

**Understanding EAP Learners' Beliefs, Motivation and Strategies
from a Socio-cultural Perspective: A Longitudinal Study at an
English-Medium University in Mainland China**

Chili LI

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the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
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Dedicated to

My brother in heaven

Abstract

Research on second language learners' beliefs, motivation, and strategies has been growing in recent decades. However, few studies have been undertaken on Chinese tertiary learners of English for academic purposes (EAP) within a broader English as a foreign language (EFL) context. The current call for a socio-cultural theory in second language acquisition (SLA) has also highlighted the necessity of a socio-cultural approach to research on learners' beliefs, motivation, and strategies. This study thus aims to fill these gaps by following a socio-cultural approach to examining changes in beliefs, motivation, and strategies of a cohort of Chinese tertiary EAP learners in Mainland China. The study is longitudinal and situated in a Sino-foreign university where English is used as the Medium of Instruction (EMI).

Data of the study were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews at two stages. The design of the questionnaires and interviews was informed by current discussion on learners' beliefs, motivation, and strategies in the literature of second language teaching and research. At the first stage, the questionnaire was administered to 1026 students upon their arrival at the EMI University and 16 students were selected for semi-structured interviews. At the second stage, after having studied EAP for one academic year at the EMI University, the questionnaire was distributed again to the same cohort of the students and semi-structured interviews were conducted with the same group of participants in order to identify potential changes in their beliefs, motivation, and strategies and to obtain an in-depth understanding of the nature of changes.

The questionnaire surveys identified significant changes in the participants' beliefs, motivation, and strategies after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. The participants showed stronger beliefs about the *difficulty* and *nature* of language learning and *autonomous* language learning, a significant increase in motivation, and a higher level of use of learning strategies. Changes in the three

learner variables were also found in the interviews. These changes indicate possible influence of learning context upon learners' beliefs, motivation, and strategies.

The analysis of the in-depth interviews further revealed that these changes were attributable to the mediation of various socio-cultural factors in the EMI setting, including the learning environment at the EMI University, studying content subjects in English, learning tasks, extracurricular activities, formative assessments, and other important factors such as teachers and peers. The interviews also illustrated that the dynamic changes in the participants' beliefs, motivation, and strategies might be accounted for by the participants' internalisation of the mediation of the socio-cultural factors through exercising their agency. Based on the findings, this research argues that the development of language learners' beliefs, motivation, and strategies is the result of the interplay between agency and context.

The present study deepens our understanding of the nature of learner development in that it contributes to the socio-cultural exploration of contextual influence on second language learning in SLA research. The study also has pedagogical significance for its practical recommendations for English language teaching in EMI settings in Mainland China and other similar EFL contexts.

(502 words)

Declaration

I declare that this thesis represents my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

(Signed) _____

Chili LI

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Abbreviations

The abbreviations in the thesis are listed as follows:

BALLI	Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BLL	Beliefs about Language Learning
CET	College English Test
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EGP	English for General Purposes
ELC	English Language Centre
EMI	English as the Medium of Instruction
ESL	English as a Second Language
I.C.E	Interactive Communications Environment
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
LLS	Language Learning Strategies
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MLL	Motivation for Language Learning
MOE	Ministry of Education
SA	Study Abroad
SCT	Socio-cultural Theory
SILL	Strategy Inventory for Language Learning
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TBLT	Task-based Language Teaching
UNNC	The University of Nottingham, Ningbo, China
VOA	Voice of America
WTO	World Trade Organisation
XJTLU	Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

In recent years, the accelerating rate of globalisation has contributed to the worldwide spread of English as a global language (Crystal, 2003; Rubdy, 2009). This has, in turn, led to the omnipresence of the English language in educational domains around the world (Hornberger & Vaish, 2009). The prominent place of English is manifested in the increasing prevalence of English as the medium of instruction (EMI) in the English as a foreign language (EFL) countries and regions such as the United Arab Emirates, Japan, South Korea, and China.

Differing from the traditional universities in the EFL countries, those which adopt English as the medium of instruction and communication create a beneficial English environment for their students. Nevertheless, while enjoying this native-like English-speaking environment, the students often face daunting language and academic problems (Li & Bray, 2007; Skyrme, 2007). The literature indicates that, while much attention has been paid to the adapting difficulties of those international students studying in the English-speaking countries (Li, 2007), little light has been shed onto the problems among those studying at EMI universities in non-English-speaking countries.

Given that learner beliefs, motivation, and strategies are central factors influencing learning process and outcomes (Chamot, 2001; Dörnyei, 2005a; Ellis, 2008), it is necessary to obtain an understanding of EFL learners' language learning processes at those EMI universities in non-English-speaking countries. Hence, the present study focuses on a cohort of Chinese university students' English for academic purposes (EAP) learning experiences and explores the dynamic nature of their beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies in learning EAP at an EMI university in Mainland China.

This introductory chapter will present a statement of the problem, the contextual background, the research questions, delimitation of the key terms, the significance of the study, and the organisation of this thesis.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This section will briefly review the research on beliefs about language learning (BLL), motivation for language learning (MLL), and language learning strategies (LLS) respectively. It will also highlight the problems in research on these three learner variables, which have motivated and necessitated the current research.

In recent years, there has been a proliferation in studies on learner beliefs (Amuzie & Winke, 2009; Bernat, 2008; Horwitz, 1988; Mercer, 2011a; Peacock, 2001; Yang & Kim, 2011), motivation (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Kim, 2006; Kormos & Csizér, 2011) and learning strategies (Gan, Humphreys & Hamp-Lyons, 2004; Griffiths, 2006; Oxford, 2003a; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Rao & Liu, 2011; Yang, 1999). Influential studies have indicated that learner beliefs, motivation, and strategies are important factors that might be responsible for the variations among language learners' achievements (Hernández, 2006; Nisbet, Tindall & Arroyo, 2005; Peacock, 1998, 1999; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). These studies have contributed to our understanding of the individual differences in learners' language learning experiences.

However, research on the three learner variables is under criticism for its overemphasis on the cognitive aspects and for neglecting the influence of external contexts (Bernat, 2008; Macaro, 2006; Ushioda, 2006). Traditional cognitive perspective research mainly adopts the normative approach such as the utilisation of surveys and questionnaires. The adoption of this normative approach, though able to provide clarity and precision, is considered to be unable to guarantee representativeness of all the beliefs learners might hold (Bernat, 2008). More importantly, the cognitive approach is criticised for its simplistic theorisation of the constructs it uses. For instance, it is considered to be problematic to capture a construct as complex as a person's belief simply by looking at

the person's responses to a set of normative statements (Bernat, 2008; Tseng, Dörnyei & Schmitt, 2006; Ushioda, 2006).

At the same time, there is an increasing voice for integrating external factors such as the learning environment into the theorisation of these three constructs (e.g., Bernat, 2008; Gao, 2006; Ushioda, 2006). This voice puts beliefs, motivation, and strategies as socially situated constructs, and suggests understanding them in particular social settings (Bernat, 2008; Kozaki & Ross, 2011; Palfreyman, 2006). Echoing this call, the socio-cultural perspective is increasingly proposed as an alternative in SLA study on BLL (Bernat, 2008), MLL (Ushioda, 2006), and LLS (Donato & McCormick, 1994).

The literature of research on Chinese EFL learners' beliefs, motivation, and strategies has indicated paucity in an array of perspectives. There has already been some research concerning Chinese EFL learners' beliefs (Bernat, 2006; Ellis, 2008; Peacock, 1998; 1999; Yang, 1999; M. Zhong, 2008), motivation (Chen, Warden & Chang, 2005; Gao, 2008a; Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou, 2004, 2007; Warden & Lin, 2000), and learning strategies (Wen & Johnson, 1997; Zhang, 2003). However, to date there is little research that has included these three variables among Chinese EFL students in one study whose research background is situated in an EMI setting in Mainland China.

Therefore, this study aims to bridge these gaps by adopting a socio-cultural approach to examining the disposition of learner beliefs, motivation, and strategies among a cohort of Chinese tertiary learners studying EAP in an EMI setting in Mainland China. It is hoped that this study will shed light on the nature of beliefs, motivation, and strategies from a socio-cultural perspective and will generate empirical implications for English language teaching in EMI settings within broader EFL contexts.

1.3 Contextual Background of the Study

With the implementation of China's open-door policy in 1978, English language education began to develop at an increasing speed in Mainland China (Hu, 2009; Jin &

Cortazzi, 2002). The rapid development of English language education is manifested in the following aspects.

Firstly, China has the largest English-learning population of the world (Crystal, 2008). As reported by *China Daily* in 2010, there were around 400 million English language learners in China (Bolton & Graddol, 2012). Undoubtedly, with China's growing economic and political integration into the rest of the world in recent years, such as the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2010 Shanghai World Exposition (Hu & Alsagoff, 2010), this nationwide fashion of learning English will continue to increase in future.

Another aspect that demonstrates the development of English language education in Mainland China is that English has become a pivotal component in the Chinese educational system. English is an important subject for Chinese students at different educational levels. As required by the Ministry of Education (MOE) of China, a student receives English language education from primary school to undergraduate study in university (Table 1.1). Pupils start to learn English at Grade 3 in primary schools. They then continue to learn English for the entire 3 years in junior and senior middle schools respectively. When attending university, they are required to learn English in the first 2 years. Aggregately, a student may have been learning English for at least 12 years when he/she graduates from university.

Table 1.1 Formal Classroom English Language Education in Mainland China

Educational level	Duration of English Class	Total
Primary School	Year 3-6	4 years
Junior Middle School	Year 1-3	3 years
Senior Middle School	Year 1-3	3 years
College/University	Year 1-2	2 years

*Adapted from Cortazzi and Jin (1996).

The popularity of English language education in Mainland China is the result of multiple reasons at the national, individual and educational levels (Hu, 2003; Jin & Cortazzi, 2002). At the national level, English has been taken by the Chinese government as an important means to realise the nation's drive for rejuvenation,

modernisation and international status in the 21st century (Jin & Cortazzi, 2002). For this drive, English is therefore viewed by the nation as an important means to produce qualified human resources with a high level of English proficiency at the educational level. At the individual level, English proficiency is deemed by many Chinese people as the key to a host of economic, social and educational opportunities such as a tertiary education at home or abroad and a desirable job in the public or private sectors (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996).

Because of the tremendous profits a high level of English proficiency can bring to the nation and individuals, English language education has drawn substantial attention from all aspects of society (Ross, 1993). In addition, with the widening of China's opening door to the outside world and its further involvement in the world arena, there will be expanding demand for more qualified graduates with a high level of English proficiency. Therefore, more efficient English language teaching at all educational levels will be needed in Mainland China.

However, present English language education in Mainland China, College English language education in particular, is continuously criticised for failing to meet the public's demand for good English proficiency. For a better understanding of the contextual background, the following section will briefly describe the current situation of College English language education in Mainland China.

1.3.1 College English Language Education in Mainland China

With China's continuing engagement in the international area in the twenty-first century, as aforementioned, more versatile international professionals with good English proficiency are in urgent need. However, this need is regrettably found to be far from satisfied in current College English language education. It is against this background that the efficiency of current College English language education has been continuously questioned. This section will briefly review College English language education in

Mainland China, with a focus on the College English curriculum, College English tests, College English teachers and teaching methodologies, and textbooks and materials.

1.3.1.1 College English Curriculum

College English language education, undertaking the nation's mission of modernisation, began to revive when China endorsed its reform and opening up policy to the world in 1978. It came to a peak of development when China decided to expand the recruitment of college/university students in 1999. Consecutive reforms of College English language education for non-English majors have taken place in the later 1990s and early 2000s. For instance, the latest version of College English Curriculum Requirements was officially implemented in 2007 (hereinafter referred to as the 2007 Curriculum). The newly released curriculum switched the priority of College English teaching from linguistic competence to communicative competence such as in the skills of speaking and listening.

However, the current College English curriculum is criticised for being unable to reflect social needs of development in a context of internationalisation and globalisation in China (Cai, 2010, 2012; Zhang & Margaret, 2010). For instance, the 2007 Curriculum is questioned for failing to truly reflect the nation's requirements for foreign language professionals (Xie, 2009). The course design embodied in the current curriculum cannot meet the social needs of professionals who have good English proficiency in the field of a particular profession (Cai, 2012). This problem was mainly caused by the quickening process of globalisation, which was further speeded up by China's entry into WTO, the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and the 2010 Shanghai World Exposition.

1.3.1.2 College English Test

In order to evaluate the efficiency of College English language education, a national College English language proficiency test, College English test (CET), has been established for non-English majors. The CET is composed of four parts: listening

comprehension (35%), reading comprehension (35%), cloze tests (10%), writing (15%), and translation (5%) (Zheng & Cheng, 2008). English tests such as the CETs (Band 4 and Band 6) are of paramount importance to Chinese tertiary students. They are perceived as the key to success (Cheng, 2008). For non-English majors, passing the CET Band 4 is one of the prerequisites to obtaining a degree upon graduation. Further, success in the CETs might give them a competitive edge in future employment market (Jin & Cortazzi, 2002).

On the other hand, the current College English test is under severe criticism. Firstly, it is accused of overemphasising students' reading skills but neglecting to test their communicative competence (Chen, 2008; Xie, 2009). 45% of the questions of the CETs are concerned with students' reading ability. Moreover, it is criticised for leading to examination-oriented learning and teaching (Han, Dai & Yang, 2004; Jin, 2008). In Han, Dai and Yang's (2004) survey of attitudes towards the CET system among 1194 English teachers in 40 colleges and universities, they found that 37.7% of the teachers believed that their universities evaluated their teaching performance on the basis of the passing rate of the CET in the class they taught. In addition, the CET was found to mainly test students' knowledge about vocabulary and grammar. As a result, teachers mainly focused on the teaching of these two aspects with a purpose of helping more students pass the CET (Qiao, Jin & Wang, 2010).

Examinations under such an evaluation system emphasise learning results rather than the learning process (Jin, 2008). Consequently, this examination-oriented teaching made students lose interest in learning English (Chen, 2008). Therefore, a formative assessment method, which not only tests students' reading skills, but also tests their communicative competence, is in need.

1.3.1.3 College English Teachers and their Teaching Methods

The continuing expansion policy of higher education has increased the number of College English teachers in Mainland China since 1999. However, this expansion policy

has resulted in a severe shortage of experienced College English teachers (Cai, 2006). In a national study, Dai and Zhang (2004) discovered that 32.4% of the surveyed teachers had no more than 5 years' teaching experience. Many of them did not have a good academic qualification (Zhou, 2005).

Moreover, many College English teachers have a weak awareness of the importance of linguistic theories, psychology, and pedagogy (Cheng & Sun, 2010). Inadequate knowledge of modern language education thinking will definitely constrain these teachers from selecting appropriate teaching methods. Therefore, a teacher-centred, textbook-reliant, grammar-translation teaching method is often found to prevail in English classroom at universities in China (e.g., Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Rao, 2006). In such a traditional class, teachers primarily focus on vocabulary and grammar, while students listen to them passively and memorise every item of knowledge their teachers provide (Liao, 2000). As a result, these traditional English teaching methods have failed to cultivate Chinese EFL learners' communicative competence (Hu, 2002).

In order to foster students' communicative competence, communicative language teaching (CLT) has been increasingly advocated for the Chinese EFL classroom since the late 1980s (Liao, 2004). However, due to some constraining factors, the CLT method has not been well implemented. One of the constraints relates to English teachers' misconceptions about CLT (Xiao, 2011). Some teachers mistake CLT as "less 'teacher talk' and more 'student talk' regardless of 'nature' and 'spontaneity' of the talk *per se*" (Xiao, 2011, p.56). Large class size is another constraining factor. It is commonly found that an English class has between 50 and 70 students in China, which makes it difficult to organise communicative activities (Ding, 2007). Thirdly, the examination-oriented evaluation system, the CET in particular, is considered to be an obstacle to the adoption of the CLT in class (Rao, 2006). As noted above (Section 1.3.1.2), the emphasis of CETs on testing students' language knowledge rather than communicative competence has hindered the adoption of the CLT method in class.

1.3.1.4 Teaching Textbooks and Materials

College English teaching materials and textbooks have come into a new phase of development. Communicative competence has been increasingly emphasised in these textbooks. A variety of English textbooks were developed, such as *New College English*, *New Horizon College English*, and *21 Century College English*. Different from previous ones which primarily focused on reading, the recent published textbooks lay much emphasis on comprehensive communicative competence. The task-based approach is also integrated into these textbooks. Apparently, there has been great improvement in these textbooks in terms of quality and pedagogical philosophies (Liu & Dai, 2003).

However, College English textbooks are considered to be problematic. For instance, a national survey revealed that over 20% of the surveyed College English teachers thought that the present College English textbooks were inappropriate for the reform of College English teaching (Liu & Dai, 2003). The reasons are that these textbooks still emphasise reading and that the exercises in these textbooks still mainly focused on vocabulary and grammar. They are structuralist in nature rather than communicative. Accordingly, textbooks designed in this manner definitely cannot meet China's requirements for educating professionals with a comprehensive communicative competence in the context of internationalisation.

1.3.2 Characteristics of Chinese Students in the English Classroom

Chinese students bring an array of characteristics into the English class. A large majority of them have been found to be highly motivated in learning English (Jin & Cortazzi, 2002). They hold a utilitarian attitude towards the learning of English. For them, learning English well means good educational opportunities, passing various examinations, obtaining a university degree, ideal career prospects, better access to the latest information in modern science and technology, making foreign friends, and fulfilling social responsibility (Gao & Trent, 2009; Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou, 2004; Liu, 2007).

Though highly motivated to learn English, Chinese students are found to be passive in the English class (Campbell & Li, 2008; Wang, 2010). They are particularly found to be reticent in discussion activities (Jackson, 2002; Trent, 2009). One of the reasons for their reticence might be their inadequate English proficiency (Evans & Green, 2007). Their limited language proficiency results in a lack of confidence in expressing themselves fluently in class. Contextual reasons are also perceived to be responsible for Chinese students' reticence in English class. As found in a case study of a Chinese student in London, a lack of basic understanding of the UK educational context and culture might result in the student's silence in class (Wang, 2010).

Coupled with Chinese students' strong motivation but reticence in English class, they have also been reported to be obedient and respectful to their teachers. This characteristic is argued to be associated with Confucian thinking in Chinese culture (Biggs & Watkins, 2001; Li, 2003). Confucian thinking highlights strong obedience and respect to authorities. As a result, Chinese students are expected to highly respect their teachers as authoritative and to memorise what they are taught in class (Ho, 2001).

A good understanding of these characteristics of Chinese EFL learners would be helpful for the improvement of the efficiency of College English teaching. However, the traditional teacher-centred and grammar-translation teaching methods, being rigid and mechanical, neglect these characteristics and provide few opportunities for students to interact and communicate in class (Leng, 1997). Additionally, the examination-oriented teaching makes students receptive rather than productive in learning English (Tang, 2001). The present English teaching does not take these characteristics into full consideration, which constrains the reform of English teaching in Mainland China.

In summary, the above sections have reviewed current College English language education in Mainland China (Section 1.3.1) and the characteristics of Chinese EFL students in the English classroom (Section 1.3.2). It has been revealed that current College English language education is inefficient in meeting the societal needs for international professionals with good English language proficiency. Current College

English language education has also been found to fail to take into account the characteristics of Chinese EFL students. As a result, current College English language education has dissatisfied university students, resulting in their loss of interest and their passivity in English classroom (Cai, 2012).

In response to these criticisms, China has witnessed a deluge of top-down and bottom-up reform initiatives at different levels of the Chinese educational system (Hu, 2005a). One of the recent initiatives is to promote EMI Education by cooperating with international elite prestigious universities to open campuses in Mainland China. A pioneering example was the establishment of the University of Nottingham, Ningbo, China (UNNC) in 2004. Two years later, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU), was co-founded by Xi'an Jiaotong University and the University of Liverpool. Several more of this kind of Sino-foreign institution are about to be set up, such as New York University at Shanghai and Kunshan Duke University.

It is against this contextual background that the present research aims to explore the English language learning experiences of a cohort of Chinese students studying EAP at an EMI university in Mainland China. For a better understanding of their learning experiences, it is essential to obtain an overall picture of a typical EMI University (Section 1.3.3).

1.3.3 English Language Education at the Selected EMI University

The EMI University (Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, hereinafter as XJTLU) examined in this research was founded in May 2006, and is located at Suzhou, a city close to metropolitan Shanghai in China. The cultural context of learning and teaching at the EMI University not only reflects the latest trends in global higher education but also absorbs the essences of the learning cultures of the Chinese and British university systems. As a Sino-foreign joint university, it adopts English as the medium of instruction, implements the UK education model, and offers UK university degrees. Meanwhile, as a tertiary institution in Mainland China, its social context is similar to

local Chinese universities where educational tradition is didactic and highlights respect for knowledge and authority (Biggs & Watkins, 2001; Li, 2003).

On the other hand, as an international university, it bears some distinct characteristics: All the programmes are taught entirely in English from the second year of the students' university study on. Students learn EAP in their first two university years in order to meet the language proficiency requirements for studying academic subjects in English and for pursuing a UK degree. Textbooks are imported from abroad and the same as those used in its parent university in the UK. Degrees are of the same quality and standard as those of students graduating in the parent university. The academic staff are employed from across the world. Its students are recruited throughout the country and the world. English is the working language within the campus. These features have contributed to the development of a sub-culture of its own at the EMI University within the broad social context in Mainland China. This internationalised pedagogical environment represents a mixed educational cultural context at the EMI University.

As an EMI institution which adopts the educational model of its parent university in the UK, English language education at this EMI University is of paramount importance. It has its own characteristics in terms of its students, curriculum, textbooks and teaching materials, teachers and teaching methods, assessment, and extracurricular activities. These features are to be introduced in detail in Section 3.4.

In light of the aforementioned characteristics which are different from traditional universities in Mainland China, it seemed worthwhile to explore the English language learning experiences of a cohort of Chinese tertiary EAP learners studying at this EMI University. It was hoped that this study would yield practical implications for English language education in the increasing number of EMI settings in Mainland China, by examining the development of these Chinese students' beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies at the EMI University.

1.4 Research Questions

Triggered by the aspiration to address the issue of learner development in terms of learners' beliefs, motivation, and strategies from both theoretical and practical perspectives, the present study proposes to take a socio-cultural stance to explore Chinese students' beliefs, motivation, and strategies in an EMI setting within a broader EFL context. To be specific, it aims to examine the beliefs, motivation, and strategies of Chinese students upon and after their arrival at an EMI university in Mainland China. The study mainly addresses the following questions:

RQ 1: What are Chinese EFL learners' beliefs about, motivation for and strategy use in the learning of English upon their arrival at the EMI University chosen for the investigation?

RQ 1a: What are Chinese EFL learners' beliefs about the learning of English upon their arrival at the EMI University?

RQ 1b: What is Chinese EFL learners' motivation for the learning of English upon their arrival at the EMI University?

RQ 1c: What strategies do Chinese EFL learners use to learn English upon their arrival at the EMI University?

RQ 2: What are Chinese EFL learners' beliefs about, motivation for and strategy use in the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University?

RQ 2a: What are Chinese EFL learners' beliefs about the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University?

RQ 2b: What is Chinese EFL learners' motivation for the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University?

RQ 2c: What strategies do Chinese EFL learners use to learn English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University?

RQ 3: What are the potential changes in their beliefs about, motivation for and strategy use in the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, and what might have caused these changes?

RQ 3a: What are the potential changes in their beliefs about the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, and what might have caused these changes?

RQ 3b: What are the potential changes in their motivation for the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, and what might have caused these changes?

RQ 3c: What are the potential changes in their strategy use in the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, and what might have caused these changes?

A mixed-method longitudinal study, including questionnaire surveys in tandem with semi-structured interviews, was undertaken to answer these questions. By adopting a socio-cultural approach, this study will hopefully cast light on the nature of learner development of beliefs, motivation, and strategies.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The present study was undertaken in the context of an EMI university in Mainland China. Being the first study of such kind to explore individual differences in an EMI setting within a broader EFL context, it will present an in-depth picture of Chinese university students' beliefs, motivation, and strategies in such an EMI setting in Mainland China.

This research will be of theoretical significance by contributing to the development of the existing theories of learner beliefs, motivation and strategies in SLA research. Drawing on the concept of mediation (See Section 2.5.2) in socio-cultural theory and the critical realist stance on the agency-structure relationship (see Section 2.5.5.3), the study will also shed light on the mediating effects of the English-medium environment upon Chinese university EFL learners' beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies in the learning of English.

The findings will be used to sensitise Chinese English language teachers and educators to the importance of individual differences in beliefs, motivation and learning strategies in both EMI and EFL classroom settings. In addition, the findings will offer new insights for learner development that training learners means not only promoting learners' strategic learning capacity, but also enhancing their socio-cultural,

micro-political, and intrapersonal capacity. The findings will also provide empirical evidence to Chinese EFL teachers that an all-English environment can be created in Mainland China to assist English language teaching and learning.

Most importantly, this study will provide empirical evidence concerning the teaching of EAP to EFL learners in the increasing number of EMI settings in both Mainland China and other similar contexts in Asia. Pedagogically, the study will be of paramount significance to English language education in Mainland China and beyond.

1.6 Delimitation of Three Learner Variables

Beliefs about language learning (BLL), motivation for language learning (MLL), and language learning strategies (LLS) have been defined variously. This section briefly reviews definitions of the three learner variables in order to establish appropriate ones for the current thesis.

1.6.1 Beliefs about Language Learning

Beliefs about language learning (BLL) have been variously defined from cognitive, psychological, educational, social and cultural perspectives. A list of the most common definitions for BLL is as follows: BLL are learners' "mini-theories" of second language learning (Hosenfeld, 1978, cited in Ellis, 1994, p.477), "assumptions about their roles and functions of teachers and teaching materials" (Holec, 1987, p.152), a philosophy of language learning which refers to "beliefs about how language operates, and, consequently, how it is learned." (Abraham & Vann, 1987, p.95), and "a component of meta-cognitive knowledge (Flavell, 1987; Wenden, 1998), which includes all that individuals understand about themselves as learners and thinkers, including their goals and needs" (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005, p.2).

The large number of definitions reveals some common traits in people's perceptions of this construct: BLL include cognitive features like learners' assumptions about their

own roles in language learning (Holec, 1987) and “ideas that students have about language and language learning” (Miller & Ginsburg, 1995, p.294). Socio-cultural characteristics, such as learners’ beliefs about the roles of teachers and teaching materials in their language learning (Holec, 1987), also emerge in these definitions.

A multitude of other features are also identified. For instance, beliefs are deemed to be subjective understandings which are relatively stable and idiosyncratic (Gaies, 1998). They are stable, stable, fallible and interactive (Wenden, 1991). Though overlapping in some aspects, these viewpoints are implicative in that the subjective understandings reveal the cognitive nature in language learners’ beliefs and the interactive feature indicates a potential connection between beliefs and socio-cultural environment. Further, the disposition of being subjective and interactive implies a potential of change in learners’ beliefs during the process of learning a second or foreign language. The statability trait also suggests the possibility of being completely reported and quantitatively measured.

In summary, the above discussion indicates that a definition that integrates cognition and socio-cultural perspective is needed. The definition that maximally suits this criterion is proposed by Victor and Lockhart (1995). They term beliefs about language learning as “general assumptions that students hold about themselves as learners, about factors influencing language learning, and about the nature of language learning and teaching” (p.224). This definition encompasses the internal (cognitive) and external (socio-cultural) elements, thus linking in with the argument held in current research that learners’ acquisition of a second language is the result of the interplay between cognitive and socio-cultural factors.

1.6.2 Motivation for Language Learning

Though motivation for language learning (MLL) has been variously defined from different perspectives for different research purposes and contexts (Oxford & Shearin, 1994), a review of these different definitions indicates that MLL entails the following

components: being goal-oriented (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gardner, 1985); being dynamic in nature (Csizér, Kormos & Sarkadi, 2010); and being a socially situated construct influenced by others (McDonough, 2007; Ushioda, 2007).

These features indicate that MLL, as a complex and multi-faceted construct (Dörnyei, 1998), has been defined from a variety of points of view, including cognitive, psycholinguistic, socio-educational, and social and cultural perspectives. These perspectives expand our understanding of the characteristics of MLL. However, each of them, as well as having merits, has shortcomings. For instance, Gardner's (1985, 2001) socio-educational definition that MLL includes the internal dimensions of personal effort, desire and attitude overlooks social factors such as learning contexts and important agents like parents, teachers and peers during the language learning process.

Another problem existing in these previous definitions relates to an assumption that MLL is relatively stable in nature. However, MLL is postulated to be dynamic (Csizér, Kormos & Sarkadi, 2010). It might undergo certain changes throughout the learning process. Furthermore, previous definitions are criticised for only connecting MLL to language learners' individual cognitive behaviours (Kozaki & Ross, 2011). Critics call for expansion in understanding the nature of MLL by relating them to socio-cultural factors (Ushioda, 2003, 2006, and 2007).

Informed by the above discussion, one definition is synthesised for the current research: MLL is the learner's social and psychological desires to achieve the goal of learning a language with a favourable attitude and a persistent effort which is dynamic and responsive to socio-cultural factors. This definition takes into account the cognitive features of MLL and considers the influence of socio-cultural context.

1.6.3 Language Learning Strategies

Similar to beliefs and motivation, language learning strategies (LLS) have also been defined variously (e.g., Derry, 1990; Griffiths, 2006; Oxford, 1990, 2003a; Macaro,

2004; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Schunk, 2004; Wenden, 1987; Zhang, 2003). In light of the massive literature in LLS research, the current research does not seek to exhaustively list all the efforts made to define this construct. Instead, it endeavours to selectively review the most typical definitions in order to obtain a deeper insight into the nature of LLS and to formulate a single definition for the current study.

An examination of the various definitions suggests a number of fundamental components (Derry, 1990; Griffiths, 2006; Oxford, 2003a, 2011). LLS refer to the activities learners do (Rubin, 1975). The activities, different from the actions as proposed by Oxford (1990, 2011), include both physical and mental processes (Griffiths, 2006). Secondly, as learners' conscious and purposeful behaviours (Oxford, 1990; Macaro, 2004), LLS are the optional means used by learners to exploit available information to improve competence, proficiency or achievement in learning a foreign or second language (Oxford, 2011). LLS are also used by learners to manage or regulate their learning (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003).

Based on critical reviews of the definitions in the previous literature, Derry (1990), Oxford (2003a, 2011) and Griffiths (2006) develop the most influential and representative definitions respectively. Derry (1990) views LLS as a complex plan that one formulates to accomplish a learning goal. Oxford (2003a) considers that LLS comprise "specific plans or steps—either observable, such as taking notes or seeking out a conversation partner, or unobservable, such as mentally analysing a word—that L2 learners intentionally employ to improve reception, storage, and retrieval of information" (p.81). In a more recent article, Oxford (2011) characterises LLS in a general way as "the learners' goal-directed actions for improving language proficiency or achievement, completing a task, or making learning more efficient, more effective, and easier" (p.167). Similarly, Griffiths (2006) describes LLS as "activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own language learning".

These definitions present a picture of LLS as a cognitive and psychological process (Chamot, Dale, O'Malley, & Spanos, 1992; Gao, 2010). However, these cognitive

conceptualisations are criticised for paying little or no attention to the influence of the socio-cultural factors (e.g., Block, 2003; Dörnyei, 2005a; Gao, 2006; Tseng, Dörnyei & Schmitt, 2006). In addition to being personalised, LLS are also context-specific. They are not only susceptible to learners' capabilities, but also responsive to a variety of socio-cultural factors such as the learning environment, the nature of a learning task, and the demands of the situation (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

Based on the above discussion, a definition of LLS for this study emerges as a complex plan of activities consciously employed by learners to attain a learning goal, such as receiving, storing, and retrieving information and regulating their language learning. Learners' use of learning strategies is related to both cognitive factors such as motivation, age, gender, and beliefs, and to socio-cultural factors such as the learning environment and nature of a learning task.

1.7 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis comprises eight chapters. The present introductory chapter has presented a brief overview of the research and the statement of the problem. It has then introduced the contextual background of the study, providing an overview of College English language education in Mainland China and the characteristics of Chinese students in English classroom. Research questions, the significance of the study, the organisation of the thesis, and the delimitation of the three learner variables with which we are concerned have also been included in this chapter.

Chapter 2 is a literature review chapter. It reviews the literature related to the three learner variables concerned in this study. It first reviews previous research on learners' beliefs, motivation, and strategies with a focus on Chinese EFL learners. Based on the review, this chapter identifies the problems and briefly describes criticisms of previous studies of the three learner variables. Echoing the criticisms, it proceeds to establish a socio-cultural framework for the present study on the basis of the concept of mediation and the dialogical relationship between agency and context.

Chapter 3 introduces the methodology design of the study. It firstly introduces the methodological philosophy of the study, and the characteristics of the quantitative and qualitative research which justify the adoption of a mixed method in this study. Next it describes the research questions, subjects, instruments, pilot study, data collection procedures, and data analysis used in this study. Finally, it presents the measures taken to guarantee the trustworthiness of the study results.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the results of the study. These three chapters report the findings obtained from the questionnaire surveys and the semi-structured interviews that were used, concerning the Chinese EFL learners' beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies respectively. The profiles of the three learner variables among these participants are captured in these three chapters. They provide a general understanding of the development of these students' beliefs, motivation, and strategies in learning English prior to and after studying EAP at the EMI University.

Chapter 7 offers an overall discussion of the results presented in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. It firstly draws on the concept of mediation, as earlier defined in Chapter 2, to interpret these findings and identifies the mediating factors which might have influenced the participants' beliefs, motivation, and strategies upon and after their arrival at the EMI University. Based on the discussion of these findings, it finally proposes a model to help illuminate our understanding of the development of these three learner variables by making use of the critical realist socio-cultural framework established in Chapter 2.

Chapter 8 is a conclusion of the study. It first highlights the theoretical contributions and pedagogical implications of this study. It then notes the limitations of the study and provides some recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this chapter is to review some studies on Chinese EFL learners concerning their beliefs, motivation, and strategies in learning English and to justify the socio-cultural approach to the current research. To this end, this chapter first relates the need to undertake research on Chinese EFL learners' beliefs, motivation, and strategies in EMI settings in Mainland China. It then proceeds to account for the necessity of undertaking socio-cultural research on BLL, MLL, and LLS against the background of a paradigmatic shift in second language acquisition (SLA).

This chapter will first present an account of research on BLL, MLL, and LLS with a focus on Chinese EFL learners. Responding to the problems in studies of the three learner variables, a socio-cultural perspective is argued for the current research. Then, drawing on the recent development of socio-cultural theory (SCT) in association with SLA study, a socio-cultural framework is established as the theoretical foundation for the present study. This theoretical foundation is based on the concept of mediation and the dialogical relationship between learner agency and context.

2.2 Research on Beliefs about Language Learning in SLA

The past decades have witnessed a substantial amount of research on BLL. The research has mainly examined BLL from the following perspectives: beliefs about the nature of language learning held by learners from various linguistic, cultural and contextual backgrounds (e.g., Bernat, 2004, 2006; Horwitz, 1988; Mercer & Ryan, 2010; Peacock, 2001; Yang & Kim, 2011), the stability of beliefs (e.g., Amuzie & Winke, 2009; Bernat, 2008; Riley, 2009; M. Zhong, 2008), relationships between beliefs and other learner variables such as learning strategies (e.g., M. Wu, 2011; Yang, 1999), motivation (e.g., Xiao & Hurd, 2010), language proficiency and achievement (e.g., Tanaka & Ellis, 2003),

learner autonomy (e.g., Chang, 2007; Q. Zhong, 2010), and gender (e.g., Bernat & Lloyd, 2007), and so on. This section will review research on BLL with a focus on Chinese EFL learners.

2.2.1 Research on Chinese EFL Learners' BLL

Chinese EFL learners' BLL have been extensively addressed (e.g., Amuzie & Winke, 2009; Banya & Cheng, 1997; Bernat & Lloyd, 2007; Bernat, 2006; Pan & Block, 2011; Peacock, 1999, 2001; M. Wu, 2008a, 2011; Xiao & Hurd, 2010; Yang, 1999; Zhang & Cui, 2010; M. Zhong, 2008; Q. Zhong, 2010). These studies present a holistic view of Chinese EFL learners' BLL in various contexts mainly from the following perspectives: their beliefs about vocabulary and grammar learning, the environment for language learning, the difficulty of language learning, autonomy in language learning, the stability of beliefs, and relationships between beliefs and learning contexts.

2.2.1.1 Chinese EFL Learners' Beliefs about Vocabulary and Grammar Learning

Chinese EFL learners seem to attach much importance to the learning of vocabulary in their learning of English (Peacock, 1999; Wang, 2003; M. Wu, 2008a; Zhang & Cui, 2010). In a study conducted in Mainland China, 40.3% of the participants were found to hold a belief about the importance of vocabulary in language learning (Wang, 2003). This finding is echoed in M. Wu's (2008a) research in Hong Kong. He found that 44% of his surveyed participants agreed about the importance of vocabulary in language learning and 13.6% of them strongly agreed with this belief.

In contrast to the uniform belief in the importance of vocabulary learning among Chinese EFL learners, there is inconsistency concerning their beliefs about the importance of grammar in language learning. Research conducted in Hong Kong (e.g., Peacock, 1999; M. Wu, 2008a) reported that Chinese EFL learners attached much importance to grammar learning. For example, Peacock (1999) discovered 64% of his participants endorsed the critical role of grammar in language learning. By contrast, a

smaller proportion was found in Zhang & Cui's (2010) research in Mainland China. Only 26.6% of their surveyed participants acknowledged the importance of grammar.

The above review indicates that Chinese EFL learners hold a strong belief about the importance of vocabulary in learning English, while they do not always hold a strong belief about the importance of grammar. The reasons for their inconsistent belief about the place of grammar in learning English are still unknown.

2.2.1.2 Chinese EFL Learners' Beliefs about Environment for Language Learning

Chinese EFL learners appear to highly appreciate an English-speaking environment for learning English (Bernat & Lloyd, 2007; Wang, 2003; Yang, 1999). In one of her early studies into the relationship between beliefs and strategy use among Chinese EFL students in Taiwan, Yang (1999) found that 90% of her participants expressed their preference for a native English-speaking country as an ideal environment for learning English. In Mainland China, Wang (2003) reported that 89.7% of her participants held the belief that an ideal place for learning English is an English-speaking environment. In addition, in Australia, Bernat & Lloyd (2007) observed that 80% of their surveyed participants believed that a native country is an ideal place for learning English.

It is interesting to note that there is a noticeable difference in this belief about the ideal place for learning English between Chinese learners learning English in Taiwan and Mainland China and those learning English in native English-speaking countries like Australia. It may be worthwhile to examine the reasons why Chinese EFL learners learning English in EFL contexts like Mainland China strongly agreed with this belief. A related question is whether and why learners learning English in an ESL setting within a broader EFL context would still hold such a belief.

2.2.1.3 Chinese EFL Learners' Beliefs about the Difficulty of Language Learning

Chinese EFL learners are found to be optimistic about the difficulty of English language learning (Bernat, 2006; Peacock, 1999; M. Wu, 2008a; Yang, 1999). For example, in

her study, Yang (1999) found that 45% of the surveyed participants thought English to be a language of medium difficulty, 37% thought it an easy language, and 2% believed it to be a very easy language. This belief is shared by Chinese EFL learners in Hong Kong. M. Wu (2008a) found that 51.3% of his surveyed Hong Kong vocational students regarded English to be a language of medium difficulty and 5.5% of them thought it an easy language.

Chinese EFL learners' confidence in learning English is also demonstrated in their beliefs about the length of time needed to learn English well. Bernat (2006) reports that a quarter of her survey participants believed that it would take one to two years to learn English well and 29% of the participants believed that it would take 3 to 5 years to learn it well if someone spent 1 hour per day learning English. It seems that more than half of these Chinese EFL learners believe that one can learn English well within 5 years if one spends 1 hour per day learning English.

The review of literature above tends to indicate that Chinese EFL learners are generally confident in learning English well. However, it is unknown what makes them confident in English learning and whether they encounter any difficulties when transiting from an EFL context into an EMI environment.

2.2.1.4 Chinese EFL Learners' Beliefs about Autonomy in Language Learning

There are mixed results regarding Chinese EFL learners' beliefs about autonomy. On the one hand, they are found to strongly hold a belief in the value of their own efforts in achieving success in learning English (Q. Zhong, 2010). In her investigation into Hong Kong Chinese EFL learners' readiness for autonomous learning, Chan (2001) found that an overwhelming majority (95%) of her research participants liked to be responsible for their own learning and to assess their own progress (80%). Based on this firm belief, they tend to think that their own efforts are pivotal in their success in learning English (Q. Zhong, 2010). On the other hand, they demonstrate an ambivalent attitude towards the teacher's role in learning English (Chan, 2001; Q. Zhong, 2010). Chinese EFL

learners' strong beliefs about taking responsibility for their language learning seemingly do not always make them highly independent of their teachers. For example, Q. Zhong (2010) interviewed 5 Chinese learners in New Zealand and found 4 of them held a predominantly traditional view of the role of teachers: to teach and transmit knowledge.

The literature reviewed above has indicated a contradiction within Chinese EFL learners about their readiness for autonomous learning. This contradictory belief is considered to be related to contextual conditions, such as classroom dynamics and teaching practices (Peng, 2011; Q. Zhong, 2010). However, the relationship between contextual conditions and this disparity in Chinese EFL learners' beliefs about their readiness for autonomy is not adequately examined.

2.2.1.5 Dynamicity of BLL of Chinese EFL Learners

BLL have been argued to be dynamic and responsive to context (de Bot, 2008; Ellis, 2008). The stability of BLL has long been receiving attention in various contexts (e.g., Riley, 2009; Tanaka, 2004; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003; M. Wong, 2010). However, as far as Chinese EFL learners are concerned, such studies have only recently been undertaken with mixed findings reported (Amuzie & Winke, 2009; Peacock, 2001; M. Zhong, 2008).

Peacock (2001) is perhaps the pioneer in identifying changes in BLL among Chinese EFL learners. He conducted a three-year longitudinal study on 146 pre-service ESL teachers' beliefs about language learning at a Hong Kong university. He found no significant changes in these pre-service ESL teachers' beliefs. Nevertheless, changes were captured in other studies. For instance, M. Zhong (2008) identified a major change in her 10-week study about the beliefs of a migrant Chinese ESL learner at New Zealand. She found that the learner came to believe less in the importance of rote learning and to appreciate more the value of interacting with other students in pair work and group projects. In their examination of the effects of study abroad (SA) on the beliefs of 70 EFL learners (22 of whom were Chinese native speakers), Amuzie and

Winke (2009) discovered changes in the participants' beliefs. They found that those with more time abroad had significantly more changes in their beliefs. These findings support the view that beliefs are dynamic and responsive to context (de Bot, 2008).

Though inconsistent in their results, the above studies have contributed to our understanding of the stability of Chinese EFL learners' BLL. However, these findings must be treated cautiously considering their shortcomings. For example, Peacock (2001) mainly relied on quantitative means to elicit information about his research participants' beliefs. The representativeness of the research samples is also a problem in these studies. M. Zhong (2008) only focused on one learner over a 10-week period. As indicated by Amuzie and Winke (2009), the length of context exposure may influence learners' beliefs. The research duration in M. Zhong's (2008) study may not be long enough to observe the potential changes in learners' beliefs.

2.2.1.6 Effects of Learning Contexts on Chinese EFL Learners' BLL

The existing research has focused on Chinese EFL learners in a variety of learning contexts: 1) the EFL environment in Mainland China (e.g., Pan & Block, 2011; Xiao & Hurd, 2010; Zhang & Cui, 2010) and Taiwan (e.g., Yang, 1999); 2) the ESL environment in English-speaking regions like Hong Kong (e.g., Peacock, 1999, 2001; M. Wu, 2008a, 2011) and Singapore (e.g., De Costa, 2011); and 3) the environment in native English-speaking countries such as Australia (e.g., Bernat, 2006; Bernat & Lloyd, 2007), New Zealand (e.g., M. Zhong, 2008; Q. Zhong, 2010), the US (e.g., Amuzie & Winke, 2009), and the UK (e.g., Hurd & Xiao, 2006). Within the first context, English is learned as a foreign language and a very limited number of educational institutions use English as the medium of instruction and communication. By contrast, within the latter two contexts, English usually serves as the medium of instruction and communication both in classroom and daily life.

Research in these contexts seems to be inconclusive due to the divergent results reported. As noted above, Chinese learners learning English in Mainland China tend to

attach less importance to vocabulary and grammar than those learning English in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Australia (Bernat, 2006; Peacock, 1999; M. Wu, 2008a; Wang, 2003; Yang, 1999). Given that Mainland China is a highly competitive context for education in which the learning of English is often stereotyped to be focused on vocabulary and grammar, it is thus worthwhile to explore whether the beliefs among Chinese EFL learners from Mainland China really reflect their learning experiences and whether a change of learning context would lead to students' re-understanding of the value of vocabulary and grammar in learning English.

These studies are either about Chinese learners learning English as a foreign language in Mainland China or Taiwan, or learning EAP in EMI contexts like Hong Kong and the native English-speaking countries. However, there is to date no research concerning Chinese learners' beliefs about learning EAP in EMI settings within a broader EFL context. Taking into account the potential influence of learning context upon language learners' BLL, it is worthwhile to explore how an EMI environment within a broader EFL context might influence the BLL among Chinese EFL learners in Mainland China.

2.2.2 Criticisms of BLL Research

Research on BLL has been mainly cognition-oriented in terms of ontology and epistemology (Bernat, 2008; Gabilon, 2005). This cognitive approach is referred to as the mainstream which has dominated SLA research over the past two decades (Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003; Zuengler & Miller, 2006). On the other hand, research on BLL adopting a socio-cultural perspective has been emerging in recent years. While making considerable contribution to our understanding of BLL, current research on BLL has come under criticism. Criticisms mainly centre on the conceptual and methodological issues.

The first issue as regards criticism of BLL research concerns the conceptualisation of beliefs about language learning. As indicated in Chapter 1, being a complex phenomenon, it is a challenge to define the construct of BLL (Bernat, 2008). This

construct has been defined inconsistently. The cognitive approach takes beliefs as a stable and isolated phenomenon. It emphasises the individuality of mental knowledge and sees contextual influences as secondary (Bernat, 2008). This cognitive perspective is criticised for ignoring the dynamic nature of beliefs which are related to socio-cultural contexts (Amuzie & Winke, 2009; Yang & Kim, 2011).

Another criticism pertains to the research methodologies used in previous BLL studies. Previous BLL research, particularly the mainstream cognitive BLL research, shows a dominance of questionnaires. Among these quantitative instruments, Horwitz's (1988) BALLI has been the most influential and widely adopted in a variety of contexts. However, these *etic* research instruments, like the BALLI, though able to guarantee a large number of respondents and to afford anonymity (Bernat, 2008; Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005), can only give a snapshot of learners' beliefs, which is insufficient to understand the complexity of learner beliefs (Benson & Lor, 1999). A second problem is the doubt about the sensitiveness of questionnaires to specific contexts where learners are learning a language. Questionnaires may fail to take into account the socio-cultural context (Barcelos, 2003). Questionnaires might be also unable to fully capture all the dimensions of the students' beliefs in a set of normative statements. Beliefs profiled in questionnaires are only those identified by the researchers, not all the ones learners might hold (Bernat, 2008).

One more criticism relates to the qualitative methods used in BLL research which fall into the meta-cognitive and contextual approaches respectively. The meta-cognitive approach is featured with using semi-structured interviews and self-reports to collect data and the contextual approach is characterised by adopting ethnography, narratives, and metaphors to collect data (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005). These two approaches are accused of being merely suitable for small samples and of being time-consuming (Barcelos, 2003). These weaknesses might constrain them from being applied to broader SLA contexts (Bernat, 2008). These two approaches are also criticised for not giving adequate attention to the evolution of learners' beliefs and the interaction between

beliefs and actions. For instance, when criticising the limitations of the contextual approach, De Costa (2011) argues that it lacks focus on the political and interactional aspects of language learning and fails to fully explore how macro- and micro-level dimensions work interactively to impact on language learning over extended periods of language learning.

In light of these limitations, alternative perspectives are called for, particularly the emerging socio-cultural approach (e.g., Bernat, 2008; Kalaja, 2003; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003; Yang & Kim, 2011). This socio-cultural perspective advocates researching learners' beliefs in the social contexts where they are engaged, and focusing on the interactions between learners and the contexts.

2.3 Research on Motivation for Language Learning in SLA

The literature has documented research on MLL from a variety of aspects: the disposition of motivation among learners from various linguistic, cultural and contextual backgrounds (e.g., R. Wong, 2010), the dynamic nature of motivation (e.g., Csizér, Kormos & Sarkadi, 2010; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Gao, 2008a; Kim, 2009), relationships between motivation and other learner variables such as learning strategies (e.g., Gupta & Woldemariam, 2011), beliefs (e.g., Xiao & Hurd, 2010), language proficiency and achievement (e.g., Hernández, 2006; Vandergrift, 2005), language learning experiences and teachers' teaching practices (e.g., Haggerty, 2011), gender (e.g., Kissau, Kolano & Wang, 2010), and so on. This section will review research on MLL with a focus on Chinese EFL learners.

2.3.1 Research on Chinese EFL Learners' MLL

Chinese EFL learners' MLL has been extensively addressed (e.g., Chen, Warden & Chang, 2005; Gao, 2008a; Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou, 2004, 2007; Gu, 2009; Kyriacou & Zhu, 2008; Li, 2006; Liu, 2007; Wang, 2008; Warden & Lin, 2000; Wei, 2007; R. Wong, 2007a, 2010; Wu, 2003; Xiao & Hurd, 2010). These studies present a holistic

view of Chinese EFL learners' MLL in various contexts mainly from the following perspectives: types of Chinese EFL learners' MLL, the integrative motivation of Chinese EFL learners, the stability of Chinese EFL learners' MLL, and relationships between learning contexts and Chinese EFL learners' MLL.

2.3.1.1 Types of Chinese EFL Learners' MLL

Research into motivation for language learning among Chinese EFL learners mainly follows the mainstream L2 motivation theories such as the classical instrumental-integrative dichotomy¹ (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), the intrinsic-extrinsic dichotomy² (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and the expanded L2 motivation model³ (Dörnyei, 1994). The current literature on Chinese EFL learners' motivation for language learning shows that little has been done to identify the types of L2 motivation among Chinese EFL learners (e.g., Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou, 2004, 2007; Liu, 2007; Wang, 2008; Warden & Lin, 2000; Wei, 2007).

Wang (2008) is one of the few researchers who pay attention to the types of motivation that Chinese EFL learners have for learning English. She investigated the MLL among 469 non-English major students in Mainland China and categorised the research participants' L2 motivation into 4 types: motivation for knowledge (such as interest in learning English), internal fulfilment regulation (e.g., referring to the importance of English for personal development), motivation of a challenge (the feeling of satisfaction

1 Instrumental motivation refers to a learner's motivation for learning a foreign language as an instrument to achieve some practical goals and integrative motivation refers to a learner's motivation for learning a foreign language because of the learners' interest in, or desire to interact or even become similar with, the target community and culture (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

2 Extrinsic motivation is a learner's motivation for learning a foreign language in order to receive some extrinsic rewards or to avoid punishment and intrinsic motivation is a learner's motivation for learning a foreign language for the sake of internal rewards such as pleasure and satisfaction from language learning process (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

3 Dörnyei (1994) categorises L2 motivation into three dimensions: the language level (the instrumental-integrative dichotomy), the learner level and the situational level (the situation-specific motives related to a classroom setting such as course-specific, teacher-specific, and group-specific motivational components).

through the challenge of learning English), and external utility regulation (external rewards). However, these four types are problematic in that they are not precisely distinguished from each other. Instead, they to some degree overlap with each other. For example, the statement “in order to get an ideal job in the future I study English diligently”, which refers to L2 learners’ utilitarian motives for learning English, is categorised as an instance of internal fulfilment.

Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou (2004) took an inductive approach to investigate the motivation of 2278 Chinese tertiary EFL learners in order to identify their motivational types. They obtained 7 types: intrinsic interest, immediate achievement, learning situation, going abroad, social responsibility, individual development, and information medium. Among these seven types, immediate achievement, information medium and individual development belong to instrumental motivation which refers to the employment of the target language as an instrument to achieve certain goals. Intrinsic interest is target-culture oriented. They further categorise the language learners’ cultural interests and concerns into cultural motivation. This is to some degree equivalent to integrative motivation in the classical motivation theory. Furthermore, social responsibility refers to when Chinese EFL learners use English as an instrument to promote their native culture. Therefore, they treat this type as both instrumental and cultural. Similarly, going abroad motivation also includes instrumental and cultural elements and the type of learning situation refers to the influence of the learning environment on learners’ motivation. With regard to this type, they categorise it into situational motivation.

Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou’s (2004) classification demonstrates similarities with the classical instrumental-integrative model (Gardner, 1985) and reflects the situation-specific motives as included in the expanded model of L2 motivation (Dörnyei, 1994). This classification caters to my research purpose and will thus be adopted in the current research.

2.3.1.2 Integrative Motivation of Chinese EFL Learners

Previous research indicates that Chinese EFL learners tend to be instrumental rather than integrative in their learning of English (e.g., Chen, Warden & Chang, 2005; Liu, 2007; Warden & Lin, 2000). For instance, in an investigation into 202 non-English major students' MLL in Mainland China, Liu (2007) finds that the majority of the students were not integratively but instrumentally motivated to learn English. In their study on Chinese senior high school students' motivation for learning English, Kyriacou & Zhu (2008) also find that their participants' motivation is dominated by life- and career-based reasons instead of intrinsic or integrative reasons.

However, contradictory results are reported in other studies concerning Chinese EFL learners' integrative motivation (R. Wong, 2007a; Wu, 2010). In R. Wong's (2007a) investigation into motivation for learning English among 70 pre-service teachers in Hong Kong, she found that these EFL learners do have integrative motivation. She explained that this might be caused by the participants' considering that being bilingual in an international city like Hong Kong is an advantage. She also attributed this result to the fact that these participants had just passed the public English examination. This might have freed them from examination pressure and made them begin to appreciate the learning of English language for its own merits. As a result, their integrative motivation might be enhanced.

The identification of the existence of integrative motivation among Chinese EFL learners in Hong Kong has two implications: firstly, as discussed in the above paragraph, it suggests that the emancipation from high stake examinations might strengthen EFL learners' integrative motivation for learning English. Secondly, the status of English as a global language might have enhanced EFL learners' integrative motivation.

The integrative motivation, moreover, seems to have a new meaning against the background of globalisation. As R. Wong (2007a) points out, the EFL learners regarded bilingualism as an advantage in the international city where they belonged. This

indicates that EFL learners might have developed a “bicultural identity” (Arnett, 2002, p.777) in the context of globalisation, which comprises “a vision of an English-speaking, globally-involved but nationally-responsible future self” (Lamb, 2004, p.16). This newly developed understanding of integrative motivation lends support to the concept of international posture (Yashima, 2002, 2009). International posture refers to foreign language learners’ interest in international affairs, a desire to interact with foreigners including both native and non-native speakers of English, and sometimes an interest in working overseas (Yashima, 2002, 2009).

Considering these inconsistent results, the integrative motivation of Chinese EFL learners for learning English will be further examined and the influence of English as a global language upon Chinese EFL learners’ motivation for learning English should be further investigated in other contexts, particularly in EMI settings within broader EFL contexts.

2.3.1.3 Dynamicity of MLL of Chinese EFL Learners

MLL has been claimed to be dynamic and responsive to context (Csizér, Kormos & Sarkadi, 2010; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Kim, 2009). However, as far as the Chinese EFL learners are concerned, there is a scarcity of research. Gao (2008a) and Lai and Ting (2013) are among the few researchers paying attention to the dynamic nature of Chinese EFL learners’ L2 motivation.

Gao (2008a) examined the dynamic nature of MLL among a cohort of Mainland Chinese students studying EAP at a Hong Kong university. He found context-mediated and self-determined elements in his participants’ motivation. He also found that their context-mediated motivation could be changed into self-determined motivation two years after they had studied at Hong Kong. He thus contended that the contextual conditions in Mainland China and Hong Kong were responsible for the formation of their context-mediated motivation. Socio-cultural factors, including the role of English,

academic competition, medium of instruction, and important social agents, worked together through a socialisation process to influence their motivation.

Lai and Ting (2013), adopting a qualitative approach, interviewed 20 university students in Taiwan in order to explore the changes in their motivation for learning English over a two-month period. They found that the majority (19 out of 20) of their participants had experienced motivational changes. They claimed that these changes might be the result of the influence of a number of socio-cultural factors such as significant others (e.g., teachers), external pressure, examinations, group dynamics, and social experiences.

These studies are of pivotal significance in that they verified that L2 motivation is dynamic in nature; they also demonstrated how Chinese EFL learners change their motivation in their interaction with contextual conditions. On the other hand, given this small number of studies on the dynamic nature of Chinese EFL learners' motivation, more in-depth empirical studies are needed.

2.3.1.4 Effects of Learning Contexts on Chinese EFL Learners' MLL

The existing research has focused on Chinese EFL learners' L2 motivation in a variety of learning contexts: 1) the EFL environment in Mainland China (e.g., Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou, 2004, 2007; Kyriacou & Zhu, 2008) and Taiwan (e.g., Chen, Warden & Chang, 2005; Warden & Lin, 2000); 2) the ESL environment in English-speaking regions like Hong Kong (e.g., Gan, 2009; Gao, 2008a; R. Wong, 2007a, 2010; Wu, 2007, 2010); 3) the environment in native English-speaking countries like Australia (e.g., Yu & Shen, 2012) and the UK (e.g., Li, 2006).

The literature indicates that Chinese EFL learners from different contexts tend to be different in their motivation for learning English. For instance, Chinese EFL learners from Mainland China and Taiwan are found to be more instrumental than integrative in their motivation for learning English (e.g., Chen, Warden & Chang, 2005; Liu, 2007; Warden & Lin, 2000; Wei, 2007). However, this finding is inconsistent with those

studies among Chinese students learning English in Hong Kong (e.g., R. Wong, 2007a, 2010; Wu, 2007, 2010). While reporting that their research participants are traditionally instrumental, R. Wong (2007a, 2010) and Wu (2007, 2010) also discover that these English learners are highly integrative in their motivation for learning English.

