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**Group Influences on Individual Learners' Motivation:
A Study of Group Dynamics in EFL Classrooms**

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Teaching and
Applied Linguistics

CELTE (Centre of English Language Teacher Education)

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Declaration

I, Lilian Ya-hui Chang, am the sole author of this research thesis submitted in completion of the Ph.D. in English Language Teaching Research at the Centre for English Language Teacher Education (CELTE). This is my own work and does not contain work by any other author. I absolutely state that none of the material in this research thesis has ever been published.

I also confirm that neither this thesis, nor any work therein, has ever been submitted for a degree at another university, nor has any of this material been submitted for another degree.



Lilian Ya-hui Chang

Abstract

Attention to how groups of students at university influence an individual learner's motivation within the group is the focus of this research. The uniqueness of this research lies in shifting the focus from an analysis of the individual's experience seen as being apart from the group to considering the individual's experience in relation to the social interactions within the group.

This thesis begins with the examinations of the theoretical framework, including major issues in learning motivation and group dynamics, an area that has been gaining more and more attention in second language research. Then, it discusses the selection of a mixed methods approach, the employment of three research instruments (the classroom observation, the questionnaire, and the interview), and the research procedure. After presenting the findings from each research instrument, this study will integrate all the data and present key findings from the integration.

Questionnaires were administered to 127 Taiwan university students from the Applied English Department of National Kaohsiung First University of Science and Technology (NKFUST). The results from the questionnaires show that there is a slight to moderate correlation between group processes (group cohesiveness and group norms) and students' level of motivation (self-efficacy and level of autonomy). A dozen students who participated in this study were asked to give further information during semi-structured in-depth interviews. During those interviews, several students commented that their classmates are indeed important to their learning, as being around more motivated classmates positively influences their own motivation and autonomy. Other relevant findings, such as what is a 'good' and 'bad' group, the importance of a mixed methods approach, and the role of culture aspects, will also be discussed.

Chapter One -- Introduction

1.1 The focus of the study

Where the interesting changes have occurred in recent years is the expansion of motivational theory beyond the individual student to the entire class or to groups of students. (Ehrman, Leaver, and Oxford, 2003, p.322)

For the last thirty years or so, language learning motivational theory has adopted an individualistic perspective. Since it is the individuals' choice to make decisions about their learning regarding learning goals, methods, or content, this individualistic perspective certainly makes a lot of sense. However, as Ehrman, Leaver, and Oxford point out, recent years have witnessed an expansion of language learning motivational theory from the individual perspective to the influences of a learner group. No doubt this is because the student is being viewed within the greater social context of learning which includes fellow learners in addition to the individual student and teacher. As Dörnyei (2001a, p.15) explains, "humans are social beings and human action is always embedded in a number of physical and psychological contexts, which considerably affect a person's cognition, behavior, and achievement." This seems to imply that an individualistic perspective of language learning motivation may not be sufficient to fully explore the impact of the wider social contexts, such as the learner group, upon one's learning motivation. Indeed, most learning situations, especially in schools, take place in groups. Learners are learning with their peers, and the teacher is teaching to a class, not to an individual learner. Ushioda (2003) illustrates this in her paper: When teachers talk about students' learning situation and motivation, they often use the collective term, "this

class is motivated” or “that class is pretty unmotivated.” Learners themselves naturally understand they are engaged in classroom activities with others. When interviewed, they tend to say “our” teacher said...., or “we” did listening in today’s class ...etc. As it is indisputable that learners conceptualize their learning as occurring in a group, it would seem essential to examine the effects the learner group poses on learners.

Specifically, this thesis explores how group related processes (such as group cohesiveness, group norms, group leadership) in a foreign language classroom influence individual learners’ motivation (such as their learning orientations, self-efficacy, and level of autonomy). The uniqueness of this research comes from bringing attention to how a group of students influence individual learners’ motivation. In terms of L2 motivational theory, the shift from focusing on the individual’s experience apart from the group to looking at the individual embedded within the social interactions of the whole classroom dimension is a recent development which has not yet received much attention in language classrooms. Although recent years have witnessed the publication of group-related literature in this aspect (e.g. Dörnyei and Malderez, 1997, 1999; Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003; Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998; Hadfield, 1992), surprisingly there have been few empirical studies on the effects of group processes in language classrooms. There is a clear need for L2 motivational researchers to conduct an empirically grounded study to illuminate our understanding of the effects of the learner group on learner motivation, and this research is an attempt to address that need.

1.2 An overview of the research context

All the participants in this Ph.D. research were EFL students at a National

Technology University in Kaohsiung County, Taiwan; all were majoring in English at the intermediate to upper-intermediate English proficiency level. Involving only students from the same department of the same university suits the nature of this research. Since the focus of this research is the influence of the learner group on individual learners' motivation, other factors (such as teachers, the workload, school policy) that could make a difference to one's motivation were minimized by having research subjects with as similar a background as possible.

Moreover, it is essential to have a learner group (a more detailed definition of the term *group* will be discussed later) as the basic unit of this study, rather than an individual learner, since this study focuses on the effects group processes have on learner motivation. Four groups, a total of 152 participants, from the Department of Applied English at the target university were chosen:

- Senior (4th) Year Group 4C
(44 students)
- Senior (4th) Year Group 4D
(41 students)
- Junior (3rd) Year Group 3C
(32 students)
- Junior (3rd) Year Group 3D
(35 students)

Students in these four groups all attended the two-year, upper-division programme of the university. The two-year programme is designed for students who had previously studied at a 5-year junior college programme and graduated with an associate's degree. These students must complete two more years of upper-division study (junior (3rd) and senior (4th) years) at a university to obtain a bachelor's degree. All participants in these four groups completed their junior college education prior to matriculating into the university. For the purposes of this study, it is important to bear in mind then that the junior year groups (Group 3C and Group 3D), having just been admitted from a 5-year junior college programme, were actually in their first

year together as a group of classmates. The senior year groups (Group 4C and Group 4D) had been together as classmates for more than a year as they were in their second (and final) year together when this research project was undertaken. It is also worth bearing in mind that the Department of Applied English within the College of Foreign Languages is relatively small. These 152 students represent all the students in the upper-division programme, as such they have nearly all their classes together in various combinations of classmates. And while the time together as a single group unit are nine hours per week for juniors and three hours per week for seniors (who as juniors had spent nine hours of classes per week together as a single unit), this may not truly reflect the high contact time they spend together with different classmates (although not as a complete group unit) when taking all courses into consideration.

1.3 Research methods

This research adopts a mixed methods approach, collecting both quantitative data and qualitative data for the analysis. Three research instruments were employed to complete the data collection procedure:

1.) *Classroom observation*: Classroom observation helps me to get a better perspective of my target groups from my own eyes. I am able to get a general feel of each target group and generate questionnaire items that are more locally appropriate from the observation experiences.

2.) *The questionnaire*: The questionnaire facilitates the establishment of baseline information for each target group, such as the learning orientation of each group, its level of cohesiveness, etc. In addition, some statistical analyses (such as T-test and correlation test) were performed to detect any interesting relationships or abnormalities from the questionnaire data.

3.) *Semi-structured interviews*: Interviewing is the last stage of my data collection.

The interviewees included all six teachers who taught the compulsory courses of the four target groups and three students from each group (a total of twelve students).

These semi-structured, in-depth interviews help me better understand the social and cultural aspects of the relationships between group processes and learner motivation.

Data from these three research instruments were collected and then integrated to complete the portrait of each target group and explore the dynamic intricacies between group processes and learner motivation from different aspects. In this study, both quantitative data and qualitative data share equal weight and are equally important for the findings generated from the analysis.

1.4 The organization of the thesis

This Ph.D. thesis consists of three major sections - nine chapters:

1. Section A (Chapters 1-4): The background of the study

In this section, chapter one gives a general introduction to the thesis.

Chapters two and three review the literature on L2 learner motivation and relevant theories of group processes. Finally, chapter four presents a detailed explanation of the research methodology, including the research context, questions, instruments and the administration.

2. Section B (Chapters 5-7): The data of the study

The three chapters in this section deal with the data generated from each research instrument – classroom observation (chapter five), the questionnaire (chapter six), and the interview (chapter seven).

3. Section C (Chapters 8-9): The findings of the study

Chapter eight integrates all the data from three research instruments and presents research findings through the discussion of the research questions. Finally, chapter nine gives a general overview and summarizes key findings of the study.

To summarize this first chapter: the focus of the study has been clarified, a brief overview of the research context and research methods has been presented, and the overall structure of the thesis has been outlined. In the next two chapters the literature on theories and studies relevant to the focus of this research will be reviewed.

Chapter Two: Learners' Individual Motivational Traits

For several decades, motivation has been considered an extremely important factor in L2 learners' successful acquisition of a second language. Along with the intensity of research, there have been many theories and controversies in the area of motivation. Motivation, defined by Gardner (1985, p.54), is "learner's effort, plus desire to achieve a goal, plus attitudes;" Brown (1994, p.152) interprets motivation as "an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to a particular action," and according to Dörnyei,

Motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process (1998, p.117).

From these definitions, it is not hard to realize that motivation is a rather complex idea to pin down involving many aspects of the human mind and behavior. One thing we can be sure of is that without sufficient motivation, a person is unlikely to succeed in learning languages even if he or she has a great gift for it (Dörnyei, 2001b). While there is no controversy about the importance of motivation to language learning, there are various motivational theories by researchers focusing on different areas of psychology, such as social psychology or educational psychology. For nearly thirty years, Gardner and Lambert's social psychology perspective (instrumental orientations and integrative orientations) had dominated L2 motivation research until the beginning of the 1990s, when L2 researchers highlighted the limitations of the social psychological perspective. The very first influential paper criticizing the limitations of this social psychological perspective on L2 motivation was by Crookes and Schmidt (1991). With such a vast and complex field as the field

of motivation they believed “much of the work on motivation in SL learning has not dealt with motivation at all” (p.502). They challenged researchers to broaden their horizons to discover factors unique to language learning that go beyond the limited perspective of instrumental and integrative orientation.

The second influential “critique” paper from Oxford and Shearin (1994) responded to the widening gap between L2 motivation and concepts being used in mainstream education motivation in the 1970s and 1980s. They recommended researchers adopt several important motivational theories that were being developed in educational psychology such as need theories, expectancy-value theories, equity theories, attribution theory, self-efficacy theory, and cognitive developmental theory. Oxford and Shearin hope by expanding the scope of L2 motivational research it will “include other possible motivations and additional mechanisms by which these motivations become reflected in students’ behaviors” (p.23) and thus provide further insights for language teachers. Since then, L2 motivational researchers became more aware of the limitations of the social psychological approach and directed their attention to closing the gap between motivational research in educational psychology and motivational research in second language acquisition.

Currently, L2 motivation is often seen as an intricate construct comprised of multilevel aspects, such as the cognitive aspect, the process aspect, or even the neurobiological aspect. The scope of this research precludes adopting every aspect discussed in current L2 motivation. Only some representative select aspects of L2 motivation will be discussed in this study. They are divided into two categories: *before* learning, and *during* learning. The formation of these two categories is inspired from Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998 and Williams and Burden, 1997, who focus on the temporal aspect of learner motivation and characterize motivational theories by

different stages of motivation over a period of time. This chapter examines relevant theories under each category – *before* learning (learners' learning orientations), and *during* learning (learners' cognitive processes) – in detail.

2.1 Before learning: learning orientations

Every learner has more or less different learning motives or orientations for their learning; for example, it could be their personal interest, job security, or external pressure. This research regards learning orientation as their impetus to learn a foreign language. Two major motivational theories, the social psychology approach (instrumental and integrative orientations) and self-determination theory (extrinsic and intrinsic orientations) are concerned with learning orientations.

2.1.1 Integrative and instrumental orientations

Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) published the pioneering work done in L2 motivation in which they proposed two types of motivational orientations that dominated the area for several decades: integrative orientation and instrumental orientation. Gardner and Lambert believe people with integrative motives, which could include identifying with the culture of the L2 group, want to become part of the target language community and are very interested in the people and culture represented by the target group. They learn the language in order to understand the L2 community and the culture better, and they look forward to the chance to integrate into the L2 community after they have successfully acquired its language. Gardner (1985) suggests that people who have integrative motives might say the reasons they study English are, for example, the following:

- I want to make friends with people who speak English;
- I am interested in English-speaking people and I want to understand them

better by studying their language first;

- I want to be able to appreciate the culture and literature of the target group more.

The other motivational orientation Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) discuss is instrumental. They believe that learners with an instrumental orientation learn a language in order to open up new and better opportunities for themselves. Such opportunities could include getting a promotion at work, entering a better school, or studying abroad. Gardner (1985) suggests that people who have instrumental motives might say the reasons they study English are, for example, the following:

- It is useful to get a better job;
- I want to get into a better school;
- I can earn more money if I can speak English.

At first, Gardner and Lambert believed that learners with integrative orientations have better motivation and better chances to achieve in language learning. However, research later on disagreed that this was always the case. Other research studies have shown that learners with instrumental motives could reach similar levels of achievement as learners with integrative motives. In addition, many learners have to some degree a combination of both orientations as one does not necessarily exclude the other. So then, some researchers arrived at different results from Gardner and Lambert, and Dörnyei (1990) points to the cultural context they worked in as a possible explanation for these differences. Both Gardner and Lambert's research background is in Canada, an uncommon bilingual environment. With both English and French as official languages, there is a substantial amount of people who speak French as a second language. In this particular context it becomes

more understandable why integrative motives work better than instrumental.

However, in other countries without two official languages or where the percentage of people who speak the second language is small, learners might have vague ideas about “integrating into the L2 group” when the L2 group is simply lacking in their environment. Recognizing this problem, Dörnyei (2003a, p.6) re-interprets integrative orientations with a broader definition: “the identification generalized to the cultural and intellectual values associated with the language, as well as to the actual L2 itself.”

Despite the controversy, Gardner and Lambert’s model of integrative and instrumental motivational orientations has been the foundation of much motivation research in language learning and opened up a new and important research area in second language learning. While Gardner and Lambert’s research continues to play an influential role in L2 motivation research, even Gardner and MacIntyre admit that

the important point is that motivation itself is dynamic. The older characterization of motivation in terms of integrative vs. instrumental orientations is too static and restricted.
(1993, p.4)

As a result, during subsequent decades many researchers tried to develop other motivational theories that better capture learner’s motivation from a broader point of view.

2.1.2 Intrinsic and extrinsic orientations (self-determination theory)

Self-determination theory was first introduced by Deci and Ryan (1985, 2002) in mainstream educational motivational research and has been receiving a considerable amount of attention in the mainstream educational field for the past two

decades. However, the theory was not properly recognized in the field of SLA until the early 1990s, when several researchers started to recognize the need to expand L2 motivational research. Since then, some SLA researchers, such as Vallerand et al. 1993, and Noels 2001 brought attention to self-determination theory and developed this theory in SLA research. Self-determination theory – examining learners’ orientations from intrinsic orientation to different types of extrinsic orientation – provides a more elaborate construct of learning orientations.

A simple yet clear definition of intrinsic motivation (IM) comes from Noels et al (2003): “Intrinsic motives generally refer to motivation to engage in an activity because that activity is enjoyable and satisfying to do.” Learners who have intrinsic motives or orientations learn the language for their personal fulfillment. They learn it because they find the learning experience pleasant. Intrinsic orientation is further divided into three subtypes (Noels, 2001; Ryan and Deci, 2000; Vallerand, 1997):

1. **IM-Knowledge:** Learners enjoy finding out new things about what they are learning. They feel satisfied after learning something new because of their knowledge development.
2. **IM-Accomplishment:** Learners get satisfaction after achieving their learning goals. They enjoy the feeling of success after they learn something new in class.
3. **IM-Stimulation:** Learners simply like the target language very much and find language learning is interesting and fun.

According to Vallerand (1997), people who have intrinsic orientations might say they study English because of reasons such as the following:

- It is a pleasant experience for me when I understand spoken English;
- Learning English brings me a feeling of success;

- Learning English is really fun and great and I love it.

Ryan and Deci (2000) believe that intrinsic motivation is a pervasive and vital type of motivation. This is because all human beings have “innate needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness” (p.57). Human beings long to be their own agent and in charge of what they want to do. They need to foster the competence to control their lives while being valued and trusted in relationships with significant others (Noels, 2001). Ryan and Deci (2000) believe only intrinsically motivated activities can adequately satisfy these basic psychological needs. Under this assumption, Deci et al. (2001) argue that any extrinsic reward will undermine intrinsic motivation and only through autonomy-supportive environments and informational feedback in classrooms can learners’ intrinsic motivation gradually be fostered. Vansteenkiste et al. (2004)’s empirical study supports this belief by concluding that intrinsic goals and an autonomous, supportive learning environment effectively enhance learners’ interest and devotion in learning activities.

Although intrinsic motivation sounds ideal, in reality, it may be seen as a utopian idea. While it is the best to view it as an ultimate goal, it might be hard to always expect learners to learn something out of the pure enjoyment of acquiring the knowledge. Realities such as money, parental expectations, job prospects, eventually sink in. Even Ryan and Deci acknowledge this and admit that

the freedom to be intrinsically motivated becomes increasingly curtailed by social demands and roles that require individual responsibility for nonintrinsically interesting tasks. (2000, p.60)

While the ideal of intrinsic motivation is beset with everyday realities, it is possible that learners may find an impetus from extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation (EM) is used to describe people engaging in something for reasons other

than the pure enjoyment of the activity itself. In contrast to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation refers to “actions carried out to achieve some instrumental end, such as earning a reward or avoiding a punishment” (Noels et al., 2003, p. 39).

Learners learn English for some external factor other than satisfying their own needs.

Four levels, from the lowest to the highest, of extrinsic orientations have been identified (Noels, 2001; Ryan and Deci, 2000; Vallerand, 1997):

1. **External regulation:** Learners learn L2 because of other people, such as parental pressure, school regulation, or avoidance of certain punishments.
2. **Introjected regulation (introjection):** Learners learn L2 because of the pressure they give themselves in response to the pressure coming from some outside force. For instance, learners are afraid that other people will look down on them for their ignorance if they can not speak a foreign language.
3. **Identified regulation (identification):** Learners learn L2 because they can see the value and its usefulness. They choose to learn due to their own personally relevant reasons.
4. **Integrated regulation (integration):** Learners fully identify with the outcomes and the values of the learning. This is the highest level of EM and learners with this type of EM learners have basically integrated the goal of learning into their self-concept.

According to Vallerand (1997), people who have extrinsic orientations might say they study English because of reasons such as the following:

- If I do not study English, my parents will nag me.
- I would feel ashamed if I could not speak English because many people can.
- People will respect me more if I can speak English.

- I choose to be a person who can speak English.

According to self-determination theory, these four types of extrinsic orientations are “along a continuum according to the extent to which they are internalized into the self-concept” (Noels et.al. 2003, p.39), as figure 2.1 indicates. In other words, they are gradually inclined toward each other and the key is how much the learners have internalized the motivation into their self-concept and to what extent they are motivated. So then, the more the learners have internalized the motivation into their self-concept (such as an ‘identified regulation’ orientation), the more their disposition is toward the intrinsic orientation, as a result, the longer the motivation will sustain them and possibly the better they might do in their learning.

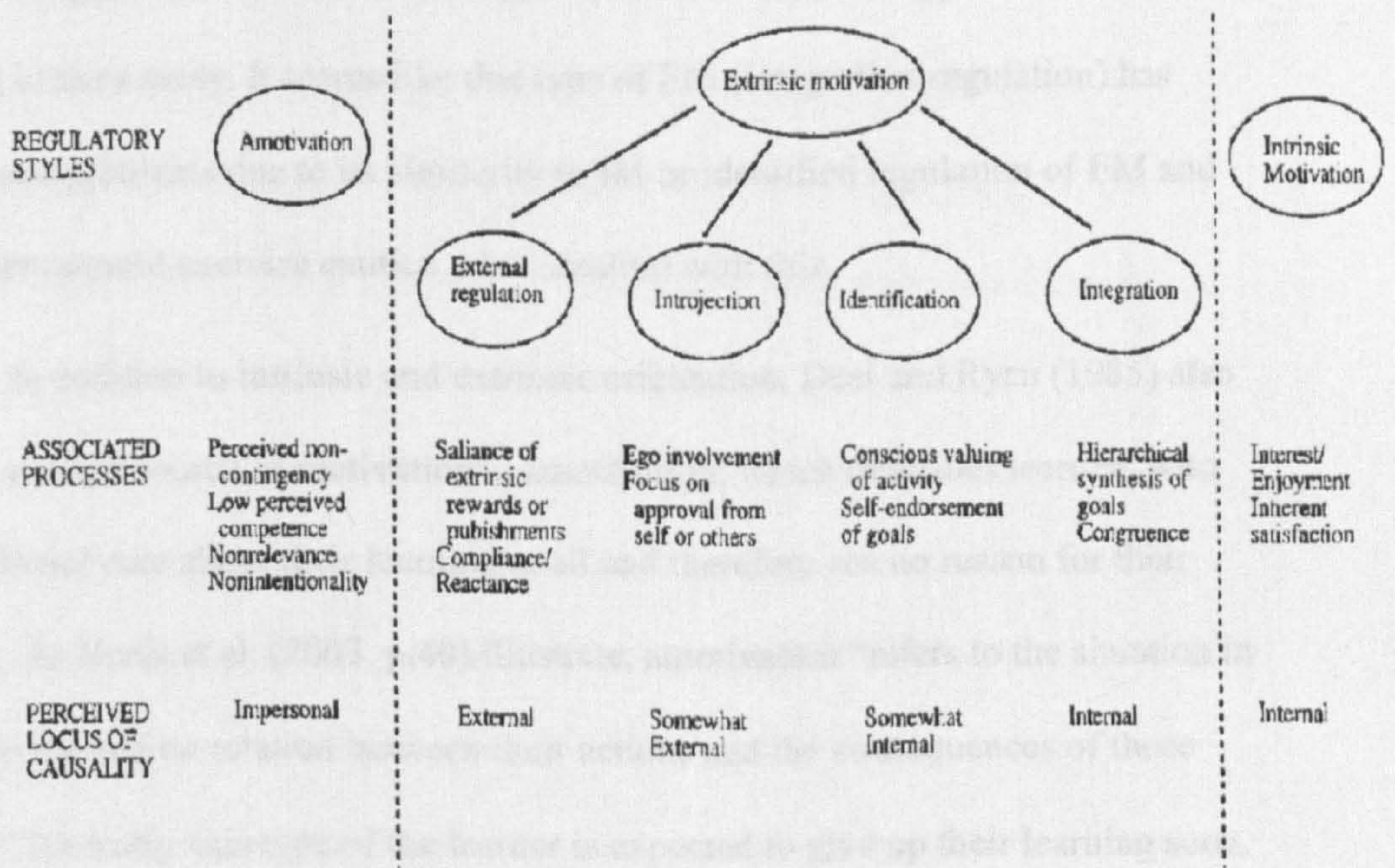


Figure 2.1 A taxonomy of human motivation
Source: Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.61

However, there are some controversies with the most self-determined type of EM, integrated regulation. This type of EM, being at the internalized end of the

continuum, is very similar to IM. However, integrated regulation is still different from IM because the learning activity is not done out of the enjoyment of the behaviour itself, rather, it is done due to “its presumed instrumental value with respect to some outcome that is separate from the behaviour” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 62). Although Ryan and Deci firmly state that integrated regulation is different from IM, other researchers have disagreed with this point of view. For instance, Van Lier (1996, p.112) believes that it is common for learning to be both “extrinsically and intrinsically motivated” and it is very possible for the learner to intrinsically enjoy the learning while personally valuing the outcome of the learning. Moreover, Noels et al. (2003) explain in their study that some research has difficulty distinguishing integrated regulation from identified regulation; as a result, this type of EM is not included in their study. It seems like this type of EM (integration regulation) has posed some problems due to its similarity to IM or identified regulation of EM and researchers should exercise caution when dealing with this.

In addition to intrinsic and extrinsic orientation, Deci and Ryan (1985) also identify another source of motivation -- amotivation, which describes learners who simply do not care about their learning at all and therefore see no reason for their learning. As Noels et.al. (2003, p.40) illustrate, amotivation “refers to the situation in which people see no relation between their actions and the consequences of those actions.” Basically, this type of the learner is expected to give up their learning soon.

Furthermore, Deci and Ryan’s (1985) also recognize that a student’s motivational orientation may not be static. For instance, learners may start with extrinsic orientation due to a school requirement (the school demands students undertake an English course in order to graduate). And yet, through a positive learning experience and pleasant exposure, it could be possible for learners to

develop an intrinsic orientation toward English. On the other hand, learners may enter the classroom with some intrinsic motivation, but due to a teacher's controlling behavior (e.g. negative feedback, withholding rewards, giving tests/grades) their intrinsic orientation might diminish. In addition, it is possible for learners to have different kinds of orientations at the same time, for instance, they might want to learn English because they are interested in the language (intrinsic orientation) *and* they need good English skills to be able to study abroad (extrinsic orientation). It is too limiting to assume that learners' orientations will stay the same and they have one only kind of orientation throughout their whole learning process. Fluid orientations along a continuum is one complication of motivation, and yet such challenges compel researchers to discover ways to better understand learners' motivations.

Several research studies regarding extrinsic orientations or intrinsic orientations have been conducted in a Chinese context. In Green's study (1999), Chinese learners appear to have identified regulation of EM as the dominant type of motivational orientation. Lai's (1999) research verifies Green's study with the conclusion that Chinese learners are primarily instrumentally or extrinsically motivated with very strong career motives. Kember (2000) further elaborates the importance of career motivation to Chinese learners. He believes that career motivation is a vital part of Chinese learners' learning orientation and that it should not be treated in a negative light since his data suggests that the presence of career motivation does not diminish the learners' intrinsic interest.

Chen et al. (2005) criticize the fact that intrinsic orientations and extrinsic orientations do not appropriately accommodate learners' learning context in different cultures. In their study in Taiwan, they identify a third motivational orientation, Chinese Imperative, which refers to motivation reflecting the internalization of social,

educational and institutional requirements, such as getting high test scores or passing exams. In the article, the authors argue that Taiwanese students are not necessarily intrinsically motivated to learn English or have a specific instrumental end. Rather, they are motivated to learn English due to social and family expectations (such as getting a high TOFEL score) they have internalized so well and with which they personally deeply identify. It is certainly reasonable for one to argue that expectations or pressure from others, rather than from within, should be considered extrinsic orientations no matter how internalized these ideas are, hence, this third motivator (Chinese Imperative), strictly speaking, is a form of EM. However, one important concept these authors try to emphasize is, we should not easily accept clear cut answers when it comes to learner motivation since motivation coupled with cultural factors grows in complexity. All in all, it seems important to consider the cultural implications while considering a learner's learning orientation.

To conclude, this section has analysed two major motivational theories examining learners' learning orientations: social psychology approach (integrative and instrumental orientations) and self-determination theory (intrinsic and extrinsic orientations). These different kinds of orientations provide us with an insight as to why learners learn the language and how that affects their motivation. After examining the motivational components learners have *before* learning, the next section is going to focus on the cognitive processes learners have *during* their learning.

2.2. During learning: cognitive processes

During the learning process, a substantial amount of factors, such as teachers, materials, or learners' own beliefs, could affect individual learners' motivation. This

section will focus on learners' beliefs, or the cognitive process they undergo during language learning that affects their motivation. For instance, during the learning learners may need to set their learning goals, attribute their successful or an unsuccessful learning outcome to a specific reason, develop their self-efficacy in language learning or show willingness to take on some responsibility for their learning. This thinking or their beliefs could eventually lead to relevant behaviours (e.g. study harder next time) that affect their level of motivation. Out of the wide range of various cognitive processes and behaviours learners may engage in during their learning that affect their motivation, this section will focus on two main areas: learners' level of self-efficacy (how they judge themselves in their ability to succeed in language learning), and learner autonomy (their perception of their responsibility in their language learning).

2.2.1 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is an introspective judgment of one's ability to perform. As such, it situates the responsibility for the motivation to accomplish tasks within the learner's own cognitive process. Oxford and Shearin capture the introspective nature of self-efficacy well in their definition:

Self-efficacy is one's judgment of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations. It focuses on one's ability, creativity, adaptability, and capacity to perform in a particular situational context. (1994, p.21)

Research shows that learners who judge their previous actions to be performance failures will be more likely to develop low self-efficacy. Those learners do not expect to succeed due to their previous failures. On the other hand, learners who have pleasant learning experiences and a firm belief in their own ability to succeed

have higher self-efficacy. Learners with high self-efficacy set more challenging goals for themselves which in turn inspire them toward stronger motivation in order to achieve those goals, while students with low self-efficacy lack confidence which lowers motivation and compromises their own ability to achieve.

To get a clearer grasp of how expectations shape learner motivation Bandura (1986, 1993, 1997) divides self-efficacy into two aspects: 1) outcome expectancy – learners' anticipation about how specific learning skills or strategies can lead to certain positive or negative outcomes, and 2) efficacy expectancy – learners' own judgment about whether they will have the ability to use the specific skills or strategies required to achieve a positive outcome.

In addition to these two aspects of self-efficacy, Bandura continues by trying to understand where and how learners develop their own self-efficacy judgments.

Through his studies, he has identified four sources of learners' self-efficacy beliefs:

1. **Actual experience:** The actual experiences, for example, how past experiences of success or failure will influence the learner's self-efficacy. Generally speaking, successful experiences raise self-efficacy while failures lower it.
2. **Vicarious experiences:** Learners will be inspired by their peers. For example, if one learner sees another learner perform a task successfully, her self-efficacy is reinforced and she thus believes that she will be able to do the same too.
3. **Verbal persuasion:** Positive feedback and encouragement from teachers and parents will help learners attain higher self-confidence and positive self-efficacy.
4. **Physiological arousal:** If a learner has high anxiety in a particular learning situation and that anxiety affects her learning results negatively, her perceptions

of efficacy will lower, thereby influencing her future performance.

To summarize, if learners have a positive outcome expectancy (such as 'if I use the good study strategies recommended by the teacher, I will get a good result in language class') and a positive efficacy expectancy (such as 'I believe I will be able to use those good study strategies') which comes from a positive experience, like an actual successful learning experience in the past, or positive feedback they have received on their work from teachers or parents, they will be more motivated to learn because they believe in their own ability to achieve success in the end. Likewise, "if people believe they have no power to produce results, they will not attempt to make things happen" (Bandura, 1997, p.3).

Many studies show that self-efficacy is important in successful academic performance and motivation. Wood and Locke conducted four empirical studies to examine the relationship between academic self-efficacy and performance in 1987. They found a statistically significant correlation between self-efficacy and academic performance. The more self-efficacious learners are, the more likely they are to perform better academically. In addition, Schunk (1991) in his paper examines how self-efficacy relates to other relevant constructs (e.g. attributions, goal-setting, expectations and values) of academic motivation. He concludes that learners' sense of efficacy is important for their academic motivation and teachers should pay attention to learners' self-efficacy in addition to their instructional planning in order to effectively enhance learners' motivation and reach desirable learning outcomes. Finally, Yang (1999) carried out a research study situated in Taiwan examining how learners' self-efficacy affects their use of language strategies. One of the findings from the research reveals that learners' self-efficacy, motivation, and strategy use form a cyclical relationship -- positive beliefs about language learning to some level

enhances learner motivation which leads to the use of effective learning strategies. Or, the adoption of effective learning strategies shapes learners' positive beliefs resulting in higher motivation. Either way, this empirical research in the same local research context in which this study was conducted identifies a relationship between self-efficacy and learner motivation.

To conclude, evidence suggests that self-efficacy is important for one's level of motivation and performance because self-efficacious learners may more readily engage in challenging tasks, adopt effective learning strategies, invest more effort in their study, and get less frustrated during tough times. As Zimmerman (2000, p.86) substantiates, "self-efficacy beliefs have also shown convergent validity in influencing such key indices of academic motivation as choice of activities, level of effort, persistence, and emotional reactions."

2.2.2 Learner autonomy

Unlike self-efficacy which is often discussed as *part* of the general motivation area, autonomy and its wide-ranging applications are often interpreted as a separate area from motivation. And yet, in some respects autonomy and motivation intertwine as forces affecting learner outcomes (Ushioda, 1996) where autonomy becomes an important process for developing learners' motivation in language learning. Out of the numerous autonomy research studies, this section selects only research relevant to this particular inquiry. First, it will give an overview of the field of autonomy to set the context, followed by a discussion showing the interconnectedness between autonomy and motivation. Next, it will discuss issues of autonomy in an Asian context and finally illustrate the relevance of autonomy to this specific research.

2.2.2.1 Background: development and definition

According to Benson (2001), the concept of autonomy in language learning originated with the establishment of the Council of Europe's modern Language Project in 1971, which prompted the establishment of the Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Langues (CRAPEL) in France. In 1981, the leader of CRAPEL, Henri Holec, made a pivotal project report to the Council of Europe stating that autonomy is a key element to language learning, thus establishing the importance of autonomy in the language learning field. Ever since then, many researchers like Benson (2001), Benson and Voller (1997), Dickinson (1987, 1995), Gremmo and Riley (1995), Little (1991, 1995), Littlewood (1996, 1999), Sheerin (1989, 1991), and Ushioda (1996) have dedicated themselves to researching learner autonomy. Different researchers have slightly dissimilar ideas about the definition of autonomy, since autonomy is generally a broad concept and "can take numerous different forms, depending on learners' age, how far they have progressed ... and so on. Autonomy, in other words, can manifest itself in very different ways" (Little, 1991, p. 4). Despite its complexity, various theoretical definitions of learner autonomy still share some significant characteristics: Learners take charge and are responsible for their own learning, make their own decisions about what and how they want to learn, determine their goals, reflect on their learning, identify their resources, monitor their own progress, and develop their own learning strategies that suit them best (Benson, 2001; Dickinson, 1987; Holec, 1981; Little, 1991; Littlewood, 1996).

Autonomy being such a broad and abstract concept with many different types of possibilities and explanations has spawned many sub-fields to accommodate differing areas of focus under the rubric of autonomy. One sub-field is learner training, i.e. instructing learners on how to be autonomous. For learners to be able to

take charge of their own learning, they must be equipped with effective learning strategies, self-management, and self-assessment skills (Benson, 2001). It would be arduous for learners to become autonomous right away without any professional help. Thus, the attention was on the importance of learner training, and researchers like Oxford (1990) have developed and identified many effective learner strategies and management skills.

Another sub-field is self-access, “ a way of describing materials that are designed and organized in such a way that students can select and work on tasks on their own” (Sheerin, 1991, p. 143). Self-access is seen as an ideal approach to promote learner autonomy, since learners can choose whatever they want to learn in their own way. Researchers like Sheerin (1989, 1991), and Gardner & Miller (1999) have undertaken many studies on the success of self-access learning centres.

A third sub-field of autonomy in language learning is autonomous practice in the classrooms. Researchers (e.g. Dam, 1995; Little, 1991) believe that autonomy can be developed in language classrooms through collaboration and interdependence. One example of this is negotiation between teachers and learners in the classrooms: teachers share responsibilities with learners and are no longer solely in control of the power to decide what goes on in the classroom. Teachers shift their role to become more like counselors or learner trainers rather than knowledge transmitters. Dam’s research (1995) is the classic example with abundant details on how to apply autonomy in language classroom practices.

This research refrains from considering all aspects of learner autonomy discussed above, but rather it focuses on autonomy’s relation to learner motivation, the main focus of this research. Motivation and autonomy have been shown to be relevant to each other through an ever-increasing amount of research. Therefore, for

the purposes of this research it would be prudent to include aspects of autonomy that relate to motivation and are also relevant to an Asian context.

2.2.2.2 Autonomy and motivation

The relationship between autonomy and motivation is identified in much existing literature, either theoretically or empirically. Ushioda (1996, p. 2) states, “autonomous learners are by definition motivated learners.” In Littlewood’s (1996) theoretical construct of autonomy in language learning, ability and willingness are two main components of autonomy. Ability refers to a learner’s meta-cognitive knowledge and skills: what kinds of alternatives in working toward autonomy are available and which one to choose, or whether the person has the necessary skills required for her choices. Willingness consists of a learner’s confidence and *motivation*. It would seem difficult then for a language learner lacking motivation to display autonomous behaviors or be willing to work toward autonomy. Granted that this is one theoretical construct proposed by Littlewood himself (1996), it clearly shows a logical argumentation that motivation can be seen as one element of autonomy. In addition to Littlewood’s (1996) theoretical construct, autonomy and its relevance to motivation can also be identified through two existing, widely-recognized motivation theories: attribution theory and self-determination theory.

Dickinson (1995) points out how autonomy is related to the attribution theory, a dominant motivational theory in education field since the 1980s. Attribution theory examines how a learner attributes the causes of her outcomes (either a success or a failure) and how her attributions (i.e., ability, effort, luck, or task difficulty) shape her expectations for the next outcome which in turn affects her motivation (Weiner, 1985). Dickinson (1995) points out that learners who attribute their success or failure to internal factors (e.g. personal effort) rather than external causes (e.g. luck, task

difficulty) are more autonomous because they take on the necessary responsibility for their own learning – one main quality of autonomous learners. Their willingness to take responsibility sparks motivation because they believe they can attain success by their own personal effort rather than attributing success to unpredictable factors outside their control. Hence, from the perspective of the attribution theory, Dickinson (1995) proposes that autonomous learners are also motivated learners, since both kinds of learners show responsibility and consequently take charge of their own learning.

Self-determination theory (discussed in detail in section 2.1.2.) links autonomy and motivation through its examination of a learner's intrinsic motivation or extrinsic motivation in language learning. When learners have intrinsic motivation, they learn the L2 for their personal fulfillment and satisfaction rather than due to external pressure (e.g. parental pressure). Deci and Ryan point to the role of autonomy in intrinsic motivation:

When conditions are created that facilitate intrinsic motivation, in particular those that are *autonomy* supporting, students' learning, especially conceptual learning and creative thinking, increases dramatically. (Emphasis added) (1985, p. 261)

When learners are in the kind of environment where the teacher is not in control of everything, where learners can make decisions on what they want to learn and how, where parts of the locus of control lies within learners themselves, all of which encompass characteristics of autonomous learners, they are more likely to develop intrinsic motivation which sustains their learning better in the long run.

Deci and Ryan's (1985) point of view indicates how autonomy can promote intrinsic motivation, but the relationship between autonomy and motivation may not always be unidirectional. Ushioda (1996) in her monograph on autonomy describes

how intrinsic motivation promotes autonomy. She proposes that for some learners to develop intrinsic motivation, they need to see their learning as personally relevant, something they can use during their lifetime, not only in school but also for years beyond. They would find motivation in knowing they will be able to understand the lyrics of popular songs, appreciate drama, communicate with native speakers, and so on, throughout their lives. For them, language learning is no longer just another abstract boring subject they cram for at school and then leave behind. Once these learners view language learning as imbued with “personal meaning and relevance”, something that fits together “contextually in relation to a particular area of life” (Ushioda, 1996, p. 41), the conditions exist for them to begin to develop intrinsic motivation. Once learners’ intrinsic motivation is sparked, chances are they will spontaneously carry out their learning outside the classroom in real life, like tuning into radio broadcasts and reading popular magazines in the target language, or seeking out DVDs with bilingual capabilities, to fulfill their desire to be competent in their L2. Hence, their autonomous behaviors are fostered gradually. Otherwise, if learners are not intrinsically motivated, learning will be meaningless; as a result, they will constantly need external incentives (e.g. grades) to force them to study. If that is the case, we can confidently say there is no autonomy.

Deci and Ryan (1985) and Ushioda (1996) show how autonomy can work both ways: It could be a criterion for promoting intrinsic motivation, or it could also be a by-product of intrinsic motivation. Perhaps the best way to describe the relationship between autonomy and intrinsic motivation is more in terms of a symbiotic relationship where each mutually benefits and enhances the characteristics of the other.

More recent research shows a further connection between autonomy and

motivation. Wu's (2003) quasi-experimental study is promising in its support of Ryan and Deci's (1985) notion that an autonomy-supporting environment helps develop learners' intrinsic motivation. When teachers encouraged autonomy, shared learning decisions with the learners, and integrated effective strategy training in the classroom, the learners in the experimental group of Wu's study did indeed develop more intrinsic motivation than the control group. However, some elements of the study may undermine the validity of the findings. For example, the researcher is the teacher in one of the two experimental classes. Another element of concern is that the learners are between the ages of four and six years old and might not have had the cognitive ability to really process what was going on in the classroom. It seems problematic to assume that such young learners are able to respond meaningfully to the researcher's data collection means and procedures. Despite these factors, to some extent this study does provide some empirical evidence that an autonomous environment helps to develop intrinsic motivation.

Chan's (2001), and Spratt, Humphrey & Chan's (2002) empirical studies conducted in Hong Kong support and build upon Ushioda's (1996) statement that motivation is essential for fostering autonomy. In Chan's (2001) study, which sought to measure how ready Hong Kong learners are for learner autonomy, many subjects described autonomous learners as having high motivation:

Mary: He/She (the autonomous learner) is someone *highly motivated* in learning. He/she learns independently and will certainly get better results. (Emphasis added)

Bonnie: He/She (the autonomous learner) must be someone who is prudent and has *strong motivation*...will find the opportunity to use the language out of class. (Emphasis added) (p.512)

Also, when asked why they do not engage in more autonomous activities, many learners refer to lack of interest and lack of motivation. These interview excerpts show that from learners' point of view, motivation is a fairly important element for their level of autonomy. The other study by Spratt, Humphreys and Chan (2002), aiming to explore the relationship between autonomy and motivation, also shows similar results. In the questionnaire, the researchers asked learners to comment on their motivation, ranging from highly motivated to not at all motivated. Then, the researchers compared the motivation result with their engagement in out-of-class learning activities – the result was that “the higher the level of motivation the greater the frequency of engagement in [out-of-class learning activities]” (p.257). During the interviews, learners also confirmed the results of the questionnaire. If the learners were not very autonomous, they tended to claim lack of motivation as one of the reasons. As the researchers concluded, “low motivation discouraged the pursuit of autonomous activities” (p.256), hence, “one way to encourage autonomy may be to develop students' motivation to learn” (p.263).

The former study (Chan, 2001) was a small-scale study with only 20 language major participants while the later one (Spratt, Humphreys & Chan, 2002) was a large-scale study with 508 participants majoring in different fields. Both research studies having been done at Hong Kong Polytechnic University might create a problem with generalization validity, yet they do provide a substantial amount of evidence that from the learners' point of view, motivation is very important to their level of autonomy. It seems then that if learners are autonomous learners, they are also motivated learners.

Whether we regard autonomy as a foundation for developing motivation or as a by-product of motivation, evidence from both theories and empirical research

shows how autonomy and motivation are highly interrelated by forming a virtuous cycle.

2.2.2.3 Autonomy in an Asian context

This research focuses on language learning motivation and does not aim to explore the implications of autonomy specific to an Asian context. Nevertheless, as this research is being conducted in an Asian context, it is important to briefly address relevant issues. A substantial amount of autonomy literature has been devoted to exploring whether autonomy is an applicable concept in an Asian context where independence does not have the same value as in the West.

Asian learners are often described as “passive, reticent, and reluctant to openly challenge authority, especially teachers” (Pierson, 1996). Some researchers are uncertain about the applicability of autonomy with such learners. For the concept of autonomy to be applied successfully in an Asian context the ideal virtuous student, who is obedient and does not challenge the teacher, must challenge the teacher’s traditional role as an authority figure and be able to learn to share some responsibilities with teachers. Ho and Crookall (1995) explain two factors which work against the notion of autonomy in a Chinese society: relational hierarchy – Chinese learners respect the teacher as an authority figure and will give up control in exchange for the comfort of knowing teachers are in charge of everything; and “saving face” (mien-tzu) – in Chinese society, it is particularly important to protect one’s self-image, to appear to know everything. This certainly applies in a classroom context, where Chinese students do not want to undermine a teacher’s authority by challenging what the teacher says and causing her ability as a teacher to come into question. Likewise, teachers strive to maintain their self-image so they do not feel comfortable saying things like “I don’t know the answer” or “I am sorry I was

wrong” even while they might think it. Although one may argue that these characteristics are stereotypical and do not represent all Chinese learners, yet due to the influence of the Confucian culture Chinese learners may certainly be more likely to be submissive to authority figures than their Western counterparts. This tendency to respect authority without questioning (Yang, 1986; Ho, 2001) and to save face (Bond and Hwang, 1986) makes it harder to promote learner autonomy since “being autonomous often requires that students work independently of the teacher and this may entail shared decision making, as well as presenting opinions that differ from those of the teacher” (Ho & Crookall, 1995, p. 237). However, does that mean that Asian learners can not learn to be autonomous? Many research studies have shown that in fact they can demonstrate autonomous behaviours. Studies done by Aoki and Smith (1999) in Japan, Chan (2001) and Littlewood (1999) in Hong Kong, Gan (2004) in Mainland China, and Jones (1995) in Cambodia all show positive response to learning to be autonomous. Learners in these contexts demonstrate some levels of acceptance of autonomy in language learning, such as sharing decision making responsibilities in the classrooms, engaging in out-of-class learning, attending self-access learning centres, participating in a simulation project in their own spare time. Despite these learners’ contradictory cultural traits, they seem to welcome the idea of learner autonomy and are aware of the value of autonomy. However, it is important to understand that this does not mean that autonomy works within these contexts without making adjustments to cultural preferences. When involved in designing a self-access learning centre in Cambodia, Jones (1995) purposefully designed areas within the self-access centre where learners could work together with other learners to share answers, help solve problems, and so on. Jones reported that since Cambodian learners seem to be rather interdependent among each other, working

totally on their own in the self-access learning centre all the time might be intimidating and undesirable. Group work areas were set up in addition to individual booths, the main design in most self-access centres in western countries, to integrate autonomous learning with local culture to suit learners' needs better. His concession to native culture proved to be a success. In addition, Littlewood (1999) proposes a type of autonomy that might work better with Chinese learners – *reactive* autonomy, which means teachers help to set up a direction of learning to which learners *react* by choosing their own preferred styles or strategies, materials, and goals. Littlewood (1999) explains that reactive autonomy could be a preliminary step toward *proactive* autonomy, the form of autonomy that is “usually intended when the concept is discussed in the West” (p. 75), where learners take charge of learning including the directions they want to work toward. With the kind of dependence Chinese learners have on their teachers, it might be very hard for learners to become fully autonomous all at once. However, with a teacher's help, encouragement, and gradual shifting of responsibilities, Chinese learners seem also to be able to gradually become autonomous by reacting to teacher's suggestions or directions first. Hence, Littlewood's (1999) reactive autonomy is an appropriate adaptation of autonomy in a Chinese context.

To conclude, enough empirical evidence from different Asian countries has demonstrated that Asian learners could have every chance to become autonomous with the right kinds of support and environment where the concept or the practice of autonomy is re-adjusted in an appropriate way. While reporting all these relevant studies on how the idea of autonomy can be readjusted and implemented in an Asian context, I would like to exercise caution by saying that there may not always be a need to distinguish the practice of autonomy in a Western context and in an Asian

context. Dealing with culture-relevant learner traits is a delicate issue which must be undertaken with appropriate sensitivity. It is not the intention of this study to suggest or present a culturally stereotypical portrait of all Asian learners by implying that every Asian learner is submissive to authority figures, prefers to work in groups, and responds more favorably to *reactive* autonomy. The intention of this research is to offer studies which show that autonomy is an applicable concept in Asian contexts but perhaps with appropriate adjustments – adjustments which may very well apply to all contexts. With the influence of Western culture and the societal change among Asian countries, the distinction of Asian learners and Western learners may not be as pronounced as before. While in some cases there could still be cultural differences between Western contexts and Asian contexts, the issue is often not clear-cut.

2.2.2.4 The use of autonomy in this research

Since autonomy has received much attention in language learning research over the past decade, many researchers (see section 2.2.2.2) have examined the relationship between motivation and autonomy in their research and discussed the interconnection between learner autonomy and learner motivation. During this Ph.D. research, learners' level of autonomy is measured in three dimensions: their beliefs about their learning responsibilities, their actual behaviours in relation to these learning responsibilities, and their engagement in out-of-class learning. The first dimension examines to what extent learners believe it is also their responsibility (not just the teacher's) to define their learning objectives, choose learning materials and activities, evaluate their progress, and identify their weaknesses. As mentioned earlier in section 2.2.2.1, many autonomy researchers, like Holec (1981) and Little (1991, 1995) propose that the fundamental principle of learner autonomy is for learners to take charge of and be responsible for their learning. One way to

determine learners' level of autonomy might be to investigate to what extent learners consider they are responsible for their own learning. Do they believe they should define their own learning objectives? ...evaluate their own progress? ... identify their own weaknesses? Chan, Spratt, and Humphreys (2002), Cotterall (1995, 1999), and Victori and Lockhard (1995), are examples of research studies that address learners' beliefs in language learning. One area of Chan et al's autonomy research in Hong Kong investigates tertiary learners' perceptions of teacher's responsibilities and their own responsibilities – this is an approach to examining individual learners' autonomy similar to this present study.

The second dimension of autonomy measurement deals with learners' actual behaviours in relation to their autonomous beliefs, as discussed above. Calculating individual learners' autonomous beliefs is certainly one possible approach to gauge their level of autonomy. Intuitively, it seems logical for the adoption of some effective autonomous behaviours to follow from individual learners' beliefs, however, do positive autonomous beliefs naturally result in autonomous behaviours? To cite an example: Some people may have always believed exercising is important for their health, but they do not really engage in an effective exercising program. The fact that some people who believe in the importance of exercise might not actually engage in exercising is a case of how human behaviour conflicts with beliefs: this conflict of human nature could have implications for autonomous learning. Perhaps some learners who believe in the importance of autonomous learning might not actually engage in autonomous behaviors. Discovering to what extent individual learners *actually* define their own learning objectives and evaluate their own progress, and then comparing this information to their beliefs could assist in filling in some gaps regarding a learner's autonomy.

The last dimension of autonomy measurement, out-of-class learning, is an additional measurement to examine learners' autonomous behaviours from a different angle in an effort to get a more complete picture. Out of class learning, referring to "any kinds of learning that takes place outside the classroom" (Benson 2001, p.62), ranges from going to self-access centres in their own universities, having a native speaker pen pal, to watching movies in the target language. In Pickard's (1995) small scale case study research he identifies reading newspapers and novels in L2, and listening to target language radio broadcast as popular out-of-class learning activities in Europe, while in Chan et al. (2002)'s large scale survey study, the most popular out-of-class learning activities are watching English movies, listening to English songs, reading English notices, and using English for the Internet. Autonomy is demonstrated through out-of-class learning because learners internally decide to devote their own time to practicing their English by themselves; the decision is not imposed upon them from the outside (e.g. teacher). In addition, learners themselves identify the area they want to work on and freely choose the materials and methods they prefer, all of which show signs of taking charge of their own learning.

Finally, one more point regarding the relationship between learner autonomy and motivation needs to be clarified. The cited research and discussion in section 2.2.2.2 has attempted to demonstrate that an autonomous learner may well be a motivated learner, however it does not necessarily mean that a lower level of autonomy equals lower motivation. No existing literature has addressed this issue directly. Most theoretical and empirical evidence only supports the notion that autonomous learners are motivated learners – leaving uncertainty surrounding whether un-autonomous learners are unmotivated learners. If learners do not have a

high level of autonomy, maybe they are highly motivated, but are in an environment where autonomy is not recognized or encouraged which results in their not showing significant autonomous behaviour. As a researcher, I am aware of this possibility and that is why I also include other perspectives (e.g. learning orientations, self-efficacy) to explore learners' level of motivation. The results from the autonomy perspective in this research will be compared with the participants' learning orientations and self-efficacy. In addition, follow-up interviews with the respondents will attempt to clarify concerns and flesh out details of correlations.

To conclude, this section (2.2) has examined learners' cognitive process during learning. We have explored various cognitive influences on learner motivation from the perspectives of self-efficacy and learner autonomy. These cognitive factors affect learners' motivation, either positively or negatively. Now that an attempt has been made to identify learners' individual motivational traits a question arises: How do these pieces of information fit into the context of this research? The next section explores the use of individual motivational traits in this research.

2.3 Learners' motivational traits and group processes

As mentioned in the introductory first chapter, the intention of this research is to examine how the learner group influences learners' motivation. To approach such research, a first step has been taken to identify learners' motivational traits – the previous two sections of this chapter have attempted to explore the area of learner motivation. Then, it seems the next step would be a necessary examination of how or to what extent these individuals' motivational traits are affected by their learner group experiences. Such attention to how a learner group influences individual learners' motivation has not received much attention in EFL classrooms. This is

perplexing as the importance and the necessity of this dimension would seem obvious. Because we understand that most learning situations, especially in school settings, take place in groups and learners do not learn in isolation, the interactions learners have with their teachers and peers are bound to have a significant effect upon them.

Although the impetus to learn comes from within the learner, it develops as a function of the child's (or learner's) engagements in a particular activity with motivated and motivationally supportive others. (Ushioda 2003, p.92)

As Ushioda illustrates learners are influenced by “motivationally supported others.” She goes on to say how learners often exchange information and share interests with peers as part of their social interactions within the classroom. In what way do these kinds of interactions affect learners' level of motivation? To take autonomy as an example, in a learner group some learners may listen to an L2 radio broadcast as an out-of-class learning activity and then discuss the content of the radio programme in class the next day. Would this kind of interaction, through talking and sharing, inspire other learners who did not engage in such out-of-class learning to follow suit? It is possible that such inspired learners may actually find this experience (of listening to L2 radio broadcasts) helpful and enjoyable and continue to do so and perhaps even engage in other similar cultivating activities (e.g. reading L2 magazines) for their own personal satisfaction. As a result, these learners' level of autonomy may be gradually enhanced, which in turn may enhance their level of motivation.

Such possible scenarios have rarely been explored in the existing research studies and the effects of the learner group on individual learners' motivation remain an area rich for exploration. This Ph.D. research aims to identify the relationship

between group processes and learner, i.e., to what extent individual learners' motivation are affected by their peers and their group experiences.

2.4. Summary

The first two sections of this chapter have identified learners' individual motivational traits which are divided into before learning (their learning orientations) and during learning (their cognitive processes). Then, this chapter has also explained briefly why group processes may be important to individual learners' motivation. To explore the relationship of these two variables (learner motivation and the learner group) in-depth, it will be important to first of all identify relevant group processes or characteristics that fit within the milieu of the language classroom. The chapter following sets out to frame a context of relevant group processes.

Chapter Three -- Group Processes in the Classrooms

Chapter two has closely examined different motivational traits learners may exhibit during different stages of learning, such as learning orientations, level of self-efficacy, and autonomy. The purpose of this research is to explore how these motivational traits of learners may be affected by the learner group, perhaps through the interactions learners within the group have with their group peers. In an attempt to understand more about learner groups, this chapter explores relevant group processes of learner groups in the context of language learning classrooms.

3.1. The background

This section mainly focuses on the definition of the term 'group' in this study. In addition, it examines why it is important to explore individual learners' level of motivation from the perspective of group processes.

3.1.1 The definition of 'group'

In mainstream group dynamics theory (Forsyth, 1999; Johnson and Johnson, 2002; Oyster, 2000) researchers usually consider any group of more than two people a group, with a group under 20 people usually referred to as a small group. Much of the work in group dynamics theory is centered on a small group (e.g. a therapy group, business management teams, sport teams), however, any group can be applied to group dynamics theory as long as it is a "meaningful" group. So then, the next question is: What exactly constitutes a real, meaningful group? Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) and Johnson and Johnson (2002) summarize the important features of a group which most group theories propose:

1. Group members interact with each other and become interdependent.

2. People in the group need to identify with the group and perceive themselves as being part of this group.
3. Group members share some mutual goal that its members are trying to achieve.
4. The group exists for a reasonable amount of time -- weeks, months, or even years.
5. The group has developed some structure in terms of the roles or norms it has set.

Following on these characteristics, researchers who have conducted research on group processes in an education context -- Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998), Dörnyei and Malderez (1997, 1999), Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) and Schmuck and Schmuck (2001) -- clarify their use of the term 'group' as referring to *the whole language class* as a 'group'. Language learning class groups, particularly in an Asian context, certainly do exhibit the characteristics mentioned above: learners interact with each other on a daily basis, inside and outside the classroom; the sense of belonging to the group is strong; all members in the group share the mutual goal of studying English; group members stay in the same group for a couple of months or longer (often for even a couple of years together); and each class group has its unique set of rules to follow.

Most current literature on groups in language learning classrooms focuses on small group-work (usually 3-5 people) for collaborative learning activities in the classrooms. Relatively little empirical research (Hinger, 2006; Senior, 1999) refers to the whole class as a group. This seems to suggest that viewing the whole class as a group is not a common practise in educational or language learning research.

According to Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998), one reason for this rarity might be the

difficulty of finding a proper group, especially since “in most schools in the world, class group membership fluctuates continuously.” (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003, p.5)

This situation might be true in most Western countries where learners go to different classrooms for different courses and take classes with different classmates after the age of 11. However, in most Asian countries, especially in Taiwan, Mainland China, or Japan, students after the age of eleven (i.e., in junior high schools, senior high schools, junior colleges, and universities) are still assigned to one class group. The students stay within this class group for much of the time, taking many if not all courses together. It is not uncommon for them to stay in the same classroom all day long (except during special courses like PE or Music) and teachers are the ones to move throughout the day to the classroom of each class group to teach. The situation changes slightly at the university level (my research context), but by and large, students still belong to a specific class group (for example, students could belong to English 1A, English 1B, Engineering 3C, Engineering 3D) and take a considerable number of classes together as one group. As a group, they also need to participate in some university activities together, like cheer-leading contests, class group website designing contests, or even classroom cleaning contests. Such activities further aid the fostering of group solidarity. Under these circumstances, students usually have a strong identification with their group since not only do the group members remain constant, but they participate in learning activities as well as extracurricular activities with their classmates every day and spend most of their day together. Looking at the situation from this angle, a learner group in schools or universities in such Asian contexts may well be justified as a real, meaningful group, rather than just a collection of individuals. In that sense, the use of the term ‘group’ as the whole class group matches with the definition of a group in most group-related

theories, hence, while the use of the term is not frequently adopted, it is certainly legitimate.

Finally, a further distinction is made between teacher-led groups in a school setting – the focus of this research – and other more informal groups. Informal groups such as study groups learners themselves form or groups learners belong to through online communities may also have an effect on their learning. Due to necessary limitations, the scope of this research focuses only on the effect of classroom group processes in the teacher-led groups that learners belong to in a university environment.

Thus, this research thesis examines the group processes in teacher-led class groups and the term ‘group’ in this research refers to the whole class group. With this in mind, the term ‘group leaders’ refers to the teachers in the classroom, and the term ‘group members’ refers to all the learners in the class.

