November 2016

Motivation, Identity and L2 Reading: Perceptions of Chinese ESL Students in Canada

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Arts

Recommended Citation

Zhao, Binru, "Motivation, Identity and L2 Reading: Perceptions of Chinese ESL Students in Canada" (2016). *Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository*. 4189.
https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/4189

Abstract

This study was conducted to explore and examine whether there are different motivational tendencies among Chinese English as a Second Language (ESL) students with different reading proficiency levels, and the identity transformations they may have experienced during the process of their ESL learning. A mixed methods approach was applied in this study by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative results demonstrate statistically significant differences between two groups of participants (high proficiency vs. low proficiency), and participants' reading motivation levels are positively correlated with their previous reading proficiency levels. Furthermore, the qualitative semi-structured interviews indicate that participants' self-perceived motivation toward reading in English is mainly academic, and they are experiencing a certain level of identity transformation in the process of learning in an authentic English speaking environment.

Keywords: motivation, reading motivation, reading proficiency, identity, identity transformation, Chinese ESL students

Acknowledgments

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped me in the process of my thesis writing.

First of all, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Steve Bird, for his patience, support, guidance and valuable suggestions to complete this thesis. Without his encouragement, I would not have made up my mind for choosing the topic that interested me the most in the first place.

In addition, I would like to thank my committee member, Dr. Farahnaz Faez, for her insightful comments and suggestions. She was my professor for one of my courses related to Second Language Acquisition, and she is a knowledgeable and dedicated scholar who sees her students as family.

Also, I want to thank all my participants for their participation in this study, and for sharing their living and learning experiences with me. This study could not have been completed without their cooperation.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my family and friends, especially Xu, who has been here for me and encouraging me all the time.

Table of Contents

iv

List of Tables

List of Appendices

Chapter 1

Introduction

Learning a second language is a life-long process that involves efforts both inside the classroom and outside the classroom. Motivation for learning a second language is perceived to have great influence on English as a Second Language (ESL) students' attitudes, investment, and their learning achievement. Two essential elements that affect attitudes and learning outcomes are learners' motivation and their language identity. Therefore, it is of interest to researchers to investigate the effects of learners' motivation and language identity on language learning.

1.1 Background and Rationale of the Study

Language learning motivation and its role in the process of second language acquisition is considered to be of great importance because of the inexorable spread of "global English". Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) state:

> In short, over the past decades the world traversed by the L2 learner has changed
>
> dramatically -- it is now increasingly characterised by linguistic and sociocultural
>
> diversity and fluidity, where language use, ethnicity, identity and hybridity have
>
> become complex topical issues and the subject of significant attention in sociolinguistic
>
> research (p. 1).

Second Language (L2) Motivation, which can be defined as a learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language, is considered to be crucial in the process of

second language acquisition (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991), because efforts made, desire to learn and positive attitudes toward learning contribute to a large and meaningful proportion of language learning achievement (Gardner, 2006). Originally, in this specific study regarding ESL students' L2 learning motivation and their language identities that I pursue, I defined this L2 motivation based on the theoretical concept proposed by Gardner and Lambert (1972), which is the willingness to learn a second language due to a sincere as well as a personal interest in the culture represented by a particular group of people, because I believe this very interest can lead to a L2 learner's persistence and desire of making as much effort as possible to achieve his/her goal. However, as more and more studies have been conducted relating to motivation, some researchers realized motivation is a more complex concept which is fluid, situational, and multiple rather than stable and unitary. Norton (2013) points out, researchers such as Crookes and Schmidt (1991), Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) argue that notions proposed by Gardner and Lambert (1972) should be broadened and reconceptualized, because they "do not capture the complex relationship between power, identity and language learning..." (Norton, 2013, p. 50).

I still believe that Gardner and Lambert's (1972) earlier notion of motivation, especially *integrativeness*, is the key because it serves as the basis for other researchers' motivation theories, such as Dörnyei's (2009) *L2 Motivational Self System*, and Norton's concept of *Investment*. However, what should be noticed is motivation as a complex concept needs to be seen as fluid, situational, multiple and related to leaners' social and language identity (Norton, 2013).

Identity which is related to L2 motivation also plays an important role in language learning, because it is an "inside the individual" construct which refers to the belonging, to what you have

in common with some people and what differentiates you from others (Weeks, 1990, p. 88). Identity in the process of language learning is pervasive but invisible. Identity shapes the way we think, which can in turn have a potential influence on our learning habits and purpose.

Since a reading comprehension course is a very important approach for ESL students to enhance their English vocabulary knowledge as well as their English proficiency levels, a variety of studies have been carried out trying to find what can shape students into effective readers (Komiyama, 2013; Yamashita, 2004, 2007, 2013; Kamhi-Stein, 2003; Mckenna, Kear & Ellsworth, 1995; Wilhelm, 1994).

A widely held assumption is that students who are highly motivated will generate positive attitudes toward reading and thus have higher achievement in reading comprehension (Rubin& Opitz, 2007; Kush, Watkins, Marley & Brookhart, 2005). For example, Cobb (2001) believes that motivational factors related to attitudes toward reading can influence students' reading comprehension achievement. "Children who continue to struggle with reading after grade three will often develop negative attitudes toward reading, may suffer from low self-esteem, and will be likely to internalize faulty literacy habits" (p. 155).

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Since it is widely accepted that learners who possess higher levels of motivation are more likely to be higher achievers of learning a second language (Gardner, 1985), is it also true vice versa? Since identity in language learning is consider as non-unitary or even contradictory within

a single individual (Norton, 2013), what possible identity transformation may ESL students have during their learning process?

As an English teacher myself, I have to say that this study is very much based on my own interest in this particular area of language learning motivation and language identity. Before coming to Canada to pursue my second master's degree, I was an English teacher who taught students reading as well as speaking skills for test of The International English Testing System (IELTS), and I am now working as a part-time IELTS tutor on my own time. A particular phenomenon that has caught my attention is ESL students who are now studying in this English speaking country are very different as I thought before.

Based on my own teaching experience before, I assumed that students who are more proficient in reading would be more motivated toward their language learning and thus have better performance in their IELTS tests. However, several students I observed here in Canada can be perceived as very different compared to the students I taught before when I was back in China.

For example, as far as I can see, this one particular student E (pseudonym) was highly motivated for his L2 study despite the fact that he had a very low proficiency level of English reading (4.5 out of 9.0 in IELTS test). I see him as highly motivated because he would spend quality time reading materials for his ESL courses at school (a College in southern Ontario, Canada) as well as books recommended by his home-stay sister as good authentic reading materials to enhance his English reading proficiency. He was eager to learn the reading skills that I taught him and willing to practice as much as he could. Therefore, an assumption was held in

my mind that maybe all ESL learners, regardless of their higher previous reading proficiency level or their relatively lower previous reading proficiency level, are highly motivated when they are learning L2 in an authentic English speaking environment.

However, what confuses me is why does the positive motivational orientation of E failed to affect positively on his language attainment? Does it have anything to do with his L2 self-identity (He did mention once that he had difficulty blending in the local community)? Is it that despite he is highly motivated, he may be motivated differently when compared to other students with higher reading proficiency level?

These particular questions in my mind have driven me to pursue this study in order to find proper answers. I speculate that, in this case, a detailed picture of individual experience as an ESL learner in addition to quantitative data collected may also be helpful to this research topic.

Furthermore, the purpose of this study is actually twofold. First of all, this study is to explore whether ESL students with different reading proficiency levels will generate different motivational tendencies for reading in English? Do ESL students with relatively higher level of reading proficiency possess higher level of reading motivation? Secondly, what possible identity transformation could ESL students go through during the process of language learning?

It is hoped this study will contribute to the understanding of the reading motivational tendencies and the possible identity transformation of ESL students with different reading proficiency levels.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study should be considered important for researchers as well as teachers for the following reasons. First of all, the multitude of literature on reading motivation were focused on first language (L1) learners (Guthrie et al., 2007; Wang & Guthrie, 2004; Lau & Chan, 2003; Gottfried, 1990), there is relatively few of them that touched L2 learners, especially Chinese learners in ESL program before undergraduate study. This study contributes to the existing literature by focusing on the perceptions of Chinese ESL students about their language learning experiences.

Secondly, former studies on reading motivation were designed to determine whether learners with higher language proficiency level are more likely to become higher achievers in reading comprehension, few were conducted to examine whether it is still true when it is reversed, that is to say, whether learners with higher proficiency level will generate higher level of motivation. This study is designed to determine whether Chinese ESL learners' reading motivation levels are positively correlated with their previous English reading proficiency levels while studying in an authentic learning environment.

Furthermore, by linking motivation to identity, this study explores how specific needs, desires of ESL learners determine their investment, and affect their motivational tendencies in learning the target language; how those factors may have an influence on their identity transformation in the process of target language learning.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. After this introduction chapter, I present the literature review in the second chapter. Chapter three focuses on methodological approach, both quantitative and qualitative, used for this study. In chapter four, findings are presented separately: quantitative findings are demonstrated by statistical reports obtained through SPSS 24; while qualitative data are divided into two parts. In the first part, I provide summaries of five out of seven participants first, then I elaborate on the rest two special cases by each theme generated from qualitative data. The discussion section is the fifth and last chapter of this thesis, which includes conclusions, implications, limitation of the study, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 L2 Motivation and Identity

In the context of globalization, learning a second language, especially English, has become a requirement under almost all circumstances, such as for academic purposes or for future employment after graduation. There are a variety of factors that affect second language learning achievement, such as motivation, attitudes, self-confidence, self-efficacy, personality variables, and learning strategies. Among these factors, motivation is considered to be of utmost importance. For example, it is widely accepted that learners who possess higher levels of motivation are considered as more likely to become higher achievers of learning a second language (Gardner, 1985).

In the socio-educational model of Gardner (1985), motivation and attitudes are seen as the core. Gardner (1985) argues that motivation and attitudes are interrelated, and learners need to be consistently motivated in the process of L2 acquisition. He believes that positive attitudes toward a learning situation can affect the level of motivation and this motivation contributes greatly to L2 learning achievement.

Motivation as a commitment to learning the target language in general is classified into two essential elements -- instrumental and integrative. Instrumental motivation is often referred to as the desire to learn a second language for utilitarian purpose, such as meeting the requirements for school or employment, while integrative motivation references the desire to successfully integrate with the target language community. Both of them can be the reasons that ESL learners

are motivated to make persistent efforts to improve their language proficiency levels.

Similarly, research specified with L1 learners' reading motivation suggest that motivation constructs are multidimensional, which are generally divided into intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Deci and Ryan (1985) point out that on the one hand, "intrinsically motivated behaviours are engaged in for their own sake - for the pleasure and satisfaction derived from their performance..." (p. 328). On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is "performed not out of interest but because they are believed to be instrumental to some separable consequence" (p. 328). Unlike Gardner and Lambert's (1972) notions of integrative motivation and instrumental motivation, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation are overlapping and complementary rather than antagonistic.

According to Wang and Guthrie (2004), intrinsic reading motivation includes Curiosity, Involvement, and Preference for Challenge, which can be perceived as related to a learner's personal interest and pleasure reading experience, while extrinsic motivation is associated with Competition, Compliance, Recognition for Reading, Grades, and Social, which means a learner is reading for school requirements or for social communication with others. The reading motivation constructs developed to study L1 readers were found very well applied to the interpretation of the motivation tendencies of L2 learners, and it has been revised by Komiyama (2013) into a five-dimensional model of motivation constructs that are specific to L2 learners. Therefore, in this study, I will utilize the multidimensional constructs of motivation suggested by Komiyama (2013) to investigate the relationship between ESL students' motivational tendencies and their reading proficiency levels.

In terms of identity, there is no doubt that identity plays an important role in second language learning process. The identities of L2 learners "are deeply connected to their status as members of distinct but interrelated communities in which bilingualism (as opposed to monolingualism) is the norm" (Ricento, 2005, p. 906). Learners who struggle to integrate into L1 communities are influenced by their own multiple identities.

Wenger (1998) proposes five ways to view identities:

"Identity as negotiated experience. We define who we are by the ways we experience ourselves through participation as well as by the ways we and other reify ourselves" (p.149).

"Identity as community membership. We define who we are by the familiar and the unfamiliar" (p.149).

"Identity as learning trajectory. We define who we are by where we have been and where we are going" (p. 149).

"Identity as nexus of multimembership. We define who we are by the ways we reconcile our various forms of membership into one identity" (p.149).