The above review has indicated that, firstly, a shift from an EFL context to an ESL environment may cause changes in learners' motivation for learning English. It is thus worth further exploring how a shift of learning context might reshape learners' L2 motivation. Secondly, these studies are either about Chinese learners learning English in EFL contexts, or learning EAP in EMI contexts. However, there is to date no research paying attention to Chinese learners' motivation for learning English in EMI settings within a broader EFL context. Taking into account the potential influence of learning context upon L2 motivation, it is worthwhile to explore how an EMI setting within a broader EFL context might impact on EFL learners' MLL for learning English.

2.3.2 Criticisms of MLL Research

L2 motivation research has been growing since the seminal work of Gardner and Lambert in 1959. It has gone through the following four phases: the social-psychological period (1959-1990), the cognitive-situated period (during the 1990s), the process-oriented period (turn of the century), and the social-dynamic period (current) (for a detailed review, see Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). However, MLL research has come under criticism (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The criticisms mainly centre on Gardner and his associates' socio-educational model.

The first criticism of the socio-educational model resides in the ambiguous nature of integrativeness (Dörnyei, 2009a). The nature of integrativeness is problematic for it overlooks the differences between ESL and EFL settings (Dörnyei, 2009a; Ryan, 2009). Dörnyei (2009a) argues that this notion does make sense in a multilingual ESL setting like Montreal where it was first theorised, but it is meaningless in EFL contexts where learners have little contact with native speakers of English. The overlooking of the

differences between ESL and EFL settings thus undermines the applicability and relevance of Gardner's theory of integrativeness (Ryan, 2009).

The notion of integrativeness is also criticised for its static characterisation of the L2 community (Ryan, 2009). This concept implies "a clearly and visible L2 community tied to fixed locations, with which the language learner can identify and ultimately integrate" (Ryan, 2009, p.124). However, with the establishment of English as an international language, an L2 community does not always equate to a group of native speakers of English (Lamb, 2012; Ryan, 2009; Yashima, 2009). This dynamic feature of the L2 community thus contradicts the static nature characterised in Gardner's theory.

The socio-educational model of L2 motivation is also criticised for ignoring social, cultural and contextual variables (Ushioda, 2009, 2011). Ushioda (2009) and Dörnyei (1999) contend that the Gardnerian theorisation of L2 motivation actually focused on individual differences, rather than on the social and contextual factors which might have a strong influence on L2 learners' motivation. Ushioda (2009) thus argued that L2 learners should be understood as individuals who are "necessarily located in particular cultural and historical contexts" (p.216). L2 motivation models developed in one particular cultural context might not be applicable to another one. She justified her argument with an empirical study conducted by Chen, Warden and Chang (2005) which claimed that the "required motivation" and the "Chinese imperative" among Chinese EFL learners in Taiwan might be specific to traditional Chinese culture.

Previous studies on L2 motivation are further criticised for methodological shortcomings (Kim, 2005). Most L2 motivation research mainly relies on large-scale questionnaire surveys (Dörnyei, 2003; Ushioda, 2009). Quantitative research does have the merit of revealing the interconnection between cognitive and affective factors in L2 motivation (Dörnyei, 2001). However, using it alone cannot guarantee an in-depth investigation (Ushioda, 1997). Rich interpretive data that allows for thick descriptions (Geertz, 1988) firmly contextualised in a learner's current situation is therefore required.

In summary, criticisms of the current L2 motivation research indicate that, against a background of English as an international language, this research needs to re-conceptualise L2 motivation within a new paradigm which follows a socially situated and dynamic perspective.

2.4 Research on Language Learning Strategies in SLA

The voluminous literature has addressed LLS from a wide variety of perspectives such as the use of learning strategies by learners with different linguistic, cultural and contextual backgrounds (e.g., Griffiths, 2006; Oxford, 1990, 2003a), relationships with learner beliefs (M. Wu, 2011; Yang, 1999), motivation (e.g., Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Vandergrift, 2005), gender (e.g., Radwan, 2011), disciplines (e.g., Peacock & Ho, 2003; Rao & Liu, 2011), and language proficiency and achievement (e.g., Fewell, 2010; Gan, Humphreys & Hamp-Lyons, 2004; Nisbet, Tindall & Arroyo, 2005). This section will review research on LLS with a focus on Chinese EFL learners.

2.4.1 Research on Chinese EFL Learners' LLS

Chinese EFL learners' LLS have been extensively explored (e.g., Chen, 2009; Gao, 2006, 2007; Goh & Kwah, 1997; Griffiths, 2006; Jiang & Smith, 2009; Li, 2005; Jiang & Sharpling, 2011; Liu, 2013; Ni, Chatupote & Teo, 2008; Nisbet, Tindall & Arroyo, 2005; Parks & Raymond, 2004; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Rao, 2006; Wen & Johnson, 1997; Xiao & Hurd, 2007; Yu & Wang, 2009). These studies present a holistic view of Chinese EFL learners' LLS in various contexts mainly from the following perspectives: the overall use of learning strategies, the types of learning strategies used by Chinese EFL learners, the stability of Chinese EFL learners' LLS, and relationships between learning contexts and Chinese EFL learners' LLS.

2.4.1.1 Overall Strategy Use of Chinese EFL Learners

Chinese EFL learners' use of LLS has been widely portrayed. Previous research has revealed that Chinese EFL learners generally demonstrate a medium frequency of use, though sometimes inconsistently reported, of learning strategies (e.g., Li, 2005; Ni, Chatupote & Teo, 2008; Rao, 2006; Yu & Wang, 2009). Li (2005) conducted an empirical study on the use of learning strategies of 107 non-English majors in Southeast University in China, and discovered that these students were overall at the medium level in their use of learning strategies. This finding is supported by a later study. Yu & Wang (2009) used Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) as the major instrument to investigate the LLS deployed by 278 junior secondary school students in the Chinese EFL context. Their study again showed that the surveyed participants were at the medium level in their overall use of learning strategies.

A similar but slightly different result is reported by Nisbet, Tindall & Arroyo (2005). They focused on the learning strategies used by 168 third-year English majors at Henan University, Kaifeng, China. In contrast to the studies which showed that their research participants were at the medium level in their use of learning strategies, this research revealed that the chosen group of English majors reported a moderate to high frequency of use of learning strategies. This finding might indicate a distinction between English majors and non-English majors in strategy use. With slight variations, all of the reviewed literature has suggested that the Chinese EFL learners are at a medium level in their use of learning strategies in the Chinese EFL context.

2.4.1.2 Types of Learning Strategies Used by Chinese EFL Learners

Previous research on Chinese EFL learners' LLS reveals that they deploy a wide range of learning strategies. Given that Oxford's (1990) six-category taxonomy of learning strategies and SILL instrument dominated quantitative research on LLS, this study reviewed the specific types of learning strategies reported by Chinese EFL learners (Table 2.1) following Oxford's (1990) framework.

Table 2.1 Types of Learning Strategies Used by Chinese EFL learners

Study	Subject	Ranking order (from most frequently used to least)
Li (2005)	107 non-English majors	Memory, Cognitive, Meta-cognitive, Compensation, Affective, Social
Nisbet, Tindall & Arroyo, (2005)	168 third-year English majors	Meta-cognitive, Social, Cognitive, Compensation, Affective, Memory
Rao (2006)	217 non-English majors	Affective, meta-cognitive, compensation, memory, cognitive, social
Xiao & Hurd (2007)	173 Chinese distance learners of English	Affective, Social, Cognitive, Meta-cognitive, Compensation, Memory
Yu & Wang (2009)	278 junior secondary school students	Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Meta-cognitive, Affective, Social

Table 2.1 indicates inconsistent results with regard to the types of learning strategies used by Chinese EFL learners. Chinese secondary students tend to use memory and cognitive strategies most frequently and affective and social strategies the least (Yu & Wang, 2009). This pattern of strategy use echoes, to some degree, that of non-English majors as reported in Li's (2005) study. This pattern further supports early research on Chinese EFL learners' strategy use (Jiang & Smith, 2009; Wen & Johnson, 1997). By contrast, a least frequent use of memory strategies is demonstrated in two of the studies (e.g., Nisbet, Tindall & Arroyo, 2005; Xiao & Hurd, 2007). Likewise, a least frequent deployment of social strategies is observed in three of the studies (e.g., Li, 2005; Rao, 2006; Yu & Wang, 2009).

However, a closer scrutiny of Table 2.1 indicates that the types of Chinese EFL learners' strategy use might be connected with learners' learning contexts, academic disciplines and other learner factors. Nisbet, Tindall & Arroyo (2005) undertook their study on third-year English majors. These students reported to use meta-cognitive strategies most frequently and deploy memory strategies least. The researchers accounted for this by noting that their participants' high frequency of use of meta-cognitive strategies might be related to their English language proficiency and recommended further examination of the relationship between learning strategies and proficiency. In addition, both Rao (2006) and Xiao & Hurd (2007) attributed their participants' frequent use of affective strategies to the specific educational contexts they

belonged to. The educational context in Mainland China is characteristic of intense academic competitiveness, which often leads to a strong achievement motivation for success in learning English among Chinese students. This strong motivation means high readiness among Chinese students to use a variety of affective strategies to manage their emotions whenever they are in difficult situations in learning English (Rao, 2006).

2.4.1.3 Dynamicity of LLS of Chinese EFL Learners

Research on LLS has indicated that LLS are dynamic in nature and a socially situated construct (Donato & McCormick; 1994; Gao, 2006). While LLS have been examined from a variety of perspectives and in multiple learning contexts, the dynamic nature of LLS, as revealed in literature, tends to have drawn inadequate attention. Studies with regard to the changes in LLS among Chinese EFL learners are rare. Gao (2006) and Liu (2013) are among the few researchers who have made efforts to examine the dynamicity of Chinese EFL learners' LLS.

Gao (2006), following a socio-cultural theoretical framework, investigated the dynamic nature of the strategy use of 14 Chinese learners after they had moved from Mainland China to Britain. He found that, after coming to Britain, the Chinese students deployed fewer memory strategies which used to be strongly encouraged by the high stake examinations and by important agents like teachers and parents in Mainland China. By contrast, under the influence of assessment methods and other important agents in the UK, the students revealed a more frequent exercise of social strategies.

Liu (2013) conducted a qualitative study on the changes of Chinese EFL students' language use when moving from Mainland China to the UK. She discovered that the participants displayed less use of memory strategies like grammar study and a decrease in using cognitive strategies such as listening to BBC and VOA in their study of listening and speaking. They also demonstrated less use of compensation strategies like translating of unknown words into Chinese. Instead, they reported an increase in using social strategies by seeking opportunities to speak to native speakers of English.

Though few in number, these two studies are of pivotal significance in that they verified that LLS are dynamic in nature; they also show that the socio-cultural approach can be helpful in obtaining an in-depth understanding of language learners and their strategy use. On the other hand, more in-depth research is called for by the two researchers. For instance, more research adopting the socio-cultural approach is needed to “provide insights into the influences of learning environment on strategy use over time” (Gao, 2006, p.67).

2.4.1.4 Effects of Learning Contexts on Chinese EFL Learners’ LLS

Similarly to research on BLL and MLL, research into Chinese EFL learners’ LLS is mainly targeted at three learning contexts: 1) the EFL environment in Mainland China (e.g., Li, 2005; Rao, 2006; Xiao & Hurd, 2007; Yu & Wang, 2009) and Taiwan (e.g., Chen, 2009; Y. Wu, 2008); 2) the ESL environment in English-speaking regions such as Hong Kong (e.g., Gao, 2007; Peacock & Ho, 2003; M. Wu, 2008b) and Singapore (e.g., Goh & Kwah, 1997), and 3) the environment in native English-speaking countries like the UK (e.g., Gao, 2006; Li, 2007; Jiang & Smith 2009; Jiang & Sharpling, 2011), Canada (e.g., Parks & Raymond, 2004) and New Zealand (e.g., Griffiths, 2006).

The literature indicates that Chinese students deploy learning strategies differently within different learning contexts. As reviewed above, the studies of Chinese EFL learners from Mainland China (e.g., Gan, 2004; Ni, Chatupote & Teo, 2008; Rao, 2006; Xiao & Hurd, 2007; Yu & Wang, 2009) show that they tend to use learning strategies moderately. They employ memory strategies the most and social strategies the least. In contrast, a large body of research on Chinese learners learning English in EMI contexts (e.g., Gao, 2006; 2007; Parks & Raymond, 2004; M. Wu, 2008b) indicates that, albeit with minor differences, Chinese EFL learners report a wider use of learning strategies and a more active application of indirect strategies such as meta-cognitive and social strategies and less use of direct strategies like memory strategies (Goh & Kwah, 1997; Li, 2007).

The above review has suggested that a shift from an EFL context to an ESL environment may cause a change in learners' LLS. It is thus worthwhile to explore how a shift of learning context might affect the use of learning strategies. Secondly, these studies are about Chinese learners learning English either in EFL contexts or learning EAP in EMI contexts. However, there is to date little research concerning the strategic engagement among Chinese learners learning EAP in EMI settings within a broader EFL context. It is therefore worth further examining how an EMI setting within a broader EFL context might influence language learners' use of learning strategies.

2.4.2 Criticisms of LLS Research

Although LLS research has been prominent in SLA, it has encountered a number of criticisms from not only researchers who adopt a cognitive perspective but also from those who adopt other alternatives. A substantial proportion of these criticisms relate to the conceptualisation and methodological issues of LLS research (Macaro, 2006).

Ellis (1994) argues that definitions of LLS tend to be atheoretical, and the conceptualisation of LLS has been claimed to be problematic (Dörnyei, 2005b). LLS have been defined inconsistently. For instance, while including cognitive and affective strategies in her six-strategy taxonomy of LLS, Oxford (1990) defined strategies in terms of behaviours. However, cognitive and affective strategies refer to mental processes rather than behavioural actions. In addition, when criticising Oxford's (1990) classification of LLS, Dörnyei (2005b) claims that it is illogical to parallel memory strategies to the same level as cognitive strategies because the individual strategies included in memory strategies also fall into cognitive strategies.

Another major criticism relates to the dominance of quantitative instruments such as questionnaires, the SILL in particular. Questionnaires like the SILL, though having value in LLS research, are criticised for being unable to represent LLS as a psychological trait and for their inaccuracy in measuring learning strategies (Dörnyei, 2005b). For example, when measuring LLS, the SILL tries to standardise its definition

and classification. However, researchers always face the problem of diversity in learner strategy classification schemes and learner strategy inventories, which have resulted from various theoretical approaches to defining learner strategies (Gao, 2004; McDonough, 1999).

Further, questionnaires like the SILL are argued to be insensitive to language learning contexts (LoCastro, 1994). Failure to take context into account might lead to an overlook of the dynamic nature of LLS and result in an impression that LLS are static (Gao, 2004; Parks & Raymond, 2004). Additionally, the wording of the items in questionnaires may be subject to various interpretations (Bremner, 1998). For instance, it might be a problem for learners to decide who is 'someone' before rating the item 'I pay attention when someone is speaking' in the SILL (Gao, 2004).

In order to compensate for these flaws in LLS research, some researchers, including those who adopt the socio-cultural perspective, call for the alternative of undertaking qualitative studies and gauging LLS within the particular social contexts with which learners are engaged (Donato & McCormick, 1994; Parks & Raymond, 2004). This call actually points to the recent increasing interest in examining SLA from a socio-cultural perspective (Dörnyei, 2009b; Lantolf, 2006; Johnson, 2006; Zuengler & Miller, 2006). Therefore, it is necessary to obtain an in-depth understanding of the use of learning strategies among Chinese EFL learners from such a perspective.

In summary, the review of the literature above (Sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4) has revealed that research on BLL, MLL and LLS dominantly follows the mainstream cognitive perspective. Criticisms of studies of the three learner variables indicate that a socio-cultural perspective is emerging as an alternative in research on SLA. These criticisms also reflect a gradual paradigmatic shift in SLA study in recent decades. The next section will introduce the socio-cultural perspective in SLA studies.

2.5 Socio-cultural Theory in SLA Study

Mainstream studies in SLA began to shift from cognitive perspectives to socio-cultural perspectives from the 1970s. The research contributing to this shift has been informed by the socio-cultural theory (SCT). The SCT is based on the work of Vygotsky (1978) who argued that it was essential to incorporate the study of human culture and history into the effort to understand the development of human mind. SLA research, following the socio-cultural perspective, was marked by the publication of Frawley & Lantolf's (1985) article on L2 discourse from a Vygotskian perspective (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009).

This shift was further stimulated by calls for a more “holistic approach to an outlook on language and language acquisition” (Firth & Wagner, 1997, p.296). Since then, there has been an increase in SLA research from socio-cultural perspectives (e.g., Duff, 2007; Lantolf, 2007, etc). Consequently, this “social turn” in SLA research (Block, 2003) has contributed to the establishment of socio-cultural perspectives as the mainstream in SLA study (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Swain & Deters, 2007; Zuengler & Miller, 2006).

2.5.1 Socio-cultural Perspectives in SLA Study

Socio-cultural theory originates from Vygotsky's argument that the development and functioning of human activity “are mediated by the social and cultural contexts of everyday practices” (Ajayi, 2008, p.641). Influenced by Vygotsky, socio-cultural theorists (e.g., Lantolf, 2007; Swain & Deters, 2007; Thorne, 2005) have expanded the interpretation and application of his theory for SLA study. This socio-cultural perspective has reconceptualised several key terms concerning SLA, namely, language learning, the learner, and context.

Second language (L2) learning, according to the socio-cultural theory, is “not a solitary activity, but an engagement mediated by the macro socio-cultural contexts” (Ajayi, 2008, p.641). L2 learning is considered to be a socially situated phenomenon, to which

human interaction is of particular importance (Duff, 2007). What is embedded in this socio-cultural view of L2 learning is that language learning is a social act (Donato & McCormick, 1994; Zuengler & Miller, 2006).

This socio-cultural conceptualisation of language learning indicates that learners are social agents who “actively engage in constructing the terms and conditions of their own learning” (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001, p.145). This view is of significant value in that it sees learners as agents who are capable of exerting an influence upon their learning contexts, instead of just reacting to them, in which the emphasis is on the complex dynamic interaction between agency and context (Mercer, 2011b).

The re-conceptualisations of language learning and learners also reveal a socio-cultural understanding of context. In contrast to the cognitive views which take context as a variable “modifying the internal acquisition process occurring in individual minds” (Gao, 2010, p.19), socio-cultural perspectives deem it to be “fundamental, not ancillary, to learning” (Zuengler & Miller, 2006, p.37). Context, from a socio-cultural perspective, refers to “the whole set of relationships in which a phenomenon is situated, including both the macro-dimensions and the micro-dimensions” (Watson-Gegeo, 1992, p.53).

Watson-Gegeo’s (1992) characterisation indicates a multi-layered feature of context: it includes micro-dimensions such as the immediate context of physical learning environment (Goodwin & Duranti, 1992); it also comprises macro-dimensions which refer to institutional, social, and cultural aspects of the learners’ situation (Watson-Gegeo, 1992) as well as social relationships among other contextual elements (Layder, 1990). Her definition further suggests that context is “historically constituted between persons engaged in socially constructed activity and the world with which they are engaged” (Lave, 1993, p.17).

The socio-cultural re-conceptualisations of the notions of language learning, the learner and context indicate that socio-cultural theory takes into account “the complex interaction between the individual acting with mediational means and the socio-cultural

context” (Swain & Deters, 2007, p.821). In other words, the tools learners use to act (mediational means), the place for the action to happen, and the reasons for learners to learn (motives and goals) are among the concerns of this theory (Swain & Deters, 2007). Therefore, this socio-cultural perspective to SLA sheds light on the dynamic process of second language learning, particularly learner differences in respect of beliefs, strategies, and motivation (Gao, 2010). Socio-cultural research on BLL, MLL, and LLS is potentially able to demonstrate the interaction between learner agency and context in the second language learning process.

The above re-conceptualisations further suggest that language learning is a mediation process, mediated by others through interactions, by self through private speech, and by artefacts (Lantolf, 2000; Duff, 2007). The following section will introduce mediation, a fundamental concept of socio-cultural theory.

2.5.2 Mediation

Mediation is one of the fundamental concepts in socio-cultural theory. It refers to the indirect connection “between incoming stimulation and his responses through various mediating links” that an individual makes (Cole, 1976, p.xii). The higher forms of human mental activity are mediated (Lantolf, 2000). The realisation of human forms of mental activity does not come from an individual’s direct action on the physical world. Instead, it arises in the interactions with the social world (Lantolf, 2000). In other words, human forms of activity are realised through an individual’s use of cultural, physical and symbolic tools to mediate and regulate his relationships with others and with himself (Lantolf, 2000).

The concept of mediation indicates a dialectical relationship between the mental and the social world (Lantolf, 2000). This dialectical relationship suggests the importance of an individual’s capacity to use tools to respond to outside stimuli, which refers to the individual’s exercise of learner agency (See Section 2.5.5.1). It also highlights the importance of contextual factors in an individual’s language learning.

A substantial body of literature has suggested a variety of factors which mediate learners' language learning (Donato & McCormick, 1994; Gao, 2010; Gánem-Gutiérrez, 2006; Lantolf, 2000, 2006; Palfreyman, 2006). These researchers have greatly contributed to our understanding of the mediating factors upon language learning. However, none of them is found to have systematically categorised these mediators.

Among these attempts to examine the mediating factors, Lantolf (2000) and Gao (2010) are the two most influential representatives. In his review of the literature on second language learning as a mediated process, Lantolf (2000, p.80) segmented mediating factors into three categories: social mediation ("mediation by others in social interactions"), self mediation ("mediation by the self through private speech"), and artefact mediation. He subdivided social mediation into experts and novices, peer mediation and mediation through the first language (L1). In addition, he treated private speech and gesture observed in language learners' involvement in collaborative activity and directed to learners themselves as self mediation. He further subcategorised artefact mediation into portfolios, tasks and technology.

Lantolf's (2000) categorisation of mediational sources provides a systematic framework for our understanding of the influence of contextual factors upon language learning. However, his division is to some degree "arbitrary" (Lantolf, 2000, p.80). First, it fails to explicitly demonstrate the influence of social factors upon language learning. As human relationships and artefacts are socially constructed, they inevitably carry the values and attitudes towards language learning in a particular socio-cultural context where they are created. These values and attitudes refer to the learning discourses of the particular socio-cultural context (Gao, 2010). It is thus necessary to take social-cultural background into account while applying it into a particular context. Another shortcoming of his framework is that high stake examinations, one of the factors in the category of artefacts, are not included. As a matter of fact, high stake examinations play a critical role in language learning in many EFL environments such as in the East and Southeast Asian regions (Gao, 2010, Meyer, 2012).

Another researcher, Gao (2010), developed Lantolf's (2000) classification of mediating factors and proposed a three-taxonomy framework to analyse contextual influence upon the use of learning strategies among Chinese EFL learners. Drawing on previous literature (e.g., Donato & McCormick, 1994; Palfreyman, 2006), Gao (2010) divided mediating factors on the students' use of learning strategies into three categories: learning discourse (discursive resources), artefacts and material conditions with their associated cultural practices (material resources), and social agents (social resources).

According to Gao (2010), learning discourse tends to be the most important of the three mediating factors. In order to better understand what learning discourse refers to, it is necessary to examine the nature of discourse first. The term, discourse, has been widely used in applied linguistics research. It is conventionally taken as linguistic statements, either spoken or written, with a focus on supra-sentential language use for communication (Cook, 1989). This view of discourse, however, tends to take language as system in de-contextualised contexts, and ignore "the formation of background knowledge, or why and how a person comes to say certain things" (Pennycook, 1994, p.119).

Some researchers go beyond the traditional view and conceptualise discourse as ways of constructing knowledge and understanding the world (e.g., Fairclough, 1992, 2002; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). For these researchers, discourse is a form of social practice, which is related to specific historical and socio-cultural context (Liu, 2005; Tan & Miller, 2007). This socio-culturally oriented view of discourse is well represented in Kress' (1985, p.7) definition:

Discourses are systematically-organised sets of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution. Beyond that, they define, describe, and delimit what it is possible to say and not possible to say (and by extension—what to do or not to do) with respect to the area of concern of that institution, whether marginally or centrally. A discourse provides a set of possible statements about a given area, and organises and gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is to be talked about (Kress, 1985, p.7).

This socio-cultural perspective on discourse indicates that the language we use reflects our “ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrates words, acts, beliefs, attitudes, social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes” (Gee, 1996, p.127). This view also implies our “specific views” or “theories” of realities, (Fowler, et al., 1979, p.1), that is, our particular understandings of the social, cultural, and political world (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002; Pennycook, 1994). Further, relating language to other socially situated practices, this socio-cultural stance holds that language practice is culturally shaped (Tan & Miller, 2007) and socially determined “by the larger social and ideological conditions of society” (Pennycook, 1994, p.121). Therefore, a discourse can only be understood in the ongoing “interplay of social situation, action, actor, and social structures” of a society where it takes place (Meyer, 2001, p.21).

According to this socio-cultural viewpoint, language learning is a socio-culturally situated practice, which not only focuses on how an individual comes to master language skills, but also on how he or she makes meaningful use of the language associated with a group of people. The values and beliefs of the group are represented as part of the identity of the language learners within a particular context (Tan & Miller, 2007). Therefore, learning discourse can be defined as a discourse that reflects “the dominant values, attitudes and beliefs attached to learning a foreign language” (Gao, 2010, p.21) within a particular socio-cultural context, and may lead to changes in “language learners’ discourses about values, attitudes and beliefs in the learning process and, in turn, their strategy use” (p.21). Learners’ discourses, revealing learners’ values and motives in their learning of a foreign language, have an effect of empowering them to organise and control mental processes (Oxford, 2003b).

Similarly to learning discourse, artefacts and material conditions mediate learners’ language learning by exerting an influence on their beliefs and motivation and in turn on their strategy use (Gao, 2010). Some materials such as dictionaries or grammar books could potentially affect a student’s understanding of how a language works

(Palfreyman, 2006). This understanding might in turn regulate language learners' use of learning strategies. Learners with different perceptions about the materials may use strategies differently. The availability and accessibility of material and cultural artefacts may also affect learners' motivation, which might guide their selection of learning strategies (Gao, 2010). For instance, available novels or television channels might stimulate learners' motivation for learning a language and offer alternative opportunities for their practice of skills and communication (Palfreyman, 2006).

The third type of mediating factors is that of social agents who activate all the materials and artefacts in order to mediate language learning (Gao, 2010). These influential social agents include parents and other family members, teachers, peers, and friends. Parents and other family members may mediate learners' discourses about language learning, or provide material and psychological support to learners (Gao, 2006). In addition, the teacher's expertise in class will affect the student's language learning (Lantolf, 2000). The teacher's way of teaching in class to some degree shapes students' beliefs about language learning, their motives for learning a language and their use of strategies to learn a language. Assistance or inspiration may also be generated from the learner's interaction with their peers (Lantolf, 2000, 2006).

Among these various mediating factors identified in the literature, Gao's (2010) three-type taxonomy of the contextual factors upon L2 learning is of particular relevance to the present research. His taxonomy provides an instrument for obtaining a holistic picture of the influence of contextual factors upon language learning. It takes cultural factors into account by examining the learning discourse and high stake examinations in Chinese cultural context, which accommodates Lantolf's (2000) framework. As his research and the present study both focus on Chinese EFL learners from Mainland China, the two different groups of research participants share the same socio-cultural background. Therefore, Gao's (2010) taxonomy fits the purposes of the present study. However, Gao's (2010) framework is unable to reflect learners' exercise

of agency in regulating their learning throughout the learning process. In order to bridge this gap, a critical socio-cultural framework is adopted in this study (see Section 2.5.6).

2.5.3 Socio-cultural Studies of the Three Learner Variables Concerned

Despite the fact that there are relatively few studies of beliefs, motivation, and strategies making use of the socio-cultural approach, the studies examined (e.g., Gao, 2006, 2007, 2008a; Gu, 2009; Mercer, 2011a; Parks & Raymond, 2004; Yang & Kim, 2011) are indeed inspiring. Some representative studies adopting this socio-cultural approach are briefly reviewed in this section in order to capture the features of this approach in SLA research.

Yang and Kim (2011), adopting a socio-cultural perspective, conducted a qualitative study to explore the changes in two L2 learners' beliefs in study abroad (SA) contexts. They found that the learners' L2 beliefs were dynamic in nature, constantly changing in alignment with their learning goals and SA experiences. Based on their findings, they questioned the assumption that exposing to an SA context is an ideal way to learn an L2. Instead, they argued that "learners' belief changes can be seen as their agentic efforts to reconstruct the relationship between the learner and the L2 learning environment" (p.326). Their study further confirms the dynamic nature of learner beliefs.

In order to unfold the features of successful learners' beliefs about language learning, Mercer (2011a) interviewed two expert tertiary EFL learners at an Austrian university. She found that the two successful EFL learners held different beliefs, with one's beliefs commonly labelled as positive while the other's being negative. She however proposed not to view learners' beliefs as positive or negative. Instead, she suggested considering learners' beliefs in terms of appropriacy "for an individual's personal history, affordances, contexts and purpose" (p.70).

Parks & Raymond (2004) conducted a longitudinal study to investigate the influence of learning context upon the use of learning strategies among Chinese EAP learners in a

Canadian university. They found that these Chinese students' use of strategies was related to their experiences in interaction with native Canadian students in group work. For instance, they discovered that these Chinese students, pushed by their observation of how their native Canadian peers behaved in team work, tended to make more effort to prepare themselves. Based on their findings, they concluded that use of learning strategies is a complex situated phenomenon and related to personal identity.

Employing a critical discourse analysis approach, Gu (2009) investigated how two English learners in Mainland China constructed their motivation. She found that the participants' individual factors such as their personal values and ideas about language learning and their imagined identities of future existence had an influence upon the formation of their motivation. She also discovered that social realities, such as social discourses about education and language learning, and interpersonal relationships like peer relationships and teacher-student relationships, exerted an impact on shaping the participants' L2 motivation.

As shown in the above studies, learner beliefs, motivation, and strategies are socially and situationally related to contextual conditions. They are mediated by contextual discourses, artefacts (assessment methods), the learning environment, and important others like teachers, parents and peers. At the same time, they are also the result of the learners' internalisation of these external mediating influences. In a word, the above studies have indicated a dialectical relationship between cognition and context. That is, learner development in these three learner variables is the result of the interplay between learner agency and contextual realities.

In summary, the socio-cultural approach helps us understand the role of context in learners' beliefs, motivation and strategy use by examining learners' interaction with contextual discourses, material/cultural artefacts, and social agents. However, this advantage does not mean that socio-cultural theory is not without shortcomings. Indeed, it faces some challenges and criticisms.

2.5.4 Problematising Socio-cultural Research in SLA

As a new theory in SLA study which used to be dominated by a cognitive approach, socio-cultural theory has received some criticism (Lantolf, 2007; Zuengler & Miller, 2006). The first criticism of socio-cultural theory is that it fails to present a holistic view of language learning (Kasper, 1997; Long, 1997; Mitchell & Myles, 1998). Socio-cultural theorists argue that language learning/acquisition occurs through language use (Firth & Wagner, 1997). However, this socio-cultural conceptualisation of learning is opposed by cognitive researchers (Kasper, 1997; Mitchell & Myles, 1998). Mitchell and Myles (1998) assert that socio-cultural perspectives “do not offer any thorough or detailed view of the nature of language as a formal system” (p.161). Kasper (1997) claims that socio-cultural theory “has in fact very little to say about L2 acquisition” (p.310).

The criticism of socio-cultural theory also includes questioning whether it establishes an explicit connection between its claims and evidence (Mitchell & Myles, 1998). For instance, Donato and McCormick’s (1994) investigation of the impact of portfolio assessment upon language learners’ use of learning strategies is criticised for being unable to reveal the actual function of the portfolio in the participants’ use of learning strategies. It is unknown whether the portfolio only acted as an instrument to record their strategic development or it served as a catalyst to promote such a development (Gao, 2010). This failure therefore undermines the claim that the portfolio has a mediating effect. This method, as argued by Mitchell and Myles (1998), is unable to explicitly present a detailed and holistic view of language learning.

Another criticism of socio-cultural theory pertains to its over-emphasis on the influence of context on language learning (Gregg, 2006; Palfreyman, 2003; Wenden, 1998, 2002). As accused by Gregg (2006), the socio-political aspects of second language learning are overemphasised in socio-cultural perspectives. This excessive importance attached to contextual factors might be argued to undermine attention to the role of learners’ cognitive capacities, such as their beliefs and meta-cognitive knowledge (Wenden, 1998,

2002). This concern points to the issue of reaching a balance between context and agency while examining language learning from a socio-cultural perspective. The above criticism suggests that agency be positioned with due attention. On the other hand, researchers also caution against the other extreme of attaching too much importance to agency. This possibility might engender ‘an impoverished view of learners’ (Palfreyman, 2003).

In this thesis, several attempts are made to tackle these problems. In response to the criticism of socio-cultural theory’s incapability of presenting a holistic view of language learning, the present study proposes to adopt a mixed method. This mixed method aims to capture not only learners’ learning experiences, but also the mediating effect of the learning contexts (Palfreyman, 2003; Song & Kellogg, 2011). As regards the issue of reaching a balance between context and agency, the study aims to follow an integrative approach by combining these two concepts (Block, 2003; Lantolf, 2006; Larsen-Freeman, 2002). However, to combine these two concepts poses another question: how best to integrate agency and context? In order to answer this question, the present study establishes a critical understanding by drawing on the realist position on the relationship between agency and structure in social science. The next section will present the establishment of the dialectical relationship between agency and context.

2.5.5 Towards a Dialectical Relationship between Agency and Context

The establishment of a dialectical relationship between agency and context is based on the realist position on the agency-structure debate in social science. The realist sociological approach has been shown to be applicable to studies of applied linguistics (e.g., Sealey & Carter, 2004). In order to make the realist view on the agency-structure debate more explicitly relevant to socio-cultural research on SLA, it is necessary to delineate the two notions: agency (Section 2.5.5.1) and structure (Section 2.5.5.2).

2.5.5.1 Understanding Agency

With regard to the nature of agency, there have been numerous debates, with differentiating definitions reflecting varied theoretical perspectives (Mercer, 2012). Literature has indicated a commonly accepted definition for agency that takes it as an individual's socially mediated capacity to act in a socially constructed world (Ahearn, 2001; Gao, 2010; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001; Mercer, 2011b, 2012; Rogers & Wetzell, 2013; van Compernelle & Williams, 2012; Widdowson, 2004, etc). Notwithstanding a host of efforts to conceptualise learner agency, there are several aspects to be further clarified. Judging from the definition which is widely accepted in the literature, the following three questions need to be further addressed: 1) What does "capacity to act" mean? 2) What does "capacity to act" entail? And 3) What are the mediational factors on agency?

The first issue relates to the meaning of "capacity to act". There is vagueness within the term of "capacity to act". It is not to act aimlessly, but purposefully and reflectively (Rogers & Wetzell, 2013). Individuals act with conscious initiative to take charge of their learning by utilising the social environment to try out developing a second language with semiotic tools and by taking opportunities to use the target language (Hunter & Cooke, 2007; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001). Without the individual's purposeful and conscious intervention, the action will be meaningless (Giddens, 1984).

Another question is associated with the entailment of the concept of "capacity to act". The term of "capacity to act" means the ability to act differently (Hunter & Cooke, 2007) and to promote language learning (Widdowson, 2004). It also means the ability to act in relation to one's environment (van Compernelle & Williams, 2012) and to assign relevance and significance to things and events (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; van Lier, 2008). However, as cautioned by Mercer (2012, p.42), "the simplicity of the expression *capacity to act* also belies the complexity of what such latent capacity could involve". She argues that while viewing an individual's capacity to act as being socio-culturally, contextually and interpersonally mediated, it is to be understood in terms of a person's

intrapersonal capacity such as his or her physical, cognitive, affective, and motivational capacity to act. Therefore, she contends that “agency is not only concerned with what is observable but it also involves non-visible behaviours, beliefs, thoughts and feelings” (Mercer, 2012, p.42). Aligning with such ideas, she proposes to adopt Gao’s (2010) conceptualisation. Gao (2010) expands the concept of “capacity to act” in learners’ agency in association with another term, power.

Power is a precondition to agency (Giddens, 1984). It refers to an agent’s will or motives and beliefs in learning, as well as an agent’s capacity (Dörnyei, 2005b), “to achieve the desired and intended outcomes” (Giddens, 1984, p.14-15). In addition to intrapersonal capacity as proposed by Mercer (2012), the concept *capacity* consists of other three aspects: learners’ strategic learning capacity, their socio-cultural capacity and their micro-political capacity (Gao, 2010; Giddens, 1984). Strategic learning capacity refers to learners’ “knowledge of what strategies are needed to achieve their learning objectives” (Gao, 2010, p.78); socio-cultural capacity means learners’ “critical understanding of contextual discourses and realities” (p.79); micro-political capacity concerns learners’ “competence in manipulating contextual conditions and social processes within particular contexts to create a facilitative learning environment” (p.26).

The third issue pertains to the factors which might have a mediational effect on agency. Agency is “a relationship that is constantly co-constructed and renegotiated with those around the individual and with the society at large” (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001, p.148). This relationship is constructed through interaction with an array of socio-cultural forces which might comprise “education, language, community and resources” (Hunter & Cooke, 2007, p.79). In other words, the relationship operates “in and through a multi-layered social setting” (p.76).

In light of the socially and contextually constructed nature of agency, it is essential to further categorise the factors that might have a mediational effect upon agency. The mediational factors have been subdivided into the following types: “material and semiotic tools such as languages and literacies, pedagogical frameworks, and

conceptions of learning”, “relevant communities”, and “historical and emergent rules and divisions of labour that structure the ongoing activity” (Thorne, 2005, p.397). These factors constitute a set of contextual conditions that can be either enabling or constraining to agency (Hunter & Cooke, 2007). A student can get exposed to language input by means of “material and semiotic tools” (Thorne, 2005, p.397) in a certain language learning environment such as Internet, TV and movies, and through traditional resources such as dictionaries and textbooks (Hunter & Cooke, 2007). These learning conditions might be constituted of “values, viewpoints and ideologies”, thus probably having an impact upon learner agency (p.79). Learners’ previous and current language learning experiences might strongly influence their agency. Language teaching methodologies might either limit or foster opportunities for learners to operate their agency (Hunter & Cooke, 2007). While highlighting the observable contextual resources that might have mediated learner agency, there is a call for attention to the invisible forces which might be also influential (Mercer, 2012). For instance, vague ideal selves were found to have an impact on learners’ motivation for language learning in Lamb’s (2013) study of constraints on rural Indonesian young adolescent learners’ agency.

In summary, it is necessary to deem agency as the product of multi-componential, intrapersonal and socio-cultural processes. Agency is an individual’s purposeful initiatives and choices to take charge of actions in language learning. It entails the strategic learning, socio-cultural, and micro-political capacity (Gao, 2010) and intrapersonal capacity such as physical, cognitive, affective, and motivational capacity (Mercer, 2012). Further, agency is mediated by a variety of multi-layered socio-cultural factors and learners’ cognition (Lamb, 2013). It is in nature: a) contextually situated (socio-cultural, educational contexts; artefacts, affordances, and others); b) interpersonally situated (teachers, peers through collaboration and working together, and native speakers as models); c) temporally situated (previous experiences, current goals, and future self images); and d) intrapersonally situated (individual’s holistic life, physical, cognitive, affective, and motivational capacities to act) (Mercer, 2012).

The above discussion indicates a connection between agency and context. Learners, as agents, are “capable of exerting some degrees of control over the social relations in which one is enmeshed, which in turn implies the ability to transform those social relations to some degree” (Sewell, 1992, p.20). It is indicated that social relations form one of the aspects of social milieu where learners exercise agency (Bakewell, 2010). That is, agency is related to structure which will be introduced in the next section.

2.5.5.2 Understanding Structure

The notion of structure is difficult to address with an exact definition (Bakewell, 2010). “Structure operates in social scientific discourse as a powerful metonymic device, identifying some part of a complex social reality as explaining the whole. It is a word to conjure with in the social sciences. In fact, structure is less a precise concept than a kind of founding epistemic metaphor of social scientific -- and scientific -- discourse” (Sewell 1992, p.2, cited in Bakewell, 2010, p.1695). From Sewell’s (1992) point of view, structure is too elusive to specify.

In order to operationalise a definition for the current study, this paper resorts to Sealey and Carter’s (2004) comments on structure. According to them, structure refers to two broad senses in sociological studies: “normative institutions (the legal system, ideological system, and so on)” (Sealey & Carter, 2004, p.6) and “relational groupings (capitalist and proletariat, for example)” (p.7). Structures are “always ‘macro’ features of society” (p.7). However, when we examine the agency-structure debate, they suggest that structures should be considered to be ‘social institutions’ or ‘social relations’.

In light of the above considerations, structure is thus defined as the set of social structures or social relations “between the different elements of a social system or society” (Scott & Marshall, 2009, cited in Bakewell, 2010, p.1695). It describes the alignment and arrangement of the social and contextual elements of a society (Bakewell, 2010; Dean, Joseph, Roberts, & Wight, 2006; Layder, 1990; Scott & Marshall, 2009). This delineation of structure entails both tangible contextual elements and intangible

areas such as the social relationships between the different elements of a society. It thus echoes the socio-cultural conceptualisation of context in SLA (Section 2.5.1). This study follows the common ways in which socio-cultural researchers use this term. That is, it is used interchangeably with context, contextual realities, contextual conditions, or contextual resources (Donato & McCormick, 1994; Gao, 2010; Palfreyman, 2006).

Having established a working definition of structure, this thesis invites attention to two potential problems associated with this term (Bakewell, 2010). The first problem is about the tendency for structure to be seen as “rigid and beyond the reach of human agency” (Bakewell, 2010, p.1695). The other issue pertains to the problem that structure might be able to describe patterns of human interaction but is often unable to explicate “how those patterns change over time” (p.1695). These problems thus stimulate the debate over the way that agency-structure relationships can be used in understanding people’s social actions (for a detailed review of the agency-structure debate, see Sealey & Carter, 2004). This study adopts the realist position on the agency-structure relationship, which is introduced in the next section (Section 2.5.5.3).

2.5.5.3 Understanding Dialectical Relationship between Agency and Context

The delimitation of the above two concepts indicates that it is language learners’ agency that makes their learning purposeful, effortful, and strategic. However, the relationship between agency and context is not one-way only. According to the realist position, it is a dialectical orientation.

According to the realist stance, “structure and agency possess distinctive properties and power” (Sealey & Carter, 2004, p.10). Social structures pre-exist the individual (Archer, 1995; Bakewell, 2010). Social structures are also distinctive in being relatively enduring, and might provide an enduring stage for learners to act upon (Gao, 2010; Sealey & Carter, 2004). These features mean that social structures possess a power of enablement and constraint (Layder, 1985; Sealey & Carter, 2004). As for agency, it has such distinguishing properties and powers as “self-consciousness, reflection, intentionality,

cognition, emotionality and so on” (Sealey & Carter, 2004, p.11). Additionally, social structures have emergent properties, which are the ‘outcomes of agency which “emerge” or pass a developmental threshold, beyond which they exercise their own causal powers, independently of the agency which produced them’ (Parker, 2000, p.73, cited in Bakewell, 2010, p.1696).

Critical realists claim a dialectical relationship between agency and structure (e.g., Archer, 1982; Bakewell, 2010). According to critical realists, the anteriority of structures makes it possible for structures to function as ‘structure conditions’. These structure conditions then have an influence, either enabling or constraining, over subsequent ‘social interaction’. During social interaction process, an individual’s action might be further enabled or constrained, but not determined by structural conditions (Archer, 1982; Bakewell, 2010). Instead, the individual may act with his or her own agency. At the same time, new properties of structure will emerge during social interactions (Carter & New, 2004). These new emergent properties of structures might either enable or constrain the individual’s exercise of power (Gao, 2010), which might in turn result in the modification of the previous structural properties or in the introduction of new ones (Archer, 1982, 1995; Bakewell, 2010).

In a word, social structures “exist and have effects independently of our knowledge of them” (Carter & New, 2004, cited in Bakewell, 2010, p.1696). However, this idea does not mean that social structures are independent of human activity (Archer, 1995; Bakewell, 2010). This critical realist view indicates that agency is influenced by structure but not determined by it, and that agency has a tendency to impact on structure. The two co-exist in a dialectical relationship. This realist position is insightful to the current research in that it provides a fruitful theoretical avenue for studies in social sciences and applied linguistics (Bakewell, 2010; Sealey & Carter, 2004).

In terms of SLA, the above conceptualisation of agency provides a framework to understand learners’ beliefs, motivation, and strategies in language learning, while the delineation of context offers a framework for understanding the mediating effects of

contextual conditions on these three learner variables. The dialectical relationship between agency and context contributes to the exploration of the dynamic nature of beliefs, motivation, and strategies and their interaction with contextual realities in language learning process. In order to better understand the dynamic nature of learner beliefs, motivation, and strategies, the next section will introduce the establishment of a critical realist socio-cultural framework for the current study (Section 2.5.6).

2.5.6 Establishing a Socio-cultural Framework for the Current Study

The present study aims to extend previous research in socio-cultural theory and SLA by exploring a socio-cultural approach to BLL, MLL, and LLS research. The review of literature above has revealed that human activity is directed toward some object or motive for the purposes of generating an outcome and is mediated by artefacts and community under certain contextual conditions (Engeström, 1987). The development of human activity reflects a dynamic interaction between agency and context. This section aims to establish a critical socio-cultural framework for the current study. Before introducing the proposed framework, it is necessary to provide a brief review of the literature based on which this framework is informed. The relevant literature is associated with three researchers: Gao (2010), Lamb (2013), and Layder (1993, 2006).

Layder (1993, 1997, and 2006) suggests a layered framework for doing social research from a critical realism perspective (Carlsson, 2003). In his research map of human action and social organisation, he proposes to disentangle the multi-layered structure of society into four elements: self, situated activity, setting, and context. Self refers to an individual's biographical experiences (Layder, 1997, 2006). Self is also "where learner agency and power are located" (Gao, 2010, p.30). Situated activity focuses on the dynamics of social interaction. Setting is about the immediate forms of social organisation, while context refers to the macro social forms (Layder, 1993, 2006). By examining these different layers of structure, Layder (1997) argues that it is practical to analyse issues of agency and context.

This research map has proven effective in studies of applied linguistics (Gao, 2010; Lamb, 2013). Drawing on Layder's (1993) research map, Gao (2010) proposed a realist socio-cultural framework to analyse the strategic development of a group of Mainland Chinese students learning English in a Hong Kong university. He found that his participants' use of learning strategies was related to the specific contextual realities both in Mainland China and Hong Kong. Contextual elements like institutional learning settings, artefacts, important others such as parents, teachers, and peers, and the traditional learning discourse of the macro context contributed to the participants' strategic engagement. At the same time, he discovered that the participants' strategic development was also related to the exercise of their agency (capacity to act, will, motives and beliefs). Based on his findings, Gao (2010) argues that the use of learning strategies is the result of interplay between learner agency and context.

More recently, Lamb (2013) adapted Layder's (1993) research map in order to show how different levels of context constrained rural Indonesian EFL learners' L2 motivation. He found that the Indonesian EFL learners' ideal selves were vague, which might be partly due to their young age. Evidence comes from the other layers of context. He further discovered that the learners' vagueness of ideal selves might be caused by little support from their parents at the level of situated activity. The inadequate L2 learning experiences and expensive schooling at the level of setting were also found to constrain the learners' motivation. Additionally, their geographic distance from urban areas provided the participants with very limited exposure, and less immediate need for career or education opportunities through English discouraged the learners from improving their English proficiency.

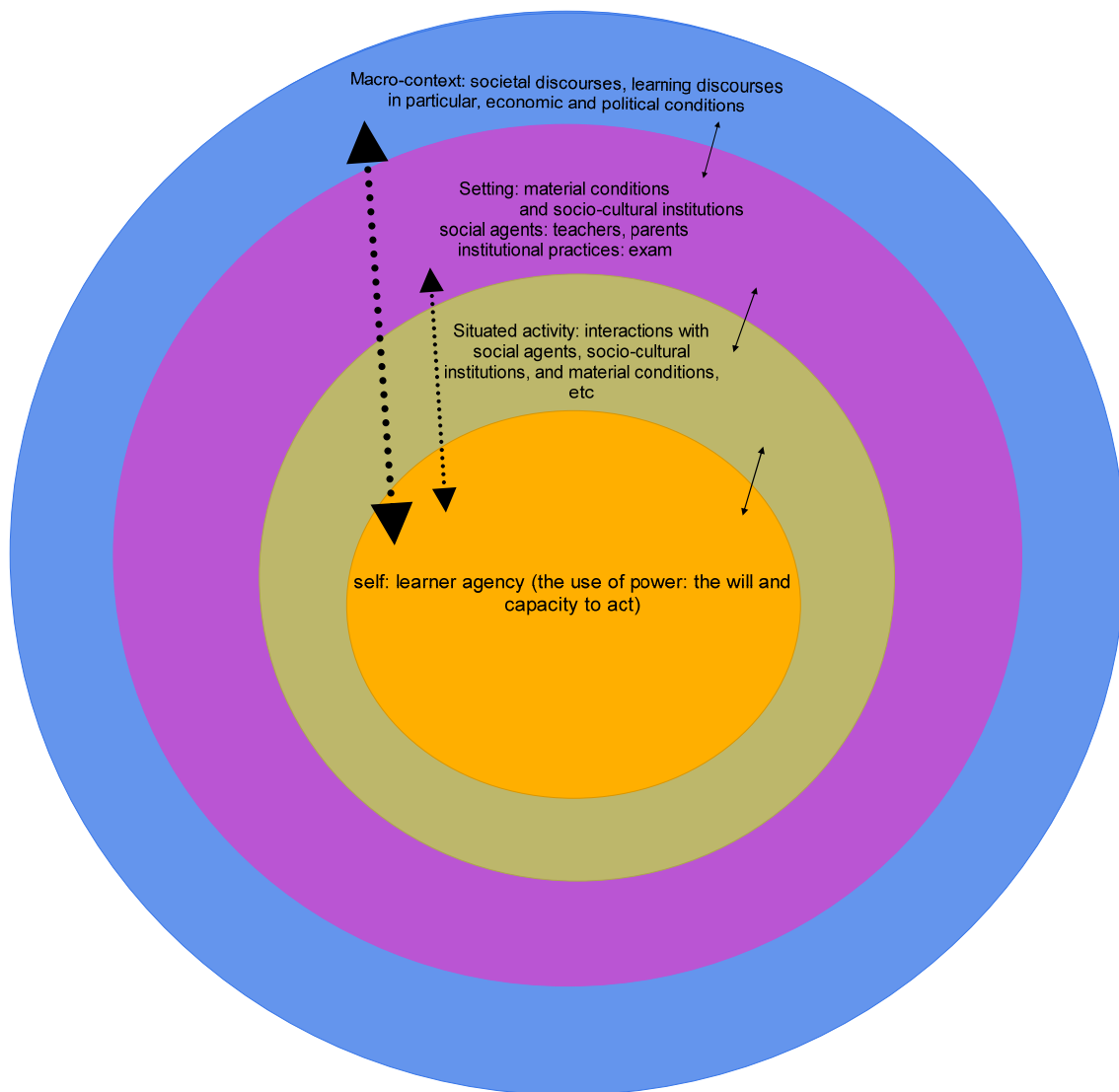
Informed by these previous studies (Gao, 2010; Lamb, 2013; Layder, 1993) and the realist position on the agency-structure relationship (Archer, 1982; Bakewell, 2010; Carter & New, 2004), the present research attempts to propose a critical socio-cultural framework (Figure 2.1) below. It aims to understand the dynamic disposition of beliefs, motivation and strategies by incorporating agency, mediation, contextual conditions,

and their dialectical relationship in a socio-cultural perspective into Layder's (1993, 2006) research map.

The reasons for drawing on these studies are as follows: firstly, the socio-cultural perspective has not received adequate attention in SLA (Lantolf, 2006). Secondly, it represents a critical realist understanding of the dialectical relationship between agency and context (Bakewell, 2010). Additionally, it has proven effective in accounting for the interplay between agency and structure in empirical studies (Gao, 2010; Lamb, 2013). More importantly, the framework in this study is used as an attempt to extend Gao's (2010) research as he calls for more research with an inclusion of other elements such as learners' motivation and beliefs in learner agency (Gao, 2010). The current study thus tries to combine beliefs and motivation, two of the most critical parts of learner agency, together with learning strategies, with an objective of examining the interplay of agency and context in the language learning process.

The proposed analytical framework includes the following four elements: context, setting, situated activity, and self (Figure 2.1). *Self* focuses on learners' biographical experiences (Layder, 2006). It is also the source of learner agency, which includes not only learners' will (motives and beliefs) but also their capacity to act in the learning process, such as strategic learning capacity, socio-cultural capacity, and micro-political capacity (Gao, 2010; Mercer, 2012). *Situated activity* refers to learners' social interactions with other layers at the different levels of contextual resources including important others, artefacts and material conditions in immediate learning settings and cultural, economical, political and social situations in the macro context (Layder, 2006). *Setting* relates to the immediate language learning environment including physical learning conditions, artefacts and learning materials and the social relationships learners form with mediating agents such as teachers, peers, and parents (Layder, 1997). *Context* refers to traditional discourses about language learning, cultural, economic and political conditions (Gao, 2010; Layder, 2006).

Figure 2.1 The Socio-cultural Framework for the Current Study



Adapted from Gao, 2010; Lamb, 2013; Layder, 1993, 2006

In this framework, the contextual resources at the levels of setting and context function as the enduring stage for the learners to act upon (Archer, 1982; Bakewell, 2010). These structure conditions exert influence, either enabling or constraining (Bakewell, 2010), upon the learners' exercise of power in their agency which includes their beliefs, motivation, and capacity to act (Mercer, 2012). During their interaction with the different elements of contextual resources, learners might internalise these contextual influences, in response to which they might either modify or generate new beliefs, motivation, and strategies. This newly developed agency might in turn engender new emergent properties in the contextual realities, which might lead to learners' new

understanding of the arrangement of the different layers of the contextual elements (Archer, 1982, 1995; Bakewell, 2010; Carter & New, 2004; Gao, 2010).

This framework is thus adopted to explore how Chinese EFL learners will adapt their beliefs, motivation and strategies when they make the transition from traditional EFL contexts to an EMI setting in Mainland China. This framework will be helpful in demonstrating how language learning is directed by their objectives and motivation and how it is mediated by learning discourses (values, attitudes towards and beliefs about the target language within a particular context), artefacts (assessment methods, learning materials) and the learning environment and conditions, and social agents (Gao, 2010; Lamb, 2013). This framework will also shed light on this study's argument that the development of learners' beliefs, motivation, and strategies is the result of the interplay between learner agency and context.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has reviewed research on the three learner variables of beliefs, motivation, and strategies. It has also criticised the over-emphasis on cognition and methodological issues in previous studies of these three learner variables. Based on a critical review of the relevant literature, it has justified the necessity of adopting a critical socio-cultural approach to the exploration of the dynamicity of learner development in terms of beliefs, motivation, and strategies. Then, it has discussed mediation, a core component of socio-cultural theory, and reviewed the relevant research on the three learner variables from a socio-cultural perspective. It has argued that a critical realist socio-cultural framework should be adopted in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the interplay between learner agency and context in the process of learner development in terms of beliefs, motivation, and strategy use.

Having presented the review of relevant literature and the theoretical framework established for this study, the following chapter will describe the research methodology,

including the research methods adopted, the research context, the participants involved, and the instrumentation adopted.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter elaborates the research design that was adopted in the study. It first describes the research methodology that this study has followed (Section 3.2). It next details the design of the instrumentation for data collection (Section 3.3) including questionnaires (Section 3.3.1) and interviews (Section 3.3.2). This is followed by a description of the research setting where the study was located (Section 3.4). This chapter then presents the research procedures followed (Section 3.5) which includes research questions, participants, and data collection. The chapter also details the procedures taken to analyse the quantitative and qualitative data (Section 3.6). Finally, it describes the steps taken to enhance trustworthiness of the study (Section 3.7).

3.2 Research Methodology

This section starts with an introduction of the methodological philosophy of the study, which is followed by a discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research methods respectively. Drawing on this discussion, the importance of a mixed method will be highlighted for the purpose of triangulating the collected data in order to obtain an in-depth interpretation of the research findings.

3.2.1 Methodological Philosophy of the Study

This research, based on the socio-cultural theory, intends to longitudinally explore the participants' experiences in learning English at the EMI University. The longitudinal nature of this study emanated from an ethnographic epistemology. Ethnography is based on the first-hand experiences of social action within a particular context (Pole & Morrison, 2003) and has been drawing increasing attention in language learning research (Benson & Nunan, 2005). The purpose of ethnographic research is to gather and interpret information about the beliefs and meanings of social interactions, the

reality of the lived experiences of social actors, within a particular context (Pole & Morrison, 2003).

Conventionally, ethnography is conceived to be a range of interpretive qualitative methods because generating ethnographic knowledge requires the researcher to immerse themselves in the context under research in order to initiate interactions and observations of the everyday life and unearth a “thick description” (Geertz, 1988). The emphasis on the value of a “thick description” refers to what an interpretive approach focuses on (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). This “thick description” of an interpretive approach helps illuminate the meaningful social practices in a holistic manner (Tilly, 2006). From this perspective, ethnographic research is therefore interpretive and longitudinal in essence. Based on the above epistemological considerations, an interpretative qualitative approach, which focuses on the construction of meanings of a phenomenon within a particular context, is needed in terms of methodology.

As the present study plans to investigate the participants’ learning experiences at an EMI university in Mainland China, much attention is thus paid to the contextual conditions within this particular context. However, given the importance attached to these contextual conditions, due consideration should be taken into the potential problems in interpretive qualitative research. One of the major problems is that ethnographic research is claimed to be so concerned with the meanings and the interactions these meanings are negotiated that it ignores how such negotiations take place in a broader context (Gains, 2011). A further problem is that ethnographic research requires researchers to involve themselves in the research process, spending time interacting and observing, thus making this engagement time-consuming (Gains, 2011). Usually, a typical ethnography is assumed to “take a year in order for a full calendar of events to take place” (Gains, 2011, p.158). In addition, researchers’ immersion into the context may encounter challenges in producing a neutral (objective) analysis of the collected data relevant to the participants’ actual lived experiences

(Gains, 2011). That is, researchers might subjectively interpret research participants' accounts of their lived experiences.