3.1.2 The importance of motivational research on a group basis

While defining what one means by a group is straightforward, the key question is, why does a learner group have anything to do with learner motivation? For a long time, the dominating perspective on language learning motivation has been to regard it as largely characterized by the individual, such as how individual learners set goals, how they attribute their success or failure, or how much confidence they have in language learning. Since learning is basically a personal business, this individual approach seems logical. But is this individual perspective on learner motivation a sufficient explanation of the complex reality of learner motivation? Could there be other factors, other than learners’ own thinking, affecting their level of motivation? As Rueda and Moll explain, an individualistic perspective on learner motivation neglects the greater context in which learning occurs:

Current theories of motivation are limited in that they conceptualize motivation as an individual 'in-the-head-phenomenon' with little or no attention paid to the sociocultural context and the interpersonal processes within which individual activity occurs. (1994, p.117)

Rueda and Moll believe that motivation is “socially negotiated”, “socially distributed” and “context specific” (p.131), that is, learner motivation is not a unitary event that exists only in a learner’s mind, rather, what goes on around a particular learner during his or her learning is bound to affect the learner. This idea that learners’ learning is influenced by the wider sociocultural context is based on Vygotskian sociocultural theory. This theory emphasizes the importance of social dimensions of one’s learning and how through working and interacting with others one can effectively enhance one’s cognitive development (Lantolf, 2000).

In the field of education, some researchers have been paying attention to the effects of the influence of peers on learner motivation. For instance, Harter (1996) points out teachers and classmates could have an effect on learners’ intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for classroom learning. Since the classroom is a “powerful social context” (p.11), learners need to adjust their psychological thinking in response to the influences from the social context. While extensively examining the development of children’s motivation in the school context, Wigfield et al. (1998) corroborate Harter’s opinion and identify the importance of peer groups. They point out that children are able to direct more effort and attention on learning if they feel supported by their peers. Wentzel (1999) examines how peer relationships affect students’ motivation and concludes that having a good relationship with one’s peers and being accepted by them increase one’s interest in school work while “being rejected by peers has been related to low levels of interest in school” (p.89). It is

logical to assume that high interest in school is a foundation of high motivation to learn, to attend classes, be more participatory in lessons, and to do homework. This is why Wentzel believes “relationships with peers have been related consistently to students’ motivational response to school” (p. 88). Similar discussions can also be found in the work of Hawkins’ (1994), and Salili et al. (2001) which examines the impact of culture on Asian learners’ motivation. Both of these papers emphasize that due to their collectivist culture influenced by Confucian values, peer groups appear to be especially important to Asian learners in classrooms. Having good peer relationships encourages more academic activities at school and promotes learner motivation (Salili et al., 2001).

Though the importance of the learner group or peers has long been recognized in the field of education, it has not been a centre of attention in second language research. Only within the last few years have some SLA researchers expanded their motivation research in language learning to consider factors within the learning environment, such as the learner group, interactions with their peers, and teachers. This is surprising since most language learning at school takes place in groups and those class groups are themselves compact social units, part of larger and smaller, concentric and overlapping circles of social organization; familial units, employment units, school units, municipal units, geographical units. Humans are naturally interacting social beings, as of course are students in the classroom – talking, playing, learning, with each other, both inside and outside the classroom. With motivation being such a fundamental basis of successful language learning, which takes place in groups most of the time, it seems important to take group processes into account while considering learner motivation. As Ushioda (2003) states: “We must expand the unit of analysis from the individual to embrace the

interaction between the individual and the social learning setting” to examine how these kinds of interactions affect individual learners’ motivation, and to what extent they are influenced by their peers because “learning is a culturally rooted, socially mediated process that takes place through the interaction between the child (or learner) and more competent others in meaningful activities” (p. 91-92).

Teachers intuitively perceive the importance of building good relationships among a group of students. Group dynamics theory could be an effective framework to help us understand how to build good relationships in a group. Understanding this, authors, such as Hadfield (1992), offer practical, specific techniques for language teachers to promote good group dynamics in language classrooms (e.g. focusing on the aspects of group norms, group cohesiveness, etc.) under the framework of group dynamics theory. Group dynamics theory examines group behavior as a whole, including group developments through its different stages of formation, group structure, group cohesion, group norms, and group leadership (Forsyth, 1990). Recognizing the importance of group dynamics, Dörnyei (1994) listed four group-specific motivational components directly applied from group dynamics theory (group goal-orientedness, group norms, group cohesiveness and group structure) under the learning situation level, one of the three levels (language level, learner level, learning situation level) that affect a learner’s motivation in his tripartite motivational framework. In addition, Dörnyei has published several articles and books with other researchers like Ehrman (1998), and Malderez (1997, 1999) discussing the importance of group dynamics theory in language classrooms. Recently, Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) published a book adding practical implications of group dynamics in classrooms.

While group dynamics has been receiving an increasing amount of attention

in language research, surprisingly, empirical studies still remain scarce. One attempt to include group cohesiveness in language classroom research is a study by Clément et al. (1994). In this study the researchers recognized the importance of cohesiveness in a language classroom and claimed that group cohesiveness is one factor in learners' positive evaluation of their learner group. The learner group, as the study concludes, is one part of the "interdependent aspects of classroom reality" (p.440) that has an effect on individual learners' learning behaviors.

Another research study on group cohesiveness in the language classroom is that of Senior (1997, 1999). Senior (1997) identifies the importance of a bounded group – a group that is "identified by its teacher as functioning in a cohesive manner" (p. 4) to both teachers and learners. In the study she pointed out that in a bounded group, teachers teach more enthusiastically due to learners' positive and active participation. At the same time she found learners also learn more efficiently because they feel more at ease when they have to speak and share their ideas in a bounded group.

More recently, Hinger (2006) examines the relationship between instructional time and group cohesion (or cohesiveness) and concludes that group cohesion is higher in an intensive course, in which learners meet many more hours (12 hours) per week over a shorter period of time (4 weeks) than in a standard format course where learners meet for less time, such as the usual three hours per week for the entire term. While these three empirical research studies point out the importance of group cohesiveness in language learning, they do not examine the relationship between this group process and learner motivation. The only empirical study that comes close to examining the relationship between group processes and learner motivation is Shoaib and Dörnyei's (2005) paper. In this paper they examined how

learners' motivation changes over a period of time and from the interview data they identified the influence of fellow students or classmates as a factor affecting change to a learner's motivation:

Well, if the group I am in is composed of people I dislike then I won't feel motivated towards that class...(p.40)

This student interview excerpt reveals how a learner group might have an effect on learner motivation and points to a need to conduct a more systematic study exploring the relationship between group processes and learner motivation in depth. This research thesis is an attempt to respond to this need.

For as McGroarty (2001) says:

Motivation is an attribute not only of individuals, but also of particular school and classroom environments, of varied learning tasks and activities, and of various social groups and process, each of which can have motivational force. (p.87)

3.2 Examples of group processes

This thesis aims to explore the effect of group processes on individual learners' motivation in EFL classrooms. The emphasis is more on *how* (in what ways) these processes relate to learner motivation particularly in EFL classroom settings, rather than *what* group processes have an effect on learner motivation. Because of that, this study selects the relevant group processes that show a potential link to learner motivation from the existing literature in group dynamics. Thus, not all the group processes discussed in group dynamics theory are included in this research. Only four components are selected due to their potential link to learner motivation: group cohesiveness, group norms, group leadership style and group size. These will

now be discussed in turn.

3.2.1 Group cohesiveness

Cohesiveness, or cohesion promotes group members' feelings of identification with their group because it "results from perceived similarity and then from mutual acceptance" (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998, p.136). In a cohesive group, group members have a strong connection to each other and mutually accept each group member. Hence, they participate more in group activities, communicate more and want to do their best to ensure the success of the group which positively motivates individuals. Cohesion, as Levine and Moreland (1990) summarize, is produced from four sources: 1.) human nature: it is human nature to naturally generate cohesion when a group of people gather together – it is a matter of how strong the cohesion is that makes a difference from one group to the next; 2.) the particular likings of the individual group members: the more positive the feelings and attitudes toward each other, the stronger the cohesion is among group members; 3.) a successful learning experience and an enjoyable learning environment: when a group succeeds in their mission or goal, the feeling of reward strengthens group cohesion; and 4.) the group leader's encouragement: the teacher's encouragement has an influential effect upon producing cohesion. These four sources work together to build up a cohesive group, in which learners:

- Make each other feel welcome and show signs of support
- Pay attention to each other
- Communicate more in the group
- Actively participate in conversations or group related activities
- Are more friendly and more cooperative

- Work easily with any other group members
- Feel satisfied at being part of the group
- Use “we” or “us” often when talking about the group

(adapted from: Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003; Oyster, 2000)

Group cohesiveness seems to be an important group characteristic since group cohesiveness is central to the few research studies done on group processes in language learning, Clément et al. (1994), Senior (1997, 1999), Hinger (2006). This supports Dörnyei and Murphey’s (2003) point of view that group cohesiveness is a vital characteristic of group life since it has received the most attention in social psychology or in education literature.

Many research studies have focused on how cohesiveness affects group performance and productivity. For example, Mullen and Copper’s (1994) meta-analytic integration research identified cohesiveness as having a significant effect on group performance -- the more cohesive the group, the better performance the group has. Particular to the context of English language learning classrooms, research done by Clément et al. (1994) has also found that group cohesiveness has a direct effect on group performance. Hinger’s (2006) research concludes that a learner group develops more cohesiveness and works more effectively together in a compact course, where they meet for longer hours over a shorter period of time.

All these findings show promise in trying to establish a connection between performance and cohesion, but while performance is naturally linked to motivation, the reasons establishing the relationship between cohesiveness and motivation have not been clearly delineated in research studies. I believe that learners can only improve performance when their motivation is high. Since many research studies have confirmed that cohesiveness enhances group performance and productivity,

theoretically, their motivation should be similarly enhanced as well. So, cohesion probably enhances motivation, and enhanced motivation in turn helps learners perform better. How motivation acts as a mediator in between cohesion and performance should be an area worthy of further investigation.

From some other research studies, I identify three *possible reasons* that might help to clarify the link between cohesiveness and motivation. First of all, Swezey et al. (1994) mention that in general, members of a cohesive group are more satisfied with their groups. This kind of satisfaction could help group members be more motivated, thus inspiring them to work harder toward the group goal to ensure the feelings of satisfaction continue. Secondly, Brawley et al (1987) claim that members of a cohesive group tend to interact with each other more, and participate more in group activities. Since learning a second language requires learners to participate and interact with their group members for a significant amount of time, especially when engaged in listening and speaking activities, finding it easy to interact with each other should help to increase their motivation. Conversely, in a non-cohesive group, where communication and interaction between members is often laboured, learner motivation could diminish due to the unpleasantness of participating. Finally, Mullen and Cooper (1994) point out that commitment to the task, one component of cohesiveness, proves to have the most direct link to improved performance. In other words, if a group of learners have high commitment toward the task they agreed to work for, such as everyone in the group passing the final exam, the high commitment leads to increased cohesion, and thus better performance. I believe high commitment to the task and high motivation are inseparable since it seems counter-intuitive for the same learner to be identified with high commitment and yet low motivation. Therefore, it is reasonable to identify a relationship between cohesion and motivation

through a learner's commitment to the task.

3.2.2 Group norms

Group norms, or group rules accepted and respected by all group members, influence members to act in accordance with normally accepted group behaviour. There are different levels of norms; some are set up by school officials (e.g. what to wear at school), some are established by teachers (e.g. never hand in assignments late), and some are decided by learners in each group (e.g. always prepare well before coming to class). Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) further argue that the norms that come from the teacher and the learners within the learning group affect group behavior the most. Although norms can be explicit and openly discussed in a group, many of them are implicit, "unspoken, mutually agreed on, and usually unconscious in groups." (*ibid.*, p.131) Group norms promote an effective learning environment and enhance learner motivation in two ways: 1.) when positive, they reinforce group members' desires and needs to perform well (Moreland and Levine, 1992) and, 2.) they can enhance learners' motivation by acting as an appropriate boundary (Dörnyei and Malderez, 1999).

Positively reinforcing norms, such as handing in every assignment on time, bring some positive pressure to bear on each group member, which in turn acts as a mediator for enhancing learners' motivation, since they do not want to infringe upon the norms. While this sounds very positive, what if learners' degree of conformity to the norms are not high? A study done by Argote (1989) concluded that even if the group shares a positive norm, if group members are not cohesive enough to take it as seriously as they should, or to put in as much effort as they should to conform to the norms, even positive norms will not work as a successful tool to improve group members' motivation. As a result, positive norms are only beneficial for group

members' motivation with the right kind of group.

Group norms, acting as an appropriate boundary, can enhance the motivation of a group member whose behavior violates those appropriate group boundaries (Dörnyei and Malderez, 1999). Say a group of learners set up the norms (either explicitly or implicitly) such as to hand in each assignment on time. If one member fails to hand in an assignment on time, she might directly receive some negative comments from her peers, or indirectly get the cold shoulder. This unpleasant experience might motivate her to work harder to conform to this group norm better in the future. "We should not underestimate the power of the group: it may bring significant pressure to bear and it can sanction- directly or indirectly- those who fail to conform to what is considered acceptable." (Dörnyei and Malderez 1999, p. 161)

Dörnyei and Malderez's (1999) work points to one way of interpreting the influence of group norms upon individual motivation, but an array of different group norms could vary in influence upon individual motivation. We might be wondering, do all the norms have the same effect? Theoretically speaking, in addition to being explicit or implicit, there might be other more elaborate categorizations of norms that show various influences on group behaviors. If this is the case, what kinds of norms are more influential? To further refine the types of norms and their influences, Schmuck and Schmuck (1994, 2001) point out that norms could be either static or dynamic, or formal or informal. Static norms are the most basic, unconscious ones learners share regardless of which group they are from, like no cheating (formal), or greeting the teacher (informal). These norms are usually the traditional rules all students have to follow and many of the formal static norms are probably written in the book of school policy. Since static norms are standard in most schools or universities and remain unchanged, it will not be the focus of this research since

there will not be much variation among the groups. The type of norms this research will focus on is dynamic norms. As Schmuck and Schmuck point out (1994, 2001), a dynamic norm could be actively participating in class, no talking during the teacher's lecture (formal), or addressing the teacher in a nasty fashion (informal). Schmuck and Schmuck further explain that it is the dynamic norms that are the most interesting to teachers or researchers since those are the norms that define the uniqueness of each group, i.e. what is valued in one class group may not be valued in another. It will be very interesting and valuable to find out the dynamic norms of each group in my research context, e.g. what they are, what makes each group unique, as these have rarely been explored in the context of EFL classrooms.

3.2.3 Group leadership

Group leadership examines how group leaders (i.e., the teachers) communicate their classroom decisions to the group members – does the teacher have a democratic, autocratic, or laissez-faire style towards learners? Democratic teachers allow learners to participate in making decisions about what kinds of learning activities they do. Autocratic teachers decide everything and rarely allow learners to participate in lesson planning. Laissez-faire teachers do very little in the classroom and allow students to do whatever they want (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998).

Dörnyei and Malderez (1999) claim that learner motivation is at the lowest state within laissez-faire groups as they simply feel lost while grappling to cope without suitable guidelines from the group leader. On the other hand, motivation is at the highest level in democratic groups. Swezey et al. (1994) also point out that while autocratic groups might perform better, democratic groups are more satisfied within their group. This is further verified by Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) who explain

Lewin et al.'s work from 1939: while autocratic groups may be more productive than democratic groups, the quality of the work from democratic groups is usually better. In addition, autocratic groups will stop working while democratic groups continue even if the group leader (the teacher) leaves the classroom. This connects well to Deci and Ryan's (1985) argument that an autonomy supportive learning environment promotes learners' intrinsic motivation (for details, see section 2.1.2). When learners are in an autonomy supportive learning environment where they can, for example, share the learning decisions with the teacher, they might develop more intrinsic motivation. Since they are intrinsically motivated, learners are more likely to continue to work on their own even when the teacher is no longer in the classroom.

In addition, democratic teachers, through their sharing decisions with learners and promoting autonomy in the classrooms, generate more interactions and promote more cooperation among peers within the classroom. Several researchers (Ames, 1984; Dörnyei, 1997; Ushioda 1996) have argued that a cooperative learning structure in the classroom, in which learners share working responsibility and learn from each other, is more effective and powerful, particularly in enhancing learners' intrinsic motivation. Learners are more relaxed in a cooperative learning structure and they enjoy learning more by working with others and sharing responsibilities. In short, all the evidence demonstrates that democratic leadership might promote higher motivation, especially an intrinsic orientation, which in turn sparks a higher desire to get the work done.

Several empirical studies have also shown the advantages of democratic leadership. Foels et al. (2000) conducted a meta-analysis integration study of most leadership research studies done from 1953 until 1983 in various group contexts. In their study, they confirmed that democratic leadership results in more satisfaction

from group members than an autocratic leadership style. It seems logical to assume then, that when group members are more satisfied with their groups, they have a higher chance of being more motivated than if they are dissatisfied with their groups. Moreover, Foels et al. (2000) explain that this satisfaction is especially obvious when the group size is large: Since large group size might result in decreased cohesiveness of the group, that creates opportunities “for democratic leadership to exert its effect on member satisfaction” (p. 693). The effects may not be as obvious in small groups since in small groups, members may already have higher cohesiveness than larger groups, thus their satisfaction may already be higher so the level of their satisfaction will not have an obvious change concerning the leadership style. As a result, effective leadership -- the democratic style -- is especially important in a large group (a similar discussion can also be found in section 3.2.1).

Particularly in the context of language learning, Noels et al. (1999) examined the relationship between learners’ perceptions of teachers’ communicative style and their motivation orientation. This study finds that if learners perceive the teachers’ communicative style as informative and autonomy supportive (e.g., encouraging learners to engage in a learning task they like), it is more likely that they have intrinsic motivation; whereas if they perceive the teachers’ communicative style as controlling and less informative, they tend to have lower intrinsic motivation. Although Noels et al.’s research does not directly look at teachers’ leadership style, the communicative style they adopt reflects similar characteristics to their leadership style. Teachers who support autonomous behaviours echo those democratic teachers who allow learners to take part in their learning decisions. On the other hand, teachers who are more controlling are similar to autocratic teachers who decide everything in the classroom. Hence, to some extent this empirical study by Noels et

al. establishes the possibility that democratic teachers in the classroom are more likely to promote learners' intrinsic motivation than autocratic teachers.

Most researchers discuss the group leadership style in terms of the three styles mentioned above, democratic style, autocratic style, and laissez-faire style, but it seems that these researchers have ignored one aspect -- in reality, it is probably hard to find a group that is exposed to one leadership style *entirely*, even from the same teacher, let alone from different teachers. The leadership style of a teacher could fluctuate because of the tasks, and it could be situation-specific. For instance, a teacher, usually democratic throughout the term, in one class or two might become more autocratic in preparation for the midterm or final exam. It seems more logical to assume that teachers probably adopt different kinds of leadership style with one style being a dominant one. And in an educational context there may be more than one leader. Each learner group has several teachers teaching different subjects, hence, we are examining different leaders at the same time. With possible different leadership styles of different teachers, it is harder to judge exactly what the leadership style is for one class group. Thus, when examining leadership style in a class group context, the researchers should exercise caution and be aware of possible problems.

At this point I should offer a caveat: in this research thesis I *do not* plan to explore in depth how teachers influence learners' motivation, since there are many aspects involved in this area (teaching methodologies, personality, or authority type). Trying to encompass this whole area would shift my research away from the focus -- learner group processes in the classroom. However, the teacher is indeed part of the group experience and is someone who might pose a significant influence on individual learners' learning. As Dörnyei and Malderez (1999) explain well, the way

teachers “carry out leadership roles have a significant influence on the classroom climate and the group processes” (p.165). Hence, to solve this dilemma, the focus of my research will be limited to teachers’ (group leaders’) leadership style in the classroom. This research is going to examine how group members in an EFL classroom perceive their teachers’ leadership style (democratic, autocratic, or laissez-faire) and how the leadership style influences their motivation.

3.2.4 Group size

Large group size has both advantages and disadvantages to learner motivation, but most literature suggests the negative effects of a large group, such as: less satisfaction with group membership and less participation in group activities (Levine and Moreland, 1990); more conflicts among the group members and more difficulty reaching consensus (Moreland and Levine, 1992); and less task involvement and lower morale in the group (Baron and Kerr, 2003). It seems intuitive to assume that with so many disadvantages, members in a large group probably develop less motivation to accomplish the task. In Gooding and Wagner’s (1985) meta-analytic review, they discovered that motivation could decrease in a large group because of the complexity in achieving group goals. Since there are more people in a group, there could be a variety of differing individual goals; thus, deciding on a common group goal could be more difficult. Even when a group goal is decided upon, it then becomes harder to achieve the goal because more people might have different opinions of things, such as, how and when to achieve the goals, or what approaches to take. In other words, it is hard to coordinate cooperation between group members, and this coordination complexity could well serve as a demotivating factor. Particular to language classrooms, Holliday (1996) points out

that in a small group there is usually good rapport between the lecturer and students while in large groups the rapport between the lecturer and students may break down and thus create a more distant relationship between the lecturer and students. Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) identify the possibility that in a large group it is more likely for sub-groups and cliques to form which might eventually lead to a less supportive and less welcoming environment for learners. As a result, learners' level of motivation might diminish gradually in such an environment. Another possible problem with a large group size is that some group members who have little motivation to begin with could more easily lose what motivation they have since they can easily "hide" in a group. Without much attention from the teacher, doing the very minimum to pass the course, their motivation starts low, stays low, and might end up even lower at the end of the course.

Nevertheless, large group size still has its merits. According to Morgan and Lassiter (1992), one positive result of a large group size could be increased creativity because with more individuals contributing there is a higher chance of more creative ideas being generated. Due to more creativity, more resources group members can utilize to achieve their goal and more people they can ask for help when they encounter difficulties, the overall group effectiveness is enhanced. This increasing effectiveness as a group might motivate individual group members since learning is more resourceful, efficient and productive. Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) offer a similar opinion by pointing out that "with certain types of tasks (such as brainstorming)" (p.74) more people in the group may benefit since different members can effectively offer a wider range of experiences, knowledge, and skills.

In my research context, students take classes in two different group sizes. For most compulsory courses, students learn in a larger group. For example, everyone in

Group 3C (36 students) attends some compulsory courses together (totaling 9 hours per week) except for two compulsory courses – *Advanced Listening and Speaking* and *Academic Writing*. For these two courses, students learn in a smaller group. For example, Group 3C is split into two smaller groups (or what we call divisions here), 3C-division A and 3C-division B, each with 18 students in their *Advanced Listening and Speaking / Academic Writing* classes.

It will be beneficial to see whether the size factor plays a role in learner motivation, to explore whether learner motivation is generally better in the larger group setting since they enjoy the resourcefulness and effectiveness as a large group, or whether their motivation is inhibited due to the complexity in coordination. It makes sense that group size should influence learner motivation; however, to look at a single relationship between motivation and group size may not be practical.

Whether the group size is a positive influence or a negative one, it usually involves many other factors, such as the cohesiveness of the group, the reasons why they are in the class, the teachers' leadership style. For example, in a cohesive large class where group members care a lot about each other and have a strong identification within their group, learners might more easily see the benefits (such as resourcefulness or effectiveness) of a large group and thus become more motivated. As a result, it is vital to take other considerations into account in order to explore possible underlying influences of the group size.

To conclude, this section has looked at four processes this research adopts: group cohesiveness, norms, leadership style, and size.

3.3. Summary

This chapter has first of all defined the term ‘group’ in this research and justified the importance of motivational research on a group basis. It argued that the traditional individual perspective on motivation has its limitations. By including the wider social context, such as the learner group, in motivational research we may be able to shed some light on our understanding of learner motivation. In addition, four group processes that are included in this research – group cohesiveness, norms, leadership style, and size – were also discussed in detail in this chapter.

The next chapter, research methodology, will discuss in depth the procedures and means of this research study.

Chapter Four - Research Methodology

The aim of this research is to identify the relationship between group processes and learner motivation. Since most learning situations, especially in school or university settings, take place in groups, the interactions learners have with their teachers and particularly with their peers are bound to affect their motivation. The purpose of this research study is to examine how individual learners' motivation is affected by their learner group experiences. This chapter describes the context, research questions, research instruments, the research administration and the limitation of the study, explaining the details of how I carried out my research over the ten-month data collection period, from September 2004 to June 2005.

4.1 Context description

This research takes place at a National Technology University in Kaohsiung County Taiwan. The Taiwan National University system is a two-tier system with National Universities occupying the top tier and National Technology Universities occupying the tier just below. All National Universities are subsidized by the government, and as such have lower tuition fees, and more money to support faculty research. These factors in turn attract the best and brightest students as well as faculty from all over the country. While there are a few good private universities in Taiwan, the National Universities are the goal of every college-bound student taking the annual national entrance examinations in July. National Universities are commonly referred to as "traditional" universities because they have the typical humanities and science departments associated with prestigious universities throughout the industrialized world. Conversely, National Technology Universities,

most of which have been established over the last decade, are an effort by the government to create first-rate technological and vocational universities geared to the immediate needs of growing industries.

4.1.1 National Kaohsiung First University of Science and Technology

Specifically, this research was conducted at National Kaohsiung First University of Science and Technology (NKFUST). The founding principles of NKFUST, established in 1995, are similar to the mandate of National Technology Universities throughout Taiwan. The University aims to:

1. Advocate the practical teaching of applied knowledge and skills to maintain an open dialogue between industry and academia.
2. Promote the integration of science and technology to prepare students for the upgrading of industry.
3. Emphasize applied research and provide services for industry, fulfilling the social role of a university.

Most technology university students expect to learn skills and knowledge more directly applicable to their future careers than students attending a traditional university. As a result, NKFUST offers academic programmes closely linked to the more immediate needs of social and national development. Even an academic programme in a humanities field, such as English, would reflect this influence in the courses it would offer. In fact, the very name of the English Department at NKFUST reflects its difference from traditional university English departments – it is called the Department of “Applied” English in Mandarin, Taiwan’s official language. Borrowing a term used to differentiate Applied Linguistics from Linguistics with a theoretical focus, the English Department is referred to as an “Applied” English

Department to denote the department's focus on teaching English *language* skills as opposed to English *literature*. English departments in traditional universities offer classes concentrating on English literature such as 20th Century American Poetry, Medieval Literature, Shakespeare, with usually fewer classes offered in the acquisition of English language skills. The Department of Applied English at NKFUST offers courses like Business English, English Language Teaching, and English Interpretation to prepare students for the pragmatic needs of their future. NKFUST's Department of Applied English also requires all English majors to take core classes from other university departments, such as Introduction to Business Administration, or Computer Website Design, in order to fulfill graduation requirements. Similarly, all students at NKFUST, and at most other National Technology Universities throughout Taiwan, not majoring in English must fulfill English language requirements to graduate to ensure Taiwan's future workforce is able to compete on a global scale. This English language requirement is usually not true of the student body at traditional universities.

4.1.2 Research participants

All research participants are from the Department of Applied English at NKFUST. I intentionally have only students from the same department of the same university as my research participants to suit the nature of this research. Since my focus is the influence of a learner group on individual learners' motivation, I should do my best to minimize all other factors that could also make a difference to learner motivation. I hope to achieve this by having research participants with as similar a background as possible. Students who were admitted to NKFUST had similar entrance examination test scores, which could be one reflection of similar English levels. Moreover, they take the same amount of compulsory courses, and though

each individual's elective credits vary, their workload for compulsory courses is about the same. Finally, even though they may be taught by different teachers, all the faculty members at the Department of Applied English were screened by the same hiring standards set by the committee which apply to all the applicants. This may point to faculty having parallel career achievements amounting to similar qualifications. Thus, the expectation is that having research participants from one institution would allow me to distill more of the learner group processes during my research.

It's worth mentioning that students from the Department of Applied English at NKFUST take English compulsory courses together and in their first year of study (in both programmes as explained below) they see each other every day. Since they spend a great deal of time together, their learner group gets the chance to develop its own characteristics and becomes more meaningful to them, which is an important element for this research.

Moreover, since my research focus is the influence of the learner group on individual learners' motivation, I should have groups as the basic unit of my research participants. Within the entire Department of Applied English at NKFUST, there are six groups: one freshman (1st year) group, one sophomore (2nd year) group, two junior (3rd year) groups and two senior (4th year) groups. Among these six groups, the freshman and sophomore groups attend a four-year programme, while the junior and senior groups attend a two-year (upper-division) programme.

Students matriculating into the two different programmes of the Department of Applied English – the four-year and two-year programmes – have different educational orientations prior to attending NKFUST. Students in the four-year programme (which commenced September, 2003) come from senior high schools,

either a traditional senior high school (with an academic focus) or a vocational senior high school (with the focus a mixture of both job and academic skills). On the other hand, students who attend the two-year programme (which commenced in September, 1997) come from junior colleges where they spend five years (three years of senior high school and the first two years of university) getting their Associate of Arts degree. In this thesis research I chose to focus on two-year programme students. One reason is, again, to minimize other variables that could compromise the research findings. Since prior educational background is not the focus of this study, it seems sensible to remove this variable from this research. Another reason is reliability. During the time of data collection I was teaching one course to the freshman group, and doing research on that group might have compromised the reliability and validity of this research. Eventually I came to the decision to focus only on two-year programme students and have the two junior groups and the two senior groups of that programme as my research participants. These four groups share similar fundamental components and are ideal for the nature of my research. To put it concisely, this research thesis has four target groups:

- Senior Year Group 4C (total of 44 students)
- Senior Year Group 4D (total of 41 students)
- Junior Year Group 3C (total of 32 students)
- Junior Year Group 3D (total of 35 students)

It is also worth bearing in mind that the Department of Applied English within the College of Foreign Languages is relatively small. These 152 students represent all the students in the upper-division programme, as such they have nearly all their classes together in various combinations of classmates. And while the time

together as a single group unit is nine hours per week for juniors and three hours per week for seniors (who as juniors had spent nine hours of classes per week together as a single unit) this may not truly reflect the high contact time they spend together with different classmates (although not as a complete group unit) when taking all courses into consideration.

4.2 Research questions

In order to establish the influences a learner group has on individual learners' motivation in English classrooms, five research questions are proposed:

1. How can we define the motivational disposition of each group?
2. How can we define the characteristics of each group through its group processes (e.g. group cohesiveness)?
3. Statistically speaking, what is the relationship between group processes and learners' level of motivation?
4. From individual learners' own account, to what extent and in what ways does a learner group influence their motivation to learn English?
5. What are the benefits of a mixed methods approach for researching group processes and learner motivation?

4.3 The research design and instruments

This study adopts a mixed methods approach, which combines both quantitative data and qualitative data for analysis. According to Creswell (1994), a mixed methods approach probably first appeared in Campbell and Fisk's 1959 research using more than one method to measure a person's psychological traits. Then, in 1978, Denzin applied the term triangulation to research methodology to suggest that more than one research instrument should be employed to eliminate any

bias a single method might create. Bryman (2001) points out that since the 1980s, a mixed methods design has been gaining more and more attention and several books (Greene & Caracelli, 1997; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003) are devoted to the discussion of a mixed methods design. Although the adoption of a mixed method design has become more popular, the combination of both quantitative data and qualitative data has been called by different names, such as multimethod synthesis, integrating, quantitative and qualitative methods, mixed-model studies, multimethodological research. The multiplicity of terms has been causing some confusion in the area. Due to the effort of researchers within the last couple of years to codify this approach, the term “mixed methods” has been consistently applied to refer to the combination of both quantitative data and qualitative data in a *single* study (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

Although a mixed methods approach was originally employed to triangulate the data, some researchers have defined other purposes that a mixed methods design offers. Greene et al. (1989, p.259) explains that in addition to triangulation, or to seek convergence of the findings, a mixed methods research can also serve the purpose of “complementarity” (discovering different facets of a event), “development” (using the results of one method to help develop the other method), “initiation” (discovering any paradox or contradictions), and “expansion” (seeking to broaden the breadth and depth of the research). In my research, adopting a mixed methods approach for the data collection is vital, not only for triangulation, but also for the purpose of complementarity – to discover deeper facets of how group processes might affect learner motivation.

To achieve complementarity, a quantitative survey study and qualitative research instruments were employed in my research. A survey study yielding

quantitative data is necessary for my research since I plan to form baseline information of my target groups by setting up a profile of their group characteristics and motivational disposition. Dörnyei (2001a) defines survey studies in the following way: “survey studies aim at describing the characteristics, attitudes, or opinions of a population by examining a subset of that group” (p.216). From this it seems a survey study suits my needs to present the characteristics of each group and describe the participants’ opinion of the motivation of their group. However, solely relying on quantitative data to grasp the possible abstract relationship between group processes and learner motivation could prevent a deeper understanding of the dynamic interplay between them. The limitation of quantitative data, Muijs (2004) explains, is that “it is difficult to come to a deeper understanding of processes and contextual differences” (p.45). To complement the quantitative survey, qualitative instruments – namely classroom observations and semi-structured interviews – were employed to provide richer and more detailed research findings from different angles. Greene et al. (1989) define the purpose of complementarity as:

In a complementarity mixed-method study, qualitative and quantitative methods are used to measure overlapping but also different facets of a phenomenon, yielding an enriched, elaborated understanding of that phenomenon.
(p. 258)

According to Creswell (2003) and Creswell et al. (2003), researchers who adopt a mixed methods approach should consider the following elements: implementation (how the data is collected), priority (which set of data is the dominate one), integration (where in the research the two sets of data are combined). In this study, the two sets of data were collected following the order of qualitative (classroom observation), quantitative (questionnaires) and back to qualitative (semi-structured interviews) (see figure 4.1). Both qualitative and quantitative data have

equal weight, and even though the quantitative data and qualitative data findings are presented in three separate sections (see chapters five to seven), the final analysis and interpretation of the results integrate both sets of data (see chapters eight and nine).

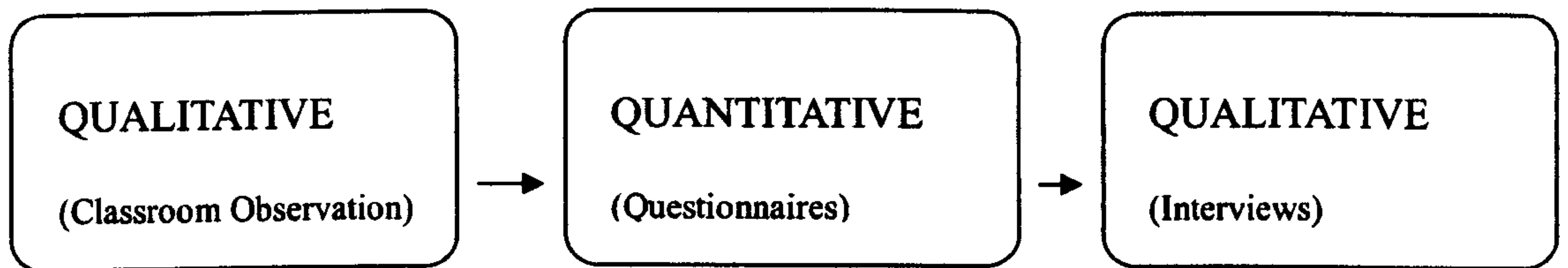


Figure 4.1 The process of data collection

Several advantages of a mixed methods design are discussed, for example, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) point out that mixed methods research can better “answer some research questions that the other methodologies cannot;” it provides better or stronger inferences; also, the researcher is able to present “a greater diversity of divergent views” (p.14-15). Morse (2003) mentions that the major strength of mixed methods designs is that it has a better chance to develop a more comprehensive finding and is less likely to be constrained by the research method itself. However, Morse also points out that the adoption of a mixed methods research approach might mean that each method is used less rigorously, hence, the data it collects might be “thin” and as a result “suspect” (p.195). A similar point is made by Creswell (1999) indicating that adopting a mixed methods design poses a greater challenge for researchers since they need to have expertise in both types of data. They also need to be prepared to devote more time and effort to collecting and interpreting two types of data. In addition, there are no clear guidelines on how to deal with the data skillfully should any discrepancies between quantitative data and qualitative data occur.

After viewing relevant literature on a mixed methods design and considering all

the pros and cons, I decided to adopt it for my research thesis for several reasons. One main reason is I believe a mixed methods design suits the type of inquiry this research seeks to undertake. This is especially true since little empirical research on this subject matter exists, which as Creswell (1999) points out, is one of the major reasons for conducting a mixed methods study. It also seems a single method is less likely to answer all my research questions appropriately. With this mixed methods design, I could obtain more comprehensive data through one set complementing the other set of the data, thus providing more comprehensive data collection. Due to all these reasons, this research project has adopted a mixed methods design.

Three research instruments are employed in this mixed methods design: classroom observation, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. The following sections will introduce these three research instruments in detail according to the sequence they were used.

4.3.1 Classroom observations

4.3.1.1 Rationale

Classroom observations in this research serve two purposes. Firstly, it gives me a general impression of the characteristics of each group from my (the researcher's) point of view. Since my research focus is about group processes, it was important for me to recognize the unique characteristics of each group through my own eyes. Secondly, what I observed in the classroom could help me revise my questionnaire. Half of my questionnaire items look at group processes, such as the cohesiveness, norms and leadership style. If I could observe certain kinds of behaviour or patterns that could be used in the questionnaire, it certainly would make the questionnaire more authentic and appropriate for my local research context. Due to these two reasons, I decided to conduct classroom observations and performed observations first in my research design. Overall then, I would agree with Wragg's

comment about the purpose of classroom observations being to “form impressions about the generalities of classroom life” (1999, p.54) and in addition I wished to generate further ideas for the questionnaire items.

4.3.1.2 Observation methods

Since my research is not about language use in classrooms, I chose not to record the sessions of my observation. I mainly used note-taking methods for my observations and hoped that these notes would help me “elicit a pattern, extract principle or select illustrative examples of what happened in the lesson” (Wragg, 1999, p.77). I always brought two things into the classroom, an observation sheet (see Appendix 1) adapted from Senior (1999) and my own notebook. During the observations, I wrote down anything that seemed relevant to my research focus, that is, anything that was related to group processes and learner motivation. For instance, I observed the general atmosphere of the group (serious? relaxing? helpful? enthusiastic?), any unique reactions in class (lots of laughter), any positive behaviours (helping teachers with the equipment), any negative behaviours (chatting privately during the teacher’s lecture), or any sign of motivation in general (paying attention, taking notes, answering teacher’s questions voluntarily, or not). After the observations were completed, I went through all the observation notes and picked out any relevant notes that could be helpful for revising my questionnaire items (see section 4.3.2.2).

4.3.2 Questionnaires

4.3.2.1 Rationale

The questionnaire is the main tool to identify the characteristics of each group and level of motivation. Weir and Roberts (1994, p.152) state some advantages in the use of questionnaires:

1. They are cheaper and more cost-efficient;

2. They allow wider sampling;
3. They ask everybody the same questions;
4. They give more time to think about answers;
5. They may prove easier to analyze.

Since my research required a wide sampling (four different target groups, over a hundred participants), required asking everyone exactly the same questions (so that the results from each group would be fair to compare) and gave subjects time to think about their own choices (in order to be able to reflect their own opinions properly), the use of questionnaires is justified for this research.

SPSS and *Microsoft Excel* were employed in this research for processing questionnaire data. Basic descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, as well as inferential statistics, such as t-tests, Pearson's correlation tests, were calculated in order to present an overall profile of each target group and also to detect any statistical differences among them. Questionnaire items are therefore mostly closed questions utilizing a Likert scale (1-4) in order to obtain numerical components for statistical analysis.

4.3.2.2 The content of the questionnaire

I followed several experts' (Bryman, 2001; Dörnyei, 2003b; Muijs, 2004; Oppenheim, 1992) advice for designing a good questionnaire, such as the need for an attractive appearance, desirable length, simple and clear language, and detailed instruction. I also avoided using ambiguous words, double negatives statements, double-barreled questions, complex or irritating questions. In addition, I included both positively and negatively worded items for the applicable sections to avoid "a response set in which the respondents mark only one side of a rating scale," (Dörnyei,

2003b, p.55) and hence further ensure the reliability of the results. For the multiple choice sections, I always included an “others” response category with a blank line for the respondents to freely write their examples if they were not provided in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire (see Appendix 2) in this research consists of two parts: part one is learners’ own assessment of their motivation. From the relevant literature review presented in chapter two we realize that motivation is a broad concept with different theories focusing on various aspects of one’s motivation. It is impossible to apply all the motivational theories discussed in chapter two in the actual research here since they are simply too broad. Thus, I only selected three theories to focus on in this study, one theory from the ‘before learning’ (learning orientations) category – self-determination theory – and two from the ‘during learning’ (cognitive processes) category – self-efficacy and autonomy. The second part of the questionnaire is learners’ own assessment of their learner group, including the cohesiveness, the teachers’ leadership style and the norms of the group. This questionnaire includes both closed questions and open-ended questions with closed Likert scale (scale 1 to scale 4) questions being the majority.

The first section of the questionnaire, section A of Part I, aims to explore learners’ learning orientations. These 15 statements plus one “others” choice are adapted from Noels et al.’s (2003) and Van Lier’s (1996) validated instruments in their studies of self-determination theory. Respondents were asked to choose the ones that correspond with their own learning orientations (they could choose more than one, but no more than five). Section B measures the respondents’ level of autonomy. The first question regards ways to learn English and explores to what extent learners believe they are responsible for their learning *and* to what extent they

carry out these actions. For each item of this question, such as 'identifying your weakness', 'deciding your learning objective', and 'choosing what activities to use in your English lesson', the respondents were asked to answer both columns: The one on the left (how responsible you think you should be for doing this) and the one on the right (to what extent you actually do it).

The second question of this section explores how often the respondents engage in out-of-class learning activities. As mentioned in chapter two, autonomy is demonstrated through out-of-class learning because learners choose to devote their own time to practising English by themselves. There are eleven out-of class learning activities such as 'do assignments that are not compulsory', 'note down new English words,' and 'read English newspapers' plus one 'others' response category for learners to choose. Furthermore, some open-ended questions regarding learners' out-of-class learning activities were devised to help further define the disposition of the target groups. Items for both question one (learner's perceived responsibility for their learning) and question two (out-of-class learning activities) are adapted from Chan's (2001), and Spratt, Humphrey, & Chan's (2002) questionnaires from their autonomy research studies in Hong Kong.

Section C consists of ten statements assessing the respondents' self-efficacy. These statements are adapted from Riggs and Knight's (1994) and Jinks and Morgan's (1999) research on self-efficacy. Out of these ten statements, four statements (Nos. 44, 47, 50 and 51) are negatively worded while the rest are positively worded. Respondents were asked to rate these statements from 1 (not true) to 4 (very true).

Part two of the questionnaire measures the group characteristics. Section D is an open ended question asking the respondents to freely comment on their learner

group.

Section E measures the learner group cohesiveness. These nine statements are adapted from Clément et al.'s research in 1994. Seven statements in this section are positively worded (such as statement No. 52: 'Compared to other groups like mine, I feel my group is better than most' and No. 57: 'I feel very comfortable working with this group.') while two statements are negatively worded (No. 55 and No. 59). Again, the respondents had to rate these statements from 1 (not at all true) to 4 (very true).

Section F and G are the last two sections of the questionnaires. Section F assesses the leadership style, whether it is a democratic, autocratic, or laissez-faire style. It was explained to the participants that this section does not look for an absolute scenario without any exceptions; instead, it is looking for a predominant leadership style among all the teachers of compulsory courses. Section G explores group norms of the respondents' learner group. Statements from both of these sections were devised by me. One source of these statements was ideas shaped from relevant literature discussed in chapter three and another source was the classroom observation notes. For instance, statement No. 65 in section F, ('Most of my teachers are willing to adapt their methods and contents according to students' needs'), statement No. 73 ('Fully participate during the class, for example, answer teacher's questions voluntarily'), and No. 76 ('Absolutely no chatting with classmates when the teacher is lecturing') are examples of questionnaire items adapted directly from my observation notes. Just like the previous Likert scale sections, the respondents were asked to rate these statements from 1 (not true or not important) to 4 (very true or extremely important).

4.3.3 Interviews

4.3.3.1 Rationale

While the questionnaire results satisfied my preliminary purpose to establish the baseline information of the motivational disposition and characteristics of each group, the relationship between the two cannot be simply determined only from the questionnaire results. Since the relationship between learner motivation and group processes could be abstract and dynamic, sole reliance upon statistical data would be insufficient to garner the information necessary to complete this study. It is necessary to employ a more qualitative approach to grasp the various compelling connections between learner motivation and group processes. As Ushioda (1994) has advised, it is vital to adopt a qualitative approach in motivation study so that the “dynamic interplay between learning experience and individual motivational thought” (p.83) can be best understood.

The type of interview chosen in this research is semi-structured interviews. In a semi-structured interview the researcher has a list of probe questions with specific topics that she wants to explore, but the interviewee has a great deal of flexibility in answering those questions. The researcher may therefore ask questions that are not on the list in response to what the interviewee has said (Bryman, 2001). Semi-structured interviews suit the needs of this research because the interviewees selected were chosen exactly because they have responded differently from each other when they answered the questionnaire. Although the semi-structured interviews were approached with a list of guiding questions, and anticipated follow-up questions common to all interviewees, it was necessary to ask further probing questions unique to the individual qualities of the interviewees. The format of semi-structured interviews allows for such latitude during the interview.

4.3.3.2 Interview guiding questions

Based on the research questions and any general trends or irregularities I detected from observation notes or the statistical results of the questionnaire, I came up with the following guiding questions for my interviews:

A. Guiding questions for teacher interviews:

1. a. Generally speaking, how would you describe the motivation of the group?
b. What makes you say so? How can you tell?
2. a. How about the cohesiveness of the group? For example, how well do the students get along?
b. What makes you say so? How can you tell?
3. Can you tell me a couple of things you like about this group of students?
4. Can you tell me a couple of things you don't like about this group of students?
5. Compare the same course (or a similar course) you taught before but to a different group of students, is this group any different than your previous one(s)?
(In what ways? Can you give me some examples?)
6. Are there any noticeable behaviors that you have observed during this semester that you could classify as "group" behaviors?
7. Is there anything about this group of students that you'd like to make a comment on that I have not mentioned?

B. Guiding questions for student interviews

1. Generally speaking, what is your learning experience here at NKFUST? (e.g. Are you satisfied with your learning environment? your classmates? your courses?)
2. What is your general impression of your current learner group?

3. a. In your opinion, how is the level of cohesiveness of your group?
b. Can you give me some specific examples?
4. Can you tell me a couple of things you like or don't like about studying in Group _____?
5. a. In your opinion, how is your classmates' level motivation?
b. Can you give me some examples?
6. a. In your opinion, how is your classmates' level of autonomy?
b. Can you give me some examples?
7. How is *your own* level of motivation?
8. How is *your own* level of autonomy?
9. In your questionnaire, you mostly rated 3-4 for the section of 'autonomous beliefs', but usually 2-3 for the actual behaviours (I showed them some examples and was more specific during the interview). Can you tell me why there is a difference?
10. Is there any change in your motivation or autonomy before you entered NKFUST and after you started your study in NKFUST? If so, what is the reason for the change?
11. a. How was your previous learner group in the junior college?
b. Did you like that previous learner group? Why or why not?
12. a. In your opinion, is the learner group important to your learning?
b. If so, in what ways? Can you give me some examples?
13. What is a "good" learner group in your mind? In other words, what are some

characteristics a “good” learner group?

14. a. Have you ever been in a “good” learner group? Describe your experiences.

b. How did being in that group influence your learning? Any examples?

15. What is a “bad” learner group in your mind? In other words, what are some characteristics a “bad” learner group?

16. a. Have you ever been in a “bad” learner group? Describe your experiences.

b. How did being in that group influence your learning? Any examples?

17. Does learning in a big group or a small group (like when you take *Advanced Listening & Speaking* class) make any difference to your learning? In what ways?

18. a. Out of all the factors that could influence your motivation, which one is the most important one to you?

b. What is the percentage of that factor in relation to your overall motivation (suppose your overall motivation is 100 percent)? How about the rest percentage? What do they refer to?

19. In your questionnaire, you wrote _____, can you explain this more?

What did you mean by that?

20. Is there anything you’d like to comment on regarding your own motivation or your learner group?

4.4 The research administration

The data collection period lasted ten months, from September 2004 to June 2005. During this time the data was collected through four main stages: classroom observation (October 2004~December 2004), piloting questionnaire (December 2004), questionnaire administration (December 2004 ~ January 2005), and

interviews (teachers in January 2005, and students from March to June, 2005). I started the data collection procedure by talking to the chairperson of the Department of Applied English at NKFUST. I explained the research purpose and procedure and gave her an outline of the data collection schedule. The chairperson was highly interested in my research proposal and gave me her consent to conduct a research study at the Department of Applied English. Then, I explained my research plan to all six teachers who were teaching the compulsory courses of my target groups. All six teachers showed their interest in participation and agreed to let me observe their classes, administer questionnaires to their students, and to be interviewed. Then, a letter with details of the research procedure along with a consent form (see Appendix 3) was sent to them. I received all six signed consent forms back by mid October 2004. Then, I started the first stage of my research, classroom observation.

4.4.1 Classroom observations (October ~ December 2004)

Classroom observation started late October 2004. The classroom observations had two rounds, the first round was from late October to mid November, 2004 and the second round in December 2004. During the first round I observed all the compulsory courses in my four target groups once (one or two hours per observation). During the time of my research, senior groups (Group 4C and Group 4D) had only one compulsory course (*Computer Assisted Language Learning*) so this was the only course I could observe. On the other hand, junior groups (Group 3C and 3D) had three compulsory courses (*Foreign Language Learner, Communication and Presentation, and Introduction to Translation*) taught by different teachers so I got a chance to observe how the groups react in different teachers' classrooms. In December I observed all my target groups' compulsory courses one more time for more validity (also one or two hours per time). To sum up, I observed both senior

groups for a total of four hours and both junior groups for a total of eight hours. Please refer to the Appendix 4 for a detailed record of my observation schedule.

During my first round of observation, I always sat at the back of the classroom (either on the right corner or left corner) to minimize the intrusion of my presence in class. However, at the end of my first round observation, one teacher suggested that maybe I could sit in the front (in the right or left corner facing students). That way, I would be able to see the students' facial expression which sometimes may help to indicate their level of motivation. I thought that was a good idea so I followed her suggestion for my second round of observations. In other teachers' classes, I also asked for permission to sit in the front and all the other teachers agreed. Hence, I was able to sit at a different place for my second round observations and looked at the same group/same course from a different angle.

4.4.2 Piloting the questionnaire (10th December, 2004)

After I finished my first round of classroom observations, I used my notes to modify my questionnaire. I added items that I observed in the classrooms (such as No. 76 'Absolutely no chatting with classmates when the teacher is lecturing' and No. 77 'Ask teacher questions whenever we have questions or problems' in section F) and modified some items to suit the local context better. Then after modifying the questionnaire, I arranged to have a trial run before the distribution stage. According to Dörnyei (2003b) and Oppenheim (1992), piloting the questionnaire is important because it can help the researcher find out how long it requires for the respondents to complete the questionnaire, whether the instructions are clear or contain any unclear or ambiguous wordings, or whether any items that are too difficult to respond to. Also, through piloting I could determine how to code my questionnaire and transfer it into the computer database. Should any problems occur, I would have the chance

to correct them before it was too late. Also, since my questionnaire has several multi-item sections, it is essential to check the internal consistency reliability (Cronbach alpha) first and eliminate any items that may cause problems.

In addition to all these advantages, one main purpose of piloting the questionnaire was to see which language I should use in my questionnaire. Mainly, I was deciding whether to use an English version, a Chinese version, or a bilingual version. The advantage of using an English version is the ease of conveying my original ideas in English without the complications caused by translation. Since my research participants were all English majors, they should have no problems understanding English. However, the disadvantage is the risk that some respondents may misunderstand items or respond inappropriately since it is not their native language. It is also likely to take them much longer to read and fill in the questionnaire. The advantage of using a Chinese version was clear – the respondents should have no problems understanding the meaning of each item. However, some ideas cannot be easily translated into Chinese and I was afraid that some original meanings would be lost through translation. The ideal choice is a bilingual version but that will add more length to the questionnaire which might intimidate the respondents. It may also possibly add more time for the respondents to respond. After a careful consideration and discussions with my supervisors, I decided to try out both a Chinese version and a bilingual version for my pilot study and see what the respondents' reactions were.

The pilot questionnaire was administered on 10th December, 2004 to the freshman group. There were fifty-five students in the freshman group. Half of the students did the Chinese version questionnaire and half of the students did the bilingual version questionnaire. From the piloting I found out that the

respondents needed about fifteen minutes to fill out the questionnaire; the ones that had the Chinese version and the ones that had the bilingual version took about the same time to finish the questionnaire (maybe the bilingual version ones took a bit longer, but not that significantly longer). In the bilingual version group, a few students admitted that they only read Chinese, but most of them said that they read both: They mainly read Chinese, but they also read English from time to time to check their understanding. It seemed to me that there was still some value in keeping English in the questionnaire, so from this pilot study I learned that the bilingual version questionnaire was the best choice. To improve the quality of the translation, I asked two translation teachers (also from the Department of Applied English at NKFUST) to help me with the translation. They checked to see if my translation of the questionnaire was proper or not, and for a few controversial wordings we checked with a native English professor (whose Chinese was very fluent) at the same department for final confirmation.

In addition, at the end of the pilot questionnaire I asked the respondents to write anything that was not clear in the questionnaire or any recommendations of the improvements of the questionnaire. From their comments I was able to give clearer instructions (such as adding the line 'more statements on the next page' at the end of each page if applicable) and to remove any ambiguous wording in the Chinese translation.

During the two weeks following the pilot I also tried to code the questionnaire, key in the raw data into *SPSS*, and run a few statistical tests. One main thing I checked using *SPSS* was the internal consistency reliability (Cronbach alpha) for all my multi-item sections. Generally there was no problem, the Cronbach alpha was around .8 ~ .85. However, the group cohesiveness section (Section E) and the

leadership style section (section F) were not as high, only around .7, and a couple of items seemed problematic according to *SPSS*. So I decided to delete those items, for example, 'The atmosphere of this class is tense and cold' in section E (group cohesiveness) and 'most of my teachers often emphasize that they are the ones in control' in section F (group leadership) were eliminated.

To sum up, from the comments of pilot participants and the *SPSS* results, I did some final amendments to my questionnaire including conceiving a less problematic translation, adding clearer instructions, eliminating ambiguous wording, and deleting some items of multi-item sections to obtain a higher Cronbach alpha. Finally, by the end of December 2004 the bilingual version questionnaire was ready for administration.

4.4.3 The questionnaire administration (December ~ January 2004)

The questionnaire was administered to all my four target groups. Both junior groups (Group 3C and 3D) did the questionnaire on 20th December, 2004. Group 4C did the questionnaire on 31st December, 2005 while Group 4D filled it out on 3rd January, 2005. For each group I followed the same procedures. First, I explained who I was, the purpose of the study and how long the questionnaire would take. Then, I explained I might need to do an in-depth interview later on so writing their names on the questionnaire would help me identify them for future interviews. I especially reassured them that although the questionnaire was not anonymous, the information they wrote was absolutely confidential and would only be used for research purposes. I also told them that if they wished not to be interviewed in the future, they could choose not to write their names in the questionnaire. Then I distributed the questionnaires to the participants and I went over each section's instructions and gave them an overall idea of each section. After all of this, they

started to fill out the questionnaires. I reminded them that if they had any questions about the questionnaire, they were welcome to ask me any time.

I remained in the classroom until everyone finished filling out the questionnaires – about fifteen minutes for each group on average. At the end, I thanked them again for their participation and collected the questionnaires. From early January to early March I worked on processing the questionnaire data. In total I received 127 valid questionnaires and each of them was coded and keyed in *SPSS* and *Microsoft Excel* for further analysis. For details of the questionnaire results please see chapter six.

4.4.4 Interviews (January ~ June 2005)

The interviews had mainly two stages: teacher interviews and student interviews (Please see Appendix 5 for the detailed interview schedule). Teacher interviews took place at the end of the first semester (mid-January) for several reasons: a.) this is the time when the teachers had the freshest memory of the group after just teaching the group for four months; b.) many of them may not be teaching the same group again the following semester, certainly not the same course. Since it was the first semester's courses that I observed, it was logical that I interviewed the teachers and got their opinions about the group at the end of the first semester.

At the beginning of the interview, I asked whether they wished to conduct the interview in English or in Chinese. Although, as English teachers, they speak English fluently, all chose to do the interview in Chinese because they would feel more comfortable expressing themselves in Chinese. Hence, all the teacher interviews were conducted in Chinese. At the beginning of the interview I always briefly went over the purpose of the interview, the expected length, and guaranteed confidentiality to whatever they said during the interview. I also got their consent for recording

before the interview started. All the interviews were recorded by an MP3 digital recorder for transcription. I made the choice to make an audio recording and not to depend on interview notes, thereby freeing me to focus on the interview process.

Each teacher interview lasted about fifteen minutes. As discussed earlier, the interviews in this study are semi-structured with a list of guiding questions (see section 4.3.3.2). They acted as prompts to elicit responses from the interviewees ‘in order to seek further elaboration, clarification, specific examples and so on’ (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p.97). I always started with guiding question No. 1 on the list (“Generally speaking, how would you describe the motivation of the group?”) and took it from there depending on their answers. By the end of the interview, all the guiding questions were discussed although perhaps not in the same order for each interview. During the interview, I constantly nodded to reflect my understanding, kept eye-contact, showed my interest in what they were saying, tried not to ask leading questions, or suggest or indicate answers; I also occasionally paraphrased or summarized what they had been saying to check my understanding (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Richards, 2003).

From March 2005 I started on the student interviews. I selected three participants from each target group for interviews; hence I had a total of twelve student interviewees. The interviewee sampling utilizes purposive strategy mentioned by Cohen and Manion (1989) where the researcher handpicks the respondents based on the needs of the research. The main criterion for the selection is their different answers from the questionnaires. Ideally, I wanted to select students who might have different opinions so I could get a richer and more complete data for my research. After going over all the questionnaires carefully in each group, I was able to divide them into three categories, a.) students who appear to be satisfied with

the learner group; b.) students who do not show either apparent satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their learner group; c.) students who seem to have frustration with their learner group. The number of participants in these three categories were not equal, namely, most of them were either in category a or b, not many of them were in category c. However, there were still enough participants in category c that aroused my attention. Hence, I decided for each group I would randomly choose one student from each category for the interview. Once I selected the interviewees, I contacted them through either phone or email to set up an interview appointment. I started off with senior students because they graduate in May, one month before the semester courses end for junior students. Since they would not be around the campus as long as junior students, it was vital to start with them first.

Each student interview took about half an hour. Just like the teacher interviews, I also had a list of guiding questions (see section 4.3.3.2) during the interviews and always started with question No. 1 (“Generally speaking, what is your learning experience here at NKFUST?”). Then based on their answers I chose the questions on the list that seemed most relevant to what they had just said. So by the end of the interview, most guiding questions were discussed although perhaps not in the same order for each interview. The interview techniques I employed for student interviews were the same as the ones in the teacher interviews mentioned on the previous page.