"Identity as a relation between the local and the global. We define who we are by negotiating local ways of belonging to broader constellations and of manifesting broader styles and discourses" (p.149)

Davies and Harre (1990) point out that "human beings are characterized both by continuous personal identity and by discontinuous personal diversity" (p. 46). As ESL learners, identities will inevitably influence the way we are thinking as well as the way we are learning. Identity is

therefore an important concept in this study.

The reason identity is an important concept in this study is that it is closely related to integrative orientation in L2 motivation because it means that a L2 learner "…must be willing to identify with members of another ethnolinguistic group and take on very subtle aspects of their behavior" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 135). However, identity is no longer a stable construct in the 21st century due to the process of globalization. As Norton (2000) points out, identity is how a person negotiates and renegotiates his/her relationship to the larger social world, and this relationship is changing over time and space. That is why Dörnyei (2005) proposes a new perspective of L2 Self based on the psychological theory of "possible selves" that indicates how individuals associate themselves with "what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming" (Markus & Nurius, 1987, p. 157).

By combining the two key concepts (motivation and language identity) of learning L2 together, Dörnyei (2005) outlines a new approach to L2 learning motivation with a Self framework. After several years of empirical studies, he proposes a new theory in the book of *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self* in 2009 -- the L2 Motivation Self System. This theory provides a brand new perspective to L2 motivation researchers.

The L2 Motivation Self System has broadened the scope of L2 motivation research by proposing a new focus on the individual's self which is an explicit utilization of psychological theory of the self. Based on the fact that the traditional self-concept is seen as deriving from an individual's past experiences, Dörnyei draws on Markus and Nurius's (1987) notion, which moves beyond past or present to the future, that possible selves are an individual's ideas of "what

they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming" (Markus & Nurius, 1987, p. 157).

The three central components of the L2 Motivation Self System are *ideal self, ought-to self* and *L2 Learning Experience:*

(1) Ideal L2 Self, which is the L2-specific facet of one's "ideal self": if the person we would like to become speaks an L2, the "ideal self" is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves. Traditional integrative and internalized instrumental motives would typically belong to this component.

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

(3) L2 Learning Experience, which concerns situated, "executive" motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g. The impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, the experience of success). This component is conceptualized at a different level from the two self-guides and future research will hopefully elaborate on the self aspects of this bottom-up process (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29).

Studies have been conducted by different researchers to test this system, for example, a comparative study was carried out by Taguchi et al. (2009) among Japanese, Chinese and Iranian learners of English. The total number of participants was nearly 5000. Three versions of a questionnaire were applied to participants from each country, and the questionnaire was divided

into two parts (the first part included items to measure attitudes and motivation of English learning; the second part consisted of questions about the learners' background information). Other than the comparative results from the three countries in this article, a very important finding is that the L2 Motivation Self System has been confirmed to be of great validity. Other research also made the same conclusion about the validity of L2 Motivation Self System (Csizer and Kormos, 2009; Ryan, 2009; Yashima, 2009; Al-Shehri, 2009).

However, despite the fact that researchers agree that L2 motivation plays a crucial role in L2 learning process, research findings are not always consistent about the positive relationship between high motivation, positive attitudes and learners' achievement.

On the one hand, research in this field have shown high L2 motivation can have a positive impact on learners' performance and achievement (such as Dörnyei, 2001; Gardner, 1985; Gliksman, 1976). On the other hand, researchers like Oller et al. (1977) had found the opposite result in their study with Mexican women in California. They argued that negative feelings toward L2 learning might lead to the fact that learners can be more motivated to overcome their difficulties during learning, which will enhance their learning outcomes.

In terms of reading motivation, it is of interest to researchers because motivation regarding to the aspect of reading can be related to specific language skills. Reading motivation in this study can be described as both intrinsic and extrinsic motives which drive learners for their reading activities and achievement (Wang & Guthrie, 2004).

Different motivational factors or components have been proposed by scholars like Wigfield and Guthrie (1995), they divided motivation in to three main categories: firstly, competency and

reading efficacy which are related to reading challenge, confidence and work avoidance. Secondly, achievement values and goals that are identified as intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Finally, social aspects of reading that are associated with social communication and compliance. Based on these motivational components, they suggested an eleven-dimension model of reading motivation. In 2004, Wang and Guthrie revised the eleven-dimension model to an eight-dimension model which retained only factors related to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. As discussed in the introduction part, intrinsic reading motivation includes Curiosity, Involvement, and Preference for Challenge, which can be perceived as related to a learner's personal interest and pleasure reading experience, while extrinsic motivation is associated with Competition, Compliance, Recognition for Reading, Grades, and Social, which means a learner is reading for school requirements or for social communication with others (Wang & Guthrie, 2004).

A research study specified to L2 reading was carried out by Komiyama (2013). By pointing out that research on L2 reading motivation was relatively little in contrast with the expansive inquiry on L1 reading motivation, she suggested the need for a revised version of reading motivation model based on the eight-dimensional model of Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) proposed by Wang and Guthrie (2004) to interpret reading motivation constructs of L1 learners. Komiyama developed a revised version of Motivation for Reading in English Questionnaire (MREQ) that was specific to L2 learners. Three phases were carried out to adjust the questionnaire so that it could fit the unique situations for L2 learners. Finally, a revised version of five-dimension model of MREQ which included 44 items was built to identify the

main factors affecting L2 reading motivation. The five factors include Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Drive to Excel, Extrinsic Academic Compliance, Extrinsic Test Compliance and Extrinsic Social Sharing. The finding based on this L2 reading motivation scale was that there was not enough evidence to support or deny the assumption of positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and reading achievement. Komiyama (2013) also pointed out in the article that the major limitation in this study was the lack of research of this MREQ on adult ESL students.

2.2 Motivation and Attitudes toward Reading

Reading as an essential part of language learning process can contribute not only to academic achievement, but also personal development. Attitude which is perceived as closely interrelated to learning motivation is considered to play a very crucial role in promoting students into a higher language proficiency level.

Studies show that reading comprehension goals can be achieved through the utilization of different reading strategies, such as anticipation guides, question-answer relationship (QAR), and H-map graphic organizers. As is stated by Tankersley (2003): "effective readers know how to apply decoding skills to recognize words quickly and efficiently. Effective readers have good vocabularies in relation to their age and show high word recognition. Effective readers possess strong fluency skills" (p. 1). Therefore, strategy use and high level of motivation are closely related to students' success (Zimmerman, 1989).

However, the use of strategy is not always sufficient for a good reading process. Other factors such as positive attitudes toward reading can be considered as a high level of motivation which will increase students' reading success. A powerful desire for reading can be as crucial as the utilization of reading skills (Tuckman, 1999). Even though reading comprehension involves various factors including previous knowledge, aims, cognitive and metacognitive processes, motivation which is related to attitude toward reading is a significant element because students who have positive attitudes and enjoy reading are likely to make more effort to comprehend their reading materials (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995).

Rousseau (1762), the great philosopher, once pointed out as long as the readers have adequate motivation, any method of teaching reading would be effective. It has been observed that emotional response to reading is the main reason that a person likes to read, and also the primary reason someone does not read (Smith, 1988).

Research indicate that students' attitudes toward reading is an essential factor that affects their reading performance, which proves there is a link between attitude and achievement (Walberg & Tsai, 1985; Purves & Beach, 1972). It is supported by scholars that students with positive attitudes toward reading comprehension are more likely to be successful readers (Gibbson, 2003; Forman et al., 1998; Marshal, 1992; Smith, 1992). As educators or future educators, it is necessary for us to understand the importance of attitudes in developing effective readers, because studies show that positive attitudes toward reading comprehension not only have an effect on students' learning, but also on teaching. As Schooten and Gloopper (2002) state: "educators have been interested in attitudes because of their possible impact on learning, and

while attitudes have not been convincingly linked to achievement, they have been long considered an important outcome of education" (p. 172). Therefore, students' motivation and attitudes toward reading are perceived as having an effect on reading education. According to Dörnyei (2001), there may be a causative relationship between motivation and L2 achievement, that is to say successful L2 learners are more likely to possess higher level of motivation, because learners with higher language proficiency are more likely to develop motivational intensity.

The reason that there are relatively fewer studies focused on the important role played by students' motivation with regard to attitudes is that it is difficult to conceptualize, measure and address instructionally (McKenna & Kear, 1990). Therefore, there is an important question to ask: what is reading attitude?

The term reading attitude has been defined by researchers in different ways. For instance, Matthewson (1994) postulates in his model of reading, attitude is a major factor which attributes to one's intention to read. However, this definition is considered to be flawed on some level, because it is not able to explain the long-term influence of attitudes on reading comprehension. McKenna et al. (1995) point out that although attitude, intention and subjective norms could affect the initial decision to read, they are all contingent upon many other factors.

McKenna et al. (1995) suggest three concepts that are related to the theoretical models of general attitudes and reading attitude development, which are affect, cognition and conation. Affect involves one's feelings and emotional evaluation; cognition includes one's beliefs and subjective evaluation; and conation is related to one's behavioral intentions.

Harris (2009) once pointed out the importance of beliefs among the five dimensions of attitudes toward reading. According to Harris, beliefs are closely "...related to ability and to the perception of the value of reading in a specific social context" (p. 9). That means students who have frustrating reading experiences or whose peers do not think reading is important tend to be unmotivated and have negative attitudes toward reading.

In a quantitative study conducted by Min-Hsun Chiang (2015), fifty-four University freshmen from Taiwan were randomly divided into two groups -- "i+1" group and "i-1" group. Different levels of difficulty Oxford Graded Readers were provided to these two groups of participants. Results from pretest and posttest of the Reading Attitudes Survey indicate that even though all participants declared a large amount of vocabulary gain from this program, more positive attitudes were gained by "i-1" group, while "i+1" group made no difference in reading attitudes after the study.

2.3 Language Proficiency

How to improve ESL learners' language proficiency has always been a central concern to researchers, language teachers and L2 learners. The reason is fairly simple: improving language proficiency into a higher level is always the goal for second language acquisition (SLA).

Research findings are contradictory in this area, because most studies have found that ESL students with higher language proficiency levels were more motivated toward L2 learning and exerted more effort than the ones with lower language proficiency levels (Sung & Padilla, 1998;

Coleman, 1995).

A study was carried out by Lee and Schallert (2014) using quantitative data collected from background questionnaire and language tests, participants in this research were 289 middle school students in Korea. Results show that language proficiency is the contributor to L2 reading achievement, and proficiency levels are associated positively with reading attitudes. Furthermore, there are several factors identified as related to L2 reading attitudes, such as access to books, length of private instruction, teachers' encouragement, and participant's gender.

A similar article written by Mokhtari and Sheorey (1994) examined the relationship between English proficiency (high vs. low), education (graduate vs. undergraduate) and reading behavior patterns. A reading habits survey was conducted among 158 international students who were enrolled in credit-bearing ESL composition classes at a university in the midwestern United States (undergraduate n=95, graduate n=63). The results indicate that both English proficiency levels and educational background are strongly related to the reading practices of university ESL students. Participants of higher English proficiency level are more motivated to spend more time reading and have better reading habits than the ones with lower English proficiency level. Findings also show that ESL students in this study are very much interested in improving their English reading skills.

However, a study conducted by Shaaban and Ghaith (2000) indicates that Lebanese EFL students in the University Orientation Program show totally opposite attitudes than in the other studies, which means students with lower language proficiency are more motivated than the ones with higher language proficiency. There is one flaw that should be noticed in Shaaban and

Ghaith's study, which is that participants in this research are all relatively low-proficiency learners who do not meet the requirement of English language admission test. Therefore, findings of the relationship between motivation and proficiency levels in this study may not be able to generalize into this category.

2.4 Summary

Based on the literature review in this chapter, we can see that in terms of motivation and attitudes toward reading, a widely held assumption captured by scholars is that students who have high motivation and positive attitudes toward reading will have higher achievement in reading comprehension (Rubin& Opitz, 2007; Kush, Watkins, Marley & Brookhart, 2005). For example, Cobb (2001) believes that attitudes toward reading can influence students' reading comprehension achievement. "Children who continue to struggle with reading after grade three will often develop negative attitudes toward reading, may suffer from low self-esteem, and will be likely to internalize faulty literacy habits" (p. 155). However, contradictory results were found in studies carried out in different culture contexts.

Furthermore, the focus of most research have been on the quantitative data that indicate student's capacity of reading comprehension rather than qualitative studies related to their motivation and attitudes toward reading. Studies which do fall into this category are mostly done to children, adolescents who are under eighteen years old or L1 learners. There are relatively few studies conducted by researchers on effects of motivation and identity regarding to L2 reading,

and the relationship between how students are motivated and their reading comprehension levels based on data collected from adult English learners, especially ESL students who are now studying in English spoken countries as a preparation for their undergraduate studies.