Given the aforementioned problems in ethnographic research, there is therefore a need to take into account context where reality is socially constructed by and between the persons who experience it (Darlaston-Jones, 2007). By taking into consideration the context, it is not only possible for researchers to understand how the persons, as social agents, actively interpret the contextual conditions, but also for them to examine how context leads to these social agents' interpretations (Cohen et al., 2000; Corson, 1997).

Therefore, researchers are advised to provide openness in their accounts of data generation and explicitness in data interpretation; they are also suggested to draw on a variety of techniques to triangulate the ethnographic data (Rhodes, 2005). The present study thus embraces a mixed method that integrates qualitative and quantitative research. It will use questionnaires to collect quantitative data to obtain a snapshot of the participants' beliefs, motivation, and strategy use in English study. It will also employ semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative data in order to acquire an in-depth understanding of and to further interpret the reasons for them to develop their beliefs, motivation, and strategy use.

3.2.2 Quantitative Research

Quantitative method used to dominate research on education in the 19th century (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Based on the philosophy of positivism and realist assumptions, quantitative research stresses numerical quantification (Bryman, 2001; Porter, 2007). It follows strict rules, procedures and statistical approaches in data collection and analysis (Schedler & Mudde, 2010). It is, in nature, "obtrusive and controlled, objective, generalisable, outcome-oriented" and "assumes the existence of 'facts' which are somehow external to and independent of the observer or researcher" (Nunan, 2002, p.3). In terms of research methods, it usually employs random sample surveys to collect data and analyses the data through statistical techniques (Schedler & Mudde, 2010).

Quantitative approaches have been used in many studies on beliefs, motivation, and strategies in past decades by means of standardised instruments (Dörnyei, 2007). Their popularity comes from the advantage of measuring a group of subjects' responses to a certain number of questions (Patton, 1990). That is, quantitative approaches have the merit of providing data from larger and more representative samples (Hartley & Chesworth, 2000). In addition, using statistics in quantitative research can improve the validity and reliability of the research (Schedler & Mudde, 2010).

However, quantitative research has its disadvantages. The results produced in using a quantitative method may be too general, because it is impossible to take account of "the subjective variety of an individual life" (Dörnyei, 2007, p.35). It is also criticised for its propensity to reduce complex phenomena to the lowest common denominator in an attempt to justify generalisation and causal inferences (Hantrais, 2005). Therefore, quantitative methods are claimed to lack depth in understanding certain phenomena under investigation (Hohenthal, 2006). Considering the drawbacks of quantitative methods, it is necessary to integrate qualitative methods into the study.

3.2.3 Qualitative Research

Different from quantitative research, qualitative research is based on the philosophy of constructivism which argues that knowledge is actively constructed (Porter, 2007). Qualitative research has become popular among researchers in social science in recent decades (Roulston, 2010).

Qualitative methods are relative, subjective, ungeneralisable, and process-oriented in nature (Nunan, 2002). Small-scale, being holistic, researcher involvement and emergent design are its major characteristics (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Qualitative research uses purposive sampling, interviews, diaries, and classroom observation to collect data, and analyses data using social or anthropological research techniques (Carvalho & White, 1997).

As far as studies on individual differences are concerned, qualitative research is more useful for conducting an in-depth investigation among language learners. Participants can offer in-depth responses to questions about how they have constructed or understood their language learning experiences, from which researchers can thus get more information about the phenomenon under investigation. Qualitative research, therefore, offers considerable potential for researchers to understand the key issues under investigation (Cassell & Symon, 2011). For instance, qualitative research is claimed to be more sensitive in exploring the dynamic nature of motivation in the L2 learning process compared to quantitative research, because of which it has been recommended that it should be more often used (Ushioda, 2001).

However, qualitative research has its disadvantages. It is criticised for being too context-specific, unrepresentative (Hantrais, 2005). The limited number of participants involved in qualitative studies might be argued to undermine the generalisability of the research results to a larger population (Jackson II, Drummond & Camara, 2007).

Both the merits and demerits of quantitative and qualitative studies discussed above necessitate the integration of these two methods. Therefore, a mixed method which combines these two methods seems worthy of consideration for a study such as the present one. The next section considers the advantages of a mixed approach.

3.2.4 Mixed-Method Research

Given the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative methods and quantitative methods respectively, a synergy of these two methods within a single study is increasingly advised (e.g., Bryman, 2007; Reams & Twale, 2008).

The employment of a mixed method has a number of advantages (Brent & Kraska, 2010; Greene, 2005; Reams & Twale, 2008). Through the use of quantitative and qualitative tools, a mixed approach can uncover more information, increase corroboration of the data, and yield less biased and more accurate conclusions (Reams & Twale, 2008), thus

providing an enhanced understanding of the questions under investigation (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008). Secondly, mixed methods research might reasonably overcome the limitations of purely quantitative and purely qualitative approaches (Gelo, Braakmann & Benetka, 2008). In other words, mixed methods research “utilises the strengths of one method to overcome weaknesses in the other” (Brent & Kraska 2010, p.419). A counterbalance of strengths and weaknesses of each individual technique is thus achieved (Reams & Twale, 2008).

The advantages of the mixed method just discussed might account for its popular application both in social sciences and SLA (Dörnyei, 2007). The current study thus integrates quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method provides a general understanding of the learners’ beliefs, motivation, and strategy use and the qualitative method provides detailed and in-depth insights into these learner variables.

Having presented the research methodology in general terms, the next section will centre on the design and development of the research instruments that were adopted in the study. These instruments include questionnaires and interviews.

3.3 Instrumentation

Before describing the instrumentation of this study, it is necessary to introduce how this study rationalises its research methodologies in response to the criticisms of research on BLL (Section 2.2.2), MLL (Section 2.3.2), LLS (Section 2.4.2), and the socio-cultural approach to SLA study (Section 2.5.4).

Criticisms of the three variables centre on conceptualisational and methodological issues. On the conceptualisational issue, existing conceptualisations for these three variables have been criticised for being dominated by the cognitive perspective which takes these variables as static in nature and fails to take into account contextual factors. In response to these criticisms, this study has proposed to adopt a socio-cultural

approach (Section 2.5.5) and established a working definition for these variables respectively (Sections 1.6.1, 1.6.2, and 1.6.3).

Secondly, this study has recognised the shortcomings of the socio-cultural approach to SLA study, which is questioned both by cognitive researchers and socio-cultural advocates (Section 2.5.4). In order to compensate for the disadvantages of a socio-cultural approach, this research has proposed to follow a critical realist socio-cultural framework which integrates mediation, a central concept of socio-cultural theory, and a critical realist position on learner agency and structure (Section 2.5.5).

On the methodological issues, existing studies have been mainly criticised for being dominated by the utilisation of questionnaires. The use of questionnaires is claimed to be problematic in accurately representing and measuring these variables and in guaranteeing an in-depth picture of them. Questionnaires are also criticised for failing to capture the dynamic nature of these variables and for ignoring the contextual influences on them. These criticisms mainly point to the disadvantages of a quantitative method. In response to these shortcomings, this study proposes to adopt a mixed method (Section 3.2.4) combining advantages of both quantitative (Section 3.2.2) and qualitative (Section 3.2.3) studies.

Given that questionnaires have an advantage of capturing a snapshot of learners' BLL, MLL, and LLS, this longitudinal study proposes to utilise them to obtain an understanding of the disposition of these three learner variables at the two stages under investigation in order to identify potential changes in the variables. In addition, because interviews can provide a thick description of learners' lived experiences, this study employs semi-structured interviews in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the complexity of these variables. Through using semi-structured interviews, this study can reveal how language learners develop their BLL, MLL, and LLS during their interactions with contextual realities.

Apart from the above techniques taken to respond to the criticisms of research on BLL, MLL, and LLS and to the shortcoming of a socio-cultural approach to SLA study, other measures are also taken into account for the purpose of further guaranteeing the trustworthiness of this study (see Section 3.7).

3.3.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are the most prevalent instruments in quantitative methodology (Dörnyei, 2003; Rasinger, 2008). In contrast to qualitative methods such as interviews, questionnaires are economical, quick and efficient (Brown, 2002). A researcher can obtain a great deal of high quality information within a short time by administering a questionnaire to a cohort of participants (Dörnyei, 2007; Rasinger, 2008). Another advantage of questionnaires is that they require less personal investment, compared to what is needed for interviewing the same number of participants (Dörnyei, 2003). However, questionnaires have some limitations. For instance, researchers may have limited control over the administration of the questionnaires. As cautioned by Dörnyei (2003), the respondents may leave out or misread some questions.

Though questionnaires are widely used in applied linguistics, it is not easy to design a questionnaire that can yield sufficient reliability and validity (Dörnyei, 2007; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). In his theorisation of questionnaires, Dörnyei (2007) elaborates some common issues to be considered for designing an effective questionnaire. In the present study, a questionnaire, concerning students' beliefs, motivation, and strategies in learning English, was developed, piloted, and finally implemented. When it was being designed, particular attention was paid to issues concerning the clarity of questionnaire items, item formats, reliability and validity of the questionnaires.

Attention was first paid to the clarity of the questionnaire items. When the items were written, efforts were made to avoid “loaded words” and “leading questions” by using a pilot study (Section 3.3.1.5). Attention was also paid to the item formats including closed-ended and open-ended item types (Dörnyei, 2007). The selection of item formats

depends on the research questions and the intended methods of data analyses. Closed-ended types were adopted in this study because a large cohort of research respondents was targeted and it was planned to analyse the collected data using statistical techniques. To examine the extent to which each item correlated with other items and with the whole scale of the instrument, internal consistency checks were performed to test the reliability of the questionnaire. To guarantee the validity of the questionnaire, four students were interviewed in order to seek feedback about the questionnaire in the pilot study.

This section presents the process of designing and developing the questionnaire used in this study, including the construction, piloting and finalising of the questionnaire.

3.3.1.1 Questionnaires Used in Research on BLL

Questionnaires have been widely used to investigate learners' beliefs (e.g., Amuzie & Winke, 2009; Chan, 2001; Horwitz, 1987, 1988; Riley, 2009; M. Wong, 2010). As already noted in the literature review (Chapter 2), Horwitz (1987, 1988) developed an instrument "Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI)" to measure learners' beliefs. The BALLI includes the following five categories: the difficulty of language learning, foreign language aptitude, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, and motivation and expectation.

Questionnaires, the BALLI in particular, have been widely used to assess learner beliefs in foreign or second language learning contexts (Amuzie & Winke, 2009; Bernat, 2006; Yang, 1999). Bernat (2006) used questionnaires to investigate EAP learners' beliefs in the Australian context. Amuzie and Winke (2009) explored the effects of study abroad upon learners' beliefs by means of a questionnaire survey. Chan (2001) carried out a questionnaire survey to explore Hong Kong tertiary students' readiness for autonomous learning, including their attitudes towards teacher and learner roles. Yang (1999) used questionnaires to study Chinese EFL learners' beliefs and the relationships with learning strategies in Taiwan. These studies have proven that questionnaires are a useful

tool for investigating BLL in various learning contexts including both EFL and EMI contexts (Bernat, 2006; Chan, 2001; Yang, 1999). They have also confirmed that questionnaires can be used to explore the dynamic nature of BLL (Amuzie & Winke, 2009). In a word, questionnaires are popular and reliable in BLL research.

In the design of the questionnaire used in this study, we have drawn on Horwitz (1987, 1988) and Chan (2001). The items concerning learners' beliefs about the difficulty (Items B1, B2, B7, and B13) and the nature (Items B3, B4, B5, B6, B8, and B9) of language learning were adapted from Horwitz's (1987, 1988) BALLI. The five items regarding learners' autonomous beliefs (Items B10, B11, B12, B14, and B15) were adapted from Chan (2001). The selection of these items is based on the following considerations: firstly, the BALLI has proven reliable in investigating EFL learners' BLL. It has been widely used in the Chinese cultural context (e.g., Peacock, 1999, 2001; Yang, 1999). More importantly, these items are relevant to the purpose of this study. This study aims to investigate a group of Chinese EFL learners' EAP study experiences at an EMI university in Mainland China. This EMI University is distinguished from traditional EFL schooling environments in a number of ways. English is learned for academic purposes (EAP) at the EMI University, which is different from the College English in traditional EFL universities where English is learned for general purposes (EGP). This transition might create difficulties for the students, and might influence their beliefs about the nature of language learning. In addition, the chosen EMI University gives a great deal of freedom to its students in their study, which means autonomy is of particular importance. Therefore, we decided to focus on the participants' beliefs about difficulty of, the nature of and the appropriate level of autonomy in language learning.

3.3.1.2 Questionnaires Used in Research on MLL

Questionnaires are also widely used in research on motivation for language learning in a variety of contexts. Of particular relevance to the present study are Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou (2004, 2007), Gardner (1985), Dörnyei (1994), and Kyriacou and Zhu (2008).

Gardner (1985) proposed an integrative-instrumental dichotomy to approach L2 motivation from a macro perspective of the social and educational context. Dörnyei (1994) expanded the Gardnerian theory of L2 motivation by taking micro foreign language classroom settings into account.

Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou (2004, 2007) attempted to characterise Chinese university students' English language learning motivation through a 30-item questionnaire. They factor-analysed their participants' responses and came up with the following seven types of motivation (Section 2.3.1.1): 1) intrinsic interest; 2) immediate achievement; 3) learning situation; 4) going abroad; 5) social responsibility; 6) individual development; and 7) information medium.

Kyriacou and Zhu (2008) employed a questionnaire and an interview to explore the perceptions of senior high school pupils in Shanghai regarding their motivation towards learning English and the influence of important others (parents, teachers, and peers) on their motivation. Their findings indicate that the pupils' motivation for learning English was dominated by life and career-based reasons rather than intrinsic or integrative reasons, and that the influence of important others was perceived as being positive but small, with teachers being viewed as the most influential.

These resources informed the present study in the following ways: firstly, Gardner's (1985) integrative-instrumental dichotomy has proven effective in identifying Chinese EFL learners' instrumental orientations in learning English (e.g., Chen, Warden & Chang, 2005; Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou, 2004, 2007; Warden & Lin, 2000). Secondly, Dörnyei's (1994) expanded model of L2 motivation focuses on the immediate learning situation in foreign language classroom settings, which is directly relevant to the present study. The present study aims to examine the impact of the immediate learning situation on Chinese EFL learners' motivation at an EMI university in Mainland China. Thirdly, Gao, Zhao, Cheng and Zhou (2004) provides a systematic categorisation of Chinese EFL learners' motivation and Kyriacou and Zhu (2008) highlights the influence of important others. These two studies demonstrate similarities with the classic

instrumental–integrative model (Gardner, 1985) and the expanded models (Dörnyei, 1994), and provides empirical evidence for the way Chinese EFL learners are motivated.

In light of the purpose of the current study, we decided to follow Gao, Zhao, Cheng and Zhou's (2004) model of Chinese EFL learners' L2 motivation. However, as the present study mainly focuses on the immediate learning situation at the chosen EMI University, one category in Gao, Zhao, Cheng and Zhou's (2004) model, social responsibility, has not been included. The exclusion of this category was also supported from interviews with the respondents at the piloting stage (Section 3.3.1.5). As a result, six categories were adapted from their model: intrinsic interest (Items M1 and M2), immediate achievement (Items M3 and M4), going abroad (Items M5 and M6), individual development (Items M7, M8, and M9), and information medium (Items M10 and M11), and learning situation (Items M14, M15, M16, M17, M18, and M19). In addition, a category of important others (Items M12 and M13), as informed by Kyriacou and Zhu (2008), was added to the instrument.

3.3.1.3 Questionnaires Used in Research on LLS

Questionnaires are also a frequent instrument employed to study learning strategies of L2 learners in a variety of contexts (e.g., Baker & Boonkit, 2004; Gan, 2009; Gan, Humphreys & Hamp-Lyons, 2004; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Ni, Chatupote & Teo, 2008; Oxford, 1990; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Rao, 2006; Yu & Wang, 2009).

The following studies are of particular relevance to the design of the questionnaire for present research (Baker & Boonkit, 2004; Gan, 2009; Oxford, 1990; Yu & Wang, 2009). Oxford (1990) designed a questionnaire, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), to assess learners' use of language learning strategies in the following six categories: memory strategies, cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, social strategies, and affective strategies. SILL has been widely used in later L2 strategy research.

Gan (2009) combined questionnaires with semi-structured interviews in order to compare language learning strategies among Chinese EFL students in Mainland China and Hong Kong. He discovered that institutional contexts and social environments could best account for the differences in these two cohorts of students' use of learning strategies in learning English. Similarly, Yu and Wang (2009) employed SILL together with an interview to investigate Chinese secondary EFL students' use of LLS from a socio-cultural perspective. They found that contextual factors such as learning environment, classroom practice and assessment had a strong influence upon those students' deployment of learning strategies. Baker and Boonkit (2004), using questionnaires, investigated learning strategies employed by undergraduate students at a Thai university studying EAP reading and writing courses. Based on their research results, they called for more attention to be paid to the use of learning strategies of EFL learners in Asian EAP contexts.

These studies are informative to this research in that they have proved that questionnaires, the SILL in particular, are reliable in studying EFL learners' learning strategies in both EFL and EMI contexts (Baker & Boonkit, 2004; Gan, 2009; Oxford, 1990). They have also confirmed that questionnaires are compatible with a socio-cultural framework to examine Chinese EFL learners' learning strategies (Yu & Wang, 2009). Therefore, in this study we decided to follow Oxford's (1990) six-taxonomy of learning strategies. After an interview with the participants at the piloting studying stage (Section 3.3.1.5), 30 items distributed across six categories of learning strategies were designed.

The six categories comprise memory strategies (Items S1, S2, S3, S4, and S5), cognitive strategies (Items S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, and S11), compensation strategies (Items S12, S13, and S14), meta-cognitive strategies (Items S15, S16, S17, S18, S19, S20, S21, and S22), affective strategies (Items S23, S24, S25, and S26), and social strategies (Items S27, S28, S29, and S30).

In summary, the aforementioned studies have indicated that the questionnaire is an effective tool for investigating learners' beliefs, motivation, and strategies in language learning. The questionnaire adopted in the present study has been informed by these previous studies.

3.3.1.4 Construct of the Questionnaire for the Study

Informed by previous studies and guided by the research purpose of the present study, a questionnaire concerning students' beliefs, motivation, and strategies was developed. It includes three main categories: beliefs, motivation, and strategies.

The BLL construct consists of three subcategories: 1) difficulty of language learning (perceptions about the difficulty of learning a foreign language in general); 2) nature of language learning (perceptions about a wide range of issues concerning the nature of learning a foreign language); and 3) autonomy in language learning (perceptions about readiness to be autonomous in learning a foreign language).

The MLL construct comprises the following seven subcategories: 1) intrinsic interest (fondness for the target language, its culture and language learning in general); 2) immediate achievement (short-term goals in learning English, that is, immediate external achievements such as obtaining high scores in tests and examinations, and a certificate or a degree); 3) going abroad (desire for opportunities for higher education or travelling abroad); 4) individual development (desire to improve one's ability and social status in future development); 5) information medium (tendency to view the learning of English as a means to acquire information); 6) important others (influence of important others on one's motivation for learning English); and 7) learning situation (constituents of the learning environment comprising quality of teaching, teachers and teaching materials, and affiliation with learning groups).

The LLS construct encompasses six subcategories: 1) memory strategies (strategies used to store and retrieve new information); 2) cognitive strategies (strategies used to

understand and produce language); 3) compensation strategies (strategies used to compensate for lack of knowledge in learning a language); 4) meta-cognitive strategies (strategies used to control cognition); 5) affective strategies (strategies used to regulate emotions); and 6) social strategies (strategies used to build social interactions with others).

3.3.1.5 Piloting of the Questionnaire

A piloting process is assumed to be of pivotal importance to research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). It helps improve the validity of a research study. Considering the potential positive effects upon the planned study, a pilot study was administered before the main study was carried out. The purpose of the pilot study was to predict any potential problems such as leading questions and loaded or ambiguous words in the design of the research instruments and to check the clarity of the statements in the questionnaire, thus ensuring the validity and reliability of the study (Dörnyei, 2007).

The pilot study was conducted on four second-year students in the August of 2011. The four participants were studying in Finance at the EMI University. They were briefed at the outset about the aim of the pilot study and the purpose of the research. Then, they were asked to answer the questionnaire within a time ranging from 8-15 minutes. After completing the questionnaire, they were asked to comment on the content in order to see whether the questionnaire had reflected their past experiences of learning English. According to their comments, the questionnaire statements were generally clear in wording. Some redundant expressions were however identified by the participants. Several wording problems that might cause ambiguity were also pointed out. In light of this feedback, adjustments were accordingly made. For instance, for the items concerning language learning strategies, changes have been made from “I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English” to “I listened to English radio, watch English TV or movies” in Item S7, and from “I read for pleasure in English” to “I read English newspapers, magazines or novels out of class” in Item S8.

3.3.1.6 Final Version of the Questionnaire

The final version of the questionnaire (Appendix 1) consists of the following four parts: Part A (Participants' demographic information), Part B (BLL), Part C (MLL), and Part D (LLS). The structure of the questionnaire is listed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Structure of the Questionnaire for the Current Study

Construct	Sub-categories	Number of Items	
Part A	Demographic Information	9	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Part B	Difficulty of language learning	4	B1, B2, B7, B13
Beliefs	Nature of language learning	6	B3, B4, B5, B6, B8, B9
	Autonomy in language learning	5	B10, B11, B12, B14, B15
	Total	15	B1-B15
Part C Motivation	Intrinsic interest	2	M1, M2
	Immediate achievement	2	M3, M4
	Going abroad	2	M5, M6
	Individual development	3	M7, M8, M9
	Information medium	2	M10, M11
	Important others	2	M12, M13
	Learning situation	6	M14, M15, M16, M17, M18, M19
	Total	19	M1-M19
Part D Strategies	Memory Strategies	5	S1, S2, S3, S4, S5
	Cognitive Strategies	6	S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11
	Compensation Strategies	3	S12, S13, S14
	Meta-cognitive Strategies	8	S15, S16, S17, S18, S19, S20, S21, S22
	Affective Strategies	4	S23, S24, S25, S26
	Social Strategies	4	S27, S28, S29, S30
	Total	30	S1-S15

Part A is about the participants' background information. This part is designed to elicit demographic information about the research participants. It includes the following items: gender, age, major taken at the EMI University, family background, hometown, length of years spent learning English, types of high school graduated from, English score on the National Matriculation (Gaokao), and overseas experiences. It was anticipated that this information would help the author better understand the results of the findings in this study.

Part B, comprising 15 items, is about the students' BLL. It covers the following three areas: 1) the difficulty of language learning; 2) the nature of language learning; and 3) learner autonomy in language learning. Items B1, B2, B7, and B13 concern the participants' beliefs about the difficulty of learning English and specifically of learning different language skills. Item B1 assesses the general difficulty of learning English. The participants were required to respond to this item, using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from a very difficult language (1) to a very easy language (5) as follows: 1) a very difficult language; 2) a difficult language; 3) a language of medium difficulty; 4) an easy language; and 5) a very easy language.

Item B13 asks the participants' belief about the length of time needed to learn English well. They were asked to respond this item, "If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take them to speak the language very well?" using a 5-point scale as follows: 1) less than one year; 2) 1-2 years; 3) 3-5 years; 4) 5-10 years; and 5) You can't learn a language in 1 hour a day. Responses at the higher end of the scale, such as 4 or 5, reflect the participants' belief that it takes a longer time to learn to speak English well.

Item B2 relates to the respondents' difficulty with participating in group activities and Item B7 determines whether the students think reading and writing to be more difficult than speaking and listening in English. The participants were required to respond to these two items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). These two items are all stated in the direction from the easiest to the most difficult. Responses at the higher end of the scale, such as 4 or 5, mean that the students believe there to be a large degree of difficulty.

e.g., B2 It is difficult for me to take part in group discussion in English. 1 2 3 4 5
(1 Strongly disagree; 2 Disagree; 3 Neither agree nor disagree; 4 Agree; 5 Strongly agree)

Items B3, B4, B5, B6, B8, and B9 include a wide range of issues related to the participants' beliefs about the nature of language learning, including the importance of practice and repetition (Item B3) extensive reading (Item B5) and pronunciation (Item

B9), the role of vocabulary and grammar (Item B4) and language immersion (Item B8) in language learning. The participants were asked to respond to these items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Responses at the upper end of the scale indicate a high level of agreement with these statements.

e.g., B4 The most important part of learning English is learning vocabulary and grammar. 1 2 3 4 5

Items B10, B11, B12, B14, and B15 address the participants' beliefs about their autonomy in language learning, including their level of responsibility for their own learning of English (Items B10 and B14) and the role of their teachers in their learning of English (Items B12 and B15). The participants were required to respond to these items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Responses at the upper end of the scale, such as 4 or 5, mean a large degree of preparedness for autonomous study.

e.g., B11 I should be responsible for my own English learning instead of relying on teachers. 1 2 3 4 5

Part C concerns the students' MLL. A total of 19 items were included in this part. It encompasses the following seven subcategories: 1) intrinsic interest; 2) immediate achievement; 3) going abroad; 4) individual development; 5) information medium; 6) important others; and 7) learning situation. All the 19 items followed a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Responses at the upper end of the scale, such as 4 or 5, reflect strong motivation.

e.g., M3 I learn English mainly for obtaining high scores in exams. 1 2 3 4 5

Part D measures the students' LLS. It contains six categories of learning strategies: 1) memory strategies; 2) cognitive strategies; 3) compensation strategies; 4) meta-cognitive strategies; 5) affective strategies; and 6) social strategies. These 30 items use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *I never do this* (1) to *I always do this* (5).

Responses at the upper end of the scale, such as 4 or 5, reflect students' high frequency of use of learning strategies.

e.g., S1 I memorise new words by looking up the meanings of new words in dictionaries like online dictionaries. 1 2 3 4 5

3.3.2 Instrument for the Interviews

As the most commonly used method for collecting qualitative data (Dörnyei, 2007), the interview has been widely used in studies of applied linguistics (Nunan, 2002). As a research tool, interviews can yield in-depth data about the experiences of the interviewees and offer interviewers a great deal of flexibility (Dörnyei, 2007).

To be specific, interviews have the following advantages for research in applied linguistics: firstly, learners can talk about unobservable mental processes such as their thoughts, feelings and motives after they have completed performing a task (Dörnyei, 2007). Interviewers thus can get access to the lives of their interviewees (Nunan, 2002). The data elicited from interviews help the researcher understand the meanings that participants attribute to their lived experiences (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). In other words, interviews can to some degree help researchers understand what is going through their interviewees' minds when they make a judgment, solve a problem or perform a task (Dörnyei, 2007). Another advantage is that an interview can serve as a helpful means for the interviewer to create a rapport with his or her interviewees. This climate of trust can to a large extent ensure the quality of the interviewees' subsequent responses (Dörnyei, 2007).

More importantly, as a kind of retrospective report, interviews can reveal the trajectories of the development of interviewees' beliefs, motivation, and strategies in language learning. It can not only reveal what changes happen, but also suggest why the changes happen (Amuzie & Winke, 2009). These advantages of interviews justify the extensive use of interviews in the study of individual differences, beliefs, motivation, and learning

strategies in particular (e.g., Gan, Humphreys & Hamp-Lyons, 2004; Gao, 2006; Gao, 2008a; Gu, 2009; Parks & Raymond, 2004; Wenden, 1991).

However, just like any other research instruments, the interview has its weaknesses. As pointed out by Dörnyei (2007), to plan and conduct an interview is time-consuming and an interview requires good communication skills on the part of the interviewer. The biggest problem of the interview might be the asymmetrical relationship between the participants (Nunan, 2002). Therefore, these problems need to be taken into account when setting up and conducting an interview.

Taking into account the strengths of interviews for research on applied linguistics, however, the present study adopts the interview as a tool to explore how students think about learning English (beliefs), why they learn English (motivation) and how they learn English (strategies) at the EMI University in Mainland China.

3.3.2.1 Interview Protocols

In order to get an in-depth understanding of how the participants adjust their beliefs, motivation and strategies over the one-year English learning experience at the EMI University, interviews were conducted with the participants throughout the two stages. Based on the theoretical framework of this study, interview protocols were designed to guide the interviews. The interview protocols (Appendix 3 and Appendix 4) consisted of eliciting questions related to the three learner variables about learning English: beliefs (the participants' perceptions about and experiences in learning English), motivation (why they learn English), and strategies (how they deal with their learning of English).

3.3.2.2 Piloting of the Interview

According to Dörnyei (2007), a good interview guide requires some piloting because a few trial runs can ensure that the questions elicit sufficiently rich data and do not dominate the flow of the interview conversation. He claims that piloting the interview

guide can help the interviewer in the following five ways: “(a) by ensuring that the domain is properly covered and nothing important is left out by accident; (b) by suggesting appropriate question wordings; (c) by offering a list of useful probe questions to be used if needed; (d) by offering a template for the opening statement; and (e) by listing some comments to bear in mind” (p.137). A piloting is also suggested to be able to help avoid leading questions and ambiguous words (Dörnyei, 2007).

In order to serve these above-mentioned purposes, a piloting of the interview protocols for the present study was conducted on four second-year students at the EMI University in August 2011. As noted above, these four students were English and Finance majors who had already learned EAP for one year at the EMI University. They had similar educational backgrounds and experiences in learning English to those students who would participate in the main study. The pilot interviews were conducted after class. Every interviewee was told that the interview would be recorded. All of them chose to be interviewed in their mother tongue, Chinese, because they said that using the mother tongue could help them better express their opinions. Each interview lasted for about 40 minutes. The piloting interviews indicated that the interview questions were generally clear and easy to understand; that the interviewees were able to describe their thoughts in proper depth; and that they were able to express their feelings more accurately and thoroughly in their mother tongue. These points provide insightful suggestions for the conduct of the interviews in the main study.

3.4 Research Setting

The present study is situated at Xian Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU), an EMI university, which has a unique cultural context for absorbing the essences of the learning cultures of the Chinese and British university systems (See Section 1.3.3). This section mainly focuses on the background of English language education at this university, including its students, curriculum, textbooks and teaching materials, teachers and teaching methods, assessment, and extracurricular activities.

3.4.1 Student Population and Teaching Faculty

The unique cultural context at the EMI University is firstly manifested in its creation of an internationalised language learning and teaching environment. It had a diversified student population of around 6500 undergraduate students studying over 23 undergraduate degree programmes in the fields of science, engineering and management by 2011. These students were recruited from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and abroad, over half of whom will transfer to the UK parent university at the end of Year 2 through the EMI University's 2+2 programme.

English language teachers at the EMI University are recruited internationally according to the standards of the UK parent University. By March 2011, there were 63 English language tutors at the EMI University's English Language Centre (ELC), 52 of whom (82.54%) are from English-speaking countries including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK, and the United States. All these tutors hold appropriate qualifications in the area of applied linguistics or English language teaching. The other 11 Chinese English tutors all received higher education from overseas universities, and seven of them have a PhD degree in applied linguistics. All these tutors have rich experience in teaching EAP to EFL learners, especially to Chinese EFL learners. In addition, there are five academic support officers and one secretary at the English Language Centre, providing support services to these English tutors.

3.4.2 English Language Education Curriculum

The EMI University's unique cultural context is also embodied in the design of its curriculum framework on the basis of the following principle:

The teaching and student support should represent a true synthesis of Chinese and Western methods. Chinese education and culture are traditionally didactic and Chinese students show respect for received knowledge, while Western education is characterized by a more heuristic approach, which emphasises the importance of exploration, questioning and independence of mind (XJTLU Education Model, 2010, p.2).

Based on the above principle, the 2-year English language education curriculum at the EMI University focuses on the knowledge and skills of EAP learning, integrating the traditional curriculum (conventionally delivered by teachers in classroom) with the co-curriculum (facilitated by support staff) and the extra-curriculum (experiential activities and societies organised by students themselves). The overall objective of this curriculum is to ensure that students develop the study skills and English language proficiency which will help them adjust to the British style of teaching and complete a British degree programme. This English language education curriculum is delivered in an interactive teaching mode, including a variety of communicative tasks and activities, such as group presentations, projects, essays, and reports.

The English module is composed of EAP classes, skills classes, lectures, tutorials and self study. The EAP and skills classes are small-sized with no more than 20 students, and tutorials are in a format of small group of five students. The EAP class focuses on academic reading and writing, while the skills class emphasises academic skills for listening and speaking. The lectures aim to train the students how to adapt into an EMI context by introducing them to the academic skills and norms expected and to the English-speaking culture. The tutorial sessions provide face to face interaction opportunities for students, with a focus on skills for exchanging information effectively, for critical thinking, and for providing feedback on written work to students. Self-study is also encouraged by recommending the students to utilise the facilities on campus and online resources and the graded readers in library.

All the textbooks at the EMI University are imported from the UK. For instance, the textbook, *English for Academic Study Series* which was used in Semester I, is published by Garnet Education. These textbooks not only provide abundant input of academic English to students, but also cover a variety of academic skills associated with reading, listening, speaking and writing. They are characteristically academic-oriented, strategy-embedded, process- and task-based, and critical-thinking-focused.

3.4.3 Formative Assessment

Embedded in this curriculum is the formative assessment that the EMI University adopted to assess students' success in language learning:

Students should be discouraged from equating success narrowly with what they know, as indicated by measures such as grades and graduation rates, but with what they can do with what they know. This will require staff to develop new methods for the assessment of learning. It will also require the University to define alternative institutional success measures such as employment rates and graduate satisfaction (XJTLU Educational Model, 2010, p.3).

Formative assessment can be traced back to Scriven's (1967) concept of formative evaluation, and has received much attention in current research on assessment and evaluation. (e.g., Black & Jones, 2006; Black & William, 1998, 2009; Evans, Zeun, & Stanier, 2014; Sadler, 1989; Wingate, 2010). In contrast to summative assessment whose purpose lies in assessment of learning, formative assessment serves the purpose of assessment for learning (Schmid, 2012). It is designed to facilitate learning by providing beneficial feedback to students during the learning process, and is therefore expected to enhance learning (Evans, Zeun, & Stanier, 2014; Sadler, 1989; Wingate, 2010). This conceptualisation of formative assessment highlights the importance of students' active participation and engagement in evaluating the learning in the learning process (Carless, 2011; Evans, Zeun, & Stanier, 2014; Lee, 2011).

Meanwhile, the role of teachers in formative assessments should not be overlooked. Brookhart (2007) defines formative assessment as such that it could give teachers information for making instructional decisions, in addition to the information provided to students for improvement. Students therefore can receive scaffolding and assistance from teachers on how to improve their performance. Formative assessment is now commonly defined as a kind of assessment activities that can facilitate learning if they generate "information to be used as feedback, by teachers, and by their pupils in assessing themselves and each other, to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" (Black & Jones, 2006, p.4). This definition takes into account

teachers' roles, but does not attach due importance to the ongoing interaction in the teaching and learning process.

In light of the above concerns, this thesis takes formative assessment as assessment that “emphasises the role students play in the process of learning, whereby they can negotiate learning goals and outcomes with teachers, and engage in self- and/or peer assessment” (Lee, 2011, p.99). Formative assessment promotes learning due to active student engagement and effective feedback from teachers (Black & Wiliam, 1998). The activities applied in formative assessment, as suggested in the literature, mainly centre on sharing success criteria with learners, classroom questioning, comment-only marking, peer- and self-assessment, and formative use of summative tests (Black & Wiliam, 2009).

The working definition of formative assessment thus indicates that assessment can be activities of assessment in a dynamic fashion which are enacted after a semester or an academic year, or in the middle of a semester, or in an individual class (Wiliam & Thompson, 2007), either in form of formative methods alone or in a combination of summative tests (Black & Wiliam, 2009).

At the EMI University, formative assessment was adopted to evaluate students' performance and facilitate their learning. This is manifested in the feedback provided via a multitude of means such as midterm and final examinations (formative use of summative tests), feedback on drafts of essays/reports as part of the writing process, continuous coursework, and oral participation in class. The examinations cover four skill components, namely, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In addition, students are required to write a 1500-word essay or group report, accounting for 10% of the final score. Each semester, students' oral participation in tutorials/seminars also contributes to 5% of the final score for the purpose of encouraging students to participate in class.

3.4.4 Classroom Teaching

English teaching at the EMI University exhibits the following characteristics. At first, teachers pay much attention to raising students' language awareness. At the beginning of each class, teachers spend about 5 minutes telling the students the objectives of the lesson, what and how they are going to learn, and why they need to learn. During the class, teachers explicitly teach learning strategies and guide students to discuss the most appropriate strategies for a particular task. This process is beneficial in improving students' awareness and knowledge of learning strategies.

Teachers also design activities to train students how to study in an academic context. For example, teachers encourage students to work in groups for discussion, for presentations, or for projects or experiments. When doing group tasks, teachers train them how to work in a team. Moreover, teachers encourage students to be responsible for their study and train them how to manage their own study. For instance, every week teachers assign students certain self-study tasks on the EMI University's I.C.E (Interactive Communications Environment) system. Teachers also recommend famous books, novels, or internet sources to them, suggesting them to read them and to write about their impressions. Teachers then check students' logs every week and give feedback to each student face to face.

3.4.5 Tutorial System

The EMI University has a three-level tutorial system which comprise the co-curriculum: external mentors, personal tutors, and buddy programme. The external mentors mainly exchange their personal experiences and their success in their career and provide suggestions to the students on personal development and career plans. In addition, every student has a personal tutor. The tutors meet them periodically and give them feedback and advice on their study, telling them how to prepare for lectures and how to do academic essay writing. Tutors also give them advice on setting goals in study and on overseas study. There is also a buddy programme which offers peer tutorials to each

Year 1 student. Members of the buddy programme are responsible for 3 to 5 Year 1 students, helping them deal with issues such as how to adjust to university life, how to learn English, how to prepare for examinations, and whether to take part in some societies.

3.4.6 Extra-curricular Activities

The EMI University has created a large number of opportunities for students to engage in extra-curricular activities, such as clubs, societies, and competitions. There are 14 societies organised by the EMI University's English Language Centre, including Colourful Cultures Club, Debating Society, Language Club, Magazine Club, Model United Nations, and Surf Zone. Every semester, these clubs sponsor a variety of activities, which can considerably benefit students by creating a strong English atmosphere on campus. These clubs and activities provide abundant opportunities for students to practise English skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing, and for them to learn how to cooperate and communicate with others in English. They also help students generate and maintain their interest in learning English.

The EMI University's I.C.E. system is a virtual self-access system for students to study English after class, where there are rich online materials and information for students to learn English after class. Students can interact with each other and with their ELC teachers, exchanging their opinions on topics put forward by the ELC tutors and students. There are also teaching files and materials, telling students what and how to prepare for the class. The links provided in this virtual self-access system provide a rich variety of online resources for the students to do self-study after class.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The data of this study were collected during August 2011 to July 2012 at the EMI University. The participants comprise a large cohort on whom the questionnaires were

administered, and a small group of students who participated in the interviews. This section presents the details of data collection of the study.

3.5.1 Research Questions

The current research, following a socio-cultural perspective, seeks to explore the disposition of a cohort of Chinese EAP learners' beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies upon and after their arrival at an EMI University in Mainland China. The study addresses the following questions:

RQ 1: What are Chinese EFL learners' beliefs about, motivation for and strategy use in the learning of English upon their arrival at the EMI University chosen for the investigation?

RQ 2: What are Chinese EFL learners' beliefs about, motivation for and strategy use in the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University?

RQ 3: What are the potential changes in their beliefs about, motivation for and strategy use in the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, and what might have caused these changes?

3.5.2 Research Stages

In order to seek answers to these research questions, this study was conducted in two stages (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 The Research Stages

Stage	Scheduled time	Research methods	Tasks
Stage 1	August – September, 2011	Interviews, Questionnaires	Survey I, Interview I
Stage 2	September, 2011 – July, 2012	Interviews, Questionnaires	Survey II, Interview II

The first stage aimed to acquire an understanding of the participants' previous English learning experiences before coming to the EMI University. At this stage, a survey study was administered to 1026 participants (Survey I) and an interview (Interview I) was conducted with 16 participants. The data collected at this stage were used as the baseline information.

The second stage was to investigate their beliefs, motivation, and strategies after they had studied EAP for one academic year at the EMI University. The same questionnaire which had been used in the first stage was conducted with 909 participants (Survey II) and 17 participants were interviewed at the end of the second semester (Interview II). Based on the results at these two stages, a comparison was made in order to identify changes in their beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies.

3.5.3 Participants for the Questionnaire Surveys

Table 3.3 below describes the demographic information of the 1935 students who participated in the longitudinal survey study, comprising 1026 students in Survey 1 and 909 in Survey 2 respectively.

The 1026 participants in Survey 1 were from across the country, comprising 621 girls and 405 boys. Among these participants, a large majority (953) were from urban areas while only 15 were from rural areas. In terms of the type of high school they graduated from, 976 participants graduated from key high schools at either provincial (605) or city (306) or county (65) levels. They were of university age, ranging from 16 to 21. The average age was 18.34. By the time of the study, they had been learning English for an average of 9.72 years. The participants' English score in the National English Matriculation (Gaokao) was investigated in Survey 1 in order to elicit information about their English language proficiency upon arrival at the EMI University. The average English score in the Gaokao was 122.69 out of a total score of 150, indicating a high level of English language proficiency.

Of the 909 participants in Survey 2 which comprised 413 girls and 496 boys, 833 were from urban areas while only 76 were from rural areas. 696 of them had never gone abroad before attending university. As far as the type of high school is concerned, the picture is similar to that for Survey 1. A large number (864) of them graduated from key high schools at either provincial (530) or city (280) or county (54) levels. The age of

them ranged from 17 to 22. When the second survey was administered, they had been learning English for an average of 10.07 years.

Table 3.3 Demographic Information of the Participants for the Questionnaire Surveys

\	\	Survey 1	Survey 2
Number	Category	1026	909
Sex	Female	621	413
	Male	405	496
Family background	Rural	73	76
	Urban	953	833
Major	Arts and Humanities	438	406
	Science and Engineering	588	503
Experience abroad	Yes	238	213
	No	788	696
Type of high school graduated	Provincial key*	605	530
	City key	306	280
	County key	65	54
	Ordinary school	50	45
Age	Maximum	21	22
	Minimum	16	17
	Mean	18.34	19.04
Years of learning English	Maximum	15	16
	Minimum	6	6
	Mean	9.72	10.07
English scores in Gaokao	Maximum	146	\
	Minimum	79	\
	Mean	122.69	\

*In Mainland China, secondary schools are categorised into different classes at a variety of governmental levels, such as ordinary schools and key schools. Key schools include those of county, city (municipal) and provincial levels. Key schools usually receive more financial and policy support from government.

This demographic information is indicative in several ways about the background and this cohort of Chinese learners studying EAP at the EMI University. Based on the information obtained from the interviews at the first stage of the study, the following assumptions may be tentatively made about them:

- 1) They have generally been learning English for more than 9 years, which indicates that they might have developed a certain understanding of learning English. When they came to study in the EMI environment, they might have been prepared to observe differences in learning English between their past experiences and the present contextual conditions at the EMI university;

- 2) The average score they got in the National English Matriculation indicates that they had a satisfactory level of proficiency in English language when coming to the EMI University. This satisfactory English proficiency may to some degree have prepared them to be autonomous in their learning of English, which is highly required and valued in this EMI context;
- 3) As noted above, about 93% (953 out of the 1026 surveyed students) of the participants came from urban areas. This means that most of them are likely to come from well-off families. They may have had better financial conditions in their learning of English. Most of their parents and other family relatives may have been well-educated, which may have affected their attitudes, motivation, and use of learning strategies in learning English.
- 4) A large majority of them graduated from key schools at provincial, municipal and county levels. Key schools in China presumably have more advantages over the ordinary schools in terms of teaching staff, teaching quality, study conditions, resources and financial support from the government. Their English learning experiences at these key schools may have left a strong impression on them and shaped their beliefs, motivation, and strategies in learning English.
- 5) Almost one third (30.20% in Survey I and 30.60% in Survey II) of the participants had had international experiences prior to their arrival at the EMI University. When they went abroad, they might have more opportunities to contact the communities of English speakers. In other words, these international experiences might implicitly increase the opportunities for those participants to be exposed to English language input. As a result, these experiences may influence their beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies in learning English.

3.5.4 Participants for the Interviews

Table 3.4 describes the demographic information of the 24 students who participated in the interviews at the two research stages respectively.

As listed in Table 3.4, 16 students participated in Interview I. However, not all of these 16 students participated in Interview II. This reflects one of the less helpful characteristics of a longitudinal study. That is, during the research process of a longitudinal study, it is difficult to guarantee a stable population of participants. Bearing this in mind, the author kept constant contact with the participants and tried to invite new volunteers when some left for some unavoidable reasons.

At the time of Interview II, two of the 16 students who had participated in Interview I quit this study because they thought they could not allocate time for the second interview, and another two informed the researcher that they were too busy with their study at that moment. In order to keep a balance of interviewees, another five students were invited to be interviewed at this stage. In total, 17 students participated in Interview II.

Table 3.4 Demographic Information of the Participants for the Interviews

No.	Name*	Sex	Age	Major	Length	Score	Origin	School	Interview
1	Jimmy	M	18	ENG	8	124/150	Urban	PRO	I, II
2	Eason	M	18	ENG	8	128/150	Urban	COU	I, II
3	Peter	M	20	ENG	10	124/150	Rural	COU	I
4	Hanks	M	20	ENG	6	125/150	Urban	CIT	I
5	Lynn	F	18	ENG	12	115/150	Urban	CIT	I, II
6	Norah	F	18	FIN	8	137/150	Urban	PRO	I, II
7	Jack	M	19	ENG	7	125/150	Rural	CIT	I,II
8	John	M	18	FIN	9	110/150	Urban	PRO	I
9	Paul	M	18	ENG	10	115/150	Rural	CIT	I, II
10	Jason	M	18	ENG	7	99/150	Urban	PRO	I, II
11	Jane	F	18	ENG	9	118/150	Urban	PRO	I, II
12	Mark	M	18	ENG	11	99/150	Urban	CIT	I
13	Simon	M	18	ENG	11	122/150	Urban	PRO	I, II
14	Michael	M	18	ENG	10	122/150	Urban	CIT	I, II
15	Rachel	F	19	ECO	9	127/150	Urban	PRO	I,II
16	Sarah	F	20	ENG	13	120/150	Urban	PRO	I, II
17	James	M	18	ENG	7	125/150	Rural	PRO	II
18	Roy	M	18	ENG	12	130/150	Urban	PRO	II
19	Bane	M	18	ENG	8	122/150	Urban	CIT	II
20	Steve	M	19	FIN	7	100/150	Urban	PRO	II
21	Duke	M	19	FIN	7	123/150	Urban	PRO	II

* All the participants' names mentioned in this study were anonymised; F = Female; M = Male; ECO = Economic; ENG = Engineering; FIN = Finance; Length = Length of time learning English; Score = English score in Gaokao; PRO = Provincial key school; CIT = City key school; COU = County key school.

As can be seen from Table 3.4, most of the interviewees were studying programmes related to Engineering. Most of them were from urban areas in metropolitan cities like Shanghai, Beijing, Nanjing, and other cities in southeast China. Another feature of the interviewees is that all of them graduated from key high schools at county, city and provincial levels. One more noticeable characteristic of the participants is that most of

them scored over 120 out of the 150 full marks in the National English Matriculation, which to some degree indicates that they were at a high level of English proficiency.

3.5.5 Quantitative Data Collection

The questionnaires for the first stage (Appendix 1) were administered at the regular class times and were subsequently collected in September 2011 (Survey I). Before the participants started to answer the questionnaire questions, they were first briefed about the purpose of the study and given instruction on how to respond to the questionnaire. In order to detect possible changes in the participants' beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies in learning English, the same questionnaire with minor changes in directions (Appendix 2) was administered to them in June 2012 (Survey II), after they had studied EAP for one academic year at the EMI University.

3.5.6 Qualitative Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted at weekends in September 2011 (Interview I), and from February to June of 2012 (Interview II) respectively. All the interviews were guided by the interview protocols (Appendices 3 and 4). Following Dörnyei's (2007) suggestions concerning the length of the interviewing time, each interview lasted between 30 and 50 minutes. All the interviews were audio recorded with the Sony Digital Voice Editor. All the interviews were conducted in the interviewees' mother tongue, Chinese. This was, as already noted, because the use of the interviewees' native language could enable them to express their views and opinions more precisely and thoroughly.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedures

The collected data were collected in different ways according to their different nature. The data of the questionnaire surveys were analysed on the statistical package SPSS

16.0 for Windows, while the interview data were analysed on qualitative analysis software ATLAS/ti.

3.6.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analysed by means of both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. The reliability of the questionnaires was also computed.

3.6.1.1 Descriptive and Inferential Statistical Analyses

The collected data were entered into the SPSS programme for descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

Descriptive statistical analysis: The participants' responses were presented in terms of percentages, mean scores and standard deviations for each item, each subscale and the whole scale in Part B, Part C, and Part D. For calculating the participants' attitudes towards each item in the sections of beliefs (Part B) and motivation (Part C), responses for *strongly disagree* and *disagree* are categorised as *disagree (D)*, *neither disagree nor agree* as *neutral (N)*, and *agree* and *strongly agree* as *agree (A)*.

For calculating the participants' attitudes towards each item in the strategies section (Part D), responses for *I never do this* and *I seldom do this* are categorised as *seldom (S)*, *I sometimes do this* as *neutral (N)*, and *I usually do this* and *I always do this* as *often (O)*.

Inferential statistical analysis: A parametric test (an Independent Samples T-test) was performed to ascertain any possible changes in these three learner variables and to examine the extent of these changes among the participants upon and after their arrival at the EMI University. The means of each individual item, each subscale, and the whole scale were compared between the Upon- and After-arrival questionnaires when performing the Independent T-Test. The Cronbach alpha level was set at 0.05. However, when performing Independent T-Test, Items B1 and B13 were excluded because these

two are ordinal data, which fail to meet the requirements for executing a parametric test (Dörnyei, 2007).

3.6.1.2 Reliability of the Questionnaire

This section presents the results of the internal consistency reliability estimates of this questionnaire (Table 3.5). Reliability coefficients, as used here, indicate the degree to which a subscale is internally consistent or reliable. All of these reliability estimates are Cronbach alphas. Cronbach alpha can be interpreted as the percentage of reliable or consistent variance in each instrument. For the current questionnaire, the reliability of the subscale of “difficulty of language learning” in the scale of the BLL could not be calculated, because Items B1 and B3 of this subscale are rank order statements while the remaining items are multiple-choice items.

Table 3.5 Reliability of the Language Learning Questionnaire

Part	Content	Number	Items used	Alpha (Survey I)	Alpha (Survey II)
Part	BLL	15	B1-B15	.5061	.6345
B	Difficulty	4	B1, B2, B7, B13	\	\
	Nature	6	B3, B4, B5, B6, B8, B9	.3218	.4240
	Autonomy	5	B10, B11, B12, B14, B15	.5316	.6512
Part	MLL	19	M1-M19	.7017	.7352
C	Intrinsic interest	2	M1, M2	.7585	.6471
	Immediate achievement	2	M3, M4	.7593	.6617
	Going abroad	2	M5, M6	.4518	.5110
	Individual development	3	M7, M8, M9	.5799	.4925
	Information medium	2	M10, M11	.3737	.4070
	Important others	2	M12, M13	.6713	.6875
	Learning situation	6	M14, M15, M16, M17, M18, M19	.6449	.5405
Part	LLS	30	S1-S30	.8333	.8250
D	Memory	5	S1, S2, S3, S4, S5	.4117	.5050
	Cognitive	6	S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11	.5862	.5642
	Compensation	3	S12, S13, S14	.3856	.3334
	Meta-cognitive	8	S15, S16, S17, S18, S19, S20, S21, S22	.7518	.7270
	Affective	4	S23, S24, S25, S26	.5421	.5212
	Social	4	S27, S28, S29, S30	.7404	.5077

As revealed in Table 3.5, the reliability for “Nature of language learning” in Survey I was a low .3218 and the reliability for “Autonomy in language learning” was a medium .5316. The reliability of the overall BLL items in the questionnaire was .5061, acceptably high. With regard to the MLL items in the questionnaire, the reliabilities of their seven subscales ranged from a relatively low .3737 for “Information Medium” to a relatively high .7593 for “Immediate Achievement”. The reliability of the overall MLL items in the questionnaire was .7017, reasonably high. As for the reliability of LLS in the questionnaire, its six subscales fluctuated from a relatively low .3856 for “Compensation Strategies” to a relatively high .7518 for “Meta-cognitive Strategies”. The reliability of the overall SLL items in the questionnaire was .8333, fairly high.

In Survey II, the reliability for “Nature of language learning” was a relatively low .4240 and the reliability for “Autonomy in language learning” was a medium .6512. The reliability of the overall BLL items in the questionnaire was .6345, acceptably high. As for the reliability of MLL in the questionnaire its seven subscales ranged from a relatively low .4070 for “Information Medium” to a medium .6617 for “Immediate Achievement”. The reliability of the overall MLL items in the questionnaire was .7352, satisfactorily high. With regard to the LLS items in the questionnaire, the reliabilities of their six subscales fluctuated from a relatively low .3334 for “Compensation Strategies” to a relatively high .7270 for “Meta-cognitive Strategies”. The reliability of the overall SLL items in the questionnaire was .8250, fairly high.

It can be observed from the above table that the overall reliabilities of the MLL and LLS scales in the two surveys and that of the BLL scale in Survey II are all above .60, while that of the BLL scale in Survey I is .5316. According to Dörnyei (2007), a Cronbach alpha of 0.60 is an acceptable level for quantitative research in applied linguistics. Judging from this criterion, the scales of this questionnaire, except for BLL, could be considered to be relatively high in terms of reliability coefficients. The relatively low Cronbach alpha of BLL may be explained as follows: the BLL items were designed by drawing sources from the BALLI. The BALLI was reported to have a low alpha ranging

from .53 to .71 in the literature (Ahn & Yang, 2009). This low alpha might be caused by its inadherence to the convention of using multi-item scales, a prerequisite for the measurement of a questionnaire's internal consistency reliability (Sage, 2011).

Another issue to be addressed is that, as revealed in the above table, when each scale is dismantled into subscales, the reliabilities of these subscales become smaller. This might be caused by the smaller number of items for each subscale. The number of items which comprise a scale tends to also decide the internal consistency reliability of the scale (Dörnyei, 2007). Generally, the more items a category contains, the higher the reliability estimate is. Therefore, when each scale is broken into subscales, fewer items are included in each of them, which might have resulted in smaller alphas.

More importantly, the low alphas might be engendered by the complexity of the SLA process (Dörnyei, 2007). The complex nature of the SLA process makes L2 researchers "typically want to measure many different areas in one questionnaire" (Dörnyei, 2007, p.207). Therefore, it is impractical for them to utilise long scales. In addition, a very long scale might be time-consuming for participants to use. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect to encounter low Cronbach alphas in quantitative research of applied linguistics.

3.6.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

The interview data were processed through an iterative process where data collection, analysis and interpretation were continuously revised and refocused based on the emergent results (Dörnyei, 2007). This iterative process involves the adoption of a qualitative content analysis approach. The content analysis is a second-level and interpretive analysis of the qualitative data and generates qualitative categories inductively from the data analysed. It follows the generic sequence of coding for themes, looking for patterns, making interpretations, and building theory (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005).

3.6.2.1 Transcription of the Interview Data

The first step taken to handle the interview data was transcription. The recorded interviews were firstly transcribed verbatim in Chinese. While transcribing, there is a decision to make, that is, how much information should and can be actually included. This relates to the following three issues (Dörnyei, 2007). The first one concerns the nonverbal aspects of the interviews such as the interviewees' body language. The absence of reference to body language like facial expressions, gestures or eye-movements might "impoverish" (p.247) the written transcriptions. The second issue which is also problematic concerns "supra-segmentals such as stress and intonation and paralinguistic factors such as acoustics or non-vocal noises" (p.247). A third problem concerns the representation of the speech which might be imperfect in some ways because of false starts, word repetition, and stammering or language mistakes (Dörnyei, 2007).

In light of these problems, an iterative process was followed while transcribing the interview data. This involved "a nonlinear, 'zigzag' pattern: we move back and forth between data collection, data analysis and data interpretation depending on the emergent results" (Dörnyei, 2007, p.243). This step was adopted in order to identify the correct meanings the interviewees might be trying to express and to compensate for the loss of information caused by the absence of a record of the paralinguistic factors mentioned above. However, given that the objective of the interviews was to collect information about the interviewees' beliefs about language learning, instead of their language *per se*, the absence of the above mentioned paralinguistic features was not considered important in the current study.

The transcription generated a total transcript of about 103,080 Chinese characters for Interview I and around 122,580 Chinese characters for Interview II respectively. The transcript was typed onto the computer and stored as Word files named "Interview I" and "Interview II" respectively. Before entering the coding phase of the interview data, the iterative process was again followed. A copy of the transcript was printed out for

reading and re-reading several times in order to obtain a global understanding of each individual interviewee's English learning experiences with a focus on their beliefs, motivation, and strategies. This step also helped to reflect on the transcript, to note down thoughts and memos. This reflection process could shape the researcher's thinking about the data and influence the way the researcher would go about coding it (Dörnyei, 2007; Richards, 2005). That is, this pre-coding step was used to help identify any commonalities or patterns (Seliger & Shohmay, 1989). While seeking these common patterns that emerge from the transcripts, it is important to bear in mind the research questions we are seeking to answer.

3.6.2.2 Coding of the Interview Data

Based on the preparatory reflection, the handling of the qualitative data entered into the coding stage. The interview data were coded by applying the qualitative analysis software ATLAS.ti. The coding procedures started with open coding which is the first level of conceptual analysis of the data in the grounded theory. Any relevant segment or extract was highlighted in the text, for which a quotation was correspondingly created on the ATLAS.ti programme. At the same time, a descriptive label to the quoted segment was attached on the margin of the text. For instance, the following segment was quoted and coded on the margin as 'memorising grammar': "*the impression I have got from my English learning experiences in high school is that learning English means memorising grammar*"⁴. Following these steps, an organising scheme for the transcribed interview data was developed.