In between interviews I devoted most of the time to transcribing the interviews. Transferring the voice file to a computer or disc made it extremely convenient to transcribe the interviews while manipulating the digital recording on a *Media Player*. The exceptional quality of the recording had made the transcription less fatiguing than it otherwise might have been. Although the interview was

conducted in Chinese, the transcript had to be in English for research purposes. Hence, I was doing the transcribing and translating at the same time. Needless to say, the process of translation in addition to transcribing was very time consuming.

All of the spoken data in the interviews were transcribed in a simple question/answer format. When I finished one transcript, I emailed the English transcript back to the interviewees to check content validity. Once in a while when I ran across some words or concepts that I was not sure whether I had translated properly, I wrote their Chinese words after my English translation and let the interviewee decide whether the English expression was appropriate or not. If not, they would suggest another way of translating their expression which they found more appropriate.

The data collection ended at the end of June, 2005 and the analysis started.

4.4 The limitation of the study

Although every effort has been made to carefully design this study to suit the needs of the research focus, there are still some limitations of the design that need to be addressed. First of all, this study only includes some selective measurements (learning orientations, self-efficacy and learner autonomous) of learner motivation in the questionnaire. Also, group processes explored in the questionnaire are restricted to group cohesiveness, norms and leadership style. It is clear that these selective measurements do not represent all aspects of learner motivation or group processes. It is understandable that in a single research study it is necessary to narrow down the scope of the research, however, this practise might create some bias in the findings and may not be able to comprehensively reflect what is going on between group processes and learner motivation. Part of the problem is solved by having semi-structured interviews since the participants might refer to some other aspects that are

not addressed in the questionnaires. Although the interviews could compensate for the limitation of the selective items in the questionnaire, a discrepancy between questionnaire data and interview data might occur. As mentioned earlier, Creswell (1999) points out that one potential problem of a mixed methods study is that no clear guideline exists on how to deal with the data skillfully should any discrepancies between quantitative data and qualitative data occur.

Another limitation of the study is the selection of only three learners per group for interviews since it may not be enough to generate a fair representation of each learner group. Potentially, learners' views of the group could be complex and with the relationship between group processes and the learner group being elusive and abstract, interviewing more learners in a learner group might prove to be beneficial. It is unfortunate that the scale of this research thesis is limited due to its length, however, it is important to acknowledge this potential problem and hopefully in a future study there will be the opportunity to extend the scope of such research.

It is also necessary to acknowledge that this study has limitations with respect to the role of *time* as a factor in the influence upon the learner group. This study does record the influences of the learner group on the learners at a certain point in time; however, it does little to capture the influences of the learner group *over an extended period of time*. In my opinion, the best way to examine the role of time would be to follow one group over an extended period of time (e.g. one year). In this present study, even though I have both senior groups and junior groups, I think it is unfair to assume senior groups exert more influences simply because learners in the senior groups have spent one more year together than junior year students. I believe that each group is unique in its own way and whether senior groups have more influence on the learners or not really depends on many other factors, for instance, the leaders

(the teachers) of the group, the background of the learners, or the learning history they shared in their junior year. In addition, it seems logical to assume that the relationship between group processes and learners' learning could be in flux. In other words, the effects the group processes have on learners may not be consistent. The research instruments I employed, administering questionnaires or interviewing learners at one point in time, is probably unlikely to capture the overall ebb and flow of the effects of group processes.

Finally, it is important to mention that translation could be a problem with the study. The questionnaire employed in the study was a bilingual version, with both English and Mandarin Chinese (the participants' mother tongue). In the interviews, all the participants chose to express their opinions in Chinese since they felt more comfortable that way. It is logical to say that some concepts are by nature hard to translate and could cause some misunderstandings. I have tried to reduce the chance of any potential problems or misunderstandings by having professors whose area of expertise is Chinese/ English translation look at my translations. In addition, I also sent each interviewee the English transcript to check its internal validity. Despite this, I think that some problems of translation might surface during the data analysis stage and it is necessary to acknowledge this as a limitation of the study.

All in all, the limitations mentioned above should not compromise the investigation of the research questions and the analysis of the data. However, it is important to bear in mind what the research aims for, i.e. what it can do and what it cannot do. It is also important to be aware of the potential problems. In this way, I expect to be more aware of problems which arise during the data analysis stage and hopefully minimize such problems or misunderstandings should they occur.

4.5 Summary

This section has given a detailed description of the research background. It started off with the context description, including where the research was conducted and the background of the research participants. It then listed the research questions of the study, explained the research design, instruments, the research administration and finally the limitation of the research design. This chapter is the end of section A of the thesis (the background of the study). The next section, the data of the study, starts with chapter five which presents the data from the classroom observations.

Chapter Five – Classroom Observation Findings

The classroom observations were carried out from early October to December 2004. During these two months I observed the compulsory course(s) of each group twice (1-2 hours per time). At that time, senior groups (Group 4C and Group 4D) had only one compulsory course – *Computer Assisted Language Learning* – so this was the only course I observed. Each observation lasted two hours, so that with two observations I observed each senior group for a total of four hours. On the other hand, junior groups (Group 3C and 3D) had three compulsory courses – *Foreign Language Learner*, *Communication and Presentation*, and *Introduction to Translation* – taught by different teachers. I went to observe all three courses twice for each group, each time one or two hours, so I have observed each junior group for a total of 8 hours (for a detailed observation schedule please refer to Appendix 4). The consent from teachers was obtained prior to the observation (see Appendix 3). For each observation, I always took a simple observation sheet (see Appendix 1) adapted from Senior (1999) along with my notebook and during my observations I wrote down anything that seemed relevant to my research focus, such as my impression of the general feel of the group, any positive or negative group behaviours.

This chapter will first of all present a preliminary group profile based on my observation notes for all my four target groups (Group 4C, Group 4D, Group 3C, and Group 3D). Then, my own personal comments on these target groups will follow.

5.1 The observation notes of senior groups

This section presents the profile of Group 4C and Group 4D based on my observations in their *Computer Assisted Language Learning* course.

5.1.1 Group 4C

A. Background:

- Number of students: a total of 45 students in this group, about 35-40 students attended the class during my observations.
- Observation hours: a total of 4 hours, 1 course – *Computer Assisted Language Learning*.
- Observation dates: 12th November, 2004 and 10th December, 2004.

B. Observation notes:

1. Regarding general feel of the group or general group behaviors:

Generally speaking, students in this group did not seem to be interested in this course and were not very participatory. For instance, I wrote:

Ss tend to be working on their own computers a lot, e.g. surfing online, playing games, and ignoring teachers' first few questions: "Do you have your homework ready?" (Ss were silent, no one said anything) [12th November, 2004]

This situation persisted throughout the class; the teacher always had to call on a student to answer the questions, otherwise, the class remained silent. In addition, when some students were appointed to answer a question regarding the textbook content which they were supposed to read before the class, it took a long time for them to answer:

The teacher wanted group 9 to explain what a not-so-good checklist is like, group 9 laughed and remained silent for a long time before they started to answer the questions. Also, their answers were not very good/clear, clearly unprepared. [12th November, 2004]

This situation occurred a couple of times during my observations.

2. Noticeable positive behaviors:

Some students worked hard on the group project, even though not all the students were engaged in what they had to do. For instance:

Ss had about 25 minutes to work on their presentation (finding a suitable website on CALL to evaluate). Most students seem to participate fully, although a few were playing with their own computer (reading news). [12th November, 2004]

3. Noticeable negative behaviors:

Generally speaking, this group of students seems to lack discipline and interest in the course. For example, I noticed that students (as many as five or six per hour) seemed to come and go as they please, without asking the teacher's permission:

Ss came in and out of the classroom freely, especially when they were doing some group work. [10th December, 2004]

Students also seem to show little interest in their classmates' presentations, as I wrote:

When a small group was doing a presentation, other small groups didn't seem to pay attention (chatting, laughing...) [12th November, 2004]

In addition, some students did not even pay attention to the teacher's instructions:

When the teacher was showing students how to do something on the computer screen, not all the students were listening or paying attention. A lot of them were chatting, some of them were reading their own books or looking at some photos. [10th December 2004]

This was especially true for students sitting at the back of the classroom.

5.1.2 Group 4D

A. Background:

- Number of students: a total of 41 students in this group, about 35-38 students attended the class during my observations.
- Observation hours: a total of 4 hours, 1 course – *Computer Assisted Language Learning*.
- Observation dates: 15th November, 2004 and 13th December, 2004.

B. Observation notes:

1. Regarding the general feel of the group and general group behaviors:

This group of students is very similar to the ones of Group 4C. They did not seem to be interested in this particular course and were not very participatory in class, as I indicated in my notes:

The class was basically quiet when the teacher was lecturing. Most of them appear to be paying attention, but occasionally some students were chatting, getting online to browse other websites, looking at their own notebooks, or playing games.

[15th November, 2004]

Again, this is especially true with the students sitting at the back of the classroom. It seems like some students were interested in the course and wanted to learn while some others did not share the same interest and were bored in this class.

Moreover, in my notes I also indicated that some students in this group did not pay attention to their classmates' presentations:

When one small group was giving a report, quite a few students were not listening – they were looking at the itinerary for their graduation tour, or chatting.

[15th November, 2004]

This was true throughout the whole class. Generally speaking, students did not show much interest in their classmates' presentations.

2. Noticeable positive behaviors:

The second time I observed the class, students were paying more attention to the teacher. It seems the teacher was giving information related to what they had to do for their final project, probably due to this, students were more motivated and focused in class. As I describe in my notes:

Ss had more interactions with the teachers, answered the question when the teacher asked "do you have any questions". They had a "wow" sound when they saw something amazing or said "yeah" when they successfully did something. [13th December, 2004]

3. Noticeable negative behaviors:

One example of a noticeable negative behaviour was the disruption students created when they went in and out of the classrooms in the middle of the class without asking the teacher's permission:

About 2-3 Ss came in and out of the classroom in the middle of the class – during teacher's lecture. [15th November, 2004]

Other than that, when students were working on their computer project, about one third of the students were not focusing on their projects. Instead, as I wrote in my notes:

They were just doing their own thing, like writing email, playing computer games. [13th December, 2004]

Again, this shows that some students in this class were really not interested in the course.

5.1.3 General comments on senior groups

Senior groups (both Group 4C and Group 4D) did not appear to be interested in this course – *Computer Assisted Language Learning*. Group 4C and Group 4D were taught by two different teachers. Although these two teachers had very different teaching styles, for example, the teacher of Group 4C gave them a lot of pair work or group work for discussion while the teacher of Group 4D focused more on lectures, students' behaviors did not seem to differ that much. From the observations I had the impression that the students were not very motivated in this course, because they did not pay much attention to the teachers' lecture and were not very responsive in class. Students from both groups liked to do their own things on the computer during the teachers' lecture and also during the presentations of other small groups.

From my observation I also had the impression that these two groups were not very cohesive. In a cohesive group, I imagine, students should show their interest in what other students have to say in their presentation, or at least they will show the courtesy toward the other groups by paying attention. From my observation of Groups 4C and 4D, when others were doing a presentation, the rest of the students did not pay attention. They were either using the computer or chatting privately. This to me is a sign of low cohesiveness.

I am aware that it is probably unfair to reach any conclusion based on two observations. It is hard to say whether this is the way senior students behaved generally or whether they were just this way in this particular compulsory course. In addition, the fact that this course was conducted in a computer lab could be a factor. Students might have behaved differently in a computer lab than they normally would

have in a normal classroom. Since this is the only compulsory course I could observe for senior students, it does not seem reasonable to make any assumptions about these groups based only on these observation notes. Hopefully with the data from questionnaires and interviews I will be able to yield a fairer and more complete picture of these two senior groups.

5.2 The observation notes of junior groups

This section presents the profile of Group 3C and Group 3D based on my observations in their compulsory courses: *Foreign Language Learner*, *Communication and Presentation*, and *Introduction to Translation*.

5.2.1 Group 3C

A. Background:

- Number of students: A total of 32 students in this group, about 29-30 students attended the classes I observed.
- Observation hours: a total of 8 hours, 3 different courses: 3 hours *Communication and Expression*; 3 hours *Introduction to Translation*; 2 hours *Foreign Language Learner*.
- Observation date: 26th and 28th October; 2nd and 14th December, 2004.

B. Observation notes:

1. Regarding general group feel/group behaviors:

This group was very responsive to teachers and classmates. The atmosphere was often relaxing, with lots of laughter especially during their classmates' presentations. Most times students answered the teachers' questions voluntarily; the teachers did not need to call on any specific student to answer questions, and students themselves seemed supportive of their classmates' work and cared about

what their classmates went through. Hence, I had the impression that this group was cohesive. Some examples I had in my field notes are:

Group members say “加油 [good luck]” to the person who is going to do a report.

[26th October, 2004]

They responded to their classmates’ reports or presentations well, by clapping,

laughing, answering questions like “get it?” [26th October, 2004]

In addition, I also wrote:

Ss made comments on other small groups’ topics – envious sound when one

group’s topic is easier/pity sound when the other one is harder. [26th October, 2004]

This happened when one teacher assigned the presentation topic to each small group.

I think this shows that they cared about their classmates and sympathized with them

since they were not just thinking about their own topics.

Also, it seems that most students in the class took notes during the teachers’ lecture and also during their classmates’ presentations. Most times they listened attentively and interacted enthusiastically:

Most Ss were writing down the information from the blackboard. [28th October, 2004]

2. Noticeable positive behaviors:

Generally speaking, students all seem motivated in the classes I have observed and were actively engaged in those classes. As indicated in my field notes:

Ss seem to respond to the teacher’s questions and jokes well. [26th October, 2004]

Ss voluntarily offer suggestions on different ways to translate a sentence. [2nd December, 2004]

When there was a “controversial” translation students would volunteer to offer some other translations. [2nd December, 2004]

These examples show the enthusiasm these learners have towards their learning especially when they are willing to share their opinion voluntarily, which does not happen often in a Chinese learning context. In addition, students in Group 3C also seem to be very supportive of their classmates, as I wrote:

Ss always laughed pretty hard when the presentation is funny. [14th December, 2004]

So during the presentation time there was usually lots of laughter and this is a sign that students were paying attention to their classmates' presentations. Another example was in the translation class:

One student did a very good job on translation. While she was reading the translation, other students made some verbal comments like "wow." [2nd December, 2004]

This is a good example of how these learners were supportive of each other and especially appreciated other members' good work.

Finally, students of this group voluntarily helped set up the teaching equipment, like VCR, projector. Students also seem to help out when the equipment was not working well.

3. Noticeable negative behaviors:

Students of Group 3C seem to have limited amount of attention span. When the bell rang or during the break time, the attention level of the students clearly lowered.

For instance:

When the bell rang and the class time was over, Ss started to close the book/put the books in the bag even though the teacher was still talking. [26th October, 2004]

The teacher didn't take a break until 11:05 instead of 11:00. Students were chatting during these five minutes and they started to get antsy. [2nd December, 2004]

These two examples show that while this group of students was focused during the class time, their focus was easily lost during break time or when the class went overtime.

Also, when one teacher was lecturing or going over some information in the textbook, noticeably some students looked bored. Occasionally, as I wrote in my field notes:

A couple of Ss sitting at the back were chatting once in a while during the teacher's lecture. [2nd December, 2004]

This did not happen often, but I noticed that two or three students sitting at the back of the classroom did this.

5.2.2. Group 3D

A. Background:

- Number of students: a total of 35 students, about 30-34 students attended the classes I observed.
- Observation hours: a total of 8 hours, 3 different courses: 3 hours *Foreign Language Learner*; 3 hours *Introduction to Translation*; and 2 hours *Communication and Presentation*.
- Observation dates: 11th, 16th and 29th November; 9th, 14th and 20th December, 2004.

B. Observation notes:

1. Regarding general group feel/group behaviors:

This group is very similar to Group 3C. Generally speaking, students all seem to be motivated in class, very responsive to teachers and had lots of interaction in the classrooms. Students also paid attention to the teachers' lectures and were fully

focused in class. Following are some examples I wrote:

When the teacher was lecturing or explaining a concept, most of the Ss looked at the teacher and tried to understand (nodding, smiling). [11th November, 2004]

Also, some examples in the translation class show that they were interested in the class and paid full attention to the teacher,

When the teacher checked the answers with them or offered a good translation, they noted them down (write it down) on their paper. [14th December, 2004]

When Ss spotted some mistakes on the handout, they would point it out and asked the teacher about it. [14th December, 2004]

In addition, most times they answered the teachers' questions voluntarily as a group. The teacher did not have to call on a specific student to answer:

One time, the teacher asked "What's CPH?" Ss answered well and voluntarily. [11th November, 2004]

2. Noticeable positive behaviors:

Students seem to be interested in what their classmates had to say and responded enthusiastically. For example, they took notes when their classmates were doing presentations or laughed at their classmates' humorous examples or funny translations. In addition, students were able to focus for a long period of time and seem to be interested in the course content. For instance, when the teacher did not take a break in between a two-hour class, students did not complain at all. They were still very attentive during the break time. A similar situation happened again in another observation, as I wrote in my notes:

The teacher went overtime (about 10 minutes late). As before, Ss were still paying attention even though the bell already rang. [2nd December, 2004]

In both situations, students remained focused until the teacher dismissed the class.

Also, students were very participatory in group discussion.

When Ss do group discussion, everyone seems to be actively involved / participating in the discussion. [11th November, 2004]

Although they participated fully in pair work or group discussions, during the discussion there was obviously less laughter compared to Group 3C. Most pairs/groups discussed quietly among themselves, but everyone in the same group participated enthusiastically. Furthermore, students in this group listened attentively when other students shared their homework answers or translation ideas. For example,

They said "that's nice" if they liked the ideas. They laughed when their classmates offered a funny example. [20th December, 2004]

Finally, just like the students of Group 3C, students in this group also helped teachers with the equipment, such as setting up the VCR, or setting up the projector.

3. Noticeable negative behaviors:

Sometimes students did not volunteer to ask questions (either to the teacher or to their classmates) even when they were confused about something. The teacher needed to check with them and then found out they did not understand the first time. In addition, sometimes students may not always pay attention to other classmates' opinion:

Occasionally, when some groups were sharing their ideas, other groups were a bit noisy discussing their ideas. The teacher had to ask them to be quiet. [11th November, 2004]

However, this happened only once during my observations.

5.2.3 General comments on junior groups

On the whole, junior groups appear to be very different from senior groups. Both Group 3C and 3D seem to be very focused and interested in their learning. In the classes I have observed, they always listened attentively and took notes. They also seem to care about their classmates too. Whenever someone was sharing answers or doing a presentation, most others paid attention and responded positively and enthusiastically. From the classes I observed I got the impression both Group 3C and Group 3D were motivated and cohesive groups.

However, despite their apparent similarities, I did notice one difference between the two groups. Group 3C appeared to be more “outgoing” and “fun” as a group, for example, they usually did something humorous (a very funny role-play) whenever there was a group presentation. Whenever there was a group discussion, there was usually lots of laughter during the discussion. However, when the teacher was lecturing or going over the information in the textbook, some students (though not all, but noticeably some) looked bored or distracted. Also, it was observable that if the class went overtime, students of Group 3C got anxious easily. On the other hand, Group 3D appeared to be a bit quieter as a group. Though everyone still participated fully in the discussion, discussions were usually quieter and had less laughter compared to Group 3C. When the teacher was lecturing or going over the information in the textbook, the majority of them were paying careful attention and taking notes. Also, if the teacher went overtime or did not take a break in the middle of the class, Group 3D was still able to concentrate and pay attention to the teacher. All these behaviours are different from those of Group 3C.

In short, based on my observations from three different courses, both junior

groups seem cohesive and motivated, but their motivation may be exhibited in different ways. What caught the attention of Group 3C and what caught the attention of Group 3D seemed different. A fairer, more complete picture will emerge from questionnaire and interview data.

5.3 Summary

This chapter has presented the observation notes of all four target groups: Group 4C, 4D, 3C and 3D. The preliminary examination of these observation notes has shown that senior groups appeared less cohesive and motivated than junior groups. Although both junior groups appeared motivated, their motivation was displayed differently. However, it is important to remember that it would be unfair to reach any definite conclusions based on the sketch provided by observation notes alone. Observation findings need to be integrated with questionnaire data (the next chapter) and interview data (chapter seven) for a more complete profile of each target group.

Chapter Six: Questionnaire Findings

The questionnaire (see Appendix 2) was administered to all four target groups at the Department of Applied English at National Kaohsiung First University of Science and Technology (NKFUST) from 20th December, 2004 to 31st December, 2004. The four target groups totaled 152 participants, of which 127 participants filled out questionnaires – 67 seniors and 60 juniors. Exact numbers follow:

- **Senior year Group 4C** (36 participants)
- **Senior year Group 4D** (31 participants)
- **Junior year Group 3C** (29 participants)
- **Junior year Group 3D** (31 participants)

The Likert scale sections of the questionnaire were then processed in *SPSS*. The respondents' answers from the Likert scale sections were all coded (with negatively-worded items reversely coded) in the computer database for statistical analysis. However, the two non-Likert sections-- section A, learning orientations and section B (II), out-of-class learning -- were processed separately in *Microsoft Excel*. This chapter is going to present the questionnaire results in three sections: the results of the senior year participants, then the results of the junior year participants, and finally the overall findings and discussions.

6.1 Questionnaire results of senior year participants

This section presents the questionnaire results of two senior groups (Group 4C and 4D). Then, it draws a comparison between these two groups for any similarities and differences.

6.1.1 Group 4C

- **Background**

I received 36 valid questionnaires from this group. Out of these 36 questionnaires, 7 participants did not indicate their gender. Among the remaining 29 participants, 24 (82.8%) of them were female participants while 5 (17.2%) were male (see figure 6.1). On average they have learned English for 9.6 years (Minimum 6 years; maximum 13 years; Std. Deviation 1.7).

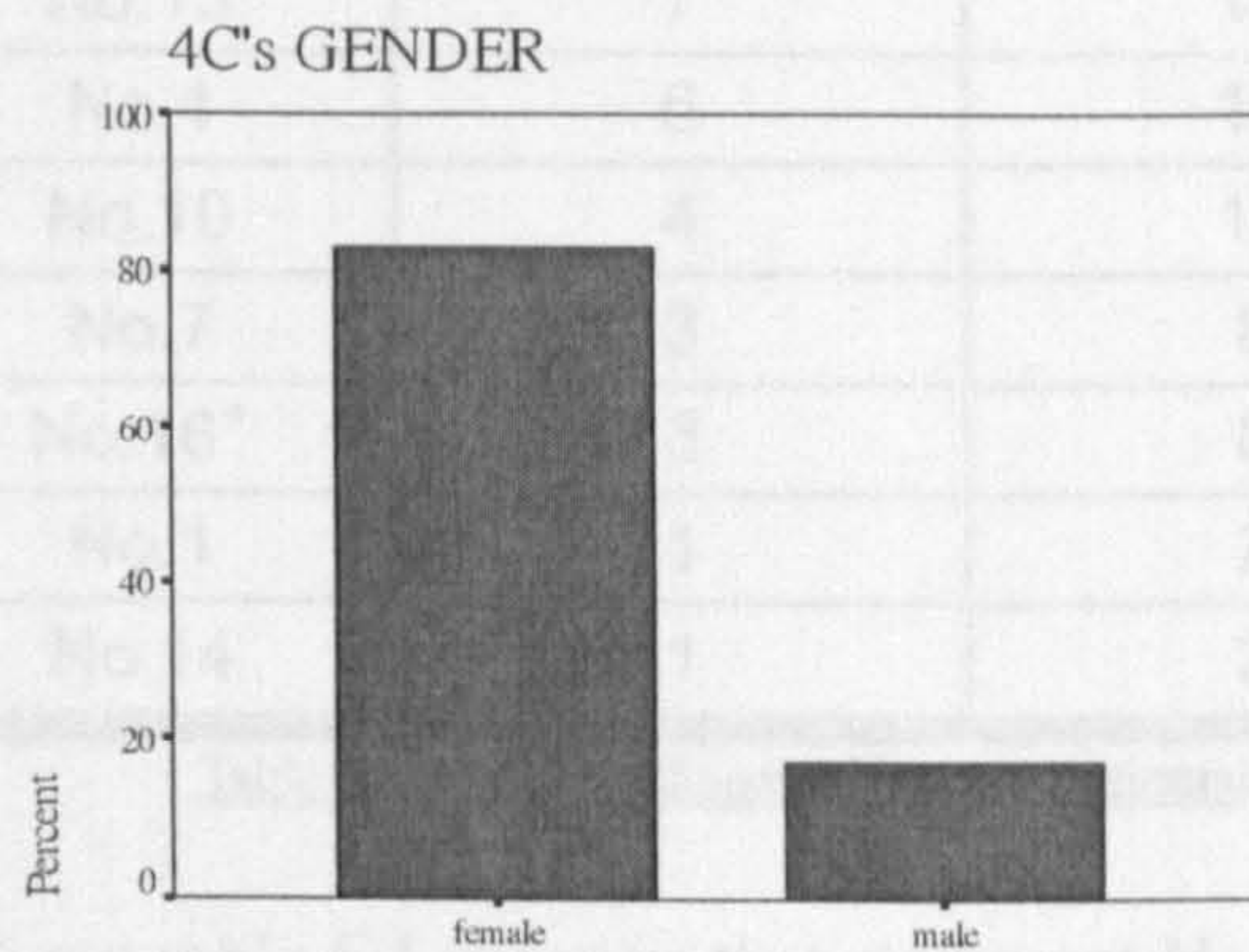


Figure 6.1 -- 4C participants' gender distribution

- **Questionnaire section A (p. 1-3): learning orientations**

This section of the questionnaire provided 15 common learning motives plus one 'others' choice. The participants were asked to choose the ones that most corresponded to their own motive (They could choose more than one motive, but no more than five.) The result of Group 4C is as follows:

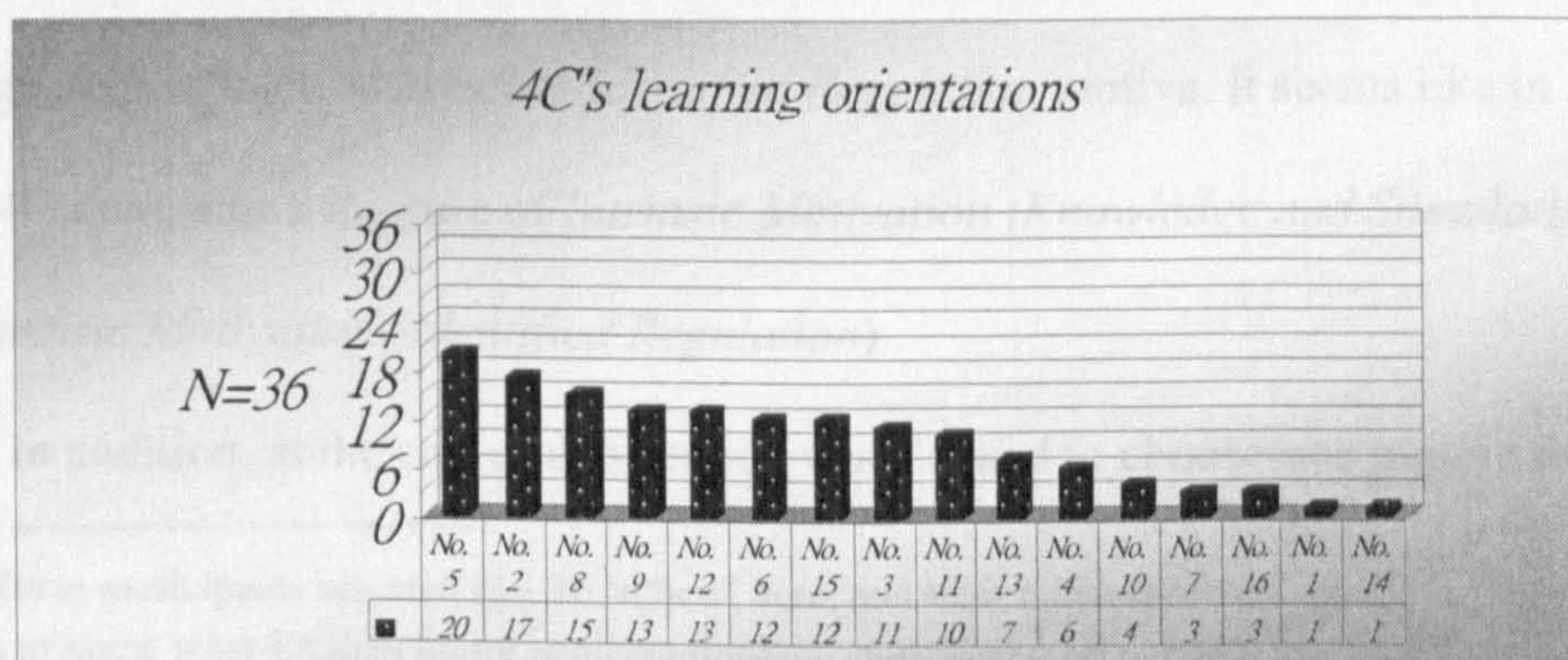


Figure 6.2 -- 4C participants' learning orientations bar graph

Statements	Frequency(N=36)	Percent
No.5	20	55.6%
No.2	17	47.2%
No.8	15	41.7%
No.9	13	36.1%
No.12	13	36.1%
No.6	12	33.3%
No.15	12	33.3%
No.3	11	30.6%
No.11	10	27.8%
No.13	7	19.4%
No.4	6	16.7%
No.10	4	11.1%
No.7	3	8.3%
No.16*	3	8.3%
No.1	1	2.8%
No.14	1	2.8%

Table 6.1 -- 4C participants' learning orientations

Figure 6.2 and table 6.1 show us that statement No. 5: I have always been interested in English and I would like to learn more about it, was the most popular motive in Group 4C with 20 participants (55.6%) selecting it. This is an IM (Intrinsic Motivation) classified under the category of *Intrinsic Motivation-Knowledge*. The next popular statements were No.2: I really enjoy learning English and I think it is a lot of fun for me, an *Intrinsic Motivation-Stimulation* motive, and No. 8: I learn English because I want to be the kind of person who can speak more than one language, an *Extrinsic Motivation-Identified Regulation* motive. It seems like in Group 4C there was a mixture of *Intrinsic Motivation (Knowledge and Stimulation)* and *Extrinsic Motivation (Identified Regulation)*.

In addition, at the end of this section when asked to choose one motive that

* Note: Three participants selected No. 16 'others' here, and their motives were:

1. I want to know what English major students think.
2. I like Chinese and I like English too. I want to compare their differences.
3. English is a useful tool. I can learn something directly without waiting for the translation.

best described their motive to learn English (see figure 6.3 and table 6.2 below), most (21.9%) participants chose an *Intrinsic Motivation-Stimulation* motive, statement No. 9: I simply like English. The next two most popular statements were No. 12: I learn English because I enjoy the feeling when I speak fluent English, an *Intrinsic Motivation- Stimulation* motive and No. 5: I have always been interested in English and I would like to learn more about it, an *Intrinsic Motivation- Knowledge* motive. Interestingly here, the top three popular choices are all *Intrinsic Motivation* motives instead of a mixture of *Extrinsic Motivation* and *Intrinsic Motivation*.

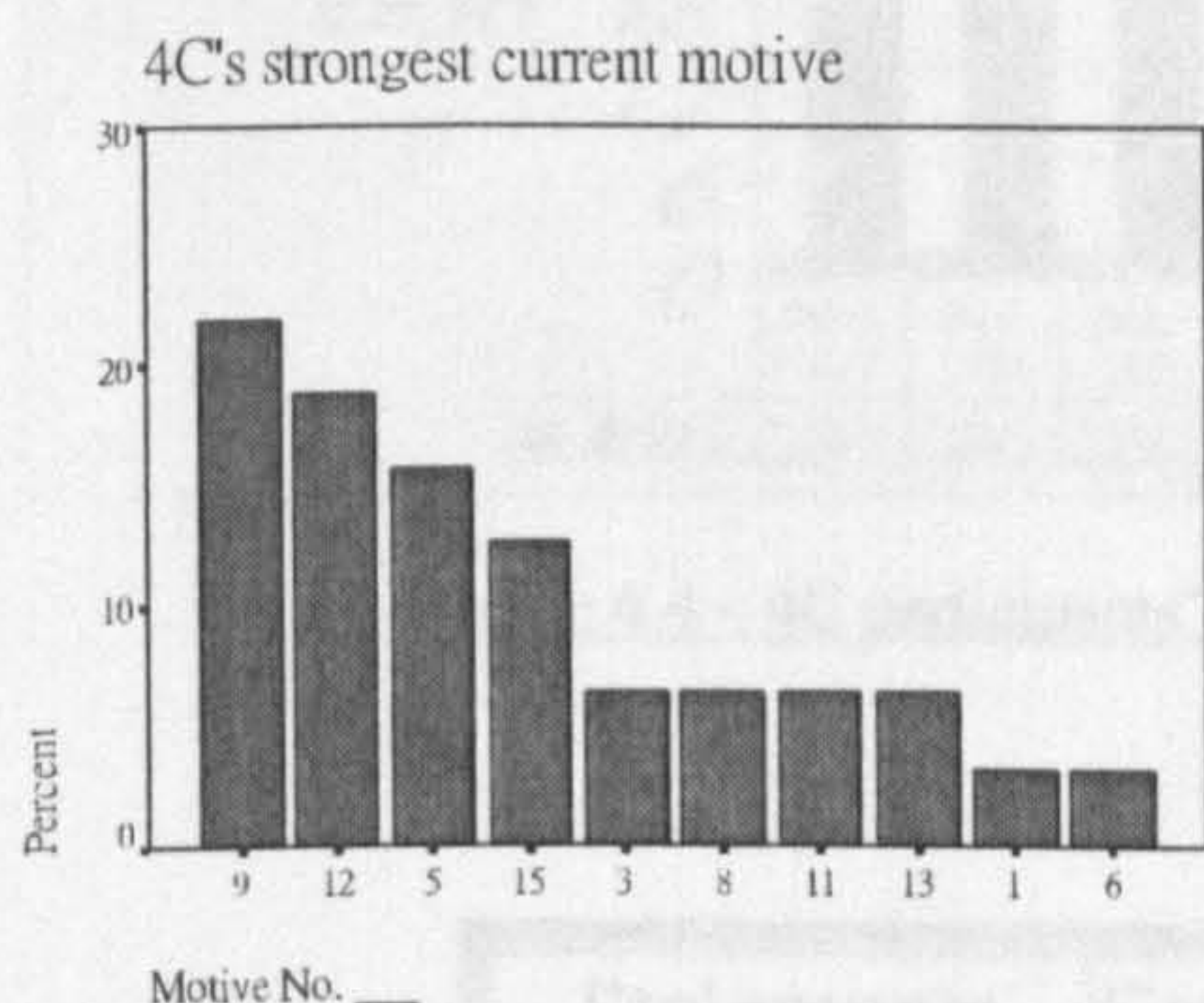


Figure 6.3 – 4C participants' strongest motives bar graph

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	9	7	19.4	21.9	21.9
	12	6	16.7	18.8	40.6
	5	5	13.9	15.6	56.3
	15	4	11.1	12.5	68.8
	3	2	5.6	6.3	75.0
	8	2	5.6	6.3	81.3
	11	2	5.6	6.3	87.5
	13	2	5.6	6.3	93.8
	1	1	2.8	3.1	96.9
	6	1	2.8	3.1	100.0
	Total	32	88.9	100.0	
Missing	99	4	11.1		
Total		36	100.0		

Table 6.2 – 4C participants' strongest motives

● **Questionnaire section B (II) (p.4): out-of-class learning**

In this section, participants selected the activities they had done during the past month with the intention of improving their English ability. As the following figure 6.4 and table 6.3 show, the students of this group were very active and

enthusiastic in engaging in all different kinds of out-of-class learning activities. Over 80% of the participants had visited websites in English (No. 31) and read newspapers, books, or magazines in English (No. 32). Over 60% of the participants had practised using English with friends/classmates (No. 38), noted down new words and their meanings (No. 29) and listened to English radio shows (No. 33).

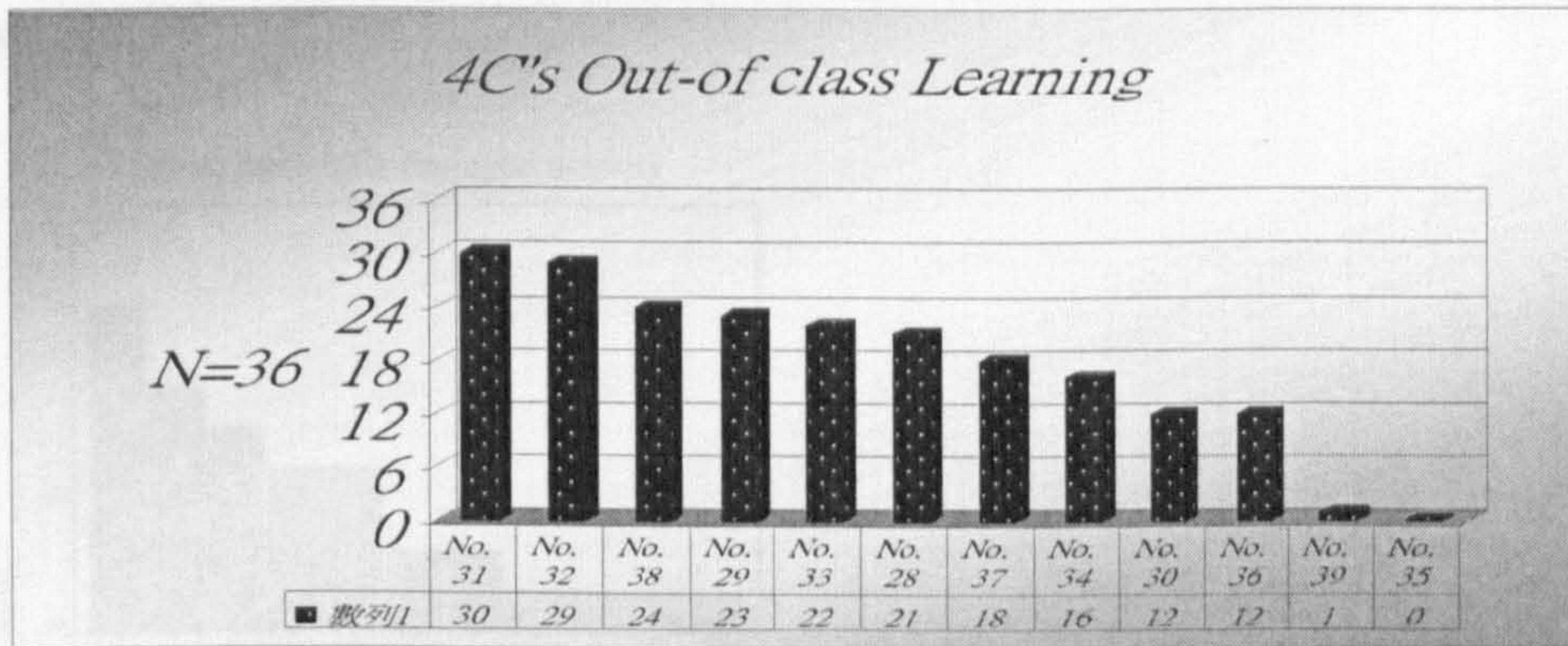


Figure 6.4 – 4C participants’ out-of-class learning activities bar graph

Statements	Frequency(N=36)	Percent
No. 31	30	83.3%
No. 32	29	80.6%
No. 38	24	66.7%
No. 29	23	63.9%
No. 33	22	61.1%
No. 28	21	58.3%
No. 37	18	50.0%
No. 34	16	44.4%
No. 30	12	33.3%
No. 36	12	33.3%
No. 39*	1	2.8%
No. 35	0	0%

Table 6.3 – 4C participants’ out-of-class learning activities

When asked to choose one activity they engaged in most frequently, 22.9% of

* Note: One participant selected No. 39 ‘others’, and his/her example was: memorizing news articles

participants chose No. 32: read newspapers, books, or magazines, and 17.1% of participants chose No. 31: visited websites in English. Some other popular choices were No. 38: practised using English with friends/classmates, No. 33: listened to English radio shows and No. 37: watched English movies or English TV programmes without Chinese subtitles. For details please see figure 6.5 and table 6.4

below.

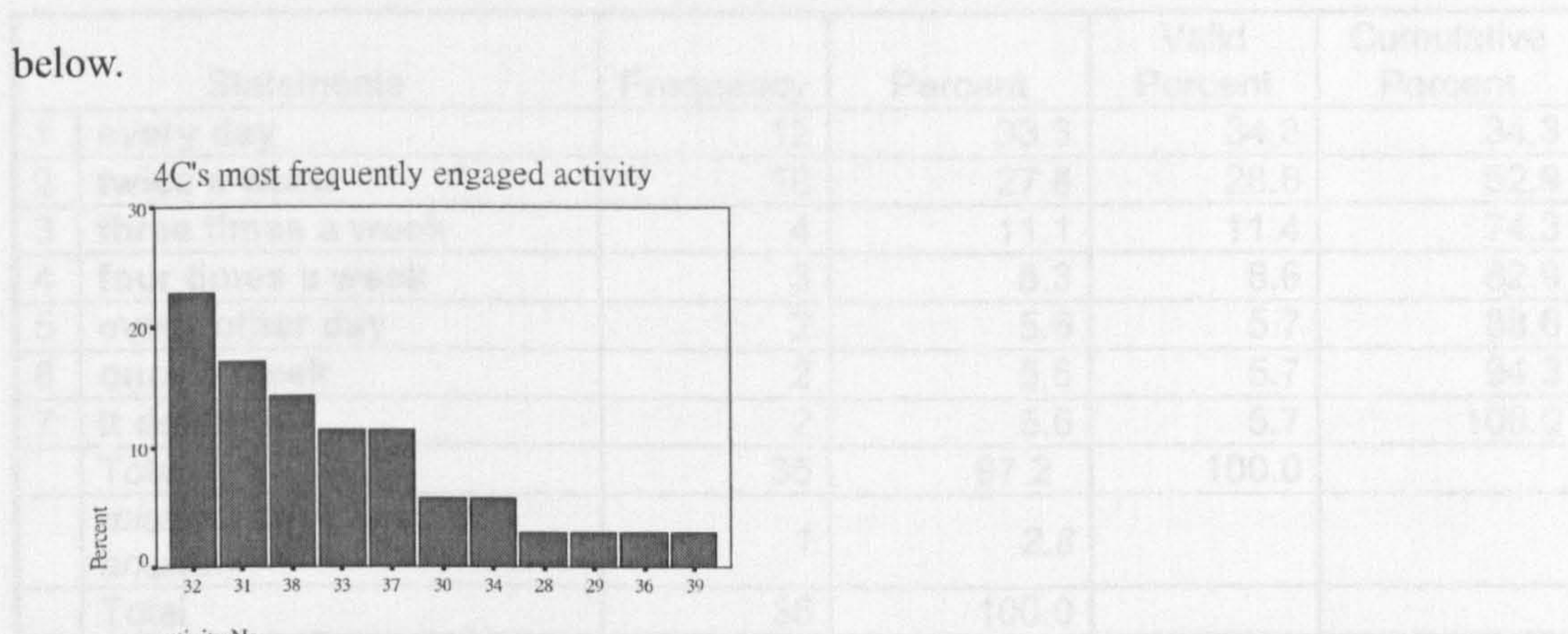


Figure 6.5 – 4C participants' most frequently engaged activity bar graph

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	32	8	22.2	22.9	22.9
	31	6	16.7	17.1	40.0
	38	5	13.9	14.3	54.3
	33	4	11.1	11.4	65.7
	37	4	11.1	11.4	77.1
	30	2	5.6	5.7	82.9
	34	2	5.6	5.7	88.6
	28	1	2.8	2.9	91.4
	29	1	2.8	2.9	94.3
	36	1	2.8	2.9	97.1
	39	1	2.8	2.9	100.0
	Total	35	97.2	100.0	
Missing	99	1	2.8		
Total		36	100.0		

Table 6.4 – 4C participants' most frequently engaged activity

In addition, the participants were also asked to give more comments on the out-of-class learning activity they engaged in most frequently. They were asked to answer how often they did this activity, why they chose this activity at first and why

they continued to do this activity. Their answers are summarized in the tables 6.5, 6.6, and 6.7 below:

- *Questionnaire Question: "How often do you do this activity?"*

	Statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	every day	12	33.3	34.3	34.3
2	twice a week	10	27.8	28.6	62.9
3	three times a week	4	11.1	11.4	74.3
4	four times a week	3	8.3	8.6	82.9
5	every other day	2	5.6	5.7	88.6
6	once a week	2	5.6	5.7	94.3
7	It depends	2	5.6	5.7	100.0
	Total	35	97.2	100.0	
	<i>missing(didn't give an answer)</i>	1	2.8		
	Total	36	100.0		

Table 6.5 -- How often 4C participants did the activity

- *Questionnaire Question: "Why did you do this activity at first?"*

	Statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	improve my English ability	9	25.0	26.5	26.5
2	my interest	8	22.2	23.5	50.0
3	easy access, convenience	6	16.7	17.6	67.6
4	want to have the chance to practice oral ability more	4	11.1	11.8	79.4
5	just for fun	2	5.6	5.9	85.3
6	necessary for my part-time job	2	5.6	5.9	91.2
7	don't know why	2	5.6	5.9	97.1
8	for the translation	1	2.8	2.9	100.0
	Total	34	94.4	100.0	
	<i>missing (didn't give an answer)</i>	2	5.6		
	Total	36	100.0		

Table 6.6 -- Why 4C participants chose the activity

- **Questionnaire Question: “Why do you continue on this activity?”**

	Statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	helps to improve my English	12	33.3	33.3	33.3
2	I enjoy doing this activity	7	19.4	19.4	52.7
3	already a habit	6	16.7	16.7	69.4
4	it's convenient to do	4	11.1	11.1	80.5
5	keep in touch with my friends	3	8.3	8.3	88.8
6	necessary for my part-time job	2	5.6	5.6	94.4
7	it's efficient	2	5.6	5.6	100.0
	<i>missing (didn't give an answer)</i>	0	0.0	0.0	
	Total	36	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.7 -- Why 4C participants continued on this activity

Many participants in this group were doing out-of-class learning activities either every day (34.3%) or twice a week (28.6%) and over 90% of participants were doing it at least once a week. They seem to engage in out-of-class learning activities regularly at a satisfactory level. The top three reasons that they chose to do the out-of-class learning activity they engaged in most frequently were 1.) They wanted to improve their English skill (26.5%), 2.) The activity was their interest (23.5%), and 3.) It was easy to get access and it was convenient to do the activity (17.6%). As for why they continued to do the activity, 33.3% participants said that the activity had helped them improve English, and 19.4% participants continued to do it because it was fun to do it and they enjoyed doing the activity. 16.7% participants explained that it had already become a habit of theirs.

- **Questionnaire section D (p.6): open- ended question**

In this open-ended question section, the participants wrote down their feelings regarding their learner group. The key words from their answers were identified, coded, categorized, and summarized by the researcher in this table 6.8 below:

Statements	Frequency (N=36)
General comments	
● *We don't quite know each other well.	4
● *It's OK, but a few classmates don't get along.	2
● *Generally it's OK, but there are some cliques.	2
● *I feel stressful in this group.	2
● It's very nice, and we all get along well.	2
● Everything is fine.	1
● *The motivation in this class is low.	1
Regarding their classmates	
● have very good English ability	11
● friendly and easy to get along	4
● smart	3
● hard-working	2
● helpful (help each other out)	2
● creative	1

Table 6.8 – 4C participants' views of their learner group

As table 6.8 shows, some participants of Group 4C gave some negative comments like “we don't quite know each other well”, “a few classmates don't get along” and “there are some cliques”. Although the specific comments on their own classmates were all positive (for example, classmates “have very good English ability” and are “friendly” and “smart”), the fact that the general comments had mixed voices shows that this group is probably not very cohesive and there is something worth exploring here.

- **Questionnaire section B (I), section C, section E, section F, and section G (p. 3, p.5-8): Likert scale sections**

The rest of the questionnaire, measuring students' autonomous beliefs and actual behaviours (questionnaire p.3), self-efficacy (p.5), their group's cohesiveness

* Note: These are negative comments.

(p.6), leadership (p.7), and norms (p.8), all had Likert scale items with the ratings from 1 (the lower end) to 4 (the higher end).

The Cronbach alpha internal consistency of these multi-item sections was checked and all the sections reached the satisfactory level. (alpha = .70)

P.3: Autonomous beliefs (alpha = .79) and actual behaviours (alpha = .85)

P.5: Self-efficacy (alpha = .70)

P.6: Group cohesiveness (alpha = .73)

P. 7: Group leadership (alpha = .75)

P. 8: Group norms (alpha= .81)

The overall statistics for these Likert scale sections are shown below (table 6.9):

Sections	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
<i>Autonomous beliefs</i>	36	1.40	2.60	4.00	3.51	.37	.14
<i>Autonomous behaviors</i>	36	2.10	1.50	3.60	2.67	.51	.26
<i>Self-efficacy</i>	35	1.70	1.90	3.60	2.65	.41	.16
<i>Group cohesiveness</i>	35	2.11	1.78	3.89	2.67	.41	.17
<i>Group leadership</i>	35	2.00	1.88	3.88	3.02	.41	.17
<i>Group norms</i>	35	2.40	1.50	3.90	2.72	.50	.25

Table 6.9 – Group 4C: results of Likert scale sections

For detailed descriptive statistics of individual participants of Group 4C please see Appendix 6.

6.1.2 Group 4D

● Background

Out of 31 participants who filled out the questionnaires in this group, 4 participants did not indicate their gender. Among the remaining 27 participants, 21 (77.8%) of them were female while 6 (22.2%) were male. On average they have learned English for 9.7 years (Minimum 5 years; maximum 20 years; Std. Deviation 2.4).

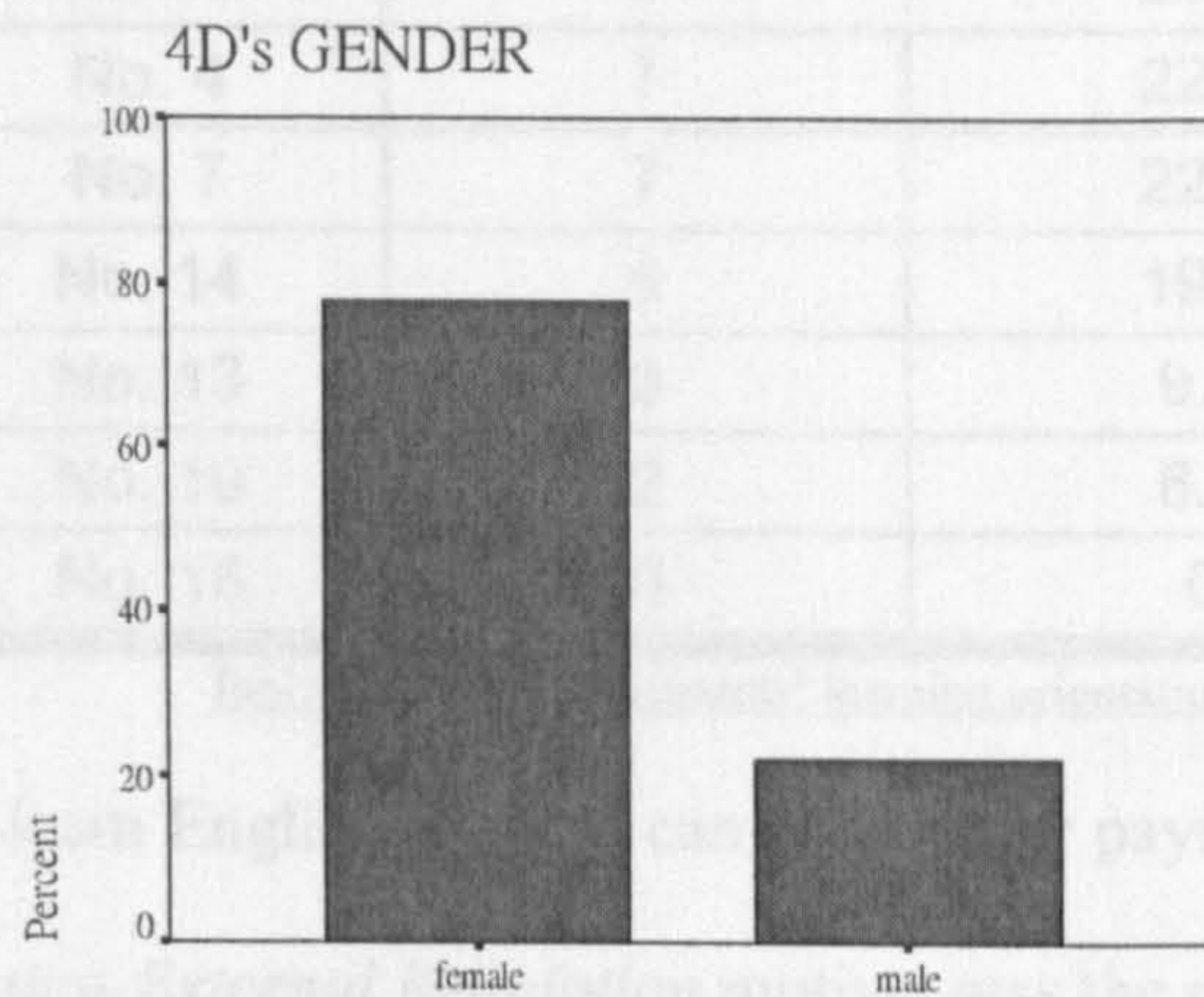


Figure 6.6—4D participants' gender distribution

● Questionnaire section A (p. 1~3): learning orientations

From the 15 common learning motives plus one 'others' choice provided in this section, the respondents chose the motives that most corresponded to their own motives of learning English. The results of this group are as follows in figure 6.7 and table 6.10:

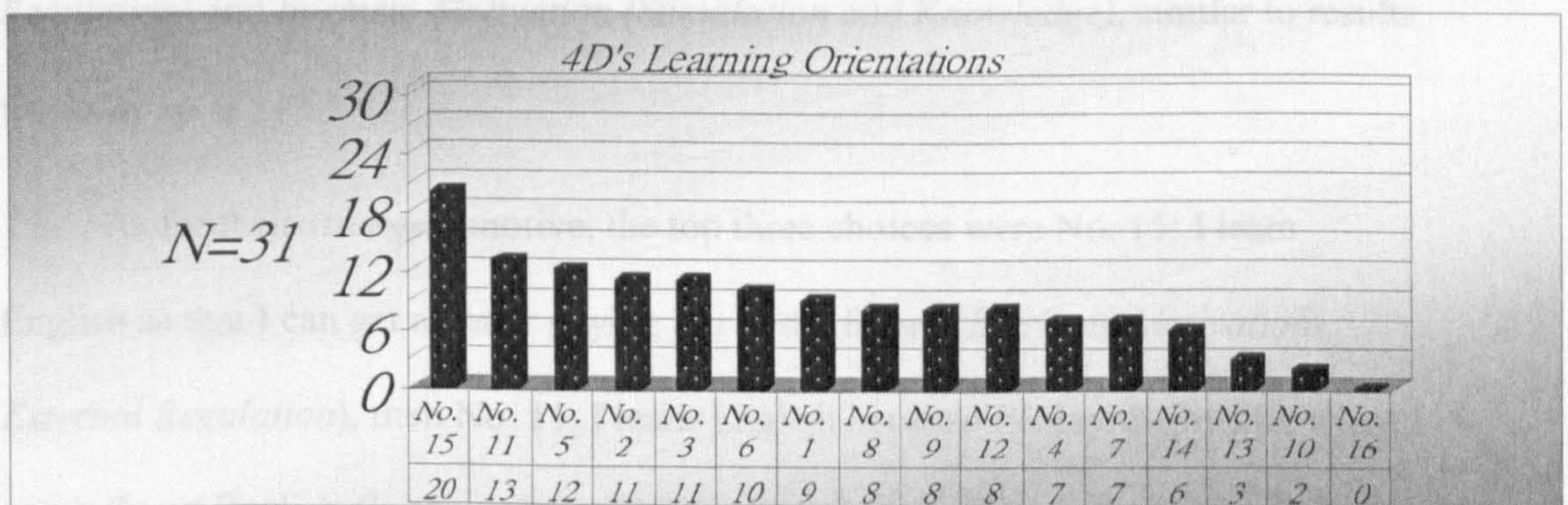


Figure 6.7 – 4D participants' learning orientations bar graph

Statements	Frequency(N=31)	Percent
No. 15	20	64.5%
No. 11	13	41.9%
No. 5	12	38.7%
No. 2	11	35.5%
No. 3	11	35.5%
No. 6	10	32.2%
No. 1	9	29.0%
No. 8	8	25.8%
No. 9	8	25.8%
No. 12	8	25.8%
No. 4	7	22.6%
No. 7	7	22.6%
No. 14	6	19.4%
No. 13	3	9.7%
No. 10	2	6.5%
No. 16	0	0%

Table 6.10– 4D participants' learning orientations

No. 15: I learn English so that I can get a better paying job in the future, an *Extrinsic Motivation-External Regulation* motive, was the most popular statement with 20 participants (64.5%) selecting it. The next popular statements were No.11: I learn English because I enjoy the feeling when I speak fluent English, an *Intrinsic Motivation-Stimulation* motive, and No. 5: I have always been interested in English and I would like to learn more about it, an *Intrinsic Motivation-Knowledge* motive. It seems like in Group 4D, there was also a mixture of *Extrinsic Motivation (External Regulation)* and *Intrinsic Motivation (Stimulation and Knowledge)*, similar to results from Group 4C.

As for their *strongest* motive, the top three choices were No. 15: I learn English so that I can get a better paying job in the future (*Extrinsic Motivation-External Regulation*), then No. 11: I learn English because I enjoy the feeling when I speak fluent English (*Intrinsic Motivation – Stimulation*) Two statements tied for the

third choice – No. 2: I really enjoy learning English and I think it’s a lot of fun for me (*Intrinsic Motivation—Stimulation*), and No. 9: I simply like English (*Intrinsic Motivation—Stimulation*). For details please refer to figure 6.8 and table 6.11.

Interestingly, the top two strongest motives are consistent with the top two popular learning orientations from the above section.