As has been mentioned above, reading can be beneficial to second language learning, more attention should be drawn to adult ESL learners, and more studies should be conducted to explore the perceptions of ESL students with different reading proficiency levels.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Overview

In light of Norton's (2013) identity theory which emphasizes the complex meaning construction through learners' social and cultural experience, language learners should not "be just defined in binary terms as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited" (Norton, 2013, p.2), because "such affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing across time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways within a single individual" (Norton, 2013, p.2). Therefore, this study was conducted to explore and examine whether there are different motivational tendencies between ESL learners with different reading proficiency levels, and the identity transformations they may have experienced during the process of their L2 learning.

Based on the purpose set at the begging of this study, research questions were as listed as followed:

1. Are Chinese ESL students with different reading proficiency levels motivated differently?

2. What are the factors that affect the reading motivation of Chinese ESL students with different reading proficiency levels?

3. What are their self-identified motivations and how the process of learning ESL in an authentic English speaking environment affects Chinese ESL students' identity?

The site of this research was a university in southern Ontario, Canada. This study took place at the English Language Center of this university, where all the students were, for the most part,

holding conditional admission to different faculties of the university, meaning they would be able to start undergraduate or master's study in this university as long as they could pass all the exams and meet the required scores at the end of the program, with the exception of those who decided to give up their conditional offers and apply for other universities. The English Language Center offers the Academic English Program on site at four levels (High Advanced, Advanced, High Intermediate, and Intermediate) at which students are taking ESL courses for one to four terms respectively based on their IELTS scores before entering this program. Each term is sixteen weeks in length, for up to 26 hours per week. This program is specifically designed for international students to develop their communicative skills, including reading, writing, listening and speaking in conjunction with the cultural knowledge that will help students to succeed in their future demanding academic environment.

The core of this program is to provide international students with an authentic local living environment where they can better fit in before they actually begin their academic life in Canada, thus helping the students steadfastly enhance their English language proficiency

at all levels: linguistic, communicative and pragmatic.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

Motivation as a psychological process instead of action itself is considered to be related to "the direction and magnitude of the human behavior, that is, 1) the choice of a particular action, 2) the persistence with it, and 3) the effort expended on it" (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 8). This proves that

motivation should be perceived as goal-directed behavior (Heckhausen, 1991), which leads to the learners' endeavor of achieving their goal.

L2 motivation, which is similar to motivation in general, can be seen as the learners' orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language, and is described by Gardner (2006) as something that contributes to a large and meaningful proportion of language learning achievement. Gardner and Lambert (1972) point out that L2 motivation can be defined as the willingness to learn a second language due to a sincere as well as a personal interest in the culture represented by a particular group of people because this very interest can lead to the desire of making as much effort as possible to achieve a learner's goal.

Based on the understanding of Gardner (1985), L2 motivation can be divided into two categories: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. These two types of motivation indicate respectively the desire of the learners to blend into the target language community and their desire to achieve functional goal of L2 such as higher grades. As in Gardner's (1985) study with Anglo French learners, integrative motivation was found to have a positive contribution on L2 achievement.

Similarly, Deci and Ryan (1985) argued that motivation constructs are multidimensional, which can generally be divided into intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Deci and Ryan (1985) argue that, on the one hand, "intrinsically motivated behaviours are engaged in for their own sake - for the pleasure and satisfaction derived from their performance..." (p. 328). On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is "performed not out of interest but because they are believed to be instrumental to some separable consequence" (p. 328).

Unlike Gardner and Lambert's (1972) notions of integrative motivation and instrumental motivation, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation are overlapping and complementary rather than antagonistic.

Even though researchers agree that L2 motivation plays an important role in L2 achievement, they argue that motivation might contribute to L2 achievement by affecting other factors (such as in-class behavior and learning attitude) rather than affect L2 achievement directly (Gliksman, 1976). Furthermore, Dörnyei (2001) suggests that the relationship between motivation and L2 achievement may occur in the opposite direction than Gardner's claim, which means learners with better achievement may be motivated more intensively. Overall, what is agreed is that there is a causal relationship between motivation and L2 achievement, and it is equally likely that both motivation can lead to L2 achievement and L2 achievement can lead to motivation. This study intends to examine whether ESL students with different L2 reading achievements are motivated differently.

As for reading motivation, Wigfield and Guthrie (1997), based on Deci and Ryan's (1985) theory, suggest that motivation to read is multi-dimensional rather than unitary, and they propose an eleven-dimensional model of reading motivation. Later in 2004, this eleven-dimensional reading motivation model was revised by Wang and Guthrie to an eight-dimensional model which contained only the motivational constructs related to intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Since both of the multi-dimensional reading motivation models were designed for L1 learners, it is necessary for researchers to create a reading motivation model specific to L2 language learners. With the goal of developing a reading motivation model for L2 learners, Komiyama (2013)

revised Wang and Guthrie's (2004) framework into a five-dimensional model specific to English as a second language learners. A total number of over 2000 participants have been included in to Komiyama's study to examine the reliability of the five-dimensional model of reading motivation, the five factors include Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Drive to Excel, Extrinsic Academic Compliance, Extrinsic Test Compliance and Extrinsic Social Sharing. This five-dimensional model of Motivation for Reading in English Questionnaire (MREQ) will be utilized to measure L2 learners' reading motivation tendencies in this study.

Identity as a crucial factor in language learning is considered to be closely related to L2 learning because a L2 learner "…must be willing to identify with members of another ethnolinguistic group and take on very subtle aspects of their behavior" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 135). As pointed out by Norton (2000), identity is no longer a stable construct in the 21st century due to the process of globalization because a person's relation to the larger social world is changing over time and space.

L2 learners who struggle to integrate into L1 communities are influenced by their multiple identities, and may feel marginalized because they are "…deeply connected to their status as members of distinct but interrelated communities in which bilingualism (as opposed to monolingualism) is the norm" (Ricento, 2005, p. 906). Based on this struggle shared by L2 learners, Dörnyei (2009) develops the L2 Motivational Self System by drawing on the psychological theory of "possible selves" which indicates "what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming" (Markus & Nurius, 1987, p. 157), and he proposed the essential factors "ideal self", "ought-to self" and "L2 Learning Experience"

in his theory.

As Norton (2013) states, identity theory can be deemed as offering language learning "a comprehensive theory that integrates the individual language learner and the larger social world" (Norton, 2013, p.2) because learners should not "be just defined in binary terms as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited" (Norton, 2013, p.2). According to Norton (2013), "such affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing across time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways within a single individual" (Norton, 2013, p.2).

In light of identity theory in language learning, the sociological construct of investment is explored by Norton (2013) as complementary to the psychological construct of motivation in SLA. The concept of investment suggests the complex relationship between a learner's identity and his/her language learning commitment. "A learner may be a highly motivated learner, but may nevertheless have little investment in the language practices of a given classroom or community" (Norton, 2013, p.3). A learner who is highly motivated to learn a language may not necessarily be invested in a given set of language practices. "However, a learner who is invested in a given set of language practices would most likely to be a motivated language learner" (Norton, 2013, p.3). That is why the importance of investment is pointed out as an explanatory construct in the field of language learning (Cummins, 2006).

In order to understand a learner's investment in the target language, it is necessary that we understand that his/her access to the target language community is affected one way or another by the relations of power in the larger social world. Since "Identity, practices and resources are

mutually constitutive" (Norton, 2013, p.2), the real inquiry is that how and under which conditions do those learners have opportunities to practice the target language.

According to the poststructuralist theory of identity, language should be deemed as central to the analysis of relationship between the individual and the social because language serves to construct our sense of ourselves -- our subjectivity (Weedon, 1997). The term subjectivity reminds us that a person's identity must always be understood in relational terms such as "subject of a set of relationships （i.e. in a position of power）or object to a set of relationships (i.e. in a position of reduced power)" (Norton, 2013, p.4). Poststructralism, which is different from humanist conception that presupposes everyone is unique, "depicts the individual (i.e. The subject) as diverse, contradictory, dynamic and changing over historical time and social space" (Norton, 2013, p.4). Through using the target language, language learners are negotiating and renegotiating who they are and their relationships with the larger social world. That is to say, they are part of their own identity construction and negotiation.

Since the struggling multiple identities might influence ESL learners' learning experience and learning achievement, it is necessary to carry out studies regarding to their possible identity transformation in the process of language learning with the hope of understanding how language learners can appropriate more desirable identities with respect to the target language community.

3.3 Research Design

A mixed methods approach was applied in this study by collecting both quantitative and

qualitative data based on the understanding that "A mixed methods design is useful to capture the best of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. For example, a researcher may want to both generalize the findings to a population and develop a detailed view of the meaning of a phenomenon or concept for individuals" (Creswell, 2003, p. 22). According to Creswell, a concurrent triangulation strategy can enhance the quality of research results by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data in one phase and lead to well validated and substantiated findings. That is to say, the analysis and interpretation from both quantitative and qualitative data can support each other and achieve the strengthened research findings.

All research methods have their own strengths and weaknesses, the combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods can enhance their strengths as well as compensate their limitations. That means, the complementary strengths of mixed methods research designs have a better chance of overcoming the weaknesses of quantitative or qualitative method respectively. As pointed out by Dörney (2009), mixed methods approach "offer a radically different new strand of research methodology that suits the multilevel analysis of complex issues, because it allows investigators to obtain data about both the individual and the broader societal context" (p. 242).

First of all, under certain circumstances, invalid and misleading results may be yielded by quantitative questionnaires if participants understand the questions differently than the researchers (Kelle, 2006). Such operationalization problems in quantitative surveys can be reduced when the research is combined with data collected from semi-structured qualitative interviews. The mutual trust and understanding gained from qualitative interviews can be seen as

especially helpful for supporting standardized data from quantitative research method because qualitative data can provide detailed narratives of the participants.

Secondly, the open-ended questions from semi-structured qualitative interviews can encourage the participants to express their feelings freely and give them an impression of being taken seriously, which makes it more likely for the participants to develop their own perspectives that are precious for data collection and research results.

Finally, since the quantitative research design can provide a standardized overview on a macro-level whereas the qualitative data can be utilized to gain a detailed explanation over the phenomenon being studied, a mixed-methods research was specifically chosen to conduct this study with the hope of overcoming the limitations of applying only quantitative or qualitative research.

3.3.1 Participants

This study consisted of two phases based on a mixed methods approach. The first phase of the research was conducted through a quantitative questionnaire. In 2013, Komiyama developed the quantitative questionnaire – Motivation for Reading in English Questionnaire (MREQ) (see Appendix A). It is a five-dimension model of reading motivation constructs designed specific to L2 learners, and it is a revised version of Wang and Guthrie's (2004) eight-dimension model of Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) which was originally designed for L1 learners. The second phase of the research was carried out through a qualitative semi-structured interview. I designed all the semi-structured interview questions for this study to explore ESL students'

self-identified learning motivations, their identity construction, and possible identity transformation they may have experienced in the process of their ESL learning in an English speaking country.

The sample size for this study was originally designed to include 40 Chinese ESL students from any level at the English Language Center of a university in southern Ontario, Canada, which was almost all the Chinese students at that time. All of them were required to fill out the questionnaire, of which 10 were chosen randomly to participate in the semi-structured interviews. The only restriction applied to the sampling was that participants must be Chinese international students who were over 18 years old and at that time pursuing their ESL study in the English Language Center of that university. Thirty-seven of the forty potential participants expressed interest in this study and signed the consent forms. However, only 33 participants completed the questionnaires, and 7 volunteered to participate in the semi-structured interviews. The procedures of this study are described as below:

After receiving the ethical approval from the University of Western Ontario for this study on 18th March, 2016, I started the process of recruiting my participants. I myself am a master's student of the Faculty of Education in the university that I attend, which allows me to have relatively better access to familiarize thoroughly with the research context. Furthermore, my position as a student did not compromise this study in any way because unlike professors or administrators, I was unable to impose any influence on the final achievement of the students in this program. At the very beginning of this study, I intended to ask the instructors in the English Language Center to help me send out the information letters and consent forms for recruitment,

then I realized that would be inappropriate because potential participants may be influenced by the power relationship that their instructors possessed over them. Therefore, I changed my recruitment method to asking the instructors for 5 to 10 minutes of their time at the beginning or at the end of their lessons to explain my research purpose myself to all the Chinese students.