On the basis of the open coding, a second-level coding was launched in order to go beyond a mere descriptive labelling of the relevant data segments and to capture more abstract commonalities (Dörnyei, 2007). This step corresponded to the axial coding in the grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During this phase, the specific extracts highlighted in the open coding stage were read several times in order to form broader

⁴ All the interview extracts used in this thesis were translated from Chinese.

categories. Throughout the coding process, constant questioning and comparing was undertaken in order to generate inductively subcategories and main categories.

When the open coding and the axial coding were finalised, an overarching taxonomy with a three-level hierarchy was constructed (Table 3.6). At the top level were the three main categories selected for the final qualitative content analysis; at the bottom level were the specific labels representing the segmented quotations and in the middle were named subcategories. The ATLAS.ti programme automatically counted the numbers of the quotations that were assigned to a specific label and the number of specific labels that clustered around a specific subcategory.

Table 3.6 Examples of Three Levels of Categorisation of BLL (Interview I)

Themes and coded quotations	Subcategory	Main Category
<u>Vocabulary learning</u> <i>The most difficult for me is vocabulary. I always feel that my vocabulary is not large enough. Therefore, I spent a lot of time memorizing words. I have got this feeling the moment I come across an unknown word.</i>	Difficulty in vocabulary learning	Difficulty of language learning
<u>Repetition and practice in language learning</u> <i>Examination is often about Cloze Test and Reading Comprehension. Things like these depend on more practice.</i>	Importance of repetition and practice	Nature of language learning
<u>Focus of language learning</u> <i>Learning English was mainly about learning grammatical rules in high school.</i>	Learning of grammatical rules	
<u>Self-study on my own</u> <i>As for writing I would like to surf the internet and participate in foreign forums and blogs at usual. Just casual writing.</i>	Looking for their own opportunities to learn English	Autonomy in language learning

Qualitative analysis is an iterative process and this is particularly apparent in the process of coding (Dörnyei, 2007). During the open coding and second-level coding procedures, the interview data were coded and recoded several times in order to guarantee the consistency of the salient content categories that emerged from the interview data and the appropriateness of the terms used to represent them.

3.6.2.3 Intra-coder Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the taxonomy, one third of the same transcript was re-categorised five months after the initial taxonomy had been established in the first round of categorisation. Then, the new coded segments were compared with those identified earlier. The intra-coder reliability coefficient was then calculated using the following formulae:

$$\frac{\text{Number of agreements in the first and second coding}}{\text{Total number of coded items (agreements + disagreements) in the first coding}}$$

The intra-coder reliability coefficient was $184/221=.833$. The coefficient indicates reasonable reliability (Miles & Huberman, 1994). That is, the categorisation of the data was reasonably consistent over time. Those segments that were not consistently coded were further revised until the final version was made.

3.7 Trustworthiness in the Study

The following measures were taken to guarantee the trustworthiness of the findings generated in the research:

Before interviewing the participants, the purpose of the research and its requirements were explained to the prospective participants. They were then informed that they had the right to decide to participate in the research or withdraw at any time without any negative effect on their study at the university.

In order to give the participants a clear understanding of the purposes and requirements of the research and their rights during the research process, a letter of invitation (Appendix 5), a participant information sheet (Appendix 6), and a consent form (Appendix 7) were distributed to and signed by them. Explanation and clarification of the purposes of the questionnaire were also given to them while the questionnaire surveys were being administered.

During the research process, every effort was also made to earn the participants' cooperation. Each participant was treated equally and with respect. Each contact with them during the research process, such as running into them on campus or an email exchange, seemed to be highly appreciated. At the same time, the researcher offered extra help to the participants, such as proof reading their writing homework drafts and listening to their struggles in learning academic writing and presentations.

Furthermore, in the second interviews, the participants were given the initial findings obtained in the previous interviews. When interpreting the interview data, since all the interviews were conducted in Chinese, all the quotes appeared in the analysis chapters were translated from Chinese into English. For the purpose of reducing any potential problems related to translation, these translated quotes were double checked by another researcher.

Moreover, all the participants were informed that the data collected from them would be kept confidential. Each participant was coded with an anonymous name when transcribing their interview data and pseudonyms were used, instead of their real names, in the final report. Finally, throughout the research process, I kept a reflective research journal, recording my research experiences, problems and progress.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has introduced the research methodologies that have guided the design of the research and the methods that were employed during the research process. It has also described the questionnaire surveys and interview studies used in the research, including the research questions, instruments, procedures of data collection and analysis. The techniques used to enhance the trustworthiness of the research have also been described. Having presented the design of the research, the following chapters will report on and discuss the results of the research.

Chapter 4 Results Regarding Beliefs about Language Learning

4.1 Introduction

The quantitative data, collected with questionnaires upon and after the participants' arrival at the EMI University, were entered into the statistical package SPSS 16.0 for Windows, and analysed in terms of descriptive (frequency response) and inferential (means with standard deviation and parametric tests) procedures (Section 3.6.1). The qualitative data, collected throughout the research using semi-structured interviews, were computed into the ATLAS.ti, and processed by following the content analysis approach (Section 3.6.2). The quantitative data provide baseline information about the participants' beliefs, motivation, and strategies upon and after their arrival at the EMI University, whereas the qualitative data generate in-depth insights into the nature of the changes, as well as how and why these changes take place.

This chapter focuses on the findings from the relevant quantitative and qualitative data regarding the participants' beliefs about language learning. It presents the answers to the following questions:

RQ 1a: What are Chinese EFL learners' beliefs about the learning of English upon their arrival at the EMI University?

RQ 2a: What are Chinese EFL learners' beliefs about the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University?

RQ 3a: What are the potential changes in their beliefs about the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, and what might have caused these changes?

To report the findings with regard to these questions above, this chapter firstly presents the results concerning the participants' beliefs upon their arrival at the EMI University, as reflected in the first questionnaire survey and interviews at this stage. Then, it summarises and discusses the changes in the participants' beliefs at the second research stage after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University.

4.2 Beliefs about Language Learning upon Arrival

In order to address the first research question, the quantitative data concerning the participants' beliefs were analysed by calculating the frequency of response to each item of the questionnaire (Section 3.6.1). Then, the qualitative data were analysed by following the content analysis approach, as introduced earlier (Section 3.6.2), in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the quantitative data. All the qualitative data were first scrutinised individually. Related entries were then categorised and developed as subcategories. After re-examining all the subcategories, a pattern of findings regarding BLL emerged.

4.2.1 Nature of Language Learning

Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 present the results regarding the nature of language learning from Survey I and Interview I respectively.

Noticeably, 73% of the participants agreed that it is necessary to know about English-speaking culture in order to learn English well (Item B6). Similarly, 73% of them considered it best to learn English in an English-speaking environment (Item B8). These findings reveal that an immersion setting is perceived to be beneficial for learning English among the participants. This belief is echoed in the interviews (20 references) (Table 4.2). As indicated in the following extract, an English-speaking environment is considered to be facilitative to the participants' learning of English by creating opportunities for them to internalise what they have learned from the class (Bernat, 2006; Peacock, 2001):

1) [...], our English teacher tried to create an English environment for us by speaking English in class when we were in Grade 1 in high school. This environment could help us internalise what we had learned from the class, such as vocabulary... (Rachel, Lines 1954-1955, Interview I).

The participants' belief in the value of an English-speaking environment indicates the influence of contextual realities upon language learners' English learning experiences.

Given that English is learned as a foreign language in Mainland China where learners have very limited opportunities to get exposed to the target language, it is therefore reasonable for Chinese students to anticipate benefits from an English-speaking environment for learning English (Liu, 2013).

Table 4.1 Beliefs about the Nature of Language Learning in Survey I

Item	Disagree (D) (%)	Neutral (N) (%)	Agree (A) (%)
B3 To learn English means doing a lot of repetition and practice.	21	20	59
B4 The most important part of learning English is learning vocabulary and grammar.	36	34	30
B5 Extensive reading of English newspapers, magazines or novels is more helpful than close reading of textbooks.	7	28	65
B6 To learn English well, it is necessary to know about English-speaking culture.	7	20	73
B8 It is best to learn English in an English-speaking environment such as an English-speaking country.	6	21	73
B9 Clear expression of ideas is more important than good English pronunciation.	11	27	62

Table 4.2 Beliefs about the Nature of Language Learning in Interview I

No.	Subcategory	Counts
1	Vocabulary is important.	39
2	Memorisation and repetition are important.	39
3	Grammar is important.	34
4	Examination is important.	32
5	Exercises are important.	26
6	It is best to learn English in an English-speaking environment.	20
7	English should be learned through practice and communication.	15
8	Pronunciation is important.	15
9	Extensive reading is important.	10
10	Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Chinese.	7
11	It is necessary to understand English-speaking culture	6
12	Listening is important.	2
13	Speaking is important.	2
14	Writing is important.	1

The participants expressed a range of attitudes towards the study of language skills. For instance, 65% of the students agreed with Item B5, “Extensive reading of English newspapers, magazines or novels is more helpful than close reading of textbooks”. This

finding suggests that the students considered it important to learn English through extensive reading other than through intensive study of textbooks.

In terms of the importance of pronunciation in the learning of English (Item B9), 62% of them disagreed that good English pronunciation should take precedence over clear expression. However, this result is divergent from the findings of the interviews. A majority of the interviewees were found to attach a great deal of importance to pronunciation (15 references). The reason for this belief may be related to their concern about vocabulary learning:

2) *I think pronunciation is important for the learning of English. If you could not pronounce correctly, you would not be able to memorise words by following their pronunciation ... (Simon, Lines 1689-1690, Interview I).*

The participants' concerns about the study of vocabulary are illustrated in the following statement, "the most important part of learning English is learning vocabulary and grammar" (Item B4). 30% of the participants expressed a positive attitude towards this statement. This belief is further found in the interviews. The importance of vocabulary (39 references) and grammar (34 references) for learning English in high school was frequently mentioned in the interviews. Eason put it simply:

3) *My impression about learning English in high school is that it means learning vocabulary and grammar (Eason, Lines 133-134, Interview I).*

59% of the participants agreed with the statement that "To learn English means doing a lot of repetition and practice" (Item B3). This finding indicates that most of the participants believed that doing a large quantity of practice was indispensable for learning a language before they entered the EMI University. This belief is confirmed in the interviews (26 references). As evidenced in the following remark, this belief tends to be caused by the traditional grammar-translation approach in Mainland China, which puts much emphasis on practice and rote learning:

4) [...], *but learning English, you have to practise more and memorise more. You cannot learn it well without a certain amount of practice (Lynn, Lines 564-565, Interview I).*

In addition to the above results, a strong faith in memorisation and repetition is found to be prevalent among the participants in the interviews (39 mentions). They seem to assign importance to abundant memorisation and repetition in English study. Rachel's comment serves as a good example to illustrate this belief:

5) [...], *I have to memorise these English words again and again. If I did not do like this, I might completely forget them. Learning a language, I think, should be always like this ... (Rachel, Lines 1864-1865, Interview I).*

The findings that the participants held strong beliefs about the importance of vocabulary and grammar, practice, and memorisation in learning English upon their arrival at the EMI University confirm previous studies (e.g., Li & Liang, 2012; Yang, 1999). These beliefs reflect the examination-oriented language learning and teaching in Mainland China which mainly focuses on the memorisation of grammar and vocabulary (Benson & Gao, 2008). Such examination-oriented teaching seems to lead to the emergence of the aforementioned beliefs among Chinese EFL learners (Peng, 2011).

4.2.2 Difficulty of Language Learning

Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 show the participants' responses to the difficulty of language learning. The participants' opinions varied on Item B1, with 56% of them stating that "English is a language of medium difficulty" and 25% of them that "English is an easy language". Item B13 estimated the length of time required to learn a language. 22% of the respondents believed that they could learn to speak English well within 3 to 5 years if they spent one hour a day learning English, and 35% of them thought that they could do so within 1 to 2 years. 13% of them even considered that they could learn to speak English well in less than a year. These findings suggest that the participants were confident of learning English well upon their arrival at the EMI University. Their confidence about learning English might stem from their English proficiency upon

arrival at the EMI University. A large majority of the participants scored over 120 out of 150 in the National English Matriculation (Section 3.5.3). Their good performance in this entrance examination might have resulted in their confidence about learning English.

Table 4.3 Beliefs about the Difficulty of Language Learning in Survey I

Item	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
B2 It is difficult for me to take part in group discussion in English.	43	30	27
B7 Learning to read and write in English is more difficult than learning to speak and listen.	30	32	38
B1 English is a/an _____ language.			
1) very difficult;			2
2) difficult;			13
3) medium-difficult;			56
4) easy;			25
5) very easy			4
B13 If someone spent one hour a day learning English, how long would it take them to speak the language very well:			
1) less than a year			13
2) 1-2 years			35
3) 3-5 years			22
4) 5-10 years			10
5) You can't learn a language in 1 hour a day.			20

Table 4.4 Beliefs about the Difficulty of Language Learning in Interview I

No.	Subcategory	Counts
15	Vocabulary is difficult.	7
16	Speaking is difficult.	2
17	Grammar is difficult.	2
18	Writing is difficult.	1
19	Reading is difficult.	1

Their confidence is further demonstrated on their responses to Items B2 and B7 which measure their beliefs about the relative difficulties of the language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. 43% of the participants disagreed with the statement that “it is difficult for me to take part in group discussion in English” (Item B2). This result echoes their confidence in learning English as analysed above. 38% of the participants considered learning to read and write in English to be more difficult than learning to speak and listen (Item B7). This result indicates the impact of the learners’ previous

English learning experiences in high school upon their beliefs. Receptive skills related to English reading are always more focused on than productive skills like speaking in high school (Hu, 2002; Liao, 2000; Tang, 2001). The importance of reading and writing was thus impressed upon the participants.

The interviews generated more in-depth results with regard to the participants' beliefs about the difficulty of language learning (Table 4.4). Vocabulary was mentioned the most by the participants as their difficulties in language learning (7 references). Though small in number, this might be taken as further evidence for the above finding that the participants endorsed the primacy of vocabulary in their learning of English upon their arrival at the EMI University. One of the relevant extracts is exemplified as follows:

- 6) *The most difficult for me was still about vocabulary. I always felt that my vocabulary was not enough. Therefore, I spent a lot of time memorising vocabulary. (Hanks, Lines 399-400, Interview I).*

4.2.3 Autonomy in Language Learning

Table 4.5 and Table 4.6 present the results concerning the participants' beliefs about autonomy in language learning.

Table 4.5 Beliefs about Autonomy in Language Learning in Survey I

Item	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
B10 I believe that I should find my own opportunities to use English.	2	27	71
B11 I should be responsible for my own English study instead of relying on teachers.	2	30	68
B12 I consider what I need to learn on my own instead of waiting for instruction from teachers.	2	30	68
B14 In order to learn English well, I am ready to practise a lot after class.	15	42	43
B15 I think the role of teacher is to create opportunities for me to practise English.	9	38	53

Table 4.6 Beliefs about Autonomy in Language Learning in Interview I

No.	Subcategory	Counts
20	Teachers are important.	35
21	English learning is my own responsibility.	10
22	I should find my own opportunity to learn English.	10

71% of the participants believed that they should find their own opportunities to use English (Item B10); 68% of them agreed that they should take responsibility for their learning instead of relying on teachers (Item B11); 68% of them thought about what they needed to learn rather than awaiting instruction from teachers (Item B12). The findings indicate that the participants tended to be autonomous in their English study. This result is supported by the interviews (Table 4.6). Most of the interviewees were cognizant of the importance of taking their own responsibility in the learning of English. They thought that it was important to study on their own (10 references) and that they should find their own opportunities to learn English (10 references). Eason commented as follows:

7) *I did not have any extra tuition in high school, because I thought the learning of English was my own business. (Eason, Lines 171-172, Interview I).*

However, a further examination of their responses to these items reveals two interesting points: firstly, though 43% of them agreed that they were ready to practise extensively after class in order to learn English well (Item B14), 42% of them were undecided. This implies a gap between their belief that they are autonomous and their actual practice in English learning. This gap might further indicate the immature cognition of the participants when they were in high school. The young teenagers in high school might be not mature enough to take control of their English study (Lamb, 2013).

Another noteworthy point is that, though most (53%) of the respondents believed that the role of teachers was to create opportunities for them to practise English (Item B15), over one third (38%) of them were undecided. Their dependence on teachers is more evidently revealed in the interviews. The interviewees were found to depend a great deal on their teachers in the learning of English (35 references). As Eason states below, the learners' dependence on teachers is related to teacher-led learning of English and teaching in high school (Gan, 2009).

8) *[...], teachers were definitely important. We mainly depended on teachers to learn English when we were in high school. They talked in class, and we mainly listened*

and took notes. We barely had our own time to study (Eason, Lines 143-144, Interview I).

4.3 Beliefs about Language Learning after an Academic Year

In order to answer the second research question (RQ 2a: What are Chinese EFL learners' beliefs about the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University?), the quantitative data relating to the participants' BLL were analysed in the same way as noted earlier in Section 4.2. The frequency of response to each item was noted in the belief questionnaire. Then, the qualitative data were analysed in order to provide triangulation with the quantitative data (Section 3.6.2).

4.3.1 Nature of Language Learning

Table 4.7 and Table 4.8 present the findings on the participants' BLL one academic year after they had studied EAP at the EMI University.

Comparing Table 4.1 (Section 4.2.1) and Table 4.7, no apparent changes were discovered in their responses to Item B6 and Item B8 between Survey I and Survey II. On Item B6 with which 73% of the participants agreed in Survey I, 71% of them in Survey II considered "it is necessary to know about English-speaking culture in order to learn English well" (Item B6). On Item B8, 77% of the participants in Survey II agreed with the statement that "it is best to learn English in an English-speaking environment such as an English-speaking country" (Item B8). Similarly, 73% of participants agreed with this statement in Survey I. These findings indicate that the participants continued to assert the value of an immersion setting for learning English, which confirms previous studies in other similar EMI contexts (e.g., M. Wu, 2008a).

The above results are further echoed in the interviews (31 references) (Table 4.8). As exemplified in the following extract, the exposure to English seems to have strengthened the participants' beliefs about the value of an English-speaking environment for learning English:

- 9) *An English-speaking environment is good for learning English. In such an environment you can have more opportunities to talk to native speakers to practise your oral English (Steve, Lines 1324-1325, Interview II).*

Table 4.7 Beliefs about the Nature of Language Learning in Survey II

Item	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
B3 To learn English means doing a lot of repetition and practice.	13	26	61
B4 The most important part of learning English is learning vocabulary and grammar.	29	30	41
B5 Extensive reading of English newspapers, magazines or novels is more helpful than close reading of textbooks.	7	18	75
B6 To learn English well, it is necessary to know about English-speaking culture.	8	21	71
B8 It is best to learn English in an English-speaking environment such as an English-speaking country.	4	19	77
B9 Clear expression of ideas is more important than good English pronunciation.	11	20	69

Table 4.8 Beliefs about the Nature of Language Learning in Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts
1	English should be learned through practice and communication.	37
2	It is best to learn English in an English-speaking environment.	31
3	Vocabulary is important.	22
4	Writing is important.	18
5	Pronunciation is less important as long as the goal of communication is achieved.	16
6	Exercises are important.	15
7	Extensive reading is important.	14
8	Speaking is important.	10
9	It is necessary to understand English-speaking culture.	8
10	English learning involves peers and cooperation.	6
11	Memorisation and repetition are important.	2
12	Examination is important.	2
13	Grammar is important.	1

With regard to beliefs about the study of language skills, 75% of the participants considered that “extensive reading of English newspapers, magazines or novels is more helpful than close reading of textbooks” (Item B5). On the same item in Survey I, only 65% of the participants agreed with this statement. The 10-percentage difference indicates that this belief was more widely held by the participants after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. This difference seems to be related to the large number of reading tasks in academic studies in EMI environments (Gao, 2006;

Liu, 2013). Academic studies in EMI settings involve extensive reading tasks, which might shape the participants' belief that extensive reading is of particular importance.

On Item B9, there was a slight change observed between Survey I and Survey II. 69% of the participants in Survey II agreed that “clear expression of ideas is more important than good English pronunciation”, while 62% of them agreed in Survey I. This slight increase may not be enough to indicate a change in students' beliefs about the importance of pronunciation. However, evidence can be further found in the interviews that these participants held a realistic belief about the importance of pronunciation in learning English. The interviews reveal that pronunciation was perceived to be of less importance as long as it did not impede successful communication (16 references):

10) It is common that different people speak English with different accents. Therefore, I think pronunciation is not that important as long as the goal of communication is achieved (Michael, Lines 501-502, Interview II).

Further, 59% of the participants in Survey II agreed with the importance of repetition and practice (Item B3), with which 61% of them in Survey I agreed. This result indicates that this belief was still held by them after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. However, an examination of the interviews reveals that the word “practice” might have changed its meaning in Interview II. “Practice” in Interview I means practising examination-oriented exercises, while “practice” in Interview II is more closely equivalent to using English to solve practical problems. As revealed in the interviews, most of the participants considered that English should be learned through using it to solve problems such as completing surveys and questionnaires. This belief is demonstrated in the following extract:

11) Now, I think learning English means using it to handle some problems, such as using English to write reports, or to do some questionnaires (Eason, Lines 38-39, Interview II).

The above findings concerning the participants' beliefs about the importance of clear expression and of using English to solve practical problems are related to the feature of

studying EAP in an EMI setting. Studying in an EMI setting highlights the need for the ability to use English for academic studies and communication (Gao, 2006; Liu, 2013), which might be expected to lead to the emergence of the belief that English should be learned through using it to solve practical problems.

41% of the participants in Survey II agreed with the statement, “the most important part of learning English is learning vocabulary and grammar” (Item B4). This finding suggests that the participants, after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, still believed in the importance of vocabulary in the learning of English. What distinguishes the two interviews, as Jimmy indicates in the following extract, is that vocabulary learning in Interview II focused more on content subjects.

12) Vocabulary is very important. For example, if I do not know some vocabulary for the Physics class, I may be unable to understand the requirements of the questions in this course (Jimmy, Lines 134-135, Interview II).

This extract reveals the influence of the study of content subjects in English upon the participants’ belief in the importance of vocabulary at the EMI University. As noted earlier (Section 3.4), English serves as a means to study content subjects at the EMI University. The study of content subjects poses several challenges to the students, such as difficulties in technical vocabulary and expressions (Evans & Green, 2007; Li & Ruan, 2013). These challenges might result in the participants’ belief in the importance of vocabulary in learning English at the EMI University.

The interviews also indicate some new beliefs, which add to the quantitative results. The participants expressed a strong belief about the importance of academic reading, writing, and speaking after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. Learning EAP at this EMI University seems to have increased their awareness of the importance of speaking (10 references). Another newly found belief pertains to the interviewees’ perceptions about the importance of cooperation with peers (6 references). This belief seems to stem from their experiences in cooperation with peers to conduct a series of activities such as presentations and projects at the EMI University:

13) *The impression I have got from my experience of studying here for a year is that learning English involves group activities like projects and presentations, [...] (Jason, Lines 292-293, Interview II).*

These newly developed beliefs, as revealed in the above extract, were concerned with the participants' EAP learning experiences at the EMI University. Studying in EMI contexts involves using English to solve practical problems such as doing group projects, surveys, and presentations (Liu, 2013; Parks & Raymond, 2004). Engaging in these academic tasks may require the learners to often read materials, write essays, express their opinions, and work together with others in groups. These experiences might enhance their belief in the importance of skills in reading, writing, speaking, and cooperating with others for academic studies in EMI contexts.

4.3.2 Difficulty of Language Learning

Table 4.9 and Table 4.10 relate to the participants' beliefs about the difficulty of language learning. With respect to Item B1, while the participants demonstrated almost the same attitudes towards the three answers 1) *English is a very difficult language*, 3) *English is a medium-difficult language*, and 5) *English is an easy language* between Survey I and Survey II, they revealed some obvious changes as regards the remaining two choices: 2) *English is a difficult language* and 4) *English is an easy language*. 13% of the participants in Survey I agreed with the answer that *English is a difficult language*, while this percentage rose up to 20% in Survey II. Similarly, 25% of the participants in Survey I agreed with this statement that *English is an easy language*, while this percentage in Survey II decreased to 17%.

Similar results are also found for Item B13. In Survey I, 13% of the participants believed that they could learn to speak English well in less than a year if they spent one hour a day learning English, while only 9% of them in Survey II believed they could do so. 35% of the respondents in Survey I thought that they could learn to speak English well within 1 to 2 years if they spent one hour a day learning English, while only 29% of them in Survey II believed that they could do so. The decrease in Survey II indicates

that the participants had become aware of more difficulties in learning English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University.

Table 4.9 Beliefs about the Difficulty of Language Learning in Survey II

Item	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
B2 It is difficult for me to take part in group discussion in English.	39	34	27
B7 Learning to read and write in English is more difficult than learning to speak and listen.	26	26	48
B1 English is a/an _____ language.			
1) very difficult;			3
2) difficult;			20
3) medium-difficult;			58
4) easy;			17
5) very easy			2
B13 If someone spent one hour a day learning English, how long would it take them to speak the language very well:			
1) less than a year			9
2) 1-2 years			29
3) 3-5 years			29
4) 5-10 years			16
5) You can't learn a language in 1 hour a day.			17

Table 4.10 Beliefs about the Difficulty of Language Learning in Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts
14	Studying content subjects in English is difficult.	17
15	Writing is difficult.	11
16	Listening is difficult.	6
17	Speaking is difficult.	3
18	Vocabulary is difficult.	3
19	Reading is difficult.	2

This change is further revealed in the results for Item B7 which measures the participants' beliefs about difficulties in acquiring language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. 38% of the participants in Survey I agreed with the statement that "Learning to read and write in English is more difficult than learning to speak and listen" (Item B7), while this percentage in Survey II increased to 48%.

The above findings reveal that the participants were aware of more difficulties in language learning after having studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University.

Studying in an EMI context, as mentioned earlier, means more demand for language skills for academic purposes, such as participating in group activities, extensive reading, and academic writing (Liu, 2013). It may take time for the students to adjust to this new environment.

The interviews contribute to our understanding of the participants' difficulties in EAP learning at an EMI University (Table 4.10). They reveal a new belief, namely, that the participants considered it difficult to study the content subjects in English at the EMI University. As described in Section 3.4, in the second semester, the EMI University started to offer some modules in content subjects to its students, such as Physics and Information Technology for Business, which were taught in English. In the interviews, most of the participants said that they encountered difficulties in studying these content subjects in English:

14)[...], the Physics class is taught in English this term. It is a big pressure on me. Everything is in English and there are many technical terms. (Simon, Lines 69-70, Interview II).

Another major difficulty the participants report in the interviews concerns academic writing, evidence for which is found in the qualitative results. To be specific, the difficulty in this regard lies in writing timed essays, coursework essays, and project reports. This point is illustrated in Steve's comment as follows:

15)[...], for me, writing the timed essay is a big challenge, because I have to do it immediately without opportunity to get access to other help (Steve, Lines 1243-1244, Interview II).

It seems that studying content subjects in English caused difficulties for the participants at the EMI University. These difficulties were mainly due to their inadequate knowledge of technical terms (Li & Ruan, 2013). It also caused difficulties for the participants in their writing for academic purposes such as writing timed essays, coursework papers, and project reports (Evans & Green, 2007).

4.3.3 Autonomy in Language Learning

Table 4.11 and Table 4.12 present the results in Survey II regarding the participants' beliefs about autonomy in learning English at the EMI University.

Table 4.11 Beliefs about the Autonomy in Language Learning in Survey II

Item	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
B10 I believe that I should find my own opportunities to use English.	4	17	79
B11 I should be responsible for my own English study instead of relying on teachers.	4	21	75
B12 I consider what I need to learn on my own instead of waiting for instruction from teachers.	5	23	72
B14 In order to learn English well, I am ready to practise a lot after class.	17	31	52
B15 I think the role of teacher is to create opportunities for me to practise English.	12	26	62

Table 4.12 Beliefs about the Autonomy in Language Learning in Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts
20	English learning is my own responsibility.	31
21	I should find my own opportunity to learn English.	24
22	Teachers are important.	15

In comparison with the items pertaining to autonomy in Survey I (Table 4.5), the participants in Survey II expressed more agreement with those items. 79% of the respondents believed that they should find their own opportunities to use English (Item B10); 75% of them agreed that they should be responsible for their own English study instead of relying on teachers (Item B11); 72% of them would think about what they need to learn on their own rather than waiting for instruction from teachers (Item B12). These findings indicate stronger autonomy among the participants an academic year after they had studied EAP at the EMI University. These findings are further illustrated in the interviews (Table 4.12). Eason remarks as follows:

16) [...], compared to high school, I think I have a stronger sense of responsibility in my learning of English now (Eason, Lines 24-25, Interview II).

An increase is also observed in the items related to the participants' autonomous behaviour. 52% of the respondents agreed that they practised after class in order to learn

English well (Item B14). A decrease in their dependence on teachers was also noticed. 62% of them thought that the role of teachers was to create opportunities for them to practise English (Item B15). These findings further indicate that the participants might become more autonomous in their English study after spending a year at the EMI University. Their enhanced autonomy is captured in the following remark:

17) It is particularly important to create opportunities to practise my listening and speaking on my own at this University (Steve, Lines 1260-1261, Interview II).

The participants' enhanced autonomy, as revealed in the above extract, seems to be related to their EAP learning experiences at the EMI University. The participants engaged themselves into a variety of learning tasks such as group projects, surveys, and presentations in their EAP classes. These activities require a strong awareness of taking one's own responsibility (Q. Zhong, 2010). In addition, as described earlier (Section 3.4), the students were trained how to take control of their own study at the EMI University.

4.4 Changes in Beliefs after an Academic Year

In order to address the third research question (RQ 3a: What are the potential changes in their beliefs about the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, and what might have caused these changes?), the quantitative data were analysed with descriptive techniques (means and standard deviation), and with inferential statistical procedures (a parametric test) (Section 3.6.1). Then, for the purpose of providing triangulation with the quantitative data, the qualitative data were analysed with a focus on the changes emerging in the interviews (Section 3.6.2).

4.4.1 Changes in Beliefs in Quantitative Data

In order to explore whether the changes which are already identified in Section 4.3, are statistically significant as regards the participants' beliefs, a parametric test (an

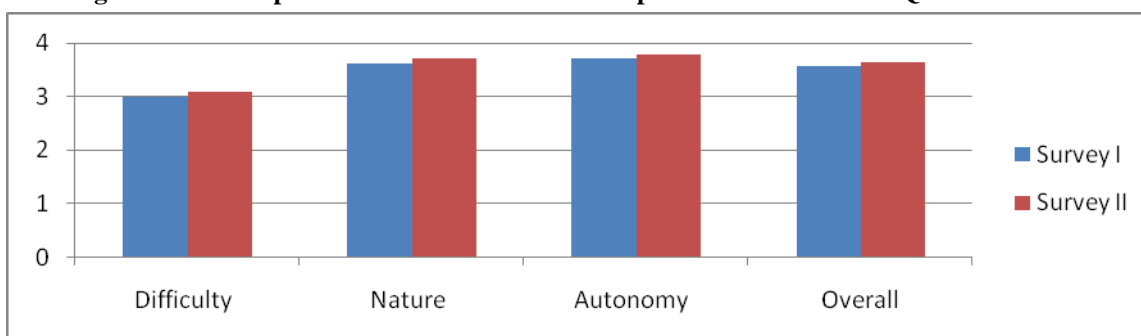
Independent T-Test) was performed on the data collected at the two research stages (Survey I and Survey II) as described in Chapter 3.

Table 4.13 and Figure 4.1 present the Independent T-Test results. It can be seen that there are apparent differences in the overall means of the participants' beliefs between Survey I and Survey II. An obvious increase is observed in the means of all the categories of the beliefs in the after-arrival questionnaire. As shown in Table 4.13, the P values [Sig. (2-tailed)] for the three subscales and for the whole scale of BLL are 0.001, 0.000, .001 and .000 respectively, which are all below the .05 level. The findings indicate that there are statistically significant changes in the participants' beliefs about the *difficulty* of, the *nature* of, and the degree of *autonomy* in language learning after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University.

Table 4.13 Independent T-Test: Overall Beliefs in Upon- and After-arrival Questionnaires

Category	Group	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Difficulty	Survey I	1026	2.9781	.69791	-3.462	1933	.001
	Survey II	909	3.0869	.68144			
Nature	Survey I	1026	3.6197	.43678	-4.125	1933	.000
	Survey II	909	3.7030	.45054			
Autonomy	Survey I	1026	3.7088	.47807	-3.355	1933	.001
	Survey II	909	3.7864	.53912			
Overall	Survey I	1026	3.4356	.34181	-5.547	1933	.000
	Survey II	909	3.5254	.37016			

Figure 4.1 A Comparison of Means of Beliefs in Upon- and After-arrival Questionnaires



In order to further examine the changes in the participants' beliefs about learning English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, an Independent Samples T-Test was again performed on the means of every individual item between the

upon- and after-arrival questionnaires (Table 4.14). When the means of every individual item of the Upon- and After-arrival questionnaires are compared, significant differences are found to exist in 9 items [Sig. (2-tailed) approximately $P < 0.05$]. The significant differences indicate changes in these 9 individual beliefs among the participants after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. These 9 changes fall into the three areas of the belief questionnaire: 1) the difficulty of language learning (Item B7); 2) the nature of language learning (Items B4, B5, B8, and B9); and 3) autonomy in language learning (Items B10, B11, B14, and B15).

Table 4.14 Independent T-Test: Individual Beliefs in Upon- and After-arrival Questionnaires

Item	Mean (Upon)	Mean (After)	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
B4 The most important part of learning English is learning vocabulary and grammar.	2.95	3.15	-4.632	1933	.000
B5 Extensive reading of English newspapers, magazines or novels is more helpful than close reading of textbooks.	3.77	3.86	-2.465	1933	.014
B7 Learning to read and write in English is more difficult than learning to speak and listen.	3.15	3.33	-3.799	1933	.000
B8 It is best to learn English in an English-speaking environment such as an English-speaking country.	3.94	4.04	-2.785	1933	.005
B9 Clear expression of ideas is more important than good English pronunciation.	3.66	3.76	-2.281	1933	.023
B10 I believe that I should find my own opportunities to use English.	3.92	4.00	-2.282	1933	.023
B11 I should be responsible for my own English study instead of relying on teachers.	3.89	3.99	-2.823	1933	.005
B14 In order to learn English well, I am ready to practise a lot after class.	3.33	3.43	-2.385	1933	.017
B15 I think the role of teacher is to create opportunities for me to practise English.	3.55	3.63	-2.124	1933	.034

4.4.2 Changes in Beliefs Indicated in Qualitative Data

In order to further examine the changes in the participants' beliefs, the subcategories coded in the data of the two Interviews (Interview I and Interview II) were re-examined. A comparison was then made between the two groups of the coded subcategories. Evidence of changes in belief was noted and included in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15 A Comparison between Beliefs Emerging from Interview I and Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts		Category
		Interview I	Interview II	
1	Vocabulary is difficult.	7	3	Difficulty of Language Learning
2	Speaking is difficult.	2	3	
3	Grammar is difficult.	2	/	
4	Writing is difficult.	1	11	
5	Reading is difficult.	1	2	
6	Listening is difficult.	/	6	
7	Studying content subjects in English is difficult.	/	17	
8	Vocabulary is important.	39	22	Nature of Language Learning
9	Memorisation and repetition are important.	39	2	
10	Grammar is important.	34	1	
11	Examination is important.	32	2	
12	Exercises are important.	26	15	
13	It is best to learn English in an English-speaking environment.	20	31	
14	English should be learned through practice and communication.	15	37	
	Pronunciation is important.	15	/	
15	Pronunciation is less important as long as the goal of communication is achieved.	/	16	
16	Extensive reading is important.	10	14	
17	Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Chinese.	7	/	
18	It is necessary to understand English-speaking culture.	6	8	
19	Listening is important.	2	/	
20	Speaking is important.	2	10	
21	Writing is important.	1	18	
22	English learning involves peers and cooperation	/	6	
23	Teachers are important.	35	15	Autonomy in
24	English learning is my own responsibility.	10	31	Language
25	I should find my own opportunity to learn English.	10	24	Learning

Examination of Table 4.15 reveals the following changes in relation to the three categories of beliefs. With regard to the difficulty of learning English, the participants came to believe more strongly that English was a difficult language to learn after they had stayed at the EMI University for an academic year. Specifically, upon their arrival at the EMI University, the greatest difficulties they encountered seemed to be associated with vocabulary (No. 1), grammar (No. 3), and writing (No. 4). By contrast, their difficulties centred more on the study of content subjects in English (No. 7), academic writing (No. 4) and listening (No. 6) one academic year after they had started studying EAP at the EMI University.

Table 4.15 also reveals that, after staying at the EMI University for an academic year, the participants held less strongly in the following beliefs about the nature of English learning: the importance of memorisation and repetition (No. 8), grammar (No. 10), and examinations (No. 11). On the other hand, they demonstrated a strengthening in their beliefs about the importance of practice and communication (No. 14), the value of an immersion setting (No. 13), the critical importance of academic writing (No. 21), extensive reading (No. 16), and speaking in the learning of English (No. 20). Pronunciation was perceived to be less important as long as the purpose of communication was achieved (No. 15); and the importance of interactions with peers was identified in their beliefs about English study (No. 22).

Changes are also found in their beliefs about autonomy in learning English. After staying for an academic year at the EMI University, they expressed a greater degree of belief in autonomy. They believed more strongly that learning English was their own responsibility (No. 24), and that they should find their own opportunities to learn English (No. 25). On the other hand, the comparison indicates a decrease in their belief in the need for dependence on teachers (No. 23).

However, there were still 15 references observed in Interview II concerning their belief in the importance of teachers. This result suggests that some of them still needed assistance and guidance from their teachers while studying EAP at the EMI University.

This may be caused by the difficulties they encountered when learning EAP at the EMI University. As reported above (Section 4.3.2 and Section 4.4.1), the participants encountered difficulties in academic vocabulary, speaking, reading, and writing when studying EAP at the EMI University.

In summary, the participants showed apparent changes in their beliefs about learning English after they had studied EAP for an academic year at an EMI University. The results which came out of the quantitative data provide a general understanding of the changes in the participants' beliefs about learning English between the two research stages. The qualitative data provide rich insights into these changes, which will be further discussed in the upcoming section (Section 4.4.3).

4.4.3 Discussion of the Changes in BLL

This section discusses the changes in the participants' beliefs about learning English after they had studied EAP for one academic year at the EMI University.

4.4.3.1 Nature of Language Learning

Both the questionnaire surveys and interviews indicate that the participants in Survey II held a stronger belief about the importance of vocabulary in the learning of English at the EMI University than they had in Survey I. An account for this change might be related to the study of content subjects in English at the EMI University. As noted earlier, English serves as a means to study content subjects in EMI contexts. The study of content subjects may cause difficulties to the students due to their inadequate knowledge of the relevant technical vocabulary and expressions (Evans & Green, 2007; Li & Ruan, 2013).

Both the quantitative and qualitative data reveal that the participants came to believe more in the importance of extensive reading in learning English at the EMI University. This might be due to the nature of academic studies in EMI contexts. Studying in EMI contexts might involve a large number of extensive reading tasks (Gao, 2006; Liu,

2013). These experiences of having to do extensive reading might have formed their belief that extensive reading is of particular importance.

The above findings concerning the participants' belief about the importance of clear expression and using English to solve practical problems might be associated with their EAP learning experiences at the EMI University. Studying in an EMI setting highlights the ability to use English as a means of study and communication (Gao, 2006; Liu, 2013). Consequently, after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, the participants might come to believe more that English should be learned through using it to solve practical problems in academic studies and communication. This communication-oriented feature of EAP learning at the EMI University might also make them believe less in the importance of grammar, memorisation, and examinations in learning English.

The interviews suggest that the participants developed some new beliefs after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. They came to believe more in the importance of academic skills in writing, speaking, and interactions with peers. These newly developed beliefs are likely to be related to their EAP learning experiences at the EMI University. As mentioned above, learning tasks in EAP classes such as using English to do group projects and presentations may create opportunities for them to write essays, express their opinions, and work together with others in groups. These writing tasks serve the purpose of communication and information exchange within particular disciplines, which makes it an important part of academic studies in EMI contexts (Dodigovic, 2005; Hemp-Lyons, 2001; Johns, 1997). In addition, the formative assessment adopted at the EMI University may have created many opportunities for the participants to receive feedback and to interact with others, which might engender changes in the participants' attitudes towards themselves as learners (Kemp & Scaife, 2012). Consequently, this experience might lead to the emergence of their belief in the importance of skills in writing, speaking, and cooperating with others. Finally, their EAP study experiences at the EMI University may guarantee them adequate exposure to

the target language input, which might have also contributed to their belief in the value of an English-speaking environment for learning English.

4.4.3.2 Difficulty of Language Learning

Both the quantitative and qualitative results reveal that the participants believed more strongly that English is a difficult language to learn after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. This change might be explained by the nature of studying in an EMI setting. As pointed out by Gao (2006) and Liu (2013), studying in an EMI context requires students to have fluent skills for academic studies, such as skills in participating in group activities, extensive reading, and academic writing. The requirements for these skills might thus cause difficulties for them, resulting in the change of the strength of their belief that English is a difficult language to learn.

The qualitative data indicate that the participants encountered difficulties in studying content subjects in English at the EMI University. These difficulties seemed to be mainly caused by their inadequate knowledge of technical terms (Li & Ruan, 2013). The interviews also reveal that they encountered difficulties in writing for academic purposes such as writing essays and project reports. The difficulties might be related to the contextual realities at the EMI University. As noted earlier, the participants began to study content subjects in English from the second semester, such as Physics and International Relationships. The students' English proficiency at the moment might not have prepared them for the study of these content subjects in English as early as the second semester of their university study.

4.4.3.3 Autonomy in language learning

Both the quantitative and qualitative data reveal that the participants believed that they demonstrated an enhanced autonomy in taking responsibility for their own learning of English. They seemed to have a stronger awareness of the need to find their own opportunities to learn English. They also showed an apparent decrease in their reliance

on teachers. This apparently enhanced autonomy may be firstly caused by their experiences in conducting the variety of learning tasks such as group projects, surveys and presentations at the EMI University. These experiences might have cultivated their awareness of the need to take one's own responsibility in group activities. Further, the EAP teaching at the EMI University encouraged students to take control of their own study. In short, the classroom dynamics and teaching practices at the EMI University might be expected to contribute to the strengthening of the participants' autonomy (Q. Zhong, 2010; Peng, 2011). However, the qualitative data suggest that a certain number of the participants still attached great importance to teachers in their EAP study at the EMI University. As discussed above, this might be caused by the difficulties they encountered in their academic studies when adapting to the EMI University.

Having discussed the overall changes in the participants' BLL after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, the following section will discuss the key findings at the two research stages including their BLL upon (Section 4.5.1) and after (Section 4.5.2) their arrival at the EMI University respectively.

4.5 Discussion of the Key Findings Regarding BLL

This study has made use of questionnaire surveys and interviews. The surveys have focused on unveiling the overall pattern of the participants' BLL. The interviews have centred on describing the potential changes in their BLL. To examine how the two parts have worked together to contribute to our understanding of the participants' BLL at the EMI University, this section will discuss the results obtained from the two data sources.

4.5.1 Key Findings about BLL upon Arrival

The quantitative data showed an overall pattern among the participants' BLL. The qualitative data provided rich information about their beliefs. The two data sources reveal an array of characteristics of their BLL upon their arrival at the EMI University.

The two data sources reveal that optimism towards the study of English was prevalent among the participants. They were confident of learning English well. A second feature of their BLL, as indicated in the questionnaire surveys and interviews, relates to a strong belief in the primacy of vocabulary and grammar. Similarly, an endorsement of the critical importance of doing considerable memorisation was also noticed in the two data sources. The quantitative and qualitative data also reveal an appreciation of the value of an English-speaking environment for learning English among the participants. Another characteristic of their BLL, as revealed in the interviews, is the great importance they attached to the study of pronunciation, though they were found to attach equivalent importance to clear expression in the learning of English. It is also interesting to note that, in spite of a certain degree of readiness to take responsibility for their own learning of English, the participants displayed an inclination to dependence on teacher in the interviews.

The findings obtained at this research stage, which serve as the baseline for the whole study, confirm previous research on Chinese EFL learners' beliefs in similar EFL contexts. For instance, the participants' optimistic attitude towards the learning of English discovered in the present study verifies Yang's (1999) research. In her investigation into beliefs about the learning of English among Chinese EFL learners in Taiwan, Yang (1999) discovered that her participants were confident in their learning of English. The primacy assigned to vocabulary and grammar by the participants in the present research also corresponds to that reported in Wang's (2003) investigation. The result concerning the participants' beliefs about the importance of practice lends further support to Li and Liang's (2012) research. They found that Chinese EFL learners attached much importance to practice in learning English. Confirmation to previous research (Li & Liang, 2012) is also found with regard to the importance attached to pronunciation among the participants in the current study. Congruence with previous research (Yang, 1999; Wang, 2003) is further discovered in the participants' appreciation of an English-medium environment in learning English.

The study finds that Chinese EFL learners hold at this stage an ambivalent attitude towards autonomy in their English study, which confirms Chan (2001)'s and Q. Zhong's (2010) studies. While demonstrating a certain degree of autonomy, they still tend to rely much on their teachers. This might be related to the traditional teaching style in Mainland China where English courses are generally featured with large classes, book-based instruction and a stress on the mastery of linguistic knowledge (Gan, 2009). This teaching style leads to few opportunities for the students to actively engage themselves with the language learning process, instead leading them to depend on school language teachers. On the other hand, their language teachers constantly emphasise the essential role of personal effort in achieving satisfactory grades in examinations (Gan, 2009).

In a word, my findings on the participants' BLL identified in the current study confirm the results of previous research on Chinese EFL learners in similar EFL contexts. In this sense, my participants might be considered to be typical of Chinese EFL learners. Hence, the purpose of providing baseline information to the whole study is realised at this research stage, which makes it reliable for further comparison with the results obtained at the later stage of the study.

4.5.2 Key Findings of BLL after an Academic Year

After studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, the participants were found to be consistent with respect to some beliefs identified at the first research stage. For instance, both the quantitative and qualitative data indicate that they still believed in the importance of vocabulary and an English-speaking environment for language learning.

At the same time, a number of changes were observed in the participants' beliefs one academic year after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. In contrast with the optimistic attitude towards the learning of English upon their arrival at the EMI University, a more realistic position on the difficulty of learning English was

found among them. In the questionnaire surveys, they demonstrated significant changes in their belief about the general difficulty of learning English (Item B1) and the time it takes to learn it well (Item B13). Further, they showed more awareness of difficulties in reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Item B7) both in the questionnaires and in the interviews.

The qualitative data also indicate that, after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, the participants' perceived difficulty in learning English shifted from vocabulary and grammar to studying content subjects in English, and to academic writing and listening. In other words, the major difficulties they encountered were associated with studying content subjects in English and doing academic writing tasks such as essays, coursework papers, and project reports. Coinciding with these perceived difficulties are the prevalent belief among them about the importance of academic study in vocabulary, speaking, writing, and reading.

With regard to their beliefs about the nature of the of learning English, both the quantitative and qualitative results indicate that, though the primacy of grammar (Item B4) was abandoned by the participants after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, moderate importance was still attached to the study of vocabulary. The qualitative data reveal that their beliefs about the importance of memorisation and repetition, examinations, and the value of translation became weaker with time. Instead, a perception that English should be learned through practice and communication with others was held by the participants. Correspondingly, clear expression was considered more important than good pronunciation in learning English. A further change detected in the interviews relates to their belief in the value of interacting with peers in learning English.

The questionnaire surveys and interviews also show that the participants placed greater value on an English-speaking environment for (Item B8) and on extensive reading in learning English (Item B5). In addition, both the quantitative and qualitative data

indicate that they attached less importance to pronunciation as long as it did not hinder smooth communication (Item B9).

The two data sources show that the participants recognised the need for a larger degree of autonomy in their English study after the participants had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. They were more ready to take responsibility for their own learning of English (Item B11), and to practise more after class in order to learn English well (Item B14). Hence, they thought that they should find their own opportunities to learn English (Item B10). However, though there was evidence of less reliance on teachers among the participants (Item B15), the interviews reveal that they still needed guidance from their teachers in EAP learning at the EMI University.

The changes in the participants' BLL after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University validate the literature on Chinese learners learning EAP in English-speaking contexts. The result pertaining to the participants' perception of the value of an English-speaking environment echoes that of Bernat and Lloyd's (2007) study in Australia. Chinese students tend to believe that studying in an English-speaking context will provide a favourable environment to learn and use English (Liu, 2013; Yang, Webster & Prosser, 2011). Nevertheless, their appreciation of the EMI environment did not undermine the emergence of their realistic attitude towards the difficulty of learning English in such an EMI context (Tanaka, 2004). They seemed to realise that an EMI context did not necessarily lead to automatic progress in their English proficiency.

The belief in the importance of practising English and communicating with others confirms M. Zhong's (2008) study. After studying EAP at EMI contexts, the participants seemed to have broadened their belief that learning English means not only focusing on textbooks, but also using it to communicate with others. Another newly developed belief that it is important to interact with peers in English learning also confirms Yang and Kim's (2011) and M. Zhong's (2008) studies.

The participants' lingering belief in the importance of vocabulary learning at the EMI University verifies a number of studies in other similar EMI contexts (e.g., Bernat & Lloyd, 2007; M. Wu, 2008a). Vocabulary learning seems to be one of the essential components in Chinese EFL learners' beliefs. In contrast, there is a decrease in the participants' belief in the importance of grammar in the current study. Grammar seems not to be a focus of their beliefs when studying EAP in the EMI context.

Confirmation of previous research also comes in the participants' beliefs about autonomy in the learning of English. This research echoes studies conducted in similar EMI contexts (e.g., Amuzie & Winke, 2009; Chan, 2001; Tanaka, 2004; Q. Zhong, 2010) in that, after studying EAP in these EMI contexts, the EFL learners reported a stronger autonomy.

While generating evidence in support of much previous research on Chinese learners' beliefs in EMI contexts, this study also identifies some new findings. For instance, the present research found a certain degree of teacher dependence among the participants. This finding contradicts some earlier literature (e.g., Amuzie & Winke, 2009) in which a subsiding of belief in the importance of teachers was reported among Chinese learners after studying EAP in the U.S. This might be associated with the nature of the English curriculum at the EMI institutions. The English course at an EMI tertiary institution is actually for academic purposes, serving as part of the students' content studies. The EAP courses make use of the formative assessment, normally task-based and group-oriented. As a result, students might have a need to seek guidance from their teachers about how to prepare for this kind of formative evaluation (Gan, 2009).

The present study aims to fill the gap created by the theoretical shortcomings in previous research on Chinese EFL learners' beliefs (Section 2.2.2). The above findings with regard to the changes in the participants' beliefs at the EMI University indicate that belief is dynamic and context-specific in nature. This finding provides counterevidence to the cognitive perspective that belief is a stable meta-cognitive construct (Wenden, 1999). It indicates a connection between learner beliefs and learning context (Barcelos,

2003), hence supporting the socio-cultural conceptualisation that belief is socially situated and responsive to context (Amuzie & Winke, 2009).

The findings suggest a potential connection between the socio-cultural elements and the participants' beliefs. For instance, the participants' perceived difficulties in academic study at the EMI University, including the study of content subjects in English, and of academic writing and speaking, were found to have contributed to the emergence of their beliefs about the importance of speaking and writing for academic purposes. This reflects the influence of situational conditions and cultural artefacts upon their beliefs. Furthermore, their belief in the importance of practice and communication in English displays the influence of the situational learning discourse at the EMI University. Lastly, the participants' belief in the value of interacting with peers suggests the possible mediating effect of social agents (peers) upon learner beliefs.

This study therefore validates the socio-cultural approach to BLL research proposed by a number of researchers (e.g., Bernat, 2008; Kalaja, 2003; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003; Yang & Kim, 2011) and extends previous BLL research by examining EAP learners in an EMI setting within a broader EFL context. It has identified congruence and divergence in their beliefs with previous research and shed more light on the nature of BLL from a socio-cultural perspective.

4.6 Summary

In summary, this chapter has reported the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data. It has also discussed the changes identified between the two research stages. The findings provide a general understanding of the students' beliefs after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. It has indicated that the changes in the participants' beliefs are related to the contextual conditions and their EAP learning experiences at the EMI University. In the next chapter, I shall present my results with regard to the informants' motivation.

Chapter 5 Results Regarding Motivation for Language Learning

5.1 Introduction

This chapter centres on the results of the quantitative and qualitative data regarding the participants' motivation for learning English upon and after their arrival at the EMI University. It presents the answers to the following research questions:

RQ 1b: What is Chinese EFL learners' motivation for the learning of English upon their arrival at the EMI University?

RQ 2b: What is Chinese EFL learners' motivation for the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University?

RQ 3b: What are the potential changes in their motivation for the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, and what might have caused these changes?

This chapter firstly reports the results concerning the participants' motivation for language learning upon their arrival at the EMI University. It includes the first questionnaire survey and interviews at this stage. It then discusses the changes in the participants' motivation after they began studying EAP for one academic year at the EMI University.

5.2 Motivation for Language Learning upon Arrival

In order to answer the first research question, the collected data were analysed in the same ways as in Section 4.2: the frequency of response to each item of the questionnaire was calculated (Section 3.6.1) and the content analysis approach was followed to analyse the interview data in order to provide triangulation with the quantitative data (Section 3.6.2). Relevant entries in the interview data were categorised and then developed as subcategories. All these subcategories were further examined, from which a pattern of findings emerged.

5.2.1 Intrinsic Interest

Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 show my findings with regard to the participants' intrinsic interest in learning English.

Table 5.1 Intrinsic Interest in Language Learning in Survey I

Item		Disagree (D) (%)	Neutral (N) (%)	Agree (A) (%)
M1	I learn English because of my special interest in this language.	20	42	38
M2	I learn English because of my interest in the Western culture and society, such as music, movies, history, etc.	15	35	50

Table 5.2 Intrinsic Interest in Language Learning in Interview I

No.	Subcategory	Counts
1	For watching English movies, TV programmes and video clips	9
2	For reading English newspapers, novels, magazines, and graded readers	7
3	For listening to English music and songs	5
4	Because of interest in the English language	3
5	Because of interest in English-speaking culture and life style	2

On Item M1, only 38% of the participants stated that they learned English because of their love of the English language. 50% of them said that they were interested to learn English because of their fondness of Western culture and society, such as its music, movies, and history (Item M2). These findings suggest that though most of the participants did not learn English out of their interest in the language *per se*, half of them learned it because of their intrinsic interest in English-speaking cultures, songs, movies, history, literature, etc. These results are supported in the interviews (Table 5.2). Some of the interviewees were found to be straightforward about their intrinsic cultural learning motives. They said that they were interested in English movies, TV programmes, and video clips (9 references). They were fond of English music and songs (5 references). They also liked reading English newspapers, novels, and graded readers (7 references). One of the extracts illustrates their intrinsic/cultural interest as follows:

18) Yes. I like watching English movies, because these movies are indeed more interesting than those produced in China, [...]. I also like reading English novels. I was crazy about the Harry Porter series. [...]. (Norah, Lines 641-642, Interview I).

However, the participants' intrinsic cultural interest was often found to be integrated with their predominant instrumental orientation. As commented by Eason, the participants tend to treat watching English movies and TV programmes as a way of improving their English listening. It seems that their intrinsic motivation is partly a reflection of their belief that watching English movies and TV programmes, listening to English music, and reading English materials, benefit their study of English, serving as an additional way of preparing for the high stake examinations (Gao, 2010).

19) I like watching English movies and TV programmes, because I can improve my vocabulary and spoken English by watching them. [...], nevertheless, at that time in high school, the priority of the learning of English was for the National Matriculation (Eason, Lines 121-122, Interview I).

5.2.2 Immediate Achievement

Individual development, as noted in Section 3.3.1.4, refers to learners' short-term goals in learning English, which include their immediate external achievements such as obtaining high scores in a variety of tests and entrance examinations and acquiring a certificate or a degree. Table 5.3 and Table 5.4 present the results relating to the participants' immediate achievements in English study.

Table 5.3 Immediate Achievement in Language Learning in Survey I

Item	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
M3 I learn English mainly for obtaining high scores in examinations.	20	25	55
M4 I learn English because it is a required course to get a certificate, a diploma or a university degree.	22	37	41

Table 5.4 Immediate Achievement in Language Learning in Interview I

No.	Subcategory	Counts
6	For getting high scores in various examinations such as the National Matriculation, term examinations, and IELTS	22
7	Because it is a required course for entering an institution, a diploma, or a degree	5

On Item M4, 41% of the participants agreed that they learned English because it is a required course for getting a certificate or a university degree. In addition, 55% of the respondents agreed with the statement that they learned English mainly to obtain high

scores in high stake examinations, such as final examinations and the National College Entrance Examination (Item M3). High stake examinations seem to have been a strong driving force in the participants' motivation for learning English before they entered the EMI University. This particular motivation is also commonly mentioned in the interviews (Table 5.4). Almost all the interviewees (22 references) expressed the same motive for learning English in high school. That is, the primary driving force for them to learn English was the fact that English was a compulsory course which served the eventual purpose of the National Matriculation (Gao, 2010). This motive is exemplified in the following extract:

20) [...], *though I like watching English movies I think the priority of the learning of English at that time was for the National Matriculation. Interest was secondary. (Eason, Lines 189-191, Interview I).*

These findings indicate that most of the participants learned English with a strong utilitarian attitude (Gao, 2010; Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou, 2004). The participants were found to be motivated to learn English primarily in order to get high scores in tests, pass entrance examinations, and obtain a certificate, diploma or degree. These findings echoed the “certificate motivation” which has elsewhere been found to be prevalent among Chinese EFL learners (Hua, 1998; Shi, 2000).

5.2.3 Going Abroad

Table 5.5 and Table 5.6 show the results with regard to the participants' attitude towards going abroad as a motivation for learning English.