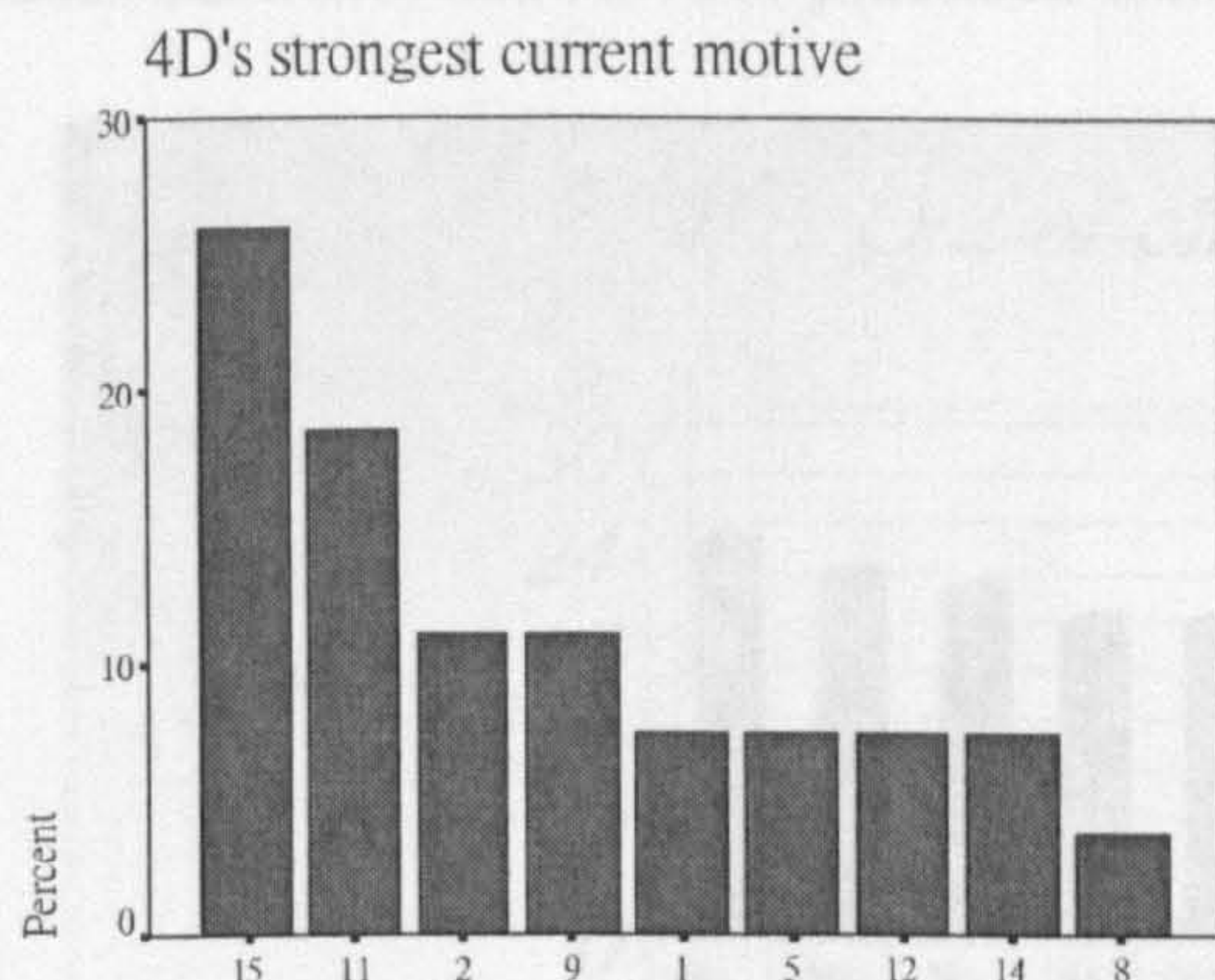


Figure 6.8 – 4D participants’ strongest motives bar graph

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	15	7	22.6	25.9	25.9
	11	5	16.1	18.5	44.4
	2	3	9.7	11.1	55.6
	9	3	9.7	11.1	66.7
	1	2	6.5	7.4	74.1
	5	2	6.5	7.4	81.5
	12	2	6.5	7.4	88.9
	14	2	6.5	7.4	96.3
	8	1	3.2	3.7	100.0
	Total	27	87.1	100.0	
Missin g	99	4	12.9		
Total		31	100.0		

Table 6.11 – 4D participants’ strongest motives

● **Questionnaire section B (II) (p.4): out-of-class learning**

From 11 out-of-class learning activities plus one “others” choice, the respondents chose the activities that they had done during the past month with the intention of improving their English. Figure 6.9 and table 6.12 show the participants

in Group 4D were also very keen on engaging in all different kinds of out-of-class learning activities: Almost 80% of the participants visited websites in English (No. 31); about 70% participants read newspapers, books, or magazines in English (No. 32). Some other popular choices were No. 29: noted down new words and their meanings, No. 37: watched English movies or English TV programmes without Chinese subtitles, and No. 38: practised using English with friends/classmates.

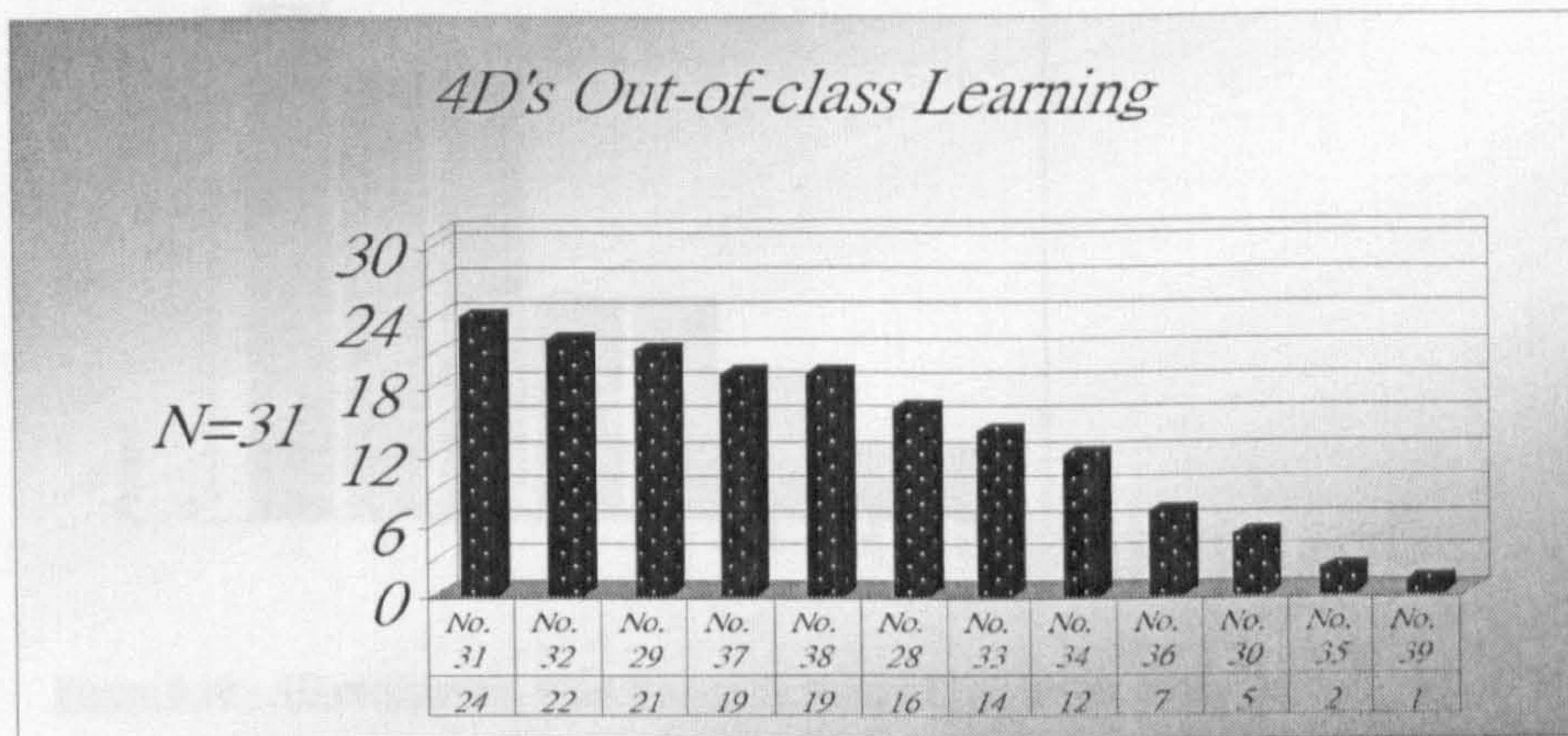


Figure 6.9 – 4D participants’ out-of-class learning activities bar graph

Statements	Frequency(N=31)	Percent
No. 31	24	77.4%
No. 32	22	71.0%
No. 29	21	67.7%
No. 37	19	61.3%
No. 38	19	61.3%
No. 28	16	51.6%
No. 33	14	45.2%
No. 34	12	38.7%
No. 36	7	22.6%
No. 30	5	16.1%
No. 35	2	6.5%
No. 39*	1	3.2%

Table 6.12 – 4D participants’ out-of-class learning activities

When asked to choose one activity that they engaged in most frequently (see

* Note: One participant chose No. 39 ‘Others’; his/her example was “read English E- news on the internet.”

figure 6.10 and table 6.13), 24.1% participants chose No. 37: watched English movies or English TV programmes without Chinese subtitles. 20.7% participants chose No. 31: visited websites in English, and No. 33: listened to English radio shows.

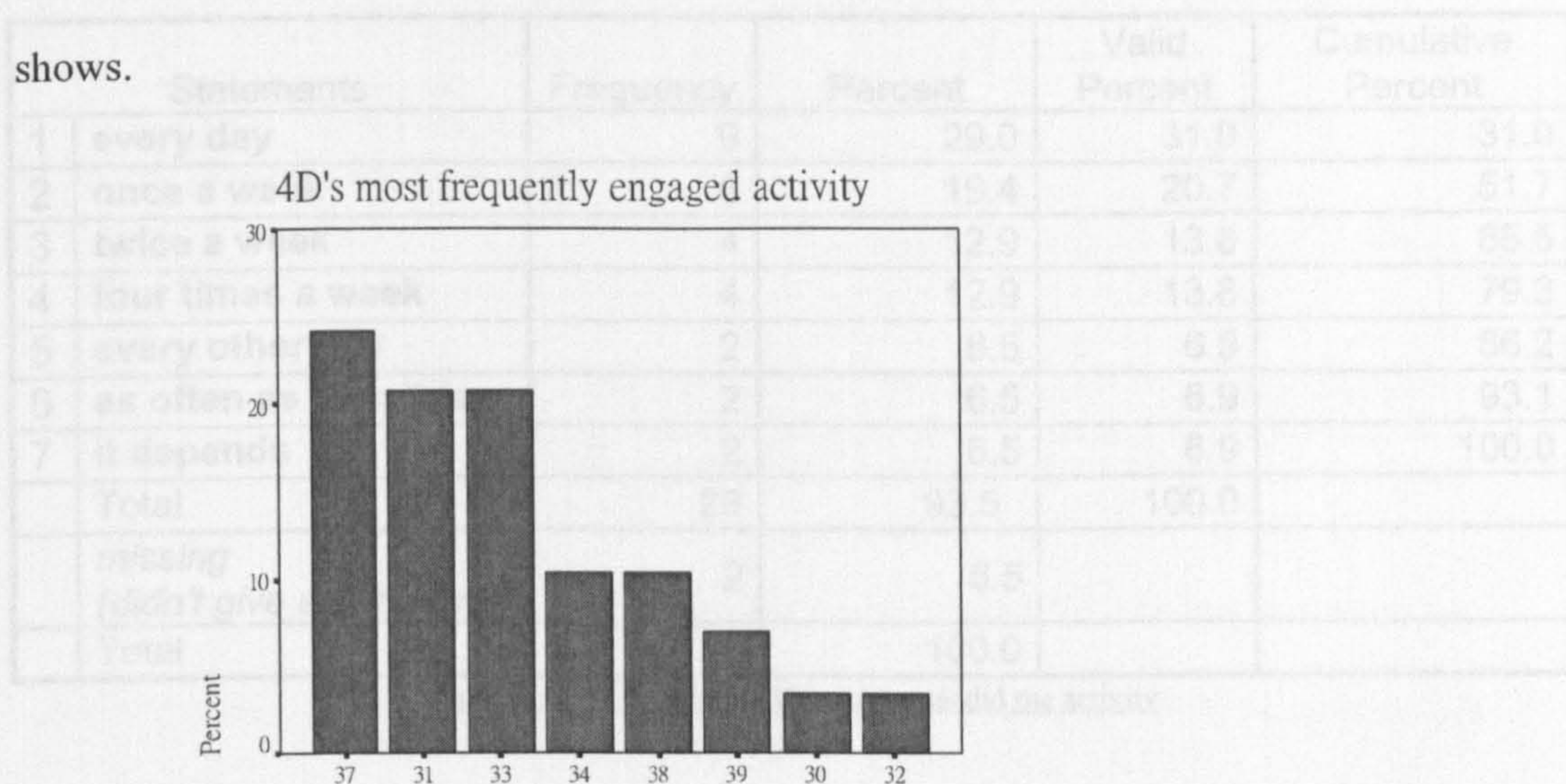


Figure 6.10 – 4D participants' most frequently engaged activity bar graph

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	37	7	22.6	24.1	24.1
	31	6	19.4	20.7	44.8
	33	6	19.4	20.7	65.5
	34	3	9.7	10.3	75.9
	38	3	9.7	10.3	86.2
	39	2	6.5	6.9	93.1
	30	1	3.2	3.4	96.6
	32	1	3.2	3.4	100.0
	Total	29	93.5	100.0	
Missing	99	2	6.5		
Total		31	100.0		

Table 6.13 – 4D participants' most frequently engaged activity

The participants also commented more on the out-of-class learning activity they engaged in most frequently. They explained how often they did this activity, why they chose this activity at first and why they continued to do this activity. Their answers are summarized in tables 6.14, 6.15, and 6.16 below:

- *Questionnaire Question: "How often do you do this activity?"*

	Statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	every day	9	29.0	31.0	31.0
2	once a week	6	19.4	20.7	51.7
3	twice a week	4	12.9	13.8	65.5
4	four times a week	4	12.9	13.8	79.3
5	every other day	2	6.5	6.9	86.2
6	as often as possible	2	6.5	6.9	93.1
7	it depends	2	6.5	6.9	100.0
	Total	29	93.5	100.0	
	<i>missing (didn't give an answer)</i>	2	6.5		
	Total	31	100.0		

Table 6.14 – How often 4D participants did the activity

- *Questionnaire Question: "Why did you do this activity at first?"*

	Statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	improve my English ability	8	25.8	28.6	28.6
2	easy access, convenience	6	19.4	21.4	50.0
3	my interest	5	16.1	17.9	67.9
4	just for fun	4	12.9	14.3	82.2
5	want to have more practice	2	6.5	7.1	89.3
6	don't know why	2	6.5	7.1	96.4
7	curious	1	3.2	3.6	100.0
	Total	28	90.3	100.0	
	<i>missing (didn't give an answer)</i>	3	9.7		
	Total	31	100.0		

Table 6.15 -- Why 4D participants chose the activity

● *Questionnaire Question: “Why do you continue on this activity?”*

	Statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	already a habit	9	29.0	32.1	32.1
2	helps to improve my English	8	25.8	28.5	60.7
3	I enjoy doing this activity	4	12.9	14.3	75.0
4	it's convenient to do	2	6.5	7.1	82.2
5	helpful for my homework	2	6.5	7.1	89.3
6	want to know more about foreign culture	2	6.5	7.1	96.4
7	my interest	1	3.2	3.6	100.0
	Total	28	90.3	100.0	
	<i>missing (didn't give an answer)</i>	3	9.7		
	Total	31	100.0		

Table 6.16 -- Why 4D participants continued on this activity

About 86% of participants in this group were doing the out-of-class learning activity they engaged in most frequently at least once a week and 31% of participants were doing it every day. This seems to indicate that the participants in this group engage in out-of-class learning activities frequently on a regular basis. From this indication we would say they seem autonomous. As for *why* they chose that particular activity, 28.6% of participants said that they wanted to improve their English ability; 21.4% of participants explained that it was convenient to do that activity because it was easily accessible, and 17.9% said it was their interest. These reasons (although in a different order) are the same reasons participants from 4C gave. In addition, 32.1% of participants said they continued to do the activity because it had already become a habit of theirs. 28.5% of participants believed that the activity had helped to improve their English and 14.3% explained that they enjoyed doing the activity so they continued to do it. Again, the results are similar to those of Group 4C.

● **Questionnaire section D (p.6): open ended question**

In this section the participants wrote down their feelings regarding their learner group. The key words from their answers were identified, categorized, and are summarized in table 6.17 below:

Statements	Frequency (N=31)
General comments	
● *We don't know each other very well.	3
● *Lots of cliques in this group	2
● *Generally it's OK, but only half of the classmates are hard-working.	2
● We respect each other	2
● *I feel stressful in this group.	1
● It's a very ideal learning environment	1
● We get along well and help each other out.	1
Regarding their classmates	
● have very good English ability	9
● nice and friendly	8
● outgoing/active	3
● hard-working	2
● *not very hard-working	2
● motivated	1
● helpful	1

Table 6.17 – 4D participants' views of their learner group

Similar to the results of Group 4C, participants in Group 4D also gave both positive and negative comments. Participants who enjoyed being in Group 4D wrote that it was an ideal learning environment and they all got along very well. However, some participants in this group had a different opinion; they felt that they did not know each other very well and there were some cliques within this group. The different voices from this section seem to reveal that the group may not be cohesive from every group member's perspective and there is something worth exploring here. I intend to get more information from the interviews with students.

* Note: These are negative comments

- **Questionnaire section B (I), section C, section E, section F, and section G (p.3, p.5-8): Likert scale sections**

For all the Likert scale items (with the students rating from 1, the lower end to 4, the higher end for each statement), the Cronbach alpha internal consistency was checked and they all reached a satisfactory level: (alpha = .70)

- Questionnaire p.2: Autonomous beliefs (alpha = .85) & actual behaviours (alpha = .85)
- Questionnaire p.5: Self-efficacy (alpha = .71)
- Questionnaire p.6: Group cohesiveness (alpha = .81)
- Questionnaire p.7: Group leadership (alpha = .73)
- Questionnaire p.8: group norms (alpha = .88)

The overall statistics for these Likert scale sections are shown below (table 6.18):

sections	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
<i>Autonomous beliefs</i>	31	1.00	3.00	4.00	3.56	.30	.09
<i>Autonomous behaviors</i>	31	2.30	1.40	3.70	2.70	.55	.30
<i>Self-efficacy</i>	31	1.70	1.70	3.40	2.71	.39	.15
<i>Group cohesiveness</i>	31	2.22	1.56	3.78	2.66	.46	.20
<i>Group leadership</i>	29	1.75	1.75	3.50	2.93	.41	.16
<i>Group norms</i>	29	2.00	1.70	3.70	2.71	.51	.26

Table 6.18 –Group 4D: results of Likert scale sections

For the detailed descriptive statistics of individual participants in Group 4D please see Appendix 6.

6.1.3 The comparison of Group 4C and 4D

The following table 6.19 summarizes the data of section A (learning orientations) and section B (II) (out-of-class learning) for both senior groups: Group 4C and 4D.

Sections	Rankings	Group 4C	Group 4D
Learning motives in general	No. 1	No. 5 (IM-K*)	No. 15 (EM-ER*)
	No. 2	No. 2 (IM-S*)	No. 11 (IM-S)
<i>Strongest current learning motive</i>	No. 1	No. 9 (IM-S)	No. 15 (EM-ER)
	No. 2	No. 12 (IM-S)	No. 11 (IM-S)
Out-of-class learning activities	No. 1	No. 31 (visited English websites)	No. 31 (visited English websites)
	No. 2	No. 32 (read English newspapers, books or magazines)	No. 32 (read English newspapers, books or magazines)
The one out-of-class learning that they engaged in <i>most frequently</i>	No. 1	No. 32 (read English newspapers, books or magazines)	No. 37 (watched movies without subtitles)
	No. 2	No. 31 (visited English websites)	No. 31 and No. 33 (visited English websites) (listened to English radio shows)

Table 6.19 – The comparison of senior groups

From table 6.19 we can see that Group 4C was more prone to IM (Intrinsic Motivation) since the top two choices for their learning motives in general and their

* NOTE: The abbreviations for these terms stand for:
EM-ER: Extrinsic Motivation-External Regulation
IM-K: Intrinsic Motivation- Knowledge
IM-S: Intrinsic Motivation- Stimulation

strongest current motives were all under the category of IM. On the other hand, Group 4D was somewhere in the middle. In this group, for both learning motives in general and the strongest learning motive, the number one choice was an Extrinsic Motivation motive, motive No. 15: I learn English so that I can get a better paying job in the future, while the number two choice for both sections was No. 11: I learn English because English will enable me to broaden my view of the world, an Intrinsic-Motivation motive. Hence, if we only look at the top two choices of these two sections, Group 4C is certainly IM orientated while Group 4D has both IM and EM orientations.

As for their out-of-class learning activities, there is no apparent difference between these two groups. The top two popular activities for both groups were No. 31: visited English websites and No. 32: read English newspapers, books, magazines. No. 31: visited English websites, was also the second popular activity for both groups as the activity they engaged in most frequently. This shows that nowadays students really take the advantage of the Internet and are very keen on improving their English through this method.

Apart from the sections mentioned above, table 6.20 below shows the statistical summary of both senior groups while table 6.21 provides t-test results which indicate whether there is a statistically significant difference between these two groups of students. As the results show, there was no statistical difference between these two groups. In other words, the autonomous beliefs, autonomous behaviours, self-efficacy, group cohesiveness, group leadership and group norms of these two groups were about the same.

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<i>Autonomous beliefs</i>	Senior C	36	3.51	.37	.061
	Senior D	31	3.56	.30	.054
<i>Autonomous behaviours</i>	Senior C	36	2.67	.51	.085
	Senior D	31	2.69	.55	.098
<i>Self-efficacy</i>	Senior C	35	2.65	.41	.068
	Senior D	31	2.71	.39	.070
<i>Cohesiveness</i>	Senior C	35	2.67	.41	.070
	Senior D	31	2.66	.46	.082
<i>Leadership</i>	Senior C	35	3.02	.40	.070
	Senior D	29	2.93	.41	.076
<i>Norms</i>	Senior C	35	2.72	.50	.085
	Senior D	29	2.71	.51	.094

Table 6.20 – statistical summary of senior groups

		t-test for Equality of Means						
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
<i>Autonomous beliefs</i>	Equal variances assumed	-.641	65	.524	-.0530	.08268	-.21808	.11216
	Equal variances not assumed	-.651	64.800	.518	-.0530	.08140	-.21554	.10963
<i>Autonomous behaviours</i>	Equal variances assumed	-.170	65	.866	-.0220	.12939	-.28036	.23645
	Equal variances not assumed	-.169	61.992	.867	-.0220	.13006	-.28195	.23804
<i>Self-efficacy</i>	Equal variances assumed	-.654	64	.516	-.0643	.09829	-.26063	.13211
	Equal variances not assumed	-.655	63.514	.515	-.0643	.09808	-.26022	.13170
<i>Cohesiveness</i>	Equal variances assumed	.097	64	.923	.0103	.10706	-.20354	.22422
	Equal variances not assumed	.096	60.926	.924	.0103	.10774	-.20510	.22578
<i>Leadership</i>	Equal variances assumed	.871	62	.387	.0892	.10239	-.11550	.29383
	Equal variances not assumed	.871	59.889	.387	.0892	.10235	-.11557	.29390
<i>Norms</i>	Equal variances assumed	.072	62	.943	.0091	.12675	-.24430	.26243
	Equal variances not assumed	.071	59.635	.943	.0091	.12684	-.24469	.26281

Table 6.21 –t-test results of senior groups

6.2 Questionnaire results of junior year participants

After looking at the results of two senior groups, this section is going to focus on the questionnaire results of two junior groups (Group 3C and 3D). Then, a comparison between these two groups will be drawn.

6.2.1 Group 3C

● Background

From this group I have received 29 valid questionnaires, 23 (79.3%) of them were female participants while 6 (20.7%) of them were male participants (see figure 6.11 below). On average they have learned English for 9.8 years (Minimum 4 years; maximum 16 years; Std. Deviation 2.5).

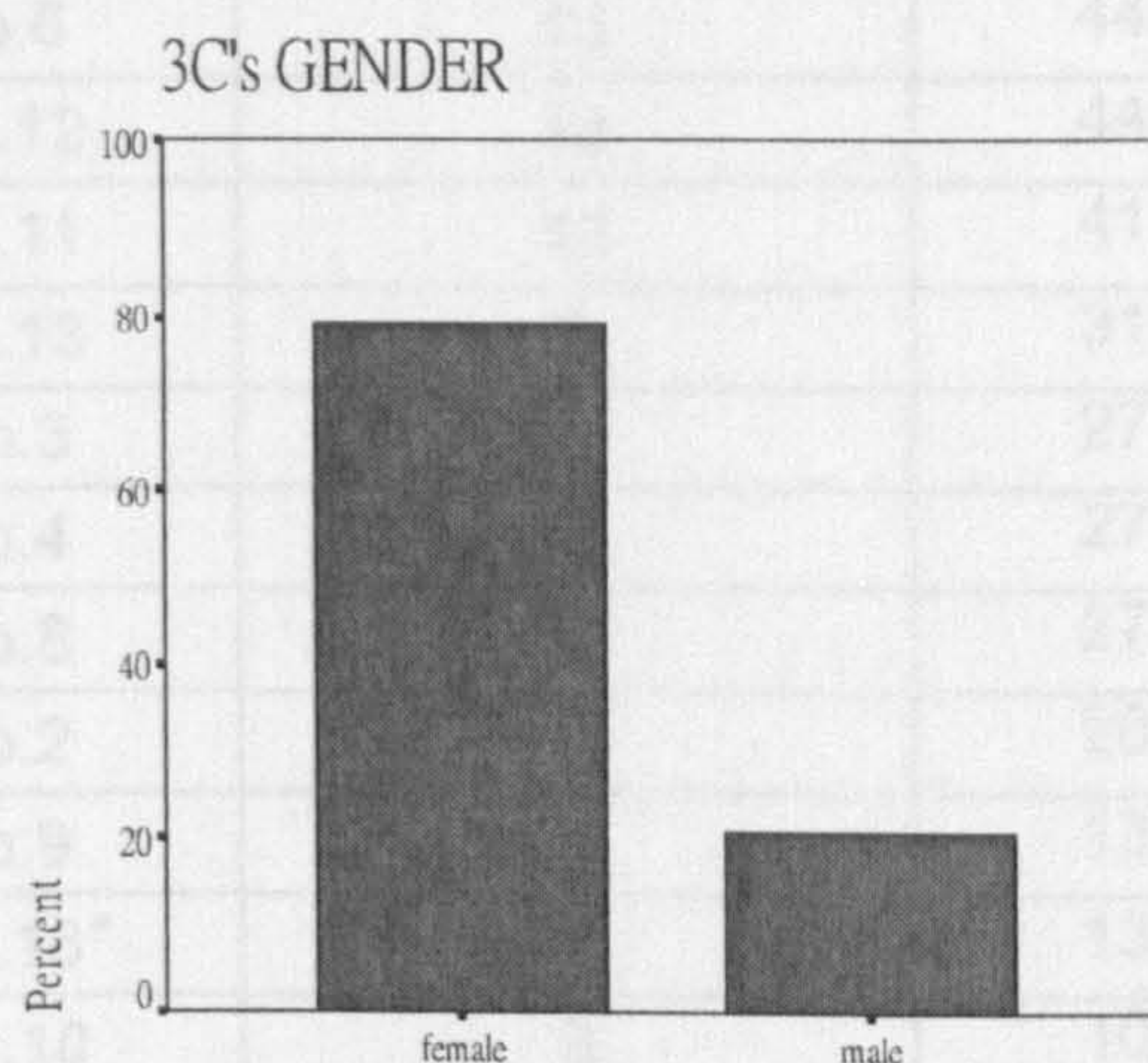


Figure 6.11-- 3C participants' gender distribution

● Questionnaire section A (p.1~3): learning orientations

This section of the questionnaire provided 15 common learning motives plus one 'others' choice, and the participants were asked to choose the ones that most corresponded to the motives that prompted them to study English. The result of Group 3C is as follows:

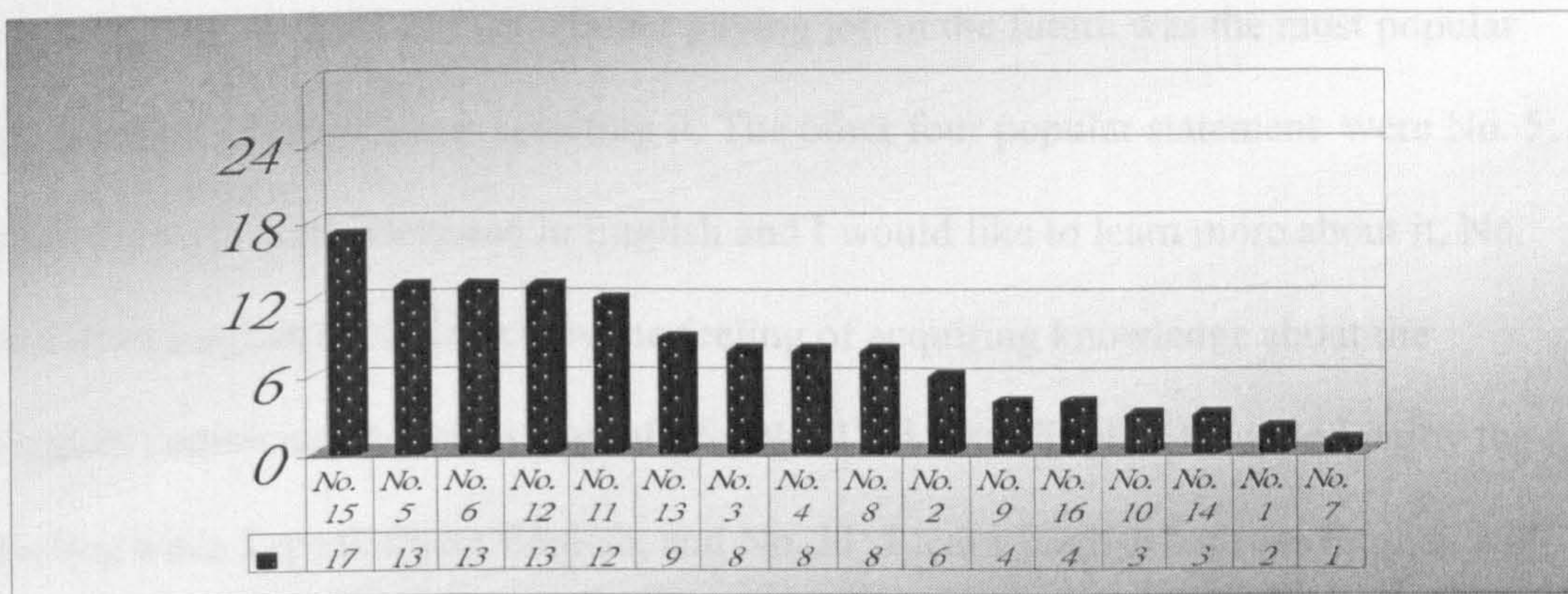


Figure 6.12 -- 3C participants' learning orientations bar graph

Statements	Frequency (N=29)	Percent
No.15	17	58.6%
No.5	13	44.8%
No.6	13	44.8%
No.12	13	44.8%
No.11	12	41.4%
No.13	9	31.0%
No.3	8	27.6%
No.4	8	27.6%
No.8	8	27.6%
No.2	6	20.7%
No.9	4	13.8%
No.16*	4	13.8%
No.10	3	10.3%
No.14	3	10.3%
No.1	2	6.9%
No.7	1	3.4%

Table 6.22 -- 3C participants' learning orientations

From the above figure 6.12 and table 6.22 we can clearly see that No. 15: I

* NOTE: Four participants selected No. 16, 'others', and in the blank provided, they further elaborated that:

1. I learn English so that I can travel by myself.
2. My mathematic has always been pretty bad, so I should study English.
3. It is a good additional skill for finding a job.
4. It will be easier for me to travel and do business around the world.

learn English so that I can get a better paying job in the future was the most popular choice with 17 participants selecting it. The other four popular statement were No. 5: I have always been interested in English and I would like to learn more about it, No. 6: I learn English because I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about the English community and their way of life, No. 12: I learn English because I enjoy the feeling when I speak fluent English, and No. 11: I learn English because English will enable me to broaden my view of the world. Overall speaking, this result shows that their learning orientation is a mixture of *Extrinsic Motivation-External Regulation* (motive No. 15), *Intrinsic Motivation-Knowledge* (motive No. 5, 6, and 11) and *Intrinsic Motivation-Stimulation* (motive No. 12).

Furthermore, when asked to choose one motive that *best* described their strongest motive to learn English, everyone's selections were very different. Motives No. 11: I learn English because English will enable me to broaden my view of the world, an *intrinsic Motivation-Knowledge* motive, and No. 15: I learn English so that I can get a better paying job in the future, an *Extrinsic Motivation-External Regulation* motive were the most popular two choices of all. (For details see figure 6.13 and table 6.23 below.)

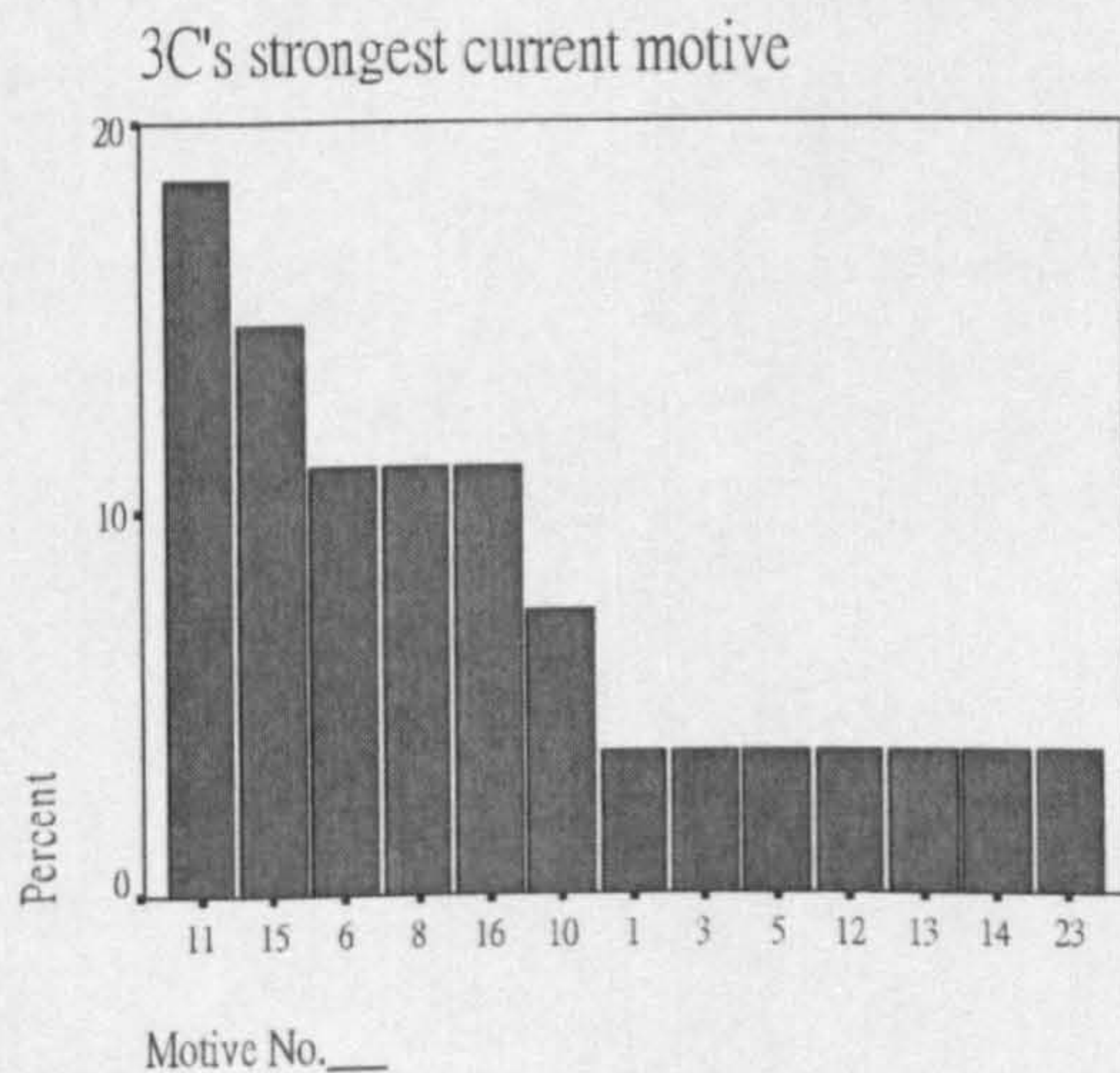


Figure 6.13 – 3C participants' strongest motives bar graph

Statements		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No. 11	5	17.2	18.5	18.5
	No. 15	4	13.8	14.8	33.3
	No. 6	3	10.3	11.1	44.4
	No. 8	3	10.3	11.1	55.6
	No. 16	3	10.3	11.1	66.7
	No. 10	2	6.9	7.4	74.1
	No. 1	1	3.4	3.7	77.8
	No. 3	1	3.4	3.7	81.5
	No. 5	1	3.4	3.7	85.2
	No. 12	1	3.4	3.7	88.9
	No. 13	1	3.4	3.7	92.6
	No. 14	1	3.4	3.7	96.3
	No. 23	1	3.4	3.7	100.0
	Total	27	93.1	100.0	
Missing	99	2	6.9		
Total		29	100.0		

Table 6.23 – 3C participants' strongest motives

● **Questionnaire section B (II) (p.4): Out-of-class learning**

In this section, the participants selected the activities they had done during the past month with the intention of improving their English ability. As figure 6.14 and table 6.24 below show, this group of students seems to be very interested in engaging in various kinds of out-of-class learning activities. This aspect is similar to the participants of senior groups. Over 70% participants from this group selected No. 33: listened to English radio shows, and No. 31: visited websites in English. In addition to these two activities, over 65% participants selected No. 28: done assignments which are not compulsory, No. 32: read newspapers, book or magazines in English, and No. 29: noted down new words and their meanings.

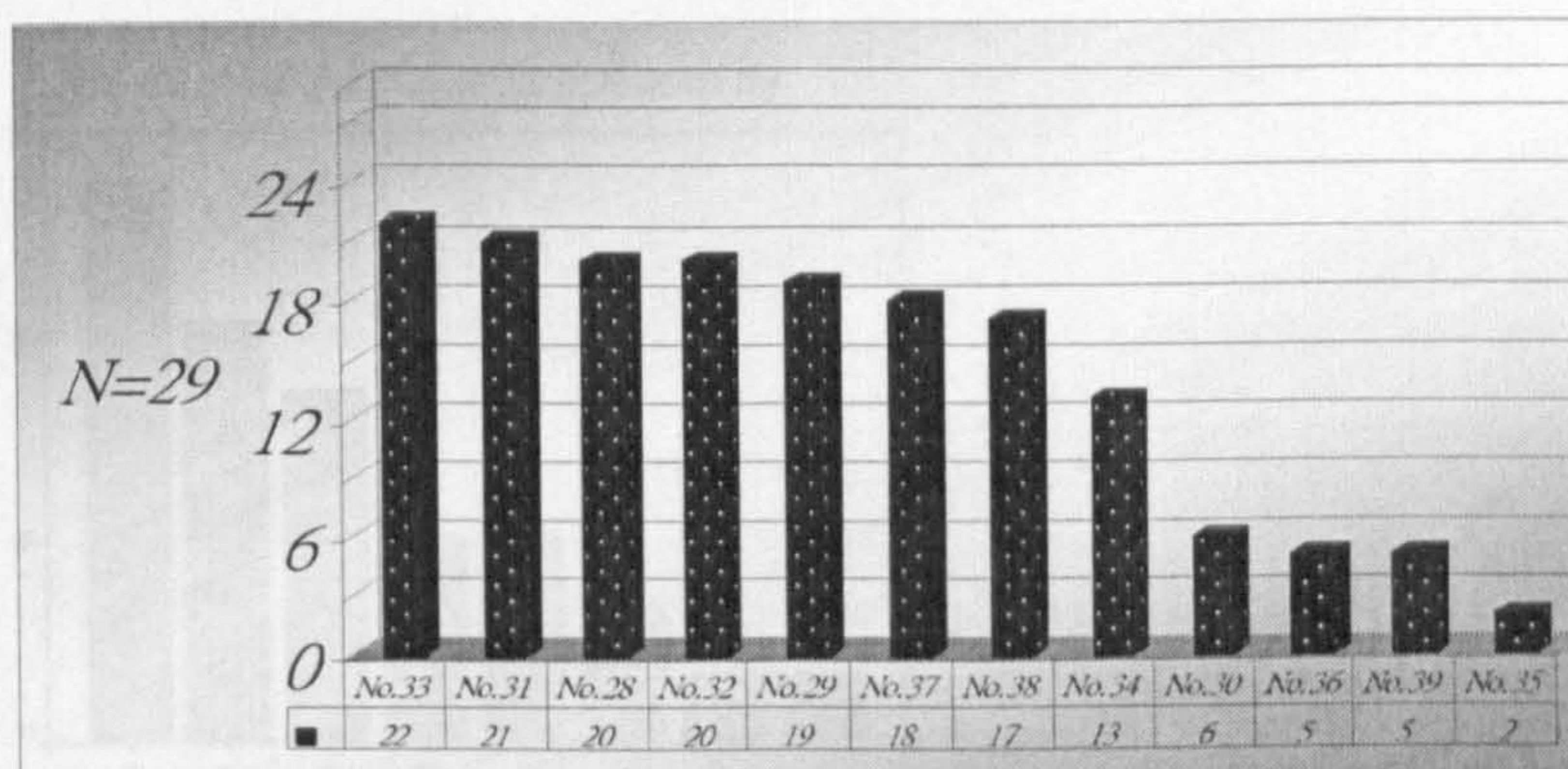


Figure 6.14 – 3C participants' out-of-class learning activities bar graph

Statements	Frequency(N=29)	Percent
No.33	22	75.9%
No.31	21	72.4%
No.28	20	69.0%
No.32	20	69.0%
No.29	19	65.5%
No.37	18	62.0%
No.38	17	59.0%
No.34	13	44.8%
No.30	6	20.7%
No.36	5	17.2%
No.39*	5	17.2%
No.35	2	6.9%

Table 6.24 – 3C participants' out-of-class learning activities

In addition, when asked to choose one activity that they engaged in most frequently, 27.6% students chose No. 33: listened to English radio shows, 20.7% students chose No. 32: read newspapers, books, or magazines, and 17.2% students chose No. 38: practised using English with friends/classmates. For details please refer to figure 6.15 and table 6.25 below.

* Note: Five participants selected No. 39, 'others', and their examples were:

1. played English version computer game
2. written English emails
3. chatted on-line (MSN) in English
4. talked to herself in English
5. helped non-English majors do translation and learn vocabulary in other professional field.

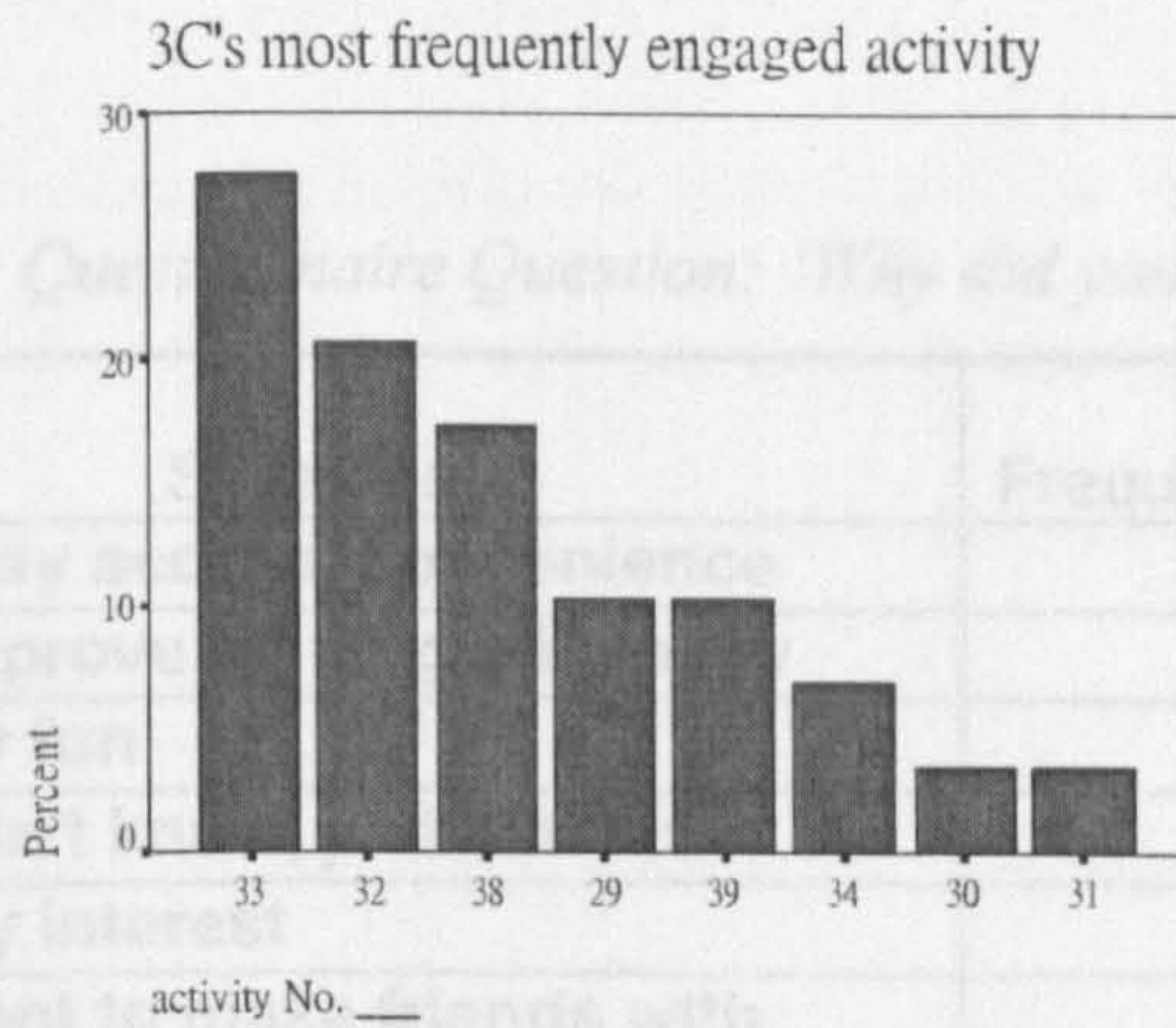


Figure 6.15 – 3C participants' most frequently

engaged activity bar graph

Statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 33	8	27.6	27.6	27.6
32	6	20.7	20.7	48.3
38	5	17.2	17.2	65.5
29	3	10.3	10.3	75.9
39	3	10.3	10.3	86.2
34	2	6.9	6.9	93.1
30	1	3.4	3.4	96.6
31	1	3.4	3.4	100.0
Total	29	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.25 – 3C participants' most frequently engaged activity

After the participants selected one activity that they engaged in the most frequently, they were asked to answer the following questions: how often did they do this activity, why had they chosen this activity at first and why did they continue on this activity. Their answers are summarized in tables 6.26, 6.27, and 6.28 below:

- *Questionnaire Question: 'How often do you do this activity?'*

Statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 every day	15	51.7	53.6	53.6
2 twice a week	3	10.3	10.7	64.3
3 ever other day	2	6.9	7.1	71.4
4 four times a week	2	6.9	7.1	78.5
5 three times a week	2	6.9	7.1	85.7
6 once a week	2	6.9	7.1	92.9
7 depends	2	6.9	7.1	100.0
Total	28	96.6	100.0	
missing (didn't give an answer)	1	3.4		
Total	29	100.0		

Table 6.26 -- How often 3C participants did the activity

- *Questionnaire Question: 'Why did you do this activity at first?'*

	Statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	easy access, convenience	8	27.6	28.6	28.6
2	improve my English ability	5	17.2	17.6	46.2
3	for fun	4	13.8	14.3	60.5
4	don't know, just a habit	3	10.3	10.7	71.3
5	my interest	2	6.9	7.1	78.4
6	want to make friends with foreigners	2	6.9	7.1	85.6
7	keep in touch with friends	2	6.9	7.1	92.8
8	lack of practice at school	1	3.4	3.6	96.4
9	want to learn more new things	1	3.4	3.6	100.0
	Total	28	96.6	100.0	
	<i>missing (didn't give an answer)</i>	1	3.4		
	Total	29	100		

Table 6.27 -- Why 3C participants chose the activity

- *Questionnaire Question: 'Why do you continue on this activity?'*

	Statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	help to improve my English	11	37.9	39.3	39.3
2	It's fun to do	6	20.7	21.4	60.7
3	help both my classmates and myself to improve more	3	10.3	10.7	71.4
4	my interest	3	10.3	10.7	82.1
5	want to learn more new things	2	6.9	7.1	89.2
6	keep in touch with foreign friends	1	3.4	3.6	92.8
7	habit	1	3.4	3.6	96.4
8	I like music	1	3.4	3.6	100.0
	Total	28	96.6	100.0	
	<i>missing (didn't give an answer)</i>	1	3.4		
	Total	29	100.0		

Table 6.28 -- Why 3C participants continued on this activity

About half of the participants from this group were doing the out-of-class learning activity every day, and around 90% of them were doing it at least once a week, which seem to indicate that they were autonomous. 28.6% of participants

chose to do the activity because it was easy to get access and it was convenient to do the activity, and 17.6% of participants said that they wanted to improve their English ability. As for why they continued to do the activity, 39.3% of participants said that the activity had helped them to improve English, and 21.4% continued to do it because it was fun to do. One thing that is noticeable is that 10% of participants said that it had helped both *their classmates* and themselves to improve more. This seems to indicate that their classmates are part of the reason why they continued to engage in out-of-class learning activities, bringing out the influencing roles of one's peers.

- **Questionnaire section D (p.6): open ended question**

This section had only one open-ended question in which the participants wrote down their views on their learner group. The key words from their answers were picked up, categorized, and are summarized in table 6.29 below. Overall speaking, most of them had a favorable opinion of their group and their classmates. They seem to get along well and enjoy being a member of this group. The only exception is that two participants mentioned that they felt stressful in this group because everyone's English ability was very good. Other than that, the comments were generally very positive and this is something different from the results of the senior groups, which have mixed comments.

Statements	Frequency (N=29)
General comments:	
● I like my group.	4
● My group is excellent.	3
● It is a good learning environment.	3
● We all get along very well.	3
● I have learned a lot from my classmates	3
● * ¹ I feel stressful in this group because everyone's English ability is very good	2
Regarding their classmates	
● have very good English ability	8
● nice and friendly	7
● very outgoing and active	7
● not afraid of expressing themselves	5
● hard-working	4
● helpful (help each other out)	4

Table 6.29 – 3C participants' views of their learner group

● **Questionnaire section B (I), section C, section E, section F, and section G (questionnaire p.3, p.5-8): Likert scale sections**

For all the Likert scale items (with the students rating from 1, the lower end to 4, the higher end for each statement) the Cronbach alpha internal consistency was checked and most sections reached the satisfactory level (alpha = .70): except for the items relating to leadership, whose alpha level is slightly below .70.

1. Autonomous beliefs (alpha = .79) and actual behaviours (alpha = .79)
2. Self-efficacy (alpha = .84)
3. Group cohesiveness (alpha = .83)
3. Group leadership (alpha = .62)^{*2}
5. Group norms (alpha= .71)

*¹ Note: This is negative comment.

*² Note: The reliability analysis shows that Leadership item No. 8 (In most of my teacher's classes we do a lot of pair work and group work in the class) seems problematic. If I delete this item, the alpha will go up to .66. The detail is shown in table 6.30 below.

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA)				
Item-total Statistics				
	scale mean if item deleted	scale variance if item deleted	corrected item total correlation	alpha if item deleted
LEADER1	20.6154	8.8062	.1634	.6208
LEADER2	20.6538	7.9954	.2516	.6043
LEADER3	20.8462	7.5754	.2125	.6231
LEADER4	20.0385	6.5185	.5149	.5221
LEADER5	21.0769	6.7138	.5177	.5256
LEADER6	20.0000	7.1200	.3942	.5642
LEADER7	20.4615	6.5785	.4595	.5397
LEADER8	20.5385	8.7385	.0212	<u>.6618</u>
Reliability Coefficients				
N of Cases = 26.0		N of Items = 8		
Alpha = .6198				

Table 6.30 – The Cronbach alpha result of Group 3C

Table 6.31 here gives overall results of these Likert scale sections:

Sections	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
<i>Autonomous beliefs</i>	28	1.20	2.80	4.00	3.55	.33	.11
<i>Autonomous behaviors</i>	28	2.10	1.50	3.60	2.83	.49	.24
<i>Self-efficacy</i>	29	1.80	1.70	3.50	2.71	.48	.23
<i>Group cohesiveness</i>	29	2.00	1.75	3.75	3.00	.52	.27
<i>Group leadership</i>	26	1.75	1.75	3.50	2.93	.38	.15
<i>Group norms</i>	26	1.70	1.90	3.60	2.63	.38	.14

Table 6.31 – Group 3C: results of Likert scale sections

Also, the detailed descriptive statistics of individual participants can be found in Appendix 6.

6.2.2 Group 3D

● Background

From this group I have received 31 valid questionnaires, only 1 participant did not indicate their gender. Among the remaining 30 participants, 24 (80%) of them were female participants while 6 (20%) of them were male participants (see figure 6.16). On average they have learned English for 9.2 years (Minimum 6 years; maximum 14 years; Std. Deviation 1.5).

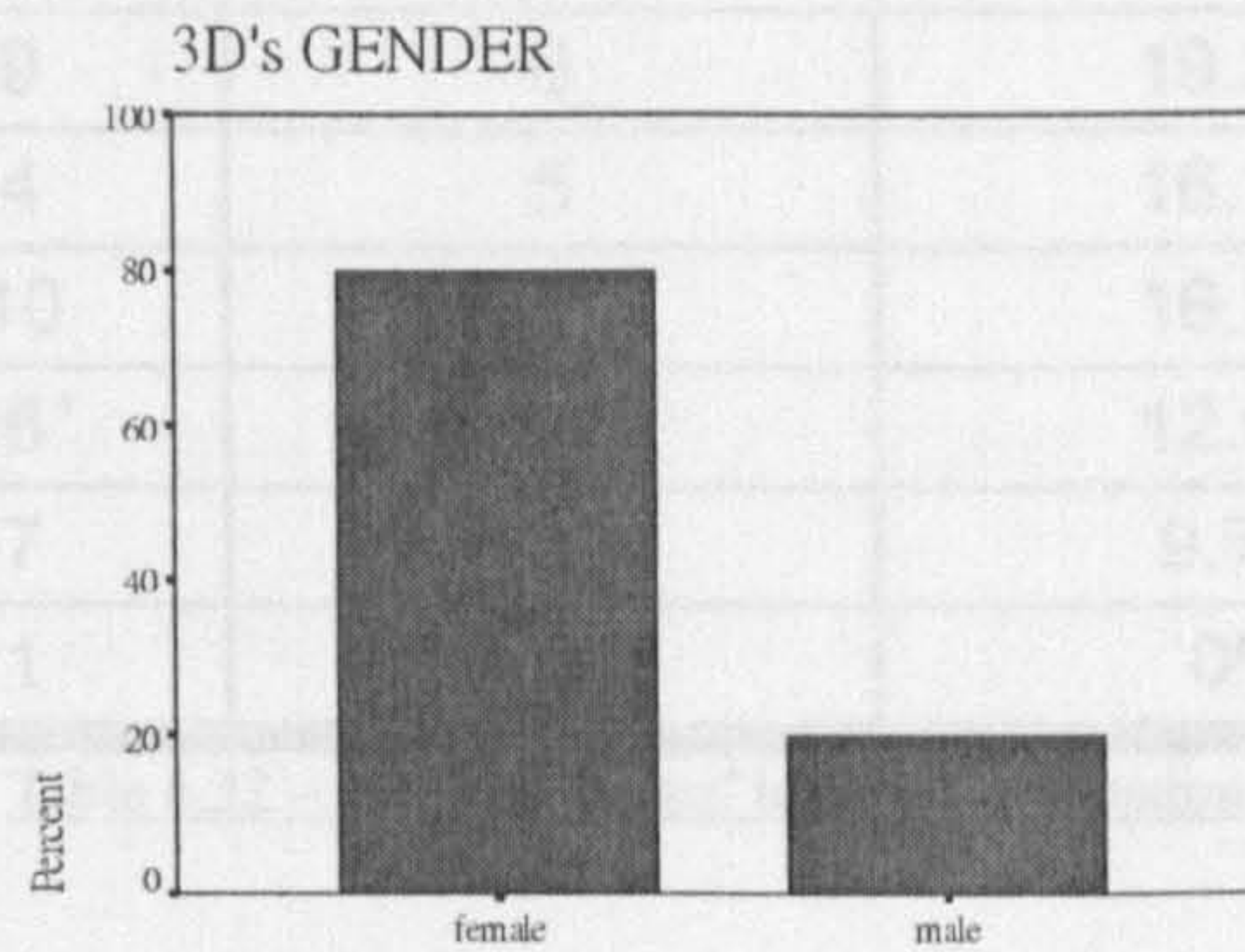


Figure 6.16—3D participants' gender distribution

● Questionnaire section A (p.1~3): learning orientations

As figure 6.17 and table 6.32 show, out of 15 common learning motives plus one 'others' choice, 48.4% of participants from this group chose No. 5: I have always been interested in English and I would like to learn more about it, an *Intrinsic Motivation-Knowledge* motive, and No. 12: I learn English because I enjoy the feeling when I speak fluent English, an *Intrinsic Motivation – Stimulation* motive.