Both English and Chinese versions of information letters were sent out while I explained the research purpose to all potential participants, and consent forms were obtained immediately from the students who agreed to participate in my study. In the information letters, I clearly stated that two phases would be included in this research, both quantitative questionnaire and qualitative interview. I also informed the participants that signing the forms would be considered as consent to participate in the research. Furthermore, all potential participants were informed that their participation in this study was optional, meaning whether or not they decided to participate would have no effect on their academic achievement in this program, and no personal information would be revealed to the institution. All participants have been assigned randomly with alphanumeric codes, such as P1, P2... (short for Participant 1, Participant 2...), while I referred myself as "Z" as in the first letter of my surname.

Furthermore, all participants who participated interviews were sent an email with their interview transcripts for them to review. I only received the response from one of the seven participants who said the transcribed data were accurate.

All 33 participants were divided into two groups: Group A (Low Reading Proficiency Level group, n=18) and Group B (High Reading Proficiency Level group, n=15) according to their International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (this includes separate tests for English

listening, reading, writing and speaking, scores of which range from 0 to 9.0, 9.0 is the highest) reading scores before they entered the program in this university, namely their past reading achievement.

Participants who had 6.0 or less IELTS reading scores and who did not attend IELTS or Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOFEL) before were categorized into Group A, meaning they were in the low reading proficiency level group, while participants who had 6.5 or over IELTS reading scores were put into Group B, meaning they were considered as readers with relatively high proficiency level. IELTS reading score 6.5 was set as a dividing line between the two groups in this study because the English language proficiency requirements for admission to Undergraduate study at this university is a IELTS minimum overall band score of 6.5 with no part less than 6.0. If a participant has achieved a 6.5 reading score in the IELTS test, he/she could be considered as having met the requirement for academic reading as an undergraduate student. Therefore, I decided to set 6.5 as a dividing line that participants were sorted into different groups.

Furthermore, the reason for not dividing them into groups by their current levels in this program is they were placed in different levels based on their IELTS overall band scores instead of only reading scores. Since my study were focused on their reading proficiency, I finally decided to put them into different groups only by their reading proficiency levels.

3.3.2 Data Collection

The original design was to include 40 students into this research, which was almost all the

Chinese students who were studying in the English Language Center at that time. However, only 37 students were interested in the study and agreed to participate. All of the 37 participants signed the consent forms and left their email addresses as contact information. Four participants who signed the consent forms never responded my email or neither did they finished the online questionnaire. I waited for their responses until June 5th, 2016, and I realized that I had to move on, or I would not be able to finish my thesis in time. Since the only way for me to contact them was through the email addresses they left on the consent form and most of them went back to China for summer vacation after finishing this program, I was unable to collect the last 4 questionnaires. Therefore, only 33 questionnaires were obtained from the participants, of whom 7 volunteered to attend the interviews.

Quantitative Data

The first two research questions were answered through the quantitative questionnaire. Due to the fact that participants were from different classes and had different course schedules, it was hard to make an arrangement for them to complete the questionnaire at the same time, thus participants were asked to complete the questionnaire on their own time through an online survey that I established by using Google Forms.

The quantitative data in this study, as mentioned earlier, were collected based on the utilization of the Motivation for Reading in English Questionnaire (MREQ) (see Appendix A) developed by Komiyama (2013). This questionnaire is a five-dimension model of reading motivation constructs which was designed specific to L2 learners, and it is a revised version of Wang and Guthrie's (2004) eight-dimension model of Motivation for Reading Questionnaire

which was originally designed for L1 learners. The MREQ was created by Komiyama (2013) to measure the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors that may have an effect on L2 learners' reading motivation. The questionnaire was developed through three phases, the pilot study, main study and follow-up study, it was revised from 59 items to 44 items. The reliability and stability of this five-dimension model was measured and examined by Cronbach's alpha as well as confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The final version of MREQ comprises 44 items related to L2 reading motivation. Participants were required to response to the items on a four-point Likert scale (4= a lot like me, 3= a little like me, 2= a little different from me, 1= very different from me).

This questionnaire was utilized to find out what factors motivated ESL students to read the most. More specifically, it sought to discover whether participants with different English reading proficiency levels exhibited different motivational tendencies toward ESL reading.

Qualitative Data

The third research question was answered through the analysis of qualitative data. The qualitative phase of this study was conducted through semi-structured interviews instead of focus group interview. At the beginning, I intended to apply focus group interview with the hope that interaction between participants would raise confidence and thus enhance data quality. However, based on the understanding that Asian students tend to be shy, an individual interview would be a better choice in this case, because focus group interview may cause silence of some shy participants, which would have led to time-consuming followed up individual interview. The reason that I chose semi-structured individual interview instead of structured interview was that

"structured interview is useful when the researcher is aware of what she does not know and therefore is in a position to frame questions that will supply the knowledge required, whereas the unstructured interview is useful when the researcher is not aware of what she does not know, and therefore relies on the respondents to tell her" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 412).

I conducted one-on-one in person interviews in the cafeteria at the Faculty of Education at the university where this study took place. Since qualitative data required much longer time to categorize and analyze, the number of anticipated participants for the qualitative interview in this study was originally designed to be 10 (hopefully 5 from each group) instead of all 40 participants. However, only 7 of the final 33 participants volunteered to participate in the interviews, of whom 3 were from Group A (Low Proficiency group) and 4 were from Group B (High Proficiency group). All interviews were recorded both by my cellphone and by a digital audio recorder in case data was lost on either of the two devices. Before the interview began, I explained again to each participant that they should feel free to express their feelings and opinions without worrying about any influence on their academic achievement or their personal information being revealed to the institution. Since the questions included participants' personal information, such as age, educational background, and their experience as ESL learners, we could stop at any time if the interviews made them feel uncomfortable. I took notes during and after each interview as supplementary to the audio record; causal chat was carried out as ice breaker before the interview began. Since interviews were semi-structured, general and open-ended questions were asked followed by sub-questions that sought to discover detailed answers. Each interview lasted for 40 to 60 minutes. Based on the preferences of the students,

the interviews were conducted in Chinese, where they felt more comfortable and confident expressing their opinions and feelings. The data collected were transcribed verbatim and translated into English afterwards. As stated above, the translated version of the interview transcription was sent to each participant by email to make sure that their perceptions were not mistranslated. However, only one of the seven interviewees responded to my email and said the transcribed data were accurate.

While quantitative data allow this study to be generalized to a possible larger population, qualitative methods provide this study an opportunity to reach the specific individuals in order to obtain a detailed description of their own experience. According to Creswell (2003), the involvement of participants in the process of data collection allows researchers to build rapport and credibility with the researched individuals.

3.3.3 Data Analysis

The quantitative questionnaires were first analyzed by running descriptive statistics Chi-square Test through Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) 24 software to identify there was statistically significant association between Group and Answer, that is, participants with different reading proficiency levels did exhibit different motivational tendencies. Furthermore, mean scores were also compared through SPSS 24 software to see which group had higher level of motivation.

As for qualitative interview data, coding and content analysis were utilized in this study, because coding is "the translation of question responses and respondent information to specific

categories for the purpose of analysis" (Kerlinger, 1970, as cited in Cohen et al., 2011, p. 559). Flick (1998) and Mayring (2004) define content analysis as a strict and systematic set of procedures for the rigorous analysis, examination and verification of contents of written data. Therefore, coding is an important step of contents analysis, which makes the content clearer and more explicit.

I conducted the qualitative data analysis and interpretation by following the suggested steps proposed by Creswell (2003), firstly, I transcribed verbatim and translated the data collected from interviews, then I organized them as a whole. Secondly, I read the through the data thoroughly and carefully in order to get a general sense. Thirdly, data were coded and sorted into different categories which I thought statements could fit. Fourthly, the coding was generated into different themes that were apparent in the data, such as former learning experiences, goals and expectations, investment, interaction with the local community and self-perceived identity. Based on the themes sorted out, I looked for patterns as I read the data again to see whether they can be related to my research questions. Fifthly, I decided how to demonstrate the description and themes in the narrative. Finally, proper interpretation of the data was made based on literature and researchers' own experiences (p. 191). Besides, I also discovered that two of the seven interviewees had exhibited opposite traits. I then linked the findings to my literature review in order to draw conclusions for my research.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Overview

This chapter of the thesis consists of two sections. The first section presents the findings concerning the quantitative data collected by Motivation for Reading in English Questionnaire (MREQ) adapted from Komiyama (2013) to determine, firstly, whether there is statistically significant differences between Group A (Low Proficiency Level group) and Group B (High Proficiency Level group) in their reading motivational tendencies. Secondly, it is also to identify which group among the two possesses a higher level of motivation toward reading. Finally, by comparing each reading motivation construct between the two groups respectively, results are obtained about which one of the five constructs motivate participants the most. Furthermore, quantitative data are analyzed and presented in terms of each group as a whole in order to get of gist of the general tendencies, thus it is unnecessary to illustrate the results of each construct respectively in order to compare between groups.

This section is followed by a second one, focusing on the qualitative data collected from seven individual semi-structured interviews about participants' learning experiences, their self-identified motivations toward reading and learning English in general as well as identity transformation they may have experienced in the process of pursuing their study in this program. Furthermore, two of the seven interview participants who exhibited contrasting characteristics in terms of their perception of identity compared to the others are depicted in much greater detail.

I would like to point out that I did not make any attempt to determine the participants'

success in terms of their changing or unchanged perception of identity, which would be beyond the purpose of this study; rather, I was interested in their ESL learning experiences as international students in an authentic English speaking environment and the possible impact the experiences may have on their self-perceived identity. These two participants are chosen on the basis of their strong distinctiveness and the great extent to which they differ from the other participants in self-perceived motivation toward ESL learning and identity transformation. While Participant 18 (P18) demonstrates almost unchanged language identity characteristics even at the end of this program and is already planning for going back to China after obtaining undergraduate degree, Participant 5 (P5) exhibits the opposite, meaning she shows great interest in integrating into the local community and enjoys her life in Canada due to her expectation for this program and her future life. Most of the participants, no matter with high or low level of motivation toward reading and language learning in general, do not express clear plans for their future life after university, however, that is not the case for P18 and P5. By providing detailed depiction about these two different examples, it is easier to see these Chinese international students' identity construction, investment and identity transformation in the process of ESL learning.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative data as complementary to each other helps to shed light not only on statistical findings that are presented in the form of measurements, but also participants' individual experiences and how they express their own motivation and identity transformation in the process of second language learning. By taking advantage of the merits of both quantitative and qualitative methods, I focus my study on reading motivation, identity, ESL

learning, and the complex relationship between these factors.

4.2 Quantitative Results

The quantitative part of my study was designed to answer the first two research questions as follows:

1. Are Chinese ESL students with different reading proficiency levels motivated differently?

2. What is the most important factor that affects reading motivation of Chinese ESL students with different reading proficiency levels?

Due to the duration of my study, there was not enough time to develop a new questionnaire as well as examine its reliability and stability. Therefore, the quantitative data in this research were collected through the well designed and examined MREQ adapted from Komiyama (2013). As described in the methodology part of this thesis, this questionnaire is a five-dimension model of reading motivation constructs which was developed specific to L2 learners, and it is a revised version of Wang and Guthrie's (2004) eight-dimension model of Motivation for Reading Questionnaire which was originally designed for L1 learners. The MREQ was created by Komiyama (2013) to measure the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation that may have an effect on L2 learners' reading motivation.

Table 1. *Label, Number of items for each factor in MREQ*

Factor	Label	Number of Items
1	Intrinsic Motivation	16
2	Extrinsic Drive to Excel	13
3	Extrinsic Academic Compliance	7
4	Extrinsic Test Compliance	4
5	Extrinsic Social Sharing	4

Table 1 demonstrates the five dimensions of L2 reading motivation construct, including one intrinsic factor and four extrinsic factors. The final version of Komiyama's (2013) MREQ comprises 44 items related to L2 reading motivation. Participants were required to response to the items on a four-point Likert scale (4= a lot like me, 3= a little like me, 2= a little different from me, 1= very different from me).

Analysis of data was conducted by running descriptive statistics to determine whether Group A (Low Proficiency Level Group, N=18) and Group B (High Proficiency Level Group, N=15) are motivated differently toward reading in English. All the statistical analyses, such as Chi-square test and compare means were carried out through SPSS 24.

Table 2. *Chi-Square test results (Sum)*

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	17.564[a]	3	.001	.001		
Likelihood Ratio	17.579	3	.001	.001		
Fisher's Exact Test	17.518			.001		
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.480[b]	1	.011	.012	.006	.001
N of Valid Cases	1452					

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 44.09.

b. The standardized statistic is 2.546.