Table 5.5 Going Abroad in Language Learning in Survey I

Item	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
M5 I learn English for better opportunities of studying or working abroad.	10	29	61
M6 I learn English in order to understand or experience the culture of English-speaking countries in future.	9	30	61

Table 5.6 Going Abroad in Language Learning in Interview I

No.	Subcategory	Counts
8	For further education or work opportunities abroad	15

On Item M6, 61% of the participants said that they learned English in preparation for going abroad in order to experience English-speaking culture (Item M6). This finding reveals the possible existence of integrative orientations for learning English among Chinese EFL learners (Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou, 2004; Wu, 2010). Furthermore, 61% of them agreed with the statement that “I learn English for better opportunities of studying or working abroad” (Item M5). This result indicates that the participants took English learning as a means to attain their goal of going abroad, which suggests that Chinese EFL learners have an instrumental motivation for learning English (Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou, 2004).

The participants’ utilitarian attitude towards the learning of English was further displayed in their comments on the motives for opportunities to study abroad (15 references) (Table 5.6). They expressed a strong intention to pursue higher education abroad and assumed good English to be a precondition for attaining this goal. This motive is illustrated as follows:

21) I really wanted to learn English well because I plan to study abroad for my postgraduate degree in the future, [...]. (Paul, Lines 1127-1128, Interview I).

5.2.4 Individual Development

Table 5.7 and Table 5.8 present the findings regarding individual development in the learning of English.

Table 5.7 Individual Development in Language Learning in Survey I

Item	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
M7 I learn English because it is a symbol of good education and social status.	24	34	42
M8 A good command of English can improve my chance of finding a good job.	4	21	75
M9 Learning English well can give me a sense of success.	11	30	59

Table 5.8 Individual Development in Language Learning in Interview I

No.	Subcategory	Counts
9	For better personal development such as employment opportunities	12
10	For a sense of success and satisfaction	6

On Item M9, 59% of the participants said that they learned English because it gave them a sense of success. 42% of them agreed with the statement that “I learn English because it is a symbol of good education and social status”. This result suggests a desire among the participants to increase their social status in the future (Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou, 2004). This desire is also reflected in the participants’ response to the statement that “A good command of English can improve my chance of finding a good job” (Item M8). 75% of them agreed with this statement. This finding indicates that the participants recognised the practical value of English as an instrument for job opportunities. This attitude is also echoed in the interviews (Table 5.8):

22) Learning English well means mastering an additional skill. If I learn it well, then I will be more competitive than others when I am looking for a job in the future (Lynn, Lines 550-551, Interview I).

The research shows that the participants understood the critical importance of English for personal development in Mainland China. English is an important means to get better career opportunities, an asset for self-fulfilment, and a symbol of social status. This is related to the fact that English is considered to be an essential skill in Mainland China, far more than a mere foreign language (Jiang, 2003; Tsui, 2004).

5.2.5 Information Medium

Table 5.9 and Table 5.10 show my results regarding the participants’ view of English medium learning as a potential motive for learning English.

Table 5.9 Information Medium in Language Learning in Survey I

Item	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
M10 I learn English in order to help my learning of other academic subjects.	40	53	7
M11 I learn English in order to catch up with current economic and technological developments in the world.	9	29	62

Table 5.10 Information Medium in Language Learning in Interview I

No.	Subcategory	Counts
11	Because it is an instrument for accessing the advanced knowledge abroad	2

40% of the respondents disagreed that they learned English in order to help their learning of other academic subjects (Item M10). On the other hand, 62% of the respondents agreed that they were learning English in order to keep themselves informed of the latest economic and technological developments in the world (Item M11). This result indicates that they hold a strong instrumental attitude towards the learning of English, taking it as a means to obtain information on the development of world economy, science and technology (Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou, 2004). It also suggests that their motive for learning English before university was not to assist them in learning other subjects.

English was only learned as a required subject for the sake of the National College Entrance Examination in high school (Gao, 2006). The predominance of the National College Entrance Examination, as revealed in the interviews (Table 5.10), seems to be the top concern in the participants' learning of English in high school, though some of them recognised the information medium function of English for the dissemination of knowledge about the latest developments in the world economy, science and technology. This is illustrated in the following extract:

23) I knew English is important for the understanding of the latest developments in the world economy and technology. However, to be honest, I did not care at that time in high school. Our primary concern was the National College Entrance Examination, [...], (Peter, Lines 210-211, Interview I).

5.2.6 Important Others

Table 5.11 and Table 5.12 present the results of the influence of important others on the participants' motivation for learning English.

Table 5.11 Important Others in Language Learning in Survey I

Item	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
M12 I learn English because my parents/teachers often tell me the importance of English.	41	30	29
M13 I learn English because my classmates work hard to improve their English.	49	36	15

Table 5.12 Important Others in Language Learning in Interview I

No.	Subcategory	Counts
12	Because of the influence of my parents and other family members	19
13	Because of the influence of my teachers	15
14	Because of the influence of peers	7

Only 15% of the respondents agreed that they learned English because their classmates worked hard in high school (Item M13). Likewise, only 29% of them agreed with the statement that “I learn English because my parents/teachers often tell me the importance of English” (Item M12). These results indicate little influence of parents, teachers, and peers on the participants’ motivation for learning English. However, the interviews tell a different story as regards parents. They reveal that parents did have a strong influence upon their motivation for learning English (Table 5.12). The interviewees said that they were often told by their parents and other family members about the importance of English for personal development in modern society (19 references), which confirms the results of Gao’s studies (2010, 2012). One extract illustrates this point as follows:

24) [...], both my parents and other family members often tell me the importance of English for contemporary society. Particularly, my uncle and my father always emphasize how important English is in front of me (Peter, Lines 212-213, Interview I).

Teachers were also found to highlight the importance of English in the National English Matriculation and for personal development (15 references), which echoes the findings of Gao’s (2010) and Kyriacou & Zhu’s (2008) studies. Teachers highlighted how important English was for the National Matriculation in class and encouraged students to invest more in the learning of English. This is captured in the following extract:

25) My English teacher also said English is important to personal development nowadays, particularly for people like us coming from the underdeveloped areas (Hanks, Lines 429-430, Interview I).

5.2.7 Learning Situation

Table 5.13 and Table 5.14 are concerned with the influence of the learning situation upon the participants’ motivation for learning English.

Table 5.13 Learning Situation in Language Learning in Survey I

Item		D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
M14	Tutorials with teachers are helpful in keeping my interest in learning English.	10	35	55
M15	I learn English in order to make good use of the online English resources and library in my university.	46	46	8
M16	I learn English because I need to study the English textbooks of my other subjects in my school.	65	30	5
M17	Activities like role play and group discussion make me interested in learning English.	21	51	28
M18	My teachers' charming personality and knowledge make me interested in learning English.	12	43	45
M19	I learn English because I like to take part in English activities such as English speaking contests, debates and the Model United Nations.	52	39	9

Table 5.14 Learning Situation in Language Learning in Interview I

No.	Subcategory	Counts
15	For participating in English activities, competitions, and societies	4
16	For communicating with others like international teachers, students, friends and other people	3

Over half (55%) of the participants agreed that tutorials with teachers helped maintain their interest in learning English (Item M14). 45% of them agreed that their teachers' charming personality and knowledge triggered their interest in learning English (Item M18). These findings indicate that teachers might be a primary source of the participants' motivation in their pre-university English learning experiences. However, only 28% of the participants agreed with the statement that "activities like role play and group discussion make me interested in learning English" (Item M17). It seems that they were less motivated by classroom activities to learn English in high school.

Instead of wanting to participate in classroom activities, they expected to focus more on grammar and vocabulary in English class, two aspects which are tested most in English examinations (Jiang & Sharpling, 2011; Rao, 2002). Their responses also suggest that English teachers did not incorporate many classroom activities in their class. English teachers might be constrained by their lack of training in using classroom activities in class (Rao, 2002; Xiao, 2011). Therefore, few classroom activities are adopted in Chinese secondary English class. This lack of experience in classroom activities might

result in their having little influence upon the participants' motivation for learning English.

Moreover, 46% of the participants disagreed that they learned English in order to make good use of the online English resources and library (Item M15). 52% of them disagreed that they learned English because they liked to take part in extracurricular activities such as English speaking contests, debates, and the Model United Nations. And 65% of them denied that they learned English because they needed to study the English textbooks of other subjects in high school (Item M16). These findings suggest that the students were less influenced by the immediate learning environment in their motivation for learning English in high school. English is learned as a compulsory subject and an important course in the National College Entrance Examination in high school in Mainland China. There is no need to learn other subjects in English in high school. Teachers play a dominant role in the learning and teaching of English. Students have little control of their own English study.

In addition, pre-dominance of the National College Entrance Examination is grammar- and vocabulary-based (Rao, 2002). This examination dominates both the teachers' and the students' attention in their English study. They may have little interest in extracurricular activities. All stake holders involved in the process of learning English focus on the same ultimate goal, the high stake National College Entrance Examination (Gao, 2006, 2010). As a result, obtaining high scores in this examination was taken as the only priority, while taking part in other activities is viewed as useless and unnecessary:

26) There was every year a vocabulary contest in our school. I took part in the first round, but gave up in the second round, because I thought it meaningless. It was just another form of preparing for the examination (Eason, Lines 173-174, Interview I).

5.3 Motivation for Language Learning after an Academic Year

In order to address the second research question (RQ 2b: What is Chinese EFL learners' motivation for the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University?), the quantitative data regarding the participants' motivation were analysed in the same ways as in Section 5.2. The frequency of response to each item was counted in the motivation questionnaire. Then, in order to provide triangulation with the quantitative data, the qualitative data were further analysed (Section 3.6.2).

5.3.1 Intrinsic Interest

Table 5.15 and Table 5.16 present the findings on the participants' intrinsic interest in the learning of English.

Table 5.15 Intrinsic Interest in Language Learning in Survey II

Item	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
M1 I learn English because of my special interest in this language.	17	39	44
M2 I learn English because of my interest in the Western culture and society, such as music, movies, history, etc.	13	32	55

Table 5.16 Intrinsic Interest in Language Learning in Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts
1	For watching English movies, TV programmes and video clips	13
2	For reading English newspapers, novels, magazines, and graded readers	10
3	Because of interest in English-speaking culture and life style	9
4	For listening to the English music and songs	6
5	Because of interest in the English language	5

Compared with Survey I, there is an apparent increase in the participants' intrinsic interest after they have studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. For the statement that "I learn English because of my special interest in this language" (Item M1), the proportion that indicates the participants' agreement in their response to this item increased from 38% in Survey I to 44% in Survey II. Similarly, a noticeable increase is observed in Item M2 in Survey II, where 55% of the participants agreed that they were learning English because they were interested in English-speaking culture,

songs, movies, history, literature, etc (Item M2). The participants' increasing interest in English-speaking culture is also captured in the interviews (Table 5.16). The interviewees expressed an apparent interest in watching English movies, TV programmes, and video clips (13 references), listening to English music and songs (6 references), reading English newspapers, novels and graded readers (10 references), and appreciating English culture and English-speaking people's life style (9 references):

27)[...], *I like reading English magazines, just for fun. I think this could at least increase my contact with English and help me learn English in an English environment, [...]* (Sarah, Lines 403-404, Interview II).

This increased integrative motivation echoes previous studies in similar EMI contexts (e.g., Gao, 2010; R. Wong, 2007a; Wu, 2010). It seems that the learning context at the EMI University guarantees adequate English language input to the participants. This immersion environment provides them authentic materials in learning English. In addition, studying content subjects in English at the EMI University also creates authentic situations within which the participants are able to learn English for real purposes. The authenticity of learning EAP in this EMI context might thus generate integrative motivation (Friedman, 2009; Pyun, 2013).

5.3.2 Immediate Achievement

Table 5.17 and Table 5.18 relate to the participants' motives for pursuing immediate achievement in the learning of English.

Table 5.17 Immediate Achievement in Language Learning in Survey II

Item	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
M3 I learn English mainly for obtaining high scores in examinations.	13	45	42
M4 I learn English because it is a required course to get a certificate, a diploma or a university degree.	22	33	45

Table 5.18 Immediate Achievement in Language Learning in Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts
6	For getting high scores in various examinations such as the National Matriculation, term examinations, and IELTS	9
7	Because it is a required course for an entry into an institution, a diploma, or a degree	2

There are two points to be noted in comparison with Survey I. The first point pertains to the participants' motivation for learning English in order to get a certificate, a diploma or a university degree (Item M4). 41% of the students agreed with this item in Survey I. Similarly, 45% of them agreed with this item in Survey II. This result suggests that the "certificate motivation" persists among Chinese EFL learners (Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou, 2004; Shi, 2000). This again provides evidence that the participants learn English with a strong utilitarian attitude.

Another point lies in the participants' attitudes towards the statement, "I learn English mainly for obtaining high scores in examinations" (Item M3). 42% of the participants in Survey II agreed with this statement, while 55% of them in Survey I had agreed with this statement. This divergence indicates an apparent decrease in the motivation after the participants had studied EAP for an academic year at this EMI University. This might indicate that when they successfully got into the EMI University, obtaining high scores in various examinations might not be their only concern (Gao, 2006). However, the fact that 42% of the participants' agreement agreed with this statement still reveals that some of them continued to take acquiring high scores in examinations as a motive. This is further supported in the interviews (Table 5.18).

28) The current motive is to get high scores in examinations. This is because I am going to study abroad through the 2+2 transfer programme. If I want to get this opportunity, I have to improve my scores not only in final examinations, but also in the IELTS, [...] Jack, Lines 900-901, Interview II).

This extract reveals that at this stage of the research, the participants might be preparing for the study abroad opportunities. Therefore, obtaining high scores in examinations at the moment seem to be one of their concerns. This finding indicates that L2 motivation is a situational construct (Ushioda, 2011).

5.3.3 Going Abroad

Table 5.19 and Table 5.20 present the attitude of participants towards going abroad as a motive for learning English.

Table 5.19 Going Abroad in Language Learning in Survey II

Item	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
M5 I learn English for better opportunities of studying or working abroad.	5	31	64
M6 I learn English in order to understand or experience the culture of English-speaking countries in future.	6	32	62

Table 5.20 Going Abroad in Language Learning in Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts
8	For further education or work opportunities abroad	29

62% of the participants in Survey II, almost the same percentage as in Survey I, agreed that they were learning English for going abroad to experience English-speaking culture (Item M6). These findings echo the integrative orientations for learning English among Chinese EFL learners (Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou, 2004; R. Wong, 2007a). In comparison with Survey I, there is a slight increase in the participants' motive of going abroad in learning English. While 61% of the participants in Survey I agreed that they learned English in order to find better education and job opportunities abroad (Item M5), a further 3% of them in Survey II were found to agree with this item. The difference indicates that going aboard is a motivational factor for the participants to attend this EMI University. This result is supported by the findings of the interviews (29 references) (Table 5.20), as illustrated in the following extract:

29) [...], *from Grade Three on, many of us would choose to study in the UK. If we failed to learn English well, it would be very difficult for us to study and live in the UK (Paul, Lines 275-276, Interview II).*

The participants' attitude towards taking going abroad as a motivation for learning English, as indicated in Extract 28, is related to the opportunities to study abroad through the "2+2" transfer programme or exchange programmes at the EMI University. At the time when the second set of interviews was conducted, a great majority of the participants were considering whether to take these opportunities for going abroad or not.

5.3.4 Individual Development

Table 5.21 and Table 5.22 show the results with regard to the participants' motivation for pursuing individual development in their learning of English.

Table 5.21 Individual Development in Language Learning in Survey II

Item	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
M7 I learn English because it is a symbol of good education and social status.	17	43	40
M8 A good command of English can improve my chance of finding a good job.	5	18	77
M9 Learning English well can give me a sense of success.	8	29	63

Table 5.22 Individual Development in Language Learning in Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts
9	For better personal development such as employment opportunities	16
10	For a sense of success and satisfaction	19

There is no obvious change observed in the motivation among the participants between Survey I and Survey II. 40% of them in Survey II were found to agree with the statement, "I learn English because it is a symbol of good education and social status" (Item M7). This percentage is almost the same as that (42%) in Survey I. This finding confirms the instrumental motivation among the Chinese EFL learners of increasing their ability and social status in future (Gao, 2008a; Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou, 2004).

A slight increase is identified on Item M9, for which 63% of the participants in Survey II said that they learned English because it can give them a sense of success. On the other hand, 59% of the participants in Survey I endorsed this item. This increase in their sense of success and satisfaction between Surveys I and II, as also revealed in the interviews (19 references) (Table 5.22), might stem from the participants' learning experiences at the EMI University, such as praise from teachers and applause from peers through participating in various activities.

30) [...], receiving praise from teachers and applause from classmates I do have a sense of success and satisfaction, [...] (Paul, Lines 237-238, Interview II).

Another slight increase is identified on Item M8 of Survey II which asks about the participants' motivation of pursuing personal employment. 77% of them in Survey II agreed that only with good English skills could they find a good job in the future (Item M8). These findings indicate that the participants' motivation is for personal development in the long run. This is supported in the interviews (16 references):

31)[...], nowadays, English is omnipresent and has become an essential quality for personal development in China (Michael, Lines 529-530, Interview II).

5.3.5 Information Medium

Table 5.23 and Table 5.24 present the findings relating to whether the participants were being motivated in their learning of English by the information medium.

Table 5.23 Information Medium in Language Learning in Survey II

Item		D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
M10	I learn English in order to help my learning of other academic subjects.	4	18	78
M11	I learn English in order to catch up with current economic and technological developments in the world.	6	30	64

Table 5.24 Information Medium in Language Learning in Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts
11	Because it is an instrument to learn the advanced knowledge abroad	3
12	To help in the learning of other subjects	22

In comparison with Survey I, there is no obvious change in the participants' motivation for learning English in order to keep themselves informed of the latest economic and technological developments in the world (Item M11). 64% of the participants in Survey II, almost the same as that in Survey I, agreed with this motive. This result shows that Chinese EFL learners are motivated to learn English as an instrument for acquiring information about the latest developments in the world economy and technology (Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou, 2004). It also importantly shows that an academic year at an EMI university has no effect on this particular motivation among the participants.

However, there is an apparent increase in the participants' motivation for learning English in order to facilitate their study of other content subjects (Item M10) in Survey II. 78% of the respondents in Survey II agreed with this item, while a mere 7% of them endorsed it in Survey I. This sharp difference indicates that the participants were treating English as a pivotal means of facilitating their study of other subjects at their EMI University. The study of content subjects might pose challenges to EFL learners. In order to survive in an EMI context, students might be more strongly motivated to learn English (Gao, 2010; Liu, 2013). This is supported in the following extract:

32) Of course, English is of particular importance, because content subjects such as Physics, Advanced Mathematics, are all taught in English at this EMI University. Without a good command of English, it would be very difficult to learn these subjects well. (Eason, Lines 54-55, Interview II).

5.3.6 Important Others

Table 5.25 and Table 5.26 show the influence of important others in the participants' motivation for the learning of English.

Table 5.25 Important Others in Language Learning in Survey II

Item	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
M12 I learn English because my parents/teachers often tell me the importance of English.	35	39	26
M13 I learn English because my classmates work hard to improve their English.	26	41	33

Table 5.26 Important Others in Language Learning in Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts
13	Because of the influence of my parents and other family members	2
14	Because of the influence of my teachers	20
15	Because of the influence of my peers	14

On Item M12, 26% of the participants agreed with the statement that "I learn English because my parents/teachers often tell me the importance of English". This figure is 3% lower than that in Survey I (26%). This slight decrease might indicate the participants' cognitive maturity after their one year's study of EAP at the EMI University (Gao, 2010;

Lamb, 2013). The influence of parents and other family members might diminish after the students enter the EMI University where they are far away from their family. As a result, they have to make their own decisions both in life and study. In addition, teachers' teaching practice at the EMI University might have encouraged them to take responsibility for their own study, which is different from the teacher-led teaching in high school (Gan, 2009). Teachers at this EMI University come to be facilitators, consultants and interest generators, which result in the learners' greater independence from parents and teachers.

Another change relates to the influence of peers upon the participants' motivation for learning English. Compared with Survey I, 33% of the respondents agreed that they learned English because their classmates worked hard in university (Item M13). By contrast, this percentage was merely 15% in Survey I. The findings imply that peers were found to exert more influence on their motivation at the EMI University. As indicated in the following extract, the rich opportunities to interact with each other in a variety of classroom tasks and extracurricular activities at the EMI University contribute to a dynamic learning atmosphere which might have motivated the participants to learn English (Ishikawa, 2012; Rollinson, 2005; Topping, 2003):

33) I have an opportunity to know a boy when we worked together for a group project. He studies very hard and is good at taking notes in class. In class, he is also very active. Whenever our teacher needed somebody to answer a question, he would raise his hand. His hard work and active involvement in class really motivate me. He is my model. (Norah, Lines 600-601, Interview II).

5.3.7 Learning Situation

Table 5.27 and Table 5.28 are concerned with the results of the influence of the learning situation on the participants' motivation for learning English at the EMI University. Compared with Survey I, there is an apparent increase in the influence of the learning situation upon the participants' motivation for learning English in Survey II. More participants (61%) in Survey II agreed that the tutorials with teachers helped maintain their interest in learning English (Item M14). Their interest also seems to be influenced

by their teachers, as 57% of them agreed that their teachers' charming personalities and knowledge made them interested in learning English (Item M18).

Table 5.27 Learning Situation in Language Learning in Survey II

Item	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)
M14 Tutorials with teachers are helpful in keeping my interest in learning English.	6	33	61
M15 I learn English in order to make good use of the online English resources and library in my university.	16	40	44
M16 I learn English because I need to study the English textbooks of my other subjects in my school.	7	24	69
M17 Activities like role play and group discussion make me interested in learning English.	9	31	60
M18 My teachers' charming personality and knowledge make me interested in learning English.	9	34	57
M19 I learn English because I like to take part in English activities such as English speaking contests, debates and the Model United Nations.	36	44	20

Table 5.28 Learning Situation in Language Learning in Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts
16	For participating in classroom activities, presentations, and projects	18
17	For communicating with others like international teachers, students, and friends	12
18	For participating in English activities, competitions, and societies	10

An obvious increase is also observed in Survey II in the participants' interest in participating in both classroom and extracurricular activities after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. 60% of them agreed that activities like role play and group discussions made them interested in learning English (Item M17). 20% of them expressed an interest in taking part in the extracurricular activities such as English speaking contests, debates, and the Model United Nations (Item M19). These findings are confirmed in the interviews (Table 5.28). For instance, after the participants had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, the interviewees demonstrated an interest in participating in classroom activities and projects (18 references). These classroom activities, which seldom took place in high school, seem to have strengthened the participants' motivation for learning English:

34) *We have done two tasks for this semester's EAP class. One was a survey about automobile and digital products which related to my major. The other was an experiment about the learning of English. These tasks were very interesting, because we never did such activities in high school. (Simon, Lines 75-76, Interview II).*

Evidence is also found in the interviews regarding the participants' motivation for learning English in order to participate in the extracurricular activities at the EMI University (10 references). As aforementioned in Section 3.4, there were a number of extracurricular activities and societies for the participants. These extracurricular activities guaranteed them an adequate exposure to English, which might arouse their interest and strengthen their motivation for learning English (Jagger, 2013; Kirkpatrick, 2012). The following extract illustrates this:

35) *I took part in the Surf Zone, an English magazine managed by students. It gave me a strong sense of success in my learning of English when I completed an issue of this magazine. [...] (James, Lines 657-658, Interview II).*

Moreover, 44% of them agreed that they learned English in order to make good use of the online English resources and library (Item M15). 69% of them agreed that they learned English because they needed to study English textbooks of other subjects (Item M16). The findings indicate that the students were motivated to learn English by the learning situation at the EMI University. The EMI University provides rich learning resources for the students, which are beneficial for learning English. In the interviews, the participants demonstrated a strong motive of communicating with others in English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University (12 references). There are abundant English learning resources and the presence of English-speaking people (teachers and students) at the EMI University. This made it not only possible but essential for the participants to communicate with others in English (Gao, 2008a; Liu, 2013).

36) *In the Language Partner Programme there are some international students from several countries such as Indonesia and the US. If I can talk with them in English for a while, I will be very glad, [...] (Lynn, Lines 420-421, Interview II).*

5.4 Changes in Motivation after an Academic Year

In order to answer the third research question (RQ 3b: What are the potential changes in their motivation for the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, and what might have caused these changes?), the data were analysed in the same ways as described earlier in Section 4.4: the quantitative data were analysed with descriptive techniques (means and standard deviation) and with inferential statistical procedures (a parametric test) (Section 3.6.1). Then, the qualitative data were analysed with a focus on the changes emerging in the interviews in order to provide triangulation with the quantitative data (Section 3.6.2).

5.4.1 Changes in Motivation in Quantitative Data

As previously described (Section 4.4.1), a parametric test was performed on the data collected at the two research stages (Survey I and Survey II) for the purpose of further identifying whether these changes, as already described in Section 5.3, are statistically different in respect of the participants' motivation after they had begun studying EAP for one academic year at the EMI University.

Table 5.29 and Figure 5.1 present the Independent T-Test results. It can be seen that there are apparent differences in the overall means of all the categories between Survey I and Survey II. There is an obvious increase in the means of all the categories of motivation in the after-arrival questionnaire.

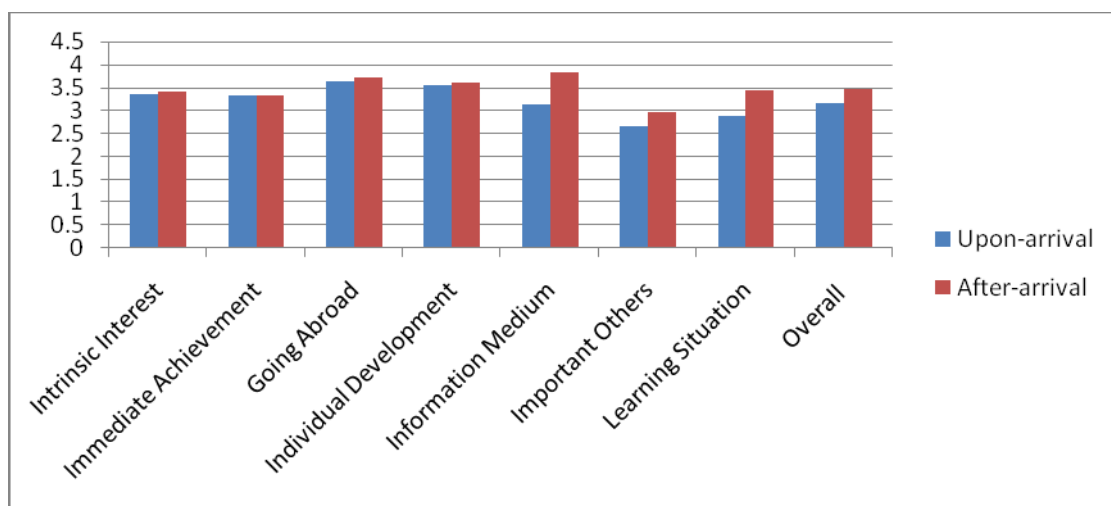
Further, as shown in Table 5.29, except for intrinsic interest, immediate achievement and individual development, the P values [Sig. (2-tailed)] for *going abroad*, *information medium*, *important others*, *learning situation* and the whole scale of MLL are .004, .000, .000, .000, and .000 respectively, which are all below the .05 level. The findings indicate statistically significant changes in the participants' motivation with regard to *going abroad*, *information medium*, *important others*, and the *learning*

situation and in their overall level of motivation after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University.

Table 5.29 Independent T-Test: Overall Motivation in Upon- and After-arrival Questionnaires

Category	Group	Number	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Intrinsic Interest	Survey I	1026	3.3572	.88364	-1.683	1933	.093
	Survey II	909	3.4213	.78049			
Immediate Achievement	Survey I	1026	3.3182	.96087	-.156	1933	.876
	Survey II	909	3.3245	.79110			
Going Abroad	Survey I	1026	3.6267	.71091	-2.864	1933	.004
	Survey II	909	3.7151	.63723			
Individual Development	Survey I	1026	3.5533	.67470	-1.824	1933	.068
	Survey II	909	3.6063	.59312			
Information Medium	Survey I	1026	3.1438	.63787	-24.423	1933	.000
	Survey II	909	3.8361	.60429			
Important Others	Survey I	1026	2.6618	.94127	-7.206	1933	.000
	Survey II	909	2.9571	.85019			
Learning Situation	Survey I	1026	2.8717	.50114	-26.147	1933	.000
	Survey II	909	3.4422	.45270			
Overall	Survey I	1026	3.1636	.36567	-18.837	1933	.000
	Survey II	909	3.4728	.35445			

Figure 5.1 A Comparison of Means of Motivation in Upon- and After-arrival Questionnaires



In order to further examine the potential changes in the participants' motivation for learning English after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University,

an Independent T-Test was again performed on the means of every individual item between the upon- and after-arrival questionnaires (Table 5.30).

When the means of every individual item of the upon- and after-arrival questionnaires was compared, significant differences were found in 9 items [Sig. (2-tailed) approximately $P < 0.05$]. The significant differences suggest that these 9 individual motivational factors have changed significantly after the participants began studying EAP for one academic year at the EMI University. These 9 items cover four areas of the motivation questionnaire: 1) going abroad (Item M5); 2) information medium (Item M10); 3) important others (Item M13); and 4) learning situation (Items M14, M15, M16, M17, M18, and M19).

Table 5.30 Independent T-Test: Individual Motivation in Upon- and After-arrival Questionnaires

Item		Mean (Upon)	Mean (After)	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
M5	I learn English for better opportunities of studying or working abroad.	3.62	3.73	-2.833	1933	.005
M10	I learn English in order to help my learning of other academic subjects.	2.64	3.95	-39.201	1933	.000
M13	I learn English because my classmates work hard to improve their English.	2.51	3.06	-12.361	1933	.000
M14	Tutorials with teachers are helpful in keeping my interest in learning English.	3.54	3.63	-2.619	1933	.009
M15	I learn English in order to make good use of the online English resources and library in my university.	2.57	3.32	-20.721	1933	.000
M16	I learn English because I need to study the English textbooks of my other subjects in my school.	2.24	3.75	-41.127	1933	.000
M17	Activities like role play and group discussion make me interested in learning English.	3.07	3.59	-13.714	1933	.000
M18	My teachers' charming personality and knowledge make me interested in learning English.	3.39	3.56	-4.531	1933	.000
M19	I learn English because I like to take part in English activities such as English speaking contests, debates and the Model United Nations.	2.43	2.80	-9.254	1933	.000

5.4.2 Changes in Motivation Indicated in Qualitative Data

For the purpose of exploring the changes in the participants' motivation, the subcategories coded in the interview data were further examined. A comparison was then made between the two groups of coded subcategories. Evidence of changes in motivation was noted and included the table below (Table 5.31).

Table 5.31 A Comparison between Motivation Emerging from Interview I and Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts		Category
		Interview I	Interview II	
1	For watching English movies, TV programmes and video clips	9	13	Intrinsic interest
2	For reading English newspapers, novels, magazines, and graded readers	7	10	
3	For listening to the English music and songs	5	6	
4	Because of interest in the English language	3	5	
5	Because of interest in English-speaking culture and life style	2	9	
6	For getting high scores in various examinations such as the National Matriculation, term examinations, and IELTS	22	9	Immediate achievement
7	Because it is a required course for an entry into an institution, a diploma, or a degree	5	2	
8	For further education or work opportunities abroad	15	29	Going abroad
9	For better personal development such as employment opportunities	12	16	Individual development
10	For a sense of success and satisfaction	6	19	
11	Because it is an instrument to learn the advanced knowledge abroad	2	3	Information medium
12	To help in the learning of other subjects	/	22	
13	Because of the influence of my parents and other family members	19	2	Important others
14	Because of the influence of my teachers	15	20	
15	Because of the influence of peers	7	14	
16	For participating in English activities, competitions, and societies	4	10	Learning situation
17	For communicating with others like international teachers, students, and friends	3	12	
18	For participating in classroom activities, presentations, and projects	/	18	

Table 5.31 reveals that, after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, the participants showed a strengthening in their integrative motivation. They demonstrated an apparent increase in their interest in English-speaking culture such as English movies, TV programmes, and video clips (No. 1). They showed more fondness for reading English newspapers, novels, and graded readers (No. 2). They also became more interested in English-speaking culture and life style (No. 5). These findings lend support to the quantitative result that the participants showed a strengthened interest in English-speaking culture after one academic year of studying EAP at the EMI University.

The table also indicates obvious changes in the participants' instrumental motivation. With regard to *immediate achievement*, the participants demonstrated an apparent decrease in the following two specific motives: "For getting high scores in various examinations such as the National Matriculation, term examinations, and IELTS" (No. 6), and "Because it is a required course for an entry into an institution, a diploma, or a degree" (No. 7). By contrast, the table indicates an obvious increase in other instrumental motivations, including *going abroad*, *individual development*, and *information medium*. They demonstrate a sharp increase in the motivation of obtaining better opportunities to study abroad (No. 8) and of facilitating the learning of other subjects in Interview II (No. 12). These changes further support the quantitative results.

The table also provides support for the quantitative result that parents and other family members exerted less influence at the EMI University (No. 13). Teachers, however, were found to be still influential in their EAP study (No. 14). This may be due to the difficulty the participants had in adapting to the EMI context, which made them need guidance from teachers. Peers, who were found to be less influential upon the participants in high school, emerged as an important agent (No. 15). This might be the result of the EAP teaching practice at the EMI University which provides adequate opportunities for peers to interact with each other.

Finally, *learning situation* became a salient source of motivation after the participants had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. This might be due to the rich materials and resources at the EMI University for learning English which included a large variety of classroom activities like group presentations (No. 18), extracurricular activities like debating societies and the Model United Nations (No. 16), and social resources including proficient English speakers (No. 17).

To sum up, the participants demonstrated apparent changes in their motivation for learning English after one academic year of studying EAP at an EMI University. The results obtained from the quantitative data present an overall picture of the changes in their motivation, while the findings from the qualitative data provide rich insights into these changes. These changes will be further discussed in Section 5.4.3.

5.4.3 Discussion of the Changes in MLL

This section discusses the changes in the participants' motivation for learning English after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University.

5.4.3.1 Intrinsic Interest

The two data sources indicate an increased intrinsic interest in English-speaking culture among the participants after studying EAP for one academic year at the EMI University. This change might be caused by their contact with authentic materials in their EAP study at the University. The immersion setting at the EMI University provided adequate input to the target language. This authenticity in learning EAP at the EMI University might have strengthened their interest in the culture of the target language (Friedman, 2009; Pyun, 2013). Another possible explanation relates to their enhanced autonomy which may make them internalise their reasons for learning English and come to learn for the pleasure of it (Noels, Pelletier, Clément & Vallerand, 2000).

5.4.3.2 Immediate Achievement

Both the questionnaires and interviews reveal that the participants' motivation for learning English in order to obtain high scores in examinations became less strong after one academic year at the EMI University. This finding might indicate that, after successfully getting into university, obtaining high scores in various examinations is not the participants' top concern (Gao, 2006). The EAP learning and teaching at the EMI University is not examination-oriented. Instead, it highlights the ability to use English to study content subjects and to communicate in academic contexts (Liu, 2013). Therefore, this shift of the focus with respect to the learning of English from examinations to academic communication might have led to the participants' becoming less motivated to obtain high marks in examinations in their English study at the EMI University.

5.4.3.3 Going Abroad

The quantitative and qualitative data indicate that there is an increase in the positive attitudes participants had towards going abroad, and that this served as motivation for learning English. This might be related to the contextual conditions at the EMI University which provided many opportunities for them to study abroad. As noted earlier (Section 3.4), the students at the University could choose to study abroad through the "2+2" transfer programme or exchange programmes during their undergraduate study. At the second stage of this study, a great majority of the participants were considering these study opportunities abroad. Therefore, it is reasonable that there should be an increase in this motivation for learning English. This result generates evidence in support of Ushioda (2011) that L2 motivation is situational in nature.

5.4.3.4 Individual Development

The two data sources suggest an increase in the participants' sense of success and satisfaction. This increase might be explained by their English learning experiences at the EMI University. As noted earlier (Section 3.4), they had many opportunities to

interact with their teachers both in and out of class. They interacted with peers through a variety of classroom activities such as group discussion, projects, and presentations. They also socialised in many extracurricular activities such as debating society, the Model United Nations, and other clubs and societies. These meaningful experiences might help the participants discover the value of their effort in learning English, thus enhancing their sense of success and satisfaction (Skehan, 1998; Yuan, 2012).

5.4.3.5 Information Medium

The two data sources show an apparent increase in the participants' motivation for learning English in order to facilitate their study of other content subjects. This is likely to be connected with the nature of an EMI context. Studying in an EMI context suggests that English is learned as a means to study other content subjects, which might pose challenges and difficulties to the EFL learners. In order to survive in an EMI context, students are likely to be more strongly motivated to learn English (Gao, 2010; Liu, 2013).

5.4.3.6 Important Others

Both the questionnaires and interviews reveal that peers were found to exert more influence on the participants' motivation for learning English after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. This might be due to the rich opportunities the EMI University provided for the students to interact with each other in a variety of classroom tasks and extracurricular activities (Section 3.4). The interaction with peers contributes to a dynamic learning atmosphere (Ishikawa, 2012; Rollinson, 2005; Topping, 2003), which might have motivated the participants to learn English.

The two data sources also indicate that parents and family members became less influential on the participants' motivation for learning English. This change might be due to the participants' cognitive maturity after studying EAP for one academic year at the EMI University (Gao, 2010; Lamb, 2013). At the same time, though the quantitative

data reveal a decrease in the teachers' influence on the participants' motivation for the learning of English, the qualitative data show that teachers remain influential in the participants' learning of English. An explanation for this finding is related to the difficulties they encounter when learning EAP at the EMI University. They may need guidance from their teachers in order to overcome these difficulties in order to better adapt to this EMI context.

5.4.3.7 Learning Situation

The two data sources show that the participants' interest in learning English was strengthened by the interactions with their teachers. There is a tutorial for every student each week at the EMI University (Section 3.4). The tutorials establish a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where teachers provide scaffolding for the students. As a result, this process of interacting with teachers serves as an additional motivational resource in the participants' learning of English (de Graaff, Koopman, Anikina & Westhoff, 2007; Huong, 2003).

In addition, the questionnaire surveys and interviews indicate an apparent increase in the participants' interest in participating in classroom activities such as group projects, presentations, and extracurricular activities like English debating societies and the Model United Nations. As presented in the section on contextual background (Section 3.4), the various extracurricular activities at the EMI University guarantee them an adequate exposure to English, which might arouse their interest and strengthen their motivation for learning English (Jagger, 2013; Kirkpatrick, 2012).

The quantitative data reveal that the participants were more motivated to learn English by the desire to make good use of the online English resources and library and to study English textbooks of other subjects. The qualitative data show a strengthening in their motivation to communicate with others like international teachers, students, and friends in English. An explanation for the enhanced motivation relates to the rich English resources and social resources, including the presence of English-speaking people

(teachers and students) at the EMI University. This made it possible for the participants to communicate with others in English (Gao, 2008a; Liu, 2013).

Having discussed the overall changes in the participants' MLL, the following section will discuss the key findings at the two research stages, namely their MLL upon (Section 5.5.1) and after (Section 5.5.2) their arrival at the EMI University respectively.

5.5 Discussion of the Key Findings Regarding MLL

This study is composed of quantitative and qualitative parts. The quantitative part aimed to unfold the overall pattern of the participants' MLL, while the qualitative part focused on the potential changes in their MLL. This section will discuss the key findings obtained from the two data sources in order to examine how they have contributed to our understanding of the participants' MLL at the EMI University.

5.5.1 Key Findings of MLL upon Arrival

The quantitative data unveiled a general pattern of MLL among the participants and the qualitative data generated rich information about their motivation. The two data sources show that they learned English primarily to obtain high scores in the National Matriculation and to acquire better opportunities for studying abroad. They also learned English for personal development reasons such as pursuing a good career. The qualitative data show that they took English as an information medium to keep themselves informed of the current economic and technological developments in the world. The centrality of their instrumental motivation, their examination-oriented motive in particular, was noticed to have darkened the intrinsic motivation, though some interest in English-speaking culture was found among them in the interviews.

The findings obtained at this research stage confirm previous research on Chinese EFL learners in similar EFL contexts. The centrality of instrumental motivation found in the present study echoes the common results reported in other studies on Chinese EFL

learners' MLL (e.g., Chen, Warden & Chang, 2005; Kyriacou & Zhu, 2008; Liu, 2007; Warden & Lin, 2000; Wei, 2007). The finding of the participants' examination-oriented motive verifies Gao's (2008a) conclusion that high stake examinations play a central role in Chinese EFL learners' motivation in Mainland China.

The above findings also confirm earlier studies (Gao, Zhao, Cheng & Zhou, 2004, 2007; Gan, 2009; Wang, 2008) that Chinese EFL learners characteristically pursue external awards including education opportunities abroad and better career development. Moreover, the result regarding the participants' integrative motivation is similar to that of Gao's (2008a) finding that Chinese EFL learners' intrinsic/cultural orientations gives way to their instrumental motives, with an examination-oriented dimension particularly.

All in all, the findings regarding the features of the participants' MLL identified in the current study confirm previous research on Chinese EFL learners in similar EFL contexts. In this regard, the participants might be taken as representative of Chinese EFL learners. Hence, the purpose of providing baseline information to the whole study is achieved at this research stage, which makes it reliable for further comparison with the results obtained at the second stage of the study.

5.5.2 Key Findings of MLL after an Academic Year

The participants were found to be consistent in their motivational pattern after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. Similar to the findings of the first research stage, the quantitative and qualitative data reveal both instrumental and cultural dimensions in their motivation. They were found to still learn English primarily for external rewards such as better overseas education opportunities and career development. Despite some consistency in the participants' motivation, there are some noticeable changes discovered. With regard to the subcategories of the motivation construct, the quantitative data reveal significant changes in the following factors that might have motivated them to learn EAP: going abroad, information medium, important others, and learning situation.

Significant changes were also identified in the individual motivation. The results show a significant increase in the participants' pursuit of better opportunities for studying or working abroad. The interviews show that they were more motivated to learn English by the desire to communicate with native English-speaking teachers, students, and friends on campus. Another significant increase, as indicated in the two data sources, was found in their taking English as an instrument to facilitate their study of other subjects and to participate in classroom and extracurricular activities. The quantitative data also suggest an increase in their taking English as an instrument to make better use of the various facilities and resources at the EMI University.

The questionnaire surveys and interviews reveal that peers became significantly important agents upon the participants' motivation for learning English. The interviews indicate that teachers were still influential in the participants' motivational discourse, while parents and other family members became less influential. The interviews also show an apparent decrease in the participants' examination-oriented dimension in their motivation for learning English.

The result that Chinese EFL learners are primarily instrumentally motivated confirms those studies with regard to the motivation of Mainland Chinese students learning EAP in EMI contexts (e.g., Gao, 2008a; Li, 2006; R. Wong, 2010; Wu, 2007, 2010). The finding that the situational learning environment has a positive influence on the participants' motivation verifies Gao's (2008a) and Li's (2006) studies in similar EMI contexts. In his study on the motivation of Chinese research students learning EAP in the UK, Li (2006) identified that the situational learning environment had a positive effect on their motivation.

The results with respect to the strengthening of the participants' overall motivation further confirm previous research on Chinese students' motivation in EMI contexts (Gao, 2008a; R. Wong, 2010). These studies indicate that, when studying EAP in EMI contexts, the Chinese learners were usually positively motivated by important others

like international teachers and peers. This enhanced mediation of important others might stem from the constant interaction between the students and their teachers and peers.

The findings regarding the participants' motivation of communicating with international teachers, students, and friends, and keeping up with the current economic and technological developments in the world echo what Yashima (2009) has called international posture (see Section 2.3.1.2). This finding adds to the literature on Chinese EFL learners' international posture in the learning of English. It expands our previous understanding of the disposition of Chinese EFL learners' motivation for learning English.

The study also reveals that, affiliated to the participants' strong instrumental orientations, there is an intrinsic/cultural dimension in their motivation. This result corresponds to the finding of some previous studies (e.g., R. Wong, 2007a; Wu, 2010) that Chinese students do have integrative motivation when learning EAP within EMI environments. This might be related to the participants' enhanced autonomy when studying in this kind of EMI contexts. This enhanced autonomy provides the students with the capacity to adjust their actions and goals in order to achieve the desired results in light of the changing environmental conditions (Zeidner, Boekaerts & Pintrich, 2000, p.751). The enhanced autonomy might also make learners internalise their reasons for learning English, become comfortable in the learning environment and perseverant in their language learning goals and learn for the pleasure of it (Noels, Pelletier, Clément & Vallerand, 2000).

The present study aims to fill the theoretical gaps of previous research into Chinese EFL learners' motivation (Section 2.3.2). The findings with regard to the changes in the participants' motivation at the EMI University indicate that motivation for language learning is a dynamic construct. The changes are connected with the institutional contexts at the EMI University. For example, the participants' desire to improve their spoken English is influenced by the nature of the EMI University where English is the medium of instruction and communication. This finding supports the socio-cultural

conceptualisation that motivation for language learning is socially situated and responsive to context (Ushioda, 2006, 2009).

The above results suggest the potential association between socio-cultural factors and the participants' motivation for learning English. For instance, the participants' strengthened motivation which resulted from the interaction with their teachers and peers indicate the mediation of important others on their learning of English. Their stronger interest in participating in classroom and extracurricular activities and their desire to make better use of facilities and resources on campus reveal the mediation of learning conditions, materials, and cultural artefacts on their motivation.

In summary, this study validates the socio-cultural approach to MLL research proposed by a number of other researchers (e.g., Csizér, Kormos & Sarkadi, 2010; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Gao, 2008a; Kim, 2009). It also extends previous MLL research by examining EAP learners in an EMI setting within a broader EFL context and casts more light on the nature of MLL from a socio-cultural perspective.

5.6 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings obtained from the quantitative and qualitative data. It has also discussed the changes identified in the participants' motivation for learning English after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. The findings provide a general picture of the students' motivation. These findings indicate a relationship between the students' motivation and the contextual realities and EAP learning experiences at the EMI University. The next chapter will report my results with regard to my informants' use of learning strategies.

Chapter 6 Results Regarding Language Learning Strategies

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the findings derived from the quantitative and qualitative data concerning the participants' use of language learning strategies upon and after their arrival at the EMI University. It presents the answers to the following research questions:

RQ 1c: What strategies do Chinese EFL learners use to learn English upon their arrival at the EMI University?

RQ 2c: What strategies do Chinese EFL learners use to learn English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University?

RQ 3c: What are the potential changes in the strategies they use to learn English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, and what might have caused these changes?

To seek answers to these questions, this chapter firstly presents the quantitative and qualitative results regarding the participants' use of learning strategies upon their arrival at the EMI University. It then discusses the changes in the participants' use of learning strategies at the second stage after the participants had studied EAP for one academic year at the EMI University.

6.2 Language Learning Strategies upon Arrival

In order to address the first research question, the data relating to the participants' use of learning strategies were analysed following the same ways as noted earlier (Section 5.2): the frequency of response to each item of the questionnaire was calculated (Section 3.6.1) and the content analysis approach was followed to analyse the interview data in order to provide triangulation with the quantitative data (Section 3.6.2).

6.2.1 Memory Strategies

Table 6.1 and Table 6.2 present the results of the participants' deployment of memory strategies.

Table 6.1 Memory Strategies in Language Learning in Survey I

Item	Seldom (S) (%)	Neutral (N) (%)	Often (O) (%)
S1 I memorise new words by looking up the meanings of new words in dictionaries like online dictionaries.	11	33	56
S2 I memorise new words by associating or comparing the meanings with other words.	13	36	51
S3 I memorise new words in sentences or in texts.	20	30	50
S4 I memorise grammatical rules by doing pattern exercises.	14	22	64
S5 I recite model sentence structures or model essays to improve my writing.	21	29	50

Table 6.2 Memory Strategies in Language Learning in Interview I

No.	Subcategory	Counts
1	Memorising vocabulary	36
2	Memorising grammar	18
3	Retaining the memory of words by consulting dictionaries	11
4	Memorising model essays to learn English writing	10
5	Doing rote learning	9
6	Reciting texts	5

An examination of the participants' responses to these items in Table 6.1 reveals that they often deployed the listed memory strategies upon their arrival at the EMI University. 64% of the learners said that they often memorised grammatical rules by doing pattern exercises (Item S4). Over half (56%) of the participants memorised new words by looking up their meanings in dictionaries (Item S1). In addition, 51% of the learners often memorised new words by associating or comparing their meanings with those of other words (Item S2).

Furthermore, 50% of the participants said that they often memorised new words in sentences or in texts (Item S3). When asked about their use of memory strategies in learning English writing, 50% of the participants said that they often recited model

sentence structures or model essays to improve their writing (Item S5). These findings indicate that they made frequent use of memory strategies to learn English before coming to the EMI University. Agreement with the quantitative results is found in the interviews (Table 6.2). They spent considerable time memorising words and grammatical rules, and reciting texts. They also learned to write by memorising model sentences and essays provided by their teachers. For instance, most of the interviewees repeatedly referred to the memorisation of words:

37) I memorised a lot of words. If you want to memorise a large number of words, you have to do considerable memorisation, [...]. (Mark, Lines 1502-1503, Interview I).

These results echo some previous studies regarding Chinese learners who have been seen as inclined to using memory strategies (Fan, 2003; Gu, 2003; Kennedy, 2002; Li, 2005; Yu & Wang, 2009). This prevalence of memorisation among Chinese EFL learners is related to the contextual realities in Mainland China. English language learning and teaching in Mainland China is highly examination-oriented, focusing on the memorisation of vocabulary and grammar (Gao, 2006, 2008a; Meyer, 2012). It is therefore not a surprise to find that memory strategies are often found to be used by Chinese EFL learners.

6.2.2 Cognitive Strategies

Table 6.3 and Table 6.4 show the results concerning the participants' application of cognitive strategies.

Table 6.3 Cognitive Strategies in Language Learning in Survey I

Item	S (%)	N (%)	O (%)
S6 I try to take notes in English class.	13	27	60
S7 I listen to English radio, watch English TV or movies.	12	37	51
S8 I read English newspapers, magazines or novels out of class.	25	48	27
S9 I write emails, blogs or diaries in English.	55	36	9
S10 I read sample articles to learn how to organise my ideas in writing.	25	46	29
S11 I make summaries of the key points while reading or listening to English.	37	40	23

Table 6.4 Cognitive Strategies in Language Learning in Interview I

No.	Subcategory	Counts
7	Doing examination-related materials and simulation papers	19
8	Reading English newspapers, magazines or graded readers	19
9	Receiving extra English tuition like training class or tutors	18
10	Following teachers' instruction	17
11	Watching English movies and TV programmes	15
12	Listening to English music, songs, radio, recordings and cassettes	15
13	Keeping a notebook for the questions where I made a mistake	14

Scrutiny of their response to these items reveals several interesting findings: firstly, a large number (60%) of the participants said that they often took notes in their English class (Item S6). They tended to often use this strategy in their learning of English. Over half (51%) of the students often listened to English radio and watched English TV or movies in their learning of English (Item S7). This suggests that a moderate number of them regarded listening to English radio and watching TV programmes and movies as important means to learn English.

Secondly, 55% of the participants seldom wrote emails, blogs or diaries in their learning of English (Item S9). This result indicates that the learners seldom used social media as a strategy to learn English upon their arrival at the EMI University. A third interesting finding relates to the participants' response to Items S8 ("I read English newspapers, magazines or novels out of class") and S10 ("I read sample articles to learn how to organize my ideas in writing"), to which the percentages of both negative and positive response were almost even, both no more than thirty. This to some degree indicates that the participants used these two learning strategies less often.

Both similarities with and differences from the quantitative results regarding the participants' deployment of cognitive strategies were found in the interviews (Table 6.4). The interviewees referred to a large repertoire of cognitive strategies in learning English upon their arrival at the EMI University. The most commonly applied cognitive strategies, which echo the quantitative results, include doing examination-related materials and simulation papers (19 mentions). One of the extracts exemplifies this as follows:

38)[...], *I did a lot of simulation exercises and papers in high school. (Eason, Lines 135-136, Interview I).*

The participants also reported to have learned English by following the teachers' instruction in class (17 mentions). Their learning of English was mostly teacher-led, as commended by Mark as follows:

39)*I learned English in high school mainly by following the teacher's instruction, such as doing multiple choice questions, reading comprehension exercises and cloze tests. I did a lot of exercises following my teacher (Mark, Lines 1498-1499, Interview I).*

Moreover, the participants also reported to having deployed the strategy of keeping a notebook to facilitate their learning of English before coming to university:

40)*I had my own notebook collecting all the questions where I made a mistake. I would think about the reasons why I was wrong for later review (Peter, Lines 268-269, Interview I).*

The above results indicate that all these strategies are examination-oriented. This finding reflects the examination-oriented and teacher-led characteristic of English language learning and teaching in Mainland China (Gao, 2006, 2008a; Jiang & Sharpling, 2011; Meyer, 2012), which is also found in the participants' after-class study of English. In the interviews, many students kept mentioning that they had received extra English tuition in order to improve their performance in examinations. The following extract illustrates this:

41)*In order to improve my grammar, I enrolled in an English tuition class like New Oriental English and New Concept English. My parents also employed English tutors to teach me before the National English Matriculation, [...]. (Jane, Lines 1479-1480, Interview I).*

The interviews also reveal that the participants adopted a variety of other cognitive strategies after class, such as reading English newspapers, magazines or graded readers, watching English movies and TV programmes, and listening to English music, songs, radio programmes, recordings, and cassettes. However, a further scrutiny of these strategies shows that the participants' exercise of these strategies still reflects the

shadow of high stake examinations (Gao, 2010). In other words, very often they still used these strategies for the ultimate purpose of preparing for the high stake examinations. As illustrated in the following extract, English newspapers and magazines only functioned as another source of simulation exercises and papers.

42) We had ordered some English newspapers, on which there were some examination-related exercises and some short texts about English culture. However, we only focused on the examination-related parts because we did not have that much time to read the other parts which were not related to examinations (Jimmy, Lines 78-79, Interview I).

6.2.3 Compensation Strategies

Table 6.5 and Table 6.6 present the findings relating to the participants' employment of compensation strategies.

Table 6.5 Compensation Strategies in Language Learning in Survey I

Item	S (%)	N (%)	O (%)
S12 I guess the meaning of a new word from the context.	4	39	57
S13 I paraphrase when I read long and difficult sentences.	7	33	60
S14 I use Chinese to help my thinking while speaking or reading English.	12	31	57

Table 6.6 Compensation Strategies in Language Learning in Interview I

No.	Subcategory	Counts
14	Guessing the meaning of a word from the context	15
15	Translating into Chinese	9

57% of the students said that they often guessed the meaning of a new word from the context (Item S12). Also, a large number (60%) of them said that they often paraphrased long and difficult sentences in their own words (Item S13). In addition, 57% of the learners often used their mother tongue Chinese in their learning of English (Item S14). The result is also confirmed in the interviews (Table 6.6). For example, Jack would turn to Chinese when he was doing writing tasks:

43) I would use Chinese to help with my English writing. Usually I would first make a draft in Chinese. Then, I translated it into English sentence by sentence (Jack, Lines 858-859, Interview I).

The above results suggest that the participants often used these compensation strategies in their learning of English in high school. Their use of mother tongue and paraphrasing echoes Zhang, Wang & Sheng (2009) who note that Chinese EFL learners deploy a number of compensation strategies such as paraphrasing and translation to facilitate communication in learning English. The use of L1, though controversial in SLA, and discouraged by cognitive SLA theories and CLT methodologies, is proven to be effective in facilitating EFL learning (Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Moore, 2013).

6.2.4 Meta-cognitive Strategies

Table 6.7 and Table 6.8 are associated with the participants' use of meta-cognitive strategies.

Table 6.7 Meta-cognitive Strategies in Language Learning in Survey I

Item	S (%)	N (%)	O (%)
S15 I notice my mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	8	39	53
S16 I think about and predict the content while listening to teachers in class.	21	40	39
S17 I pay attention when classmates are speaking in class.	6	35	59
S18 I plan my schedule so that I will have enough time to study English.	11	45	44
S19 I select English learning materials that are best suitable to me.	12	34	54
S20 I set clear goals to improve my English skills.	20	40	40
S21 I think about my progress in learning English.	16	37	47
S22 I check my writings after I have finished.	12	27	61

Table 6.8 Meta-cognitive Strategies in Language Learning in Interview I

No.	Subcategory	Counts
16	Reflecting on my English language learning	9
17	Learning how to learn English by reading guidebooks or reference books	2
18	Planning my English study	2
19	Reminding myself of my mistakes	1

An examination of the participants' response to these items reveals that they tend to often use meta-cognitive strategies to monitor and regulate their English study. For instance, 61% of the participants often checked their writings after they had finished them (Item S22) and 53% of them noticed their mistakes and used that information to help them do better in future. 59% of them would often pay attention when there were

classmates speaking in class (Item S17). 47% of them often thought about their progress in English study (Item S21). Evidence of the participants' adoption of meta-cognitive strategies is also discovered in the interviews (Table 6.8). Some interviewees commented that they would reflect on their English study. Peter, for example, used reflection as a strategy to facilitate his English study:

44) [...], I would reflect on my study every day. I did not have a good memory. If I did not summarise what I had taken down in class, I would forget very quickly. (Peter, Lines 270-271, Interview I).

The quantitative data also reveal that the participants used a variety of meta-cognitive strategies to plan their English study. For example, 44% of them planned their schedule so that they had enough time to study English (Item S18). 54% of them would often select English learning materials (Item S19).

Furthermore, 40% of the students often set clear goals to improve their English (Item S20) and 39% of them thought about and predicted the content while listening to teachers in class. As shown in Table 6.7, most of the percentages that indicate the participants' positive responses to these items are around 50. This phenomenon indicates that the participants tended to make moderate use of these meta-cognitive strategies. This finding confirms the findings of Nisbet, Tindall & Arroyo (2005).

6.2.5 Affective Strategies

Table 6.9 and Table 6.10 present the results concerning the participants' deployment of affective strategies.