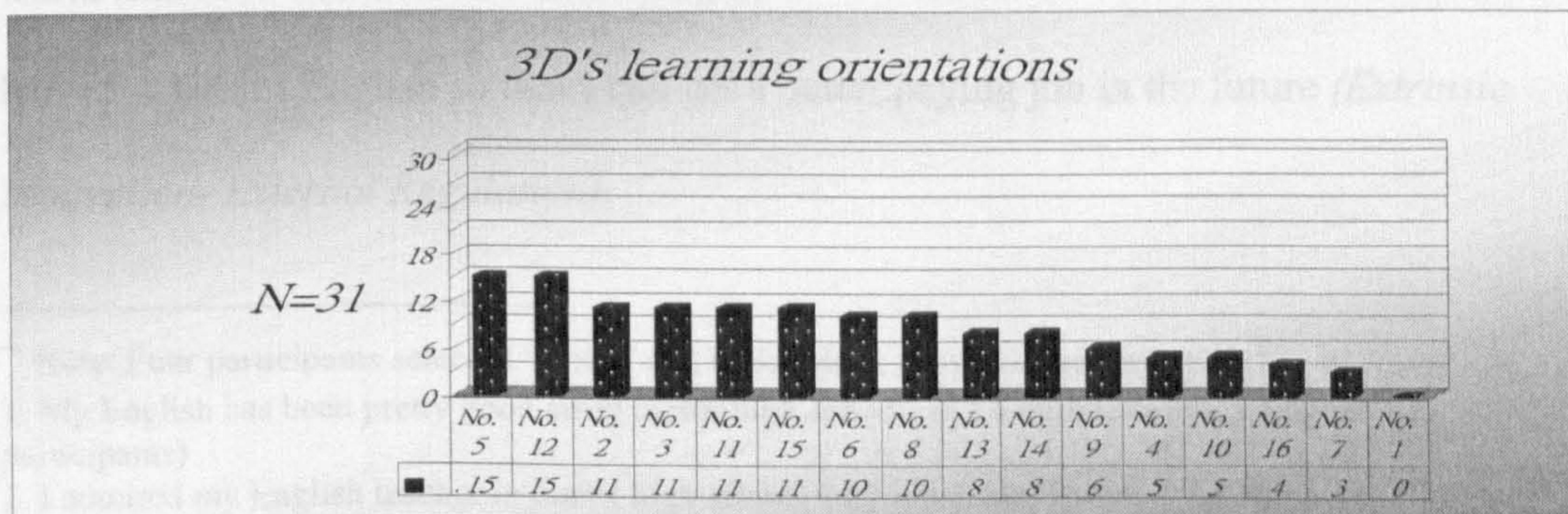


Figure 6.17– 3D participants' learning orientations bar graph

Statements	Frequency(N=31)	Percent
No. 5	15	48.4%
No. 12	15	48.4%
No. 2	11	35.5%
No. 3	11	35.5%
No. 11	11	35.5%
No. 15	11	35.5%
No. 6	10	32.3%
No. 8	10	32.3%
No. 13	8	25.8%
No. 14	8	25.8%
No. 9	6	19.3%
No. 4	5	16.1%
No. 10	5	16.1%
No. 16*	4	12.9%
No. 7	3	9.7%
No. 1	0	0%

Table 6.32 – 3D participants' learning orientations

The other four popular statements in this section were:

No. 2: I really enjoy learning English and I think it's a lot of fun for me (*Intrinsic Motivation-Stimulation*);

No. 3: English is an international language nowadays. I would feel ashamed if I could not speak English because many people can (*Extrinsic Motivation- Introjected Regulation*);

No. 11: I learn English because English will enable me to broaden my view of the world (*Intrinsic Motivation – Knowledge*);

No. 15 -- I learn English so that I can get a better paying job in the future (*Extrinsic Motivation- External Regulation*).

* Note: Four participants selected 'others' and in the blank provided they wrote:

1. My English has been pretty good since junior high school, so I continue to study English. (2 participants)
2. I admired my English teacher in junior high school very much and I want to be like her.
3. I want to appreciate Western music and literature without the translation.

It seems like the participants of Group 3D also had a mixture of *Extrinsic Motivation (External Regulation and Introjected Regulation)* and *Intrinsic Motivation (2 Stimulation and 2 Knowledge)*.

At the end of this section, the participants were asked to choose one motive that *best* described their strongest motive to learn English. The results are shown below in figure 6.18 and table 6.33. Motives No. 5: I have always been interested in English and I would like to learn more about it (*Intrinsic Motivation- Knowledge*), and No. 15: I learn English so that I can get a better paying job in the future (*Extrinsic Motivation- External Regulation*), were the most popular choices with 20.7% and 17.2% of participants selecting them. Around 10 % of participants selected No. 8: I learn English because I want to be the kind of person who can speak more than one language (*Extrinsic motivation- Identified Regulation*), No. 9: I simply like English (*Intrinsic Motivation-Stimulation*), No. 11: I learn English because English will enable me to broaden my view of the world (*Intrinsic Motivation- Knowledge*), and No. 13: I learn English because succeeding in English brings me confidence (*Intrinsic Motivation-Accomplishment*).

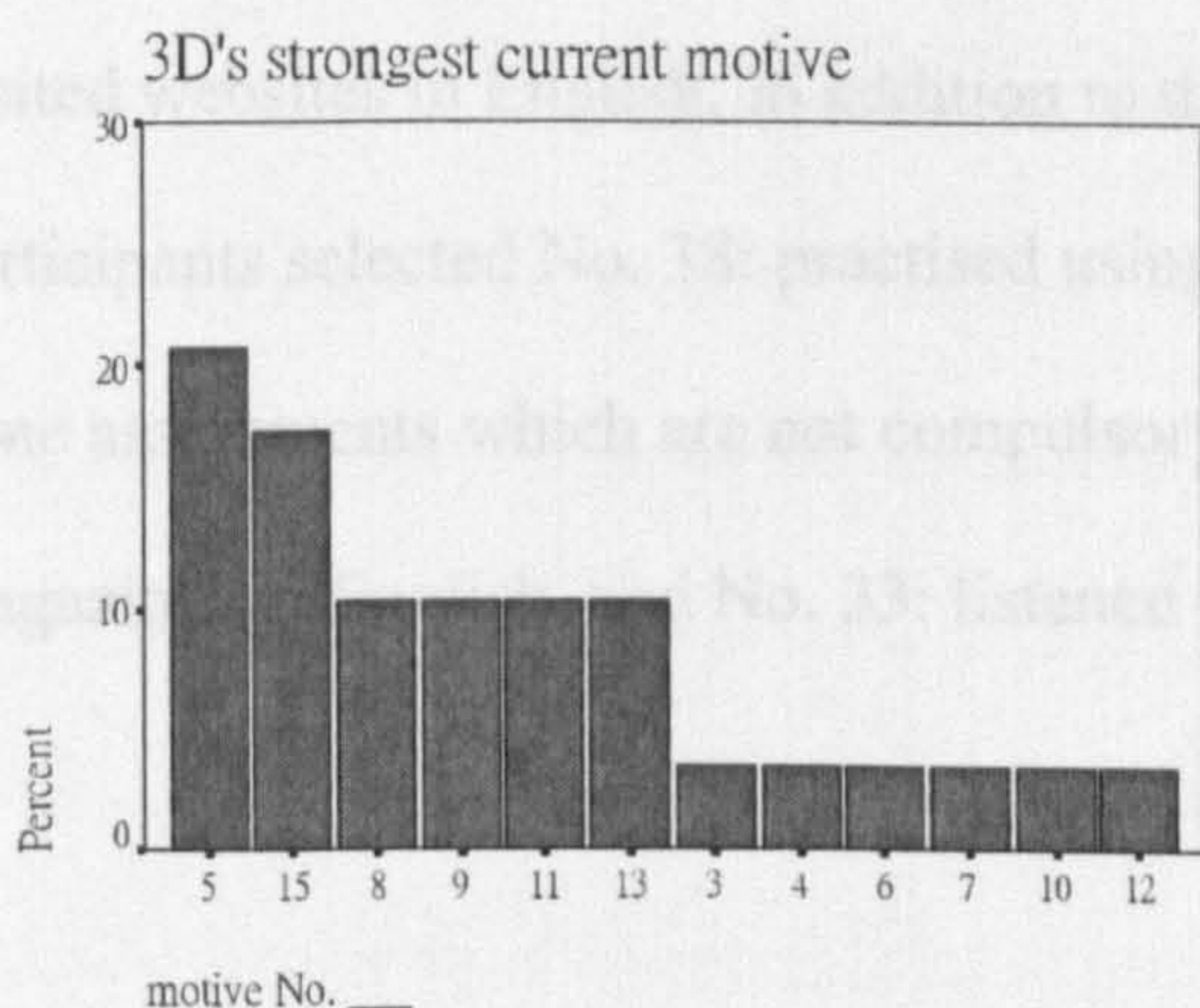


Figure 6.18 – 3D participants' strongest motives bar graph

Statements		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5	6	19.4	20.7	20.7
	15	5	16.1	17.2	37.9
	8	3	9.7	10.3	48.3
	9	3	9.7	10.3	58.6
	11	3	9.7	10.3	69.0
	13	3	9.7	10.3	79.3
	3	1	3.2	3.4	82.8
	4	1	3.2	3.4	86.2
	6	1	3.2	3.4	89.7
	7	1	3.2	3.4	93.1
	10	1	3.2	3.4	96.6
	12	1	3.2	3.4	100.0
	Total	29	93.5	100.0	
Missing	99	2	6.5		
Total		31	100.0		

Table 6.33 – 3D participants' strongest motives

● **Questionnaire section B (II) (p.4) : out-of-class learning**

In this section, the participants selected the activities they had done during the past month in order to improve their English ability. As figure 6.19 and table 6.34 show, the participants from Group 3D also seem very interested in engaging all various kinds of out-of-class learning activities. Over 70% of participants from this group selected No. 29: noted down new words and their meanings, and No. 31: visited websites in English. In addition to these two activities, over 50% of participants selected No. 38: practised using English with friends/classmates, No. 28: done assignments which are not compulsory, No. 32: read newspapers, book or magazines in English, and No. 33: listened to English radio shows.

3D's Out-of-class Learning

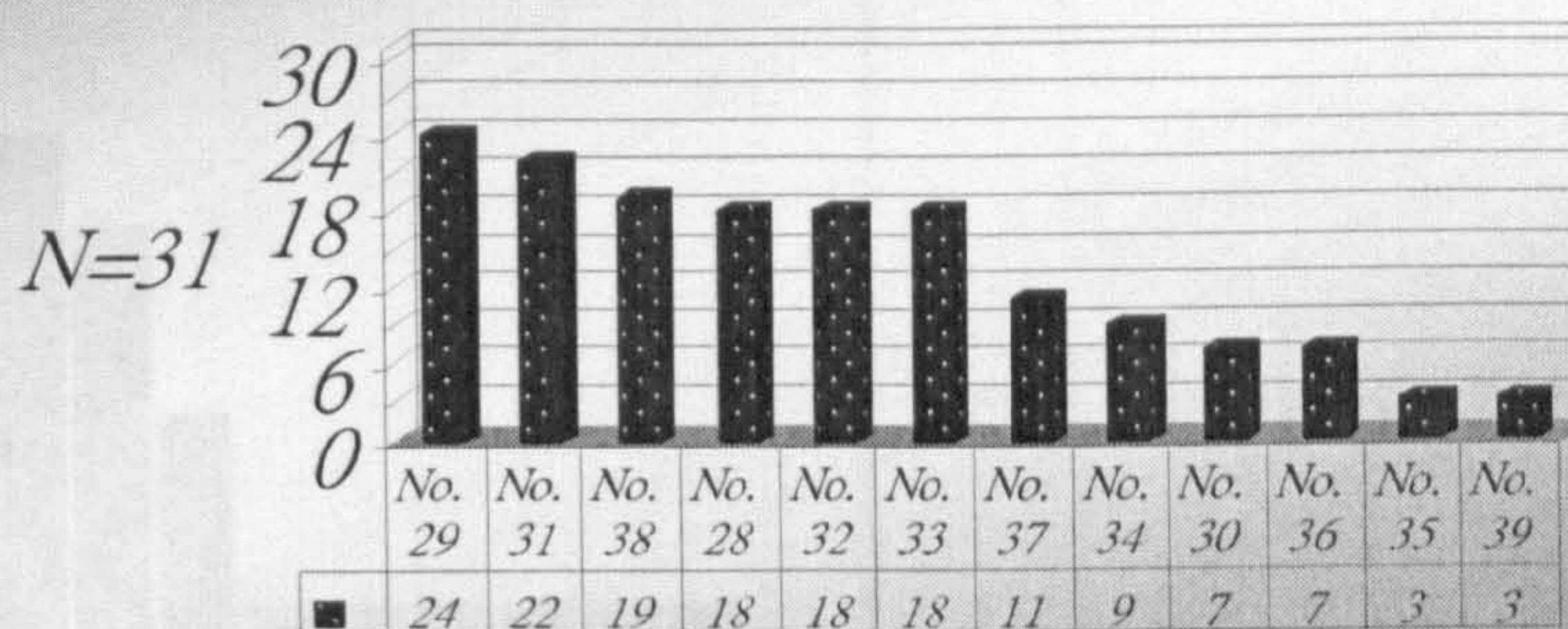


Figure 6.19 – 3D participants' out-of-class learning bar graph

Statements	Frequency(N=31)	Percent
No. 29	24	77.4%
No. 31	22	71.0%
No. 38	19	61.3%
No. 28	18	58.1%
No. 32	18	58.1%
No. 33	18	58.1%
No. 37	11	35.4%
No. 34	9	29.0%
No. 30	7	22.6%
No. 36	7	22.6%
No. 35	3	9.70%
No. 39*	3	9.70%

Table 6.34 – 3D participants' out-of-class learning results

When asked to choose one activity that they engaged in the most frequently, 23.3% of participants chose No. 29 (noted down new words and their meanings), 20.0% selected No. 33 (listened to English radio shows), and 13.3% believed that No. 38 (practised using English with friends/classmates) was the activity they engaged in the most frequently. For details, please refer to figure 6.20 and table 6.35 below.

* Note: Three participants selected No. 39 (Others) and in the blank provided they wrote:

1. listened to English songs
2. helped non English major students do translation works
3. talked to himself/herself in English

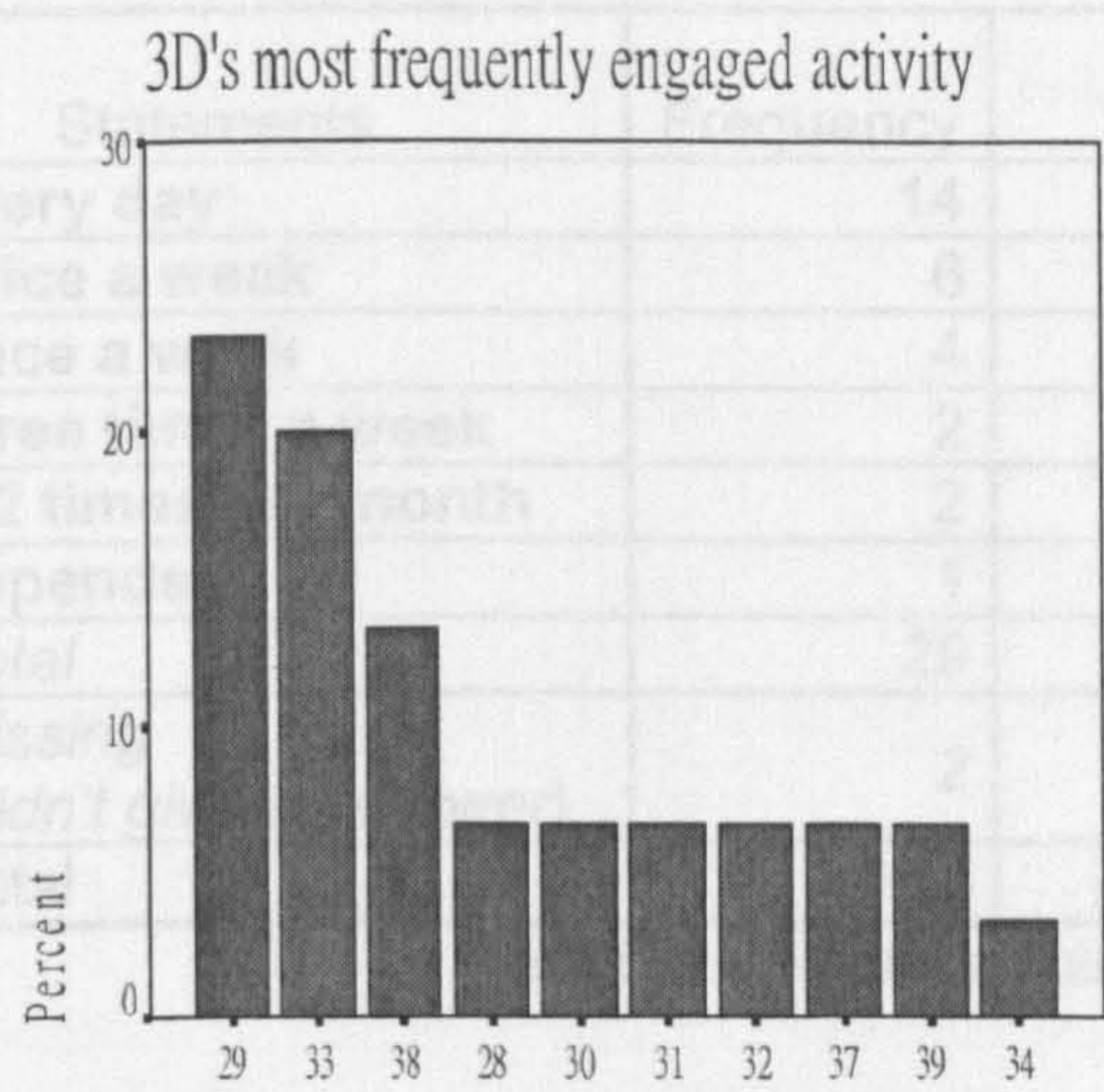


Figure 6.20 – 3D participants' most frequently engaged activity bar graph

Statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	29	7	22.6	23.3
	33	6	19.4	43.3
	38	4	12.9	56.7
	28	2	6.5	63.3
	30	2	6.5	70.0
	31	2	6.5	76.7
	32	2	6.5	83.3
	37	2	6.5	90.0
	39	2	6.5	96.7
	34	1	3.2	100.0
Total	30	96.8	100.0	
Missing	99	1	3.2	
Total	31	100.0		

Table 6.35 – 3D participants' most frequently engaged activity

In addition, the participants were also asked to give more comments on the out-of-class learning activity they engaged in the most frequently. They were asked to answer how often they did this activity, why they chose this activity at first, and why they continued to do this activity. Their answers are summarized in tables 6.36, 6.37 and 6.38 below:

● Questionnaire Question: "How often do you do this activity?"

	Statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	every day	14	45.2	48.3	48.3
2	twice a week	6	19.4	20.7	69.0
3	once a week	4	12.9	13.8	82.8
4	three times a week	2	6.5	6.9	89.7
5	1-2 times per month	2	6.5	6.9	96.6
6	depends	1	3.2	3.4	100.0
	<i>Total</i>	29	93.5	100.0	
	<i>missing (didn't give an answer)</i>	2	6.5		
	Total	31	100.0		

Table 6.36 -- How often 3D participants did the activity

● Questionnaire Question: "Why did you do this activity at first?"

	Statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	improve my English ability	15	48.4	51.7	51.7
2	my interest	4	12.9	13.8	65.5
3	want to learn more new things	3	9.7	10.3	75.8
4	easy access, convenience	3	9.7	10.3	86.1
5	lack of practice at school	2	6.5	6.9	93.1
6	curious	2	6.5	6.9	100.0
	<i>Total</i>	29	93.5	100.0	
	<i>missing (didn't give an answer)</i>	2	6.5	6.5	
	Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.37 -- Why 3D participants chose the activity

● Questionnaire Question: "Why do you continue on this activity?"

	Statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	help to improve my English	9	29.0	31.0	31.0
2	my interest	5	16.1	17.2	48.2
3	I enjoy doing this activity	3	9.7	10.3	58.5
4	want to practice more	3	9.7	10.3	68.8
5	habit	3	9.7	10.3	79.2
6	want to create an English environment	2	6.5	6.9	86.2
7	want to learn more new things	2	6.5	6.9	93.1
8	Most of my classmates' English is good, so I need to catch up.	2	6.5	6.9	100.0
	<i>Total</i>	29	93.5	100.0	
	<i>missing (didn't give an answer)</i>	2	6.5		
	Total	31	100.0		

Table 6.38 -- Why 3D participants continued on this activity

About 48% of participants in this group were doing the out-of-class learning activity every day, and almost 90% of them were doing it at least once a week, which seems to indicate that the participants of this group were autonomous. More than half of the participants chose to do the out-of-class learning activity because they wanted to improve their English ability, and 13.8% said that it was due to their interest. As for why they continued to do the activity, 31% of participants said that the activity had helped them to improve English (this is also the number one reason for the participants of Group 3C), and 17.2% continued to do it because it was their interest. One thing that is particularly interesting is that two participants (6.9%) said that they continued on the out-of-class learning activity because ‘most of *my classmates*’ English is good, so I need to catch up.’ This statement seems to suggest that their classmates play a role in their engagement in out-of-class learning.

- **Questionnaire section D (p.6): open ended question**

In this section, the participants freely wrote down their feelings regarding their learner group. The key words from their answers were identified, categorized, and are summarized in table 6.39 below.

Overall speaking, just like the results of Group 3C, the participants from Group 3D also had very positive opinion of their group and their classmates. For example, they said that they felt lucky to be a member of this group and found their classmates easy to get along with. The only exception is one participant who mentioned that he/she felt stressful in this group. Other than that, the majority of comments were very positive.

Statements	Frequency (N=31)
General Comments	
● I feel lucky to be a member of this group.	5
● This group has good atmosphere.	3
● We all get along very well.	2
● I have learned a lot from my classmates and it has raised my learning motivation.	1
● I feel no stress in this group.	1
● *I feel stressful in this group.	1
Regarding their classmates	
● friendly and easy to get along	9
● have very good English ability	7
● hard-working	5
● active and energetic	5
● encouraging and give compliments	3
● helpful (help each other out)	2
● enthusiastic attitude	1

Table 6.39 – 3D participants' views of their learner group

- **Questionnaire section B (I), section C, section E, section F, and section G (questionnaire p.3, p.5-8): Likert scale sections**

As for all the Likert scale sections (autonomous beliefs and actual behaviours on questionnaire p.3, self-efficacy on p.5, their group's cohesiveness on p.6, leadership on p.7, and norms on p.8), the Cronbach alpha internal consistency was checked and they all reached the satisfactory level (alpha = .70):

* Note: This is negative comment.

- Autonomous beliefs (alpha = .83) and actual behaviours (alpha = .78)
- Self-efficacy (alpha = .82)
- Group cohesiveness (alpha = .79)
- Group leadership (alpha = .79)
- Group norms (alpha= .72)

The overall descriptive statistics are shown as follows in table 6.40:

sections	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
<i>Autonomous beliefs</i>	31	1.67	2.22	3.89	3.43	.37	.14
<i>Autonomous behaviours</i>	31	2.20	1.40	3.60	2.70	.44	.20
<i>Self-efficacy</i>	31	1.80	2.00	3.80	2.71	.46	.20
<i>Group cohesiveness</i>	31	1.67	2.33	4.00	3.15	.42	.18
<i>Group leadership</i>	29	1.83	1.88	3.71	3.11	.44	.19
<i>Group norms</i>	29	1.60	2.00	3.60	2.85	.37	.14

Table 6.40 –Group 3D: Results of Likert scale sections

The detailed descriptive statistics of each participant can be found in Appendix 6.

6.2.3 The comparison of Group 3C and 3D

The following table 6.41 summarizes the answers of section A (learning orientations) and section B (II) (out-of-class learning) of junior groups, Group 3C and 3D.

Section	Ranking	Group 3C	Group 3D
Learning motives in general	No. 1	No. 15 (EM-ER*)	No. 5 / 12 (IM-K*, IM-S*)
	No. 2	No. 5 / 6 / 12 (IM-K/ IM-K/ IM-S)	No. 2 / 3 / 11 / 15 (IM-S/EM-ITR*/IM-K/EM-ER)
<i>Strongest</i> current learning motive	No. 1	No. 11 (IM-K)	No. 5 (IM-K)
	No. 2	No. 15 (EM-ER)	No. 15 (EM-ER)
Out-of-class learning activities	No. 1	No. 33 (listened to English radio shows)	No. 29 (noted down new words)
	No. 2	No. 31 (visited English websites)	No. 31 (visited English websites)
The one out-of-class learning that you engaged in most frequently	No. 1	No. 33 (listened to English radio shows)	No. 29 (noted down new words)
	No. 2	No. 32 (read newspapers, books or magazines in English)	No. 33 (listened to English radio shows)

Table 6.41 – The comparison of junior groups

* NOTE: The abbreviations for these terms stand for:

EM-ER: Extrinsic Motivation-External Regulation

EM-ITR: Extrinsic Motivation- Introjected Regulation

IM-K: Intrinsic Motivation- Knowledge

IM-S: Intrinsic Motivation- Stimulation

From table 6.41 we can see lots of similarities between these two groups. For instance, in the strongest motive section, both groups had *Intrinsic Motivation – Knowledge* as the most popular choice. The number one choice of Group 3C was No. 11: I learn English because English will enable me to broaden my view of the world, while the top choice of Group 3D was No. 5: I have always been interested in English and I would like to learn more about it. Both groups had *Extrinsic Motivation – External Regulation*, No. 15: I learn English so that I can get a better paying job in the future, as the second popular selection. In addition, for out-of-class learning activities, both groups had No. 31: visited English websites, and No. 33: listened to radio shows, as one of their most popular choices. Hence, it seems like these two groups of students do not differ much from each other, as far as their learning orientations and their out-of-class learning activities go.

As for the remaining sections, table 6.42 shows the statistical summary of junior groups, that is, the mean differences for all the Likert scale sections between Group 3C and 3D. Table 6.43 presents t-test results which indicate whether there is a statistical significant difference between these two groups of students. The only section that showed a statistical significant difference (at $p < 0.05$ level) is group norms. Those shared by the students in Group 3D were probably more positive than the ones in Group 3C. This is interesting since this is not something I observed during my observations while it is noteworthy in the questionnaire data. Other than that, junior participants' autonomous beliefs, autonomous behaviours, the cohesiveness and leadership of the groups all seem to have about the same level.

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<i>Autonomous beliefs</i>	Junior C	28	3.55	.33	.06
	Junior D	31	3.43	.37	.07
<i>Autonomous behaviours</i>	Junior C	28	2.83	.49	.09
	Junior D	31	2.70	.44	.08
<i>Self-efficacy</i>	Junior C	29	2.71	.48	.09
	Junior D	31	2.71	.46	.08
<i>Cohesiveness</i>	Junior C	29	3.00	.52	.10
	Junior D	31	3.14	.42	.08
<i>Leadership</i>	Junior C	26	2.93	.38	.08
	Junior D	29	3.11	.44	.08
<i>Norms</i>	Junior C	26	2.63	.38	.07
	Junior D	29	2.85	.37	.07

Table 6.42 –statistical summary of junior groups

		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error difference	Lower	Upper	
<i>Autonomous beliefs</i>	Equal variances assumed	1.263	57	.212	.1163	.09209	.06810	.30072	
	Equal variances not assumed	1.271	56.974	.209	.1163	.09150	.06692	.29953	
<i>Autonomous behaviours</i>	Equal variances assumed	1.116	57	.269	.1354	.12126	.10745	.37819	
	Equal variances not assumed	1.111	54.737	.272	.1354	.12189	.10894	.37967	
<i>Self-efficacy</i>	Equal variances assumed	-.021	58	.983	-.0026	.12099	.24475	.23963	
	Equal variances not assumed	-.021	57.106	.983	-.0026	.12123	.24530	.24019	
<i>Cohesiveness</i>	Equal variances assumed	-1.210	58	.231	-.1474	.12180	.39122	.09641	
	Equal variances not assumed	-1.201	53.724	.235	-.1474	.12270	.39343	.09862	
<i>Leadership</i>	Equal variances assumed	-1.597	53	.116	-.1781	.11152	.40182	.04553	
	Equal variances not assumed	-1.610	52.950	.113	-.1781	.11065	.40008	.04379	
<i>Norms</i>	Equal variances assumed	-2.134	53	.037	-.2172	.10178	.42135	.01305	
	Equal variances not assumed	-2.132	52.150	.038	-.2172	.10188	.42161	.01278	

Table 6.43 – T-test results of junior groups

6.3 Overall findings and discussions

This section will integrate the questionnaire data from all four groups and present overall results with relevant discussions.

6.3.1 Overall findings

The overall findings of the questionnaire data will focus on the following four areas:

- A. The comparison of learning orientations and out-of-class learning
- B. The comparison of Likert scale sections
- C. The relationship between group processes and learner motivation
- D. The relationship between autonomous beliefs and behaviours

6.3.1.1 The comparison of learning orientations and out-of-class learning

Table 6.44 summarizes the learning orientations, strongest motives, out-of-class learning activities and most frequently engaged out-of-class learning activities for all the participants. It seems that generally speaking, there was no significant difference among these four groups of students, or between seniors and juniors. Basically, their learning orientations and strongest motives were all a mixture of IM (Intrinsic Motivation) and EM (Extrinsic Motivation). The most common learning orientations were No. 5: I have always been interested in English and I would like to learn more about it, an *Intrinsic Motivation-Knowledge* motive, and No. 15: I learn English so that I can get a better paying job in the future, an *Extrinsic Motivation-External Regulation* motive. Moreover, the most common strongest motives were No.15: I learn English so that I can get a better paying job in the future, an *Extrinsic Motivation-External Regulation* motive, and No. 11: I learn English because English will enable me to broaden my view of the world, an *Intrinsic Motivation-Knowledge* motive.

Furthermore, the participants from all four groups also engaged in similar out-

Section	rank	Group 4C	Group 4D	Group 3C	Group 3D
A (I) ^{*1}	No. 1	No. 5 (IM-K)	No. 15 (EM-ER)	No. 15 (EM-ER)	No. 5 / 12 (IM-K, IM-S)
	No. 2	No. 2 (IM-S)	No. 11 (IM-S)	No. 5 / 6 / 12 (IM-K/ IM-K/ IM-S)	No. 2 / 3 11 / 15 (IM-S/EM-ITR/ IM-K/EM-ER)
A (II) ^{*2}	No. 1	No. 9 (IM-S)	No. 15 (EM-ER)	No. 11 (IM-K)	No. 5 (IM-K)
	No. 2	No. 12 (IM-S)	No. 11 (IM-S)	No. 15 (EM-ER)	No. 15 (EM-ER)
B (I) ^{*3}	No. 1	No. 31 (visited English websites)	No. 31 (visited English websites)	No. 33 (listened to English radio show)	No. 29 (noted down new words)
	No. 2	No. 32 (read English newspapers, books or magazines)	No. 32 (read English newspapers, books or magazines)	No. 31 (visited English websites)	No. 31 (visited English websites)
B (II) ^{*4}	No. 1	No. 32 (read English newspapers, books or magazines)	No. 37 (watch motives without subtitles)	No. 33 (listened to English radio show)	No. 29 (noted down new words)
	No. 2	No. 31 (visited English websites)	No. 31 and No. 33 (visited English websites) (listened to English radio show)	No. 32 (read newspapers, books or magazines in English)	No. 33 (listened to English radio show)

Table 6.44 – The comparison of all four groups

* Note:

*¹: Section A (I): learning orientations/motives; *²: Section A (II): strongest current motives

*³: Section B (I): out-of-class learning activities; *⁴:Section B (II): most frequently engaged out-of-class activities

Furthermore, the participants from all four groups also engaged in similar out-of-class learning activities. The most popular out-of-class learning activities were No. 31: visited English websites, and No. 32: read English newspapers, books or magazines. As for the most frequently engaged out-of-class learning activity, most participants chose No. 33: listened to English radio shows, No. 32: read English newspapers, books or magazines, and No. 31: visited English websites.

To conclude, for these sections (learning orientations and out-of-class learning activities) the participants from all four groups do not differ from each other much.

6.3.1.2 The comparison of Likert scale sections

T-test results between senior groups 4C and 4D (see section 6.1.3) and junior groups 3C and 3D (see section 6.2.3) did not show much of a difference between them, except a slight difference between Group 3C and 3D on group norms. Hence, it seems to make sense to treat seniors as one unit and juniors as another unit and compare seniors and juniors together for any statistical differences. The following tables (6.45 and 6.46) show the summary of the mean scores on all the Likert scale sections (autonomous beliefs, autonomous behaviours, self-efficacy, group cohesiveness, group leadership and group norms) and the t-test results between senior participants and junior participants.

	Year	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Autonomous beliefs	4 (senior)	67	3.53	.34	.04
	3 (junior)	59	3.49	.36	.046
Autonomous behaviours	4 (senior)	67	2.68	.52	.064
	3 (junior)	59	2.76	.47	.061
Self-efficacy	4 (senior)	66	2.68	.40	.049
	3 (junior)	60	2.71	.46	.060
Group cohesiveness	4 (senior)	66	2.67	.43	.053
	3 (junior)	60	3.08	.47	.061
Group leadership	4 (senior)	64	2.98	.41	.051
	3 (junior)	55	3.02	.42	.056
Group norms	4 (senior)	64	2.71	.50	.063
	3 (junior)	55	2.75	.39	.052

Table 6.45 – statistical summary of seniors and juniors

		t-test for Equality of Means						
		t	df	Sig. 2-tailed	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Autonomous beliefs	Equal variances assumed	-.714	124	.477	-.0439	.06159	-.16586	.07796
	Equal variances not assumed	-.711	119.972	.478	-.0439	.06181	-.16633	.07843
Autonomous behaviours	Equal variances assumed	.916	124	.361	.0814	.08888	-.09451	.25734
	Equal variances not assumed	.923	123.986	.358	.0814	.08822	-.09320	.25603
Self-efficacy	Equal variances assumed	.400	124	.690	.0307	.07675	-.12122	.18260
	Equal variances not assumed	.397	116.663	.692	.0307	.07732	-.12245	.18383
Group cohesiveness	Equal variances assumed	5.105	124	.000	.4112	.08054	.25176	.57059
	Equal variances not assumed	5.082	119.700	.000	.4112	.08090	.25098	.57136
Group leadership	Equal variances assumed	.601	117	.549	.0456	.07584	-.10460	.19579
	Equal variances not assumed	.600	113.267	.550	.0456	.07600	-.10498	.19617
Group norms	Equal variances assumed	.355	117	.723	.0295	.08323	-.13529	.19436
	Equal variances not assumed	.362	115.883	.718	.0295	.08167	-.13223	.19129

Table 6.46 – T-test results between seniors and juniors

As t-test results show, senior participants and junior participants had very different levels of cohesiveness. The cohesiveness mean score of senior groups was

2.7 while the mean score of junior groups was 3.1. The t-test confirmed that there is a statistically significant difference between them at .000 level. Hence, we can conclude that statistically junior groups were more cohesive than senior groups. This questionnaire finding also verifies my observation data which indicates that junior groups appear to be more cohesive since they paid attention to their classmates' presentation and showed support to each other in class while senior participants did not exhibit this kind of behaviour. This t-test result also supports the data I gathered in the open-ended question section (section D) of the questionnaires. In this section, senior participants gave mixed comments (both positive and negative) of their groups while junior participants mostly wrote positive comments. Earlier I assumed that it probably meant that junior groups were more cohesive than senior groups. My assumption was further validated by this t-test result.

As for the remaining sections (autonomous beliefs and behaviours, self-efficacy, group leadership and group norms), t-test results concluded that there is no statistically significant difference between seniors and juniors.

6.3.1.3 The relationship between group processes and learner motivation

One main question the questionnaires can shed some light on is the relationship between group processes and some aspects of learner motivation. Specifically, a Pearson's correlation test at 2-tailed significance level was administered (based on all the participants' data) to see whether the participants' autonomous beliefs, autonomous behaviours, and self-efficacy were in any ways related to their perception of the group, including its cohesiveness, leadership and norms.

		Autonomous beliefs	Autonomous behaviours	Self-efficacy	Group cohesiveness	Group leadership	Group norms
Autonomous beliefs	P. Correlation	1	<u>.25(**)</u>	.16	.10	-.06	.13
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.00	.08	.26	.52	.17
	N	126	125	125	125	118	118
Autonomous behaviours	P. Correlation	<u>.25(**)</u>	1	<u>.35(**)</u>	<u>.20(*)</u>	.07	<u>.27(**)</u>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.	.00	.02	.46	.00
	N	125	126	125	125	118	118
Self-efficacy	P. Correlation	.16	<u>.35(**)</u>	1	<u>.43(**)</u>	.16	<u>.23(*)</u>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.08	.00	.	.00	.09	.01
	N	125	125	126	126	118	118
Group cohesiveness	P. Correlation	.10	<u>.20(*)</u>	<u>.43(**)</u>	1	.14	<u>.34(**)</u>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.26	.02	.00	.	.13	.00
	N	125	125	126	126	118	118
Group leadership	P. Correlation	-.06	.07	.16	.14	1	.03
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.52	.46	.09	.13	.	.73
	N	118	118	118	118	119	119
Group norms	P. Correlation	.12	<u>.26(**)</u>	<u>.23(*)</u>	<u>.34(**)</u>	.032	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.17	.00	.01	.00	.73	.
	N	118	118	118	118	119	119

Table 6.47 -- Pearson's correlations results

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As table 6.47 shows, a few correlations were found:

1. A weak correlation between autonomous beliefs and behaviours
(.25 at 0.01 level)

2. A moderate correlation between self-efficacy and autonomous behaviours.
(.35 at 0.01 level)
3. A weak correlation between group cohesiveness and autonomous behaviours
(.20 at 0.05 level)
4. A moderate correlation between group cohesiveness and self-efficacy
(.43 at 0.01 level)
5. A weak correlation between group norms and autonomous behaviours.
(.27 at 0.01 level)
6. A weak correlation between group norms and self-efficacy
(.23 at 0.05 level)
7. A moderate correlation between group cohesiveness and group norms
(.34 at 0.01 level)

Based on my speculations some possible interpretations of the above correlations could be:

- A. Participants who had more positive autonomous beliefs might engage in more autonomous behaviours than those who did not have positive autonomous beliefs.
- B. Participants who had higher self-efficacy may exhibit more autonomous behaviours. In other words, participants who believed in their ability to succeed in learning English and felt good with their own English ability were probably more likely to show more autonomous behaviours.
- C. Autonomous behaviours also correlated with group cohesiveness. Though the correlation was not very strong, it does imply that to some degree, participants who thought their group was cohesive seem to exhibit more autonomous behaviours.

- D. Group cohesiveness also had a mild correlation with the participants' self-efficacy. It seems like the participants who thought their group was cohesive and who enjoyed being in their groups tend to have higher self-efficacy, that means, they might feel more confident of their English ability.
- E. Group norms also showed some level of correlation with autonomous behaviours and self-efficacy. Though both at a weak level, it indicates that participants who thought their group had more positive norms might in a way exhibit more autonomous behaviours and have higher self-efficacy.
- F. The two group processes, group cohesiveness and group norms, also correlated with each other at a moderate level. This probably means that these two processes have worked well together in trying to get how a group "feels": Participants who thought their groups to be cohesive also tend to believe that their groups had positive norms.

In a nutshell, Pearson's correlation test shows some interesting results.

Basically, two group processes, group cohesiveness and group norms, seem to be related to some aspects of learner motivation, particularly their autonomous behaviours and their level of self-efficacy. Furthermore, learners who had higher self-efficacy may also exhibit more autonomous behaviours. This seems to suggest that learner motivation may manifest itself in different ways, so it is important to explore learner motivation from various aspects. In a similar way, the Pearson's correlation test also shows that learners who believed their groups were cohesive were more likely to say that their groups had positive norms as well. To some degree this further verifies that it is important to explore the characteristics of a group from various aspects.

Finally, it is important to explain that I am aware that none of these correlations are strong enough to reach any definite conclusion. I do not intend to make any evident claims; however, I do think that these correlations provide some interesting insights and directions for further investigation in the interviews.

6.3.1.4 The relationship between autonomous beliefs and behaviours

To explore whether there is a discrepancy between learners' autonomous beliefs and their autonomous behaviours, I administered a paired samples t-test* between these two variables, and the result is shown below (table 6.48 and 6.49):

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 beliefs	3.51	125	.35	.03
behaviours	2.71	125	.50	.044

Table 6.48 -- Paired samples t-test statistics

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. 2-tailed
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 beliefs - behaviours	.80	.53	.05	.70	.89	16.88	124	<u>.000</u>

Table 6.49 -- paired samples t-test result

* Note: The use of paired-samples t-test is a little out of ordinary here. Normally, the paired-samples t-test is used to measure differences between the means of the *same variable* measured at two different points in time. However, I am using it to measure differences between the means of *two different variables* (autonomous beliefs and behaviour). I think this is the right test to use for the circumstance because these two variables could be treated as twin measures of the same variable (autonomy), and what the test is supposed to expose is a discrepancy between what students believe and what they actually do.

As the result shows, there was indeed a significant discrepancy between autonomous beliefs and autonomous behaviours at $p < .001$ significant level. This implies that learners may agree they are the one who should be responsible for their own learning; however, they do not always show the same enthusiasm through their behaviours. As for what causes this to happen, the questionnaire is not able to provide the answers. There will be a further discussion in the interview findings chapter (chapter seven, section 7.2.8).

6.3.2 Overall discussions

To summarize, the questionnaire data provides the following interesting findings:

1. Group processes, particularly group cohesiveness and group norms correlated with some aspects of learner motivation, such as learners' autonomous behaviours and their level of self-efficacy. Though the correlation was not strong, it did imply that group processes have a connection with individual learners' level of motivation. This provides empirical support for several researchers' claims (Dörnyei and Ehrman, 1998; Dörnyei and Melderez, 1999; Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003; Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001) that group dynamics is an important area that teachers should pay attention to in the classrooms. This finding is not too surprising in a logical sense, after all, since learners spend a great deal of time learning in groups at schools or universities, it does not seem sensible to exclude this social factor from the learning process (Brophy, 1999). The conversations or interactions learners have with their peers in their learner group should have some effects on their school lives, not only in their fundamental development of self-concept or self-esteem (Schmuck and Schmuck,

2001), but also in their successful learning experiences:

Group processes are a fundamental factor in most learning contexts and can make all the difference when it comes to successful learning experiences and outcomes. (Dörnyei and Malderez, 1999, p.10)

Having an enhanced self-esteem and successful learning experiences could both contribute to an enhanced learner motivation, thus connecting the importance of the learner group to learner motivation. Though the questionnaire data shows that there is a connection between group processes and some aspects of learner motivation, it is not sufficient to examine exactly in what ways the connections are. This is where the qualitative data will come in aid. The details of the relationship between group processes and learner motivation will be examined again in the next chapter in relation to the interview findings. (For relevant discussions please refer to chapter seven, section 7.2.3.)

2. All four groups did not show much of a difference in their level of motivation exhibited through learning orientations, out-of-class learning and level of self-efficacy. However, the t-test result showed that the level of cohesiveness was statistically different between seniors and juniors: junior groups were more cohesive than senior groups. This t-test result also supports the data from the open-ended question section of the questionnaire. In this section, senior participants wrote both positive and negative comments of their groups while junior participants mostly wrote positive comments. Having mixed comments of a learner group seems to be an indication of lower cohesiveness which is what the t-test results concluded. This finding is consistent with my observation data (see chapter five, section 5.2). My observation data suggests that junior groups appear to be more cohesive since they

seem to care more about their classmates' experiences, for instance, they paid attention (by taking notes or nodding) to their classmates' presentations and said encouraging words to their classmates when they did a good job. On the other hand, in senior groups, a lot of students were doing their own things on the computer (the class was conducted in a computer lab) when their classmates were doing a presentation. Based on this, I concluded that junior groups appear to be more cohesive than senior groups, which is further verified by the questionnaire data.

3. The Pearson's correlation test shows there was a correlation between group cohesiveness and level of self-efficacy. The t-test result shows that senior groups and junior groups had a statistically different level of cohesiveness. Intuitively, when the cohesiveness of the two groups is at a different level, their level of motivation, such as self-efficacy, should be at a different level as well since these two variables are correlated according to the correlation test. However, this is not the case in my research. The t-test concludes that the level of self-efficacy between senior participants and junior participants were about the same. This is probably because while one's perception of the group cohesiveness may change his/her level of motivation, it is probably not *the only* factor that influences his or her motivation to learn. It is very likely that there are some other factors other than group processes that could have an effect on one's motivation. Through in-depth interviews with the participants I shall be able to discover what those potential influencing factors are. (For relevant discussions please refer to chapter seven, section 7.2.6.)

4. The questionnaire data also shows that there was a discrepancy between learners' autonomous beliefs and their behaviours. In other words, learners might agree that

they were responsible for their own learning; however, they might not always show the same level of devotedness through their behaviours. As I explained in chapter two, this is similar to people who understand the value of regular exercise but do not always have a regular exercise routine. Some other research has also identified the same problem, for instance, Lai (1999) discovers that many Hong Kong students do not put their beliefs in action, for instance, 96% of them considered self-access learning to be a good way to learn English, but only 48% of them actually did go to the self-access learning center. Chan et al (2002) have also conducted autonomy research in the Hong Kong context and learned that students' attitudes do not always reflect their actual autonomous behaviours. These two relevant research studies along with my questionnaire findings reveal that it is a concern when learners (particularly Chinese learners) do not always do what they believe is important in the area of learner autonomy. It seems important to examine this issue with my research participants in the interviews and investigate why such a mismatch between their beliefs and behaviours exist. (For relevant discussions please refer to chapter seven, section 7.2.8.)

5. Finally, the Pearson's correlation test also showed that there is a correlation between two aspects of learner motivation, self-efficacy and autonomous behaviours. The correlation was also identified between two group processes, group cohesiveness and norms. One interpretation of this is that learners who have higher self-efficacy might also exhibit more autonomous behaviours while learners who believe their learner group is cohesive are more likely to say that their group has positive norms. This shows that these two aspects of motivation and two group processes have worked well together to measure the participants' level of motivation

and the characteristics of their learner group. This correlation result shall be a good reference for future studies, for instance, combining group cohesiveness and group norms together when examining the characteristics of a group might prove to be reliable and useful.

6.4 Summary

This chapter has presented a detailed report on the questionnaire results of each group, from the senior groups, Group 4C and 4D to the junior groups, Group 3C and 3D. This chapter concluded by discussing the overall findings of the questionnaire data. The next chapter will give a detailed account of the interview data to complete the data representation.

Chapter Seven – Interview Findings

The interviews took place from January 2005 to June 2005. They were carried out in two phases; teacher interviews were conducted during the first phase: from 5th January to 12th January, 2005. I interviewed all six teachers who taught the compulsory courses of my target groups. Each interview took about 15 minutes, except for one teacher (Fanny, 40-45 minutes) who taught three target groups. Student interviews followed the teacher interviews in the second phase, 21st March and ended on 16th June, (please refer to Appendix 5 for a detailed interview schedule). Three participants from each target group for a total of 12 participants were selected based on their questionnaire answers and interviewed for about 30 minutes. Both teacher and student interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese, the native language of my interviewees. They explained that they felt more comfortable expressing themselves in their native language instead of in a foreign language even though the teachers were all fluent in English and the students' English ability should pose no problems in this communication purpose. The interviews were then transcribed and translated into English and the English transcripts were validated by the interviewees after reading a transcript of their interview.

This chapter is going to present findings from the teacher interview data first followed by student interview data*. The final section will discuss overall results.

7.1 Teacher interview data

This section focuses on the findings from the teacher interviews with Betty and Fanny who were the teachers of Group 4C and Group 4D, respectively. During

* In order to preserve anonymity, the interviewees' names used in this study are pseudonyms.

the time of my research, there was only one compulsory course for senior groups so there was only one teacher interview for Group 4C and Group 4D. On the other hand, for each junior group (Group 3C and Group 3D) there were three teacher interviews since there were three compulsory courses for junior year students. Thomas, Nancy and Fanny were the teachers of Group 3C while Barbara, Jane and Fanny were the teachers of Group 3D.

After the interviews were transcribed and translated into English, the coding process began. Coding categories were formed from two aspects; one was from the core questions that were common to all interviewees, for example, “How would you describe the motivation of your group?” or “How would you describe the cohesiveness of your group?” The answers to these questions, such as, “I think this group is good as far as motivation goes,” or “they are a nice group of students who really care about each other and are cohesive,” were singled out, coded, and then formed into a category. Two examples of the categories are ‘participants’ view of group motivation’ (see section 7.1.1) and ‘participants’ view of group cohesiveness’ (see section 7.1.2).

After the coding categories from core interview questions were identified, the second coding categories were formed. I revisited the interview transcripts in an attempt to examine any key themes that could have emerged from the pool of interview data, regardless of the teacher and the corresponding group. No direct questions were asked regarding these themes; rather, they were developed from the answers interviewees had to some other questions or their general comments in the interviews. Two themes were categorized from this aspect: ‘the influences of prior group experiences’ (see section 7.1.3) and ‘the influence of groups on individual learners’ (see section 7.1.4).

This section is going to focus on two vital themes from the first coding aspect, 'group motivation' and 'group cohesiveness', and the two themes from the second coding aspect: 'the influences of prior group experiences' and 'the influences of groups on individual learners'. They are all central to the purpose of this research and will be examined with both reflective commentary and illustrative quotations from the interviews.

7.1.1 Group motivation

This sub-section presents each teacher's views of the motivation of their group and then further explores the components of motivation by synthesizing viewpoints of the different teachers.

7.1.1.1 Group 4C

Betty seems to have a favorable opinion of Group 4C and was particularly pleased with the motivation of the group. She commented that "their motivation is quite high", because they "have been working hard, and care a lot about their grades." Betty's comment regarding the high motivation of the group contradicts with what I had observed in her class. My observation notes record that this group did not seem to care about learning very much because they were not very participatory in class and lacked interest in the course content (please see section 5.1.1). Since I could only observe a couple of hours during the semester, my observation notes may not be very representative. Students could be particularly distracted during those classes I observed for some reasons (such as the approach of a holiday or a big exam). This could be the reason why my observation data and the teacher's comment on the group show a discrepancy.

7.1.1.2 Group 4D

Contrary to Betty's opinion of Group 4C, Fanny seems to have more of a

negative opinion of Group 4D. Fanny seems to indicate that this group was not very motivated since “I felt like I designed something too difficult for them and therefore lowered their motivation for this course.” This statement explains that Fanny felt the level of the motivation was not high and she was trying to find a reasonable explanation for it. Fanny’s opinion of the low motivation of the group is consistent with my observation notes indicating that this group of students did not seem to care about the course content very much (please see section 5.1.2).

7.1.1.3 Group 3C

Overall speaking, these three teachers (Thomas, Nancy and Fanny) had a positive opinion of Group 3C. Out of these three teachers, Thomas and Fanny had mostly positive opinions, especially on the motivation of the group. According to Thomas, “the interactions they had with me showed that they had high motivation,” while for Fanny, “they always pay attention in class and put in a lot of effort [towards course work].” These two teachers’ high opinion of the group motivation accords with my own observation notes (section 5.2.1), which also suggest that this group of students showed much enthusiasm and was very responsive in class.

However, the other teacher Nancy has slightly mixed views on the motivation of the group. Nancy explained that “at the beginning of the semester, everyone was very motivated and had more energy, but by the end of the semester, the situation changed.” Also, she mentioned their motivation is “situation-specific.” For instance, when the assignment was harder, their motivation seemed lower. This is something Thomas and Fanny did not mention in their interviews. However, it could be because this is something normal in their mind and they did not see the need to mention it. As researchers have begun to emphasize (e.g. Shoaib and Dörnyei, 2005; Ushioda, 2001), motivation is in constant flux and Nancy’s opinion indicates that learner

motivation could change even within a short period time.

7.1.1.4 Group 3D

These three teachers (Barbara, Jane and Fanny) had a very positive opinion of Group 3D. They all explained that this group of students was highly motivated. For example, Barbara explained that “the students are very cooperative and their motivation is quite high,” and both Jane and Fanny explicitly said “their motivation is high.” This unified impression is confirmed by my observation notes (section 5.2.2) which reveal that Group 3D is a highly motivated group.

7.1.1.5 Integration

To summarize the above comments, the teacher interview data on group motivation does not exhibit many conflicts. Their viewpoints of the motivation of their group are consistent throughout the interviews and different teachers also seem to have fairly similar impressions of the same group (the only exception is Nancy from Group 3C). In addition to merely reporting on the teachers’ impressions of their group motivation, it seems necessary to further explore these teachers’ ideas of motivation, i.e. *how* did they judge their group motivation. To this end, I analyzed their specific examples when describing the motivation of their group to investigate any common or unique elements (please see table 7.1 below):

Teacher	Examples of learner motivation
Betty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● no late assignments ● assignment quality is good ● volunteer to ask questions in class ● care about the grade ● work hard ● everyone participates in group discussions in class
Fanny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● pay attention to the teacher and group presentations in class ● no one falls asleep during the teacher's lecture ● assignment quality is good ● participate in on-line discussion enthusiastically ● lots of effort on assignments or presentations
Thomas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● interaction in class, such as smiling or asking questions ● design interesting and creative class activities ● care about learning
Nancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● good energy shown in class ● amount of effort put in for the assignments
Barbara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● cooperative in class ● doing extra assignments ● initiative, like asking questions or giving suggestions in class
Jane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● do what the teacher says ● produce high quality assignment

Table 7.1 -- Teachers' specific examples of learner motivation

All these examples generally fall into the following three categories:

A: General learning attitudes

B: In-class attitudes or behaviours

C: Homework assignments

The following table (7.2) classifies the teachers' examples of motivation based on these three categories:

A: general learning attitudes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. care about the grade (<i>Betty</i>) 2. care about learning (<i>Thomas</i>) 3. work hard (<i>Betty</i>)
B: in-class attitudes or behaviours	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. interactive or initiative in class, for example, volunteer to ask questions, give suggestions, smile (<i>Betty, Thomas, Barbara</i>) 2. cooperative, do what the teacher says (<i>Barbara and Jane</i>) 3. good energy shown in class, for example, no one falls asleep during the teacher's lecture. (<i>Fanny and Nancy</i>) 4. pay attention to the teacher and group presentations (<i>Fanny</i>) 5. everyone participates in group discussions (<i>Betty</i>)
C: homework assignments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. assignment quality is good (<i>Betty, Fanny, Jane</i>) 2. amount of effort put in for the assignment (<i>Nancy</i>) 3. no late assignments (<i>Betty</i>) 4. participate in on-line discussions enthusiastically (<i>Fanny</i>) 5. designing interesting and creative class activities (<i>Thomas</i>) 6. do extra assignments (<i>Barbara</i>)

Table 7.2 – Teachers' overall interpretations of learner motivation

As table 7.2 indicates, teachers mainly interpret learner motivation from the learners' attitudes or behaviours in the classrooms and also from their homework assignments. When these teachers commented on the motivation of their group, almost all of them cited at least one example from either category B (in-class attitudes or behaviours) or category C (homework assignments). Only occasionally did they define learner motivation from category A (general learning attitudes). One explanation of this finding is that the teachers do not see the students on a daily basis. In most cases, the teachers come to the group and teach the group for three hours per week. In-class behaviours are the most direct and convenient way to judge a group of students' motivation. More than half of the teachers mentioned that interactions and cooperation shown in class are signs of motivation to them. Basically, the teachers

enjoy teaching a group of students who respond to the teachers' questions voluntarily, who ask questions in class, give suggestions, or follow the teachers' instructions. Many teachers in my research context will regard a group like this to be a motivated group.

In addition, teachers also use the homework assignment as a sign of the students' level of motivation. I suppose from the teachers' points of view, if the students are willing to devote much time to their homework assignments and produce a high quality product, this shows that they are interested and serious in language learning, which could signal high motivation.

It will be interesting to compare these findings with the student interview data and see if students also interpret their motivation mainly from in-class attitudes/behaviours and homework assignments.

7.1.2. Group cohesiveness

Following the pattern of section 7.1.1 (group motivation), this sub-section also begins with each teacher's views of the cohesiveness of their group. Then, I will further explore the components of the cohesiveness by integrating their opinions.

7.1.2.1 Group 4C

Unlike her consistent opinion on the motivation of Group 4C, Betty seems to have conflicting views on group cohesiveness. At the beginning of the interview, she commented that "I won't say [their cohesiveness] is very high, but generally speaking it's OK." However, later in the interview she mentioned that when other students were doing a presentation, the rest of the students did not pay attention; instead, "they talked or gossiped." This description corresponds with my classroom observation notes which also records that this group of students did not pay attention

to their classmates' presentations (see section 5.1.1). This example shows me that Group 4C probably had a low level of cohesiveness since they did not seem to care about what their classmates had to say. The low cohesiveness of Group 4C also supports the questionnaire finding that senior groups have statistically significant lower cohesiveness than junior groups (see section 6.3.1.2).

7.1.2.2 Group 4D

Unfortunately, I lack teacher interview data on the issue of cohesiveness in relation to Group 4D. The teacher who taught Group 4D, Fanny, is the teacher who taught three of target groups at the same time. In one interview, I asked her questions about Group 4D, Group 3C and Group 3D. When she talked about Group 4D, she spent a lot of time talking about how a couple of students in that group influenced the rest of the class. I was intrigued by her comments and followed up on that issue for a long time. Thus, during the process I missed the opportunity of asking her about her impression of Group 4D's cohesiveness.

7.1.2.3. Group 3C

All three teachers (Thomas, Fanny, and Nancy) unanimously indicated that the cohesiveness of Group 3C was high. For instance, Thomas said, "I think [their cohesiveness] is fine...they seem to care about their small groups' presentations in my class." Fanny and Nancy concurred with Thomas' opinion by saying, "they care about each other very much." The high cohesiveness of Group 3C matches with my observation notes (section 5.2.1) and also with the questionnaire finding that junior groups have higher cohesiveness than senior groups (section 6.3.1.2).

7.1.2.4 Group 3D

Out of these three teachers (Barbara, Jane, and Fanny), both Jane and Fanny believed that the cohesiveness of Group 3D was high. These two teachers presented

a positive illustration of the cohesiveness of Group 3D by saying that “they seem to genuinely care about each other” (Jane) and “they were very nice as a group” (Fanny). These two teachers’ opinions matched both my observation notes (section 5.2.2) and the questionnaire results (6.3.1.2).

However, the other teacher, Barbara, was a bit reserved: “I didn’t really feel like they did a good job when they worked together in small groups.” From this experience, she wondered whether that was because the group had low cohesiveness. But she herself also realized it could be an unfair judgment since it was “the very beginning of the semester and they probably didn’t know each other very well at that time, so it’s hard to say.”

7.1.2.5 Integration

To sum up, most teachers are consistent in their opinions of the cohesiveness of their group and teachers of different groups have similar impressions. However, Betty of Group 4C and Barbara of Group 3D are the two exceptions. Betty seems to say that the cohesiveness of Group 4C was “OK” while some of her other comments in the interview indicated otherwise. Barbara’s opinion of the possibly low cohesiveness of Group 3D was not the same as the comments from the other two teachers in the same group.

To further explore the teachers’ idea of cohesiveness and how they judged the cohesiveness of their group, I analyzed the specific examples they gave (see table 7.3 below).