Table 3. *Effect Size result*

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: **Answer**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	5.136a	1	5.136	6.505	.011	.004
Intercept	12231.976	1	12231.976	15492.117	.000	.914
Group	5.136	1	5.136	6.505	.011	.004
Error	1144.864	1450	.790			
Total	13438.000	1452				
Corrected Total	1150.000	1451				

a. R Squared = .004 (Adjusted R Squared = .004)

Table 2 illustrates the results obtained from Chi-square test which examined participants' motivational tendencies as a whole. Since the sample size in this study is under 40 (N=33), the results should be interpreted through Fisher's Exact Test instead of Pearson Chi-Square Test, and the P-value (0.001) is less than the significance level (0.05), meaning there is statistically significant differences between Group A and Group B about their answers in the MREQ. The result confirms my assumption that participants with different reading proficiency levels indeed are motivated differently. The first research question has been answered based on this result.

Furthermore, what should be noticed is that the Partial Eta Squared value of 0.004 from Table 3 indicates that mere 0.4% of the variance is accounted for by Group, meaning there is no significant main effect for Group. Even though the effect size in Table 3 is very small, it should be considered as reasonable given the small sample size of 33 in this study.

In order to answer the second research question, all motivation factors as a whole and each factor respectively were analyzed by comparing means to demonstrate which group had a higher level of motivation toward reading in English.

Table 4. *Means report of participants' reading motivation*

Means Report			
Answer			
Factor	Group A	Group B	Average
1. Intrinsic Motivation	2.75	2.91	2.83
2. Extrinsic Drive to Excel	2.76	2.88	2.82
3. Extrinsic Academic Compliance	3.27	3.30	3.29
4. Extrinsic Test Compliance	2.88	3.22	3.03
5. Extrinsic Social Sharing	2.81	2.70	2.76
Total	2.85	2.97	2.91

Even though participants are learning L2 in an authentic English speaking environment, their reading motivation levels are inextricably linked with their language proficiency levels. While results from Table 2 have already revealed statistically significant differences between Group A and Group B, results from Table 4 indicate that Group B (high proficiency, M= 2.97) exhibits apparent higher level of reading motivation than Group A (low proficiency, M= 2.85) does. Furthermore, participants from Group A possess a lower level of motivation to read in general (Average M= 2.91).

It is also shown in Table 4 that how participants with different reading proficiency levels perceive each of the five motivation constructs. In general, all five factors are deemed to affect participants' reading based on the fact that average mean scores for each construct are over 2.

However, differences among mean scores for each factor ranging from 2.76 to 3.29 suggest that participants consider that some factors have greater impact on their reading motivation than

the others. For example, Factor 3 (Extrinsic Academic Compliance) is considered by both groups as the biggest motivator for reading in English (Average M= 3.29, Group A= 3.27, Group B= 3.30), while Factor 5 (Extrinsic Social Sharing) is the smallest motivator in general. Furthermore, Factor 1 (Intrinsic Motivation) and Factor 5 (Extrinsic Social Sharing) respectively are ranked as the least important ones that drove Group A (M= 2.75) and Group B (M= 2.70) to read.

According to the data, whether from Group A or B, all participants perceive reaching academic requirement as the most important goal for them to read because they have to pass all the exams at the end of this program in order to obtain full admission to the university. In the meantime, for participants who possess relatively low proficiency in English reading, Intrinsic Motivation which represents "...students' desires to read in the L2 because of the enjoyable experience it provides" (Komiyama, 2013, p.164) is considered to be of the least importance compared to academic goal; participants who have higher English reading proficiency do not take Extrinsic Social Sharing which depicts "students' desire to share L2 reading activities with peers, in and out of class" (Komiyama, 2013, p. 165) as crucial as other factors for L2 reading.

Furthermore, the only and also most dramatic reversion on the rank of all five motivation constructs discovered is Factor 5 (Extrinsic Social Sharing), which indicates that Group A (M= 2.81) had exhibited a higher level of reading motivation than Group B (M= 2.70), meaning participants with lower English reading proficiency level were more willing to attend L2 reading activities with peers, both in and out of class, in order to improve their ability to read. Based on the aforementioned findings, I assumed that participants with higher language proficiency level ought to be more active in participating in social sharing activities based on the fact that they

have better command of the target language. Also, what I did not expect was the statistics from Table 4 which illustrate that Factor 5 is the only construct that Group A ranked higher than Group B. This means low proficiency group in this study does possess a relatively lower level of reading motivation in general.

In summary, the first part of findings reveals that statistically significant differences does exist between two groups of participants with different reading proficiency levels, and Group B (High Proficiency Level group) exhibits a higher level of motivation toward L2 reading than Group A (Low Proficiency Level group) does. In addition, the biggest motivator among all five reading motivation constructs is Extrinsic Academic Appliance, while Extrinsic Social Sharing is ranked the lowest in general. Finally, the only reversion among the five motivators is Factor 5 (Extrinsic Social Sharing), which indicates that participants with lower English reading proficiency level are more active in attending L2 reading activities both in and out of class than participants with higher proficiency level.

4.3 Qualitative Findings

The qualitative analysis is meant to answer the last research question of this thesis: what are Chinese ESL students' self-identified motivations and how the process of learning ESL in an authentic English speaking environment affects their identity transformation? Even though I intended to focus on participants' reading motivation, in the process of interviews I realized that identity should be interpreted through language learning as a whole rather than just one aspect of

it. Therefore, in the qualitative section of this study, reading is considered as important but also integrated with other aspects of language learning, such as listening, speaking and writing.

Findings from this section are divided into two parts. In the first part, I give presentations individually on the general findings from five of all seven semi-structured interviews. For the second part, I elaborate on data collected from the other two participants (P18 and P5) because of their strong distinctiveness and the great extent to which they differ from the other five participants in self-perceived motivation toward ESL learning and their identity transformation. Therefore, themes generated from the data are interpreted in much more detail concerning the two special cases (P18 and P5), while the other five participants are only depicted in an overview presentation touching upon certain but not all themes listed in Table 5.

Table 5. *Important themes generated from qualitative data*

Themes
Views of Different English Learning Experiences
Goals and Expectations
Investment in Classroom
Interaction with Target Community, Extracurricular Activities
Self-Perceived Identity

4.3.1 Part 1: Summary of Participants

Participant 12

P12 is my first interviewee for this study, a 19-year-old girl who graduated from high school in China and has been pursuing her ESL study at this English Language Center for almost four

months. She is placed in Group B (High Proficiency group) for her IELTS Academic overall band score of 6.0 with a 7.0 reading score, which, as I explained in Chapter 3, is considered to be quite proficient in English reading. Based on my observation during the interview, she is a pretty optimistic and energetic girl who fits more in the category of being extrinsically oriented than intrinsically oriented. P12 states her reason for studying abroad as a little unexpected:

> **P12**: Actually I never thought I would be studying abroad; this was just optional at the very beginning of my high school life. I was planning to get my undergraduate degree in China since all my friends then were planning the same... but you know, I had to have options in case I did not get good grades in our national College Entrance Examination. If I could not enter a good university in my own country, I would rather study abroad, it seems to be more fun.

She admits that studying abroad was never her first choice before her senior year in high school, because in her opinion a local undergraduate degree from a reputable university is just as good as the one from a foreign country. Besides, she mentions that she would prefer to stay in China because that is where all her family and friends are. Thinking of leaving everything she is familiar with to stay in a foreign country for four years or maybe more (if she decides to pursue master's degree as well) makes her feel a little scared.

However, according to P12, she started to feel the change of her mind when she entered her senior year in high school because "I started to realize it was too hard to be successful in an exam-oriented learning environment". The fierce competition for succeeding in the national College Entrance Examination has deprived students of the joy of learning. At this point, I do agree with her to some degree on this issue because I had gone through that "cruel" examination when I was pursuing my undergraduate degree back in China. I personally perceived it as a little

unfair to determine one's future learning environment by a once-a-year examination. However,

based on the fact that China has a large population, if universities in China use the same college

application methods applied in Canada, it would be a time-consuming process to go through

every applicant's profile. College Entrance Examination seems to be a relatively efficient way to

assort students into different universities. For P12, this kind of situation makes her believe that:

> "after students actually enter colleges, the pressure is gone, they tend to relaxed too much because no one is going to keep an eye on them as high school teachers did. You know when you are used to being restrained, and all of a sudden you are "free", you will play harder, and develop many bad habits. What I am saying is that you may end up playing all day and learning nothing."

As a matter of fact, she does not know exactly what counts as bad habits, but she does

express that being restrained too hard will lead to unexpected consequences. On the one hand,

P12 expects her studying in this program to be a preparation for her undergraduate study in

Bachelor of Management and Organizational Studies (BMOS) program because a degree in the

field of business management will be quite helpful if she decides to take over family business in

the future. On the other hand, she has not given much thought to whether she would stay in

Canada after graduation.

> P12: That is too far away in the future for me, I do not think I should think about that right now. My concern now is how to pass the exams and get my bachelor's degree. Besides, I do not feel like making friends with local people because we think so very differently and have different life styles. I think I am more likely to go back to China where I belong to... but if my boyfriend wants to stay here, that will be another story, who knows.

P12 has a relatively clear academic and career goal, and she has no intention of integrating

into the local community because her self-perceived identity is still almost complete Chinese. So

far the only reason that may affect her decision on whether staying in this culturally different

country is her relationship status. Based on the fact that she is only 19 years old, that will be far

away in the future.

As I continue the interview, I notice that she does not consider reading in English as bothering her because she used to practice a lot for exams in high school and is quite skillful. However, she does not normally read in English for fun because it never interests her in any way. Too many difficult words as well as hard-to-understand cultural differences make it worse. She would rather spend more time talking with her homestay family to improve her speaking and listening abilities which according to her are more practical for her future academic life at this university.

Participant 8

P8 is a 20-year-old boy from Group A (Low Proficiency group), and he is at the end of his second semester in this ESL program. He has a 5.5 IELTS Academic overall band score as well as reading score. Although academically oriented as most of the other participants, he is one of the most intrinsically oriented participants in this study. His reason for studying abroad is based on parents' advice and the fact that he has a brother who has been studying in this university for two years. It seems to me that he enjoys living in this authentic English speaking country very much:

> P8: I find it very interesting to live in a totally different environment. Since I am already here, I feel obligated to know more about local people, their culture, their living style and their way of thinking so that I can live a better life while I am studying here.

When I ask whether he would like to make friends with local residents, he immediately gives me a positive answer. Based on his understanding, making friends with people who can

share with him things he does not know before is the best way to adapt to this new living environment. However, he does express his concern about his English proficiency level for making friends. He also mentions that he has not had many opportunities to meet local residents because he is now studying in this language program where students are from all over the world and are all non-native speakers of English.

> P8: All of us in this program are international students, and most of them are Chinese. I do not have many opportunities to meet local people, let alone make friends with them. It takes time for people to become friends, you know.

P8 tells me that he is now living with a homestay family (a local senior couple). Even though he emphasizes that they are both very kind people and help him a lot when he first came to Canada, they do not have much to talk about because of the big age difference. He also mentions that he does not want to bother them too much since they are already retired and enjoying their peaceful life.

As for reading in general, he describes himself as the type of boy who likes reading:

> P8: I know that people think boys do not read as much as girls. That is a misunderstanding. I like reading, but I am not a nerd, in fact I am pretty good at sports, especially basketball. Reading is a good habit that opens your mind to new ideas... but of course, I read mainly in Chinese.

P8 claims that he prefers to read in Chinese because it is easier to understand both literally and culturally. He admits that he does not read much in English except for academic purpose (class materials), because his major goal right now is pass ESL exams in this program so that he can start university life. Sometimes he would check online for local news in order to know what is going on in this country, because he thinks news are short, more real-life, and easier to get a

gist of.

According to P8, he is not good at tests, which is the reason that he has a lower score for IELTS test. However, he claims that great progress has been made ever since he came to Canada, because the authentic English speaking environment has provided him with more opportunities to practice:

> P8: I do not have to worry about how to pick the right answer from multiple-choice questions in reading test like I did in China because here in this program, our instructors encourage us to understand the main ideas of the reading materials instead of only certain information between lines. Also, I find authentic materials more interesting than reading materials created just for the purpose of exams in China. It makes me want to read more to know more about Canada.