Table 6.9 Affective Strategies in Language Learning in Survey I

Item	S (%)	N (%)	O (%)
S23 I try to encourage myself to speak English even though I make mistakes.	12	47	41
S24 I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in learning English.	47	30	23
S25 I discuss my feelings about my English study with my English tutors.	37	40	23
S26 I exchange my feelings and ideas of learning English with friends or classmates.	37	36	27

Table 6.10 Affective Strategies in Language Learning in Interview I

No.	Subcategory	Counts
20	Sharing English learning experience with peers	1
21	Talking with teachers about the problems in my English study	1

41% of the participants often tried to encourage themselves to speak English even though they would make mistakes (Item S23). By contrast, they demonstrated a low frequency of use of other affective strategies (Items S24, S25 and S26). 47% of them would not reward themselves when they did well in learning English (Item S24). 37% of them would not discuss their feelings about English study with their English tutors (Item S25) and 37% of them would not exchange their English learning feelings with their peers (Item S26). These findings suggest that they seldom adopted affective strategies in learning English, which confirms the findings of Li's (2005) and Yu & Wang's (2009) studies.

Their infrequent use of affective strategies is also evidenced in the interviews (Table 6.10). As indicated in the following quote, the participants seldom exchanged their feelings with peers or teachers. They thought peers might not be able to help solve their problems in learning English. In addition, they were so accustomed to the teacher-led mode of English learning and teaching that they tended to be passive learners, seldom taking the initiative to regulate their affective states in learning English (Gan, 2009).

45) We seldom talked to others about our feelings and experiences in English study. On the one hand, I think others may be also unsure when I need help for a question; on the other hand, we were so used to the traditional teacher-led way of learning and teaching. We believed our teachers and relied on them.[...], (Hanks, Lines 431-432, Interview I).

6.2.6 Social Strategies

Table 6.11 and Table 6.12 show the findings regarding the participants' use of social strategies in their English study.

64% of the learners did not look for others, like classmates, with whom to practise speaking English after class (Item S29). 60% of them said that they did not take part in English activities and societies like English clubs (Item S27). Also, 60% of them seldom talked to foreign teachers or international students to learn about their culture (Item S30). Furthermore, 52% of them did not work together with classmates or friends on English after class (Item S28). These findings indicate that the participants used these social strategies infrequently in their pre-university English learning experiences.

Table 6.11 Social Strategies in Language Learning in Survey I

Item	S (%)	N (%)	O (%)
S27 I take part in English activities and societies like English clubs.	60	28	12
S28 I work with classmates or friends on English after class.	52	34	14
S29 I look for people like classmates to practise speaking English after class.	64	27	9
S30 I talk to foreign teachers or international students to learn about their culture.	60	27	13

Table 6.12 Social Strategies in Language Learning in Interview I

No.	Subcategory	Counts
22	Discussing examination-related questions with classmates	9
23	Participating in activities like English corners, societies, and competitions.	6
24	Asking for help from teachers with my English study	4

Their infrequent application of social strategies is also revealed in the interviews (Table 6.12). Although only a small number of the participants said that they did use social strategies, their use of these learning strategies still shows traces of being examination-oriented. For example, they often discussed examination-related questions with their classmates:

46) The most common interaction between our classmates is discussing exercises or examination-related questions. We seldom talked with each other in English, because the examination did not include the speaking part (Jimmy, Lines 74-75, Interview I).

The participants' low use of social strategies identified in this study echoes previous studies (Li, 2005; Rao, 2006; Yu & Wang, 2009). This infrequent use of social strategies, as indicated in the above extract, points to the influence of the high stake

examinations in Mainland China. The predominance of examinations in learning English governs the behaviour of all the stake holders including teachers, parents, and learners (Gao, 2006, 2008a). The high stake examinations only focus on receptive skills such as vocabulary, grammar, and written forms of linguistic knowledge, paying little attention to learners' productive skills (Hu, 2002; Liao, 2000).

The examinations also lead to non-communication-oriented teaching practice in Chinese EFL classroom (Yu & Wang, 2009). Teachers did not provide many opportunities for students to use the language. As a result, students have few opportunities to socialise with others. The examinations and teaching practice in Mainland China encourage the learners to adopt memory strategies, but constrain their use of social strategies (Rao, 2006; Yu & Wang, 2009).

6.3 Strategies Used after Completing an Academic Year

In order to answer the second research question (RQ 2c: What strategies do Chinese EFL learners use to learn English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University?), the quantitative and qualitative data concerning the participants' use of learning strategies were analysed in the same way as noted earlier in Section 6.2.

6.3.1 Memory Strategies

Table 6.13 and Table 6.14 are concerned with the findings regarding the participants' use of memory strategies.

In comparison with Survey I, the participants demonstrated several interesting features in their deployment of memory strategies. Overall, they displayed a decrease in their use of memory strategies. For instance, there is a dramatic decrease on Item S4, "I memorise grammatical rules by doing pattern exercises." 64% of the participants in Survey I deployed this strategy, while only 30% of them endorsed this strategy in Survey II. This may suggest that the participants paid less attention to the study of

grammar after coming to study EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. It may also indicate that the learning of grammar is not the focus of learning English at the EMI University. The top concern in an EMI context is the ability to use English for communication in academic studies (Gao, 2006; Li, 2007; Liu, 2013).

Table 6.13 Memory Strategies in Language Learning in Survey II

Item	S (%)	N (%)	O (%)
S1 I memorise new words by looking up the meanings of new words in dictionaries like online dictionaries.	8	30	62
S2 I memorise new words by associating or comparing the meanings with other words.	15	37	48
S3 I memorise new words in sentences or in texts.	24	41	35
S4 I memorise grammatical rules by doing pattern exercises.	33	37	30
S5 I recite model sentence structures or model essays to improve my writing.	36	31	33

Table 6.14 Memory Strategies in Language Learning in Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts
1	Memorising vocabulary	28
2	Retaining the memory of words by consulting dictionaries	13
3	Memorising model essays to learn English writing	12
4	Memorising grammar	3

A second feature relates to the participants' use of strategies to memorise vocabulary at the EMI University. 48% of them memorised new words by associating or comparing the meanings with other words (Item S2). In addition, 62% of the participants said that they often memorised new words by looking up the meanings of new words in dictionaries like online dictionaries (Item S1). This result is supported by the interviews (Table 6.14). As indicated in the interviews, the participants still spent considerable time memorising words (28 references). One of the extracts illustrates this as follows:

47) After completing the tasks and homework teachers assign to us, I would memorise the words that I do not know, [...] (Jason, Lines 322-323, Interview II).

Moreover, the participants displayed the feature of memorising vocabulary in sentences or texts. One third (35%) of the participants said that they memorised new words in sentences or in texts (Item S3). This result is confirmed in the interviews. The

interviewees said that they often followed model sentences and texts in learning English (17 references). For example:

48) The model reports are very useful for my essay writing. The structures used in those model reports are similar to those our English teacher taught in class, such as methods of analysing data, and discussion (Jack, Lines 926-927, Interview II).

The participants' use of strategies to memorise vocabulary echoes their belief in the importance of vocabulary in EAP learning at the EMI University. As noted earlier, they encountered difficulties in their academic studies due to an inadequate knowledge of technical terms (Evans & Green, 2007). As a result, they make every effort to memorise these technical terms in order to survive in the EMI context (Liu, 2013).

6.3.2 Cognitive Strategies

Table 6.15 and Table 6.16 show the results regarding the participants' use of cognitive strategies.

Table 6.15 Cognitive Strategies in Language Learning in Survey II

Item	S (%)	N (%)	O (%)
S6 I try to take notes in English class.	15	30	55
S7 I listen to English radio, watch English TV or movies.	7	32	61
S8 I read English newspapers, magazines or novels out of class.	14	38	48
S9 I write emails, blogs or diaries in English.	24	38	38
S10 I read sample articles to learn how to organise my ideas in writing.	17	33	50
S11 I make summaries of the key points while reading or listening to English.	36	38	26

Table 6.16 Cognitive Strategies in Language Learning in Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts
5	Writing academic essays and reports	23
6	Reading English newspapers, magazines or graded readers	20
7	Following teachers' instruction	19
8	Watching English movies and TV programmes	17
9	Listening to English music, songs, radio, recordings and cassettes	13
10	Surfing English websites or resources	12
11	Writing English emails, letters, messages or blogs	10
12	Doing examination-related materials and simulation papers	8
13	Keeping a notebook for the questions where I made a mistake	1

In comparison with Survey I, the participants demonstrated an obvious increase in their use of the following cognitive strategies: listening to English radio, watching English TV or movies (Item S7), reading English newspapers, magazines or novels out of class (Item S8), reading sample articles to learn how to organise ideas in writing (Item S10), and writing emails, blogs, or diaries in English (Item S9).

Approximately, about two thirds (61%) of the students reported that they often listened to English radio and watched English TV programmes or movies (Item S7) after learning EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. Almost half of them (48%) said that they read English newspapers, magazines or novels out of class (Item S8). The above findings suggest that the participants tended to exercise a large variety of cognitive strategies after coming to study EAP in an EMI context (Li, 2007; Liu, 2013).

The above results are also found in the interviews (Table 6.16). The interviewees continued to use frequently the following cognitive strategies: reading English newspapers, magazines, novels and graded readers, watching English movies, video clips or TV programmes, and listening to English recordings, cassettes, radio programmes, songs and music. It seems that the participants might have developed a good knowledge of learning strategies by taking advantage of the rich resources for their learning of English at the EMI University. One of the extracts exemplifies this as follows:

49) [...], I would also go to browse some English newspapers' websites like the New York Times. [...], (Sarah, Lines 403-404, Interview II).

55% of them claimed to take notes in class (Item S6) and half of them read sample articles in order to learn how to organise their ideas in writing (Item S10). 38% of them wrote emails, blogs or diaries in English (Item S9). Similar findings are also discovered in the interviews. The interviewees revealed that they developed some new cognitive strategies such as writing academic essays and reports in English, writing English emails, letters, messages or blogs, and surfing English websites or resources in their

English study. These newly developed cognitive strategies were exemplified in the following extract:

50) I write reports or blogs for the Youth Association I participate in. This is a good opportunity to practise my English (Steve, Lines 1262-1263, Interview II).

6.3.3 Compensation Strategies

Table 6.17 and Table 6.18 present the findings concerning the participants' employment of compensation strategies.

Table 6.17 Compensation Strategies in Language Learning in Survey II

Item	S (%)	N (%)	O (%)
S12 I guess the meaning of a new word from the context.	3	40	57
S13 I paraphrase when I read long and difficult sentences.	7	28	65
S14 I use Chinese to help my thinking while speaking or reading English.	14	33	53

Table 6.18 Compensation Strategies in Language Learning in Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts
14	Guessing the meaning of a word from the context	14
15	Translating into Chinese	9
16	Paraphrasing	4

Compared with Survey I, there is no apparent change observed in Survey II. 53% of the learners often used Chinese in learning English (Item S14). Over half (57%) of them often guessed the meaning of a new word from the context in learning English (Item S12). This may be necessary because of the difficulties the participants face in their academic studies at the EMI University. As discussed above, the participants encountered difficulties in their academic studies due to their lack of knowledge of technical terms and expressions (Evans & Green, 2007; Li & Ruan, 2013). Experiencing difficulties in EAP learning, they have needed to think about compensation strategies to help them out (Gao, 2006; Liu, 2013). One of the interviewees puts it as follows:

51) [...], Sometimes, I have difficulty in understanding some new words and expressions in the textbook of the International Relation class, an optional course I take this semester. At this moment, I would guess according to the context a word and an

expression occurs within. Otherwise, I have to turn to my dictionary. (Steve, Lines 1289-1290, Interview II).

A large number (65%) of them reported that they often paraphrased long and difficult sentences when they were reading (Item S13). The adoption of this compensation strategy indicates their experience in handling academic tasks in an EMI context (Liu, 2013). Students learning EAP in an EMI context face a variety of academic tasks. They may encounter difficulties in expressing themselves when carrying out these tasks, for example, when speaking in a presentation. In order to solve these problems, they may turn to compensation strategies such as paraphrasing (Zhang, Wang & Sheng, 2009). This is captured as follows:

52) I think I have made decent progress in academic writing. For instance, when I find difficulty in expressing myself in writing essays, I would turn to paraphrase, a strategy I learned last semester, [...], (Norah, Lines 458-449, Interview II).

6.3.4 Meta-cognitive Strategies

Table 6.19 and Table 6.20 report the results regarding the participants' application of meta-cognitive strategies.

Table 6.19 Meta-Cognitive Strategies in Language Learning in Survey II

Item	S (%)	N (%)	O (%)
S15 I notice my mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	10	33	57
S16 I think about and predict the content while I listen to teachers in class.	19	38	43
S17 I pay attention when classmates are speaking in class.	5	31	64
S18 I plan my schedule so that I will have enough time to study English.	10	36	54
S19 I select English learning materials that are best suitable to me.	6	34	60
S20 I set clear goals to improve my English skills.	10	30	60
S21 I think about my progress in learning English.	8	27	65
S22 I check my writings after I have finished.	7	18	75

Table 6.20 Meta-Cognitive Strategies in Language Learning in Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts
17	Checking and revising my writing	17
18	Planning my English study	17
19	Reflecting on my English language learning	12

In comparison with Survey I, they demonstrated an increase in their use of meta-cognitive strategies, which echoes previous studies that Chinese learners display a more frequent use of meta-cognitive strategies when learning EAP in EMI contexts (Jiang & Sharpling, 2011; Li, 2007). For instance, 54% of the participants in Survey II often made their plans so that they could have enough time to study English (Item S18), compared with 44% of them who agreed that they used this strategy in Survey I. On Item S20, 40% of them in Survey I said that they set clear goals to improve their English, while 60% of them in Survey II used this strategy. 65% of the participants in Survey II thought about their progress in learning English (Item S21), compared with 47% in Survey I. These results suggest that, in general, over half of the participants used these meta-cognitive strategies to monitor and regulate their English study. As indicated in the interviews (Table 6.20), the participants said that they planned their English study (17 references):

53)[...], it is important to plan my study. [...], good time arrangement is able to improve my study efficiency (Eason, Lines 42-43, Interview II).

Another obvious change is identified in Item S22, “I check my writing after I have finished”. Three quarters (75%) of the participants in Survey II often checked their writings after they had finished (Item S22), while only 61% of them in Survey I adopted this strategy. The participants seemed to attach much importance to their mistakes in learning English, particularly in writing. This is shown in their response to Item S15, in which 57% of them would make note of their mistakes and use that information to help them do better. The interviews confirm that they often checked and revised their writings in English study (17 references):

54) I will check and revise my essay first before turning to the feedback from my teacher. I will compare my own revision and my teacher’s feedback and think about the reasons if there is any difference. (Rachel, Lines 827-828, Interview II).

These changes seem to be related to the teaching practice at the EMI University where the EAP class is strategy-embedded. During the lecture sessions, the EAP tutors train the students how to learn English in an EMI context. Further, the learning tasks in their

academic studies involve various deadlines, which require the participants to manage their time and plan their study reasonably. In addition, the different components of the formative assessment, being pragmatic and skills-based, might contribute to their greater use of meta-cognitive strategies (Jiang & Sharpling, 2011).

6.3.5 Affective Strategies

Table 6.21 and Table 6.22 display the findings with regard to the participants' use of affective strategies to regulate their emotions in learning English.

Table 6.21 Affective Strategies in Language Learning in Survey II

Item	S (%)	N (%)	O (%)
S23 I try to encourage myself to speak English even though I make mistakes.	12	36	52
S24 I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in learning English.	43	32	25
S25 I discuss my feelings about my English study with my English tutors.	24	38	38
S26 I exchange my feelings and ideas of learning English with friends or classmates.	29	45	26

Table 6.22 Affective Strategies in Language Learning in Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts
20	Sharing English learning experience with peers	14
21	Talking with teachers about the problems in my English study	9

52% of the participants said that they often tried to encourage themselves to speak English even though they would make mistakes (Item S23). This percentage is much higher than that (41%) in Survey I, indicating that they tended to make greater effort to improve their spoken English. This result also suggests that spoken English is of utmost importance in an EMI context (Liu, 2013). Therefore, in order to survive in the EMI context, they had to encourage themselves to improve their English, even though they might make some mistakes.

At the same time, 38% of the participants in Survey II discussed their feelings with their English tutors (Item S25), while only 23% of them in Survey I adopted this strategy. This might be explained by the opportunities for the students to interact with their

teachers through a variety of channels such as tutorial sessions and office hours at the EMI University. During the interactions, teachers provide scaffolding for the students, encouraging more interaction with them (de Graaff, Koopman, Anikina & Westhoff, 2007). This interaction process may contribute to the participants' increasing use of affective strategies.

One more interesting result is that the learners demonstrated low frequency in their use of self-rewarding strategies (Item S24). Only 25% of the learners would reward themselves when they did well in learning English. Further, 43% of them would not give themselves a reward or treat when they did well in learning English. Moreover, only 26% of them in Survey II said that they exchanged their feelings and ideas about learning English with peers (Item S26). This small percentage tends to indicate that the participants exchanged less frequently with peers about their English learning experiences. However, the interviews (Table 6.22) reveal that they did exchange their feelings with peers:

55) [...], *I once talked about my puzzle with my classmates that I did not feel that fast progress in English study at this university. They agreed with me. [...], we then decided to speak English when we were in our dorm. (Steve, Lines 1238-1239, Interview II).*

6.3.6 Social Strategies

Table 6.23 and Table 6.24 present the results with regard to the participants' deployment of social strategies. They show that most of the participants still demonstrated a moderately low frequency of use of these social strategies in the learning of English. However, compared with Survey I, there is an obvious increase in their deployment of these social strategies, which confirms some previous studies (Li, 2007; Liu, 2013; Parks & Raymond, 2004). These studies show that, after Chinese EFL learners go to study EAP in an EMI context, they demonstrate an increase in their use of social strategies.

Regarding Item S28, whereas only 14% of the participants in Survey I often worked with their classmates or friends on English after class, 50% of them in Survey II were positive about this strategy. 38% of the learners in Survey II said that they participated in English activities and societies (Item S27), while only 12% in Survey I used this strategy. 35% of the participants in Survey II talked to foreign teachers or international students to learn about their culture (Item S30); by contrast, only 13% of them deployed this strategy in Survey I. 34% in Survey II said that they looked for people like classmates to practise speaking English after class (Item S29), but only 9% in Survey I said that they often used this strategy.

Table 6.23 Social Strategies in Language Learning in Interview II

Item	S (%)	N (%)	O (%)
S27 I take part in English activities and societies like English clubs.	24	38	38
S28 I work with classmates or friends on English after class.	13	37	50
S29 I look for people like classmates to practise speaking English after class.	20	46	34
S30 I talk to foreign teachers or international students to learn about their culture.	25	40	35

Table 6.24 Social Strategies in Language Learning in Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts
22	Doing group discussion, presentations or projects	39
23	Participating in activities like English corners, societies, and competitions.	17
24	Speaking English with international teachers, students and friends	16
25	Asking for help from teachers with my English study	7
26	Speaking English with peers	7
27	Asking for help from peers with my English study	4

The increase in the participants' use of social strategies is related to the many opportunities to interact with peers both in and out of class at the EMI University, as revealed in the interviews (Table 6.24). The students collaborated with peers through working together on group tasks, presentations, or projects in study. Socialising opportunities are also available through participating in extracurricular activities, competitions and societies, and speaking with international students, friends, and teachers. As captured in the following extract, these interactions contribute to the participants' more frequent use of social strategies (Parks & Raymond, 2004).

56) [...], first of all, when we do group projects or presentations for English class, we have to discuss them together to make a plan for these tasks. Then, there might be some unpredictable problems when we are doing these tasks, which require skills to deal with. [...] (Jason, Lines 292-293, Interview II).

6.4 Changes in Strategies after an Academic Year

In order to address the third research question (RQ 3c: What are the potential changes in the strategies they use to learn English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, and what might have caused these changes?), the data were analysed in the same ways as in Section 5.4: the quantitative data were analysed with descriptive (means and standard deviation) and inferential procedures (a parametric test) (Section 3.6.1). Then, the qualitative data were analysed with a focus on the changes in order to provide triangulation with the quantitative data (Section 3.6.2).

6.4.1 Changes in Strategies in Quantitative Data

As noted earlier (Section 5.4.1), a parametric test was performed on the data collected at the two research stages (Survey I and Survey II) in order to explore whether the changes which were already presented in Section 6.3 are statistically significant in the participants' use of learning strategies after they had studied EAP for one academic year at the EMI University.

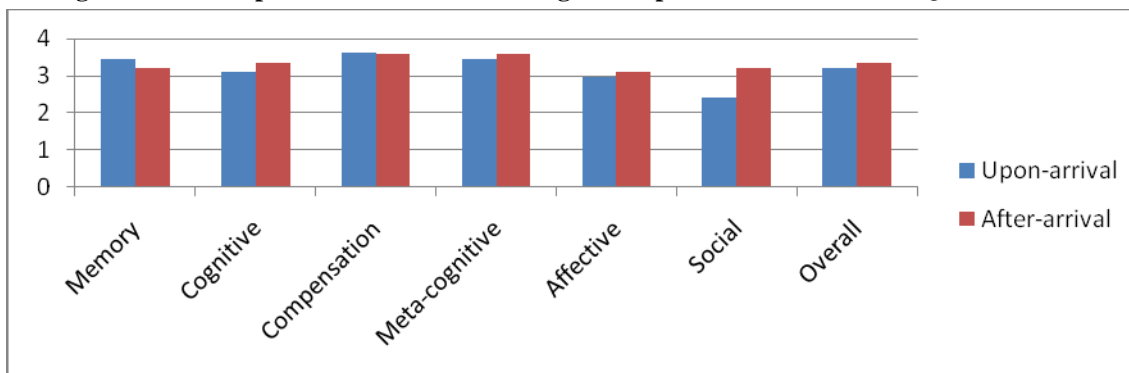
Table 6.25 and Figure 6.1 present the Independent T-Test results. It can be seen that there are apparent differences in the overall means of all the categories of the participants' strategy use between Survey I and Survey II. A decrease in the means of *memory* and *compensation* strategies is found while there is a remarkable increase in the means of *cognitive*, *meta-cognitive*, *affective*, and *social* strategies in the after-arrival questionnaire. Furthermore, as shown in Table 6.25, except for *compensation* strategies, the P values [Sig. (2-tailed)] for *memory*, *cognitive*, *meta-cognitive*, *affective*, and *social* strategies and for the overall level are all .000, which are below the .05 level. The findings indicate statistically significant changes in the participants' deployment of

memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, affective, and social strategies after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University.

Table 6.25 Independent T-Test: Overall Strategies in Upon- and After-arrival Questionnaires

Category	Group	Number	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Memory	Survey I	1026	3.4573	.52696	11.274	1933	.000
	Survey II	909	3.1912	.50818			
Cognitive	Survey I	1026	3.0955	.52325	-10.384	1933	.000
	Survey II	909	3.3349	.48627			
Compensation	Survey I	1026	3.6327	.56472	1.514	1933	.130
	Survey II	909	3.5953	.51643			
Meta-cognitive	Survey I	1026	3.4566	.53403	-6.089	1933	.000
	Survey II	909	3.5966	.46948			
Affective	Survey I	1026	2.9656	.63896	-4.190	1933	.000
	Survey II	909	3.0828	.58415			
Social	Survey I	1026	2.3913	.71739	-26.393	1933	.000
	Survey II	909	3.1947	.60812			
Overall	Survey I	1026	3.1938	.38260	-9.547	1933	.000
	Survey II	909	3.3537	.34997			

Figure 6.1 A Comparison of Means of Strategies in Upon- and After-arrival Questionnaires



In order to further examine the changes in the participants' strategy use one academic year after they had studied EAP at the EMI University, an Independent T-Test was again performed on the means of every individual item between the upon- and after-arrival questionnaires (Table 6.26). When the means of every individual item of the Upon- and After-arrival questionnaires are compared, significant differences are found in 18 items [Sig. (2-tailed) approximately $P < 0.05$]. These differences indicate significant changes in these 18 individual strategies among the participants after they

had studied EAP for one academic year at the EMI University. These 18 items fall into the following six subcategories of learning strategies: 1) *memory* strategies (Items S3, S4, and S5); 2) *cognitive* strategies (Items S6, S7, S8, S9, and S10); 3) *compensation* strategies (Item S14); 4) *meta-cognitive* strategies (Items S18, S20, S21, and S22); 5) *affective* strategies (Item S25); and 6) *social* strategies (Items S27, S28, S29, and S30).

Table 6.26 Independent T-Test: Individual Strategies in Upon- and After-arrival Questionnaires

Item	Mean (Upon)	Mean (After)	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
S3 I memorise new words in sentences or in texts.	3.34	3.10	5.769	1933	.000
S4 I memorise grammatical rules by doing pattern exercises.	3.65	2.93	15.765	1933	.000
S5 I recite model sentence structures or model essays to improve my writing.	3.30	2.94	7.703	1933	.000
S6 I try to take notes in English class.	3.68	3.53	3.389	1933	.001
S7 I listen to English radio, watch English TV or movies.	3.54	3.68	-3.431	1933	.001
S8 I read English newspapers, magazines or novels out of class.	3.05	3.40	-8.739	1933	.000
S9 I write emails, blogs or diaries in English.	2.43	3.14	-17.707	1933	.000
S10 I read sample articles to learn how to organise my ideas in writing.	3.05	3.36	-8.014	1933	.000
S14 I use Chinese to help my thinking while speaking or reading English.	3.55	3.45	2.393	1933	.017
S18 I plan my schedule so that I will have enough time to study English.	3.38	3.51	-3.641	1933	.000
S20 I set clear goals to improve my English skills.	3.27	3.60	-8.124	1933	.000
S21 I think about my progress in learning English.	3.39	3.66	-6.867	1933	.000
S22 I check my writings after I have finished.	3.69	3.87	-4.393	1933	.000
S25 I discuss my feelings about my English study with my English tutors.	2.87	3.13	-6.179	1933	.000
S27 I take part in English activities and societies like English clubs.	2.34	3.15	-18.208	1933	.000
S28 I work with classmates or friends on English after class.	2.54	3.42	-21.694	1933	.000
S29 I look for people like classmates to practise speaking English after class.	2.30	3.11	-20.255	1933	.000
S30 I talk to foreign teachers or international students to learn about their culture.	2.39	3.10	-14.580	1933	.000

6.4.2 Changes in Strategies Indicated in Qualitative Data

This section centres on the changes in the participants' use of learning strategies observed in the interviews. Similarly to Section 5.4.2, a comparison was made between the two groups of the coded subcategories in order to identify the changes in the participants' use of learning strategies. Evidence of changes in strategies was noted and included in Table 6.27.

Table 6.27 reveals that, after having studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, the participants tended to adopt less the following memory strategies: memorising grammatical rules (No. 17), reciting texts (No. 21), and learning by rote (No. 20). Though there was a decrease in references to memorising vocabulary (No. 16), the frequency of using this strategy was still high (28 references). This might indicate that the participants continued to attach great importance to the study of vocabulary at the EMI University.

Changes are also observed in the participants' use of cognitive strategies. There is an obvious decrease in their use of the following cognitive strategies: "receiving extra English tuition like training class or tutors" (No. 5) and "keeping a notebook for the questions where I made a mistake" (No. 9). Though there is a noticeable decrease in their deployment of the strategy of doing examination-related materials and simulation papers (No. 3), there are still 8 mentions of this strategy. This might indicate that they still attach a great deal of weight to examinations. The interviews also indicate an increase in some other cognitive strategies among the participants: writing academic essays and reports (No. 10), surfing English websites or resources (No. 11), and writing English emails, letters, messages or blogs (No. 12).

Table 6.27 also reveals changes in the participants' use of meta-cognitive strategies. They reported themselves to be more frequently reflecting (No. 22) and planning (No. 24) their learning of English after having studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. They also said that they paid more attention to checking and revising their

writing (No. 26). These changes in their use of meta-cognitive strategies might be related to their experience of academic studies at the EMI University.

Table 6.27 A Comparison between Strategies Emerging from Interview I and Interview II

No.	Subcategory	Counts		Category	
		Interview I	Interview II		
1	Sharing English learning experience with peers	1	14	Affective	
2	Talking with teachers about the problems in my English study	1	9		
3	Doing exam-related materials and simulation papers	19	8	Cognitive	
4	Reading English newspapers, magazines or graded readers	19	20		
5	Receiving extra English tuition like training class or tutors	18	/		
6	Following teachers' instruction	17	19		
7	Watching English movies and TV programmes	15	17		
8	Listening to English music, songs, radio, recordings and cassettes	15	13		
9	Keeping a notebook for the questions where I made a mistake	14	1		
10	Writing academic essays and reports	/	23		
11	Surfing English websites or resources	/	12		
12	Writing English emails, letters, messages or blogs	/	10		
13	Guessing the meaning of a word from the context	15	14		Compensation
14	Translating into Chinese	9	9		
15	Paraphrasing	/	4		
16	Memorising vocabulary	36	28	Memory	
17	Memorising grammar	18	3		
18	Retaining the memory of words by consulting dictionaries	11	13		
19	Memorising model essays to learn English writing	10	12		
20	Doing rote learning	9	/		
21	Reciting texts	5	/		
22	Reflecting on my English language learning	9	12	Meta-cognitive	
23	Learning strategies by reading guidebooks or reference books	2	/		
24	Planning my English study	2	17		
25	Reminding myself of my mistakes	1	/		
26	Checking and revising my writing	/	17		
27	Discussing examination-related questions with classmates	9	/	Social	
28	Participating in activities like English corners, societies, and competitions.	6	17		
29	Asking for help from teachers with my English study	4	7		
30	Asking for help from peers with my English study	3	4		
31	Doing group discussion, presentations or projects	/	39		
32	Speaking English with international teachers, students and friends	/	16		
33	Speaking English with peers	/	7		

Furthermore, Table 6.27 indicates some changes in the participants' employment of social strategies. After spending one academic year at the EMI University, the participants seldom discussed examination-related questions with other peers (No. 27). Instead, they engaged in group discussion, presentations or projects in learning English (No. 31). They interacted more with others, such as speaking English with international teachers, students and friends (No. 32), practising spoken English with peers (No. 33), and asking for help from their teachers (No. 29). They also actively involved themselves in activities like English corners, societies, and competitions (No. 28).

Table 6.27 also reveals a change in the participants' use of affective strategies. They more frequently shared their English learning experiences with peers (No. 1) and exchanged their feelings with teachers (No. 2). These changes indicate that, after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, the participants seemed to pay more attention to their affect state.

In summary, apparent changes were found in the participants' use of learning strategies after they had studied EAP for an academic year at an EMI University. The quantitative results provide a general understanding of the changes in the participants' strategies, while the qualitative results provide in-depth insights into these changes. Having summarised the overall changes in the participants' use of learning strategies after they had studied EAP for an academic year in this EMI context, the following section will discuss these changes (Section 6.4.3).

6.4.3 Discussion of the Changes in LLS

This section analyses the changes in the participants' use of learning strategies in learning English after they had studied EAP for one academic year at the EMI University.

6.4.3.1 Memory strategies

Both the quantitative and qualitative data reveal a reduced use of memory strategies, the strategy of memorising grammar in particular, among the participants. This may suggest that the participants paid less attention to the study of grammar after coming to study EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. This change may be explained by the shift of learning focus at the EMI University where EAP learning is communication-oriented and linguistic knowledge such as vocabulary and grammar is less focused upon (Jiang & Sharpling, 2011). Instead, the ability to use English is highlighted in an EMI context (Gao, 2006; Li, 2007; Liu, 2013).

The two data sources also show a decrease in the participants' use of the following two memory strategies: memorising vocabulary in sentences or in texts and reciting model sentence structures or model essays in order to improve their writing. However, the interviews reveal that they still used these two strategies frequently. A reason for this finding is about the difficulties they encountered in learning EAP in the EMI context. As noted earlier, they had an inadequate knowledge of technical terms and expressions. Therefore, these difficulties may have acted as a driving force, making the participants pay more attention to the memorising of vocabulary (Liu, 2013).

6.4.3.2 Cognitive strategies

The questionnaire surveys and interviews reveal a decrease in the participants' use of the following cognitive strategies: taking notes, doing examination-related materials and simulation papers, and receiving extra English tuition in training classes or with tutors. An explanation for this decrease relates to the focus of EAP study at the EMI University. As discussed above, the purpose of EAP study at EMI context is to learn how to use English to study other content subjects, but not to prepare for examinations (Liu, 2013).

The questionnaire surveys indicate a significant increase in the participants' use of the following cognitive strategies: listening to English radio, watching English TV or

movies, and reading English newspapers, magazines or novels out of class. The surveys also show a significant increase in reading sample articles to learn how to organise their ideas in writing. The interviews suggest a sharp increase in their writing of academic essays and reports and surfing English websites or resources. The two data sources also reveal an apparent increase in writing emails, blogs or diaries in English.

One possible reason for the participants' increasing use of these cognitive strategies is related to the ample material and social resources at the EMI University. As introduced earlier (Section 3.4), the facilities and resources such as the library and the internet at the EMI University are all in English. This EMI context provides practical support for the students' use of English (Jiang & Sharpling, 2011), which guarantees contact with the target language and contributes to the participants' use of cognitive strategies. The increasing use of cognitive strategies might be also associated with strategy-embedded teaching practice in the EAP classes. The EAP teachers incorporate strategy training into class. This strategy-embedded teaching practice might have contributed to the participants' cognitive growth (Donato & McCormick, 1994). Another account for the participants' increasing use of cognitive strategies, particularly those related to academic writing, may pertain to the fundamental function of writing in an academic context that serves information exchange within a discipline (Dodigovic, 2005; Halliday, 1999). Therefore, a culture of academic writing is often highlighted in EMI contexts where students are apprenticed through a variety of writing tasks (Hemp-Lyons, 2001; Johns, 1997). The various academic writing tasks integrated in the curriculum of the EMI University may have contributed to the participants' increasing use of academic writing related strategies.

6.4.3.3 Compensation strategies

The quantitative data show that the participants manifested a significant decrease in their use of their mother tongue Chinese. This might be due to the fact that the ability to use English is highlighted in an EMI context (Liu, 2013). This emphasis might constrain their use of Chinese in English study at the EMI University. In addition, the EMI

context provides many opportunities for them to use English, which might also have contributed to the decrease in their use of Chinese.

The interviews also reveal that they used paraphrasing strategies more frequently after they had studied EAP for one academic year at the EMI University. This might be related to their study experiences in EMI contexts (Liu, 2013). Paraphrasing is an important skill for academic studies, particularly for academic writing and presentations. When students have difficulties in expressing themselves in writing an essay or in doing a presentation, it is reasonable for them to use paraphrasing to help them out (Zhang, Wang & Sheng, 2009).

6.4.3.4 Meta-cognitive strategies

Both the quantitative and qualitative data reveal that the participants demonstrated an increase in the overall use of meta-cognitive strategies, which echoes previous studies (Jiang & Sharpling, 2011; Li, 2007). Specifically, they came to use the following meta-cognitive strategies more often: setting goals, planning their schedule, being reflective, and checking their essays.

These changes might again be caused by the teaching practice at the EMI University where EAP teaching is strategy-embedded (see Section 3.4). Strategy training is offered to the students through EAP classes, lectures and tutorials. In addition, the process-based teaching mode also contributes to the participants' meta-cognitive awareness in learning English (Liu, 2013). The learning tasks in their academic studies such as the various deadlines for coursework and presentations require them to have clear goals and plan their time. The different components of the formative assessment are pragmatic and skills-based (Jiang & Sharpling, 2011). For example, students not only receive feedback from their teachers and peers, but also provide feedback to peers. This process might make them reflect on their English study.

6.4.3.5 Affective strategies

Though the quantitative data show that this cohort of EAP learners deployed affective strategies least, the two data sources reveal an apparent increase in discussing their feelings about English study with English tutors, and sharing their English learning experience with peers. This might be explained by their interaction with their teachers through tutorial sessions and office hours at the EMI University. These changes might also be accounted for by the small-sized classes at the EMI University, which makes it possible for teacher-student and student-student interactions to take place. Through these interactions, scaffolding to students is thus created, stimulating more exchanges between them (de Graaff, Koopman, Anikina & Westhoff, 2007).

6.4.3.6 Social strategies

The two data sources reveal that the participants came to communicate with international students, friends, and teachers, and to practise English with peers at the EMI University. This change might be caused by the English learning environment in this EMI context. There are many opportunities for students to get exposed to native speakers or proficient English speakers in an EMI context (Li, 2007). In such an EMI context, it is therefore possible for the participants to use these two social strategies more frequently.

The interviews show that the participants came to interact more with their teachers. A reason for this change might be related to the teaching practice at the EMI University. English classes at the university follow an interactive teaching mode, which encourages teacher-student interaction. Teachers encourage students to communicate with them both in and after class, such as in tutorial sessions and office hours. This interaction process between teachers and students might have promoted the students' increasing use of social strategies (de Graaff, Koopman, Anikina & Westhoff, 2007).

The questionnaire surveys indicate a significant increase in the participants' working with classmates or friends after class. The interviews also show that they came to collaborate more with peers through working together on group tasks, presentations, or projects in study. The explanation for these changes might lie in their experience of learning tasks at the EMI University. EAP classes are tasked-based and encourage cooperative learning. Students cooperate with peers in such learning tasks as group projects and presentations, which might have promoted their use of social strategies (Liu, 2013; Parks & Raymond, 2004). Also, as noted earlier, the experiences in various extracurricular activities such as the debating society, the language club and the Model United Nations contributed to their increasing use of social strategies.

Having summarised the overall changes in the participants' LLS after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, the following section will discuss the key findings at the two research stages, including the participants' LLS upon (Section 6.5.1) and after (Section 6.5.2) their arrival at the EMI University respectively.

6.5 Discussion of the Key Findings Regarding LLS

This study is based on two data sources: questionnaire surveys and interviews. The questionnaire surveys have helped obtain an overall picture of the participants' LLS, while the interviews have contributed to an in-depth understanding of the changes in their use of LLS. This section will discuss how the two data sources have helped to illuminate our understanding of the disposition of the participants' LLS upon and after their arrival at the EMI University.

6.5.1 Key Findings of LLS upon Arrival

The quantitative data showed an overall pattern of LLS among the participants. The qualitative data provided rich information about how and why they made use of these strategies. The two data sources reveal an array of characteristics in the participants' use of LLS upon their arrival at the EMI University. The participants were found to be at

the medium level in their deployment of learning strategies. In terms of the six subcategories, compensation and memory strategies were most frequently used by the participants, followed by meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies. Affective and social strategies were least used.

The two data sources also indicate that a range of individual strategies was used by the participants. Specifically, memory strategies, namely, memorising vocabulary, grammatical rules, and model sentences and texts, were frequently applied by the participants. Translating into Chinese and guessing the meaning of new words from the context, which belong to compensation strategies, were also frequently used by them. The following specific cognitive strategies such as doing examination-related materials and simulation paper, keeping a notebook, following the teachers' instruction, and listening to recordings, were also discovered to be frequently deployed.

The findings at this stage of the research confirm previous research with regard to the deployment of learning strategies among Chinese EFL learners from Mainland China. The result that Chinese EFL learners are at the medium level in their use of learning strategies is congruent with the findings of previous studies (e.g., Li, 2005; Rao, 2006). This study also corroborates previous research in that Chinese EFL learners have been shown to use memory strategies the most but affective and social strategies the least (Li, 2005; Yu & Wang, 2009). Echoing previous studies (e.g., Gao, 2006), the findings have shown that these participants' use of learning strategies was examination-oriented, concerned with matriculating and passing language tests (Jiang & Sharpling, 2011).

The participants were found to adopt compensation strategies most, including guessing the meanings of new words from context, paraphrasing long and difficult sentences in reading, and using Chinese to help their thinking during speaking and reading. This result differs from the previous research on the use of learning strategies among Chinese learners learning English in Mainland China (e.g., Li, 2005; Rao, 2006; Xiao & Hurd, 2007; Yu & Wang, 2009). This difference might be explained by their previous English learning experiences in high school (Zhang, Wang & Sheng, 2009). English language

teaching in high schools in Mainland China usually focuses on vocabulary and reading comprehension, rather than speaking. English teachers often highlight the skills associated with guessing the meanings of new words while doing reading comprehension exercises.

The participants' deployment of the memorisation-related and examination-oriented strategies identified above might be associated with the contextual conditions in Mainland China. Similar to other Asian contexts, English language teaching in Mainland China traditionally follows the grammar-translation approach, which is teacher-dominated, textbook-based, and examination-oriented (Meyer, 2012). English teachers, through their pedagogical practice, are critical mediating agents, directly and indirectly influencing the students' use of learning strategies (Gao, 2006, 2008a).

Further, examinations, being decisive criteria for Chinese students to get access to further education in Mainland China, significantly guide teachers' selection of teaching methodologies and students' use of learning strategies. Examinations in Mainland China often focus on linguistic knowledge about grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension, instead of assessing students' ability to use the language. Therefore, both teachers and students naturally pay more attention to those components tested in the examinations (Meyer, 2012). Consequently, memory strategies are frequently used by Chinese students, while communicative strategies such as social strategies are less often deployed. These findings reflect the constraints of learning context upon language learners' use of learning strategies.

To sum up, the findings about the participants' LLS identified in the study confirm previous research in other similar EFL contexts. The participants thus appear to be typical of Chinese EFL learners. Hence, the purpose of providing baseline information to the whole study is fulfilled at this research stage, which makes it reliable for comparison with the results obtained at the later stage of the study.

6.5.2 Key Findings of LLS after an Academic Year

After the participants had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, some changes were observed in their use of learning strategies. Though the quantitative data reveal that the participants were still at the medium level in their use of learning strategies, a significant increase was identified in the overall level of their use of learning strategies.

Different from the results of the first research stage, the questionnaire surveys reveal that meta-cognitive and compensation strategies were most frequently used by the participants, followed by cognitive and social strategies, while memory and affective strategies were least frequently used. There is a significant increase observed in their deployment of meta-cognitive, cognitive, social, and affective strategies, and a significant decrease in their use of memory strategies. With regard to the specific strategies, both the questionnaire surveys and the interviews show that memorising vocabulary was still important to the participants. By contrast, a decrease was discovered in the participants' deployment of the strategy of memorising grammar.

While the two data sources suggest that such cognitive strategies as listening to English radio, music and songs, watching English movies, TV programmes, and reading English novels, readers, magazines, were found to be still adopted by the participants, a number of other new cognitive strategies were discovered to have emerged in their repertoire of cognitive strategies. These newly developed cognitive strategies include writing academic essays, reports, writing emails in communication with others, and surfing English websites.

The two data sources also reveal an increase in the participants' use of meta-cognitive strategies including planning and reflecting on their English study, checking their essays before submission in particular. Another increase was also observed in the interviews, which related to the participants' deployment of affective strategies such as exchanging and sharing their feelings about learning English with their teachers and peers.

Moreover, the participants came to use more frequently social strategies such as working together with peers, communicating with others in English, and participating in both classroom and extracurricular activities.

The findings pertaining to the changes in the participants' LLS after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University validate the relevant literature on EFL learners learning EAP at similar EMI and native English-speaking contexts. For instance, the result regarding a wider use of learning strategies among the participants corresponds to other studies in similar EMI contexts such as Canada (e.g., Parks & Raymond, 2004), Hong Kong (e.g., Gao, 2006), New Zealand (e.g., Griffiths, 2006), and the UK (Li, 2007; Jiang & Sharpling, 2011).

The result that the Chinese EFL learners used meta-cognitive strategies the most confirms previous research (Goh & Kwah, 1997; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Jiang & Sharpling, 2011; Li, 2007). In their investigation into Chinese EFL learners' strategy use in Singapore and in the UK, Goh and Kwah (1997) and Li (2007) both discovered a more frequent use of indirect strategies such as meta-cognitive strategies than that prior to their participants' entry into the EMI contexts.

The present research is also congruent with existing studies in that a significant increase was found in the participants' deployment of social strategies (Goh & Kwah, 1997; Li, 2007). This might be related to the English language learning environment at the EMI University, where there is no shortage of opportunities for the students to practise or to be exposed to native speakers or more proficient English speakers (Li, 2007). This research is also congruent with previous studies in that Chinese ESL learners tend to deploy affective strategies least. This might be caused by the traditional Asian culture, which encourages listening to others but discourages public discussion of feelings (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006).

The participants' less frequent use of memory-related strategies also confirms previous research on the strategy use of Chinese learners when learning EAP in EMI contexts

(e.g., Gao, 2006; Liu, 2013). After coming into EMI contexts, the participants were found to do less grammar-related study. This might be due to the fact that in such an EMI context there is no urgent need to deploy memory strategies (Li, 2007). Further, the present study confirms Liu's (2013) finding that there is less use of compensation strategies after the participants have spent some time studying EAP in EMI contexts.

The prevalence of cognitive strategies such as listening to English radio, music and songs and watching English movies among the participants in the present research is similar to that found in some earlier studies (e.g., Wang, 2012). For instance, in order to improve their English competence in an EMI context, Chinese ESL learners were found to endeavour to develop self-directed naturalistic learning pedagogy through consuming popular English language television dramas on the Internet (Wang, 2012).

Apart from these similarities to previous research, this study also has identified some new strategies applied by the participants after they had studied for an academic year at the EMI University. These newly adopted strategies include writing emails, checking academic essays before submission, and seeking opportunities to communicate with others like teachers and peers. These strategies indicate the influence of socio-cultural factors upon the participants' strategic development (e.g., Gao, 2006; Liu, 2013; Parks & Raymond, 2004).

The present study aims to fill the theoretical gaps in previous research on Chinese EFL learners' strategies. The above findings with regard to the changes in the participants' strategies at the EMI University indicate that language learning strategies are a dynamic construct. This finding supports the socio-cultural conceptualisation that the use of learning strategy is socially situated and responsive to context (Gao, 2006).

The above findings suggest a connection between socio-cultural factors and the participants' use of learning strategies. For instance, the participants' more frequent use of social strategies after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University indicates the mediation of important others on their English learning. The increase in

their writing English emails in communication with others and in checking their academic essays reveals the mediation of learning conditions, materials and cultural artefacts on their strategy use.

In summary, this study validates the socio-cultural approach to LLS research proposed by a number of other researchers (e.g., Donato & McCormick, 1994; Gao, 2006; Parks & Raymond, 2004) and extends previous LLS research by examining EAP learners in an EMI setting within a broader EFL context. It also sheds more light on the nature of LLS from a socio-cultural perspective.

6.6 Summary

This chapter has reported my findings with regard to the participants' deployment of learning strategies. These findings offer a good understanding of the students' strategies after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. As indicated in the previous preliminary discussion sections (Sections 4.4.3, 5.4.3, and 6.4.3), the contextual conditions at the EMI University are likely to have contributed to the changes in the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS. In order to explore how the contextual realities led to these changes, the next chapter will interpret and further discuss these changes following the socio-cultural framework which was established in Chapter 2.

Chapter 7 Socio-cultural Interpretation of the Results

7.1 Introduction

This study has extended previous socio-cultural research in SLA by adopting a critical socio-cultural approach to study BLL, MLL, and LLS in an EMI setting within a broader EFL context. It aims to examine the impact of an EMI context upon the development of BLL, MLL, and LLS in order to shed light on EAP teaching at the increasing number of EMI settings in Mainland China and beyond. Drawing on the literature review, the findings and the preliminary discussion in the previous chapters, this chapter will offer a comprehensive discussion regarding the three research questions:

RQ 1: What are Chinese EFL learners' beliefs about, motivation for and strategy use in the learning of English upon their arrival at the EMI University chosen for the investigation?

RQ 2: What are Chinese EFL learners' beliefs about, motivation for and strategy use in the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University?

RQ 3: What are the potential changes in their beliefs about, motivation for and strategy use in the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, and what might have caused these changes?

With regard to the first two questions, the key findings concerning the participants' BLL (Section 4.5), MLL (Section 5.5), and LLS (Section 6.5) have been summarised and discussed respectively. The changes in the three learner variables which related to the first part of the third research question have also been discussed (Sections 4.5.3, 5.5.3 and 6.5.3). To address the second part of the third question (*what might have caused these changes?*), an interpretation of the findings (Section 7.2) will be presented following the socio-cultural framework (Chapter 2), which serves to identify the mediating factors that might have caused these changes. Drawing on this interpretation

and analysis, a model to understand these changes will be proposed at the end of this chapter (Section 7.3).

Before reporting the interpretation of the changes, two issues need to be explained. One pertains to the analysis of the mediating factors which might have caused these changes. This analysis echoes the last step in the content analysis approach, which is data interpretation (Dörnyei, 2007). Following this content analysis approach and guided by the research questions, the interview data were scrutinised constantly (Section 3.6.2). Then, related entries were categorised. After constant comparing and questioning of the categorised entries, themes related to the mediation upon the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS gradually emerged. Such themes were taken as the mediating factors which might contribute to the changes in the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS.

Another issue is concerned with the concept of mediation (Section 2.5.2). Mediation refers to the indirect connections made by a person between the incoming stimulation and his or her responses through various mediating links (Cole, 1976). It includes the mediation of cultural, physical, and symbolic tools in human activity (Vygotsky, 1978). In terms of L2 learning, mediation suggests that context plays an important role in SLA (Lantolf, 2000; Parks & Raymond, 2004). With regard to the mediating factors, this study proposed to adopt Gao's (2010) three-type taxonomy to analyse the mediation of contextual realities on the development of learner beliefs, motivation, and strategies (Section 2.5.2). The taxonomy categorises contextual mediation into learning discourse, material conditions and cultural artefacts (high stake examinations), and important others (parents and family members, teachers, and peers).

7.2 Understanding the Changes from a Socio-cultural Perspective

To answer the second part of the third research question (RQ 3: What are the potential changes in their beliefs, motivation and strategy use in the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, *and what might have caused these changes?*), this section will focus on the reasons why these changes have taken

place by following the socio-cultural framework rationalised in Section 2.5. It will first analyse the key factors that might have mediated the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS prior to their arrival at the EMI University (Section 7.2.1). Then, it will centre on the major reasons that might have influenced their BLL, MLL, and LLS after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University (Section 7.2.2).

7.2.1 Mediation of the Socio-cultural Factors upon Arrival

This section analyses the key factors that might have mediated the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS before their entry into the EMI University. The interviews reveal that the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS were primarily mediated by learning discourse (Section 7.2.1.1), cultural artefacts (high stake examinations) (Section 7.2.1.2), teachers (Section 7.2.1.4), parents and other family members (Section 7.2.1.3), and were less impacted by other mediating agents like peers (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 Mediation of the Socio-Cultural Factors in Interview I

No.	Category	Counts		
		Beliefs	Motivation	Strategies
1	Mediation of teachers	34	15	30
2	Mediation of cultural artefacts (high stake examinations)	21	21	15
3	Mediation of parents and family members	8	19	23
4	Mediation of learning discourse	2	18	1
5	Mediation of peers	1	7	4

7.2.1.1 Mediation of Learning Discourse

Learning discourse (See Section 2.5.2) reflects the dominant values, attitudes, and beliefs attached to learning a foreign language, and the goals learners want to achieve within a context (Gao, 2010; Oxford, 2003b). Learning in Mainland China is characterised by a learning discourse where education traditionally carries the utmost importance in Chinese people's pursuit of social mobility and personal development (Bai, 2006). This learning discourse, as revealed in the interviews, exerted a profound influence on the participants' efforts and guided their motivation for learning English

prior to their entry into the EMI University. This point is captured in the following extract:

57) My hometown is underdeveloped, where education is the primary key to a better life. [...], (Hanks, Lines 443-444, Interview I).

This quote reflects the way that the learning discourse in Mainland China has strongly influenced the participants' instrumental motivation. Having a good education, as commented on by the student, is seen as the key to changing their social and economic disadvantages. English is an important instrument for Chinese people to obtain better educational resources and opportunities (Bai, 2006; Gao, 2008a). This situation is intensified by the fierce academic competition resulting from the rapid expansion of tertiary education and unemployment after graduation in Mainland China (Postiglione, 2005). Driven by such a competitive educational context, the learning of English is taken as an essential skill for fulfilling their pursuit of social mobility (Gao, 2008a). The instrumental value of English to the individual is therefore found to be prevalent among Chinese EFL learners (Pan & Block, 2011). English, as commented by Paul in the following extract, is thus an essential skill for many Chinese people, particularly for those like Paul close to metropolitan cities, to pursue personal development in the context of globalisation in Mainland China.

58) Learning English well is definitely important for personal development. My hometown is near to Shanghai, a global metropolitan city in China. Therefore, English is an essential skill to me (Paul, Lines 1129-1130, Interview I).

In short, the interviews reveal that the participants were subject to a learning discourse where English was conceptualised as a critical means to pursue social mobility and personal development. Their motivation for learning English was shaped by the social realities in Mainland China, including the traditional cultural beliefs about the importance of education and the contemporary socio-economic situation. These contextual conditions highlight the importance of English, directing their efforts and guiding their motivation for learning this foreign language.

7.2.1.2 Mediation of Cultural Artefacts

Cultural artefacts, which include high stake examinations, dictionaries, textbooks, and other facilities for learning, are found to exert influence on language learners' beliefs, motivation, and strategies (Gao, 2010; Palfreyman, 2006). The interviews reveal that, among all these artefacts, high stake examinations were the most influential factor that might have mediated the participants' previous English learning experiences.

The critical importance of high stake examinations like the National Matriculation, as indicated in the interviews, exerted a profound influence upon the participants' BLL. Examinations in Mainland China mainly focus on vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension (Benson & Gao, 2008; Jiang & Sharpling, 2011). This focus excludes attention to other language skills such as listening and speaking. Both teachers and students naturally focus on what are tested: grammar and vocabulary (Meyer, 2012). Consequently, a belief developed among the participants that learning English was mainly about grammar and vocabulary, rather than listening and speaking skills. Peter commented as follows:

59) The examination primarily focused on grammar and vocabulary. It did not include listening. Therefore, listening was not that important in my English study. (Peter, Lines 226-227, Interview I).

The controlling role of examinations is further illustrated in the participants' beliefs about the importance of doing mock papers. It was common that those questions which were included in some simulated exercises and papers might also appear in examination papers in high school. As a result, it was believed by the participants that doing many simulated exercises would probably increase their possibility of getting satisfactory marks in the examinations. This is exemplified in the following extract:

60) It was important to do many simulated exercises before examinations. Sometimes, you even could meet some questions in the examinations which you already did in the simulated exercises. (Hanks, Lines 337-338, Interview I).

The above discussion has revealed that high stake examinations to a large degree determined participants' beliefs about English study in high school. The focus on vocabulary and grammar in examinations made them strongly believe in the primacy of these two aspects. This discussion has thus cast light on the connection between beliefs and socio-cultural realities.

The interviews have also revealed that the high stake examinations were a driving force in the participants' motivation for learning English in high school. The interviewees kept mentioning that their learning of English in high school was for the ultimate goal of the high stake examination:

61) There was almost no activity in our English class. It was a class of simulated exercises for the National Matriculation (Rachel, Lines 1942-1943, Interview I).

It is easy to understand this phenomenon, given the paramount importance of high stake examinations in Chinese history and traditional culture. Examinations have already proven a relatively objective and reliable means for Chinese people to pursue social status and mobility since the implementation of the Imperial Examination System about 3,000 years ago in China (Hemp-Lyons, 2001). This phenomenon becomes prevalent against the background of the increasingly competitive educational conditions in contemporary Mainland China. In order to acquire membership of the academic community in Mainland China, students take examinations as a goal to improve their linguistic knowledge (Gao, 2006; Meyer, 2012; Shohamy, 2000). The above quote also indicates that the overwhelming influence of the high stake examinations led to their English teachers' examination-oriented teaching. However, the examination-oriented learning and teaching was not favourably received in high school, as one of the students commented:

62) I do not like the examination-oriented learning and teaching. But there is no other alternative. It is a common phenomenon in China. The more you memorise the more likely it is that you will get higher scores in the National Matriculation (Jimmy, Lines 50-51, Interview I).

In such a context where examinations born so much weight the participants seem to have no choice but to accept this examination-oriented way of learning English. This is just as mentioned by Sarah, “we could do nothing to change this situation as long as there is still the National College Entrance Examination”.

Subject to the profound influence of the high stake examinations, the participants were found to make every effort to improve their English. They tend to adopt strategies to learn vocabulary and grammar which are tested in examinations. As revealed in the interviews, the high stake examinations tended to lead to the participants’ use of examination-oriented and memorisation-related learning strategies before entering the EMI University.

63)[...], the more vocabulary and grammar I memorised, the easier the examination would be. That was because it was mainly about grammar and vocabulary (Jane, Lines 1359-1360, Interview I).

This is because these English examinations in Mainland China mainly checked the students’ memorisation of vocabulary and grammar (Benson & Gao, 2008; Jiang & Sharpling, 2011). Consequently, this focus leads to the prevalence of memorising vocabulary among Chinese students (Gan, 2009).

In short, high stake examinations were a critical mediating force upon the participants’ instrumental motivation for learning English in high school. High stake examinations were also found to have led to the participants’ deployment of memory and examination-oriented strategies in learning English. Though negatively commented on by the participants, they were still primarily taken as an important means of pursuing membership of colleges and universities, as well as of achieving social mobility and personal development (Gao, 2008b; Jiang & Sharpling, 2011). Therefore, the participants’ ambiguous attitudes towards the high stake examinations actually reflect the imposition of contextual realities in Mainland China where English plays a critical role. In addition, the participants’ readiness to use examinations to mobilise their

learning efforts should also be considered to be a rational response from those who desired to pursue social mobility.

7.2.1.3 Mediation of Parents and other Family Members

Parents and other family members are essential mediating agents in language learners' learning experiences (Gao, 2010, 2012). The interviews reveal that the participants' parents and other family members were involved both directly and indirectly in their language learning and hence had an important influence on the development of their beliefs, motivation, and strategies.

Parents and family members were found to foster particular beliefs about learning English among the participants (Gao, 2012). For instance, they instilled in the participants a belief in the importance of memorisation by pushing them to memorise English because they believed that memorisation was an effective way to learn a foreign language. Notwithstanding a doubt about the effectiveness of memorisation and reluctance to memorise English as required by their parents, the interviews indicated that the participants later came to hold this belief.

64) My mother forced me to memorise English texts. At first, I thought it was very boring. [...], however, I gradually felt a sense of learning English, maybe because I had memorised a lot, [...], (Michael, Lines 1725-1726, Interview I).