Teacher	Examples of group cohesiveness
Betty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● care about each other ● be able to make jokes at the expense of other students
Fanny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● care about each other ● pay attention to their classmates' presentations and give feedback ● get along well ● show willingness to learn from their classmates
Thomas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● care about their classmates' small group presentations ● know the group members well
Nancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● care about each other ● positive feelings and atmosphere in class
Barbara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● work together well in small groups
Jane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● care about each other and know each other well ● no cliques ● be aware of each other's likes and dislikes

Table 7.3 -- Teachers' specific examples of group cohesiveness

All these examples can be generally coded into two categories:

A. The relationship among the students

B. In-class behaviours

Table 7.4 below summarizes specific examples from each category:

A: The relationship among the students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. care about each other (<i>Betty, Fanny, Nancy, Jane</i>) 2. know each other well, such as know each other's likes and dislikes (<i>Thomas, Jane</i>) 3. get along well (<i>Fanny</i>) 4. be able to make jokes at the expense of other students (<i>Betty</i>) 5. no cliques (<i>Jane</i>)
B: In-class behaviours	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. care about their classmates' presentations, including paying attention and giving feedback (<i>Fanny, Thomas</i>) 2. work well in small groups (<i>Barbara</i>) 3. positive feelings and atmosphere in class (<i>Jane</i>) 4. willingness to learn from their classmates (<i>Fanny</i>)

Table 7.4 -- Teachers' overall interpretations of group cohesiveness

Most teachers cited one example from both category A (the relationship among the students) and category B (in-class behaviours) when describing the cohesiveness of their group. In other words, most teachers weigh these two categories equally. However, in Betty's and Barbara's case, this pattern does not follow. Their different interpretations of what cohesiveness is might result in different perceptions of the group. For instance, when Betty was characterizing the cohesiveness of Group 4C, she only cited examples from category A (the relationship among the students). When she commented that while one small group within the class was doing a presentation, other students did not pay attention to them, she did not link this characterization to group cohesiveness. The very same characterization, however, was illustrated by two other teachers as an example of group cohesiveness. Both Fanny (Group 3C and 3D) and Thomas (Group 3C) believed that paying attention to their classmates' small group presentations in class is a way of showing the cohesiveness of the group. Perhaps in Betty's mind, group cohesiveness only refers to the relationship among the students, thus, she believed that Group 4C had an average level of cohesiveness. However, judging from the in-class behaviours of

Group 4C, it seems reasonable to challenge Betty's opinion and assume that the cohesiveness of Group 4C is probably lower than she thought.

Barbara also seems to have different interpretations of what cohesiveness is which might explain her different perceptions of the group. When talking about the cohesiveness of the group, Barbara only cited examples from category B (in-class behaviours) while the other two teachers of the same group, Jane and Fanny, illustrated at least one example from category A (the relationship among the students). It is possible that this is the reason why Barbara's opinion of the cohesiveness of the group is different from Jane and Fanny. If Barbara takes "the relationship among the students" into account, will her opinion of the cohesiveness of Group 3D change? All these answers may remain unanswered for this present study; however, these analyses suggest that different teachers may have different interpretations of what group cohesiveness is. These different interpretations might result in different perceptions of the cohesiveness of the group.

7.1.3 The influences of prior group experiences

The above sections summarized each teacher's views of motivation and cohesiveness of the target groups. From the interview data I have discovered that teachers can present a slightly different picture of the same learner group. As mentioned in sub-section 7.1.2.5, one reason for these differences might be their different interpretations of cohesiveness, for example, some teachers interpret cohesiveness from the relationship among students while some others interpret from their in-class behaviours. Other than the different interpretations, could there be any other possible explanations for their different perceptions? For instance, Nancy seems to have a different impression of the motivation of Group 3C from the other

two teachers (Thomas and Fanny) of the same group. However, Nancy interpreted learner motivation from the categories of “students’ in-class attitudes” and “homework assignments,” just as Thomas and Fanny did. So, why do different perceptions occur? One of my speculations is that the teacher’s perception of the group could be influenced by their other teaching experiences. While describing the group they were teaching, *almost all* the teachers compared the group with some other similar teaching experiences. Here are a few instances:

1. When Fanny was commenting on Group 4D, she kept comparing Group 4D with Group 3D:

Fanny: And students in Group 4D tend to be late to class and skip more classes than **other groups** I have taught. They were like that when they were juniors, and now they’re seniors, and it still hasn’t improved much.....This situation never happened in my **current** 3D group this semester, and the class is actually scheduled to end even later, up to 18:20. [emphasis added]

2. When Barbara was commenting on Group 3D, she also compared Group 3D with the group she taught the previous year:

Barbara: Hmmm, students [of Group 3D] are very cooperative, and their motivation is quite high. So I have a good time teaching them. It’s a lot better than the group from last year.

Barbara: With the group from last year, I could see most of them didn’t even do their homework. However, students from the group this year do the homework most of the time even though they know I probably am not going to collect it.

These excerpts suggest that it seems common for the teachers to compare the group they are teaching now with the group they taught before and form some opinion of the current group based on the comparison. I suspect this kind of comparison may

result in different perceptions of the same group, meaning two teachers teaching the same group may have different opinions of the group due to their *other* teaching experiences. This might explain why Nancy's opinion of the motivation of Group 3C is not quite the same as the other two teachers'. As you may recall, Thomas seems to have a very positive experience with Group 3C. During the interview he kept saying that Group 3C was a lot better than the group he taught the previous year:

Thomas: This current group is very creative. I can give them a simple activity and they would use their creativity to make it a lot of fun. This didn't happen in **the previous group**. Students from **the previous group** were more passive and less creative; a simple activity for them would still turn out to be a simple activity. [emphasis added]

Contrary to Thomas' pleasant experiences with Group 3C, Nancy expressed her occasional frustrations with the group. She felt that students in Group 3C cared less about learning toward the end of the semester and also when the assignment was harder, students' motivation was lower. During the interview she shared her previous teaching experiences:

Nancy: Well, the group at Chung-yuan University was cohesive and my relationship with them was particularly good. We were very close at that time. They were never late to the class and always came to the class. They always paid full attention.

This illustration shows that her previous teaching experience at Chung-yuan University was very positive. Could this pleasant experience of teaching the same course at another university result in her occasional frustrations with Group 3C? Although she admitted that it was unfair to compare, she still could not help but say things like "this current group is *almost* as good as the previous group:"

Nancy: But it's hard to compare this way. At Chung-yuan University the class was in the afternoon while this current class is scheduled in the morning at 9:00. Maybe this is a factor, so I think it's unfair to compare like this. I will say that this current group is almost as good as the previous group, at least as far as the motivation goes.

All in all, it appears that teachers often compare different groups they have taught and this kind of comparison may contribute to different impressions of the same learner group. Moreover, through the comparison a regular pattern emerges; when the teachers had an unpleasant experience with the previous group, they seem to be very satisfied with the current group. This is certainly true for Fanny, Barbara, and Thomas. On the other hand, teachers, like Nancy, who had a very positive experience with the previous group seems to have more frustration with the current group. It will be interesting to see if the same pattern holds true for students' interview data.

7.1.4 The influences of groups on individual learners

Another important theme arising from the teacher interview data is the influences of the learner groups on individual learners. During the interview Fanny made lots of comments on how she believed a group of students have influenced other students within the same group, either as far as group norms go (being on-time to class), or as far as aspects relating to learner motivation go (participating in on-line discussion).

Fanny: But I think the problem is not whether I enforce my rules or not, but how many students are late or how many don't do the assignment. Because students can be easily influenced by others, so if a lot of them are late or a lot of them don't do the assignments, those who are on-time or those who do the assignments will start to be late and not do the assignments.

Clearly, Fanny pointed out that certain students' behaviour has influenced others and students' behaviour could change throughout the whole semester from the interactions they had in their learner group. These comments provide significant support for my research. They clearly indicate that this teacher, through her teaching experiences, has observed that an individual learner's learning can be influenced by others in the same learner group, a core argument of my research.

Another relevant though not similar comment from the teacher interview data concerns the individual learner's influence upon the learner group. Previously Fanny was explaining how *a group of students* have the potential to influence other students in the group. However, is it possible that *one single student* has the power to influence others in the same group? The evidence seems to emerge from my interview with Nancy. During the interview, Nancy made an intriguing comment that one particular student, who was elected as the leader of the student union of the Applied English Department, was influencing other students in a negative way:

Nancy: Hmm... One particular student got elected to be the leader of the student union of the English Department at the end of last year. She is a very nice student and is very competent. No doubt that's why she became the leader of the students' union of the English Department. But her workload became very heavy and because of this she started to come to the class late. I think this is not very good. She is supposed to be a leader, which means that she should be a good model student for her classmates to follow, but instead, she started to come to class late. **Ever since she started to come to class late, more students came to class late too. She wasn't setting a good example and I was worried about this...** [emphasis added]

Although my research focus is the influence of the learner group (a group of students) on individual learners, this excerpt clearly shows how an individual learner has the potential to influence other learners within the group, making the relationship

between these two factors bidirectional. The argument now is, does *any* individual have the same potential to influence the group? Or does that individual have to possess certain qualities? If certain qualities are essential, what are those qualities? For example, in this case, this student is the leader of the student union of the Applied English Department, so does this make a difference? All these points may be beyond the scope of this research; however, they are certainly worth further investigation.

To sum up, section 7.1 has presented data from teacher interviews. It has summarized key comments teachers made regarding each learner group and discussed some important themes arising from the data. The next section will follow the same pattern discussing data from student interviews.

7.2 Student interview data

This section will present findings from student interviews following the pattern of section 7.1. Three participants from each group were chosen according to their different answers from the questionnaires (ones who seem to have positive views of the group, neutral views of the group and negative views of the group):

	Positive views	Neutral views	Negative views
Group 4C	Whitney	Tina	Jack
Group 4D	Ray	Debbie	Kelly
Group 3C	Kate	Helen	Gina
Group 3D	Tracy	Flora	Tim

Table 7.5-- A list of student interviewees

The process of coding student interview data was similar to that used for the teacher

interview data (see section 7.1). Most coding categories are from the core questions common to all interviewees. Since each student interview lasted about 30 minutes, a substantial amount of core questions were asked. From these core questions (like “In your opinion, how is your classmates’ motivation?” or “What is a ‘good’ learner group in your mind?”), coding categories were developed, such as ‘the participants’ views of the motivation of the group’ (see section 7.2.1) or ‘the participants’ definition of a ‘good’ learner group’ (see section 7.2.4). Nine key themes are discussed from this coding category in detail with my commentary and illustrative excerpts in sections 7.2.1–7.2.9. The tenth theme, the age factor (section 7.2.10), is the only coding category that is not from the core questions common to all the interviewees. No direct questions were asked regarding this category; rather, it was developed from the answers interviewees gave to other questions.

7.2.1 Group motivation

In this sub-section individual interviewees’ comments are discussed on the motivation of their learner group. The interviewees’ viewpoints are first summarized and then their perspectives integrated.

7.2.1.1 Group 4C

Whitney, Jack and Tina all had positive opinions of the motivation of their group. They said that their classmates “study very hard” (Whitney and Jack) and are “studious and motivated” (Tina). These statements do not match with my own observation notes which indicate that they appeared disinterested in those classes I observed (e.g. they chatted privately among themselves or did their own thing on the computer during the teacher’s lecture or their classmates’ presentations – see section 5.1.1). However, these illustrations do match with the teacher’s (Betty) point of view

(see 7.1.1.1). Both the teacher and the students of Group 4C believe that this group had high motivation and cared very much about their learning.

7.2.1.2 Group 4D

Unlike the data of Group 4C, three interviewees from Group 4D, Kelly, Ray, and Debbie seem to have inconsistent views on the motivation of their group. Only Kelly was consistent with her negative comments about her classmates' not being very motivated because "most students don't seem to work very hard [in my group]." There were even conflicting statements during the interview of a single interviewee. At the beginning Ray said his classmates are "motivated, and they care about learning more." Later in the interview when I tried to further explore this issue, his comment changed to "[the motivation] is high in a way, but not as high as I expected." He was complaining that his classmates did not seem motivated enough to welcome the challenge of a more difficult assignment. A similar thing happened with Debbie. At the beginning of the interview, when she was talking about her general impressions of Group 4D, she said that "*all* my classmates care about their learning very much and *all* have been working very hard." Later when I asked about her specific comments on the motivation of her group, she changed to "*half* of the students are hard working and *half* of them are not." These interviewees' inconsistent views indicates the motivation of Group 4D seems to vary due to different circumstances. For instance, their motivation may depend on which class they are referring to or the timing of the semester. Since these interviewees' views on group motivation are inconsistent, it is hard to compare them with the observation notes (section 5.1.2) and the teacher's comment of the group motivation (section 7.1.1.2), both of which indicate that this group of students do not appear motivated.

7.2.1.3 Group 3C

Three interviewees from Group 3C (Kate, Helen, and Gina) generally believed that this group was highly motivated. For example, Kate believed that the motivation of the group was high because “everyone is hard working”, Helen believed that her classmates were all “enthusiastic in learning” while Gina said that “[the motivation] seems fine most of the time” since “[my classmates] study very hard and get good grades.”

These interviewees’ comments accord with my observation notes (section 5.2.1) and also most teachers’ comments (section 7.1.1.3) showing that Group 3C is fundamentally a highly motivated group.

7.2.1.4 Group 3D

Similar to the data of Group 3C, Tracy, Flora, and Tim from Group 3D also had unanimous views of the high motivation of the group. According to Tracy, the motivation of the group was high because “whenever we have a difficult assignment, we will all work together and discuss together.” In addition, Flora also said that “[the motivation of the group] is quite good” because her classmates all “seem to be interested in school work,” while Tim believed that “everyone studies very hard.”

There was no inconsistency in their opinion; basically, Group 3D was a very motivated group. This result adds validity to the findings from both my observation notes (section 5.2.2) and teachers’ comments which also indicate the high motivation of Group 3D (section 7.1.1.4).

7.2.1.5 Integration

To sum up, students of Group 4C, Group 3C and Group 3D all commented on the high motivation of their learner group and their viewpoints were fairly consistent. However, this consistency is not exhibited in the data of Group 4D. Interviewees

from Group 4D had rather different opinions on this subject matter with two interviewees contradicting themselves on the motivation of the group at different points in the interview. To further investigate these students' ideas of motivation, I analyzed their specific examples when describing the motivation of their group:

Students	Examples of learner motivation or {lack of motivation}*
Whitney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● study hard ● have high grade
Tina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● studious ● have been doing things to improve their English or prepared for their future job even though the teacher didn't ask to do so
Jack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● study hard ● test result
Ray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● care about learning ● interested in the subject ● {complain about harder assignment}
Debbie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● work hard ● care about learning ● prepare well for assignments or presentations
Kelly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● { do not pay attention to the school work} ● { do not work hard} ● {do minimum amount of work for presentations}
Kate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● hard working
Helen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● enthusiastic in learning
Gina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● study hard, especially right before tests ● high scores
Tracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● work together to discuss a hard assignment
Flora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● interested in school work ● work hard on the presentations
Tim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● study hard ● presentations are good ● high grades

Table 7.6 – Students' specific examples of learner motivation

* These are examples when interviewees explained why the group was *not* motivated.

Students' examples of learner motivation can be organized into the following four categories:

A: general learning attitudes

B: homework assignments or presentations

C. academic achievement

D. autonomous behaviours

The following Table 7.7 synthesizes students' examples of learner motivation based on these four categories:

A: general learning attitudes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. study hard or be studious (<i>Whitney, Jack, Tina, Debbie, Kelly, Kate, Gina, and Tim</i>) 2. care about learning (<i>Ray and Debbie</i>) 3. be interested in school work (<i>Ray and Flora</i>) 4. be enthusiastic in learning (<i>Helen</i>) 5. pay attention to school work (<i>Kelly</i>)
B: homework assignments or presentations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. prepare well or work hard for the assignments or presentations (<i>Debbie, Flora, Kelly</i>) 2. work together for an assignment (<i>Tracey</i>) 3. The quality of presentations is good. (<i>Tim</i>) 4. welcome the challenge of harder assignment (<i>Ray</i>)
C: academic achievement	test results, such as high grades (<i>Whitney, Jack, Debbie, and Gina</i>)
D: autonomous behaviours	have been doing things to improve their English or prepared for their future jobs even though the teacher didn't ask us to do so (<i>Tina</i>)

Table 7.7– Students' overall interpretations of learner motivation

Table 7.7 clearly shows that from these student interviewees' point of view, the most common example of learner motivation is "study hard" or "be studious." Eight out of twelve interviewees cited this example. In addition, almost every interviewee (except Tracy) mentioned at least one example from the category of 'general learning attitudes' when they described the motivation of the group, making

this category the most common one. Although teachers' interview data also has the category of 'general learning attitudes', this is actually the least popular category. Instead, the most common category in the teachers' data are 'in-class attitudes/behaviours' (such as 'being interactive in class' or 'discussing fully during group discussions') and 'homework assignment,' e.g. the assignment is of good quality. It is interesting to discover that the category of 'in-class attitudes/behaviours' does not exist in the students' interview data, making this category unique to the teachers' viewpoint. From the above analysis, it seems clear that teachers and students have different interpretations of what motivation is. Teachers seem to focus more on in-class attitudes or behaviours while students pay more attention to general learning attitudes. This could be because teachers cannot know what students are thinking and feeling being with them just a couple of hours per week, so they have to base their conception of motivation on what they can observe from the outside – i.e., student behaviours in the classroom. Students, on the other hand, spend a lot of time together and have a better idea or know what they think and feel and so they have an insider perspective on motivation within their learner group.

Furthermore, both teachers and students share the same category of 'homework assignment/presentations' as the second popular category. This shows that both teachers and students agree that spending time and effort on homework assignments demonstrates learners' interest and motivation in language learning.

It is also interesting to observe that a considerable number of students (1/3 of the interviewees) used their classmates' test scores to judge the level of motivation. Yet, none of the teachers used the test scores as a way to judge the students' motivation, at least, none of them mentioned the test scores in the interviews. I question whether a test score fairly judges someone's motivation because the person

could be motivated and hard-working but get low grades due to other reasons.

Whether it is fair or not may be another issue to tackle, however it is important to understand that from students' point of view, grades and motivation are sometimes synonymous and one approach to determining motivation.

7.2.2. Group cohesiveness

This sub-section will also start with individual students' views of the cohesiveness of their group, followed with an integration of examples or interpretation of cohesiveness.

7.2.2.1 Group 4C

All three interviewees from Group 4C, Whitney, Tina, and Jack said that the cohesiveness of their learning group was not very high. Whitney commented that "the cohesiveness is OK, not bad, but there are still some cliques," while Tina admitted that "because we don't really get together that often, the cohesiveness of the group is not very high." Jack further confirmed the low cohesiveness of the group by saying that their participation in extracurricular activities was not good. Their statements are in accordance with my own observation notes (section 5.1.1) and the teacher interview data (section 7.1.2.1), both of which strongly indicate Group 4C is not a cohesive group. This in turn concurs with the questionnaire findings -- senior groups have statistically significant lower cohesiveness than junior groups (please see section 6.3.1.2).

7.2.2.2 Group 4D

All three participants (Ray, Debbie, and Kelly) commented that the cohesiveness of this group was probably not very high. One reason, according to Ray, is "a lot of people are more individualistic, and we still have cliques." Debbie also

mentioned about the problems of the cliques which lead to some communication difficulties. Kelly further explained that “[the cohesiveness] is probably not very high because whenever we discuss something, it always takes a long time and very hard to reach any agreement.”

Their comments support the questionnaire results and also my own observation notes. The questionnaire results show that senior groups had lower cohesiveness than junior groups (see section 6.3.1.2). My own observation notes do indicate that students from this group were probably not very cohesive; one example was they exhibited individualistic behaviour such as using the computer while other students are doing their presentations (section 5.1.2).

Finally, a point worth mentioning is that both Whitney of Group 4C and Ray of Group 4D were chosen for interviews due to positive impressions of the group from data in their questionnaire answers (including the sections of group cohesiveness, group norms, and leadership). However, during the interviews they did not give a very positive portrait of the cohesiveness of their groups. This discrepancy could lie in the fact that the group has other merits that do not relate to group cohesiveness. Perhaps interviewees were able to express a greater range of opinions in semi-structured interviews than would be afforded in a four-point numerical scale on the questionnaire. In either case, it is important to acknowledge the discrepancy and interpret such data cautiously.

7.2.2.3. Group 3C

Unlike the consistent comments on group cohesiveness from the senior participants, the interviewees from Group 3C seem to have very different and contradicting opinions of the cohesiveness of the group. For instance, Kate thought

that the cohesiveness of the group was good because the learning atmosphere in the classroom was amiable. However, she clarified that the cohesiveness of the group was *not* high “as far as participating in extracurricular activities go.” On the other hand, Helen had a different impression altogether:

Helen: I think the cohesiveness *is* quite high as far as participating in extracurricular activities goes. A lot of classmates are members of student union of the English Department so we support each other.

It is surprising that both Kate and Helen have such a different view of their classmates’ participation in extracurricular activities, resulting in their different interpretations of the cohesiveness of Group 3C.

As for the other interviewee, Gina, she explained that the group was not cohesive because “the connection among my classmates was not very good.” This is inconsistent with Helen’s explanation of why she thought the cohesiveness of the group was high; she declared that “we have good interactions and cooperation.” Helen believes students had good cooperation among each other, but Gina characterizes group connections as being “not very good.” Their perspectives of group cohesiveness are very different. The issues these contradictory views raise will be taken up in the following chapter (Chapter 8) when data sets will be integrated to give a fuller picture of group processes and account for conflicting data.

7.2.2.4 Group 3D

All three interviewees, Tracy, Flora, and Tim commented that Group 3D was very cohesive. For example, Tracy mentioned that “I think my group is more cohesive since we often have excursions together on the weekends.” Flora also commented that due to these excursions or outings, the cohesiveness of the group was “fine.” Tim further clarified: “whenever we have activities, most of us will show

up,” hence; he believed that the cohesiveness of the group was very high. It seems like they were all fairly satisfied with the cohesiveness of the group. This finding is consistent with my observation notes (see section 5.2.2) and most teachers’ comments (section 7.1.2.4) that Group 3D was a highly cohesive group.

Tim was chosen for the interview due to his negative opinions of the learner group based on his questionnaire answers; however, in the interview he gave a positive impression of his group. I followed up on this and asked him why his opinion had changed. He explained that he filled out the questionnaire almost six months before the interview during the first semester of that school year. When he was interviewed six months later in the midst of the second semester, he felt more comfortable with his learner group and had even come to enjoy being in Group 3D. He said he would answer the questionnaire differently if he were to take it again:

Tim: Yes, [my answers on the questionnaire] would be different. For example, “compared to other groups, I like my group better,” I would tick very true. “My classmates don’t seem to care about each other,” I would tick not true.

Tim’s comments show that interviewing students a couple of months after they filled out questionnaires could result in a significant change in their opinions. This could be perceived as a problem since researchers have to deal with contradictory data. On the other hand, I find this intriguing because it demonstrates how a learner’s opinion of the group will change over time. The affect of time within the framework of group dynamics theory is not one of the areas undertaken in this present research; however as this data clearly shows it is an area worthy of further research.

7.2.2.5 Integration

To recap, students of both senior groups (Group 4C and 4D) all said that the cohesiveness of their learner groups was not very high while students of Group 3D

believed that their group had high cohesiveness. The only conflicting data appears in Group 3C where interviewees had very different views of the cohesiveness of the group.

To further explore what these students' ideas of group cohesiveness are, I analyzed the specific statements they used when describing their group's cohesiveness:

Students	Examples of group cohesiveness or {lack of cohesiveness}*
Whitney	● {having cliques}
Tina	● {does not pay attention to what other students say in class meetings}
Jack	● {low participation in extracurricular activities} ● {hard to reach any mutual decision}
Ray	● everyone gets along OK ● {having cliques}
Debbie	● {the communication is not good.} ● {hard to reach any decision together} ● {having cliques}
Kelly	● {take a long time to reach an agreement}
Kate	● {not participatory in extracurricular activities} ● the atmosphere in the classroom is good
Helen	● high participation in extracurricular activities ● good interaction and cooperation
Gina	● {connections among classmates were not very good}
Tracy	● high participation during class excursions
Flora	● hold class activities where classmates bond together
Tim	● participation in class activities

Table 7.8-- students' specific examples of group cohesiveness

* These are examples when interviewees explained why the group was **not** cohesive.

To sum up, all the examples can be generally classified into the following categories:

- A. The relationship among the students
- B. The participation in group-related activities
- C. The communication in the group
- D. Others

The table (7.9) here summarizes specific examples under each category:

A: The relationship among the students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. no cliques (<i>Whitney, Ray, Debbie</i>) 2. pay attention to other students in the class meeting (<i>Tina</i>) 3. everyone gets long OK (<i>Ray</i>) 4. good interactions and cooperation (<i>Helen</i>) 5. good connections among the classmates (<i>Gina</i>)
B: The participation in group-related activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. high participation in extracurricular activities (<i>Jack, Kate, Helen</i>) 2. high participation in class excursions (<i>Tracy, Flora, Tim</i>)
C. The communication in the group	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. be able to reach mutual decision or agreement easily (<i>Jack, Debbie, Kelly</i>) 2. The communication in the group is good. (<i>Debbie</i>)
D. Others	The atmosphere in the classroom is good. (<i>Kate</i>)

Table 7.9 – Students’ overall interpretations of group cohesiveness

Table 7.9 shows that for most students, having no cliques, having high participation in extracurricular activities and being able to reach a mutual decision or agreement is a good representation of a cohesive group. It is interesting to observe that the first category of the student interview data, ‘the relationship among the students’ is the same as the first category of the teacher interview data (see section 7.1.2.5). Both teachers and students portrayed everyone in the group getting along well and caring

about each other as an indication of a highly cohesive group. However, what differs in the teachers' interview data is that none of the students mentioned anything about in-class behaviours, which is an aspect many teachers commented on. Instead, some of the students talked about classmates participating in group-related activities and communication within the group. There seems to be a divergence between the teachers' ideas of a cohesive group and the students' which may stem from their particular vantage point when viewing such group dynamics.

One interesting issue regarding group cohesiveness is the idea of cliques. Three students (all seniors) believed that having cliques is an example of low cohesiveness. However, when I probed further during the interview, I discovered some contradicting views of cliques. Several other interviewees mentioned that cliques were not all bad; they thought it depended on how people act within the clique. Ray said having cliques shows that their cohesiveness is not "too good, however, they can still get along OK" as long as "the cliques don't interfere with our learning."

Tim from Group 3D offered a similar insight. When he explained things he did not like about Group 3D, he mentioned "cliques," but at the same time he did not think it affected his opinion of the high cohesiveness of the group:

INTERVIEWER: So, even though there are cliques, you still think the cohesiveness is high?

Tim: Yes, because whenever we have activities, everyone, or every clique still participates, so that's nice. It's just privately members from one clique tends to be together a lot, so it's a bit hard to really know someone very well if that person belongs to another clique.

For Tim, as long as every clique still participates during group-related activities, then having cliques does not necessarily mean low cohesiveness. An interviewee from

Group 3D, Tracy, also had a similar viewpoint:

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that there are cliques in your group?

Tracy: Cliques? Hmmm, well, certain people always get together, that's for sure. But I think that's a good kind of clique, because among cliques we still get along well and there is no competition or hatred. If we plan an excursion, every clique will participate and among clique we can all get along well. I don't think this kind of clique is negative.

Tracy's view seems to support both Ray and Tim's ideas that having cliques does not necessarily equal low cohesiveness of the group, as long as cliques can still peacefully coexist without competition or tension. Their opinions differ from the suggestion in most of the literature (e.g. Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998) that having cliques is a sign of lower cohesiveness. My interviewees' views suggest a new way of interpreting the role of cliques in a group. However, one thing that needs to be clarified is an issue of translation. It is possible that the term "clique" was not appropriately translated from Chinese. The Chinese word I used for "clique" means smaller groups within a big group; this term in Chinese does not have a positive image but may not share quite the same negative connotations of the English word "cliques." The problem of translation could be one reason that contributes to the contradicting views of cliques.

7.2.3 The influences of the learner group on individual learners

Four interviewees – Whitney, Ray, Kate and Tracy – were chosen because they had positive impressions of their learner groups: they characterized their groups as being cohesive and possessing positive group norms. Three of them described their own learning motivation as high. Let's examine Whitney's responses more closely for further evidence of her high motivation. Whitney liked her learner group very much

and enjoyed being around her classmates since “the classmates are all very nice too, very easy to get along.” Classmates demonstrating signs of mutual acceptance can be seen as a positive feature of a cohesive group. Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) explain that one feature of cohesive groups is that students “make each other welcome and show signs of mutual affection” (p.62). By saying her classmates are nice and get along well together, Whitney is showing that she feels comfortable and welcome in the group and appears to have a mutually rewarding relationship with her peers. In addition, another feature Whitney really likes about her group is that “everyone studies very hard,” which describes a positive norm established by her particular learner group as the group members demonstrated this as an important routine they follow. This becomes important to Whitney, since “seeing all my classmates study hard motivates me to study even harder too, because I don’t want to fall too behind, I want to be as good as they are.” Whitney demonstrates how she is positively influenced by her peers’ hard studying and probably why she shows confidence in her own high motivation:

Whitney: Yeah, I think my motivation is high. I have been very interested in English all these years and I really like English. I often use my own time to read something and to improve my English.

Conversely, of the four interviewees – Jack, Kelly, Gina, and Tim – categorized as having negative impressions of their learner groups which they described as not being cohesive and possessing negative group norms, two seem to exhibit low motivation. As an example, Kelly admits “I don’t feel like I have much chance to get to know my classmates very well.” If group members barely know each other, it is difficult for relationships to form. According to Schmuck and Schmuck (2001), friendship among the group members is a key feature of high cohesiveness. In a

group that lacks friendship among its members the group cohesiveness naturally would be low. This might be why Kelly complains that “[the cohesiveness of the group] is probably not very high because whenever we discuss something, it always takes a long time and very hard to reach any agreement,” in addition, “everyone has his/her own opinion and nobody wants to give it up.” Insisting on their own personal opinions and not being willing to compromise can create a less welcoming feeling among group members and can also be taken as signs of low cohesiveness.

During the interview Kelly also mentioned that when her classmates “do a group project, some members do nothing. They let others do the work.” This can be interpreted as portraying a negative group norm because it is in direct contrast with the good group norm of everyone participating fairly in group work mentioned by Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998). Learning English in this kind of environment discouraged Kelly:

Kelly: Now everyone is going to graduate soon and most of them are going to work, not many of them are going to go to the graduate school, so the study atmosphere is not very good. And I don't really feel like studying hard myself here in this environment.

Kelly not wanting to study hard while pointing to her environment as a possible reason could indicate a negative influence from the group. It is no surprise then that, when asked how her motivation was, her response was “my motivation is lower now...”

These two examples can be taken as indices showing how positive impressions of the group inspire higher learning motivation while negative impressions result in less interest and therefore less motivation in language learning. It is important to acknowledge that not all interview data equates conveniently into the positive/high – negative/low formula. One exception is Tracy, who seems to

enjoy learning English in her learner group since “everyone is nice and we get along so well. We are very cohesive, especially comparing to the other group.” In addition to describing her learner group as cohesive, she indicates it possesses positive group norms: Help my classmates with their schoolwork. “Whenever we have a difficult assignment, we will all work together and discuss together.” One would expect having a positive view of her learner group might inspire her to be highly motivated, but surprisingly, she admitted, “sometimes [my motivation] is high, but sometimes it’s low.” Another exception, Tim, does not seem to have a close relationship with his peers as he says, “it’s hard to know everyone well [in this group]” yet actually comments on his high motivation: “I think my motivation is high...English is very important nowadays. I want to be able to speak good English.”

These two exceptions show that while the learner group may be a factor to influence individual learners’ language learning motivation, it is probably not the only factor. That is, there seems to be a causal relationship between group processes and learners’ motivation, but not an absolute one. Aside from these exceptions, the general trend the interview data exhibits supports the questionnaire finding that there is a relationship between group processes such as group cohesiveness and group norms, and learners’ motivation (see section 6.3.1.3).

Encouraged by trends within the collected data, I ventured to directly ask interviewees the following question: “In your opinion, is the learner group important to your learning?” I explained that the learner group did not have to be the current group, it could be any prior group they had at any time. I was hoping this question would invite them to share any particularly relevant experiences as a way to connect the notions of ‘group’ and ‘motivation’ for them. The answers my interviewees gave provided much insight into the focus of this study.

Generally speaking, almost every interviewee acknowledged the strong influence of the learner group to learning – the influence could be both positive and negative. Positive influence meant being in a ‘good’ learner group that would motivate them to study harder and do better. Here are some illustrations:

Jack: We were all very motivated and willing to share things. Whenever we had some questions, we always called each other and everyone was willing to answer my questions if they could.

Interviewer: So, did being in that group help your learning?

Jack: Sure, very much. I was more motivated to learn and I had more enjoyable experience. Everyone had an ambitious goal and we all worked together, encouraged each other to reach that goal.

Jack appeared enthusiastic when he spoke of being in a group with positive norms, such as sharing learning materials. Helping one another with homework showed they had good interaction among each other and paid attention to each other’s study. According to Dörnyei and Murphey (2003), good interactions and paying attention to one another could be behaviours exhibited by a cohesive group. Jack himself admitted that being in a group like that had inspired him to achieve a higher level of motivation for himself.

Another example of a learner group’s positive influence came from Tracy:

Tracy: Because everyone is hard-working, I can’t help working hard too. For example, one time we had a test in about two weeks, one classmate had already started to prepare for the test. She told me that certain chapters were particularly hard and wanted me to be more careful and started to prepare early. I didn’t plan to start to prepare so soon, but because of this I did start sooner. Seeing all other classmates study hard makes me nervous and motivates to work hard too. I think this kind of influence is very good because I learn a lot more.

Tracy illustrated a group that seems to show high cohesiveness since her classmates share their study progress and encourage each other to prepare for the test sooner.

This shows that they care about each other very much. Being in a cohesive group motivated Tracy to study harder and be better prepared for the test sooner than she would have done on her own. These short narratives from interviewees clearly show the positive influence a group of learners can have on individual learners within the group. When a learner is in a group where learners care about each other (an example of a cohesive group), or care about learning very much (a positive group norm), this can become a positive stimulus and a source of motivation.

The opposite is true as well. If learners are in a group where other learners do not care about each other or about learning, they might gradually lose their motivation to learn. As Tracy explained clearly, “if not many people care [about learning], why should I care?” Here is another example:

Ray: When I did a presentation in my previous group, I always just did an OK job because if I did it too well, my classmates would look at me strangely and say, “Why you work so hard...there is no point!” I felt uncomfortable, so I just tried to do an average job.

Ray’s previous group possessed a negative norm – do a mediocre job on presentations – this was their code. When Ray disregarded the code and performed beyond the level of the group norm by making a good presentation, his behaviour was checked by other group members for violating the group norm. He did not like the negative comments he received from his classmates. Because of that, he decided to put in less effort in his presentations and just do an average job. Clearly, being in this group has demotivated Ray to some level because he did not want to be different from his classmates and be rebuked for it, so he put in less effort in his class.

All in all, these interviewees pointed out the importance of the learner group to their learning. Their opinions serve as strong support for the questionnaire finding that group processes have a weak to moderate correlation with some aspects of

motivation (see section 6.3.1.3). From the interviews the influence of the learner group seems obvious and unquestionable. This finding is in line with current literature (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003; Hadfield, 1992; Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001) that promotes the importance of group processes in the classroom since “successful group dynamics is a vital element in the teaching/learning process” (Hadfield, 1992, p. 10).

While most interviewees strongly believe that the learner group is an important factor to their learning motivation, one interviewee – out of the twelve students interviewed – offered a rather conflicting comment. Kate from Group 3C is the only interviewee who said the learner group did not affect her learning at all:

Kate: “Hmmm, I don’t think my relationship with my classmates has much to do with my learning. I think learning is private, something that I want to do myself. So when I was at *WenZao* [Junior College], even though I didn’t like my group, that didn’t make me like English less or want to learn English less. I was still quite motivated in English classes.

INTERVIEWER: *So you’re saying that if you really want to learn, even if you are in a really ‘bad’ group, you can still learn well?*

Kate: Yes, I think learning is something I have to do by myself. My classmates are outside factors and not very important for my own learning.

From the excerpts above we can understand that in Kate’s mind, learning is something “private” and she felt that she could control her own learning regardless of her learning environment. This perspective is unique and shows while most interviewees believe that their learner group has a certain amount of influence on their learning, there are some learners (like Kate) who disagree with this perspective. The question is, does her learner group indeed have no influence on her, or does the influence exist, yet beyond her own recognition? For example, she claimed that the

learner group did not have any influence on her learning; however, one time during the interview she explained that she originally planned to study at NKFUST for only one semester and then go abroad to study. She chose to stay longer than one semester because she liked the learner group very much.

Kate: Well, everyone gets along very well. This is very important to me because I didn't feel so in my previous learner group. Some bad things happened in my previous learner group so I particularly like the current group. Before I came here to study, I didn't intend to stay long. I thought I'd just study for one semester and leave to study abroad. But after one semester, I really enjoyed my time here and my classmates are all very nice. So I chose to stay.

This excerpt reveals that the current learner group was having some influence on her to the extent that it positively contributed to her decision to continue to study at NKFUST. Although in this excerpt she did not explain that the group influenced her learning, she did say that she enjoyed her time in the group and “the whole atmosphere was nice.” It seems logical to assume that someone's learning might naturally be more efficient under such circumstances. Hence, it might be reasonable to question what really happened in her case, though she claimed that the learner group had no relevance for her own learning. Kate's new perspective shows that the relationship between the learner group and one's learning could be complex and dynamic in nature.

7.2.4 The definition of a 'good' group

Section 7.2.3 focused on the influences a learner group has on individual learners. As it concluded, most interviewees positively acknowledged the importance of their learner group and believed that it is an important factor for their learning. Most of them said that if they were in a 'good' learner group, they would be more

motivated to learn English. Now that a relationship between the two has been established, it seems intuitive to further explore what the interviewees meant by a ‘good’ learner group. That is, what kind of characteristics does a ‘good’ learner group possess?

When answering this question, students supplied hypothetical portraits of a perfect, ideal group which were not meant to reflect their current experience. It is interesting to learn that most student interviewees considered their classmates an important factor in the creation of an ideal group. All of them mentioned something regarding their classmates, either concerning their relationships with each other or concerning academic inspiration. Only occasionally did they talk about the general atmosphere of the group or the teacher’s role in their ideal group. The table below (7.10) classifies students’ ideas of a ‘good’ learner group from three aspects:

- A. Regarding their classmates (further divided into two aspects: the relationship aspect and the academic aspect)
- B. Regarding their teachers
- C. General group atmosphere

Table 7.10 shows that the most important factor of a ‘good’ learner group is to have friendly relations and classmates who are easy to get along with. It is also important that everyone in the group can share learning methods, or ideas about homework together. These examples seem to be characteristics of what a cohesive group is like. Although student interviewees did not directly point out that a ‘good’ learner group means a cohesive group, these examples reveal that their ideas of a ‘good’ learner group are very similar to what a cohesive group is like, supporting some researchers’ (e.g. Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003; Hadfield, 1992) claim that a ‘good’ learner group is a cohesive group.

Classmates	a. The relationship aspect
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Everyone is friendly and gets along well. (<i>Whitney, Tina, Ray, Kelly, Kate, Flora</i>) 2. People encourage each other and support each other. (<i>Ray</i>) 3. We respect each other. (<i>Debbie</i>) 4. We treat each other just like brothers and sisters and are able to have fun together. (<i>Gina</i>) 5. We have lots of interaction (<i>Helen</i>)
	b. The academic aspect
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We share things together, like share learning methods, ideas, or good news. (<i>Jack, Kelly, Helen, Tim</i>) 2. Classmates care about learning, and have some level of motivation. (<i>Tracy, Flora</i>) 3. We discuss homework together and learn from each other. (<i>Kelly, Tracy</i>) 4. Everyone's English level is about the same. (<i>Ray, Tim</i>) 5. Everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves in English in front of others. (<i>Tim, Helen</i>) 6. We have common goal (<i>Debbie</i>) 7. The group that brings me stress so it motivates me to study harder. (<i>Gina</i>)
Teachers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers have good teaching methodology. (<i>Tina</i>) 2. Teachers have some degrees of interaction with the students and respect the students. (<i>Debbie</i>) 3. The teacher is a good role-model. (<i>Tracy</i>)
General group atmosphere	The group is cohesive. (<i>Tina</i>)

Table 7.10 –Students' definitions of hypothetical 'good' learner groups (not from actual experiences)

7.2.5 The definition of a 'bad' group

During the interviews, student interviewees also mentioned that if they were in a 'bad' learner group, then their learning motivation would be lower. This section explores what these student interviewees meant by a 'bad' learner group. Once again, interviewees' descriptions of a 'bad' group are hypothetical, not an actual

descriptions of their current group experience.

Similar to the results from section 7.2.4 (definition of a 'good' learner group), when student interviewees defined a 'bad' learner group, they also focused mainly on their classmates. In this way we can verify that in students' mind, their classmates are the most important factor of a learner group. The following table (7.11) classifies these interviewees' viewpoints of a 'bad' learner group also from the following three aspects:

- A. Regarding their classmates (further divided into two aspects: the relationship aspect and the academic aspect)
- B. Regarding their teachers
- C. General group atmosphere

Table 7.11 shows that the most common feature of a 'bad' learner group is classmates not being motivated / not caring about learning. Several students also did not like it when their classmates were very competitive in a negative way and plotted against each other. These findings accord with those relating to a 'good' learner group, which show that students' ideal group is when every classmate gets along well and when they are motivated and willing to share things with one another.

Classmates	a. The relationship aspect
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Everyone is very competitive in a negative way. (<i>Kate, Gina, Flora</i>) ● People plot against each other and use any means to get what they want. (<i>Whitney</i>) ● There aren't many interactions among the classmates. (<i>Tina</i>) ● Lots of cliques and each clique is not very open-minded and criticizes others easily. (<i>Ray</i>) ● My classmates don't respect each other (<i>Debbie</i>) ● My classmates are very cold toward each other and don't speak to each other. (<i>Tracy</i>)
	b. The academic aspect
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Classmates aren't motivated and don't care about learning. (<i>Tim, Ray, Helen, Tracy</i>) ● Classmates are not willing to share their learning methods and homework. (<i>Jack, Tracy</i>) ● Everyone doesn't pay attention in class and is noisy. (<i>Flora</i>) ● Their English aren't very good and they aren't very interested in English (<i>Tim</i>)
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The teacher doesn't teach very well, almost nothing, and only pays attention to a couple of students that she likes. (<i>Tina</i>) ● The teacher is too lax. They don't help out and just mind their own business. (<i>Tim</i>)
General group atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The studying atmosphere is not very good because very few students are interested in studying. (<i>Whitney</i>) ● The whole atmosphere is not friendly. (<i>Ray</i>)

Table 7.11 – Students' definitions of hypothetical 'bad' learner groups (not from actual experiences)

These two subsections conclude that:

1. The classmates are the most important factor in a learner group.
2. The classmates most interviewees want are those who care about learning, and who are all friendly and easy to get along well with.

7.2.6 Learner's own determination

Section 7.2.3 described the importance of a learner group to individual learners' learning. Generally speaking, most interviewees acknowledged the significance of a learner group; when they are in a 'good' group, it is a positive stimulus to their learning. On the other hand, a 'bad' learner group could de-motivate them. Sections 7.2.4 and 7.2.5 explored what learners meant by a 'good' learner group and a 'bad' learner group. Following on from that, I would like to explore *to what extent* a learner group affects individual learners' learning, and whether the learner group is the most important factor of their motivation. Hence, in the interview I asked all the interviewees this question: "Out of all the factors that could influence your motivation, which one is the most important one to you?"

Interestingly, nine interviewees (out of twelve) commented that their own determination was the most important factor affecting their learning motivation. They all agreed the learner group was an influencing factor, but in their opinion it was not the most important one. The most important factor came from within themselves, namely, how much they desired learning:

Debbie: I think your own determination is the most important factor. If you have a definite goal, a goal you really want to reach, then you can reach the goal no matter what kinds of environment you're in.

... and in another interview with Ray:

Interviewer: So, generally speaking, do you think that being in the right kind of group is important to your learning?

Ray: Well, it's important, but not the most important one. Your own factor is more important. For example, in my previous group, even though a lot of classmates didn't care about learning, I think to some level I still tried to study hard and did my best not to be influenced by them.

... and during Jack's interview:

Jack: Well, I think classmates still have an influence, more or less, probably 30-40 percent. But your own determination is more like 60-70 percent.

These excerpts show that over and over again, interviewees emphasized the importance of their own determination to learn in establishing their motivation. If they are fixed in their determination to learn a language, they are more likely to succeed than those whose determination is undecided. These interviewees also pointed out that their own determination was but one component of their learning motivation; many other factors, like the learner group, were also significant. Then, I further asked the interviewees to give a percentage of each influencing factor of their motivation. Most interviewees gave a range of sixty to eighty percent of their motivation was comprised of their own determination, with the remaining twenty to forty percent being a combination of other influencing factors: learner group (classmates), parents, teacher, or society.

Debbie: Now, my own determination is like 65%, and my classmates are like 35%-40%.

... and,

Tim: I think it's 80%, my own determination [the rest is] from my classmates, the teacher, the importance of English...etc.

... and,

Interviewer: How about the percentage? How much percent is your own factor?

Flora: 60% I think [the other comes from] the teacher, my classmates, perhaps my family, or even the society.

This approximate figure helps us understand to what extent individual learners' own determination or a learner group is important to their learning motivation. This figure reconfirms that from the self-described point of view of learners their own determination is still the most important factor of their overall motivation, although

some other factors, including the learner group among them, do make a difference.

Finally, an interesting comment on this subject was made by one interviewee:

Tina: But I think motivation has two parts: motivation to start to *learn* English, and motivation to *improve* English. I feel that it's all my own motivation to learn English, the environment doesn't matter. But as for the motivation to improve English goes, I think the environment is very important.

Interviewer: And your environment means the teacher and the classmates? They will help you to foster the motivation to improve English?

Tina: Yes...that's right. The teacher and the classmates are both important.

Tina believes there are two parts to motivation: the impetus to learn the language and during the learning process the desire to keep improving. For Tina, the environment – the teacher, the classmates – is very important to motivate her to improve better during the learning process, although the initial drive to learn the language has to come from her. This comment accords with the way I classified the motivation theories: the category of “before learning” (such as learning orientations) and “during learning” (cognitive processes such as self-efficacy, learner autonomy). Some researchers make a similar distinction and characterize L2 motivational theories by different stages of motivation over a period of time. For instance, Williams and Burden (1997) divide language learning motivation in two parts: initiating the motivation phase and sustaining the effort phase, quite similar to how Tina viewed her own motivation. Also, Dörnyei and Otto's (1998) process model of L2 motivation classifies learning motivation into three phases: preactional phase, actional phase, and postactional phase. Tina's comment seems to suggest that the learner group is especially important during the learning process, or in ‘sustaining the effort phase’ or ‘actional phase’.

The questionnaire results also seem to support this finding. The questionnaire finding suggests that the learning orientations of all four groups seem to be about the same (section 6.3.1.1). This shows that the group does not seem to make a difference on learners' learning orientations, which was classified under the category of 'before learning'. However, through the correlation test the questionnaire did find a correlation between group processes and autonomous behaviours and self-efficacy, both of which belong to the category of 'during learning' (see section 6.3.1.3). In this way, Tina's comment, through the verification of the questionnaire results, suggests that a learner group may have an effect on one aspect of learner motivation while it poses little or no effect on another aspect. Though Tina's opinion may not be shared among all the learners, her comment gives some insight with which to validate questionnaire findings.

7.2.7 The effect of group size

Section 7.2.3 explored the effect a learner group has on individual learners' learning and section 7.2.6 identified the extent of such effects. Now that these two points have been clarified, I want to further explore whether the *size* of a learner group has any particular effect on individual learners.

At NKFUST, my target university, students in the Department of Applied English have the chance to learn English in two different kinds of groups. For most compulsory courses, such as *Foreign Language Learner, Communication and Expression*, students learn in a relatively large group as all 36 students of Group 3C attend these courses together. However, *Advanced Listening & Speaking* and *Academic Writing* are two compulsory courses that are exceptions; students of 3C are split into two smaller divisions – Division A and Division B. *Advanced Listening &*

Speaking is offered with half the amount of the larger group 3C because the Department of Applied English believes that the atmosphere creates more opportunities for students to practice their listening and speaking skills. For *Academic Writing* the class size is meant to allow the teacher more time to grade students' essays, hence enhancing the pedagogic quality. The operation of these courses is determined for the most part by the teacher; the course content varies widely depending on each teacher's pedagogic style. A fundamental principle most (but certainly not all) teachers follow for *Advanced Listening & Speaking* class is to allow students to practice their oral skills as much as they can, such as by discussing world issues in English in class. In *Academic Writing* class, the goal is to train students to write an academic essay. Thus, students learn things such as the organization of traditional rhetorical essay patterns or skills of outlining.

During the interviews, I asked my interviewees whether learning in the larger group (e.g. in *Foreign Language Learner* class) or the smaller group (e.g. in *Advanced Listening & Speaking* class) had any effects on their learning. Generally speaking, most interviewees believed that their motivation was higher when they were within a small group where they thought they could learn more:

Tina: Hmm, I think [learning in a small group] is a bit better. Because I feel like I can actually learn something in a small group. Before in the big group, it was impossible for the teacher to take care of every student. So it was easier to just get by. I might pay more attention or put more effort when I learn in small groups.

... and,

Flora: Well, I think it depends on the course. In a small group I have higher chance to be asked a question by the teacher, in the big group, I can "hide" better. But generally speaking I think a small group is better because the teacher pays more attention to individuals, I have more time to practice and I can ask questions more freely. I feel more intimidated to ask questions in a big group.

All in all, to summarize the interviewees' points, they believe that smaller groups facilitate their learning because:

- Teachers can pay more attention to individual students. (*Tina, Kelly, Gina, Helen, Kate, Flora*)
- There are more interactions in small groups. (*Tina, Helen, Flora*)
- I feel more comfortable asking questions. (*Flora*)
- It is easier to concentrate. (*Tracy*)

Simply put students suggest that with fewer students in a group a number of benefits accrue: the teacher pays more attention to individual students; students pay more attention to the teacher, students feel more at ease to ask questions in class, and naturally have more interaction with the teacher and other classmates. All these benefits facilitate their learning and positively motivate them. However, students also explained that learning within small groups did have a disadvantage – more stress. As Gina expressed well:

Gina: Well, it's more stressful in small groups. In a big group, the teacher can't really focus on everyone, but in small groups, the teacher has the chance to pay more attention to individuals, hence more stress. Also when there are fewer students in one group, we know more about who is better and who is not, so there is more peer pressure too.

As a result, not everyone wants to take courses in a small group all the time. As Flora stated, "It's a lot more stressful in a small group. I think it's too stressful to take all the courses in small groups." This statement shows some contradictions in students' mind. It seems like in one way, they would like to learn more by getting more individual attention from teachers, and yet, they also do not mind getting lazy once in a while and "hiding" in a big group to have less stress. This might have something to do with the educational system in Taiwan. Here these university students have to

take an average of 25 credits (about 7-9 courses) per term. Having this amount of workload, it is no wonder that students feel the need to just get by in some courses while at the same time they still want to learn something. This might explain the contradiction exhibited in the interview data.

Finally, it is worth pointing out two interviewees believed group size did not affect them. Tracy explained that the people in the group were more important than its size:

Interviewer: So do you have any preference? Does being in a big group or small group influence your learning?

Tracy: Well, it really depends on my classmates and the teacher. I think it's important in a small group that everyone's English ability is about the same, otherwise it'll be very hard. It's also important for the teacher to teach suitable materials. But overall speaking, I don't really think the number of people in the group matters that much, as long as I get along with my classmates.

Tracy stated that getting along with other classmates was an essential factor for her. In her mind, group size did not matter as long as she had a good relationship with others. Also, Kate made it clear that group size was not a factor affecting her learning:

Kate: Well, I think [group size] doesn't make that much of a difference. If I have a question that I'd like to ask, I do ask, either in a big group, over 40 classmates or in a small group, less than 20 classmates, I always ask.

On the whole, while for some learners group size does not make a difference with their learning, to most learners learning in a small group generates a positive stimulus for their learning motivation. They can learn more by having more interaction in the group, getting more individual attention from teachers and also by

feeling more comfortable asking questions. However, it is also more stressful learning in a small group; hence most learners do not want to take all their courses in a small group.

7.2.8 The discrepancy between autonomous beliefs and behaviours

As discussed in chapter six, one of the questionnaire findings indicates that there is a discrepancy between individual learners' autonomous beliefs and behaviours (see section 6.3.1.4). In other words, learners may agree that they are responsible for their own learning; however, they may not always show the same level of devotedness through their behaviours. I tried to explore the reasons for this gap during the interviews. All the interviewees seemed to have a hard time answering this question because they had never really thought about it before and did not really know why. After some moments' consideration, they came up with a couple of possible answers. The most popular explanation, which almost all of them mentioned, is laziness. Here are two examples:

Kelly: laziness, I guess. Just like I know that improving my English through out-of-class activities is important, I know I should listen to English radio programmes and I should read more English magazines, but I am lazy to do so.

... and,

Jack: Hmmm, I guess I am lazy. It is hard to set the goal because I don't always know what I want. Even if I set the goal, I still may not do it, to realize my goal. For example, there was a time that I set a goal of taking the TOEIC exam. I bought the books and the tapes, but eventually didn't work very hard on it.

Another reason that some of my interviewees mentioned was time limit. They felt like they already had too much to do for homework and other extracurricular duties and they could not find the time to engage in other activities other than the

homework the teacher assigned them.

Whitney: Hmm, or sometimes it could be because I already have too much to do for my school work. If I already have too much to do for my school work, I don't have time to do things other than what's required for the school, so I don't do it as often.

... and,

Gina: If I focus only on my study at the moment, I think I'll do better, at least after class I can go to the Self-Learning Center to listen to English. But now I am too busy with my extracurricular activities and don't have much time for that.

Finally, a couple of my interviewees mentioned that they just did not know how to do it. They thought it was hard to do and they did not know where to start.

Tracy: Well, I think some items are hard to do. I need the teacher's guidance. Otherwise, I don't know how to do it, for example, I don't know how to evaluate myself, I need the teacher's comment, like 'very good', 'good' to know how I do.

... and,

Ray: Yes, I don't know how to evaluate myself and I think the teacher can do a better job. Also, it's hard to set up my own learning goals professionally. I think these kinds of ideas are very abstract and hard to do. What kinds of learning goals should I have? Knowing more vocabulary words? Speaking more fluently? How do I know whether I have improved or not? So anyway, I think teachers know better how to do those things than I do...

It seems that to some degree, learners in this context are still dependent on their teacher and feel that the teacher 'knows better' and can do a better job to help with their learning than themselves. Although they may be psychologically ready to take more responsibility for their learning and believe that they should do so, it seems hard for them to actually do it.

Although the issue of motivation never came up, it seems possible that it is the

real reason for their lack of autonomous behaviours. Learning a language is potentially a long process without quick pay offs. Thus, it is difficult for learners to persist in language learning without sufficient motivation. If a learner is motivated enough, he or she should be able to overcome the problems such as laziness or lack of time. However, if they do not have sufficient motivation, they might foresee more obstacles in language learning. For instance, before engaging in some autonomous behaviour they might think that it is too hard to be persistent or it takes up a lot of time. Their thinking is probably reinforced by the fact that the improvements of their skills are not immediate. This thinking might have stopped them from engaging in more autonomous behaviours. Hence, I speculate that lack of sufficient motivation is probably the real reason for the discrepancy between their autonomous beliefs and behaviours.

7.2.9 The influences of prior group experiences

Section 7.1.3 discussed an important finding from the teachers' interview data—the influences of prior group experiences. That is, teachers' perception of the current group is influenced by their previous or other teaching experiences. They compare the current group with other groups they have taught (or are teaching) and form their opinion based on the comparison. During the student interviews I invited my interviewees to talk about their previous learner group, e.g., “How was your previous learner group?” ... and ... “Did you like your previous learner group? Although I did not ask them to compare their current learner group with their previous learner group, from their answers I could identify the effects their previous learner group had on their perceptions of the current group. Generally speaking, learners who seem to have a positive experience with their previous group tend to

complain about their current group more. On the other hand, learners who seem to have a negative experience with their previous group tend to praise their current group more. As a result, learners in the same learner group may not have the same view about the group due to different experiences from their prior groups. This equation is not absolute, however, the pattern does emerge from my student interview data. Whitney and Jack, both from Group 4C, are good examples.

Her general comments:

Whitney: I think the learning environment is very good, very good for studying, and the classmates are all very nice too, very easy to get along. So I have a good time here.

Things she likes about the group:

Whitney: Everyone is very studious, and the whole atmosphere is very friendly and everyone is very easy to get along with.

From these two excerpts we see Whitney was very satisfied with Group 4C.

However, Jack in the same group pictured them differently.

His general comments:

Jack: Well, when I first entered this school, I really wanted to practice English by talking with my classmates in English all the time. But nobody was interested in doing that with me. My plan didn't work out very well and I was quite discouraged by that. Also, I think people are more individualistic in colleges. They have their own thinking and may not necessarily want to share that with me.

Things he likes about the group:

Jack: I am not sure, pretty abstract. I guess I like a couple students whom I am close to. They have been very kind and helpful to me. But overall speaking, I can't think of anything that I like.

It seems that Jack encountered some problems with Group 4C and he was disappointed by his experience. To follow up on why two learners in the same group

had such different perceptions of the same group, I compared their comments with their perception of their previous group experiences. Whitney explained that she really did not like her previous group:

Whitney: I think the classmates in my previous school didn't like to study very much. They cared less about their learning. I didn't think that I had a very good learning environment, so during the last year or two of my study, I really wanted to graduate sooner. I wanted to leave that school sooner.

On the other hand, Jack had a more favorable experience:

Jack: I think the group I had before was more supportive in terms of learning. For example, at that time whenever we had a midterm or final exam, we had the study group and we helped each other out. Someone would be responsible for some sections and someone else would be responsible for some other sections and then we all got together and discussed what we found out. On the contrary, we don't have these kinds of study groups here at NKFUST.

Whitney disliked her previous group. Having this unpleasant experience, her expectation of her current group was probably not very high; hence, she became more satisfied with her current group. On the other hand, Jack had more favorable experiences with his previous group; hence, his expectation of the current group was probably higher than Whitney's. When the expectations were not met, he felt disappointed. During the interview he himself said "on the contrary, we don't do this kind of study groups here at NKFUST." As I explained earlier, I simply asked my interviewee to describe their previous learner group and did not ask them to draw comparison, but obviously Jack naturally compared the two groups and stated one was not as good as the other. This shows me learners tend to naturally compare their learner groups with other group experiences and form opinions based on the comparison – just as teachers do.

The influence of prior group experiences is also apparent with some other

learners. Ray from Group 4D is another example. The first question I asked Ray was about his general impression of Group 4D:

Ray: I think it's quite amazing to me. I studied at Fortune Institute of Technology before, and the teacher's quality and students' quality were not as good. Here at NKFUST I have had quite a different impact. The teachers are all very good here, very professional, so the students benefit a lot. The students have learned a lot from the teachers. Unlike before at Fortune, I didn't learn as much and wasn't aware that I could have improved my English so much. But here at NKFUST, I realized that with the right teachers I can improve a lot.