Even though he considers passing exams as a crucial goal for his ESL learning, P8 exhibits strong desire to know more about local culture through reading other than just for academic purposes. Furthermore, P8 claims whether or not he chooses to stay in Canada will not change the fact that he is a Chinese. However, I notice that his identity is changing gradually along with his learning experiences. He tells me there is a great chance he may choose to stay in Canada in the future, because the more he knows about Canada, the more he likes staying here. Besides, P8 feels very comfortable living in a country with a smaller population and better natural environment.

Participant 21

As a girl who just had her 20-year-old birthday, P21 (Group B, IELTS Academic overall 6.0, reading 6.5) impresses me with her maturity, confidence and her extremely high level of self-discipline. It seems to me that excelsior is the most proper word to describe her. Highly

motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically, she exhibits excellent ability of planning her own future step by step:

> P21: I started to learn English from the first grade, and I realized that language learning was challenging and fun. You know, in an exam-oriented education system back in China, we focus more on test skills rather than practical reasons, so speaking and listening are never considered as important as reading and writing. Ever since I decided to study abroad at my seventh grade, I have been attending one-on-one oral English classes taught by English native speakers every week with the hope that when I go abroad, I will fit in better. I believe if you want to achieve something, you have to start as early as possible to be prepared.

P21 states that studying in the ESL program at this English Language Center is also part of her plan. Even though she has already been preparing for studying abroad, she felt that simulated learning situation in the oral English classes she attended to back in China may not be enough. She decided to stop trying to obtain overall score of 6.5 for IELTS test when she already achieved an overall band score of 6.0. According to P21, it would be a waste of time if she gave IELTS test a second try, because it is meaningless spending time on tests. Instead, she would rather choose to go through a program where she is able to actually live in this authentic English speaking country. She claims that "a better decision is more important." Therefore, after discussing with her parents as well as her teacher at that time, she is now studying in this ESL program with a conditional admission instead of trying to achieve 6.5 IELTS score and starting her university life immediately.

In her opinion, learning something just for passing exams is meaningless. However, when a good grade is necessary for a university degree, she will try her best. During the process of interview, I also notice that P21 is the only one among all seven interviewees who is still participating in extracurricular activities. The other participants have already given up due to

various reasons, such as too busy finishing homework, lack of confidence speaking with native

speakers, and so forth:

> P21: You have to go through that period when you are nervous talking to so many native speakers. If you do not try as many times as you can, you will never overcome your fear. I have a peer guide, and I tell her my concern. She is a very nice person who shares with me her own experiences when she first came to this country and gives me useful advice. We are now good friends and sometimes go out to eat, go shopping, and attend workshops or extracurricular activities together.

As far as I can see, P21's confidence and high-level of self-discipline are shown in a way

that she would like to take initiative rather than follow the mainstream. Even though she has not

started her university life yet, she seems to have already planned her future life very well.

As for reading, P21 admits that she is not as interested in reading in English as in Chinese.

According to her, at the very beginning when she has to look up to the dictionary many times for

all those terminologies, it kills the fun for reading itself. However, since she is making great

progress for her English proficiency level, this is not the situation any more. Other than academic

materials for this program, she has already been reading textbooks related to her undergraduate

study in advance (both Chinese version and English version), because "when you love what you

are going to learn, relevant reading materials can be both informative and fun."

P21 exhibits great interest in learning English language as well as integrating into the local

community. She does not perceive herself as someone who must stay in Canada for the rest of

her life or become a Canadian citizen, because wherever she is, she still sees herself as a Chinese.

However, the love for language learning has influenced her identity and increased her

willingness to stay in this English speaking country after obtaining her undergraduate degree in

the future. As quoted from her own words: "If living in Canada gives me an opportunity to learn

language in a more practical way, I would like to live here for as long as I can. Besides, I like the Canadian way of learning, which focuses more on students' individual needs rather than exam-oriented skills, so I would more like to integrate into the local community."

Participant 23

P23 is a 21-year-old girl who has been in Canada for almost one year. She is now at her second semester in this ESL program, and is hoping that she could pass all the exams at the end of this April so that she would actually start her undergraduate study at this university. With an IELTS academic overall band score of 5.5 as well as a 5.5 reading score, she is placed in Group A (Low Proficiency Level group). The reason that she chooses to pursue her undergraduate study abroad is, in her own words, "a little embarrassing":

> P23: I did not plan to study abroad at the very beginning. I was so frustrated because I did not perform well in the national College Entrance Examination. I felt so embarrassed that a lot of my classmates who were normally ranked after me in high school were about to enroll in better universities. I am not jealous of them, because I know they work hard for that and they deserve it. It is just not fair for me to bet my whole future on this one-time exam. I think everyone deserves a second chance, so I decide to study abroad.

She also mentions that if she could not enter a good university in an exam-oriented educational system, she would rather give study abroad a try. In her opinion, in a country like Canada, universities would more like to accept students who perform well all along instead of succeeding in a one-time exam. Besides, an undergraduate degree from this reputable university where she is going to pursue her undergraduate studies would be very helpful for her future career.

As I continue the interview, I notice that P23 exhibits little interest in staying in Canada after obtaining her undergraduate degree. It seems that she has a strong feeling of nationality, and she is very proud of being a Chinese.

> P23: Why should I stay in a foreign country for the rest of my life? It is not like decades ago when China was lagged behind by all these developed countries. Now our living standards are just as good as western countries. I would more prefer to live in my own country with my family, and where I feel more familiar and comfortable.

According to P23, the most apparent advantage of learning English in an authentic environment is that her oral English improves faster than ever, because she has to use it everywhere in daily life. Other than that, she claims that the learning approaches are not that different than before, in this case, meaning more attention has been paid to writing instead of reading:

> It is pretty apparent that reading accounts for a very small part of the course comparing to writing. We only have a once-a-month reading test, but we have more writing tests and are required to write essays all the time. The instructors teach us how to read business cases, but the purpose for doing so is to write case analyses. So eventually, it is all about how to write.

She tells me that at the very beginning, she was trying to make local friends to learn more about their culture. However, it did not go very well:

> I have two roommates whose parents came from India. I think they should be considered as local people because they were both born in Canada and grew up here. We chatted a lot when I first came to Canada, because we were all curious about each other. As time goes on, there is not much to talk about. Sometimes we find it hard to even understand why a joke is funny to them but not to me. I assume it is cultural differences.

Even so, P23 still shows great interest in learning more about Canadian culture. She feels that it is necessary to know more about Canada, because she will stay in this country for at least four years to obtain her undergraduate degree. Other than reading materials related mainly to business cases, she would also dedicate herself to Psychology course reading, because it is a

popular optional course for undergraduate students at university. She would like to work harder than before, because this second chance is important for her to prove that she can achieve more than a failed national College Entrance Examination. P23 does not prepare to truly integrate into the local community more than she has to, she feels more comfortable to go back to China where she possesses a sense of belonging. Her motivation to learn reading as well as learn ESL as a whole is solely due to her extrinsic academic compliance.

Participant 22

P22 (Group A, IELTS Academic overall band score 5.5, reading score 6.0) is a quiet girl who has been studying in this ESL program for eight months. Compared to the other participants, she is relatively introverted and possesses an apparent motivation of reading for extrinsically academic and test compliance. As a matter of fact, P22, the same as the previous participant (P23), admits that she is learning English only for career reasons:

> P22: Personally, I do not think learning English is particularly fascinating, but in the future I hope to help my parents with family business where English is necessary for communicating with the company's oversea partners. I applied for Bachelor of Management and Organizational Studies (BMOS) program and came to this authentic learning environment because this is where I can achieve my main goal. I mean, I do not know whether I will study abroad if English is not needed for my future career, it is hard to say. Now the priority for me is to learn English well and get my undergraduate degree.

On the one hand, P22 claims that learning English in an authentic environment is not based on her own interest, because if it is not for career purpose, she might not be interested in studying abroad where her family and friends are not around. On the other hand, she also perceives this learning experiences as beneficial to her, because she is able to know more about western

culture.

Other than this academic orientation for learning English, P22 claims her learning experience in Canada as a little frustrating. The main reason for this feeling is that she finds it is hard for her to integrate into the local community because of her introverted personality.

I guess it is because I am not confident. I feel extremely nervous when I talk to others in English. I will avoid speaking in English even in class. For me, it is terrifying. Besides, I feel more comfortable talking with Chinese students who share the same cultural background with me. Even when I try to make friends with local people, I find it hard for me to express myself in English. It is just too frustrating and making me not want to try again. That is why I do not attend extra-curricular activities on main campus any more.

Though P22 states that she likes to read in general, because it is a quiet activity, she feels like the sole purpose that she reads now is for academic and test compliance. The reason P22 is not interested in reading in English is due to difficult glossaries such as those for Psychology course. It takes her a long time to look up to the dictionary for all those words that after finishing reading academic materials, she does not feel like reading anything else but to relax herself by listening to the music she likes or going out for a walk. Since P22's reason for being in an authentic English speaking country in the first place is highly academic, she does not show any apparent interest in staying in Canada after undergraduate study. During the process of interview, she tells me that she is more willing to go back to China where all her family and friends are rather than stay in a foreign country where she feels nervous every time she speaks.

4.3.2 Part 2: Two Special Cases

While the previous part of the qualitative findings gives general summaries of five out of all seven participants, this part focuses on two special cases (P5 and P18) in which participants

exhibit strong distinctiveness among the others. Their self-perceived motivation toward ESL learning and their identity transformation are presented in much more detail according to each theme listed in Table 5.

Both of the two participants are from Group B (High Proficiency Level group), meaning their IELTS Academic reading scores are 6.5 or over. Participant 5 exhibits extremely high interest in the Canadian culture and possesses a strong determination of staying in this country for the rest of her life, because she feels Canada is where she belongs and where she could be herself. At this point, I have to admit that it did not come to my mind that by saying "be herself", she meant about her sexual orientation, which in her own words is "be attracted to girls instead of boys". As I continued the interview, I could sense that she was concerned about her privacy, and she did not want too many people to know about her sexual orientation, because she was not yet ready to let everyone know, at least not now. "I do not want to take any risk, you know. If one day I am ready, I prefer to tell my parents about it myself rather than let them know from other people. For now, just a few of my best friends know about it." I explained to her again that her personal information would never be revealed to anyone else other than the investigator myself. Even so, I could tell that she did not want to talk much about it, so I did not want to pose any pressure on her. On the contrary, though Participant 18 enjoys studying abroad itself, he exhibits no interest in staying in Canada and plans to go back to China as soon as he obtains his undergraduate degree.

The reason that I pick these two participants as special cases is that if I draw a line to demonstrate the extent to which all the participants differ in identity transformation (left being

non-transformed, right being completely transformed), all the previous five participants would be placed somewhere near the middle point. The reason is that even though transformed in identity to a certain extent in the process of learning in an authentic English speaking environment, the previous five participants do not exhibit dramatic change or zero change in identity transformation. However, P5 and P18 are two extremely different cases. On the one hand, P5 demonstrates an identity transformation that is close to the very right end of the line, which is almost completely transformed. On the other hand, P18 shows nearly no sign of identity transformation, meaning he should be placed close to the left starting point of the line.

Such great extent to which they differ in identity transformation draws my attention so that I decide to elaborate on these two cases in detail.

Views of Different English Learning Experiences

With the speculation that participants' different learning environments and experiences back in China and in Canada may have an influence on their potential identity construction and transformation, I decide to encourage all my participants to tell me how they feel about their previous English courses comparing to the current ones they have in Canada. Learning English in a formal language learning environment like China, students are mostly learning by instruction given in the classroom; while in Canada, students are able to learn in a natural learning environment where they are surrounded by fluent native speakers (Norton, 2000).

P5 is a 20-year-old girl who is holding a conditional admission to the university where this study took place, and she is in the program of Foods and Nutrition. She is at her second as well

as the last semester in the English Language Center based on her IELTS academic overall band score of 5.5 (reading score 6.5). She refers to her previous English learning experiences in China compared to current learning experiences in this ESL program as being "subject to" vs. being "subject of" (Norton, 2013, p.4), because the nature of exam-oriented education in China requires teacher-centered instruction, while the student-centered teaching approach in Canada focuses more on students' individual needs:

> P5: I came to Canada after high school, I do not know how university students learn English in China, maybe university professors give instruction in English and will not focus too much on test skills because all the students have already proved their ability by passing the national College Entrance Examination. High school English Teachers give instruction in Chinese, and most of the time, we just listen and take notes.

Even though P5 describes this kind of teaching in Chinese approach as all for question answering skills, she perceives it as necessary because otherwise it would be too difficult to explain all the terminologies in grammar course.