Chinese parents were found to highlight the importance of an English-speaking environment for learning English and even tried to create such an environment for their children. As a result, under the influence of this belief from their parents, Chinese students might themselves develop a belief in the importance of an English-speaking environment in learning English (Yang, Webster & Prosser, 2011). For instance, Sarah's belief about the value of learning English in an English-speaking environment stemmed from her parents who sent her to an English-Chinese bilingual school:

65) *Wanting to create a better environment for my English study, my parents sent me to a bilingual primary school in Jiangyin, far away from my hometown Shanghai (Sarah, Lines 1989-1990, Interview I).*

An explanation for this parental mediation on the participants' belief might relate to their families' socio-economic status. As presented in Section 3.4, a majority of the participants were from well-off families and their parents may be well-educated. These socio-economic advantages might make it possible for their parents to afford English-medium education for them (Akram & Ghani, 2013). For example, many Chinese parents have been found to make every effort to send their children either to study abroad or to English-speaking schools in order to learn English in a favourable English-speaking environment (Liu, 2013; Yang, Webster & Prosser, 2011). The parents' belief in the importance of an English-speaking environment, coupled with their efforts to creating such an environment for the students, definitely left a mark on those students' beliefs about learning English.

The interviews also reveal that the participants' families had an important role in mediating their motivation for learning English. Some parents, as illustrated in the following quote, highlighted the instrumental value of learning English for personal development by telling the participants that their poor English proficiency prevented them from taking some precious opportunities for better career development.

66) *My parents emphasised the importance of English in front of me by telling me that they lost many opportunities in their work due to their poor English, [...], (Sarah, Lines 2093-2094, Interview I).*

Through highlighting the critical importance of the language to their future development, parents and other family members instilled positive attitudes towards the learning of English in the participants (Gao, 2006). Thus, they strengthened the impression that English is an important language that the participants had to master (Gao, 2012).

In addition, the interviews show that many participants had relatives who had first hand contact with the target communities and culture. Their familiarity with the target

communities and culture gave them authority and prestige as role models, enhancing the participants' motivation for language learning. They showed the participants how much the English language could change their life and social status. For example, Lynn developed her interest in learning English and sensed the importance of English for pursuing social status from her uncle who is a diplomat:

67) My uncle, who is a diplomat, speaks English and French very well. He often told me how important English was for his success in getting such a decent job. Gradually, I began to develop my interest in learning English and sense the importance of English in China (Lynn, Lines 544-545, Interview I).

A third way that parents and family members adopted to cultivate the participants' positive attitude towards learning English was to share success stories with them. The interviews reveal that some parents and family members were successful in their learning of English, or ever obtained overseas study opportunities. They shared these experiences with the participants as a motivator to build up their interest in learning English and to strengthen the participants' instrumental orientations. For instance, Jack's cousin shared his overseas study experiences in Singapore and encouraged him to learn English well:

68) My cousin is pursuing his postgraduate study at Singapore. He often tells me how great the outside world is. English is important if I want to study abroad in future (Jack, Lines 900-901, Interview I).

Students' parents and other family members are also influential on their use of learning strategies (Gao, 2006, 2012). As noted above, a high socio-economic family background makes participants' parents able to invest heavily in their children's academic studies. They often arranged good language learning environments for the participants, such as installing satellite TV channels to provide quality English TV programmes, employing native speakers as home tutors, purchasing English movies or English magazines, and choosing the right schools (Gao, 2012). The interviews reveal that the participants' parents characteristically invested heavily in providing good learning conditions and creating learning opportunities to facilitate their language

learning, which enlarged their repertoire of learning strategies. For example, Jack's father tried to teach him how to better learn English by recommending him to keep a notebook. Sarah's father recommended her to read English magazines and bought an English magazine for her for a whole year, which is likely to have motivated her application of the cognitive strategy to learn English by reading English magazines.

69) [...], *my father recommended me to read some English magazines such as the Crazy English. He even kept buying Crazy English (an English magazine) for a year (Sarah, Lines 2097-2098, Interview I).*

The family backgrounds of many of the participants also make it possible for their parents to afford extra private tuition to them (R. Wong, 2007b). Attending private English classes thus seemed to be a common strategy for parents to give the participants extended language exposure, which may have enhanced their interest and increased their confidence in learning English:

70) *My family hired a private English teacher for me. He encouraged me that I had a good sense of English and that I could improve my English within a short period by doing more exercises. Then, he explained every point in detail, and asked me to memorise what he had highlighted. (Lynn, Lines 604-605, Interview I).*

However, receiving extra tuition class seems still to have been an extension of examination-oriented learning. For instance, Lynn was encouraged to do many exercises by her private English teacher. In such extra tuition classes, students were mainly taught to do exercises and memorise vocabulary and texts.

Without hiring a home English tutor, some other parents were found to teach their children English by themselves. As a student, Mark recalled, his father taught him English after class. In addition, parents and other family members were also found to recommend learning strategies to the participants directly. They tended to instil in the participants some memory and cognitive strategies that they considered to be effective in preparing for examinations: memorising vocabulary and reciting texts (memory strategies), and doing examination-oriented exercises (cognitive strategies). For example, under the influence of his sister who learned English well, John came to learn

these strategies: learning English by watching TV programmes, listening to English songs, and doing simulated exercises.

71) My older sister often told me to learn English by watching Friends. She also said that she did a lot of exercises, such as those simulated exercises on some English newspapers like the English Weekly (John, Lines 1104-1105, Interview I).

In summary, parents and other family members have strongly mediated the participants' beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies. They have imposed their own beliefs about the importance of memorisation in learning English on the participants. They have also fostered a belief in the participants about the importance of an English-speaking environment for learning English. In addition, parents and other family members either directly or indirectly have influenced the participants' motivation for learning English. They most of all have influenced the participants' instrumental motivation by telling them how important English was for personal development. Furthermore, parents and family members have mediated the participants' use of learning strategies by providing facilitative English learning conditions and materials and by creating learning opportunities such as hiring private English tuition for them. They have recommended strategies to the participants and even taught them English by themselves. However, this parental mediation was found to mainly affect the participants' use of memory and examination-related strategies.

This profound parental mediation might be related to their advantageous socio-economic family background (Lamb, 2013). Parents with high level of education often believe it critically important for them to get involved in their children's education (R. Wong, 2007b). This enthusiastic parental involvement might have shaped a motivational profile among the participants that English was of particular importance for their pursuit of social mobility in Mainland China. This motivational profile, through the influence of important others such as parents and teachers, drove the participants to invest much time and energy into their learning of English, directing them to take every effort to improve their English proficiency.

7.2.1.4 Mediation of Teachers

As English teachers are much more directly involved in students' learning in the educational process than anyone else, they are often found to be powerful figures who exerted profound influence on their students' beliefs, motivation, and strategy use (Gao, 2006; Horwitz, 1988; Wenden, 2002).

The interviews suggest that, teachers and their teaching practice had an impact on the formation of the participants' beliefs about learning English. For instance, influenced by what teachers had highlighted in class, the participants tended to believe that learning English involved abundant memorisation. As exemplified in the following extract, Lynn's English teacher imposed a perception on them that memorisation worked effectively for examinations and told them to memorise the model sentences and texts. Not only did teachers direct the participants' beliefs, but also dictated what they should do to learn English.

72) My English teacher required us to memorise the model essays and used them in our own writings. She only hoped that our writings could be the same as the model essays she gave to us. (Lynn, Lines 518-519, Interview I).

The above quote indicates that teachers are important agents whose instructional methods, teaching contents, classroom activities, assessment method and feedback send a message to the students about what learning a language involves. Their teaching practice will make them hold particular sets of learning beliefs (Elbaum, Berg & Dodd, 1993; Horwitz, 1988).

The interviews also indicate that teachers are influential agents in mediating the participants' motivation for learning English. Since the English language is one of the core academic subjects in high school, English teachers play a significant role in promoting the importance of English in the participants' language learning experiences (Thøgersen, 2002). Teachers, working together with parents, use their pedagogical role to highlight the importance of English to the students, which thus contributes to the

students' internalisation of this importance of English (Gao, 2008a). For instance, as Jack commented, their teachers often sought to convince them that the English language would be important to them in the National English Matriculation and in the future by emphasising its instrumental value:

73) Our English teacher often told us how important English was to the National Matriculation and how important it was for personal development (Jack, Lines 782-783, Interview I).

Another way that teachers use to motivate the participants to learn English is by means of their teaching arts, personality, and conscientious attitude towards teaching and good rapport with the students. As revealed in the extract below, a teacher' humorous personality made the students free less pressured in class. Their immediacy enabled them to establish a productive rapport with the students and their conscientious attitudes seemed to have touched the participants. As a result, the students felt interested in English study.

74) My English teacher is humorous and her class is always free. I then gradually developed an interest in learning English, [...] (Simon, Lines 1665-1666, Interview I).

The interviews also suggest that English teachers had a critically important role in influencing the participants' use of learning strategies. Like parents, teachers in all the formal school settings emphasised the importance of learning English and pressed the participants to devote time and energy to improving specific English skills for the high stake examinations. The participants commented that English teaching in their schools often displayed a strong orientation towards examinations. For this reason, English teachers are portrayed as agents urging them to adopt particular strategies to improve their English examination results. For example, teachers tended to keep emphasising the importance of memorisation in learning English through classroom pedagogical practice (Gao, 2008a; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). In this way, teachers seemed to have instilled memory strategies in the participants.

75) *What my English teacher emphasised most was memorisation. He said there would be no problem in the examinations as long as we memorised what he taught in class (Lynn, Lines 586-587, Interview I).*

Teachers' teaching approaches, reflecting the traditional teaching and learning systems, cultural traditions and contextual realities, mediated the participants' ways of learning (Elbaum, Berg & Dodd, 1993; Holec, 1987). The popularity of memory strategies among the participants might be associated with teachers' insistence on memorisation in the learning process; the teachers probably found it useful to promote this because of the traditional examination-oriented learning (Elman, 2000) and the increasingly competitive educational realities (Phelps, 2005). Therefore, teachers were found especially active in preparing students for the examinations by spending much time and effort in their pedagogical practice and getting them to work on examination-related exercises (Meyer, 2012), a phenomenon noted by all the participants.

Apart from telling the students to do abundant memorisation for the examinations, teachers were reported as having emphasised the importance of keeping a notebook to reinforce those exercises that they ever made a mistake. By keeping such a notebook, it is convenient for them to review mistakes so as not to be wrong again next time. In addition, teachers were also reported to have recommended the participants to adopt compensation strategies to handle unknown words or difficult sentences in learning English, particularly in examinations:

76) *What my English teacher taught us most was guessing the meaning of an unknown word from the context, when she was teaching us reading comprehension (Jimmy, Lines 46-47, Interview I).*

The above analysis indicates that due to the dominance of examinations in language learning and teaching, teachers tended to have led to the participants' deployment of memory-related and examination-oriented strategies, instead of communication-oriented ones (Meyer, 2012). This might be caused by the traditional grammar-translation teaching culture in Mainland China where classroom teaching is teacher-led and examination-oriented. This culture results in inadequate opportunities for the

participants to develop more appropriate learning strategies in the process of communicating in English.

One more feature of the mediation of teachers and their teaching practice upon the participants' adoption of examination-oriented strategies lies in their positive evaluation of their teachers' teaching practice in class. It seems that, though the participants did not agree with the examination-oriented teaching, they still positively recognised its effectiveness in preparing them for the high stake examinations to some degree. This point is illustrated in the following extract:

77) This cramming method was effective for the National Matriculation. However, the minute the National Matriculation was gone, nothing would stay in our mind (Eason, Lines 175-176, Interview I).

The above analysis reveals that teachers are an important agent in the participants' learning of English. Teachers and their teaching practice tended to have shaped participants' beliefs about the importance of memorisation in learning English. They enhanced the participants' instrumental motivation for learning English by highlighting that English was an important asset to the students' future. They also urged the participants to apply memorisation-related and examination-oriented learning strategies.

In conclusion, the interviews at this research stage produced ample evidence regarding the mediation of the contextual realities in Mainland China, including learning discourse, cultural artefacts, parents and other family members, and teachers, on the development of participants' beliefs, motivation, and strategies. The interviews, however, generated limited evidence of peer mediation on the participants' English learning experiences, though this does not deny the importance of peer mediation in the learning process. Having interpreted the findings related to the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS upon their arrival at the EMI University from the socio-cultural perspective, the next section (Section 7.2.2) will present the interpretation of the relevant results after they had studied EAP for an academic year at this University.

7.2.2 Mediation of the Socio-cultural Factors after an Academic Year

This section discusses how socio-cultural factors mediated the participants and their language learning as identified in Interview II after they had studied EAP for one academic year at the EMI University. The interviews at this research stage reveal that the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS seemed to be primarily mediated by the learning discourse at the EMI University (Section 7.2.2.1), cultural artefacts (Section 7.2.2.4) and material conditions including the study of content subjects in English (Section 7.2.2.2), learning tasks (Section 7.2.2.3), extracurricular activities (Section 7.2.2.5), and important agents such as teachers (Section 7.2.2.6) and peers (Section 7.2.2.7), and least influenced by parents and other family members (Table 7.2).

Table 7.2 Mediation of the Socio-Cultural Factors in Interview II

No.	Category	Counts		
		Beliefs	Motivation	Strategies
1	Mediation of learning tasks	32	22	28
2	Mediation of situational learning discourse	23	27	17
3	Mediation of teachers	22	18	30
4	Mediation of the study of content subjects in English	16	14	19
5	Mediation of cultural artefacts (high stake examinations)	8	4	15
6	Mediation of extracurricular activities	6	12	12
7	Mediation of peers	4	16	19
8	Mediation of parents and family members	2	2	3

7.2.2.1 Mediation of Learning Discourse at the EMI University

The learning discourse at the EMI context urges the students to *use* more English, which is different from an EFL environment that pushes the students to learn more English (Gao, 2006; Liu, 2013). As a result, the purpose of learning English changes in an EMI context from that in an EFL environment. This newly assigned purpose of learning English to facilitate academic studies thus reflects the new values and attitudes attached to EAP study in the situational learning discourse at the EMI University, which, as revealed in the interviews, exerted a profound influence upon the participants' learning of English at the EMI University.

Coming to the EMI University means that the participants had fulfilled their goal of achieving high marks in the National College Entrance Examination. However, this does not appear to result in a decline in their motivation for learning English. This may be due to the change in learning discourse at the EMI University. In an EMI context, the immediate need shifts from learning more English in high school to learning to use English as an instrument to complete academic learning tasks (Gao, 2006, 2008a; Liu, 2013). This shift indicates the mediating effect of the situational learning discourse at the EMI University on the participants' instrumental motivation. For instance, the adoption of English as the medium of instruction and communication seemed to cause pressure on some of the participants. In order to survive in the EMI context, therefore, to learn EAP well becomes an important motivator (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006).

78) [...], English is an important instrument at this EMI University. This is particularly true when we come to the second year when all the subjects will be taught in English, [...], (Michael, Lines 529-530, Interview II).

At the same time, the EMI University offers various facilities, materials and social resources which are beneficial for English study. In order to improve their English, the participants utilise these resources and facilities. They also communicate with international speakers of English in order to improve their spoken English. These facilities and resources provide rich language input and contact with English for the participants, which is in line with participants' beliefs about the value of an English-speaking environment for learning English. The new experiences may have thus reinforced internalisation of the utilitarian orientation among those of them who increasingly related English competence to their perception of the ideal self (Gao, 2008a).

79) I like talking to foreign teachers and Chinese teachers who have overseas education or career experiences. Besides, if my English is good, I can make better use of the state-of-the-art library and internet resources (James, Lines 669-670, Interview II).

The physical environment of an EMI context, such as the textbooks and the facilities and resources which are all in English, contributes to the participants' contact with

English and their use of cognitive strategies. In the interviews, the participants referred to their exposure to the English-learning environment which enlarged their repertoire of learning strategies and fostered their deployment of cognitive strategies. One relevant extract illustrated this mediating effect as follows:

80) English is of particular importance because at this EMI University everything is in English, such as the computer lab, the library and internet resources. What's more, the communication on campus is also in English [...], (Michael, Lines 523-524, Interview II).

As shown in the above extract, the English-medium material conditions at the EMI University such as the computer lab, the library and internet resources strengthened the participants' exposure to the target language. This English-medium environment provides practical support to the language learners, helping them to learn and use the target language (Jiang & Sharpling, 2011). Therefore, the EMI environment might have contributed to the enrichment of their cognitive strategies, such as reading English language websites and internet resources.

Further, the nature of the EMI University also entails considerably social learning resources such as English-speaking staff and students on campus, which might nurture the participants' development of communicative skills and their use of social strategies. As captured in the following extract, the use of English was emphasised at the EMI University. Communication after class, such as email correspondence with peers and faculty members, and the posters of the extracurricular societies and clubs, were all in English. These features offered opportunities for the participants to use English and socialise with others, which might be helpful in promoting their deployment of social strategies.

81) Utilising English was particularly emphasised both in and out of class. In class, we were encouraged to communicate in English. After class, we also used English, such as using English to talk to English-speaking teachers and students, to write emails to correspond with others, and to make posters for some societies and clubs on campus, to name a few. This environment, in a word, was helpful for our English learning. (Roy, Lines 1156-1157, Interview II).

The above discussion reveals that the learning discourse at the EMI University has influenced the participants' motivation for learning English. The use of English as the medium of instruction and communication at the EMI University, whether felt to be challenging or beneficial, became a driving force for the participants to learn with a changed focus on using English (Liu, 2013). Moreover, the rich learning resources at the EMI University constituted a favourable learning environment that encouraged and facilitated their adoption of cognitive and social strategies in learning English (Jiang & Sharpling, 2011).

7.2.2.2 Mediation of the Study of Content Subjects in English

As introduced in Section 3.4, the EMI University offers some optional courses related to the participants' academic subjects from the second semester of their university study on. The interviews show that the study of the content subjects in English had mediated the students' beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies.

Course content is one of the most influential elements in the students' language learning experiences which might have an impact on their beliefs (Busch, 2010). The interviews suggest that studying content subjects in English influenced the participants' beliefs about language learning in a number of respects. For instance, studying content subjects in English seemed to have mediated the participants' beliefs about the importance of vocabulary.

82) To study content subjects in English is of course beneficial to the study of English. However, there is a problem about some technical terms and expressions. A good knowledge of these related words is obviously important [...], (Jason, Lines 288-289, Interview II).

This belief might be related to the difficulties with some technical terms and expressions the students encountered in the study of content subjects in English (Albakri, 2013; Xanthou, 2011). These difficulties thus to some degree made the participants believe in the importance of vocabulary in learning English at the EMI University.

Another influence upon the participants of studying content subjects in English relates to their belief that English should be implicitly learned through using it to learn content knowledge, such as using English to write reports for the content subjects' courses. The study of content subjects offers many opportunities for meaningful communication and language use (de Graaff, Koopman, Anikina & Westhoff, 2007). This way of utilising the target language to study content subjects reflects Krashen's (1982) theory of implicit language acquisition that SLA takes place when language is used for meaningful communication. Therefore, the experience of studying the content subjects might contribute to the participants' belief that English should be learned through use. One of the extracts exemplifies this:

83) The use of English is more emphasised in our study here at this university. We use English to do presentations and write essays. We also use English to write reports for the Physics class and to do exercises for the Advanced Mathematics class. (Michael, Lines 497-498, Interview II).

The study of content subjects in English might have also affected the participants' motivation for learning English at the EMI University. It was found to strengthen the participants' interest in learning English. The subject class taught in English offers meaningful communication through a number of activities such as group projects, presentations, and experiments. These activities relate to the authentic situations where the target language is used (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009). They cater to students' needs and interest, and are therefore useful in creating a learning environment which is more alluring to students (Lasagabaster, 2011; Yuan, 2012). Simon remarked as follows:

84) [...], in this Physics class, we did presentations, experiments and wrote reports in English. These experiences were very interesting, because from them I could improve my skills in oral and written communication in my discipline. These skills will be very important in my future career. Besides, learning a discipline-related subject at very least creates an English-speaking environment for language learning (Simon, Lines 105-106, Interview II).

The study of content subjects in English seemed to also strengthen the participants' instrumental motivation for learning English. For instance, it benefited the students'

English learning by providing them with more language input and facilitating their study of English, particularly the study of technical terms. This positive effect, in the participants' eyes, affected their attitude towards taking English as an important instrument to help them better adapt to the study of other content subjects when they go into the senior stage of undergraduate study:

85)[...], *Studying the content subjects in English is actually another form of the learning of English, which could help us better adapt to the English-medium environment at this university and to study in the UK in the near future (Eason, Lines 12-13, Interview II).*

Furthermore, studying content subjects in English might contribute to an increase in the participants' integrative motivation. This might be due to the authentic materials used in the content subjects class (Pyun, 2013). The materials were selected primarily from those produced for native speakers of the language. The use of authentic teaching materials directly taken from the target culture and the emphasis on language use generated a direct connection between the classroom and the target culture, which enabled students to contact with and feel the value of the target language and its culture. The authentic materials actually provided a window into the target culture, helping students understand how the native speakers live and think. In this way, students gradually developed positive attitudes towards the target language group and the desire to integrate into its community, thus leading to their integrative motivation.

86)[...], *one of the interesting texts is about the UK culture. Last time, our teacher introduced the dialect of English at Liverpool; I was thrilled about what I could do when I am there in the future. The teacher also introduced many places of interest in the UK. Besides, the facilities such as the library and the beautiful campus at Liverpool made me eager to experience the UK culture in person (Sarah, Lines 408-409, Interview II).*

In short, the study of content subjects in English, as a new mediating factor at this stage of research, was found to have influenced the participants' instrumental motivation. While posing a challenge to the participants, it also facilitated their adaptation to the study of other content subjects at a later stage of their undergraduate study and in

possible overseas study in the future. It generated their interest because of its relevance to their needs and because its topics were interesting to them. It also contributed to the strengthening of their integrative motivation at the EMI University.

The interviews also reveal that studying content subjects in English had increased the participants' use of learning strategies. This increase might be related to the fact that the courses of content subjects adopt a holistic language approach which integrates the study of the four language skills into use in authentic contexts (Goodman, 1986). This contextualised situation may strengthen learners' ability to process language input, which prepares them for higher-level thinking skills and enhances their cognitive development (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009). This cognitive growth might be expected to contribute to their strategic knowledge. As a result, they might be able to exercise more strategies for studying content subjects in English. For instance, in order to handle new words and authentic reading materials, some of the participants like Sarah, as exemplified in the following extract, displayed an increase in consulting dictionaries:

87) The content subject is a bit demanding. I think it necessary to spend more time on it after class. For example, I will consult the online dictionaries for those new words and read the materials recommended by the teacher (Sarah, Lines 353-354, Interview II).

Another influence of the study of content subjects in English relates to the participants' deployment of compensation strategies. The study of content subjects requires real language use, which might pose difficulties to the participants due to their lack of productive knowledge (de Graaff, Koopman, Anikina & Westhoff, 2007). When difficulties emerge, the participants need to turn to compensation strategies. For instance, when encountering difficulties in learning technical terms in the study of content subjects, the participants tend to transfer the strategies they used to utilise in high school:

88) Actually, because there are too many technical terms in the Physics class, I again keep a vocabulary notebook as I did in high school, collecting those I do not know in this class (Jack, Lines 908-909, Interview II).

To sum up, the study of content subjects in English seems to have contributed to the participants' increasing application of learning strategies. It promoted the growth of their cognitive strategic knowledge. In addition, difficulties in the study of the content subjects in English such as inadequate knowledge of technical terms led to the participants' increasing use of compensation strategies.

7.2.2.3 Mediation of Learning Tasks

Being challenging, goal-driven and communicative, learning tasks could guarantee learners enough exposure to the target language through a variety of functional activities (Ellis, 2003; de Graaff, Koopman, Anikina & Westhoff, 2007). These learning tasks might be expected to influence learners' beliefs, motivation, and strategies (Busch, 2010; Ellis, 2009).

The interviews reveal that the various learning tasks at the EMI University have influenced the participants' beliefs about language learning. Learning tasks such as writing essays and reports, reading materials recommended by teachers, and group presentations have tended to make them believe that language skills like academic writing, speaking, and reading are important in learning English in an EMI context. As illustrated in the following extract, the tasks which impressed the participants most in learning English are about those concerning writing essays and reports.

89) The focus of this semester's EAP class is on learning how to write an essay. In order to learn writing essays, I have read a lot of model papers. In a word, writing essay is important (Simon, Lines 77-78, Interview II).

This extract revealed that academic writing, embedded in the various learning tasks at the EMI University such as coursework, essays, and reports, played an important part in the development of the participants' beliefs. This may be elucidated in terms of Halliday's (1978) notion of language as a social semiotic which sheds light on the development of writing. For Halliday (1978), language is a semiotic system within a culture where meanings are created and communicated. From this perspective, the

exchange of meanings depends on the purpose of the exchange and the social context where the exchange takes place (Ryan, 2011). Firstly, writing evolves in response to cultural changes in the society. It would not bear any importance to a small, mobile social group which is supported by a hunting or gathering economy (Halliday, 1985). By contrast, writing, unconfined to time and space, serves the purpose of further reference to the process of speaking in a stable society (Halliday, 1994). From this point of view, writing fulfils the function of transmitting cultural knowledge (Dodigovic, 2005). Another manifestation of the importance of writing is that academic language is predominantly written in Western academic convention (Halliday, 1999). The importance can be traced back to the ancient Greek written discourse where writing acted as the main means to transmit Aristotle's thoughts and enabled it to "carry an unchanging meaning in a changing world" (Dodigovic, 2005, p.154). It is therefore evident that writing has a communicative purpose. It conserves cultural knowledge over time on the one hand (Halliday, 1985), and represents knowledge on all the disciplines of the academia on the other hand for the purpose of exchanging information within a discipline (Halliday, 1999). Therefore, university students need to be apprenticed into the culture of academic writing in their discipline, which is achieved by setting a variety of writing tasks (Johns, 1997).

Another account for the importance of academic writing in the participants' beliefs identified in this research relates to the common practice that writing is prevalently used as a fundamental method of examination in English speaking countries (Hemp-Lyons, 2001). The traditional form of examination in the Western world was oral until the late 19th century. However, this form shifted to writing when it was introduced from China into the English speaking world in response to the expanding British colonial empire and its increasing need for a well-educated efficient administrative force. Writing, as an important assessment method, had already existed about 3,000 years ago when the imperial examination system was adopted in ancient China. Due to its impartiality, objectivity, and reliability, writing was possibly adopted by the British colonial empire in the late 19th century. Since then, writing has become the preferred mode of

assessment in the English speaking world (Dodigovic, 2005; Hemp-Lyons, 2001). The frequent use of writing in form of essays, reports and coursework well illustrates its importance in the present study and is a demonstrable wash-back of the dominant assessment strategies (Hughes , 2008).

Learning tasks were also found to affect the participants' beliefs about team spirit and cooperation with others in learning English. Conducting meaning-focused activities and interacting with peers for group tasks are found to be associated with the emergence of beliefs regarding language learning (Peng, 2011). Group tasks like presentations and reports seemed to have made the participants believe that it is important to cooperate with others in learning English. Duke, as indicated in the following extract, even gave credit to these group tasks for preparing him for the cooperative skills which are required in contemporary society.

90) [...], we often conduct tasks in groups, which could foster our awareness of team spirit. It is really important because you cannot do without cooperating with others in modern society (Duke, Lines 1349-1350, Interview II).

The above analysis indicates that the learning tasks tended to shape the participants' beliefs about the importance of skills for academic studies such as writing, speaking and reading. These tasks also strengthened the participants' beliefs in the importance of cooperation with others in learning English.

The learning tasks might also be a driving force in the students' motivation for learning English. For instance, learning tasks such as presentations and group work might stimulate participants' interest in learning English. This may be because learning tasks such as group projects, presentations, academic essays and reports were seldom used in high school. Therefore, these fresh new types of learning tasks seemed to stimulate their interest in learning English (Yuan, 2012). Duke commented as follows:

91) The ways for us to do the learning tasks are very interesting. We seldom had opportunities to conduct activities like group presentations, discussions and projects in high school. [...] (Duke, Lines 1349-1350, Interview II).

Another mediation of learning tasks upon learners' motivation points to the goal-driven nature of task-based language teaching (Ellis, 2003, 2009). Tasks such as essays, group projects and presentations offered rich opportunities for them to practise their English and to cooperate with others towards the same task goal. This experience might thus in this way nurture the development of group cohesiveness, which probably helps enhance their motivation for learning English (Chang, 2010; Dörnyei, 1997). In addition, learners' learning outcomes are assessed by task performance (Skehan, 1998). Good group performance in conducting the tasks might help learners discover the value of their effort in the language learning process, thus probably enhancing their sense of success and satisfaction. This mediating effect on the participants' motivation is captured in the following extract:

92) Once after I completed my presentation my English teacher praised me that I was very fluent. I felt a bit proud of myself in front of the class at that moment (Jason, Lines 334-335, Interview II).

The above discussion has shown that the learning tasks such as coursework, presentations, and group projects might have strengthened the participants' motivation for learning English after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. These tasks posed challenges to the participants while increasing their interest in learning English. The participants had a positive attitude towards the value of these tasks and developed a strengthened sense of success and satisfaction in the learning of English.

In addition, the learning tasks require the language learners to use English to achieve a particular objective (Ellis, 2003). This process involves the language learners' use of a series of learning strategies. The following extract indicates that classroom tasks such as writing reports and essays tended to mediate the participants' adoption of a variety of cognitive strategies, such as making use of model articles.

93) I learned to write reports by reading the model articles provided by teachers (Eason, Lines 30-31, Interview II).

The interviews reveal that the learning tasks mediated the participants' use of meta-cognitive strategies such as planning and reflecting on their English study. The learning tasks, especially the writing tasks, usually had a schedule for the participants to follow. The participants had to manage their time in order to keep in line with the time requirement for first draft, second draft, and final submission of an essay or a report. This submission arrangement also reflects the process-based nature of the academic writing tasks, which conforms to Pyun's (2013) suggestion that tasks should be presented in sequenced steps. The process of an essay usually includes reading materials, choosing and narrowing topics, reading the literature, collecting and analysing data, writing and revising drafts (Liu, 2013). Throughout this process, the participants were taught how to prepare for each step of writing an essay, how to reflect on the problems in their essay and make a revision plan, and others.

94) [...], when there is an essay to write, I would first reflect on my arrangement for the deadline so that I have enough time to prepare and revise before submission (Rachel, Lines 821-822, Interview II).

One more influence of the learning tasks lies in the participants' deployment of social strategies. This might be accounted for by the defining features of the task-based teaching approach, where tasks focus on meaningful and cooperative activities and involve language use (Albakri, 2013; Ellis, 2003). In such a context, learners have opportunities to cooperate with peers for a common learning goal (Slavin, 1983). The learning tasks at the EMI University usually engage the participants in completing a project in groups, such as doing group presentations, conducting surveys and providing feedback to other peers. Hence, conducting these learning tasks, as Roy commented, involves a frequent use of social strategies (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006).

95) When a project was assigned to us, we first discussed to allocate tasks and make a plan to prepare for it. Then, after collecting the data needed, we would again discuss about how to analyse it. [...](Roy, Lines 1124-1125, Interview II).

To sum up, learning tasks were found to have enriched the participants' use of learning strategies at the EMI University. Learning tasks involved time management, which

enhanced their application of meta-cognitive strategies such as planning and reflecting on their English study. Conducting these learning tasks also promoted cooperation with peers which contributed to their use of social strategies.

7.2.2.4 Mediation of Cultural Artefacts

Different from the traditional summative assessment in EFL classrooms in China, the formative assessment is used at the EMI University, which indicates the disappearance of the high stake examinations in this EMI context (Jiang & Sharpling, 2011). However, this difference exerts a strong influence on some of the Chinese students (Gao, 2006; Gan, 2009). For instance, a formative assessment in an EMI context usually requires active engagement in class and effective feedback to individual students (Ashton-Hay, 2009; Black & Wiliam, 1998). It focuses on the learners' comprehensive ability to use English for academic studies. These features, as revealed in the interviews, might have mediated the participants' motivation and strategies at the EMI University.

The interviews reveal that unlike summative assessments in high school, formative assessments with an inclusion of the four language skills exerted a positive influence upon the learners' motivation for learning English at the EMI University. Therefore, their overall academic success is related to their classroom participation such as joining classroom discussion, doing presentations, and asking questions in class (Liu, 2013). Hence, formative assessments at the EMI University required the participants to pay more attention to the study of English every day:

96) At this university, a final examination does not decide a student's performance in the whole semester as it did in high school. The assessment is composed of several parts including attendance, presentations, group projects, and essays, mid-term and final examinations. This assessment method makes students pay more attention to the daily study of English before the final examination (Roy, Lines 1144-1145, Interview II).

As revealed in the above extract, by adopting formative assessment, students might increase their involvement in the learning process, and their familiarity with learning

materials. The students would also be introduced to the style of summative test materials they will meet in the future, which may therefore enhance their confidence (Jacoby, Heugh, Bax, & Branford-White, 2014) and strengthen their motivation for learning (Evans, Zeun, & Stanier, 2014). This potential affective impact may lead to changes in students' attitudes towards learning, or towards themselves as learners in the learning process (Kemp & Scaife, 2012). The participants' response to formative assessments may also indicate their attitude of treating learning as a duty (Pillay, 2002). As a result, they are motivated to work harder, displaying more diligence. By recognizing this, they demonstrate a growing pro-activity and self-efficacy in adjusting to a new educational style (Ashton-Hay, 2009).

The focus of assessment tends to direct the language learners' use of learning strategies (Gao, 2006). Formative assessments in an EMI context include various components such as coursework, classroom participation, group work, and writing assignments (Gao, 2006; Liu, 2013). These components highlight the importance of skills in spoken English and in communication with others. These formative assessments may thus exert a cognitive influence upon students, engendering changes in their factual knowledge, skills, or understandings (Kemp & Scaife, 2012). As a result, Chinese students' adoption of learning strategies in EMI contexts became more pragmatic and skills-based (Jiang & Sharpling, 2011). They came less to adopt memory strategies, but more to use indirect strategies such as social strategies.

97) [...], *my roommate and I decide to speak English to each other from now on before the speaking test comes, [...]*, (Sarah, Lines 407-408, Interview II).

7.2.2.5 Mediation of Extracurricular Activities

Unlike that in an EFL context where language learning mainly takes place in classrooms, language learning in an EMI context takes place both inside and outside classrooms (Liu, 2013). At the EMI University, there are rich opportunities for students to participate in a variety of extracurricular activities for language interactions outside the

classrooms. Participation in extracurricular activities, as revealed in the interviews, seems to have mediated the students' beliefs, motivation, and strategies.

The interviews suggest that participation in extracurricular activities such as the English societies had influenced the participants' beliefs about the importance of pronunciation in learning English. They had opportunities to interact with peers who spoke English with strong accents and sometimes made obvious grammatical mistakes. However, they often found that grammatical mistakes did not affect communications with others (Liu, 2013). They may thus develop a belief that good English pronunciation is not necessarily important and that grammar is of less importance in an EMI context. As a result, a communication-oriented belief came to be held by the participants and they came to believe that English should be learned through using it as a means of communication with others. For instance, Lynn developed this belief through her participation in the Language Partner Union:

98) When I was one of the leaders for the Language Partner Union, I had to discuss the budget with the foreign teachers Lucy and Moose who were in charge of this student society. After that, I was very happy because I eventually used English as an instrument to communicate with others (Lynn, Lines 466-467, Interview II).

Extracurricular activities seem to have also strengthened the participants' beliefs in the value of an English-speaking environment for learning English. As illustrated in Steve's description about his experiences in the Model United Nations, he could not understand others at first, but he gradually came to understand more as he got more and more involved in the activity. He therefore believed in the importance of an English-speaking environment for learning English.

99) I participated in the Model United Nations conference. In the first day, I almost could not understand anything. However, in the second day of the meeting, I found I began to understand some of others' talking. I thus think an English-speaking environment is really important for learning English (Steve, Lines 1258-1259, Interview II).

The interviews also reveal that various extracurricular activities such as the Model United Nations, the Debating Society, and the Language Partner Programme exerted a strong influence upon the participants' instrumental motivation for learning English. They were found to cherish the opportunities to utilise English for communication and appreciate the value of participating in these extracurricular activities, which they took as a means to develop their personal capabilities such as public speaking ability:

100) [...], during the meeting of the Model United Nations, I found all the members performed very well. They demonstrated a good ability not only in English, but also in expressing their opinions. So, taking part in this society is good for the development of the public speaking ability, which is good for personal growth [...], (Norah, Lines 584-585, Interview II).

Moreover, the interviews reveal that participating in extracurricular activities mediated the participants' use of learning strategies. Some extracurricular activities required them to communicate with each other through emails, which increased the frequency of their English writing. Their communication-oriented self-initiated English learning activities outside class would be likely to have led to their increasing use of cognitive strategies such as writing emails and essays in English (Gan, 2009). In addition, extracurricular activities were found to promote the participants' deployment of social strategies through opportunities for interaction with others. Activities such as English debating on topical issues triggered lively interactive group discussions and a high level of student engagement and participation (Jagger, 2013). For example, Lynn, when recalling her experiences in speaking English in the Language Partner Programme, made positive comments on social interaction with others:

101) [...], through participating in the Language Partner Programme, I learned it was important to speak English with others and to grasp opportunities to open my mouth (Lynn, Lines 442-443, Interview II).

In summary, extracurricular activities at the EMI University exerted a profound influence upon the participants' beliefs, motivation, and strategies in learning English. They created opportunities for the participants to use English, to practise spoken English in particular, which contributed to the development of their communicative

competence and personal capabilities and the increasing use of learning strategies, particularly cognitive strategies and social strategies.

7.2.2.6 Mediation of Teachers

From the perspective of socio-cultural theories, teachers play a critical mediational role in the process of language learners' acquisition of a second language through social interactions with the learners (Donato & McCormick, 1994; Huong, 2003; Lantolf, 2000). This interaction process, as revealed in the interviews, might have mediated the participants' beliefs, motivation, and strategies at the EMI University.

The interviews suggest that, in their interaction with students, teachers used language as a cognitive tool to help students develop thoughts and ideas in language learning (Huong, 2003), indicating a possible connection between teachers' teaching practice and the participants' beliefs (Amuzie & Winke, 2009). For instance, the participants' teachers highlighted the importance of autonomy by telling them that they should be responsible for their own study, which, as indicated in the following extract, seems to lead to the emergence of the belief that being autonomous was important in their study.

102) [...], *Our English teachers wanted us to discover the problems in our study and then to learn through enquiry, [...]. They actually wanted to foster our awareness of autonomy in learning English (Sarah, Lines 349-350, Interview II).*

Autonomous beliefs might be due to the differences in teachers' instructional practices between the traditional L2 classroom in Mainland China and the EAP class at the EMI University. The traditional L2 class is mainly teacher-fronted and predominantly depends on the grammar-translation method (Celce-Murcia, 2001). By contrast, the instructional practices at the EMI University afford more opportunities for the learners to express ideas, to ask questions, and to interact with peers. This new mode of English teaching may have changed the learners' view of learning English as being teacher-directed.

Further, teachers seem to have mediated the participants' beliefs that pronunciation was not that important in learning English as long as the goal of communication could be attained. The following extract is a case in point in this aspect. Despite the international teachers' diversified English accents, the participants could still communicate with them successfully. As a result, the participants came to believe that standard English pronunciation was not as important as successful communication.

103) *[...], our international teachers are from all over the world. Not all of them speak native English. But, I think pronunciation is not that important as long as the goal of communication is achieved (James, Lines 665-666, Interview II).*

The preceding interpretative accounts reveal that teachers and their teaching practice had left a mark on the participants' beliefs about the learning of English. Teachers' emphasis on autonomous learning is likely to have resulted in the participants' beliefs in the importance of autonomy. The international teachers' English accents at the EMI University also led the participants to believe that English pronunciation is not important as long as the goal of communication is attained.

This study also found that teachers mediated the participants' motivation for learning English by building up scaffolding for them. As discussed earlier, studying in an EMI context might cause difficulty to learners (Li & Ruan, 2013; Liu, 2013). Therefore, it is important for teachers to provide scaffolding to help these learners adapt to this EMI context. At the EMI University, teachers offer scaffolding to the participants by encouraging constant communication with them through a variety of means such as tutorial sessions and office hours. The immediacy and availability of teachers guaranteed opportunities for the participants to communicate with them, which might have helped motivate them to learn English:

104) *I like talking with my English teacher. Last time I popped into his office and chatted for a while. He said I am always welcome to talk to him if I have a problem. He asked whether I had any difficulties in doing the project, [...], (Sarah, Lines 379-380, Interview II).*

As the English class at the EMI University was usually small, with no more than 20 students, the positive effect of teachers on the participants' motivation might be due to the small class size which guarantees more opportunities for teachers to interact with students in class (Chang, 2010; Dörnyei, 1997).

Teachers were also found to have exerted some influence upon the participants' integrative motivation for learning English. As described in the third chapter (Section 3.4), the EAP curriculum in the EMI University included a weekly lecture on western culture. The introduction of the English culture, as revealed in the following extract, seems to have enhanced the participants' intrinsic interest in learning English:

105) *The lecture is interesting because teachers would introduce some British and western culture and history, such as the Big Ben and the underground in the UK. It is good for us to enlarge our horizons, [...], (Steve, Lines 1310-1311, Interview II).*

The teacher-learner interactions, as revealed in the interviews, also mediated the participants' utilisation of learning strategies. As indicated in Extract 104 above, teachers encouraged constant communications with their students both in and after class, which might have contributed to their increasing use of affective and social strategies. Teachers also fostered the participants' deployment of these strategies by asking them to make comments on peers' presentations in class. One of the extracts illustrates this:

106) *[...], our English teacher asks us to ask questions to those groups who are doing presentations on the stage and make comments on their performance. This is good for our interpersonal communication skills and reflection abilities (Jason, Lines 324-325, Interview II).*

Teachers might also have contributed to the participants' use of meta-cognitive strategies. As indicated in the extract above, while commenting on peers' presentation, the participants were actually reflecting on their own study (Swain & Lapkin, 2002). Developing meta-cognitive awareness was also found to have been incorporated in teaching of academic writing. As captured in the following extract, teachers cultivated participants' awareness of planning in essay writing and provided them with instruction about the steps to use to write an essay.

107) [...], *the step by step teaching practice, particularly the procedure of teaching our writing, delivered a message to us that learning English involves planning and reflecting, [...]*, (Jason, Lines 324-325, Interview II).

In sum, teachers at the EMI University seem to have strengthened the participants' use of learning strategies. The interactions encouraged by teachers fostered the participants' use of social and affective strategies. Teachers' teaching practice also contributed to the participants' use of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies.

7.2.2.7 Mediation of Peers

The students had many opportunities to interact with peers at the EMI University through learning tasks such as group projects, presentations, and extracurricular activities. Peer interactions, which used not to be a salient feature in learning English in high school, became one of the most influential mediating factors in the participants' motivation and strategies at the EMI University. Peers are friendly and able to create a supportive and collaborative learning atmosphere (Ishikawa, 2012; Rollinson, 2005). They might function as role models to drive the learners to study harder. For instance, interactions with peers made it easier for them to feel that others were performing better in English study, which in turn motivated them to invest more into their learning of English:

108) *A student in the Model United Nations is not only excellent in her oral English, but also eloquent in debating. I admire so much that I want to learn English that well too, [...]*, (Bane, Lines 1097-1098, Interview II).

Peer interactions have also mediated the use of learning strategies among language learners by working as advisors to scaffold or to provide feedback to each other (Huong, 2003; Ishikawa, 2012; Lantolf, 2000). Peer feedback is able to promote critical thinking, and develop social and communication skills, negotiation, and diplomacy (Topping, 2003). Giving feedback to others can also lead to a reflective awareness of one's own learning (Ishikawa, 2012; Rollinson, 2005). As indicated in the following extract, peers worked in groups to solve some academic tasks, for example, giving comments on each

other's outlines for coursework essays. In commenting on others' work, participants learned to reflect on their own work. This process not only involved the participants' exercise of social strategies, but also nurtured their meta-cognitive strategies.

109) After we completed an essay, our teacher would ask us to provide feedback to each other in groups. This peer feedback gives us an opportunity to think about others' essays from a student's perspective (Sarah, Lines 393-394, Interview II).

Furthermore, by sharing experiences and recommending strategies, peers functioned as social agents to mediate others' use of learning strategies, by which they could enlarge their own strategic knowledge and repertoire of learning strategies. They also worked together as partners to create an English environment for practising English. In the interviews, some of the participants revealed that they made a rule with peers such as roommates to speak English at dormitories or on the Internet. They sometimes watched English movies or TV programmes together and discussed a movie or TV soap opera in English after they had watched it. In this way, they maintained an English environment so that they could practise their English, from which they developed their knowledge of cognitive and social strategies. The following extract illustrates this point:

110) [...], some of my friends keep speaking English to me, even when we are talking on the Internet. It is good for us to have an English environment in learning English (Lynn, Lines 446-447, Interview II).

In summary, the interviews have shown that at the EMI University the situational learning conditions, artefacts such as academic learning tasks, and extracurricular activities had a profound impact upon the participants' beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies at the EMI University. Though the influence of the high stake examinations seemed to disappear, the formative assessment methods exerted a positive influence upon the participants' beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies. Moreover, a new mediating factor, the study of content subjects in English emerged at this stage of the study. This provides further evidence that beliefs, motivation, and strategies are context-specific. Meanwhile, peers became a more salient factor mediating the participants' beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies. While

teachers still played a significant role as in high school, the influence of parents and family members diminished in learning English in this EMI context.

After studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, the participants seem to have internalised the mediating effects of these situational realities and have strengthened their agency. In return, this growing agency exercised more regulation of participants' beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies in their English study. This development in agency cast further light on the assumption that the process of learner development such as the development of their beliefs, motivation, and strategies is the result of the interplay between learner agency and learning context.

Having presented the mediating sources which form the different layers of contextual realities, the next section will focus on the incorporation of the findings into the socio-cultural framework which integrates the critical realist position on the relationship between agency and context (Section 7.3).

7.3 Incorporating the Findings into the Socio-cultural Framework

As reviewed in the Literature Review chapter (Chapter 2), studies on BLL, MLL, and LLS conducted in the cognitive paradigm have mainly focused on L2 learners' individual differences in their internal cognitive mechanism. This study extends previous research on these three learner variables by going beyond the cognitive paradigm, incorporating them into the socio-cultural framework and capturing their relationship with the socio-cultural milieu.

This study argues that the development of L2 learners' BLL, MLL, and LLS is the result of the interplay between learner agency and context. Drawing on my findings and previous discussion of the mediating factors affecting the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS, this section will further interpret the findings from the point of view of two aspects of the socio-cultural framework: agency and context. These two aspects will be incorporated into the socio-cultural model as proposed in Chapter 2 in order to

illuminate our understanding of the development of the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS.

7.3.1 Understanding the Participants upon their Arrival

We have just noted that it is the ongoing interaction between agency and context that contributes to the development of the participants' beliefs, motivation, and strategies upon and after their arrival at the EMI University. This section will first discuss the role of agency in the participants' English learning process and the contextual realities. Then, a model will be proposed to illuminate our understanding of the development of their beliefs, motivation, and strategies upon their arrival at the EMI University.

7.3.1.1 Agency upon the Participants' Arrival

The findings of this study have suggested that the participants' agency played an important part in their BLL, MLL, and LLS upon their arrival at the EMI University.

The disposition of the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS revealed their perceived values and attitudes towards learning English. These values and attitudes reflected the socio-cultural realities in Mainland China where education is traditionally taken as a critical tool for Chinese people to pursue social status and mobility. English language education is shown to be significant in such a learning discourse (Bai, 2006; Postiglione, 2005). Facing these contextual realities, the participants came to sense the value of learning English, related English proficiency to personal development, and took the initiative of investing tremendous time and energy into their learning of English. This process of internalising the contextual realities illustrates the conscious, purposeful nature of agency (Rogers & Wetzel, 2013).

The purposeful and reflective nature of learner agency is also embodied in the participants' internalisation of the artefacts, particularly the high stake examinations. English language teaching and learning in high school is heavily examination-oriented, which further leads to the adoption of the grammar-translation approach (Gan, 2009;

Meyer, 2012). These pedagogical practices tend to have sent the signal that learning English is for passing examinations. In the process of internalising this value and attitude towards English study, the participants came to believe that learning English was mainly related to grammar, vocabulary, memory, and examinations. They were motivated to learn for the high stake examinations by selecting examination-oriented strategies (Gao, 2006; Gan, 2009; Meyer, 2012).

Further, the participants demonstrated their *capacity to act* in their agency. Being aware of the contextual realities in Mainland China, the participants came to understand the critical importance of English proficiency and of the high stake examinations in their learning discourse about English study (Widdowson, 2004). This critical understanding of the socio-cultural conditions reflected their *socio-cultural capacity to act*. In response to the examination-oriented learning and teaching, they also established a relationship between language learning and passing high stake examinations by adopting rote learning and examination-oriented strategies. Thus, the relevance and significance of things and events in language learning is created (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), which embodied their exercise of their *strategic learning capacity to act* in their agency. In addition, though unsatisfied with the examination-oriented learning and teaching, their beliefs about the importance of and their desired goals of obtaining high marks in the high stake examinations maintained their motivation. This is a vivid illustration of the exercise of *intrapersonal capacity to act* in learner agency (Mercer, 2012).

Moreover, variations among the participants' beliefs, motivations, and strategies reflected their agency in learning English. The interviews revealed that the participants had their own particular beliefs, motivations, and strategies. Regardless of being constrained or supported by the contextual realities, they developed their beliefs, set their own learning objectives, and took their unique learning strategies to achieve their goals. Their beliefs and motivations, and the strategies they deployed all might have suggested the likely nature of their responses to the context and indicated their agency (Sealey & Carter, 2004).

Finally, the participants voiced a complaint about the examination-oriented learning and teaching, but also acknowledged its positive effect on helping them pass the high stake National Matriculation. This critical evaluation of the examination-oriented learning and teaching also revealed their agency. They were cognizant of the objective in the socio-cultural context at that moment, which to some degree shaped their beliefs and motivation, thus resulting in their deployment of a particular set of learning strategies.

7.3.1.2 Contextual Realities upon the Participants' Arrival

Despite the significant role of agency in developing the participants' beliefs, motivation, and strategies, this research has also indicated the influence of contextual realities on their English learning experiences. As discussed in the literature on the nature of learner agency, agency is co-constructed through interaction with a host of multiple-layered social conditions including the context, setting, and situated activity (Gao, 2010; Lamb, 2013; Layder, 1993; Mercer, 2012).

The impact of macro contextual realities in Mainland China upon learner agency is reflected in the participants' contradictory attitudes towards examination-oriented learning and teaching. On the one hand, they believed that learning English should not be all about rote learning, vocabulary and grammar; On the other hand, they were highly motivated to do as much memorisation as they could. Though dubious about memorisation, they made every effort and took every examination-oriented strategy to achieve high scores in examinations.

The above phenomenon might be accounted for by the contextual realities in Mainland China. In traditional Chinese cultural discourse, there is a strong demand for opportunities to pursue social mobility. At the same time, since the 1970s when China opened its door to the outside world, China's economic development has led to the emergence of a middle class who are more willing and ready to make a committed investment in their children's education, which has intensified the competition for social positions and resources (Nunan, 2003). Together with the mediation of some important

others such as teachers, parents and other family members, the participants probably came to internalise the contextual conditions. As a result, as revealed in this study, Chinese students were often found to be examination-oriented in their learning of English, which reflected the constraint of contextual realities on learner agency. Hence, the contradictions in their beliefs, motivation, and strategies might be explained by their critical internalisation of the socio-cultural realities.

At the setting level, the immediate environment for language learning, the artefacts and materials conditions were found to constrain the participants' agency. As revealed in the study, there was a lack of English language input at high school. The study of English was restricted to formal classroom instruction. Driven by the high stake examinations, the pedagogical instruction mainly followed the grammar-translation approach, which was teacher-led and examination-oriented (Gan, 2009; Meyer, 2012). This teacher-led teaching provided few opportunities for the students to interact with teachers and little interaction among peers after class. In such learning settings, it is no surprise that the students should develop an attitude that English learning was merely an instrument for passing examinations by adopting rote learning and examination-oriented strategies. In a word, the immediate setting and the pedagogical instruction they received constrained the operation of the learners' agency in learning English (Hunter & Cooke, 2007).

7.3.1.3 A Critical Socio-cultural Understanding of the Participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS upon Arrival

The discussion above has led to an understanding of the ongoing interplay between agency and context during the development of the participants' beliefs, motivation, and strategies. The findings suggest that learner power in agency, *the will and capacity to act*, seems to be mediated by contextual realities including societal discourse about learning English, high stake examinations, teachers, and parents and other family members. In turn, this mediation profoundly influenced the participants' beliefs, motivation, and strategies. The findings have also identified the learners' strategic learning capacity, socio-cultural capacity, and intrapersonal capacity to act (Gao, 2010;

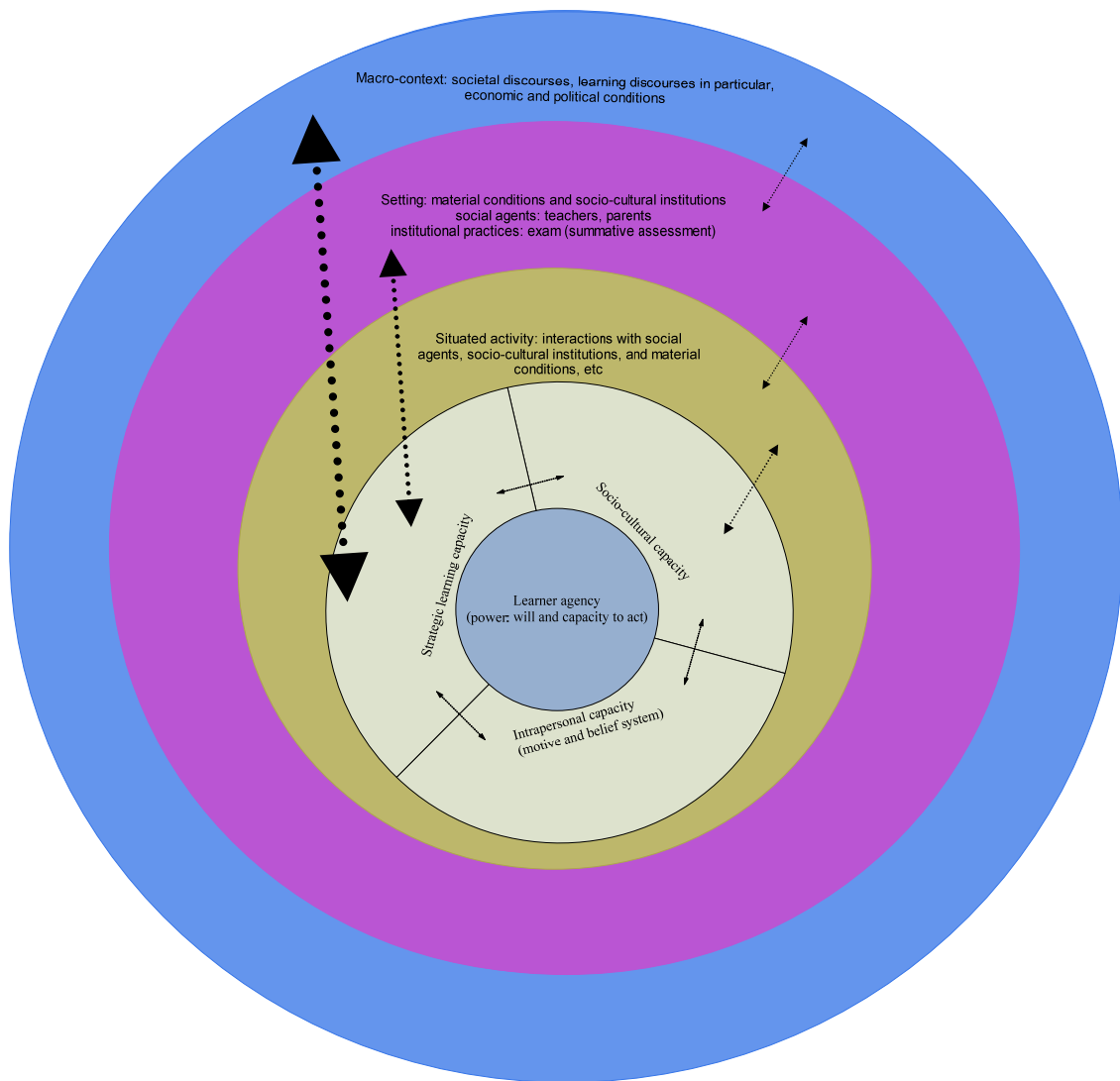
Giddens, 1984; Mercer, 2012). In tandem with their will, these capacities interacted mutually, functioning as the premise to agency and contributing to the formulation and regulation of their beliefs, motivation, and strategies. With these capacities to act, the participants were thus able to understand and internalise the contextual realities and to regulate their English learning process.

This research did not find evidence of participants' use of micro-political capacity in their learning of English upon their arrival at the EMI University. There is no record of the participants' manipulating contextual conditions to facilitate their English study. For instance, there is no evidence in the interviews regarding the participants' socialisation with peers in collaborative learning. The low micro-political capacity might be constrained by the examination-oriented learning and teaching which had intensified the competition for social mobility. It might be also accounted for by the participants' young age before they attended university, a period of cognitive immaturity which might have led to their dependence on teachers and parents (Gao, 2010; Lamb, 2013).

The ongoing interaction between learner agency and context upon the participants' arrival at the EMI University is represented in Figure 7.1 below, which was developed by adapting Layder's (1993) research map, Gao's (2010) critical understanding of learner development, and Lamb's (2013) explanation of constraints on learner agency, to demonstrate how learner agency is mediated at different levels of context.

In the core circle, the participants' agency is clear and idealistic. They were strongly motivated to learn English mainly for the sake of the high stake examinations. They associated success in examinations with better personal development. They believed that learning English was mainly about grammar, vocabulary, and memory. Their beliefs seem to be mainly shaped by their previous learning experiences. Driven by this goal and guided by their beliefs, they exercised every effort to obtain high scores in examinations mainly by adopting examination-oriented strategies. In a word, they had clear goals, realistic beliefs, and purposeful strategies, which might echo what Dörnyei (2009a, p.32) called "procedural strategies that act as a roadmap towards the goal".