From the start Ray compared his current group (Group 4D at NKFUST) with his previous group even though the comparison of the two groups was never part of the question. This supports the fact that some learners naturally compare different learner groups and form general impressions from these comparisons. Later on, Ray continued to praise Group 4D at NKFUST and complained more about his previous learner group:

Ray: Here at NKFUST it is quite different. I can do my best for a presentation without any uneasy feelings. My classmates here are much more mature and won't say anything childish if my presentation is good. They will praise me instead. Also, everyone works very hard on the presentation and everyone's presentation is good, so this is all a very good thing. The whole environment brings me lots of motivation to do my best and exceed myself.

Ray: Yes, it was hard to really get motivated [in my previous learner group]. Also there is another factor due to culture. I felt uncomfortable to be good, to be outstanding in my previous learner group. When I did a presentation at that time, I always just did an OK job because if I did it too well, my classmates would look at me strangely and said "why you work so hard...there is no point!" I felt uncomfortable being treated as an alien in the group, so I just tried to do an average job and didn't want to attract any extra attention.

Again, these two excerpts show that Ray's opinion of the current group is influenced

by his previous experience. Ray's comment on the classmates in Group 4C ("they are much more mature and won't say anything childish if my presentation is good") is a judgment based on his negative experience in his previous learner group, where his classmates made fun of him when he worked hard on a project or a presentation.

Even though the influence of prior group experiences has been evident in most student interviews, not every learner believes her opinion is shaped by the prior group. Some learners explained that they rarely liked or disliked a certain group. For this kind of learner, the influence of prior group experience is not apparent. One example is Kelly from Group 4D. Kelly seems to have a rather neutral opinion of both previous and current groups and did not seem to like or dislike either. She often used "okay, not too good, not too bad" to describe her groups.

Her general impression of Group 4D:

Kelly: Everything is OK, not great, but not too bad, I think teachers need to improve their professional knowledge.

Her general impression of her previous group:

Kelly: OK, I think, nothing special.

Because of her lack of specific comments on both groups, I could not infer whether her perception of the group is affected by her other group experiences or not. Gina also has similar views:

Interviewer: So you have never had the experience of liking a learner group?

Gina: Yeah, no, never. I have often heard people say how much they liked their previous group or things like that, but I never quite understand that. I never really like a group that much. I really don't know why, I guess it's probably due to my personality. I guess I am not the type that is moved easily.

It seems that if learners do not have certain emotions toward a group, they have

fewer tendencies to compare different learner groups; hence, the influence of prior group experiences is less apparent. Even though the influence of prior group experiences is not absolute, from my interview data it shows that most learners do have certain kinds of emotional attachment toward their learner groups and judge their new group based on their previous group experiences. Hence, being in the same group learners may have a variety of different views of the group. Teachers of the same group of students may also express different opinions of them.

7.2.10 The age factor

As discussed earlier, every theme that emerged so far from the student interview data (from 7.2.1 to 7.2.9) were developed through core questions common to all interviewees. However, upon a closer examination of the interview data, I discovered one interesting remark, the age factor, that is not developed from core questions. Since this remark, the age factor, seems relevant to the focus of this study, I decided to discuss it more in detail here.

By the age factor I mean that while a learner group seems to have some effects on individual learners' learning, the degree of the effect may be contingent upon their age. Debbie and Flora explained that when they were younger, the group had more of an influence on them; hence, being in the right kind of group was especially important. As they got older and more mature, the influence of the groups has diminished:

INTERVIEWER: So, did being in that 'bad' group in your junior college influence your learning in any way?

Debbie: Yeah, Sometimes I couldn't help being like them, like not paying attention in class or not studying very hard for the test. That was especially true in my second and third year of study. But gradually, in my fourth and fifth year of study, I realized that it was wrong and adjusted my own attitude...

... and,

Flora: Well, [learning in my previous group] was quite different. We were only sixteen when we started our study, so we were all kind of immature and we kind of grew up together. I can really see the changes in my classmates. Here at NKFUST it is a bit different. We are all grown ups, twenty something, so this is quite different. Before when we didn't like a classmate's behaviour, we would tell that person. Now it's different, either we like it or not, we don't care that much and we don't tell the other person what to do or how to behave.

Here both learners made clear that when they were younger, they were more immature and more easily influenced by others. As they grew older they sensed their own maturity and likened their new behaviour to that of a more mature person: respecting the individuality of others was one example of this. Flora pointed out that in the previous group, they “grew up together” and thus had a closer relationship. It seems to make sense that in that kind of group, the group itself might pose more of an influence on an individual learner. As teens grow into young adults, independence and separation from the group could result; the learner group then is no longer so essential to their lives. This is not to say that a learner group comprised of older learners would not have any influence on individual learners – just as Flora herself said, in her present group she is still “*more or less*” influenced by it. Rather, in a group where learners are young, the influence might be more apparent and direct. I believe that this is an interesting point of view and should be considered when we talk about the influences of the learner groups on individual learners. In the area of education, some studies (e.g. Wentzel, 1999; Wigfield et al., 1998) have addressed a similar issue and implied that peer group influences are likely to be more significant during adolescence. It would be interesting for future research to compare the degree of influence that learning groups have in relation to different age groups to determine

whether this theory can be verified. Age was not the main focus of this research, and yet I do think that these interviewees have uncovered another layer of the complexity of the influences of the learner groups and pointed out a possible useful direction and focus for future research.

To sum up, section 7.2 has presented data from student interviews. It has summarized important comments student interviewees made regarding each learner group and discussed some important themes arising from the data.

7.3 Summary

This chapter has presented findings from the interview data. The first section mainly focused on teachers' interview data, including their views of the motivation and cohesiveness of each group. Then, some themes arising from the interview data (e.g. the influences of prior group experiences) were also discussed. Following the teacher interview data was the student interview data. Findings from the student interview data, such as their views on the motivation and cohesiveness of the group, the importance of the learner group, and the effects of group size were discussed.

Chapters five to seven have presented the data from observations, questionnaires, and interviews in turn. The next chapter will integrate the data from the three sources and examine the overall findings from this study in depth.

Chapter Eight – Major Research Findings: Integration

The last three chapters have presented the analysis of the data gathered by each research instrument: classroom observations, questionnaires, and interviews. Moving from presenting the data separately, this chapter will integrate the findings when addressing each of my five research questions in turn with details and examples. Then, an overview of the important findings from this study will be presented and discussed.

8.1 Discussion of research question one

Question: How can we define the motivational disposition of each group?

8.1.1 Senior groups

- ***Complexities reveal inconsistencies and contradiction***

In order to objectively explore the motivational disposition of each group, I employed three research instruments (classroom observations, questionnaires and interviews) for the investigation. Through the process of finding an answer to this research question, I realized that researching the motivational disposition of a group is very challenging. This is mainly because different research instruments have yielded different findings and it is hard to reach a clear-cut result. With positive results from the questionnaire and complimentary interviews from the teacher and the students, Group 4C appears to be a motivated group. Their learning orientation seemed to be intrinsically-motivated because most students of Group 4C claimed they learned English because they liked English and enjoyed the learning process. Over 60 percent of them actively engaged in out-of-class learning activities at least twice a week (for details see section 6.1.1). In addition, teachers and students

interviewed believed that this group cared about learning very much and were studious (sections 7.1.1.1 and 7.2.1.1). All the results positively reinforce an intrinsically motivated learning orientation. However, from my own classroom observations my impression was very different. My observation notes show that this group of students lacked interest in their learning and were not participatory in class (section 5.1.1). The difference between my observation data and the data from the other research instruments is intriguing and shows the complexity of the picture created from different data sources. I believe that one possible explanation could be with the limitation of classroom observations. The observation method I adopted was to form a general impression of classroom life and from the impressions I tried to “elicit a pattern” or “extract principles” (Wragg, 1999, p.77). On the one hand, this observation strategy seems to work well in my research because the general impressions I developed from my observation notes helped to shape my questionnaire and make it fit into the local context better. On the other hand, as Wragg suggests, research studies that start with the data based on “what is seen and recorded” may create some problems since it “can be extremely subjective” (p.78). In that sense, some research findings within this study have the potential to be subjective since they rest upon data from classroom observations.

In addition, as Swezey, Meltzer and Salas (1994) express well:

The measurement of motivation is made difficult by virtue of the fact that motivation itself is not directly observable. As a result; we are left to infer motivational processes based on behaviour observations. (p.141)

It is possible to observe behaviours which researchers might label as representing motivation, e.g., students enthusiastically answering teacher’s questions or actively engaged in lively discussions. The challenge for researchers is in the grey area

beyond behaviours commonly labeled motivation because the absence of overt signs of motivation may not indicate an unmotivated group. I observed some behaviours which I thought relevant to students' motivation; whether, in the end, they are still determined to be relevant is open to interpretation. Moreover, behaviour exhibited in the classroom is only one way that students could exhibit their motivation. Certainly, there are many other factors, such as students' assignments, out-of-class learning, or learning orientations, that could also affect motivation. Due to all these limitations, my observation data may not be very reliable.

In addition to the limitations of classroom observations, one possible explanation for why different research instruments generate different findings could be that there is considerable motivational variation within this group – hence the lack of a sharply defined finding. This is demonstrated even more evidently in the data regarding the motivation of Group 4D which is full of inconsistencies and contradictions. My observation notes record a negative insights showing the group was unmotivated (section 5.1.2) while the questionnaire shows positive results with evidence of high motivation (section 6.1.2). In the interviews, the teacher's opinion was not favorable (section 7.1.1.2) while the students' points of view were full of contradictions – two (out of three) interviewees at times said the group was motivated and at other times said it was not (section 7.2.1.2). The inconsistencies and contradictions probably show the degree of the complexity of individual and group motivation due to the motivational variation within the group. This complexity makes researching the motivational disposition of a group a challenging task.

- ***Different areas of focus in different research instruments***

Another reason why the data on group motivation is inconsistent and

somewhat inconclusive could be because different research instruments have different areas of focus. Aspects of learner motivation I used in my questionnaire are different from the teacher and student interviewees' specific examples of motivation. In my questionnaire, I used the aspects of learning orientations (Intrinsic Motivation or Extrinsic Motivation), learner autonomy, and self-efficacy to explore learner motivation. These aspects are based on motivational theories proposed by several motivational researchers, such as Deci and Ryan (1985, 2002), Dörnyei (2001a), Noels et al., (2003), and Oxford and Shearin (1994). Theoretically it should be a reliable way of exploring one's motivation to some extent. And yet, questionnaires with closed items are limited in only eliciting data from pre-determined aspects decided in advance by the researcher, the discrepancy between the questionnaire data and the data from other sources is more understandable.

As the interview data exhibits, these three aspects were indeed not sufficient because what the teachers and students regarded as motivation was different from the items in my questionnaire. Many of their examples regarded specific classroom behaviour (e.g. 'interactive in class') or homework assignments (e.g. 'the quality of the work they do is good') which were not part of my questionnaire items. Because models of human motivation are often complex with varying number of components (Dörnyei, 2001a), these three aspects I have chosen may not have been enough to determine one's overall motivation. Indeed, human motivation is not a simple straight-forward concept.

Ultimately, it seems the questionnaire explored motivation on a more general, or abstract level while teachers and students observed motivation on a more specific, concrete level. That is, the questionnaire asked the participants to generalize their experiences and attitudes while the interviews invited them to talk about concrete

events from their personal experiences. Thus, the discrepancy between questionnaire data and interview data could occur.

- ***The influences of prior/simultaneous group experiences***

Other than contradicting data from different research instruments, an interesting phenomenon I have discovered is that contradictions can be exhibited when using the same instrument -- interviews. Different interviewees from the *same* group could have different opinions of the motivation of the group. Through the analysis I found that participants' different perspectives on the shared experience could be caused by the influences from other learning experiences. Basically, learners may compare the current group with the previous group and form an impression of the current group based on the comparison. During the interviews, several learners naturally compared their current group with their previous group. Interestingly, the pattern seems to be that the ones who really liked the current group tended to have had unpleasant experiences with the previous group. Ray is a good example:

Ray: I think [studying at NKFUST] is quite amazing to me. I studied at Fortune Institute of Technology before, and the teacher's quality and students' quality were not as good. Here at NKFUST I have had quite a different impact.

On the other hand, some interviewees with positive learning experiences in the previous group tend to complain more about the current group, like Jack:

Jack: I think the group I had before was more supportive in terms of learning. For example, at that time whenever we had midterm or final exam, we had the study group and we helped each other out.....On the contrary, we don't do this kind of study group here at NKFUST.

Certainly, this pattern is not absolute and does not apply to every interviewee, but it

does apply to several interviewees and this could explain why learners learning in the same group have different perceptions of the motivation of the group (relevant discussion can be found in section 7.2.9.).

As for the teachers, they also compared the group they were teaching with other groups (both prior and simultaneous). Betty, the teacher of Group 4C, was teaching a sophomore group during the semester of my research. During the interview, she mentioned a couple of times that Group 4C was a much better group than the sophomore group. It might be possible that since she was having such an unpleasant experience with the sophomore group, she felt that Group 4C was motivated. The same pattern occurs with Fanny, the teacher of Group 4D. During the interview, Fanny was also complaining that students in Group 4D tended to be late to class and “this situation never happens in Group 3D.” These interview excerpts support the hypothesis of how our personal construct of experience is related to previous and simultaneous personal experiences, providing us with some insights into the discrepancy among different participants' perspectives (please also refer to section 7.1.3 for details).

- ***Different interpretations of motivation***

In addition to prior group influences, I also discovered that another reason why the participants of the same group had different impressions of the group motivation could be they have different criteria of what they consider motivation. During the process of exploring the motivational disposition of the group, I also further investigated how my research participants judged motivation. I analyzed all the teacher interviewees' and student interviewees' specific examples when they talked about the motivation of their group in the interviews and categorized their examples

for further comparisons (sections 7.1.1.5 and 7.2.1.5). The following table (8.1) integrates categories from both teacher interviewees and student interviewees in order of popularity:

	Teacher Interviewees	Student Interviewees
1.	In-class attitudes or behaviour (e.g. 'interactive in class'; 'cooperative')	The general learning attitudes (e.g. 'care about learning'; 'studious')
2.	Homework assignments (e.g. 'assignment quality is good')	Homework assignments or presentations (e.g. 'prepare well for assignments')
3.	The general learning attitudes (e.g. 'care about learning'; 'work hard')	The academic achievement (e.g. 'high grades')
4.	N/A	Autonomous behaviour (e.g. 'doing extra assignments')

Table 8.1 – teacher interviewees' and student interviewees' interpretations of motivation

As table 8.1 shows, there are some similarities and differences between the examples from the teacher interviewees and those from the students interviewees. For example, the category 'general learning attitudes' appear in both teachers' data and students' data, however, it is the most important indicator for students while for teachers, the most important indicator is students' behaviour in class. It seems that the teachers are more concerned with the students' enthusiasm shown in class, such as volunteering to answer questions, nodding to show their understanding, or fully participating in group discussions. However, none of the students mentioned any of these examples in their interviews. Instead, they cared more about their general learning attitudes, such as whether someone was studious or not. These differences are not particularly surprising because it is almost impossible for teachers to know

what students are thinking and feeling, so they tend to base their conception of motivation on what they can observe, such as student behaviour in class. Students, on the other hand, are in a better position to know what they (or their classmates) think and feel and so they have an insider perspective on motivation. This finding suggests that it seems important for teachers and students to communicate clearly what motivation is and what kind of motivation behaviour teachers expect from the students. For instance, teachers should not just give general statements such as “you should be more motivated,” instead, they need to explain clearly what the students should be doing to show motivation to avoid any misunderstandings.

In addition, as table 8.1 indicates, the students’ data has an unusual category of academic achievement. It seems that students like to use academic achievement as their motivation indicator, a factor not mentioned by the teachers. Logically, as a teacher myself, I can understand why teachers do not view achievement as an inherent characteristic of motivation; a student could be motivated and hard-working but have low grades due to other reasons. It might be that the students’ perspective on the importance of test scores as an indicator of motivation is the result of the local culture. The education system here in Taiwan has been very test-oriented and often scores are highly valued. For instance, students with high grades are often well liked at home or at school regardless of their attitudes or personality. On the other hand, students with amiable personality and positive attitudes but lower grades might receive rather less respect from teachers or peers. The prevalence of exams and students’ achievement orientation in the Chinese educational system is commonly acknowledged (Tang & Biggs, 1996; Salili, 1996). Specifically in my local context (Taiwan), Chen et al. (2005) speculate on the concept of the “Chinese Imperative” as an important motivational factor, reflecting the internalization of social, educational

and institutional requirements, such as getting high test scores. Under this cultural influence the equation of high scores to high motivation seems to make sense.

This sub-section has examined the data on the motivational disposition of senior groups emphasizing that there is a lack of a clear disposition of senior groups because the data from three research instruments has yielded different findings. I have attempted to offer some explanations for the contradictory findings, such as the limitation of classroom observations, the complexity of individual and group motivation, or the influences of prior group experiences. The next sub-section will focus on the data on group motivation from junior groups.

8.1.2 Junior groups

This sub-section focuses on the data from the junior groups relating to the same research question (defining the motivational disposition of the groups). Compared to the senior groups, the data from the junior groups (Group 3C and Group 3D) is more straightforward. Most data from Group 3C is positive. My observation notes are full of positive descriptions (see section 5.2.1) and the questionnaire results are all very positive too. The interview data shows that in general, both teachers and students had favorable views of the motivation of the group. They all seem to describe the group as a motivated one due to their active engagement in class and their hard-working attitudes (section 7.1.1.3 and 7.2.1.3).

The only negative portrait is from one teacher of this group, Nancy. She commented that the motivation of Group 3C was not stable. She explained that when the assignment was harder or when it was toward the end of a semester, students' motivation was lower. In the literature, Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) and Ushioda (2001) have also pointed out that students' motivation is unstable and changeable.

Particularly, in Ushioda's study (2001), her research participants also mentioned that

a particular kind of L2 coursework (such as time-consuming L2 tasks) could result in a demotivating experience.

The other junior group, Group 3D, is the only group out of my four target groups that has consistent results from four sources. The data from classroom observation notes are full of positive portraits (see section 5.2.2) and the questionnaire results (section 6.2.1) also show that the group was motivated (section 6.2.2). All the teacher interviewees and student interviewees also commented highly on the group motivation (sections 7.1.1.4 and 7.2.1.4). I think it is unusual that all four sources of data have such a consistent result; in my opinion, it probably means that Group 3D had a *very high* level of motivation that was exhibited in various ways. Hence, no matter from what angle we explore it, the results are always positive.

To conclude, from the experience of answering this research question, I have learned that due to the complexity of motivation and individual motivational variation within a group, it is challenging to get a single measure or portrait of the group motivation (as the case in Group 4C, 4D and 3C). However, sometimes everyone in the group could be highly motivated in every way, so we could get a good single group measure on the motivation of the group, as in the case of Group 3D. In this sense, I speculate that the degree of consistency among the data might be an indication of the level of group motivation. If we get consistent data on group motivation from different research instruments, it might be a clue that the group has very high (or very low) motivation. However, if the data from different research instruments shows discrepancy, this could mean that the motivation of the group is not uniformly or consistently high or as low.

8.1.3 More on learning orientations

One interesting issue I discovered while answering the first research question regards learning orientations. Three groups out of four show a mixture of Intrinsic Motivation (IM) and Extrinsic Motivation (EM). For Extrinsic Motivation, they all chose this statement: *“I learn English so that I can get a better paying job in the future.”* According to Deci and Ryan’s (1985) theory, different types of EM (external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation) can be viewed on a continuum depending upon how the degree of internalization. Among the three types of EM, external regulation is on the far end of the continuum indicating less internalized. In Noels’ et al. (2003) study from where I adapted the ‘learning orientation’ section of my questionnaire, ‘learning English for a future job’ is given as an example of external regulation. Noels et al. believe that a person learning English due to a tangible benefit (e.g. a future job) will lose “incentive to continue engagement in the learning process” (p. 39) if the reason for learning English does not exist anymore. However, this is not the case with my research participants, as Whitney explains:

Whitney: Well, English is my interest, and I want to learn it...If a course fits my interest and helps me with my future career, that’ll be the best, but if not, I will take the one that fits my interest.

Whitney along with some other interviewees explained that without job incentives they would still carry on their learning due to their passion and interest in English. She and many other research participants exhibit having both intrinsic motivation of learning English and career motivation. The same discussion appears in Kember’s (2000) and Kember, Wong and Leung’s (1999) research studies. In these studies, they explain that Hong Kong students have interest in learning English and also career motivation -- they expect the courses to be interesting and useful for their

future careers. Although it is not explicitly explained in my interview data, the above excerpts along with relevant others seem to suggest that having opportunities for better paying jobs is something more than just a tangible benefit. Perhaps in the Chinese society, career motivation is commonly regarded as a respected goal that many learners value and internalize – they see it as an addition to their own interest (IM) in the language rather than a distraction.

Since so many research participants have both IM and this kind of career motivation, I speculate that for my research participants, learning English for better paying jobs might be something they personally identify with as a valued goal. In this sense, perhaps it might be more appropriate to treat career motivation as a more internalized type of EM, such as identified regulation. As Noels et al. (2003) explain, identified regulation refers to something students engage for “personally relevant reasons”, something students do “because of its importance for achieving a valued goal” (p.39). Particular to Taiwan, Chen et al. (2005) criticize the limitation of IM and EM and explain how these two learning orientations may not always fit into the local context. They point out that Taiwanese students internalize the social, educational and institutional requirements (e.g. finding a good job, passing an exam) as their own goal and this unique learning orientation can be seen as a ‘Chinese Imperative.’ These researchers’ views to some extent explain why so many of my research participants have both IM and career motivation.

To conclude, this section has attempted to answer the first research question regarding the motivational disposition of my target groups. It has integrated the data from classroom observations, questionnaires, and interviews and discussed the issue in depth. It has also examined relevant findings arising from the data.

8.2 Discussion of research question two

Question: How can we define the characteristics of each group through its group processes (e.g. group cohesiveness)?

8.2.1 Senior groups

Generally speaking, the data on group processes is not as complex as the data on group motivation. We can see more consistency and fewer contradictions, though there are some mismatches. For example, in Group 4C, both the observation data (section 5.1.1) and student interview data (section 7.2.2.1) illustrate low cohesiveness of the group. However, the teacher (Betty) seems slightly uncertain about the cohesiveness of the group. At one point she said the group cohesiveness was “OK”, but later on she illustrated some incidents that seem to indicate otherwise (section 7.1.2.1). As for the questionnaire results, it seems to have yielded a neutral finding: Likert scale sections revealed a neutral point of view while the open-ended question (where the respondents freely commented on their group) raised mixed voices; some liked the group but some did not (section 6.1.1).

The results from Group 4D are very similar to those from Group 4C. My observation data shows that the group had low cohesiveness because they did not seem to care about their classmates’ presentations (section 5.1.2). As for the interview data, although the teacher of this learning group did not directly comment on the cohesiveness of the group, the students of the group were unanimous in their opinion of the low cohesiveness of the group (section 7.2.2.2). Compared to the observation and interviewee data, the questionnaire seems to have yielded a more neutral finding: the mean score of Likert scale sections was somewhere between 2.5~3.0 (out of 4.0) with positive and negative comments in the open-ended question (section 6.1.2).

Based on the results, I wonder whether it is appropriate to use questionnaires, particularly Likert scale items, to measure cohesiveness or norms of a group. In both senior groups, observations and interviews all indicate the groups had low cohesiveness or negative norms, however; the questionnaire results did not seem to clearly indicate the same direction. The average mean score of Likert scale sections was 2.8 (out of 4.0) for Group 4C and 2.7 for Group 4D. Both scores are not particularly high but certainly are above average. Without the observation and interviewee data, my impression of the group processes of these senior groups would be rather different.

One problem, in my opinion, with these Likert scale sections is that the items and response categories are pre-set by the researcher in advance and the data it yielded can be limited in scope and depth. In other words, learners have limited selections and cannot spontaneously express what they think in their own words. As Oppenheim (1992, p.114) proposes, “disadvantages of closed questions are the loss of spontaneity and expressiveness – we shall never know what the respondents said or thought of their own accord.” To give a specific example, the items I selected for the section of ‘group cohesiveness’ mostly regard the general feel of the group environment (such as *‘I feel very comfortable working with this class’*) and the relationship among group members (such as *‘This class is composed of people who fit together.’*) These two aspects were chosen because many group dynamics researchers (Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998; Forsyth, 1990; Levine and Moreland, 1990) propose that important components of group cohesiveness are an enjoyable environment and strong liking of group members. However, when interviewed, several students implied that their group did not have high cohesiveness due to some communication problems (e.g. took a long time to reach a decision). Some others

used the participation in extracurricular activities as an indicator of the cohesiveness of the group. These two categories did not exist in my questionnaire items, as a result, the discrepancy occurs. This problem is also discussed in the literature, as some researchers (Dörnyei, 2003b; Muijs, 2004; Oppenheim, 1992) have recommended exercising caution with closed questions in questionnaires due to the problem of limited pre-set perspectives with quantitative data.

Having said that, it is also necessary to clarify that despite limitations, questionnaires do still provide valuable data. When I looked at the cohesiveness mean score of both senior groups (an average of 2.75 out of 4.0) by itself, it seemed to be neither a high nor low score. However, when I compared it with the cohesiveness mean score of junior groups (an average of 3.1) by administering a t-test, the t-test result shows that there is a statistically significant difference at 0.00 level between senior students and junior students (see section 6.3.1.2). In other words, through a statistical comparison, I was able to conclude that statistically senior groups indeed had lower cohesiveness than junior groups.

This finding goes against our common sense that senior groups might have stronger cohesiveness since the students in senior groups have spent a longer time together. As Dörnyei and Ehrman (1998) assert, “the longer people spend together, the stronger their cohesiveness becomes” (p.141). It seems that my research data does not support this claim. This suggests that the development of cohesiveness might depend on many factors other than time. One possible reason senior groups did not have high cohesiveness might be that they did not know each other well, which several interviewees mentioned in the interview. Dörnyei and Ehrman (*ibid*) and Dörnyei and Malderez (1999) mention that intermember acceptance, namely learning about each other and knowing each other well, is one way to promote

cohesiveness. If group members have spent a long time together *but* have not really seized the opportunity to get to know each other better, after a long time together they may still remain distant from each other, thus developing low cohesiveness. This could be because older students at the university may become less involved in the group because, facing the pressure of finding a job soon, they are probably more concerned with their own individual achievements. Other reasons, such as lack of group legends (Hadfield, 1992), lack of rewarding nature of group experience (Dörnyei and Malderez, 1999), or lack of proper communication in the group (Oyster, 2000), might also explain why senior groups had lower cohesiveness than junior groups despite the fact that senior groups had spent a longer time together.

8.2.2 Junior groups

Overall, the results of both junior groups reveal that these two groups have many affirmative group processes. For Group 3C, the observation data (section 5.2.1), the questionnaire data (section 6.2.1) and the teacher interview data (section 7.1.2.3) all support the high cohesiveness of the group. However, the students' interview data (section 7.2.2.3) does not support this. The three student interviewees from Group 3C seemed to have very different and contradicting opinions of the cohesiveness of the group.

As for Group 3D, the observation data (section 5.2.2), the questionnaire data (section 6.2.2) and the teacher and student interview data (sections 7.1.2.4 and section 7.2.2.4) all reveal that Group 3D had many positive group processes and was a highly cohesive group. The only exception is one teacher from the group who had a mixed opinion of the cohesiveness of the group, but that was simply because she experienced low cohesiveness with the group at the beginning of the semester when

everyone barely knew each other.

It seems that we have witnessed some inconsistency in the interview data on group processes from the junior groups. Either some student interviewees in the same group had contradictory views or one teacher (out of three) of the group had different impressions from the rest. The discrepancy could come from the participants' different interpretations of the term cohesiveness. Since one of my intentions is asking my interviewees about their group cohesiveness was to explore what they meant by cohesiveness, I asked them to give me specific examples when they described the high (or low) cohesiveness of their group. I then analyzed and categorized all their examples of cohesiveness (sections 7.1.2.5 and 7.2.2.5). Table 8.2 presents a summary of the categories (in order of popularity) from both teacher interview data and student interview data.

As table 8.2 below indicates, it seems that for both teachers and students one thing they valued the most when talking about the cohesiveness of the group is the relationship among students or classmates. Interviewees believed that if group members care about each other very much, get along well, and have good connections, it is a cohesive group. Other than the relationship among students, teachers also observed students' in-class behaviour to judge their cohesiveness, things such as whether they worked well in small groups, whether they paid attention to other small group presentations, or whether they were willing to learn from their classmates or not. In Senior's (1999) study, she listed four categories of teachers' ideas of cohesiveness: a.) inter-student relationships, b.) behaviours of individual students, c.) responsiveness of the whole class group, and d.) the development of class cultures. It seems that the first two categories of cohesiveness -- inter-students relationships and behaviours of individual students -- are similar to the first two

categories of my teacher interviewees' data: The relationship among the students and in-class behaviour.

	Teacher interviewees	Student interviewees
1.	The relationship among students (e.g. 'care about each other')	The relationship among students (e.g. 'no cliques'; 'good connections')
2.	In-class behaviour (e.g. 'work well in small groups')	The participation in group-related activities (e.g. 'high participation in extracurricular activities')
3.	The atmosphere in class (e.g. 'atmosphere in class is good')	The atmosphere in class (e.g. 'good atmosphere')
4.	N/A	The communication in the group (e.g. 'be able to reach a decision easily')

Table 8.2 – teacher interviewees' and student interviewees' interpretations of cohesiveness

As for the students, they did not mention examples regarding visible in-class group behaviours. Instead, they judged the cohesiveness of the group from the participation in group-related activities after class. Participation in group-related activities is not often discussed in the group literature; however, the concept is not new. Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) list “participate in group-activities willingly” and “participate with each other in out-of-class activities” (p.63) as possible indicators of a cohesive group.

To summarize, different interviewees in the same group could have slightly different interpretations of what cohesiveness refers to. Hence, different interviewees in the group may have various viewpoints of their group cohesiveness.

Another reason for the discrepancy of the interview data could be the result of

prior group influences (also discussed in 8.1.1). For instance, interviewees who had previously been with a group that had positive group processes (e.g. high cohesiveness) might be more easily dissatisfied with the cohesiveness of the current group, on the other hand, learners with unpleasant prior group experiences tend to be more content with the current group. Kate provides a good example:

Kate: Well, [in the current group] everyone gets along very well. This is very important to me because I didn't feel so in my previous learning group. Some bad things happened in my previous learning group so I particularly like the current group.

This pattern of current impressions being shaped by prior group experiences is evident in most student interviewees' data (for relevant discussions please refer to section 7.2.9). In my opinion, this does not necessarily mean that if you ask different members in a group regarding their group cohesiveness, everyone gives completely different answers. Rather, it means that in addition to the core impressions that might be common to all group members, the data might show some variations among different participants due to the influences from prior group experiences.

To conclude, this section has attempted to answer the second research question, the group processes of my target groups by integrating data from all my research instruments. Through the process of answering this research question I have learned that it can be challenging for a researcher to attempt to present a clear-cut portrait of group characteristics (e.g. the cohesiveness of the group). This is due to several reasons, such as each group member's own interpretation of what cohesiveness is, the influence of prior group experiences, and the various aspects each research instrument focuses on. The researcher can perhaps better deal with the complexity of the issue by presenting various data from different aspects, rather than to describe the group in terms of a single measure.

8.3 Discussion of research question three

Question: Statistically speaking, what is the relationship between group processes and learners' level of motivation?

8.3.1 General overview

In order to answer this research question, I administered a Pearson's correlation test at 2-tailed significance level. For full results, please refer to section 6.3.1.3. Here I am only going to discuss the correlations that are relevant to this research question:

1. A weak correlation between group cohesiveness and autonomous behaviours
(.21 at 0.05 level)
2. A moderate correlation between group cohesiveness and self-efficacy
(.43 at 0.01 level)
3. A weak correlation between group norms and autonomous behaviours.
(. 27 at 0.01 level)
4. A weak correlation between group norms and self-efficacy
(.23 at 0.05 level)

From these correlations we can see that group processes seem to relate to some aspects of learner motivation. Specifically, group cohesiveness and group norms have slight to moderate correlations with individual learners' self-efficacy and autonomous behaviours. This could mean that learners who believe their group is cohesive or has positive group norms might have higher self-efficacy and demonstrate more autonomous behaviours, both of which could be signs of high motivation. This result is in line with current literature (Hadfield, 1992; Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003) that promotes the importance of group processes in language learning. Specifically, Hadfield (1992) argues that "successful group dynamics is a vital element in the teaching/learning process" (p.10).

8.3.2 Teacher's leadership style and learners' level of motivation

Out of three group processes (group cohesiveness, group norms and group leadership) included in the questionnaire, group leadership is the only process that does not seem to have any correlations with students' level of motivation. That is, the questionnaire results indicate that group leaders (i.e. the teachers in the educational context) do not have much connection with learner motivation. This finding is rather different than what current literature (Dörnyei and Malderez, 1999; Foels et al., 2000; Noels et al. 1999; Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001) has suggested, which is democratic leadership is the most effective style to promote group motivation and performance. Specifically, Noels et al.'s (1999) empirical study concludes that if teachers allow students to make more choices in their learning (a more democratic and less controlling style), it seems to promote their motivation, especially their intrinsic motivation. It seems important to further investigate why there is no clear correlation between group leadership style and individual learners' motivation in my research. One possible explanation could be that there is no clear 'leader' in the group. In the university context in Taiwan, an English major class group has several teachers teaching them at the same time (e.g. one teacher for *English Listening* class and another teacher for *English Writing* class) and teachers might have different styles of teaching. I tried to overcome the problem by asking the learners to identify the dominant leadership style of their teachers of compulsory courses when answering this section (group leadership) of the questionnaire. However, it seems that generalizing all the teachers' leadership style might not generate reliable data. This could be the reason why the data from this section does not seem to show any significant relationship with learner motivation.

In addition, when I compared this result with the interview data, I realized that

teachers still play an important role for learners. However, the kind of teachers learners cared about in my research context does not seem to have much to do with the communicative 'leadership style' theory (e.g. democratic, autocratic, or laissez-faire style) that I adopted for this study. For instance, Tracy pointed out that the kind of teacher that is important for her is the one that makes "a good model" and is "enthusiastic in teaching." Enthusiasm, as Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) explain, is one of the four characteristics of transformational leadership. Transformational leaders tend to be good role models and provide "vision" and "inspiration" (p.100) to push learners' performance beyond expectations. It seems that the kind of teachers Tracy admired are transformational leaders.

Another interviewee, Tim, explained that the type of teacher who pays extra attention to the students in need is important to him.

Interviewer: What kind of teacher is important for you?

Tim: Someone like Jane I think, very patient. For example, at first I really didn't know much about the phonetic. She noticed that and started to use her break time to teach me phonetics. I like this kind of teacher, who is willing to put in extra effort and who encourages me a lot.

This seems to fit the description of "Earth mother" type of teaching style that Katz (1996) offers in the typology of teaching styles. This type of teacher builds an extensive relationship with students and cares about their feelings and experiences. Tim is particularly grateful for Jane's extra attention since the course Jane taught was an *Advanced Conversation* class, not a phonetics class. In class Jane saw Tim's need to learn the basic rule of phonetics and volunteered to spend the break time coaching Tim. According to Tim's illustration, Jane's extra effort has been very important to him and this is something that makes a difference to his learning.

All in all, it seems like learners in my research context care about the

teachers on a more personal level. Teachers' teaching enthusiasm or caring attitude seem to be more important than the communicative leadership style (e.g. democratic, autocratic, or laissez-faire style) they employ in the classroom. The culture influence could be a reason for the mismatch here since this finding is similar to Cortazzi and Jin's (1996, 2001) studies on Chinese students' expectations of a good teacher. They point out that Chinese learners expect the teachers to have a good personality (e.g. being patient or humorous) and good moral character (e.g. be able to set moral examples and be worthy of imitation). In addition, Cortazzi and Jin report that these Chinese learners also expect teachers to teach them about life, be their friends or even be their parents. All these findings are very similar to what my interviewees explained about a good teacher in the interviews.

8.3.3 Group processes and learning orientations

According to the questionnaire results, group processes show correlations with learners' self-efficacy and autonomous behaviours (section 6.3.1.3), but do not seem to have any connections with individual learners' learning orientations -- Extrinsic Motivation, EM or Intrinsic Motivation, IM (section 6.3.1.1). This seems to show that group processes may not affect every aspect of learning motivation; i.e., the effects could be limited to a certain stage of learning motivation. Several researchers classify L2 motivation in stages, for example, Williams and Burden (1997) propose that L2 motivation should have two phases – initialing motivation phase and sustaining the effort phase. Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) classify L2 motivation into three stages – the preactional stage, the actional stage, and the postactional stage. The questionnaire data seems to show that the learner group could have an influence on motivational aspects (e.g. self-efficacy or learner autonomy) at the actional stage,

or sustaining the effort phase. However, the influence is not apparent with the motivational aspects (e.g. learning orientations) at the preactional stage or the initialing motivation phase.

One student interviewee, Tina, corroborated this hypothesis by saying that the learner group is important for her “improvement” of English, but it is not as important for her “initial impetus to learn.” Dörnyei himself (2001b) in the further elaborated process model of L2 motivation also explains that a main motivational influence in the actional stage is the influence of the learner group.

Another similar finding where groups have different kinds of influence is demonstrated in the section on learner autonomy in the questionnaire. The Pearson’s correlation test of the questionnaire data shows that group processes have a mild correlation with autonomous behaviours (Likert scale items), but the relationship between group processes and out-of-class learning activities (where learners ticked the ones that they engaged in) is not indicated from the questionnaire results. The results from out-of-class learning activities showed that students from all four groups engaged in very similar types of activities, regardless of which group they were in (see section 6.3.1.1). This perhaps means that the group processes do not have an apparent influence on learners’ choice of out-of-class learning activities. Through further analysis I realized that it seems more than just a coincidence that both sections -- learning orientations and out-of-class learning activities (the sections that do not show connections with group processes) -- were not Likert scale sections while the rest of the questionnaire sections were (except the open-ended question). This could be one possible explanation why I could not identify the relationship between group processes and learning orientations or out-of-class learning in the questionnaire. Perhaps the inclusion of non-Likert scale sections creates problems

when comparing the results from these sections (where learners tick the selections that were true to them) with the Likert scale sections. This shows that there is a need for researchers to exercise caution in the choice of the format of questions since different formats of questions could make a difference to the research findings.

8.3.4 Autonomous beliefs and autonomous behaviours

Another interesting issue arising from the Pearson's correlation test is that group processes correlate with autonomous behaviours, but not with autonomous beliefs. This shows that if you are in a certain group, your level of motivation might be enhanced through engaging in more autonomous behaviours, but your autonomous thinking might remain unchanged. Relevant to this issue, a paired sample t-test (see section 6.3.1.4) also reveals that there is a discrepancy between autonomous beliefs and behaviours. This means that even if a learner has positive autonomous beliefs, it does not necessarily show that he/she will transform the thoughts into actions.

The discrepancy between autonomous beliefs and behaviours is also identified in the literature. In Lai's (1999) study, many Hong Kong students do not put their beliefs into action, for instance, 96% of them considered self-access learning to be a good way to learn English, but only 48% of them actually went to the self-access learning center. Chan et al. (2002) also conducted autonomy research in the Hong Kong context and they conclude that "students' attitudes do *not* always operationalise into actual autonomous behaviour" (p.11). In their study students believed that the reasons they did not engage in more autonomous practices were lack of motivation or lack of interest while in my study "motivation" was not articulated, however, learners' reasons for not putting their autonomous beliefs into

actions were laziness, lack of time and lack of know-how (see section 7.2.8). I think it is possible to suggest that lack of motivation is probably the meaning behind the same explanations my interviewees have come up with. Most people will agree that language learning is potentially a long process without quick pay offs. Thus, it is difficult for learners to persist in language learning without sufficient motivation. With sufficient motivation, learners are more likely to seize every opportunity to practice the language and overcome the problems such as lack of time. Without sufficient motivation, learners might easily think that it takes up too much time to engage in autonomous activities especially when the improvements of their skills are not immediate. This thinking might have stopped them from engaging in more autonomous behaviour.

It is also very interesting that my research and both research studies mentioned in the last paragraph, which reveal a gap between positive autonomous beliefs and enthusiastic autonomous behaviour, all have Chinese learners as research participants. Once again, the influences of the Chinese culture might play a role here. To some extent Chinese learners may still be dependent on their teacher (Watkins and Biggs, 2001) and while intellectually they realize the importance of learner autonomy, being in an environment where it is marginalized throughout their lives might have somehow impeded them from active engagement.

To sum up, this section has mainly examined the questionnaire data and tried to establish connections between group processes and learner motivation. The questionnaire data has shown that group processes seem to correlate with one's self-efficacy and autonomous behaviours. However, they do not seem to have connections with one's learning orientations, out-of-class learning activities, and also autonomous beliefs (which may not always transform into effective autonomous

behaviours). This section has also attempted to offer some explanations for why some connections were not exhibited in the questionnaire data.

8.4 Discussion of research question four

Question: From individual learners' own account, to what extent and in what ways does a learner group influence their motivation to learn English?

8.4.1 General overview

The interview data has shown that learners with positive impressions of the current learner group also seem to express high personal motivation while learners with negative impressions of their current group seem to have a lower level of motivation. In addition, 11 (out of 12) interviewees acknowledged the importance of the learner group, i.e., being in a 'good' group is a facilitator of their learning while being in a 'bad' group might negatively affect their learning enthusiasm. For instance, if they were in a 'good' learner group, it would motivate them more in their study, i.e. they would "study harder" or "put more effort in the homework." On the other hand, these learners also explained that if they were in a 'bad' group, it might lower their motivation, i.e., they would "get lazy for study" or "do very minimum for the class" (for details, see section 7.2.3). These learners' illustrations reconfirm the questionnaire results that group processes are indeed an important factor of individual learners' motivation. This finding supports many researchers' (Dörnyei and Ehrman, 1998; Dörnyei and Malderez, 1999; Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003; Hadfield, 1992) proposal that we should pay more attention to the importance of learner groups in language learning. After all, since learners spend a great deal of time learning in groups at school, it does not seem sensible to exclude this social factor from the learning process (Brophy, 1999).

8.4.2 A 'good' group and a 'bad' group

Since now we understand a learner group could have some effects on learners' motivation, the next key question then is, what is a 'good' learner group and what is a 'bad' one? In other words, what kind of group will help motivate learners positively and what kind of group will have a negative influence? Interview excerpts regarding these two matters were discussed in detail in sections 7.2.4 and 7.2.5. This section summarizes the student interviewees' definitions of a 'good' group and a 'bad' group together in the following table (table 8.3). Generally speaking, their definitions can be classified into three categories:

- A. Regarding their classmates (further divided into two aspects: the relationship aspect and the academic aspect)
- B. Regarding their teachers
- C. General group atmosphere

	A 'Good' Group	A 'Bad' Group
Classmates	<i>The relationship aspect</i>	
	1. Everyone is friendly and gets along well. 2. People encourage each other and support each other. 3. We respect each other. 4. We treat each other just like brothers and sisters and are able to have fun together. 5. We have lots of interactions.	1. Everyone is very competitive in a negative way. 2. People plot against others. 3. There aren't many interactions among the classmates. 4. Lots of cliques and each clique is not very open-minded and criticizes others quite easily. 5. My classmates don't respect each other. 6. My classmates are very cold toward each other. They don't speak to each other.

Table 8.3 continues

	A 'Good' Group	A 'Bad' Group
	<i>The academic aspect</i>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We share things together, like share learning methods, ideas, or good news. 2. Classmates care about learning, and have high level of motivation. 3. We discuss homework together and learn from each other. 4. Everyone's English level is about the same. 5. Everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves in English in front of others. 6. We have common goals. 7. The group that brings me stress so it motivates me to study harder 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classmates aren't motivated, or don't care about learning. 2. Classmates are not willing to share their learning methods and homework. 3. Everyone doesn't pay attention in class, very noisy. 4. Their English isn't very good and they aren't very interested in English
Teachers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teachers have good teaching methodology. 2. The teachers some degrees of interaction and respect between teachers and students. 3. The teacher is a good role-model. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher doesn't teach very well, almost nothing, and only pays attention to a couple of students that she likes. 2. The teacher is too lax. They don't help out and just mind their own business.
General group atmosphere	The group is cohesive.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The studying atmosphere is not very good and very few students are interested in studying. 2. The whole atmosphere is not friendly.

Table 8.3 Definitions of a 'good' and 'bad' learner group

On a general level, the 'good' group that my interviewees illustrated is an environment where everyone is supportive and cares about each other. On a specific level, many of the characteristics my interviewees mentioned are in line with some group researchers' opinion. For instance, both Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) and Hadfield (1992) mention that a good group is cohesive, has interactions and a supportive atmosphere. In addition, Dörnyei and Murphey explain that a good group should also have a common goal while Hadfield explains that in a bad group everyone is competitive and is not interested in each other.

All these characteristics were expressed by my interviewees. However, there is one area that is not explicitly developed in research literature on the group – the "academic aspect" to which my interviewees referred. What I have termed the academic aspect of a good group would be behaviour such as: sharing learning methods, discussing homework together, feeling comfortable expressing themselves in English in front of others, etc. While this academic aspect is not often pointed out in detail in group literature, it was briefly touched upon as the ideas of 'cooperation' and 'trust' that Dörnyei and Murphey (*ibid*) and Hadfield (*ibid*) mention in a comprehensive list of characteristics making up a good group. The prominence of the academic aspect as a characteristic of a good group and the detail to which interviewees elaborated upon the ideas of 'trust' and 'cooperation' with specific academic examples demonstrates the importance of it. One reason why my research participants seem to care very much about this academic aspect, particularly stressing cooperation among classmates could be, again, the Chinese cultural influence. Biggs and Watkins (1996) in their article explain that due to the Confucian values of collectivism, the environment encourages academic collective activities,

such as forming study groups to prepare for an exam. My interviewees could regard sharing study methods in study groups or helping one another with their homework a common practice of a 'good' or cohesive group. This cultural aspect might explain why most of my interviewees mentioned the aspect of academic cooperation when describing a 'good' group while it is usually not pointed out in specific academic examples by western researchers.

8.4.3 The age factor

Another relevant issue that emerged from my study through the process of answering this research question is the age factor. During the interview, a couple of interviewees mentioned that when they were in their previous learner group as junior college students, they were more influenced by group members. However, as they aged, the influences subsided (for detailed discussion with interview excerpts please see section 7.2.10). During the time of my research, my interviewees were between 20-22 years old; in junior college they were between 15-19 years old (during adolescence). Thus, my interviewees seemed to indicate that the learner group influences were stronger in their adolescence. A similar phenomenon is also discussed in general education context. Wentzel (1999) explains that children (especially those who are entering into adolescence) are more likely to "conform to peer pressure" and change their behaviour "due to fear of rejection" (p.89). In addition, Wigfield et al. (1998) believe that due to the need of social approval and sense of self, children, especially during adolescence, are eager to identify closely with their peers and hence they are "vulnerable to peer group influences on their goals, interests, and values" (p.103). It would be interesting to see if Asian students have similar goals, interests, and values. As there are few widely available empirical

research studies with non-Western students as their focus, there seems to be a need to conduct similar studies with students from a variety of other culture groups.

Interview data and the literature suggest that the influence of the learner group might be especially apparent during the teenage years. My research does not aim to explore further age-related differences in learner group influences. However, to some extent this research verifies, albeit through limited students' interview data, that age seems to be a relevant factor when it comes to the influence of the learner group.

8.4.4 The importance of learners' own determination to learn

Despite the numerous illustrations within this research showing that a learner group is indeed important to their learning motivation, during interviews my research participants also explained that the learner group was not *the* most important factor of their motivation. According to interviewees' self reports, the most important factor of their motivation came from their own determination. Interviewees said if they have a strong desire to learn then being in a bad group will not influence their motivation negatively – they felt they could still succeed. However, these interviewees believe that if a learner is in a good group, but the learner himself or herself does not want to learn English, then the good group will not be much help. Conversely, if the learner is eager to learn English, then being in the right kind of group will be a helping factor (for details see section 7.2.6).

These interviewees' idea of the importance of their own determination to learn seems to contradict the idea that social interactions in the learner group shape individual learner motivation (the direction the findings in this chapter have pointed to so far). My interviewees seem to point out that the most important source of their motivation is from within. This supports Ryan and Deci's (2000) assertion that

motivation must come from within the learner:

This natural motivational tendency is a critical element in cognitive, social, and physical development because it is through acting on one's inherent interests that one grows in knowledge and skills." (p.57)

My interviewees also seem to believe that the determination to learn English that comes from their inherent desire is more important than any other factors involved in language learning motivation. However, since their learning process is not in isolation, my interviewees also believe that their motivation is developed in a supportive environment, such as with motivated and caring classmates in the learner group. In this sense, my stance during this research study has evolved into a belief that L2 motivation should adopt a more eclectic world view in which parts of learner motivation come from learners' own inherent desire to succeed while at the same time this intrinsic motivation gradually develops and matures within a positive learning environment, such as among caring and supportive peers in their learner group. As Ushioda (2003) rightly says, "although the impetus to learn comes from within the learner, it develops as a function of the child's (or learner's) engagement in a particular activity with motivated and motivationally supportive others" (p. 92).

To summarize, this section has mainly examined interview data to explore the learners' opinions on the importance of the learner group. Most interviewees acknowledged the importance of the learner group, i.e. being in a 'good' group or a 'bad' group does affect their motivation to learn. This section has also explored learners' definitions of the 'good' and 'bad' group. In addition, it has further discussed two other relevant issues on the subject matter – the age factor and the importance of learners' own determination.

8.5 Research question five

Question: What are the benefits of a mixed methods approach for researching group processes and learner motivation?

8.5.1 Background information on a mixed methods approach

This research has adopted a mixed methods approach, combining both quantitative data and qualitative data for analysis. As discussed in chapter four, a mixed methods approach has been gaining more and more attention in social psychology research since the 1980s (Bryman, 2001). However, it is not a very common approach in language learning research, especially not in L2 motivation research. According to Dörnyei (2001a), most L2 motivational studies (a few examples are Dörnyei & Clement, 2001; Ehrman, 1996; Green, 1999; Noels et al., 2003; Spratt et al., 2002) still use quantitative data as the main source of data analysis and the questionnaire is still the most common research instrument. As far as I am aware of, there are few L2 motivation studies (e.g. Ushioda, 1994, 2001; Williams and Burden, 1999) and fewer group process research studies (e.g. Hinger, 2006; Senior, 1998) that employ a qualitative approach. A mixed methods approach in L2 motivation or group process studies remains scarce. In this sense, the present study may be said to be among those pioneers applying a mixed methods approach to the exploration of group processes within L2 motivation.

Specifically, I chose to adopt a mixed methods approach for the following reasons:

1. The research questions in my study are potentially complex and dynamic. In addition, not much empirical research in this area was conducted before. Under this condition, I was not aware of what would be the most appropriate research approach to explore my research focus. Hence, it seems necessary to employ a mixed methods

approach for trial purposes.

2. Employing a mixed methods approach also allows me to more easily highlight and integrate the data I gained from each research instrument. I can better understand the strengths and weaknesses of each method since a mixed methods approach can “bring out the best of both approaches while neutralising the shortcomings and biases inherent in each paradigm” (Dörnyei, 2001 a, p.242).

3. A mixed methods approach may also help me gather more complete data on group processes and learner motivation, and hence allow me to have an opportunity for “an examination of overlapping and different facets..., to find contradictions and new perspectives” (Creswell, 1994, p.189). In this way, I could probably gain a deeper understanding of my target groups and have a fuller perspective of what is going on.

In my research, each instrument (the classroom observation, the questionnaire and interview) has its own purpose and one follows from another for a reason. First of all, the role of classroom observations was to assist me to get a better perspective on my target groups through my own eyes, to have “firsthand experience with participants” (Creswell, 2003, p.186). In addition, the notes from classroom observations helped me generate more locally appropriate questionnaire items. Questionnaires followed classroom observations to generate baseline information on each target group, such as the level of cohesiveness of the group. The statistical data allowed me to recognize the general trend or disposition of a group and explore the relationship between variables (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Another role the questionnaire played in my research was the selection of the student interviewees.

Based on the questionnaire answers, I was able to choose students who seem to have different impressions of the group and this would allow me to explore something different from one interviewee to another. Finally, the questionnaire also helped me generate ideas for my interview guiding questions -- from any interesting relationships or abnormalities I have observed through the statistical information. Interviewing is the last stage of my data collection. I interviewed all the teachers and selected three participants from each group (a total of 12) for semi-structured in-depth interviews. Hopefully from the interviews the social and cultural aspects of the correlations found in questionnaires can be better and more fairly explored (Silverman, 2000).

8.5.2 Pros and cons of each research instrument

After the data collection and analysis stage, I realized that each research instrument has the following pros and cons, as table 8.4 shows:

	Pros	Cons
Classroom Observations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give me an overall impression of the group, through my own eyes. 2. Offer me ideas for questionnaires and interviews. 3. Develop a closer connection with the group and lays a good foundation for the questionnaire administration and interviews later on. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cannot observe the target groups all the time and can only select a few times. 2. Students may have behaved a certain way during the time of my presence; it may not represent what happens in other times without my presence. 3. Difficult to be objective.

Table 8.4. continues

	Pros	Cons
Questionnaires	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can be distributed to a lot of participants at the same time. 2. Generate useful baseline information that helps me to get an overall picture of the target groups in a short period of time. 3. Provide me with guidelines for interview guiding questions. 4. Provide me with a way to check how different each group is and in what ways they are the same or different. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-set questionnaire categories and items that may not accurately reflect the research participants' real opinion. 2. Participants may not feel that their opinions matter since they know that the questionnaire is distributed to a lot of people at the same time. So they might not focus on answering the questionnaire correctly. 3. May not accurately reflect the dynamic interactions between group processes and motivation
Semi-structured Interviews	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can explore a topic in-depth and ask follow up questions to clarify some issues. 2. Learners are more likely to share what they really think in one-on-one interviews. They may get the feeling that their opinions are valued. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cannot interview everyone in the same group and some people's opinion may be too biased to represent others in the same group. 2. Some people are not talkative, or not open enough to share their thoughts.

Table 8.4. Pros and cons of each research instrument

These advantages and disadvantages are not so uncommon in the current literature. For example, Muijs (2004) mentions that one advantage of observations is researchers can see what actually happens in the research setting and not just rely on the reports from the participants. However, as Creswell (2003) points out, researchers may seem “intrusive” (p.186) for learners and hence learners may perform or behave differently from usual. In addition, the advantage of quantitative data from questionnaires is to uncover any patterns, any regularity that allows “a processual analysis to proceed” (Bryman, 2001, p.451). This way, a further qualitative analysis is grounded on a credible statistical basis. Another strength of quantitative data is to determine general trends among a group of learners (Dörnyei,

2001a) and therefore form a general disposition of a group – the aim of research questions one and two. On the other hand, Tremblay (2001) explains that one disadvantage of questionnaires is that learners may answer questionnaire items in a socially acceptable manner, rather than truly reflect what they think; hence, response bias could take place. Finally, semi-structured interviews allow researchers to explore a problem or an issue in depth since they provide “opportunities for probing” and “opportunities for personalization” (Cohen and Manion, 1989, p.308). In addition, Creswell (1994, 2003) elucidates that interviews may be necessary in an area where the behaviour of the participants cannot be observed directly, however, some participants may be intimidated by the researcher and give a biased response. Creswell also explains that not every interviewee is equally expressive and observant of what is going.

Although most literature points out the limitations of each research method or each research instrument, it is often hard for many researchers to employ a mixed methods approach due to the amount of time and effort a mixed methods approach requires (Creswell, 2003). Despite this, the value of a mixed methods approach is clear in my study. Specific benefits of adopted mixed methods will be discussed in the next section.

8.5.3 Values of a mixed methods approach

The combination of both quantitative data and qualitative data has helped me to better understand the social perspectives on what is going on between the learner group and individual learners. Specifically to the focus of this research, a mixed methods approach offers the following gains:

1. The data I obtained from three different research instruments (one quantitative and two qualitative) does not always portray the same picture of the group; i.e., due to

the limitation of each research instrument, the data each instrument yields can be biased in its own way. As discussed in sections 8.1.1 and 8.2.1, one possible reason that causes the discrepancy could be each research instrument focuses on different aspects of motivation and cohesiveness. For instance, in my observations, I interpreted classroom interactions (e.g. volunteering to ask or answer questions) or students' degree of attention (e.g. taking notes) as a sign of motivation. However, in the questionnaires, the aspects I selected for measuring these students' potential motivation level are their learning orientations, self-efficacy, and level of autonomy. In the interviews, I discovered that most teachers consider in-class behaviour (such as 'cooperative') and homework assignments (such as its quality) as a sign of motivation. On the other hand, learners consider positive learning attitudes (such as 'studious', 'care about learning') or high academic achievement (such as 'high grades') are indicators of motivated learners. Certainly, all these aspects relate to learner motivation, however, a single research method or a single research instrument is unlikely to cover all these aspects. For instance, it will be difficult for researchers to observe learning orientations in the classroom. Questionnaires may not be able to accurately detect the level of interactions in the classroom while interviews may not easily provide a general learning orientation or level of autonomy of the group. A mixed methods approach enables the researcher to obtain data from different angles and form a more complete portrait of the target groups.

2. In addition, the value of a mixed methods approach is also demonstrated from the fact that different participants in the same group seem to have different interpretations of their group motivation or cohesiveness. As examined in sections 8.1.1 and 8.2.2, this might be the result of prior group influences, i.e., my research

participants who had positive group experiences before tend to complain more about their current group while those who had negative group experience tend to enjoy being in the current group more. The same pattern is exhibited in teachers' interview data as well. Two teachers teaching the same group may have different interpretations of the motivational disposition of the group due to their other teaching experiences. If only a questionnaire were used, then when the questionnaire data shows conflicting results, the researchers might not have the opportunity to follow up. Through interviews following up the inconsistent questionnaire data did the discovery of the prior group influences surface. Because of this, adding a qualitative dimension to the study proves wise since it allows me to explore more deeply the reasons behind a discrepancy or the problems quantitative data shows, rather than simply gather some superficial facts or statistics of the group (Oppenheim, 1992).

3. Finally, the mixed methods approach has also helped me to effectively select the interviewees that suit the research purpose. With the questionnaire data, I was able to go through the participants' answers and detect any general disposition or abnormalities. From there, I was able to more appropriately select the interviewees that might more fairly represent the group. Without this step, the interviewees I could have selected from a totally random selection might have yielded incomplete data. Dörnyei (2001a) explicitly encourages readers to take on a mixed methods approach for just this reason.