When I ask P5 about her learning experience in Canada, she admits she does feel more relaxed in class than she did back in China. Actually P5 seems to enjoy the teaching approach utilized by instructors at the English Language Center, because no notes taken seems to be necessary in class. The instructors encourage her to get the main idea of the reading materials and rephrase them in her own words instead of just answering multiple-choice questions. She tells me that this kind of learning environment enhances her confidence, because she has the feeling of being the subject of the course rather than being object to it.

P18, a 22-year-old boy who is also holding a conditional admission (BMOS program) to this university where this research took place, has basically the same English learning experiences in

high school back in China. The only difference is that, P18 has already finished his first year in college in China before he decided to drop out and apply for this university.

On the one hand, P18 claims that in China's high schools which are based on an exam-oriented education system, performance in exams is sometimes more important than practical abilities. Little attention is paid to not important aspects such as listening and speaking, because they do not count as much as reading and writing do. After failing mathematics in the national College Entrance Examination, he was enrolled in a "not so good" university. Even though P18 mentions that at universities, professors give instruction in English instead of in Chinese, he is still disappointed, because university students exhibit polar opposite attitudes toward this teaching approach. As he states, some of the students are reluctant to learn because they feel like the most important exam has already been finished. The disappointment that he experienced in his first year at university in China is the main reason that he dropped out and chose to apply for this university in Canada. P18 believes that studying abroad would be an opportunity for a brand-new start.

It is apparent that both of P5 and P18 are satisfied with their authentic learning environment and the fact that they have become the center of the class, which is extremely different from before.

> P18: The most apparent difference is that I get better opportunities to enhance my overall English proficiency, I mean not only writing and reading, but also listening and speaking. I assume that the best way of improving your language proficiency is to learn it in an authentic environment, because when you have to discuss everything in English, you will make progress without knowing it.

Furthermore, I notice that both P5 and P18 have mentioned that China's high schools

actually have oral English class which is taught by native English speakers. However, it is only once or twice a week for about one hour or two, which can be seen as insufficient for improving speaking proficiency. Though both of the participants describe oral English class as useless exam-wise, they treated it differently. P5 seems to be very disappointed that she could not enjoy the only chance of knowing more about western culture from the perspective of a native speaker:

> P5: I like oral English class, but I could not enjoy it because I do not want to be different from others. In high school, the only thing matters is test skills. No one cares about that one-hour chatting time, because oral English is not a part of national College Entrance Examination. Almost everyone is busy finishing their homework for other subjects or trying to relax themselves... no one is paying attention to the teacher or what she says. Jenny (the teacher) tries to organize class activity or group discussion, but almost no one really participates. Students would rather chat with each other in Chinese. I know they did not mean to be disrespectful, they were just too exhausted from other subjects to enjoy oral class.

It is apparent that P5 was caught in a dilemma in her oral English class back in China. On the one hand, she was eager to participate in class activities because of her interest in western culture. Even though she admits that she could gain access to almost all the information she needs online, she feels that her teacher would provide more authentic information from the perspective of a native speaker. On the other hand, she was not willing to act differently from her peers in any way, because she was afraid of drawing any unnecessary attention.

> P5: Like I said [before], I do not want to be different from others, like I am trying to please the teacher. I do it in a smart way (laugh). I talk to my teacher after class, and I tell her I want to know more about western culture. Jenny is a very nice lady and glad that I am eager to learn more. Sometimes we go out to eat together on weekends and talk a lot about what we are interested in. We become friends ever since. That is when I realize that I like western lifestyle... people live more of a free life and focus more on individual development. I guess that is an important reason I choose to study abroad and want to live here after that.

P5 tells me that Jenny has already been back to the US, but they are still keeping in touch

through emails. She is also very grateful that Jenny always encourages her to be herself and choose the way she wants to live.

In the process of my interview with P5, I can feel her carefulness when she chooses certain words, such as "different". I can sense her pressure about her sexual orientation being recognized by her peers when she was still a high school student back in China. However, as the conversation continues, she is feeling more and more relaxed. She even tells me that she actually feels less stressed living abroad where her family is not here and all her new friends do not know any of her family or relatives.

At this point, P18 does not exhibit any special feeling about his high school oral English class, because he did not realize oral English was important at that time. Like almost all his other classmates, he was too busy focusing on other subjects related to College Entrance Examination:

> P18: Like all my other classmates, I saw oral class as once-a-week relaxing hours. I was exhausted from all the other subjects, the only thing I wanted to do in that class was to get some rest. I would either do my homework or sleep a little bit. I hardly paid attention to what my teacher said during class. At that time, I never thought I would drop out of college to study abroad. I regret a little when I look back from now. I should have learned more about cultural differences which would be useful now.

Before studying abroad, P5 and P18 went through similar high school overall English learning process but treated oral English a little differently based on different personal goals at that time. For P5, learning in an authentic environment is what it takes to be a part of its community, especially when she sees herself as different from others; while P18, like most of the other participants, never considered studying abroad as the first choice.

Goals and Expectations

Goals and expectations are factors that motivate students to make great effort in the process of L2 learning. P5 came to Canada with a "this is where I belong" kind of attitude. All the effort she is making for this ESL program at the English Language Center and for her future undergraduate study in Foods and Nutrition is for "better integrating into the local community":

> P5: Like I said [before], I am always interested in western lifestyle and eager to know more. I feel like I could not be myself when I stay in China where my parents and all my relatives are. Sometimes it is very frustrating that you have to live by others' rules all the time. I am not saying that they are not treating me well, in fact, they love me very much, and I feel like they are overprotective. They always want to pave the way for me. But you know, I am already an adult, I have my own secrets and perspective of life, and I want to make my own decisions when it is related to something important.

Actually, according to P5, her "not being brave enough" to let her parents know the true herself is the main reason she decides to come to Canada, a country where she can live the life she wants. Based on her understanding, Canada is a country where there is less social pressure and no one would judge her by being who she is; while in China, a few people, such as her parents' or her grandparents' generation may still not be that open-minded.

> P5: In western countries, parents will let their children choose their own way of living, and they will be supportive whenever their children need them. I feel like I am strangled because my parents try to interfere in my life all the time by telling me what is right and what is wrong based on their own experience.

P5 claims that she has already made up her mind to stay where she can live a free life and make her own decisions. Since she is the only child in her family, her parents expect her to go back to China after obtaining her undergraduate degree or maybe after finishing her graduate study. She admits that she is not yet ready to tell her parents that she decides to stay in Canada.

P5 keeps emphasizing that she could not be herself in a community where her parents and relatives are present, and she wants to embrace a western kind of lifestyle when I ask her about the reason for her studying abroad. She is a special case, not only because she exhibits extremely great extent of identity transformation, but also that her motivation for learning English in general is different from other participants. It seems to me that her overall motivation for learning ESL is merely integrative rather than instrumental, and is more personal, which is to outreach her parents' control.

In order to integrate into the local community, P5 decides that the first step is to get the most out of her learning experience in this ESL program:

> I have to be realistic, you know. If I want to stay here, the first thing I have to do is to enhance my language proficiency. I am not saying I have to be the best in my class. I just want to learn as much as I can, and try my best to achieve more. Besides, it says on the university website that this program will help us with both communicative skills and cultural knowledge needed to live in this country. This is just what I need the most. I am not a greedy person, you know, I am not expecting to achieve exactly a native-speaker proficiency level, because it is not a realistic goal. I am just hoping to learn enough for me to survive here.

According to P5, academic performance is not her ultimate goal, rather she is more focusing on how to take advantage of ESL learning experience for her step-by-step plan.

However, P18 shows no interest in staying in Canada in the future. For him, cultural knowledge is clearly not as important as academic achievement. After experiencing the disappointment for his first year at "not a good college" back in China, P18 is determined to avoid being lazy and learning nothing:

> P18: You know, if I do not push myself hard when I am young, I will regret for the rest of my life. I am not planning to waste my time playing computer games like some of my former classmates in college. I have to work hard for my future career, I feel like learning abroad will offer me a chance of learning practical skills. Besides, all my high school good

friends are studying abroad now. I do not want to be lagged behind.

Based on P18's statement, I am wondering whether he perceives staying in China as being lagged behind by his peers. He immediately realizes that I misunderstand him, so he explains to me that he does not assume China's universities are not good enough for him. Rather, he feels frustrated about not being able to perform well in the national College Entrance Examination. Even though P18 admits that his friends studying abroad may have posed certain influence on him, it is not the main reason for him to make this decision. A brand-new start is the most important reason.

Furthermore, P18 claims that he chooses to study abroad mainly based on his own will. He hopes to learn something more practical as well as experience different cultures. Furthermore, one of the most important reasons for him to study in an English speaking country is that English as a global language is playing an increasingly important role in the modern world. Therefore, he believes that achieving a higher English proficiency level is crucial for his future career pursuit when he goes back to China after obtaining his undergraduate degree.

While P5 aims to achieve immersion into the local community, P18's goal of learning the target language is specifically academic and career related. However, both of the two participants are determined to improve themselves in terms of language proficiency before they entered this program.

Investment in Classroom

Both highly motivated to learn target language for different reasons, P5 and P18 exhibit

extremely different tendencies of investment in target language practices in classroom. P5 is an example of "a highly motivated language learner... have little investment in the language practices of a given classroom" (Norton, 2013, p.6). As a learner who is eager to improve her English language proficiency level, P5 finds her expectations of learning more about English in general and cultural differences not being consistent with neither the goals of this program nor the language practices promoted by instructors in the classroom.

P5 states that she thought this ESL program was intended to improve students' overall English proficiency and provide more information about local cultural and real-life survival skills. However, the course setting is not what she thought it would be.

Z: Could you give me an example?
P5: Sure. Taking reading course as an example, I am holding a conditional offer in Foods and Nutrition, but nine out of ten times, the reading materials are about business cases. I know most of the students in this ESL program are going to study in BMOS program, and I understand a course designed like this meets their needs. It is just that I feel like being left out of it because it has nothing to do with my future study, and it is not what I am interested in. I would expect the materials to be more general or about local history and culture.

As someone who is going to study in the program of Food and Nutrition, P5 feels a little left out in the courses that is mostly related to BMOS program. Furthermore, she claims that such situation does affect her desire to learn and her investment in class. Even though she would still finish all the reading materials and assignments because she needs practices to improve her language proficiency, she participates less and less in group discussion and other class activities because she has difficulty focusing on something that is not consistent with her major goal.

Since P5's main goal is to integrate into the local community, she is more willing to read for intrinsic reason which is based on her interest in Canadian history and culture. The discrepancy

between her expectation for this ESL program and the reality has great impact on her investment in classroom. Individual Mean report of P5 from MREQ (m=2.70) is consistent with her statement above, meaning she exhibits a much lower level of reading motivation than the average (average m= 2.91). Furthermore, based on my observation during the process of interview, P5 is definitely not "unmotivated", rather she is not "invested" in the language practices in classroom, because a learner's investment is co-constructed in his/her interaction with his/her peers, identities, learning environment, and so forth.

However, P18 exhibits extremely different investment tendency in the target language learning practices in classroom. Feeling frustrated about his previous college learning experiences has given him a clear goal, which is to take initiative for his own future. He is trying to make the most of this program in order to achieve a higher level of language proficiency, and is determined to learn something practical for his future career pursuit:

> P18: I am already 22, you know, I do not have time to waste in my life any more. I remember someone says that life is a battlefield, if you want to achieve something, you have to fight your best for it. I totally agree.

P18 describes this ESL program as very satisfying, because he can feel his English proficiency being improved every day. Since he did not cherish the opportunities for practicing oral English back in China, he felt extremely lack of confidence while he was speaking in English at the very beginning. He would avoid eye contact with the instructors because he was afraid that the instructors would ask him to answer questions in class.

> P18: But our instructors are very nice, they always encourage us to express ourselves, and they almost never interrupt me in the middle to correct me even though my sentences are full of grammatical mistakes. They will wait until I finish. I am feeling more and more confident every day, and I am even willing to participate in class discussions now, because my active

participation will be taken into account by instructors when they give marks. I think it is a good thing for everyone.

I am a little curious when I hear P18 saying that active participation in class activities would lead to a better grade, because I remember that P5 told me she felt a little upset the course setting was not as she thought, and she participated less than she should have done. I ask P18 whether he would think it is unfair to take active participation in class as one of the grading criteria, because some shy people may not be able to obtain a good mark for participation, and maybe they are shy for a reason.

P18's answer is negative, because he thinks participation counts as a crucial part of language learning, and he believes "no practice, no improvement". In his opinion, students who take initiative in their learning process win the good grade in a fair way.