Figure 7.1 The Socio-Cultural Mediation on the Participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS upon Arrival



In the situated activity circle, the interactions with social agents, socio-cultural institutions, and material conditions tended to mediate the participants' exercise of agency (Thorne, 2005). English teachers, under the influence of the high stake examinations, were examination-oriented in their pedagogical practices. In addition, the participants' parents both directly and indirectly were involved in their learning of English. Through teachers' teaching practice, coupled with parental influences, the participants came to internalise the importance of the high stake examinations, which led to their adoption of memory and examination-related strategies. This interactional process reflects the mediation of situated activities upon the operation of the strategic learning capacity (Gao, 2010).

The immediate settings for language learning seem to have mediated the participants' exercise of agency. The contextual elements in the setting circle including the high stake examinations, important others such as teachers, and parents, all contributed to the participants' exercise of their strategic learning capacity to act for the desired goals in examinations (Dörnyei, 2005b). In addition, the inadequate target language input, the lack of social resources such as English speakers and materials at the institutional settings, and the teacher-dominated classroom teaching practice constrained the participants' ability to exercise their micro-political capacity to make use of social resources (Thorne, 2005).

In the macro context circle, education, particularly English language education, is considered as a critical means for social mobility in Mainland China (Bai, 2006; Gao, 2006). These contextual realities, mainly through the mediation of teachers and parents and other family members, were internalised by the participants, causing them to operate their will and power and exercise every strategy to learn English. That is, the internalisation of these contextual conditions made them strongly motivated to learn English. The contextual elements in these four circles do not mediate agency separately, but interact with each other in the ongoing interplay with agency.

7.3.2 Understanding the Participants after an Academic Year

Though some of the participants said that they had encountered difficulties in learning English, most of them acknowledged that they became more confident to communicate with others in English after they had studied EAP for one academic year at the EMI University. They voiced that they benefited from the rich resources, study opportunities, and the availability of proficient English speakers. Since the EMI University is located in Mainland China, the macro context remained unchanged. However, the institutional settings changed tremendously. At the EMI University, the students were far away from their parents and families. Teachers played a differentiating role from those in high school. Pedagogical instruction was learner-centred, also differing from that in high school. More opportunities were available for peer interaction. Formative assessments

were adopted. These features might have contributed to the changes in the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS at the EMI University.

The participants seem to have internalised this new situational context at the EMI University, which caused changes in their agency. This section will address the issues of agency and contextual realities in the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS as identified after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University.

7.3.2.1 Enhanced Agency at the EMI University

After studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, the participants displayed an enhanced agency in their English study. This might be not only due to their cognitive maturity as they grew up, but more importantly related to their stepping into a new learning context, which might have a mediational effect upon their agency.

Firstly, the participants displayed a strengthened *will* and *power* to learn English at the EMI University. This might have been caused by their newly changed values and attitudes towards the learning of English, which reflected the contextual conditions in this new learning environment (Hunter & Cooke, 2007). Studying in an EMI context requires high English proficiency. Therefore, opting for this EMI University means that the participants had to possess the required level of English language proficiency. The students might have gradually internalised this critical importance of English. This process illustrates the ability of learners to establish relevance to contextual conditions (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), and the conscious and purposeful nature of agency (Rogers & Wetzel, 2013).

Their enhanced agency is further reflected in their strengthened self-mediated will and motivation for learning English at the EMI University. The participants' agency at the EMI University differed from that in high school. In high school, some participants recalled that their will to act derived from external forces such as societal discourses, contextual realities, and social agents. The importance of English in high stake

examinations was imposed on their beliefs by social agents such as parents and teachers. By contrast, at the EMI University, they seem to have gone through a transition from being imposed on to being internalised in their agency (Gao, 2008a). The situational setting at the EMI University was dramatically different from that in high school. Consequently, upon their arrival at the EMI University, they might have been at a loss without the mediation of the external conditions they had experienced in high school. However, most of them gradually came to internalise this situational learning environment and develop their understanding of the learning context (Widdowson, 2004). As a result, they constructed their distinct beliefs and motives for learning English.

Their enhanced agency is also embodied in their developed *socio-cultural capacity to act*. When new values and attitudes are developed, a causal connection between their beliefs, motivation, and strategies, and the context is established. This connection is further strengthened when they internalise the situational learning discourse that English is of paramount importance at the EMI University. They thus developed new beliefs and stronger motivation which catered to the immediate learning demand at the EMI University. For instance, their beliefs that English should be learned through use and that academic writing was of particular importance all reflect the situational demand for good oral and writing skills in academic studies. These newly developed beliefs and strengthened motivation testify the development of their socio-cultural capacity to act, evidence of their enhanced agency (Mercer, 2012).

Another point that reveals the participants' enhanced agency relates to the growth of their *strategic learning capacity to act*. The situational learning discourse at the EMI University made them realise the importance of oral proficiency, which strengthened their motives for learning English. Exposure to English language input, together with adequate opportunities to practise spoken English and the availability of proficient English speakers, made it possible for them to utilise these social resources to improve

their English (Thorne, 2005). They thus displayed a more frequent use of learning strategies such as cognitive, meta-cognitive, and social strategies.

The participants' enhanced agency is also reflected in the development of their *micro-political capacity to act*. As revealed in the interviews, some of the interviewees (e.g., Lynn, Steve) were keen to utilise the social resources in their learning of English, which embodied the growth of their micro-political capacity. The increasing micro-political capacity may thus lead to more interactions with important others, shaping the participants' beliefs and promoting their use of learning strategies. However, the micro-political capacity was not found in the participants' agency upon their arrival at the EMI University.

One more illustration of the growth of their capacity to act is associated with their affective and motivational control over the study of content subjects in English. Most of the participants reported to have encountered difficulties when they began attending these classes. However, realising the importance of such classes for later advanced study, they successfully overcame these difficulties by exercising their *intrapersonal capacity*, such as affective and motivational capacity to act (Mercer, 2012).

Furthermore, with the disappearance of high stake examinations, they tend to have more control over their will and capacity to act. In high school, the examinations constrained their exercise of their strategic learning capacity to act (Gao, 2010), making them take examination-oriented actions to achieve the desired goal. However, examinations at the EMI University, though still treated as very important by some participants, exerted less pressure on most students. In addition, formative assessments at the EMI University made it possible for the participants to take initiatives in their learning of English. For instance, responding to the requirements of formative assessments, they came to realise the importance of self-management, of learning English through using it to solve practical problems, and of cooperating with peers. These beliefs then guided their adoption of meta-cognitive and social strategies.

Finally, their enhanced agency is revealed in the divergence of beliefs, motivations, and strategies among the participants. As indicated in the interviews, some participants like Jason and Bane still attached much importance to examinations and spent much time memorising vocabulary. By contrast, many others like Sarah, Norah, and Lynn came to believe that English should be learned through use, and therefore tried to make use of social resources to facilitate their learning of English by actively participating in extracurricular activities and taking opportunities to interact with native speakers of English on campus. These variations in their beliefs, motivations, and strategies might be related to the differences in their intrapersonal capacity (Mercer, 2012). These variations also reflected their individual responses to the mediation of contextual conditions, demonstrating a growth in their agency.

7.3.2.2 Contextual Realities at the EMI University

The analysis of the participants' enhanced agency has indicated the role of contextual realities in their beliefs, motivation, and strategies at the EMI University. Their enhanced agency could not be fully understood without reference to the contextual conditions at the EMI University. Considering that the EMI University is located in Mainland China, the macro context remained unchanged, which might have still mediated the participants' language learning from a macro perspective. However, the situational setting had changed at the EMI University. The institutional contextual realities exerted a profound influence on the participants' English learning experiences.

The institutional context at the EMI University provided opportunities for the participants to learn English by offering them rich learning resources and facilities. For instance, native and non-native speakers of teachers and of students constituted language learning communities (Thorne, 2005). Another noticeable social resource lies in the extracurricular activities at the EMI University. Some participants displayed more control over their study through participating in these extracurricular activities. Further, facilities such as posters and library resources functioned as materials and semiotic tools to the students, guaranteeing adequate target language input and generating abundant

opportunities for them to use the target language (Hunter & Cooke, 2007). This institutional context might have shaped their perceptions of language learning.

Secondly, the pedagogical practices used at the EMI University seem to have also mediated the participants' learning of English (Thorne, 2005). The English teaching at the EMI University adopted an interactive teaching mode. English classes were delivered in the formats of EAP classes, skills classes, lectures and tutorials. This teaching approach guaranteed adequate opportunities for the students to interact with teachers who performed new roles in the participants' English study. Different from the directing role in high school, teachers at this EMI University were facilitators and advisors. This student-teacher relationship at the EMI University, demonstrating the division of labours, enabled the learners to operate their agency (Thorne, 2005).

Further, English classes at the EMI University were small sized with no more than 20 students. In the small sized classes, there were a variety of learning tasks such as group presentations, essays, and projects. The participants worked together with peers for these learning tasks. These tasks encouraged collaborative learning and provided opportunities for the participants to develop their communicative competence. These interactive opportunities with peers, which were not often available in high school, created relevant communities for language learning within which the students were able to exercise their agency (Hunter & Cooke, 2007).

Another feature of the institutional settings relates to the cultural artefacts at the EMI University. The EMI University adopted formative assessments in the EAP curriculum including a number of evaluative components such as presentations, essays, group projects, and mid-term and final examinations. Different from the summative method adopted in high school, formative assessments at the EMI University reduced the pressure of high stake examinations on the participants by distributing the pressure across the year. On the other hand, this assessment strategy drew the students' attention to everyday study. Moreover, formative assessments focused on the students' productive ability to use the target language, which also differed from evaluation in

high school where the receptive ability to memorise grammar and vocabulary was primarily focused on (Jiang & Sharpling, 2011). As a result, the participants had to pay more attention to the study of productive skills such as spoken English and communicative competence. This might thus have contributed to the participants' exercise of their strategic learning and micro-political capacity to act.

The study of content subjects in English was also observed to have mediated the participants' learning of English. From the second semester of the first academic year on, some content subjects were delivered in English. The study of content subjects in English made the participants come to believe in the importance of spoken proficiency and the ability of communication with others. In addition, content subjects were often not necessarily taught by teachers who were native speaker of English. These teachers had their own English accents, which gradually changed the students' belief that English pronunciation was not less important than the goal of communication.

All in all, the contextual conditions at the EMI University have both facilitated and constrained the development of the participants' beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies. However, these contextual conditions do not work alone to mediate the participants' English learning experiences. Instead, all these contextual elements form the micro layers of the contextual realities at the EMI University, mutually interacting with each other and exerting profound mediation on the participants' beliefs, motivation, and strategies.

7.3.2.3 A Critical Socio-cultural Understanding of the Participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS after Arrival

The above analysis has attempted to shed further light on the ongoing interaction between agency and context. Different from the mediating factors (teachers and cultural artefacts) identified at the first stage of the current research, new mediating factors have been discovered including the situational learning discourse, the study of content subjects in English, learning tasks, extracurricular activities, and interaction with peers.

The formative assessment method adopted at the EMI University has been found to exert a different mediating effect on the development of the participants. All these elements have been found to function together to mediate their beliefs, motivation, and strategies.

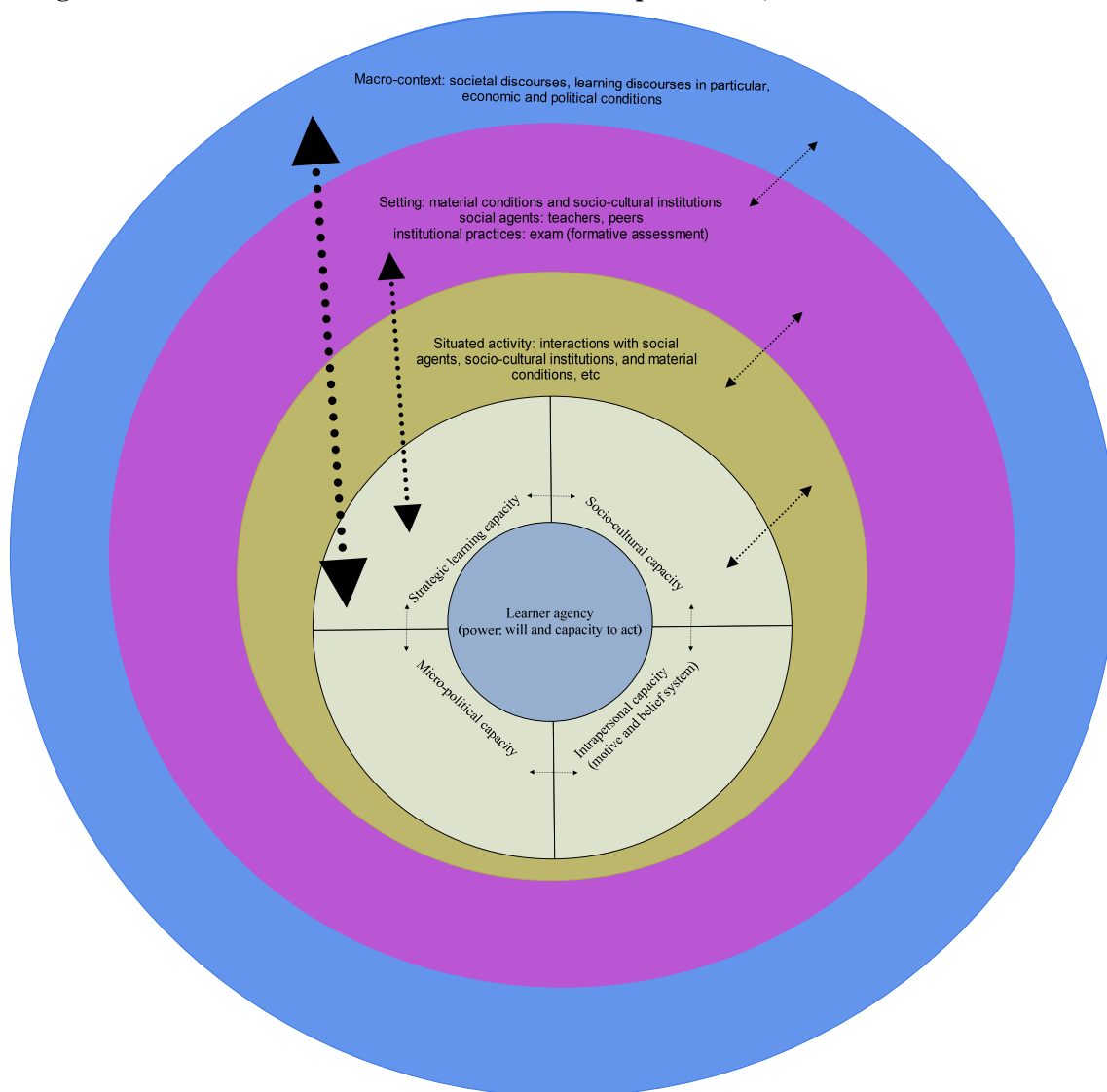
These contextual realities at the EMI University have enhanced the participants' agency. Specifically, these contextual conditions have mediated the participants' power, will and capacity to act. The research has identified enhancement not only in their strategic learning capacity and socio-cultural capacity, but also in their micro-political capacity and interpersonal capacity (Gao, 2010; Mercer, 2012). While reflecting the contextual realities, their capacities to act and the will in their power, a precondition to agency, are claimed to have contributed to the formation of their beliefs and motives, and regulated their act taken to respond to the constraint of the contextual conditions.

As discussed above, the development of the participants' beliefs, motivation, and strategies was neither the result of the exercise of their agency, nor the influence of the contextual realities alone. It is the interactive interplay between their agency and context that has contributed to this development (Gao, 2010). Each aspect is of particular importance. Though previous studies have called for in-depth examination of the development of learner characteristics, it is still unclear how the contextual realities mediate language learners' learning process (Gao, 2010). The present research thus allows a critical examination of the way context has a mediating effect on the development of learner beliefs, motivation, and strategies from a socio-cultural perspective.

Drawing on the above discussion, as well as research on mediation theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) and the realist agency-structure debate (Sealey & Carter, 2004), this study aims to understand the development of learner beliefs, motivation, and strategies from a critical socio-cultural approach. Informed by relevant research (e.g., Gao, 2010; Lamb, 2013; Layder, 1993, 1997, 2006), a critical socio-cultural model is proposed to

rationalise the mediation of context upon learner agency after learners have studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University (Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2 The Socio-cultural Mediation on the Participants' BLL, MLL and LLS after Arrival



In this model, learner agency at the level of the self is placed within the setting and the macro context. Will, as a component of power, consists of learners' beliefs and motivation. After studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, the participants became more self-mediated in their motivation for learning English (Gao, 2008a). The strengthened motivation was accompanied by their exercise of capacity in their power, a precondition to agency (Giddens, 1984). They displayed a growth in their strategic learning, socio-cultural, micro-political, and intrapersonal capacity (Gao, 2010; Mercer, 2012). Among these four types of capacity, the micro-political capacity was not

captured at the first stage of the research upon the participants' arrival at the EMI University. As pointed out by some earlier researchers (e.g., Gao, 2010; Lamb, 2013; Mercer, 2012), this growth might be also related to the participants' cognitive maturity.

In the situated activity circle, the interaction between the participants and institutional contextual conditions, mainly the EMI instruction, the study of content subjects in English, learning tasks, and important others such as teachers and peers, tended to mediate the exercise of their agency (Thorne, 2005). For instance, the study of content subjects in English made the participants believe in the value of using English in learning the language. The students exercised their micro-political capacity to grasp opportunities to interact with teachers and peers through the learner-centred interactive pedagogical instruction (Mercer, 2012). This interactional process reflects the mediation of situated activities upon the operation of their agency (Gao, 2010).

In the setting circle, the immediate settings for language learning at the EMI University seem to have mediated the participants' exercise of agency. Formative assessments, teachers' pedagogical practices, and peer interactions all contributed to the participants' exercise of their strategic learning capacity to act to achieve their desired goals in academic studies. At the same time, the availability of adequate target language input and social resources such as English speakers and materials at the institutional settings, and extracurricular activities, prompted the participants to exercise their micro-political capacity to make full use of social resources in their English study (Thorne, 2005).

Finally, as pointed out above, the macro context remained unchanged because the EMI University is located in Mainland China. Therefore, the mediational effect of the macro context upon learner agency is considered to be still in effect. The learning discourse about the important place of education and English language proficiency could still account for the participants' attitudes towards taking English language as a critical means to pursue social status and mobility (Bai, 2006; Gao, 2006). These contextual realities remain mediational both directly and indirectly upon the participants' learning of English.

In summary, the contextual elements discussed above constitute multiple layered structures and work together in the ongoing interaction between learner agency and context. The specific components of learner agency function together and interact with the elements of the setting, through which the macro context mediates learner agency indirectly. The dynamic interplay between agency and context thus contributes to the development of the learners' beliefs, motivation, and strategies.

7.4 Summary

This chapter has reviewed the changes that took place in the participants' beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies after they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University. It has then discussed the key mediational factors upon their beliefs, motivation, and strategies. It has also focused on an analysis of the nature of learner agency and context as displayed in the development of the participants' beliefs, motivation, and strategies.

Drawing on the analysis of the results, different factors have been discovered to have mediated the participants' beliefs, motivation, and strategies at different chronological points. The development of their beliefs, motivation, and strategies has been found to be the result of the interplay between agency and context. Finally, by including the findings of this study and situating learner development in the socio-cultural theory, a critical model has been proposed to help illuminate our understanding of learner development in terms of beliefs, motivation, and strategies.

Chapter 8 Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

The objective of this study was to examine how socio-cultural factors impact the beliefs, motivation, and strategies among a cohort of Chinese learners studying EAP at an EMI University in Mainland China. This study has addressed the following research questions:

RQ 1: What are Chinese EFL learners' beliefs about, motivation for and strategy use in the learning of English upon their arrival at the EMI University chosen for the investigation?

RQ 2: What are Chinese EFL learners' beliefs about, motivation for and strategy use in the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University?

RQ 3: What are the potential changes in their beliefs about, motivation for and strategy use in the learning of English after studying EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, and what might have caused these changes?

To seek answers to these research questions, this study adopted a critical socio-cultural approach by integrating socio-cultural theory and the critical realist view of the agency-structure relationship in social science. This study has utilised both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the influence of socio-cultural factors upon learners' development of BLL, MLL, and LLS. Questionnaires were distributed twice to identify potential changes in the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS. Interviews were conducted to acquire an in-depth understanding of the nature of these changes. Findings in relation to BLL (Chapter 4), MLL (Chapter 5), and LLS (Chapter 6) have been presented. Discussion on these changes has also been reported in Chapter 7.

This concluding chapter firstly summarises the major contributions of this study. It then discusses the pedagogical implications of the research, which is followed by an analysis of the limitations of the study. Lastly, it suggests some directions for future research.

8.2 Contributions of the Study

This study was based on a critical socio-cultural framework which integrates socio-cultural theory and the critical realist position on the agency-structure relationship. It has some theoretical implications.

Based on the research findings and discussions presented in previous chapters (Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7), this study has proposed a model to help illuminate our understanding of the development of BLL, MLL, and LLS among learners learning EAP in an EMI setting in Mainland China (Section 7.3.2.3). This model shows that the development of learners' BLL, MLL, and LLS involves not only agency, but also context. It highlights the mediation of contextual realities, but does not deny the importance of agency. This dialectical relationship between agency and context as revealed in this model validates the critical realist stance on the two concepts (Archer, 1982; Bakewell, 2010) and its relevance to studies in applied linguistics (Gao, 2010; Lamb, 2013). This dialectical relationship also suggests that the development of learners' BLL, MLL, and LLS is the result of the interplay between learner agency and context.

This study has provided a new understanding of the role of context in SLA. The findings of this study have indicated that contextual realities have an impact upon learners' BLL, MLL, and LLS, which validates previous research (e.g., Gao, 2010; Lamb, 2013). This study has identified that changes in contextual conditions were to a large degree responsible for the shifts in the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS. For instance, before the participants came to study at the EMI University, the traditional cultural discourse about language learning and education, and the high stake examinations (the National College Entrance Examination) were found to have mediated the participants' examination-oriented BLL, MLL, and LLS. These contextual conditions tend to have constrained the participants' agency, which might have controlled and regulated their BLL, MLL, and LLS upon their arrival at the EMI University.

By contrast, this study has found that, despite the unchanged macro context, the institutional contextual realities at the EMI University did change considerably in comparison with those in high school. The newly assigned role of English and the study of content subjects in English were found to have shaped the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS. The various learning tasks such as group presentations, projects and essays, and formative assessment were also found to be responsible for changes in their BLL, MLL, and LLS. In addition, extracurricular activities, material conditions and cultural artefacts were also important factors that might have influenced the participants' BLL, MLL, and LLS. Further, the interaction with teachers and peers at the EMI University also contributed to changes in their BLL, MLL, and LLS. In other words, this study has found that the contextual realities at the EMI University have strengthened the students' agency and enriched their capacity to act, in their micro-political capacity in particular. The enhanced agency empowered them to construct new beliefs about and motivation for the learning of English, which directed their use of corresponding learning strategies to achieve desired goals.

The study has also provided a holistic understanding of the role of learner agency in SLA. It has identified four aspects of learner agency: strategic learning capacity, socio-cultural capacity, micro-political capacity, and intrapersonal capacity. The first three aspects confirmed Gao's (2010) study, while the latter expanded his conceptualisation of learner agency. These four aspects have provided empirical evidence for Mercer's (2012) theorisation of learner agency and shown that her taxonomy of learner agency is of practical value in understanding the development of learner variables.

This study has found that learners, acting as agents and exercising their agency, internalise the influence of contextual realities and correspondingly regulate their BLL, MLL, and LLS. Before the participants came into the EMI University, it was their agency that had made them internalise the mediation of the traditional learning discourses about English language learning and education. It was also their agency that

had promoted their internalisation of the influence of the National College Entrance Examination and the influence of their parents and teachers on their learning of English. This internalisation finally resulted in their examination-oriented BLL, MLL, and LLS in high school. After they had studied EAP for an academic year at the EMI University, it was also their agency that had contributed to their understanding of the new learning environment at the EMI University and the necessity of interactions with their teachers and peers, which led to the adjustment in their BLL, MLL, and LLS.

This study has extended previous socio-cultural research and therefore shed new light on the dynamic nature of BLL, MLL, and LLS. It has expanded Gao's (2010) research that called for further research by combining beliefs and motivation, two aspects of learner agency, with strategies into one study from a socio-cultural perspective. Examining strategies alone might not have been able to paint a full portrait of students' English learning experiences in an EMI context since beliefs, motivation and strategies are interrelated in the SLA process. As claimed by Evans and Morrison (2011), a combination of motivation, strategies, diligence and supportive peer networks is helpful in facilitating EAP learners' transition from secondary school to tertiary EMI context. It is therefore significant to explore EAP learners' learning experience with an integration of BLL, MLL, and LLS in one study in an EMI setting within a broader EFL context from a socio-cultural approach.

In summary, this study has shed new light on our understanding of SLA from a critical socio-cultural perspective. Though the socio-cultural direction has been increasingly recognised in SLA studies, when the study was launched in 2009, research on BLL, MLL, and LLS was still largely dominated by a cognitive paradigm both in China and in international academia. The cognitive paradigm holds that BLL, MLL, and LLS are internal cognitive processes. This cognitive perspective, however, overlooks the external factors that might have a strong influence on BLL, MLL, and LLS. Being the first study of such kind to explore individual differences in an EMI setting within a

broader EFL context, this study has thus enriched the existing literature from a socio-cultural approach (Block, 2003; Morgan, 2007; Zuengler & Miller, 2006).

8.3 Pedagogical Implications of the Study

This study has pedagogical implications for effective EAP teaching in EMI settings in Mainland China from the perspectives of learner training, continuing language support, EAP curriculum development, assessment, extracurricular activities, and others.

8.3.1 Learner Training

This study has found that learner agency comprises four groups of capacity: strategic learning, micro-political, socio-cultural, and intrapersonal capacity. These four types of capacity provide a new understanding of Chinese EAP learners in EMI settings, which are to some degree different from the stereotyped characteristics of Chinese EFL learners. These features yield new insights for learner training.

Specifically, this study has found that the EAP learners studied possessed socio-cultural capacity. They were able to internalise the influence of contextual realities. This finding contradicts the commonly reported characteristics that Chinese EFL learners are passive learners (Evans & Green, 2007; Wang, 2010). It is therefore necessary to raise these EAP learners' awareness of a particular learning context so that they can obtain an overall understanding of the socio-cultural conditions. For instance, it is suggested that orientations including learning objectives, learning conditions and facilities should be offered to the students when they come to study in an EMI context.

The micro-political capacity identified in this study implies that learners are capable of establishing social relations between language learning and contextual realities. They have the ability to utilise supportive material and social resources and to maintain relationships with other social agents for their language learning. Therefore, it is important to enhance learners' micro-political capacities by training them how to

cooperate with peers in group activities such as discussion, presentations and projects. It is also important to train them how to interact with teachers both in and after class such as communicating with teachers during tutorial sessions.

The intrapersonal capacity found in this study indicates that learners are able to internalise the mediation of contextual conditions through interacting with other social agents, from whom the values and attitudes towards learning a foreign language in a particular context become reflected in their beliefs and motivation. These values and attitudes might affect their use of learning strategies. It is therefore essential to inform learners of the importance of learning a foreign language in a particular context. It is also important to foster and maintain positive attitudes towards learning the language among the learners. As far as EAP learning in an EMI context is concerned, it is suggested that the importance of English to academic studies should be highlighted to the EAP learners.

The fourth aspect of learner agency identified in this study relates to strategic learning capacity. This result suggests that the learners are active agents, capable of making good use of material and social resources to facilitate their language learning, as “individuals are active transformers of their world rather than passive recipients of input” (Donato & McCormick, 1994, p.459). This result indicates that it is important to enrich these learners’ strategic repertoire for language learning, and that it is sensible to train learners how to take advantage of learning material and social resources.

8.3.2 EAP Curriculum Development

This study has indicated that a learner-centred syllabus is necessary for EAP teaching in EMI contexts. This syllabus should take into account students’ needs. As revealed in this study, the EAP curriculum which was connected with the learners’ need to survive in an EMI academic context exerted a strong influence on their beliefs, motivation and strategies in learning English. In order to achieve this goal, socio-cultural theory-based pedagogy is recommended (Lantolf & Johnson, 2007). Such socio-cultural theory-based

pedagogy proposes that “the re(unification) of language and cultural (re)establishes the unity between people and language and thus reorients the focus of language instruction to feature centrally how meaning is situated in concrete human activity rather than in the language itself” (Lantolf & Johnson, 2007, p.878). This pedagogy indicates that the objective of language teaching is to explore how meaning is constructed through using the language to conduct practical activities in context.

This objective can be fulfilled by following a task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach, which helps learners acquire knowledge and skills related to their future profession through interactive tasks. As revealed in this study, a variety of learning tasks and classroom activities such as group presentations and projects had a profound influence upon the participants’ BLL, MLL, and LLS. These tasks provided opportunities for them to interact with and learn from other members of the community of practice, such as how to cooperate with peers and to interact with teachers. They also guaranteed language exposure and language use. These tasks with goals were helpful for students to understand the values and attitudes of language learning. As a result, they contributed to shaping the students’ beliefs, stimulating their interest, and regulating their use of learning strategies in language learning.

It is also recommended that learning tasks, in interactive groupings, should be relevant to the students’ academic disciplines. That is, learning tasks should be incorporated in the teaching of content subjects in the curriculum. As revealed in this study, the study of content subjects in English has a positive effect upon the participants’ learning of English, shaping their beliefs, promoting their motivation for learning English, and affecting their use of learning strategies. Studying content subjects in English provided opportunities for learners to construct knowledge by using English to interact with peers and teachers through a number of learning tasks related to their disciplines. Therefore, content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is recommended.

Another concern regarding the incorporation of learning tasks in EAP curriculum development is the size of class. The study revealed that the EMI University adopts a

small-sized class format with no more than 20 students in each class. This format makes it possible and practical for teachers to implement task-based, learner-centred, and communicative language teaching methodologies. It is hence recommended to follow the small-sized class format with no more than 20 students in an EAP class.

One more issue relating to the incorporation of learning tasks into a learner-centred curriculum is that of authentic materials in EAP classes and in the study of content subjects in English. Through using authentic materials, learners are exposed to authentic situations where they must use the language to interact with others (Friedman, 2009). The incorporation of authentic materials may thus improve the learners' communicative competence. When students realise the value of learning from such authentic materials related to real world linguistic situations, they may become more actively involved in their learning of English. Therefore, it is suggested that authentic materials should be integrated in the EAP curriculum.

8.3.3 Formative Assessment

Formative assessment, which emphasises the students' communicative competence, is recommended for EAP teaching. This study has found that the EMI University adopted a formative assessment method, which included a number of elements such as coursework essays, group projects and presentations, and mid-term and final examinations. This dynamic formative assessment method was found to have exerted a strong influence upon the participants' beliefs, enhanced their motivation, and directed their use of learning strategies in learning English. For instance, the inclusion of an oral test made the students realise the importance of skills of spoken English. Group presentations and projects tended to foster their awareness of the importance of cooperation with others in learning English. Formative assessment, which integrates coursework essays, project reports, presentations, and mid-term and final examinations, is thus advocated.

8.3.4 Extracurricular Activities

This study has found that extracurricular activities have a strong influence on learners' beliefs, motivation, and use of learning strategies in learning English. These activities provide extra opportunities for learners to use the target language and to make use of a variety of social resources out of class. The experience of participating in these activities is found likely to positively shape the learners' beliefs, enhance their motivation, and enrich their use of learning strategies in learning English. It is thus advisable for teachers and universities to offer such extracurricular activities to students as English debating societies, Model United Nations, and English speaking contests.

8.3.5 Continuing Language Support

This study has revealed that some of the participants encountered difficulties in learning English in their transition from high school to the EMI University. These difficulties lay in their study of English, in their study of content subjects, and in their transition from learning English for general purposes (EGP) in high school to learning EAP in the EMI context. Given these problems, continuing language support is recommended to be offered to such EAP learners, particularly first-year EAP learners.

As noted earlier, this study has revealed that some of the participants did not pay enough attention to the study of English after coming into the EMI University. Entry into the EMI University means that the participants might have felt emancipated from the high stake examinations as that they were used to in high school. In addition, a majority of the participants were confident in their learning of English because of the high marks they had received in the National Matriculation prior to their arrival at the EMI University (Section 3.4). This confidence may have led to the attitude that they had been well prepared to study at the EMI University. Therefore, it is important for English teachers to enhance the motivation of such learners to learn EAP by means of a variety of measures, such as by generating their interest in EAP learning and by telling them the vitality of the EAP courses to the success at an EMI university.

The study has also revealed that some of the participants encountered difficulties in learning EAP and in studying content subjects in English at the EMI University. These difficulties centre on the participants' inadequate knowledge of technical vocabulary and shortage of skills in understanding lectures, participating in group activities, writing academic essays, and others (Evans & Green, 2007; Li & Ruan, 2013). Therefore, it is advisable for English teachers to introduce the differences in learning English between high school and university to the first-year EAP learners. It is also suggested that the English teachers cooperate with the content subject teachers both in their teaching practice and in the design of the learning tasks and syllabus.

In addition, the study has indicated that some of the participants encountered difficulties in their transition from learning English for general purposes (EGP) in high school to learning EAP in the EMI context. This is caused by the differences in English learning and teaching between high school and the EMI University. As noted earlier, English classes in high school are often teacher-led, making the students become passive learners. By contrast, compared with that in high school, there is much less contact time with teachers in the typical EAP class at the EMI University. This difference requires the first-year EAP learners to be autonomous in their study.

The difficulties in learning English in the participants' transition from high school to the EMI University, therefore, necessitate redefining the role of the EAP teachers (Evans & Morrison, 2011). It is suggested that the EAP teachers play a role in-between that of a director as a school teacher and that of a facilitator in an EMI context. For instance, in the first semester, the English teachers might pay more attention to monitoring the participants' EAP learning, such as setting assignments and checking their preparation for the EAP class. Then, the English teachers might pay more attention to learners' learning experiences, providing language and affective support and encouraging them to take more responsibility for their EAP study at the EMI University.

To sum up, the above pedagogical principles based on the findings of the present study, are specifically related to EAP teaching in the increasing number of EMI settings in

Mainland China. These pedagogical implications are insightful for EAP practitioners to offer effective EAP teaching to Chinese EFL learners and to develop EAP curriculum. They are also helpful for educators and administrators to make rational policies for English language teaching reform in Mainland China.

These pedagogical implications are not only applicable to the increasing number of EMI settings in Mainland China, but also relevant to the wider EFL context of the whole country. Even though TBLT and CLT have been long introduced and encouraged since 1992, they are still not well implemented (Hu, 2005b; Xiao, 2011). In addition, since the launch of the *National Medium and Long-term Educational Reform and Development Plan* by the State Ministry of Education in 2010, College English language education in Mainland China has come into a new stage of reform. EAP teaching and content and language integrated learning (CLIL) have been widely discussed and efforts have been made to examine the applicability of EAP and EMI education in Mainland China (Cai, 2006, 2010). The findings of this study have implied that it is practical to establish an English-medium environment and to implement EAP and CLIL within a broader EFL context. Therefore, this study has provided practical implications for the English language teaching reform in Mainland China and other similar EFL contexts in Asia.

8.4 Limitations of the Study

This study is the first of such kind to investigate Chinese EFL learners' BLL, MLL, and LLS learning EAP in an EMI setting within a broader EFL context from a critical socio-cultural perspective. Findings of this study are insightful for our understanding of the disposition of these three variables among Chinese EFL learners. However, limitations are found in this study.

The first limitation relates to the sample university selected. Considering that there were only three EMI universities in Mainland China when this study was launched in 2009, the selected EMI University might be thought to represent universities of such a kind. However, the number of this kind of EMI universities has been increasing in Mainland

China since then. It thus cannot be claimed that this sampled university could represent all the kinds of EMI institutions that now exist. It is therefore necessary to be cautious when generalising the results of this study into other similar contexts. To enhance the reliability of this study, more samples should be drawn from more EMI universities in Mainland China.

Another limitation concerns the treatment of the collected data. The quantitative data were only processed by means of three of the most common statistical methods in applied linguistics, research frequency, means, and a parametric test (t-test). However, these methods have their own disadvantages. For instance, means, though able to consider all the scores, fails to take into account extreme scores (Dörnyei, 2007). Additionally, the data of this research were not analysed to further explore the in-group variations like differences in gender and discipline. It is thus necessary to be cautious when interpreting the results of this study.

A further issue relates to the handling of the qualitative data. The fact that the interview data were handled on the qualitative data analysing software ATLAS/ti points to the issue of maintaining consistency in the coding process. Although the intra-coding reliability was checked by means of recoding part of the same interview data five months after the initial coding taxonomy had been established in the first round of categorisation, it was difficult to find another suitable person to examine the data. This was firstly because handling this large bulk of interview data was time-consuming. Another reason for having not done so was due to the fact that the interview data were in Chinese, and the socio-cultural perspective to BLL, MLL, and LLS studies adopted in this study was not well explored in SLA. It was therefore a challenge to have another person to cross check the taxonomy that I had established to code the interview data.

One more limitation lies in the adoption of interviews in this study. Interviews can help researchers obtain in-depth data about the experiences of the interviewees (Dörnyei, 2007). However, interviews have their own disadvantages. Interviewees might be either too shy to produce adequate data or too “verbose” so that they generate

“less-than-useful” data (Dörnyei, 2007, p.144). Therefore, it is difficult to keep an objective stance. Also, interviews alone might not be sufficient enough to triangulate the quantitative data. Therefore, it is advised that more introspective methods are adopted in order to provide triangulation with the quantitative data.

8.5 Recommendations for Further Research

This study has opened some new avenues for further research. First of all, this study extends previous socio-cultural research in SLA and validates the feasibility of exploring learner BLL, MLL, and LLS from a critical realist socio-cultural perspective. As the socio-cultural perspective has been increasingly prominent in applied linguistics research in recent decades, this study calls for more socio-cultural studies on the development of learner variables.

More efforts are called for to widen the scope of socio-cultural research in SLA. This study focuses on a cohort of Chinese EFL learners studying EAP at an EMI University in Mainland China. Future research might explore individual differences in other similar contexts and examine a wider variety of learners. For instance, studies might be conducted to compare learners learning English in different contexts, such as learners in EFL and EMI contexts, EAP learners in EFL and EMI contexts, or learners in EMI settings within broader EFL contexts and native English-speaking contexts. Future studies taking into account a wider variety of contexts and learners may shed further light on the socio-cultural perspective and enrich the understanding of the agency-context relationship in L2 development.

Further studies are also called for to take into account the role of learners’ interaction with social agents including teachers and peers. This study has found both teachers and peers played an important part in the development of the participants’ BLL, MLL, and LLS. It is therefore suggested that future research investigates how the interactions with teachers in and out of class influence learners’ language learning. It would also be worth

obtaining an insightful understanding of how peer interactions through a variety of learning tasks both in and out of classroom mediate students' learning of English.

Similarly, further research is recommended on the mediating process of extracurricular activities upon learners' learning of English. This study has found that the extracurricular activities were vital for the participants to develop their beliefs, to maintain their motivation, and to utilise material and social resources to facilitate their English study. It is therefore advisable to systematically investigate how extracurricular activities exert influence on students' language learning in future studies.

8.6 Summary

In conclusion, this study has addressed the dynamic nature of BLL, MLL, and LLS among a group of Chinese EFL learners learning EAP in an EMI setting in Mainland China by adopting a critical socio-cultural approach. The findings of the study reveal that the development of learner BLL, MLL, and LLS is the result of the ongoing interplay between learner agency and context. It has demonstrated how contextual realities mediated this development, and how the participants exercised their agency to construct their beliefs, regulate their motivation, and control their use of learning strategies in response to the contextual realities. These findings are pedagogically implicative. It has also indicated the feasibility of creating an EMI setting for effective learning of English within a broader EFL context. At last, recommendations for further research have also been provided.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 English Language Learning Questionnaire (for Survey I)

Dear students,

This survey aims to investigate your English learning experiences **before university**. The findings from this survey may help university decision-makers to formulate language policies and English teachers to improve English language teaching. It also hopes to give you an opportunity to reflect on your English learning. Please remember that there is no right or wrong answer. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used for research purposes. The success of this investigation relies upon your cooperation. Thank you very much!

Part A Demographic Information

- 1) Gender: _____ (A. Male; B. Female)
- 2) Age: _____
- 3) Major: _____
- 4) Family Background: _____ (A. Urban; B. Rural)
- 5) Hometown: _____
- 6) English scores in Gaokao: _____
- 7) Years of learning English: _____
- 8) Type of high school where you graduated: _____
 A. Provincial key school; B. City key school; C. County key school; D. General school
- 9) Before coming to XJTLU, did you ever go abroad, including Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao?

Directions: Please read each statement and tick the one that indicates your attitude to the statement the best:

For Part B and Part C: 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree	For Part D: 1 = I never do this; 2 = I seldom do this; 3 = I sometimes do this; 4 = I usually do this; 5 = I always do this.
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Part B Beliefs about Language Learning

		1	2	3	4	5
B1	English is a/an _____ language. 1) very difficult; 2) difficult; 3) medium-difficult; 4) easy; 5) very easy					
B2	It is difficult for me to take part in group discussion in English.					
B3	To learn English means doing a lot of repetition and practice.					
B4	The most important part of learning English is learning vocabulary and grammar.					
B5	Extensive reading of English newspapers, magazines or novels is more helpful than close reading of textbooks.					
B6	To learn English well, it is necessary to know about English-speaking					

	culture.					
B7	Learning to read and write in English is more difficult than learning to speak and listen.	1	2	3	4	5
B8	It is best to learn English in an English-speaking environment such as an English-speaking country.	1	2	3	4	5
B9	Clear expression of ideas is more important than good English pronunciation.	1	2	3	4	5
B10	I believe that I should find my own opportunities to use English.	1	2	3	4	5
B11	I should be responsible for my own English study instead of relying on teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
B12	I consider what I need to learn on my own instead of waiting for instruction from teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
B13	If someone spent one hour a day learning English, how long would it take them to speak the language very well: 1) less than a year; 2) 1-2 years; 3) 3-5 years; 4) 5-10 years; 5) You can't learn a language in 1 hour a day.	1	2	3	4	5
B14	In order to learn English well, I am ready to practise a lot after class.	1	2	3	4	5
B15	I think the role of teacher is to create opportunities for me to practise English.	1	2	3	4	5

Part C Motivation for Language Learning

M1	I learn English because of my special interest in this language.	1	2	3	4	5
M2	I learn English because of my interest in the Western culture and society, such as music, movies, history, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
M3	I learn English mainly for obtaining high scores in examinations.	1	2	3	4	5
M4	I learn English because it is a required course to get a certificate, a diploma or a university degree.	1	2	3	4	5
M5	I learn English for better opportunities of studying or working abroad.	1	2	3	4	5
M6	I learn English in order to understand or experience the cultures of English-speaking countries in future.	1	2	3	4	5
M7	I learn English because it is a symbol of good education and social status.	1	2	3	4	5
M8	A good command of English can improve my chance of finding a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
M9	Learning English well can give me a sense of success.	1	2	3	4	5
M10	I learn English in order to help my learning of other academic subjects.	1	2	3	4	5
M11	I learn English in order to catch up with current economic and technological developments in the world.	1	2	3	4	5
M12	I learn English because my parents/teachers often tell me the importance of English.	1	2	3	4	5
M13	I learn English because my classmates work hard to improve their English.	1	2	3	4	5
M14	Tutorials with teachers are helpful in keeping my interest in learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
M15	I learn English in order to make good use of the online English resources and library in my university.	1	2	3	4	5
M16	I learn English because I need to study the English textbooks of my other	1	2	3	4	5

	subjects in my school.					
M17	Activities like role play and group discussion make me interested in learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
M18	My teachers' charming personality and knowledge make me interested in learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
M19	I learn English because I like to take part in English activities such as English speaking contests, debates and the Model United Nations.	1	2	3	4	5

Part D Language Learning Strategies

S1	I memorise new words by looking up the meanings of new words in dictionaries like online dictionaries.	1	2	3	4	5
S2	I memorise new words by associating or comparing the meanings with other words.	1	2	3	4	5
S3	I memorise new words in sentences or in texts.	1	2	3	4	5
S4	I memorise grammatical rules by doing pattern exercises.	1	2	3	4	5
S5	I recite model sentence structures or model essays to improve my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
S6	I try to take notes in English class.	1	2	3	4	5
S7	I listen to English radio, watch English TV or movies.	1	2	3	4	5
S8	I read English newspapers, magazines or novels out of class.	1	2	3	4	5
S9	I write emails, blogs or diaries in English.	1	2	3	4	5
S10	I read sample articles to learn how to organise my ideas in writing.	1	2	3	4	5
S11	I make summaries of the key points while reading or listening to English.	1	2	3	4	5
S12	I guess the meaning of a new word from the context.	1	2	3	4	5
S13	I paraphrase when I read long and difficult sentences.	1	2	3	4	5
S14	I use Chinese to help my thinking while speaking or reading English.	1	2	3	4	5
S15	I notice my mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	1	2	3	4	5
S16	I think about and predict the content while listening to teachers in class.	1	2	3	4	5
S17	I pay attention when classmates are speaking in class.	1	2	3	4	5
S18	I plan my schedule so that I will have enough time to study English.	1	2	3	4	5
S19	I select English learning materials that are best suitable to me.	1	2	3	4	5
S20	I set clear goals to improve my English skills.	1	2	3	4	5
S21	I think about my progress in learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
S22	I check my writings after I have finished.	1	2	3	4	5
S23	I try to encourage myself to speak English even though I make mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
S24	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English learning.	1	2	3	4	5
S25	I discuss my feelings about my English study with my English tutors.	1	2	3	4	5
S26	I exchange my feelings and ideas of learning English with friends or classmates.	1	2	3	4	5
S27	I take part in English activities and societies like English clubs.	1	2	3	4	5
S28	I work with classmates or friends on English after class.	1	2	3	4	5
S29	I look for people like classmates to practise speaking English after class.	1	2	3	4	5
S30	I talk to foreign teachers or international students to learn about their culture.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 2 English Language Learning Questionnaire (for Survey II)

Dear students,

This survey aims to investigate your English learning experiences at XJTLU. The findings from this survey may help university decision-makers to formulate language policies and English teachers to improve English language teaching. It also hopes to give you an opportunity to reflect on your English learning. Please remember that there is no right or wrong answer. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used for research purposes. The success of this investigation relies upon your cooperation. Thank you very much!

Part A Demographic Information

- 1) Gender: _____ (A. Male; B. Female)
- 2) Age: _____
- 3) Major: _____
- 4) Family Background: _____ (A. Urban; B. Rural)
- 5) Hometown: _____
- 6) Years of learning English: _____
- 7) Type of high school where you graduated: _____
A. Provincial key school; B. City key school; C. County key school; D. General school
- 8) Before coming to XJTLU, did you ever go abroad, including Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao?

Directions: Please read each statement and tick the one that indicates your attitude to the statement the best:

For Part B and Part C:	For Part D:
1 = Strongly disagree;	1 = I never do this;
2 = Disagree;	2 = I seldom do this;
3 = Neither agree nor disagree;	3 = I sometimes do this;
4 = Agree;	4 = I usually do this;
5 = Strongly agree	5 = I always do this.

Part B Beliefs about Language Learning

B1	English is a/an _____ language. 1) very difficult; 2) difficult; 3) medium-difficult; 4) easy; 5) very easy	1	2	3	4	5
B2	It is difficult for me to take part in group discussion in English.	1	2	3	4	5
B3	To learn English means doing a lot of repetition and practice.	1	2	3	4	5
B4	The most important part of learning English is learning vocabulary and grammar.	1	2	3	4	5
B5	Extensive reading of English newspapers, magazines or novels is more helpful than close reading of textbooks.	1	2	3	4	5
B6	To learn English well, it is necessary to know about English-speaking culture.	1	2	3	4	5
B7	Learning to read and write in English is more difficult than learning to speak and listen.	1	2	3	4	5
B8	It is best to learn English in an English-speaking environment such as an	1	2	3	4	5

	English-speaking country.					
B9	Clear expression of ideas is more important than good English pronunciation.	1	2	3	4	5
B10	I believe that I should find my own opportunities to use English.	1	2	3	4	5
B11	I should be responsible for my own English study instead of relying on teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
B12	I consider what I need to learn on my own instead of waiting for instruction from teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
B13	If someone spent one hour a day learning English, how long would it take them to speak the language very well: 1) less than a year; 2) 1-2 years; 3) 3-5 years; 4) 5-10 years; 5) You can't learn a language in 1 hour a day.	1	2	3	4	5
B14	In order to learn English well, I am ready to practise a lot after class.	1	2	3	4	5
B15	I think the role of teacher is to create opportunities for me to practise English.	1	2	3	4	5

Part C Motivation for Language Learning

M1	I learn English because of my special interest in this language.	1	2	3	4	5
M2	I learn English because of my interest in the Western culture and society, such as music, movies, history, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
M3	I learn English mainly for obtaining high scores in examinations.	1	2	3	4	5
M4	I learn English because it is a required course to get a certificate, a diploma or a university degree.	1	2	3	4	5
M5	I learn English for better opportunities of studying or working abroad.	1	2	3	4	5
M6	I learn English in order to understand or experience the cultures of English-speaking countries in future.	1	2	3	4	5
M7	I learn English because it is a symbol of good education and social status.	1	2	3	4	5
M8	A good command of English can improve my chance of finding a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
M9	Learning English well can give me a sense of success.	1	2	3	4	5
M10	I learn English in order to help my learning of other academic subjects.	1	2	3	4	5
M11	I learn English in order to catch up with current economic and technological developments in the world.	1	2	3	4	5
M12	I learn English because my parents/teachers often tell me the importance of English.	1	2	3	4	5
M13	I learn English because my classmates work hard to improve their English.	1	2	3	4	5
M14	Tutorials with teachers are helpful in keeping my interest in learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
M15	I learn English in order to make good use of the online English resources and library in my university.	1	2	3	4	5
M16	I learn English because I need to study the English textbooks of my other subjects in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
M17	Activities like role play and group discussion make me interested in learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
M18	My teachers' charming personality and knowledge make me interested in	1	2	3	4	5

	learning English.					
M19	I learn English because I like to take part in English activities such as English speaking contests, debates and the Model United Nations.	1	2	3	4	5

Part D Language Learning Strategies

S1	I memorise new words by looking up the meanings of new words in dictionaries like online dictionaries.	1	2	3	4	5
S2	I memorise new words by associating or comparing the meanings with other words.	1	2	3	4	5
S3	I memorise new words in sentences or in texts.	1	2	3	4	5
S4	I memorise grammatical rules by doing pattern exercises.	1	2	3	4	5
S5	I recite model sentence structures or model essays to improve my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
S6	I try to take notes in English class.	1	2	3	4	5
S7	I listen to English radio, watch English TV or movies.	1	2	3	4	5
S8	I read English newspapers, magazines or novels out of class.	1	2	3	4	5
S9	I write emails, blogs or diaries in English.	1	2	3	4	5
S10	I read sample articles to learn how to organise my ideas in writing.	1	2	3	4	5
S11	I make summaries of the key points while reading or listening to English.	1	2	3	4	5
S12	I guess the meaning of a new word from the context.	1	2	3	4	5
S13	I paraphrase when I read long and difficult sentences.	1	2	3	4	5
S14	I use Chinese to help my thinking while speaking or reading English.	1	2	3	4	5
S15	I notice my mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	1	2	3	4	5
S16	I think about and predict the content while listening to teachers in class.	1	2	3	4	5
S17	I pay attention when classmates are speaking in class.	1	2	3	4	5
S18	I plan my schedule so that I will have enough time to study English.	1	2	3	4	5
S19	I select English learning materials that are best suitable to me.	1	2	3	4	5
S20	I set clear goals to improve my English skills.	1	2	3	4	5
S21	I think about my progress in learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
S22	I check my writings after I have finished.	1	2	3	4	5
S23	I try to encourage myself to speak English even though I make mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
S24	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English learning.	1	2	3	4	5
S25	I discuss my feelings about my English study with my English tutors.	1	2	3	4	5
S26	I exchange my feelings and ideas of learning English with friends or classmates.	1	2	3	4	5
S27	I take part in English activities and societies like English clubs.	1	2	3	4	5
S28	I work with classmates or friends on English after class.	1	2	3	4	5
S29	I look for people like classmates to practise speaking English after class.	1	2	3	4	5
S30	I talk to foreign teachers or international students to learn about their culture.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 3 Interview Protocol for Interview I

The purpose of this interview is to understand your English learning experiences **before coming to XJTLU**: 1) beliefs about learning English, 2) motivation for learning English, and 3) strategies in learning English.

- 1 How long have you been learning English?
- 2 How did you learn English before university, say, in high school?
- 3 Did you like English in high school? Why or why not?
- 4 Did you know why you learned English? If yes, then how did you know?
- 6 What did you think learning English is like in high school? Could you give an example?
- 7 What did you think is the most difficult in learning English in high school? Why or why not?
- 8 What did you do when you had a problem in learning English? Could you give an example?
- 9 How did you learn English in high school?
- 10 Did you have any methods to learn English? If yes, how did you get these methods? Could you give an example?
- 11 Could you describe a typical English class in your high school?
- 12 What did you think about the role of examinations in your English study? Was it useful for your English study? Why or why not?
- 13 How did you think about the importance of your English teachers and classmates in your English study?
- 14 How did you think about the role of your parents and other family members in your learning of English?
- 15 How did you learn English after class? Did you participate in any English activities after class? Why or why not?
- 16 How would you comment on your learning of English in high school? Why or why not?

Appendix 4 Interview Protocol for Interview II

The purpose of this interview is to understand your EAP learning experiences at XJTU: 1) beliefs about learning English, 2) motivation for learning English, and 3) strategies in learning English.

- 1 How are you getting along with your English study?
- 2 How about your English results in last semester's examinations? Are you satisfied with them? Why or why not?
- 3 How do you think of your learning of English in the past semester? Do you think you have made any progress in your English study? If yes, then why?
- 4 Are there any differences in your understanding of English study after you have been learning English at XJTU?
- 5 Do you like your English class now? Why or why not?
- 6 Do you think you are motivated to learn English now? If yes, in what way?
- 7 Are you clear about the focus of your English class from last semester to the present? Could you give some detail?
- 8 What kind of English class do you have now? Could you describe one of them?
- 9 Do you have any problems while learning English at XJTU? If yes, what are they?
- 10 How do you solve these difficulties?
- 11 What do you think of your study of the subjects (such as College Physics) which are taught in English?
- 12 How are you assessed here? What do you think of the differences in examinations between this university and high school? Do you think these examinations affect your learning of English?
- 13 How have you learned English after you came here?
- 14 How do you learn English after class? Do you take part in any extracurricular activities? How do you feel about participating in these activities? Why or why not?
- 15 Could you tell me one of your most unforgettable experiences in learning English at this university? Any event or person?
- 16 What do you think of the role of teachers and peers in your English study here?
- 17 Have you made any friends now in your English class? How did you become friends?
- 18 How would you comment on your English study at this university? Why or why not?

Appendix 5 A Letter of Invitation

A Letter of Invitation

University of Liverpool, UK
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science
School of English

Dear Students,

I am a PhD candidate enrolled in the School of English, University of Liverpool. I am currently conducting a study “Understanding EAP Learners’ Beliefs, Motivation and Strategies from a Socio-cultural Perspective: A Longitudinal Study at an English-Medium University in Mainland China”. It is to identify how Chinese students adjust their beliefs, motivation and strategies from learning English in EFL context to learning English for academic purposes in English-medium context at a Sino-British joint university in Mainland China. This research will contribute to knowledge in the field of College English teaching in Mainland China.

You are invited to participate in the research, but the participation is voluntary. There will be no financial payment or reimbursement. Please find attached the “Information Sheet”. If you require further information, please contact Chili Li via Chili.li08@student.xjtlu.edu.cn.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely yours,

Chili Li

Appendix 6 Information Sheet

Information Sheet

University of Liverpool, UK
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science
School of English

Project: Understanding EAP Learners' Beliefs, Motivation and Strategies
from a Socio-cultural Perspective: A Longitudinal Study at an
English-Medium University in Mainland China

Researcher: Chili Li

Primary Supervisor: Dr. Zhoulin Ruan

Secondary Supervisor: Professor Michael Hoey

Chili Li is a PhD candidate enrolled in the School of English, University of Liverpool. He is currently conducting a study "Understanding EAP Learners' Beliefs, Motivation and Strategies from a Socio-cultural Perspective: A Longitudinal Study at an English-Medium University in Mainland China". It aims to investigate how Chinese students adjust their beliefs, motivation and strategies from learning English in EFL context to learning English in English-medium context in Mainland China. This research will contribute to knowledge in the field of College English teaching in Mainland China. During the research data collection period, students will be asked to complete a relevant questionnaire and to take part in an interview concerning their beliefs, motivation and strategies for EAP learning in English-medium context.

The information obtained in this study will be used to prepare a research report. Any information obtained from students in connection with this study will be kept confidential and available only to the researcher, the supervisors in the University of Liverpool. If the research report is published, students' names will not be disclosed. In fact, your name will not appear on any of the data forms. It will be replaced by an anonymised one in the process of data analysis. Additionally, the raw data will be stored in a secure place at the University.

You are invited to participate in the research, but the participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent any time without any effect on your study. Your participation and cooperation will be of great value to the development of English teaching and learning in Mainland China. There will be no financial payment or reimbursement. If you decide to participate in the study, you are required to complete the consent form provided by the researcher.

Should you require any further information regarding the research, please contact Chili Li via Chili.li08@student.xjtlu.edu.cn.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely yours,

Chili Li

Appendix 7 Consent Form

Consent Form

University of Liverpool, UK
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science
School of English

Project: Understanding EAP Learners' Beliefs, Motivation and Strategies
from a Socio-cultural Perspective: A Longitudinal Study at an
English-Medium University in Mainland China

Researcher: Chili Li

Primary Supervisor: Dr. Zhoulin Ruan

Secondary Supervisor: Professor Michael Hoey

I have read the Information Sheet, and understood the nature and the purpose of the research. I agree to participate in the study.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any stage and that this will not affect my study in future.

I understand that while information obtained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.

I understand that raw data will be stored in a secure place in the University. Only the researchers and the supervisors can access the data.

Name of participant _____

Date _____