Lastly, it is important to emphasize that the use of a mixed methods approach in this study helped me to gather more complete data on group processes and group motivation. The mixed methods approach in this study is used for purposes of complementarity (Greene et al., 1989; Hammersley, 1996), rather than to determine

which method is more effective and which is not. Ushioda (2003) also proposes that different approaches of investigation should be viewed as complementary rather than competing. To conclude, the mixed methods approach in my study helped offer a widespread point of view from different angles. Thus, we might be able to more fairly assess group processes and learner motivation and analyze what is going on in a more comprehensive approach.

8.5.4 The limitations of a mixed method approach

Although the mixed methods approach has proven to be beneficial to this present study, it is important to acknowledge that it is not a panacea -- the mixed methods approach has its disadvantages and limitations. One main apparent downside of a mixed methods approach is the amount of time it requires to collect data and the amount of effort it demands for data analysis (Creswell, 1994, 2003). Data collecting, from classroom observations and questionnaires to conducting the interviews, took 10 months; and it took another 10 months to process and analyze the data from these three research instruments. Another challenge in using mixed methods lies with the researcher's ability to process data from paradigmatically opposed sources. As Morse (2003) explains, in order to process both quantitative data and qualitative data skillfully, researchers need to have expertise on both quantitative and qualitative methods. Creswell (1999) also mentions that adopting a mixed methods approach poses a greater challenge to researchers since there is no clear guideline on how to deal with the data skillfully should any discrepancies between quantitative data and qualitative data occur. From my own experiences, the quantitative data and qualitative data of group motivation or group cohesiveness did have discrepancies (sections 8.1.1 and 8.2.1), and it was challenging for me to

attempt to offer some explanations for discrepancies. To some extent this process might have added some depth to my data analysis; however, this process was not a easy task and it could be intimidating for novice researchers (such as myself).

To conclude this section, the decision to adopt a mixed methods approach for my Ph.D. research proved wise. The mixed methods approach provided me with rich data to explore the relationship between group processes and learner motivation, through which several valuable findings have emerged. The mixed methods approach seems to be an appropriate approach for researching group processes and learner motivation; however, we should also be aware that a mixed methods approach demands much time and effort. In addition, it requires some expertise with both quantitative data and qualitative data in order to process the data skillfully, especially when discrepancies occur.

8.6 Summary

To conclude, this chapter has given an in-depth discussion of five research questions with the integration of my quantitative data and qualitative data. Through the analysis of the key findings, such as the importance of the learner group on learner motivation, the influences of prior group experiences, the definition of a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ group, the values of a mixed method approach were discussed in detail.

The next chapter, the concluding chapter, will give an overview of the study including the background of the research and a summary of key findings. Then, it will present some suggestions for future directions.

Chapter Nine – An Overview and Future Directions

Up to this point, this thesis has given a detailed theoretical discussion (chapters one to three), justification of the research methodology (chapter four), data presentation (chapters five to seven), and data analysis (chapter eight.) This chapter will sum up this research study. First of all, it will give an overview of my research aims, the research methodology, significant findings, and the limitations of the study. Then, this chapter will conclude with suggestions for further research.

9.1. An overview of the study

This section will summarize the background and the findings of the study, including the objectives of the study, the administration of the study and finally the significance of the study including major research findings.

9.1.1 The objectives of the study

For a long time, L2 motivational research has adopted an individualistic perspective which, given that learning is essentially a personal business, seems logical. However, while learning may seem to be the endeavor of an individual, most learning situations, especially in schools or universities, take place in groups. Through social interactions with their peers, individual learners may be interdependent and, thus affected significantly by their peers. As Schmuck and Schmuck (2001) express:

The students of a class are more than a collection of individuals. They form a social system with peers in which they experience interdependence, interaction, and common goal striving (p.40).

Ushioda (2003) also points out that it is commonplace in communicative classrooms

for learners to frequently exchange information and share interests with peers. All these descriptions emphasize that the context of the learner group may exert many influences upon the individuals within. Hence, it is worth investigating how this kind of cultivating interaction affects individual learners' learning, and, specific to this study, their learning motivation.

Keen teachers have no doubt recognized the importance of the learner group in influencing the behaviour of individual learners. Partly in response to teachers' concerns in this regard, recent years have witnessed the publication of useful practical-oriented texts promoting good classroom dynamics and group dynamics (e.g., Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003; Hadfield, 1992). In addition, there has been an increase in theoretical treatment of the topic (e.g., Dörnyei and Malderez, 1999; Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998; Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001). Yet surprisingly, there have been few empirical studies on group dynamics and how they influence individual learners' motivation. There is a clear need for L2 motivational researchers to conduct empirically grounded research to illuminate our understanding of the effects of the learner group on individual learner motivation. This research study has been one attempt to respond to this need by examining how the learner group influences foreign language learners' motivation, and focusing on group processes in the context of group dynamics theory.

Finally, it is important to clarify that most current literature on groups in language classrooms focuses on small group-work (usually 3-5 people) for collaborative learning activities in the classrooms. However, when discussing group dynamics theory, Dörnyei and Malderez (1997, 1999) and also Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) clarify their use of the term 'group' noting that they regard *the whole language class* as a group. This thesis research has followed the same usage of the

term 'group' and refers to the whole class as one group. With this in mind, the term 'group leader' refers to teachers in the classroom, and 'group member(s)' refers to all the learners in one class.

9.1.2 The administration of the study

This research was conducted at National Kaohsiung First University of Science and Technology, Taiwan. This research had as its aim to identify learner group influences on individual learners' motivation; to that end four target groups were used as the basic unit of the study: Group 4C (44 students), Group 4D (41 students), Group 3C (32 students), and Group 3D (35 students) – totaling 152 participants.

This research adopted a mixed methods approach, collecting both quantitative data and qualitative data for analysis. Data from three research instruments – classroom observations, questionnaires, and interviews served to complete the portrait of each target group and more accurately explored the dynamic intricacies between group processes and learner motivation from different aspects. In addition, the use of a mixed methods approach complemented findings from each research instrument, thus bringing out the strength of each method while minimizing weaknesses (Hammersley, 1996; Dörnyei, 2001a).

The data collection period lasted 10 months, from September 2004 to June 2005. Classroom observations were conducted from October to December 2004; one goal being to familiarize myself with the target groups, and another to shape a more locally appropriate questionnaire based on my observation notes. 127 questionnaire participants responded to questionnaires designed to establish baseline information on motivation and cohesiveness. In addition, they revealed (or exposed) relationships or abnormalities for further explorations which were taken up in semi-structured

interviews following questionnaire data processing.

In January 2005 I conducted semi-structured interviews of 10-15 minutes with all the teachers who were teaching the compulsory courses of all four target groups. Teachers mainly described their impressions of the target groups, particularly with regards to group motivation and group cohesiveness. Following teacher interviews, in-depth semi-structured interviews with selected students (three from each target group) were conducted from March to June 2005. I intentionally selected participants who seemed to have different questionnaire answers in order to gain more diverse opinions. The goal of the student interviews was to better examine the dynamic interplay between group processes and learner motivation.

Data from each research instrument was analyzed separately first and then integrated together to answer my research questions:

1. How can we define the motivational disposition of each group?
2. How can we define the characteristics of each group through its group processes (e.g. group cohesiveness)?
3. Statistically speaking, what is the relationship between group processes and learners' level of motivation?
4. From individual learners' own account, to what extent and in what ways does a learner group influence their motivation to learn English?
5. What are the benefits of a mixed methods approach for researching group processes and learner motivation?

9.1.3 The findings of the study

This section will first of all present a summary of findings of this study. Then, it will discuss some major themes that seem to emerge from the findings.

9.1.3.1 The summary of research findings

1. This study has used three different research instruments for data collection – classroom observations, questionnaires, and interviews. Each research instrument yielded slightly different data from each other. It seems hard to have a clear cut answer on group motivation or group cohesiveness, i.e., what observation notes showed may be different from the questionnaire data or interview data. One reason could be different research instruments focus on different aspects of motivation or group cohesiveness since both concepts have multiple layers. For instance, the behaviour I observed in the classroom, the selective measurements of learner motivation and group processes in the questionnaire, and the teachers' and students' idea of the subject matters did not always correspond with each other, hence, discrepancies occur (for details please refer to sections 8.1.1 and 8.2).

2. In addition, different members of the group (teachers or students) may have different interpretations of their group motivation or group cohesiveness. One reason for this phenomenon could be the result of prior group experiences; participants' perception being influenced by their previous group experiences shape, to some extent, current interpretations of the group. If their previous group experience was positive, the learners tend to have more complaints about their current group than the ones who previously had unpleasant group experiences (sections 7.1.3, 7.2.9, and 8.1.1). Another possible reason could be different participants who had different ideas of what constitutes motivation or cohesiveness arrived at different interpretations of their group motivation or cohesiveness (Also see sections 7.1.1.5, 7.1.2.5, 7.2.1.5, 7.2.2.5, 8.1.1 and 8.2.2).

3. One of the main findings this research revealed was the relationship between group processes and some aspects of learner motivation. In other words, both questionnaire data and interview data verify that being in a certain group affects an individual learner's motivation. The questionnaire result indicates moderate correlations between group processes (group cohesiveness and group norms) and learners' self-efficacy and autonomous behaviours (sections 6.3.1.3 and 8.3.1). The interview data has shown that learners with positive impressions of the current learner group seem also to express high personal motivation while learners with negative impressions of their current group seem to have a lower level of motivation. In addition, 11 (out of 12) interviewees acknowledged the importance of the learner group, i.e. being in a 'good' group is a facilitator of their learning while being in a 'bad' group de-motivates them (please also see sections 7.2.3 and 8.4.1).

4. In these learners' opinion, three important qualities a 'good' group has are a.) everyone supports each other and gets along well; b.) classmates can share things such as learning methods or materials together; and c.) the group is cohesive. On the other hand, some signs of a 'bad' group are a.) group members are competitive in a negative way; b.) everyone is unmotivated; and c.) nobody cares about each other (please also see sections 7.2.4, 7.2.5, and 8.4.2).

5. Although learners believed being in a certain group has an effect on their learning, some of them also mentioned that the degree of influence depends on their own age. When they were younger, before entering university, their learner group had a stronger influence on their learning. However, as they grew older and more mature, the influence gradually receded. According to interviewees, after the age of 20, their

learner group still makes a difference to their learning; however, the influence is not as strong as it had been before they entered university (please also see sections 7.2.10 and 8.4.3).

6. During the interviews my research participants also explained that the learner group is not *the* most important factor to their motivation. Their own learning determination is the core of their motivation; all other factors (e.g. the learner group, teachers, parents) do make a difference, but to successfully learn a language the bottom line is the learner's own determination to learn (please also see sections 7.2.6 and 8.4.4).

7. As mentioned above, the relationship between group processes and some aspects of learner motivation were identified. However, it is important to report that from the questionnaire results, one group process – group leadership – does not seem to have a connection to learner motivation (section 6.3.1.3). This does not mean that teachers are not important; several interviewees talked about the importance of the teachers. The discrepancy occurred because the theoretical framework I chose as the measurement of leadership is not an aspect students in my research context are much concerned with. They seem to care more about the teachers' personality or enthusiasm in teaching than their communicative leadership style (e.g. democratic style or autocratic style) in the classroom (please also see section 8.3.2).

8. In addition, the questionnaire results do not seem to show any connection between group processes and learning orientations. It may be possible that the influences of the learner group are more apparent with aspects of motivation during the learning

process, such as self-efficacy or learner autonomy. It may not affect the motivational aspects that concern the initial drive for learning, such as learning orientations (please also see section 8.3.3).

9. This study also discovered a discrepancy between learners' autonomous beliefs and behaviours. Learners believe they should engage in some autonomous behaviours; however, in reality they do not always transform this thought into real action. According to research participants, the reasons for the discrepancy are laziness, lack of time, and lack of know-how. However, as I discussed, these could just be excuses for lack of motivation (please also see sections 7.2.8 and 8.3.4).

10. Moreover, this study revealed that many research participants had both Intrinsic Motivation (IM) orientation and Extrinsic Motivation (EM) orientation. Their source of EM is mainly 'learning English for better job opportunities in the future.' In some literature (Noels et al., 2003) learning English for better job opportunities is considered an example of an external regulation of EM. However, these research participants explained that having this goal does not diminish their own interest in English. This kind of career motivation should be treated as a more internalized type of EM, such as identified regulation, since learners can personally relate to the value of having an ideal job and having it as an ultimate goal reinforces their interest in English (please also see section 8.1.3).

11. The influence of culture in group processes and learner motivation has also become important in this study. For instance, my research participants' career motivation (section 8.1.3), their perceptions of the teacher (section 8.3.2), and the

discrepancy between autonomous beliefs and behaviours (section 8.3.4) could partly be the result of the influence of Confucian values in Chinese culture.

12. Finally, this research also identified the value of a mixed methods approach in researching group processes or learner motivation. A mixed methods approach assisted in yielding more complete data from different angles of group processes and learner motivation. Additionally, it aided in more effectively selecting student interviewees, through which the finding of prior group influences emerged. Hence, I conclude that the adoption of a mixed methods approach for this research worked favorably to answer research questions as well as glean findings from the data which otherwise might not have emerged (please also see section 8.5).

9.1.3.2 Key themes of the research findings

Integrating the above findings, I would like to focus on three major themes that seem to emerge:

- A. Learner group influences in language learning motivation.
- B. Different expectations between teachers and students.
- C. The role of cultural aspects in group and motivation research.

A. Learner group influences in language learning motivation

This study empirically identified that the learner group does exert an effect upon individuals' learning motivation (within the learner group) in language learning classrooms. This finding supports several researchers' claim (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei and Malderez, 1999; Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003; Ehrman and Dörnyei, 1998; Hadfield, 1992; Schmuck and Schmuck, 2001) that group dynamics or group processes is an area researchers and teachers should not ignore in classrooms since

“the class group can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of learning.”

(Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003, p.3)

Realising the importance of the learner group, teachers in the classroom might be interested in finding out which kinds of groups facilitate motivation and which do not. According to my interviewees, a ‘good group’ is a cohesive group and should have classmates who are supportive of each other and interested in learning. My interviewees also mentioned that teachers should have good teaching methodology and have lots of interaction with the students. A friendly atmosphere is also a vital component of a ‘good’ group. Generally speaking, the examples of these three aspects (classmates, teachers, and general atmosphere) accord with what the literature suggests. Dörnyei and Murphey (2003), Hadfield (1992), and Schmuck and Schmuck (2001) all cite the importance of supportive classmates, caring leaders, and a cohesive environment in a ‘good’ class group. Understanding this, what teachers could do in the classroom is to promote a good relationship among the students by encouraging student cooperation, and generating group rewarding experiences (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003). Teachers can encourage interaction between themselves and students and also between students. These kinds of interactions might help students to gradually feel closer to teachers and peers, hence, a more friendly and cohesive learning environment could be created.

Further implications of this study into the importance of a ‘good’ or cohesive group to learners’ learning can also be discussed from two perspectives: how students within a learner group could foster further group cooperation, and how the institution itself can encourage greater interaction between learner groups.

Learner groups (or class groups) of students often look to the teacher to initiate experiences which foster group cohesiveness. They often do not realize they

themselves are able to take an active role in shaping group experiences that are positive steps towards creating the characteristics of a 'good' group. Examples of such activities come from the interview data of Group 3D. Interviewees from Group 3D explained how students within the group in leadership positions introduced several group experiences taking place outside the classroom. An off-campus barbeque at a local park where group members engaged in rather elaborate outdoor games was one example. Another involved different members of the class group picking a special restaurant each month for the whole group to eat at. At the end of the term, the members who had picked the restaurant voted best of all received a free dinner. There are other possible group interactions not suggested by Group 3D which could also be initiated by students themselves and assist in forming group cohesiveness. Creating informal English-only conversation groups that meet at local coffee shops and discuss current events in English for an hour, or celebrating the birthdays of group members with casual parties are two examples.

Institutions looking for a greater role in developing learner group interaction could do much to assist students in promoting group cohesiveness. Institutions could schedule class groups together in more courses when possible, hence, allowing students to take part in more educational cohesive-building experiences together. Institutions could initiate programmes run by learner groups which allow them to share responsibility among members. An English learning radio programme written and performed solely by students at a station on campus is one type of successful student-run programme that could encourage group unity. In the capacity to reach beyond the resource of faculty, institutions could invite guest speakers who would conduct workshops on peer interaction and provide tips to classes on organizing and leading off campus group activities which could guide students to initiate their own

group experiences. So as with students themselves, institutions could do much to promote group solidarity or group cohesiveness which this study has identified as having an influential role in learners' learning.

B. Different expectations between teachers and students

During the interviews I discovered that teachers and students seem to have different interpretations of what motivation and cohesiveness are. As a result, some discrepancies occur which might lead to different expectations in the classrooms. For instance, most teachers judge students' level of motivation from in-class attitudes or behaviours (e.g. interaction in class). However, most students judge their or their classmates' motivation from general learning attitudes (e.g. study hard). Another discrepancy the data shows is that students seem to associate high grades with high motivation. However, none of the teachers made this association. Due to these different interpretations, teachers and students may have different expectations in class. For instance, when teachers ask students to be more motivated, teachers might refer to more interaction in class while students might assume that they should study harder in order to receive higher test scores. As a result, it is important for teachers and students to communicate clearly what motivation is and what kind of motivation behaviours are expected.

In addition, a discrepancy also exists in the interpretation of cohesiveness. Here again, perhaps naturally, teachers pay more attention to what is occurring right in front of them by focusing on in-class behaviour (e.g. paying attention to other students' presentations), while students value participating in group-related activities (e.g. high participation in extracurricular activities) for fostering group cohesiveness. Finding this difference in interpretation between teachers' and students' ideas of

cohesiveness could help teachers to more effectively promote cohesiveness in a group. In addition to carrying out some activities in the classroom to build a close relationship among the students, such as open-bridging activities, empathy exercises, reseating games (Hadfield, 1992), teachers should also encourage students to participate in group-related activities, such as holding a day trip together, organizing birthday parties, or having a nice dinner out at the end of the semester. These extra-curricular activities could promote acceptance among group members, hence enhancing cohesiveness (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003).

C. The role of cultural aspects in group and motivation research

In this present study I also discovered that cultural aspects seem to play a vital role in learner motivation and group processes. When I started this research, I did not intend to give much consideration toward cultural factors. However, through data analysis, cultural aspects seemed to continually emerge and these cultural factors affected some interpretations of the research findings. One example is career motivation. My questionnaire finding has shown that many of my research participants have both IM (intrinsic motivation) and EM (extrinsic motivation). Their main source of EM is career motivation -- 'I learn English to get a better job in the future' -- which the research participants may have internalized as a personally valued goal. Biggs and Watkins (1996, p.273) reshape this finding within a cultural framework: Chinese learners' motivation could be formed by "personal ambition, family face, peer support, material reward ..." All these streams of influence may make Chinese learners see language learning as more than just an intrinsic inspiration, especially when learning achievement or success is something that does not just affect the individual, it often involves the 'family face' more than the case in Western countries (Salili, 1996).

Following on with this, Chen et al. (2005) proposed the learning orientation ‘Chinese Imperative’ to describe Chinese or Taiwanese learners’ internalization of the social, institutional or parental requirements (e.g. finding a good job, passing an exam) as their own personal valued goals. Chen et al. argue that the ‘Chinese imperative’ is unique to Chinese/Taiwanese culture; however, the internalization of societal and parental expectations is certainly not unheard of in Western educational cultures. It is possible that this particular cultural trait (the internalization of societal or parental expectations) exists everywhere, only in certain areas of the world or in some particular institutions it may be particularly prevalent.

Another example of the influence of Chinese culture is collectivism. Many researchers (Biggs and Watkins, 1996; Salili, 1996; Tang, 1996; Watkins and Biggs, 2001) who focus their research on Chinese learners emphasize the importance of collectivism in the Chinese culture, which is deeply influenced by Confucian values. Under the framework of Confucian values, Chinese learners may experience much influence from the social groups, such as the family or the peer groups, and even find it necessary to show “obedience and loyalty” (Salili, 1996, p.86) to the wishes of the family or even peer groups. Watkins and Biggs (2001) argue that we should look at the notion of motivation and success under the Confucian framework of collectivism in which a learners’ success may be determined by “significant others, the family, the peers, or even society as a whole” (p.8) if we are to understand the meaning of motivation within such a non-Western culture. This notion is corroborated by the evidence of the influences of the learner group on learner motivation found in this study. If the learners’ success is socially constructed within their social environment, then perhaps their motivation, a keystone to success, is also heavily influenced by their social environment (e.g. the learner group). As a result, research on the

influences of the learner group is perhaps especially important within a Chinese context.

While these culturally related aspects add to the multi-dimensionality of learner motivation and group processes, I would also like to acknowledge that I do not intend to support a culturally stereotypical portrait. I am aware that not all Chinese students have career motivation and Western students could of course exhibit career-oriented learning orientation. The cultural values I have discussed and cited from the literature might commonly be regarded as the 'big culture' (Holliday, 1999), which is "prescribed ethnic, national and international entities" (p. 237), such as British culture, American culture, Chinese culture, and so on. However, it is possible that these cultural characteristics I have discussed could be seen as 'small culture' -- "the composite of cohesive behaviour within any social grouping" (p. 247), such as the culture at a particular work place, or within a language classroom. In other words, the cultural values I have identified in this present study may not necessarily be the product of Chinese values on a general level; rather, it could be culture specifically developed within my target groups or unique to my institution. For instance, earlier I discussed that the internalization of societal and parental expectations could also exist in Western contexts and this could be just a culture trait that is especially evident in my target groups. Whether these values belong to 'big cultures' or 'small cultures,' it is undeniable that factors exist in my study which can be deemed to arise from the culture itself. Exploring culturally relevant issues has helped me gain a fuller understanding of the dynamic intricacies of group processes and learner motivation.

To conclude, this section (9.1.3) has summarized important findings of the study and discussed important themes that emerged from those findings. These

findings have shed light on our understanding of group processes and learner motivation, and most importantly, we now have a clearer idea of the relationship between the two.

9.1.4 The limitation of the study

Although this study was carefully designed, during the research process I did discover certain research procedures that could have been dealt with better. One instance is that it probably would be better to conduct an exploratory interview before designing the questionnaire. This will help to minimize the gap between the researcher's perception of the subject matters and the participants'. For example, the leadership style theory I selected for the questionnaire was not very successful because learners' view of the ideal leadership of the group does not relate to the theory I have chosen (see section 8.3.2). An exploratory interview might have helped to design a more effective questionnaire. In addition, although both quantitative data and qualitative data have their own contributions to this study, I discovered that semi-structured interviews seem to generate more constructive data. This qualitative data allowed me to explore the dynamic intricacies between group processes and learner motivation at a deeper level. As such, having only three interviewees from each group might not have been enough. Selecting more interviewees might have helped gain fuller data with which to (re)examine the generated hypothesis. This is not to say that quantitative data should be totally ignored; rather, I am recommending putting more weight into qualitative interview data for future research purposes.

Other than the research procedures, certain constraints of the study were also discovered. Specifically, I realized that a lot more research studies are required to gain a more complete understanding of the relationship between group processes and language learning motivation. The findings from this study provide an illuminating

starting point for understanding the complexities between group processes and language learning; however, due to the limited scope of a single study it is unlikely to cover every aspect of group processes. For example, the group members' roles in the group, the communication or decision making process, or group development could all have an effect on learners' learning motivation; yet, these issues were not properly explored in this research study. Also, this study focuses on the influences of the learner groups on learner motivation – one aspect of language learning. Many other aspects of learning, such as learning strategies or learning achievement, should also be explored since they could also have a connection with group processes. In this sense, this study only discovers the connection between *parts* of group processes and *parts* of one's learning processes. More research studies are needed in order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between the two.

Moreover, I believe that the relationship between group processes and learners' learning motivation may be in flux. In other words, the learner group influences on learners' motivation may not be constant. The research instruments I employed, administering questionnaires or interviewing learners at one point in time, is probably unlikely to capture the overall ebb and flow of the effects of group processes. It records how the learner group affects learners' motivation at a certain point in time; however, it fails to capture the influences of the learner group over an extended period of time.

In addition, the goal of this research is to identify influences of the learner group on individual learners' motivation. It has found some evidence that learners who have positive impressions of their group (e.g. their group is cohesive or has positive norms) seem to have a higher level of motivation (for details, see section 7.2.3 and 8.4.1). However, could it be possible that these learners' positive

impressions of the group are the result of their already high motivation? Could one's level of motivation somehow influence his or her perception of the learner group itself? The possibility certainly does exist. However, it was not the aim of this research and was not explored in this present study. It would seem important for future studies to explore the relationship between group processes and learner motivation from this angle to see if the influence could be reciprocal.

9.2 Future directions

Due to the limitations mentioned in the above section, more research studies are needed in the area of group dynamics and language learning motivation. Here are some suggestions for future directions:

A. This study indicates that the amount of influence from the learner group may depend on the learners' age. It would be worthwhile to explore the age influence in depth by, for example, doing a comparative study of two learner groups of different ages (such as a freshman high school group and a freshman university group).

B. The amount of time spent in one group might also have a different impact on one's learning. A longitudinal study of a group could examine the role of time on the learner group influences. For instance, we can explore whether staying in a group for a longer period of time has more influence on their learning or not. We can also follow a couple of learners in the group as case studies and examine their motivational change from the time they join the group to the time they leave the group.

C. Since the relationship between group processes and language learning motivation

could be dynamic, it might be worthwhile to employ learner diaries as a research instrument. Learners can regularly reflect on their feelings of the group and the effects the group has on them. This way, we might have more data to explore the dynamic relationship between group processes and language learning. This is especially useful since the relationship between the two factors could be in flux and having learners reflect on the effects of the learner group regularly over a period of time might better explore the ebb and flow of learner group influences.

D. It also could be worthwhile to explore whether the learners' impressions of their group is influenced by their level of motivation. In other words, do learners with high motivation tend to view their group as a cohesive one while learners with lower level of motivation might have more negative impressions? Looking at the relationship between group processes and learner motivation from this angle might help us gain more understanding of the dynamic interplay between these two factors.

E. It might be insightful to investigate the effects of the learner group on learner motivation in other cultural settings, to see whether the importance of the learner group is expressed in a context outside of Taiwan.

F. Identifying the learner group influences is one way to help us realize how the social context can influence one's motivation. It might be necessary to explore how learner motivation is socially constructed by other social factors, such as the family, the institution, or even the greater society.

G. We can also explore the relationship between group processes and some other

aspects of learning, such as learning achievement, the employment of learning strategies, or improvements of English skills. A relationship between group processes and these areas could also be identified.

To conclude, hopefully with these future studies, a fuller understanding of the complex relationship between group dynamics and language learning can be reached.

9.3 Endnote

I started this research with the aim of exploring the relationship between group processes and learner motivation. This inspiration came from my own teaching experiences when I was always intrigued by how I could teach exactly the same material to different groups of students and get very different responses from them in class. Some groups enthusiastically volunteered to answer questions, engaged in group work, etc., while others were silent in class, showed little effort towards their assignments, etc. The motivated groups responded to my teaching eagerly, while unmotivated groups never quite caught on in the same way no matter how I encouraged them to be positive, or adjusted the methods/materials to their needs. I found my own teaching was influenced by the motivation different groups of students displayed.

If I could be influenced by the motivation level of the group, would individual learners' studying within the group also be influenced? That one question was my "ah-ha" moment when a light bulb went on and motivated me to conduct this research. I was excited to find out Zoltan Dörnyei and his colleagues had published several books and articles in the area of group dynamics which attempted to answer similar questions as I had. I was reassured by the current attention in language

learning contexts this area is gaining, while worried that few empirical studies existed. This created doubts about whether I was approaching the research in the right way and how best to explore my research ideas. All the doubts and uncertainty went away though when I started my first student interview with Whitney. I remember vividly how, as I sat there, Whitney explained to me in different ways the influence her group had upon her learning:

Whitney: Seeing all my classmates study hard motivates me to study even harder too, because I don't want to fall too behind, I want to be as good as they are...I think the whole studying atmosphere is very important. If a lot of classmates in a group care about learning and work very hard, you can't help studying hard too. If a lot of classmates in a group don't care about learning and don't study hard at all, you can't help putting less effort in your study."

At that point, I experienced a sense of relief mixed with excitement. I felt I was discovering something interesting, an area of language learning that needed to be addressed. My enthusiasm grew as I continued to explore the relationship between group processes and language learning motivation from different angles. Throughout the data analysis I felt inspired by the findings that the learner group indeed influences an individual's learning motivation.

This whole research process has been an exceptionally fulfilling one for me. This study has provided enough insightful findings to inspire me to conduct more empirical studies in the area of group dynamics in language learning, to want to continue to ask questions with the hope of illuminating understanding of further possible influences of learner groups upon the individual learners.

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THE QUESTIONNAIRE 問卷調查

Class 班級: _____ School Number 學號: _____

Name 姓名 _____ Gender 性別 (Please Circle 請圈選): Male (男性) Female (女性)

How many years have you learned English? 學英文多久了? _____ years

First of all, let me thank you for your time and cooperation concerning this questionnaire. Your valuable opinion will help my research a great deal. The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out your learning motivation and your class's group dynamic. The information you provide in this questionnaire is totally CONFIDENTIAL and only the researcher has access to this questionnaire. Information identifying the respondent will not be disclosed under any circumstance. Please fill out the questionnaire at ease.

首先，先謝謝你們大家播出時間幫忙填寫這份問卷。你們的寶貴意見將對我的研究有很大的幫助。這份問卷主要是調查你們的學習動機及你們班的班級特性。你們在這份問卷上填寫的基本資料及內容，除了我本人以外沒有任何第三者會看得到。問卷內容也僅做為研究用、絕對不會對你們的課業成績有任何的影響，請放心填寫。

Part I: About Your Learning Motivation 關於你的學習動機**Section A: Learning orientations 學習原因**

The following fifteen statements aim to describe your **current** motives for learning English. Please read all of them carefully first and then tick in the box () only the statements that **most correspond** to the reasons you're learning English. 下列泛舉一般人學習英文的原因 (共十六項)，請勾選 **最符合**你現在學習英文的主要原因。

(Please choose **no more than five statements** 請不要勾選超過五項)

1. I learn English because my parents push me to do so. It is expected of me.
學英文是因為父母的關係，他們希望我在大學主修英文。
2. I really enjoy learning English and I think it's a lot of fun for me.
學習英文很有趣、我喜歡學習英文的過程。
3. English is an international language nowadays. I would feel ashamed if I could not speak English because many people can.
英語是國際性的語言，若我不會英文但別人都會，我會覺得很慚愧。所以我要學英文。
4. I learn English because I plan to study abroad at some time in the future.
學英文是因為我打算以後出國去唸書深造。
5. I have always been interested in English and I would like to learn more about it.
我一直對英文很有興趣，我想要多學一點英文。

(more statements on the next page 下頁還有選項)

The Questionnaire P. 1

6. I learn English because I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about the English community and their ways of life.
學英文是因為我喜歡學習更多有關西方國家的文化及外國人的生活方式。
7. I learn English because I am placed in the English Department due to the entrance examination test results. I have no other choice.
學英文是因為剛好考上應用英語系，我沒有其他選擇。
8. I learn English because I want to be the kind of person who can speak more than one language. 學英文是因為我想成為可以說好多種語言的人。
9. I simply like English. 我就是喜歡英文。
10. I learn English for the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult exercises or assignments in English.
學英文是因為當我成功地完成一項困難的作業或是練習時，我感到很有成就感。
11. I learn English because English will enable me to broaden my view of the world.
學英文是因為我覺得英文可以拓展我的世界觀。
12. I learn English because I enjoy the feeling when I speak fluent English.
學英文是因為我喜歡說一口流利英文的感覺。
13. I learn English because succeeding in English brings me confidence.
學英文是因為學好英文會帶給我很多自信心。
14. I learn English for the satisfied feeling I get in finding out new things about English.
學英文是因為多學些有關英文的東西讓我覺得很滿足。
15. I learn English so that I can get a better paying job in the future.
學英文是因為我相信我以後可以找到比較好的工作。
16. Others: 其他_____ (Please specify 請說明)

17. From the 5 statements you have selected from the choices above, please choose the one that **BEST** describes your **strongest** current motive to learn English? 現在請你從上面你剛剛勾選的原因當中，選出一個**最符合**你學英文的主要原因：No. _____

Section B: Autonomy level 自主學習的情況

I. There are ten statements here regarding ways to learn English, for example: using resources outside the classroom; identifying your own weaknesses and mistakes, etc. 下列十項陳述是關於你自主學習英文的情況，例：利用課堂外的資源、找出自己的學習弱點等等。

There are two **different** columns. 答案分爲兩欄：

<p>The one on the left asks how responsible you think you should be for doing this yourself. 左方這一欄是在問：對於這項陳述，你該負多少責任：</p>	<p>The one on the right asks you to what extent you actually do it. 右方這一欄是在問：實際情形下，你多常做這件事情：</p>
<p>How responsible 有多少責任</p>	<p>To what extent 多常做此事</p>
<p>1----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4</p>	<p>1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4</p>
<p>no responsibility 完全沒有責任</p>	<p>Not at all 從來沒有</p>
<p>a little 一點點 責任</p>	<p>Hardly 不常</p>
<p>some 部份 責任</p>	<p>On 偶爾</p>
<p>mainly 主要是我的 責任</p>	<p>Very much 經常</p>

Please **circle** your answer from 1 to 4 for **EACH** column according to your true feelings and experiences. 請在兩個欄位中都各圈選出適合的答案

How responsible for	STATEMENTS:	To what extent
1 2 3 4	18. identify my own strengths and weaknesses 了解自己的長處及比較弱的地方。	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	19. set up my own learning goals 訂定自己的學習目標。	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	20. decide what to learn outside the classroom 決定要如何在課外加強自己的英文。	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	21. evaluate my own learning and progress 評量自己的學習情況。	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	22. stimulate my own interest in learning English 增進自己學習英文的興趣。	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	23. learn from my peers, not just from the teachers 向同學們學習、而不只依賴老師。	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	24. become more self-directed in my learning 培養自動自發、自主學習的態度。	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	25. offer opinions on learning materials 向老師建議適合的教材。	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	26. discover knowledge in English on my own rather than waiting for knowledge from the teacher 自己去發現想學、該學的東西。	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	27. offer opinions on what to learn in the classroom 向老師建議想學的東西。	1 2 3 4

The Questionnaire P. 3

II. Out-of-class learning activities: During this past *month*, which of the following activities have you done with the intention of improving your English ability (teacher's requirements/ assignments do NOT count)? Please tick . 這些是同學們常做的課外活動來學習英文、增進自己的英文能力。請想想在過去一個月內、你有做過以下哪些活動？請打勾 。(老師規定的項目或是老師指定的作業不算)

Statements 活動	Have done 有做過
28. done assignments which are not compulsory 做額外自己想做的功課	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. noted down new words and their meanings 抄下新的單字及意思	<input type="checkbox"/>
30. written English letters to pen pals 和筆友通英文信	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. visited websites in English 到英文的網站上瀏覽	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. read newspapers, books or magazines in English 閱讀英文書報雜誌	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. listened to English radio shows 聽英文廣播節目	<input type="checkbox"/>
34. talked to foreigners in English 和外國人用英文交談	<input type="checkbox"/>
35. attended self-access learning centres 到自學中心去加強英文	<input type="checkbox"/>
36. gone to see your teacher about your work 私下和老師討論作業	<input type="checkbox"/>
37. watched English movies or English TV programmes without Chinese subtitles 看沒有中文字幕英文電影或是節目	<input type="checkbox"/>
38. practised using English with friends/classmates 和朋友/同學用英文交談	<input type="checkbox"/>
39. Other: _____ (please explain) 其他: _____(請說明)	<input type="checkbox"/>

III. Open-ended questions: Please feel free to express your opinions. 問答題

40. From the activities above that you have marked by ticking in the box, please choose one that you engage in *most frequently*. (If you have *never* or *rarely* engaged in any out-of-class learning activities to improve your English, please go to question No. 41 directly.) 由以上你剛剛勾選的活動當中，選出一項你**最常做**的活動(若你**從來沒有**或是**幾乎沒有**做任何的課外活動來學習英文，請直接跳至第 41 題)：

- A.) No. 活動號碼_____
- B.) How often :多久做一次 _____
- C.) Why this activity at first? 你當初為什麼會選這個活動?_____
- D.) why continue on this activity? 你為什麼會持續做這個活動?

(If you have already answered the above questions, please go to the next page directly. You don't have to answer question 41. 如果你已經回答以上第 40 題，你可以不用回答第 41 題，請直接翻至下頁。)

41. Please write down why you have *never* or *rarely* engaged in any of the out-of-class learning activities to improve English:請寫下你為什麼**從來沒有**或是**幾乎沒有**做任何的課外活動來增進英文能力

Section C: Self-efficacy 自信心

Carefully read the following statements regarding your feelings about your English ability and skills. Please rate your opinion from 1 to 4 and **circle** your answers. 這些陳述是要看看你自己對你的英文能力有多少信心，想圈選 1-4 最符合的答案。

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 -----
Not true 完全不正確 somewhat true 一點點正確 true 正確 very true 非常正確

Statements 陳述	Your opinion 你的意見			
42. I have confidence in my ability to succeed in learning English. 我相信我有能力把英文學得很好。	1	2	3	4
43. I am proud of my English ability and skills. 我對我自己的英文能力感到滿意。	1	2	3	4
44. When my performance is poor or when I get bad grades, it is due to my lack of ability (talent). 若是我英文表現的不好，那是因為我天份不夠。	1	2	3	4
45. I always get good grades when I study hard enough and use good learning strategies. 只要我努力用功、用對讀書方法，我的成績會不錯。	1	2	3	4
46. I believe I will have no problem finding a job in the future due to my good English skills. 我相信依我的英文能力，以後找工作不會有問題。	1	2	3	4
47. I usually do not get good grades in English-related subjects because it is too hard for me. 英文對我而言太難了，所以我的英文成績都不是很好。	1	2	3	4
48. I think I will get good grades this semester. 我想這學期我的英文成績會不錯。	1	2	3	4
49. Generally speaking, my English is very good. 大致來說，我的英文很不錯。	1	2	3	4
50. Most of my classmates are better at English than I am. 班上大部份同學的英文都比我好很多。	1	2	3	4
51. I feel threatened and anxious when I perform a task in English in front of my classmates. 在班上同學面前說英文我會感到非常壓力。	1	2	3	4

Part II: About your class' characteristics 關於你班上的特性

Section D: Open ended question: 請自由發表你的意見

Generally speaking, what are you feelings about your current class (focusing on your learning environment, not the content of the lessons)? 大致來說，你對於你班上的感覺如何？你覺得你班上的同學如何？

Section E : Group Cohesiveness 班上向心力

These statements attempt to describe your feelings about your current class. Please read the following statements carefully and rate your opinion from 1 to 4 by circling your answers. 這些陳述試著表達你對於你班上的感覺，請依你的意見圈選 1-4 最符合的答案。

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 -----
 Not true 完全不正確 somewhat true 一點點正確 true 正確 very true 非常正確

Statements 陳述	Your opinion 你的意見
52. Compared to other classes, I feel my class is better than most. 跟其他班比較起來，我比較喜歡我自己這一班。	1 2 3 4
53. If I were in another class, I would want that class to have students very similar to the classmates I have now. 若我在其他班學英文，我會希望那一班同學和我現在的同學差不多。	1 2 3 4
54. This class is composed of people who fit together. 班上大部份的同學都很合得來。	1 2 3 4
55. There are some people in this class who do not like each other. 班上有些同學看對方不順眼。	1 2 3 4
56. I am satisfied with my class. 我對自己的班級感到滿意。	1 2 3 4
57. I feel very comfortable working with this class. 在這個班級學英文我感到很自在。	1 2 3 4
58. If I had a choice, I would want to learn English in the same class again. 如果我可以選擇，我會想要待在同一班級學英文。	1 2 3 4
59. My classmates don't seem to care about each other very much. 班上同學似乎不太關心對方。	1 2 3 4
60. I know most of my classmates and we all get along very well. 我認識班上大部份的同學，而且我們大家都相處融洽。	1 2 3 4

Section F: Group Leadership 老師上課/領導方式

The ten statements below describe the way you generally feel about how ALL your English teachers are in class. Please read these statements carefully and comment on how true they are *generally*

speaking by circling your answers. 這些陳述試著表達，所有在第一科大教過你班上英文科目老師的上課及領導方式。想想看，大體上而言，這些陳述的正確度有多少，請圈選 1-4 最符合的答案。

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 -----
 Not true 完全不正確 somewhat true 一點點正確 true 正確 very true 非常正確

Statements 陳述	Your opinion 你的意見			
61. Most of my teachers share their decisions regarding the class with us and we have the opportunities to suggest what we want to do in the class to them. 我們有機會參與大部份老師課堂上的決定、我們通常也都有機會建議我們課堂上想學的東西、想做的活動。	1	2	3	4
62. Most of my teachers give me a lot of pressure to do my work. 大部份的老師給我們很多課業上的壓力。	1	2	3	4
63. Most of my teachers give me good and useful feedback on how I perform my course work. 大部份的老師會給我們課業方面有建設性的建議。	1	2	3	4
64. Most of my teachers do not do much. We can pretty much do whatever we want in the classroom and the teachers do not seem to care. 大部份的老師都有點混、我們隨便愛做什麼都可以、老師不會在乎。	1	2	3	4
65. Most of my teachers are willing to adapt their methods and contents according to students' needs. 大部份的老師會依學生的需要調整教學方法及內容。	1	2	3	4
66. Most of my teachers often criticize me about what I did wrong and don't give much positive feedback. 大部份的老師只會批評我們哪裡做的不好、不常給正面的建議。	1	2	3	4
67. Most of my teachers decide what to do in class and instruct us to do exactly what they say. 大部份的老師會自己決定課堂要上的內容，而且我們不得有異議。	1	2	3	4
68. In most of my teacher's classes we do a lot of pair work and group work in the class. 大部份的課堂中我們常做分組討論。	1	2	3	4

Section G: Group Norms 班上行爲

How much are the following behaviors valued in your class? Please rate your opinion from 1 to 4 by **circling** your answers. 以下這些行爲在你的班上有多重要？請依班上**實際的行爲**圈選 1-4 最符合的答案。例如第一項準時到教室上課，若你圈選不重要的話，表示上課很多同學會遲到；若你圈選很重要，表示班上同學都很準時，請以班上同學的整體行爲來回答，和你個人的行爲沒有關係。

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 -----

Not important 不重要 somewhat important 一點點重要 important 重要 extremely important 很重要

Statements 陳述	Your opinion 你的看法			
69. Come to the class on-time. 準時到教室上課。	1	2	3	4
70. Help my classmates with their schoolwork. 互相幫忙同學們的作業。	1	2	3	4
71. Hand in assignments on-time. 準時交作業/報告。	1	2	3	4
72. Be well prepared (for example, preview the lesson) before the class. 上課前做好充份的準備 (例如:預習課文)。	1	2	3	4
73. Fully participate during the class, for example, answer teacher's questions voluntarily. 上課專心、積極參與課堂活動、例：主動回答老師的問題。	1	2	3	4
74. Speak only English in the class all the time. 上課時只說英文。	1	2	3	4
75. Spend as much time as I (we) can on assignments in order to do a good job. 盡全力去做每樣作業/報告。	1	2	3	4
76. Absolutely no chatting with classmates when the teacher is lecturing. 老師講課時，台下同學一律都不講話聊天。	1	2	3	4
77. Ask teacher questions whenever we have questions or problems. 只要有任何疑問、隨時主動問老師問題。	1	2	3	4
78. Assist the teacher with setting up the equipments for the class. 幫老師借器材、並把器材準備好。	1	2	3	4

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your time.

問卷到此結束、謝謝你們的時間及配合！

APPENDIX 3 (Letter to the Teachers)

Dear Colleagues:

October 2004

First of all, let me say thank you again for showing your willingness to participate in my Ph.D. research. I feel grateful that we had such a nice talk in your office last week regarding my research. I really appreciate your wholehearted support and voluntarily participation.

I know I have briefly mentioned my research topic, aims and processes when we chatted in your office, but please allow me to further portrait the big picture to you again. With this Ph.D. research, I am trying to find out how a group of students (those together in one class – I think of ‘group’ as one class) affect the motivation of individuals within that group. That is, how one learner’s motivation is affected by her classmates/peers. As I mentioned, my research subjects are junior and senior students, and the first step of my research is to go to these students’ compulsory courses and observe how the students interact as a group – to get a sense of the group’s dynamics. It might be necessary to observe them as a group a few times to really get a sense of how their group dynamics are constructed.

The next step of my research would be to conduct a 15-to-20-minute interview with you regarding your impressions of the class. Being that my main area of interest is their motivation, I would be interested in how you would classify their motivation. For example: ‘Would you classify the group as being a highly motivated class or not?’ Your opinions on their behavior will certainly be highly valuable to my research.

As my research focuses on the behavior of students among themselves while in a class, I’d like to make it clear to you that I am not interested in the teaching methods or materials employed in the class. My purpose is strictly to understand students’ demeanor in classrooms and to explore the delicate relationship between group dynamics and student motivation. In fact, I am trying my best to eliminate as much of everything else that may go on in the classroom as possible during my classroom observations. In addition, I ensure you that absolute confidentiality will be guaranteed and any names used in my Ph.D. thesis will be pseudonyms.

Hopefully, through your participation in this research we will all be able to better understand our students, e.g. how they feel in the classrooms, what they think of their peers and how their motivation is affected by all this. Your continual participation in this research will be highly appreciated; however, if any time during the research you change your mind and wish not to continue to participate, you certainly may withdraw from this research.

Thank you very much for your attention. If you have any enquiries or questions, please contact me at yhchang@ccms.nkfust.edu.tw

Sincerely Yours, Lilian Ya-hui Chang

(The Consent Form)

If you are willing to participate in this study, please kindly complete this form.

I _____ have fully understood the nature of this research and am willing to participate in this study. I am aware that the data gathered in this research will only be used in personal research and any name used in published papers will be pseudonyms.

I am also aware that any time during the research if I change my mind and wish not to continue to participate I have the right to withdraw.

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Date)

APPENDIX 4

Observation Schedule (26th October ~ 20th December 2004)

● Group 4C

Observation Date	Observation Time	Course	Teacher
12 th November, 2004 (first round)	13:30~15:30	<i>Computer Assisted Language Learning</i>	Betty
10 th December 2004 (second round)	13:30~15:30	<i>Computer Assisted Language Learning</i>	Betty

Total Observation Hours: 4 hours

● Group 4D

Observation Date	Observation Time	Course	Teacher
15 th November, 2004 (first round)	10:00~12:00	<i>Computer Assisted Language Learning</i>	Fanny
13 th December, 2004 (second round)	10:00~12:00	<i>Computer Assisted Language Learning</i>	Fanny

Total Observation Hours: 4 hours

● Group 3C

Observation Date	Observation Time	Course	Teacher
26 th October, 2004 (first round)	15:30~17:30	<i>Communication and Presentation</i>	Fanny
26 th October, 2004 (first round)	17:30~18:30	<i>Foreign Language Learner</i>	Thomas
28 th October, 2004 (first round)	10:00~12:00	<i>Introduction to Translation</i>	Nancy
2 nd December, 2004 (second round)	10:00~11:00	<i>Introduction to Translation</i>	Nancy
14 th December, 2004 (second round)	16:30~17:30	<i>Communication and Presentation</i>	Fanny
14 th December, 2004 (second round)	17:30~18:30	<i>Foreign Language Learner</i>	Thomas

Total Observation Hours: 8 hours

● **Group 3D**

Observation Date	Observation Time	Course	Teacher
11 th November, 2004 (first round)	10:00~12:00	<i>Foreign Language Learner</i>	Fanny
16 th November, 2004 (first round)	15:30~17:30	<i>Introduction to Translation</i>	Barbara
29 th November, 2004 (first round)	16:30~17:30	<i>Communication and Presentation</i>	Jane
9 th December, 2004 (second round)	11:00~12:00	<i>Foreign Language Learner</i>	Fanny
14 th December, 2004 (second round)	15:30~16:30	<i>Introduction to Translation</i>	Barbara
20 th December, 2004 (second round)	17:30~18:30	<i>Communication and Presentation</i>	Jane

Total Observation Hours: 8 hours

B. Student Interview

Interviewee	Interview Date	Interview Time
SENIOR GROUPS		
Whitney (Group 4C)	27 th March, 2004	15:45~17:30
Jack (Group 4C)	24 th March, 2004	15:45~17:30
Tina (Group 4C)	24 th March, 2004	15:45~17:30
Ray (Group 4D)	4 th April, 2004	15:45~17:30
Kelly (Group 4D)	18 th April, 2004	15:45~17:30
Debbie (Group 4D)	12 th April, 2004	15:45~17:30

APPENDIX 5

Interview Schedule (5th January ~ 16th June, 2005)

A. Teacher Interview

Interviewee	Interview Date	Interview Time
Jane(Group 3D)	5 th January, 2005	14:30~14:45
Barbara(Group 3D)	10 th January, 2005	12:00~12:10
Betty (Group 4C)	10 th January, 2005	14:40~14:55
Fanny (Group 4D, 3C and 3D)	12 th January, 2005	11:30~12:15
Nancy (Group 3C)	12 January, 2005	12:45~12:55
Thomas (Group 3C)	12 January, 2005	13:10~13:25

B. Student Interview

Interviewee	Interview Date	Interview Time
SENIOR GROUPS		
Whitney (Group 4C)	21 st March, 2005	16:40~17:20
Jack (Group 4C)	24 th March, 2005	11:00~11:30
Tina (Group 4C)	24 th March, 2005	13:30~14:05
Ray (Group 4D)	4 th April, 2005	16:35~17:10
Kelly (Group 4D)	11 th April, 2005	16:35~17:05
Debbie (Group 4D)	18 th April, 2005	12:50~13:30

Interviewee	Interview Date	Interview Time
JUNIOR GROUPS		
Helen (Group 3C)	5 th May, 2005	12:50~13:20
Gina (Group 3C)	19 th May, 2005	12:45~13:20
Kate (Group 3C)	26 th May, 2005	12:45~13:20
Flora (Group 3D)	9 th June, 2005	13:00~13:30
Tim (Group 3D)	13 th June, 2005	12:45~13:20
Tracy (Group 3D)	16 th June, 2005	15:35~16:00

Appendix 6

Descriptive Statistics of Individual Participants

● Descriptive Statistics of Individual Participants -- Group 4C

participants	Autonomous beliefs	Autonomous behaviours	Self-efficacy	Group cohesiveness	Group leadership	Group norms
1	3.70	3.10	2.40	2.67	3.25	2.90
2	3.60	3.60	3.30	2.56	3.25	3.10
3	3.70	3.20	2.80	2.44	3.25	2.60
4	3.60	3.20	2.80	2.89	3.50	3.50
5	3.50	2.30	2.00	3.00	3.50	2.60
6	3.60	2.10	3.20	3.33	3.25	2.40
7	3.60	3.40	2.70	2.89	1.88	3.40
8	3.70	1.50	2.20	2.22	3.38	2.80
9	3.90	2.80	2.80	2.22	3.00	2.60
10	3.60	3.10	3.00	3.11	3.38	2.50
11	3.20	3.40	3.60	3.89	3.88	3.40
12	2.80	2.70	3.10	3.00	3.25	2.50
13	3.80	3.30	3.20	3.11	2.50	2.20
14	2.60	2.50	2.20	2.56	3.00	3.30
15	3.80	3.10	2.70	2.89	2.88	3.60
16	3.60	2.20	2.20	2.56	3.13	2.80
17	3.30	2.90	2.70	2.67	Missing	Missing
18	3.90	2.90	2.30	2.89	3.00	2.40
19	3.80	2.40	2.60	2.56	3.00	2.60
20	2.70	2.10	2.30	2.22	3.25	2.60
21	3.80	2.80	2.70	2.00	3.38	3.90
22	3.90	3.50	2.40	3.00	3.00	2.00
23	3.20	2.20	2.90	2.33	3.00	2.70
24	3.50	2.40	2.60	2.78	2.88	2.50
25	3.40	2.20	1.90	2.67	2.38	3.10
26	2.60	2.50	2.78	2.44	3.00	2.40
27	3.30	1.60	2.10	3.11	3.25	2.40
28	4.00	2.80	2.40	2.11	2.88	2.30
29	3.50	2.70	2.50	2.67	3.13	2.40
30	3.40	2.10	2.40	3.00	2.88	3.20
31	3.70	2.40	2.60	2.33	1.88	2.00
32	3.30	2.50	Missing	Missing	2.88	3.20
33	3.50	2.70	3.40	2.67	3.13	2.60
34	3.80	2.30	3.00	1.78	3.00	1.50
35	4.00	3.00	2.60	2.44	3.13	2.80
36	3.40	2.60	2.40	2.44	2.50	2.50
Total N	36	36	35	35	35	35

● **Descriptive Statistics of Individual Participants -- Group 4D**

participant	Autonomous beliefs	Autonomous behaviours	Self- efficacy	Group cohesiveness	Group leadership	Group norms
1	3.70	3.00	3.10	2.44	3.00	2.50
2	3.80	3.30	2.60	2.67	Missing	Missing
3	3.40	3.10	2.70	2.78	3.13	2.30
4	4.00	2.30	2.50	2.11	2.88	1.70
5	3.00	1.80	2.30	2.56	2.50	2.60
6	4.00	2.70	2.40	2.22	2.63	2.90
7	3.90	3.30	3.00	3.00	3.38	2.80
8	3.50	2.70	1.70	2.11	2.25	2.20
9	3.80	2.40	3.30	3.78	1.75	3.50
10	3.80	3.20	3.20	3.11	3.38	3.00
11	3.80	3.30	3.10	3.00	2.88	3.10
12	3.40	2.80	3.30	2.89	3.13	2.60
13	3.30	2.80	3.20	2.67	2.88	2.30
14	3.80	2.20	2.60	2.22	3.25	3.10
15	4.00	2.60	3.00	2.89	2.75	2.90
16	3.80	3.70	2.60	2.56	2.00	3.70
17	3.40	3.30	2.30	2.89	Missing	Missing
18	3.30	2.50	2.10	2.22	2.88	2.50
19	3.00	2.00	3.20	3.67	3.00	3.00
20	3.10	2.90	2.60	2.89	3.13	3.10
21	3.70	2.20	2.70	2.22	3.29	2.40
22	3.80	3.30	2.70	2.67	3.13	2.60
23	3.50	2.70	2.50	2.56	3.13	2.30
24	3.50	3.33	2.80	2.67	3.50	2.90
25	3.30	2.70	2.60	2.22	2.88	2.00
26	3.40	2.50	2.60	2.67	3.38	2.60
27	3.70	1.80	2.30	2.56	3.13	1.90
28	3.60	2.00	3.40	3.22	2.75	3.40
29	3.70	2.60	2.60	3.00	2.75	3.40
30	3.40	3.00	2.67	2.44	3.25	3.30
31	3.00	1.40	2.50	1.56	3.13	2.10
Total N	31	31	31	31	29	29

● **Descriptive Statistics of Individual Participants -- Group 3C**

Participant	Autonomous beliefs	Autonomous behaviours	Self- efficacy	Group cohesiveness	Group leadership	Group norms
1	3.60	2.60	2.80	3.13	3.00	2.78
2	3.70	2.90	2.30	2.75	3.13	2.70
3	3.10	3.30	2.40	2.38	3.13	2.30
4	2.80	2.60	1.90	1.75	2.88	2.00
5	3.80	3.40	3.30	3.63	2.50	2.50
6	3.60	2.70	2.40	2.00	2.63	2.80
7	3.70	2.60	3.00	3.13	3.38	3.10
8	3.20	2.50	3.30	3.25	2.25	2.30
9	3.60	Missing	2.60	2.50	1.75	2.80
10	3.20	3.10	2.80	3.00	3.38	2.70
11	4.00	3.20	2.60	3.38	2.88	2.60
12	3.70	3.00	3.00	3.75	Missing	Missing
13	3.50	3.00	1.90	2.25	2.88	2.60
14	3.40	2.70	1.70	3.13	3.25	2.80
15	3.60	3.30	3.30	2.25	2.75	2.70
16	2.80	2.70	2.30	3.25	3.00	2.70
17	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.38	3.13	2.40
18	4.00	2.70	2.90	3.50	Missing	Missing
19	3.60	2.90	2.50	3.25	3.13	2.30
20	3.30	2.00	2.50	3.13	3.13	2.60
21	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.00	3.50	2.90
22	3.80	1.50	2.20	3.13	2.88	1.90
23	3.20	2.10	3.00	2.88	3.38	2.40
24	3.80	3.30	3.40	3.75	3.13	2.60
25	3.70	2.20	2.70	3.13	2.75	2.30
26	3.70	2.50	2.70	3.00	2.75	3.50
27	4.00	2.90	2.20	2.38	Missing	Missing
28	4.00	3.40	3.20	3.50	3.13	3.60
29	Missing	3.30	3.00	3.50	2.63	2.60
Total N	28	28	29	29	26	26

● **Descriptive Statistics of Individual Participants -- Group 3D**

Participant	Autonomous beliefs	Autonomous behaviours	Self-efficacy	Group cohesiveness	Group leadership	Group norms
1	3.22	2.60	3.00	2.67	3.38	3.00
2	3.44	2.70	2.00	3.11	Missing	Missing
3	3.78	2.50	2.30	3.11	3.25	2.90
4	3.67	2.70	2.90	3.33	3.25	2.78
5	3.67	2.60	3.00	2.78	3.38	2.70
6	3.78	2.40	2.50	3.11	3.25	2.80
7	3.44	2.80	2.00	3.22	3.63	2.80
8	3.56	2.80	2.60	2.78	2.25	3.00
9	3.67	3.20	3.20	3.00	3.25	2.70
10	3.00	2.20	3.10	3.13	3.38	2.70
11	2.89	2.90	2.10	2.67	2.38	2.90
12	3.44	2.60	2.00	3.00	3.50	3.10
13	3.67	1.90	2.70	2.56	3.38	2.20
14	3.78	3.20	3.30	4.00	3.38	3.20
15	3.67	3.60	3.10	3.67	3.25	2.90
16	3.44	3.10	2.30	2.33	2.75	2.80
17	2.22	2.20	2.30	2.89	3.13	2.00
18	3.78	3.00	2.50	3.44	3.13	2.80
19	3.22	2.50	2.60	3.22	2.63	2.60
20	2.89	2.80	3.30	3.56	3.38	2.80
21	3.44	2.60	2.50	3.00	3.13	2.20
22	3.89	3.30	3.80	3.89	3.13	3.50
23	3.00	2.50	2.50	2.78	3.25	2.60
24	3.78	2.90	3.20	3.11	3.25	3.50
25	3.67	2.00	2.80	3.44	3.38	2.80
26	2.89	2.80	2.50	3.00	2.25	2.80
27	3.33	3.00	3.10	2.56	Missing	Missing
28	3.22	2.90	3.20	3.33	3.38	3.60
29	3.67	3.00	2.90	4.00	3.71	3.40
30	3.67	2.90	2.60	3.44	3.00	2.50
31	3.67	1.40	2.20	3.44	1.88	3.10
Total N	31	31	31	31	29	29