Z: How about reading course? Is it mostly related to business cases? How do you feel about it?
P18: Most of them, yes. I think maybe it is because we are all holding conditional offers to BMOS program, so the course is designed to enhance our language proficiency level and prepare us for our future academic life.
Z: So you are satisfied with the reading course, right?
P18: Yes. I think it is very thoughtful. It is related to my future study, so I am willing to finish reading all the materials. To be honest, I do not read other than for academic purpose, because I do not think it is necessary. Besides, reading in English is too hard, because there are too many words to look up to the dictionary. It is such a waste of time. I would rather watch some Chinese TV shows or read something in Chinese.

It is apparent that P18 is totally satisfied with the course design of this ESL program, and he is becoming increasingly active in class. He claims his reading motivation to be strictly academic. He is willing to finish all the readings, because they are BMOS related. Since this program meets P18's extrinsic motivation of academic compliance, his higher level of reading motivation (m= 3.11) compared to P5 and investment to the target language can be well explained.

Interaction with Target Community, Extracurricular Activities

Norton (2000) points out that "interaction between target language speakers and language learners is most productive when both parties work actively to achieve understanding" (p.70). That is to say, learning L2 in an authentic environment could be fairly beneficial if learners are willing to make the most of it. As a language learner myself, I understand the importance of engaging in local social activities or extracurricular activities such as university workshops.

Unfortunately, both of two participants claim they never heard any workshop related to reading or reading strategies for them. I also notice on the university website that the only reading related workshop is the annually held Reading Strategies for Graduate Students workshop, which hardly seems to appeal to students at the English Language Center. Therefore, the interviews of this part relating to workshops are more in general rather than just for reading.

For P5, since her major goal of studying abroad is to live here ever since, she immediately gives me a positive answer when I ask her about extracurricular activities. In fact, P5 has already been adapting to local life. According to her description, she is really enjoying some of those activities because she could have access to know more about Canada. For example, she decides to attend the main campus activity where international students would be assigned with peer guides who would help them with all kinds of academic or everyday life problems.

It seems to me that P5 has been blending into the local community very well. She also mentions that she was trying to make friends with her roommate as well, even though she did not succeed based on the fact that her roommate is a very shy person.

> P5: I choose to live in university residence building so that I will have the chance to meet
> more local students of my age, but it did not go well when I tried to make friends with my

roommate. She is a first year undergraduate student in a program related to music, a local girl from Windsor. She is a very quiet girl who does not talk much. I used to invite her to have dinner together at school building cafeteria or local restaurant maybe, but she never went. I am sure she is not refusing me because I am an international student or something like that. She is just a shy and doing-everything-alone kind of person. I almost never saw her hanging out with any other people. It has been almost eight months since we are living in the same room, only once or twice that she had a friend come over to visit her. I really hoped we could chat more and maybe be friends. However, I could not force a shy person to be talky, right? So I just let it go.

It is easy to see that P5 is a person who is willing to take initiative for achieving her goals.

She does not struggle for too long when she realizes the current situation is not as she expected,

instead, she would more like to put in effort and seize every possible opportunity in order to

accomplish her goals.

P18 also managed to make friends with other students in and out of classroom. But unlike P5,

his friends are all Chinese students.

P18: I am already overwhelmed with my homework, you know, essays, readings. I do not have the energy to attend all those workshops. It's not my priority. My goal is to be well prepared for my undergraduate study. Besides, I am not planning to stay in Canada after graduating from this university, so I prefer to focus on my academic achievement rather than social life. It is easier to be friends with people who speak the same language and share the same cultural background with me. I have already had a heavy workload in classroom, and I do not want to burden myself more. Besides, I am not confident about my oral English. Speaking in classroom is one thing, because instructors are meant to help us improve English proficiency, they are patient, because I'm their student. However, attending workshops or other extracurricular activities is another thing. People in the workshops are not my instructors, they may not be as patient.
Z: So you have not attended any workshop or tried to make friends with people who are not Chinese?
P18: Not yet, no. I just do not think it is necessary for now. Maybe I will have time to attend workshops after I pass all the exams and start my undergraduate life.

I did not expect to find the extend to what P5 and P18 differ when it is related to interaction

with target community and extracurricular activities. It is apparent that P5 does not struggle as

much as P18 does in terms of workload in this ESL program. Furthermore, with a strong desire

to integrate into the local community, P5 exhibits a much more positive attitude outside the classroom than inside it, because classroom activities do not completely meet her needs. P18, however, who is strictly motivated by academic reasons feels overwhelmed by classroom activities and workload already. Besides, the fact that P18 is not planning to stay in Canada in the future also has a great impact on his decision of not participating into extracurricular activities.

Self-Perceived Identity

The fact that identity is non-unitary and may even be contradictory within a single individual helps me understand the participants' struggle of identifying themselves with the local community as well as the possible identity transformation they are experiencing while studying in this ESL program at the English Language Center.

Even though P5 declared she was ready to embrace the Canadian lifestyle before she actually came here and is doing that all along her first four-month being in this program, sometimes her identity as a Chinese is still present in her to a certain extent. P5 admits that even she is trying her best to adjust to local life, she still finds it is difficult to fully blend in:

> P5: There is cultural difference that cannot be erased easily because after all, I did not grow up here. It takes time for me to understand the way they think. Even though they treat me nicely enough to be friends with me, it is still mentality differences between us when we do things. Sometimes I find it difficult to understand their jokes, not all of them, some of them. Maybe I push myself too hard, after all I have only been here for several months. But sometimes it is just frustrating, you know. Sometimes I even wonder, if I told my parents about my special situation, and if they could accept who I am, would I still insist on staying here for the rest of my life? But, on the other hand, even if my parents support me unconditionally because I am their daughter no matter what, how about others? I know that more and more people start to accept people like me, but still, the mainstream has not yet. It is terrifying for me to think about living in a country where many people think it is abnormal

for being who I am.

It is apparent that on the one hand, P5 is concerned about whether she could fully integrate into the local community, because her not-growing-up-here situation may lead to difficulty neutralizing cultural differences. On the other hand, she feels that the only way for her to be herself and live a comfortable life due to her sexual orientation "problem" leaves her no choice but to stay in a country like Canada, a country where people are more likely to accept diversity. P5 possesses a strong feeling that she could be more accepted in Canada than in China. As far as I can see during the interview, even though P5 is experiencing a great extent of identity transformation, she is also experiencing dual identities in the process of identity transformation. P5 considers herself as someone who cannot be herself in China and is eager to be part of the local community, because she is different from the mainstream in her own country, yet she also finds it difficult to achieve full integration because "I am from China, that's where I grew up".

Even though she claims that she would never forget the fact that she is from China, she has already been making every effort she could in order to integrate into the local community, which comparing to other participants should be seen as experiencing an extremely great extent of identity transformation.

As I continue the interview with P18, I notice that on some level he tries to maintain his identity as a Chinese ever since he came to Canada:

> P18: As I said before, I do not think it is necessary for me to try to blend in the local community because I am not planning to stay here after I graduate, so I choose not to live in school residence building. I rented a room in a house before I came here on a website for Chinese who live in Canada. It is easier for an international student who comes to a foreign country for the first time because all the information is in Chinese, and of course the rent is lower.

It seems to me that P18 never struggles to try and blend into the local community, rather, he would feel more comfortable living and making friends with people who share the same cultural background as he does. P18 never even bothers to consider living in the school residence, because according to him, that will all be unnecessary. His main goal is to learn as much as he can from class and go back to the country where he belongs. He would live in a house where all tenants are Chinese rather than take the risk of trying to get along with local roommates. As quoted from his own words: "Since there are cultural differences for sure, I guess it will not be easy for people from different cultural backgrounds to live together. I do not want anything unpleasant to happen". After all, he is in Canada for academic purpose.

However, with a goal like P18's, it does not necessarily mean he refuses to make friends with people other than Chinese. It is true P18 is not trying to blend in, but if there is an opportunity for him to make friends with any classmate in a proper situation, he is more than happy to do that. He just does not believe making friends on purpose.

When I ask whether they want to stay in Canada after obtaining undergraduate degree, the other five participants do not give me a direct answer of completely positive or negative. However, that it not the case for P5 and P18. P5 exhibits a clear willingness of staying in Canada, while P5 gives me a completely negative answer.

> Z: And it never occurs to you that you may want to stay in Canada after obtaining undergraduate degree?
> P18: Not really. My parents want me to stay, though, you know, to become permanent resident, something like that. I think they have some sort of misunderstanding. Such as western developed countries are definitely better than developing countries like China in such aspects like the level of people's living standard, environment and so on. With all due respect, I have to say that I respectfully disagree. For my four-months living here, I have to

admit this is a quiet city with good educational system and a good natural environment where you could live a peaceful life. There are good university, trees everywhere... but it does not mean I have to love staying here. It is just too slow-paced for someone like me. I prefer to keep myself busy learning new things when I am young, and pursue a challenging career through which I can improve myself all the time. Besides, China is developing much faster on a daily basis, I do not think cosmopolitan cities like Beijing and Shanghai are not as good as similar cities in Canada. I prefer to go back, because I want to make contribution to my own country through what I have learned and be closer to my family and friends.

As a matter of fact, having been living in the Chinese community is an important factor that maintains P18's identity as a Chinese the whole time. He also mentions that he is having a hard time adapting to local food, and he likes authentic Chinese food, not Canadian Chinese food. It is not by chance that this happens, it is part of P18's "plan" for ESL program in which he has to focus on academic compliance.

This chapter of the thesis was divided into two sections based on the two kinds of data collected for this study -- quantitative questionnaire and qualitative semi-structured interviews. In the first section, the quantitative data analysis illustrated the factors that motivated Chinese ESL students to read, and which one among the five factors motivated them the most. Furthermore, a comparison of Group A (Lower Proficiency Level group) and Group B (Higher Proficiency Level group) was conducted in order to find out which group possessed a higher level of motivation toward reading in English.

The second section, focusing on the qualitative data collected from seven individual semi-structured interviews, was presented by two parts. In the first part, general presentations were given on five out of seven participants' learning experiences. Participants' self-identified motivations toward reading and learning English in general as well as identity transformation they may have experienced in the process of pursuing their study in this program. In the second

part, two of the seven interview participants who exhibited contrasting characteristics in terms of their perception of identity compared to the others were depicted in much more detail based on their strong distinctiveness.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The previous chapter presents findings through analyzing both quantitative data and qualitative data. In the last chapter of this thesis, I draw conclusions based on the findings relevant to the research questions. Then implications and limitations of this study are discussed. Finally, recommendations for future research are provided based on this study.

5.1 Conclusions

Are Chinese ESL students with different reading proficiency levels motivated differently?

As I mentioned in the literature review, even though research findings are not always consistent about the positive relationship between high level of motivation and learners' achievement, a widely accepted assumption is that learners who are highly motivated will generate positive attitudes toward reading and thus have higher achievement in reading comprehension (Rubin& Opitz, 2007; Kush, Watkins, Marley & Brookhart, 2005, Gardner, 1985).

At this point, I have to reiterate that what drives me to pursue this study is to find out whether the assumption of learning motivation level is positively related to language learning achievement is still true when it is reversed? That is to say, whether learners with higher reading proficiency level before entering this ESL program will generate a higher level of reading motivation than those with a lower level of reading proficiency?

Based on my previous observation while I was being a part-time IELTS tutor in Canada, most of the Chinese ESL students with different reading proficiency levels were highly motivated when they were learning in an authentic English speaking environment, which means there may not be a significant difference in reading motivation levels among learners with different proficiency levels.

However, the Chi-Square test results obtained from this study reject my previous assumption. According to the statistical report of Chi-Square test results demonstrated in Table 2, conclusion could be made that significant difference does exist between Group A and Group B about their answers in the MREQ, meaning participants with different reading proficiency levels do exhibit different motivational tendencies for reading.

In order to further examine which group generated higher level reading motivation, all reading motivation factors were analyzed by comparing means. The results from Table 4 indicate that participants' reading motivation levels are positively correlated to their previous reading proficiency levels. That is to say, participants with a higher level of reading proficiency before entering this program are more likely to generate higher level of reading motivation.

The quantitative findings in this study are in accordance with Dörnyei's (2001) statement, that there may be a causative relationship between motivation and L2 achievement. As such, successful L2 learners are more likely to possess higher level of motivation, because learners with higher language proficiency levels are more likely to develop motivational intensity. Furthermore, participants expressed the view that they are more satisfied with Canada's education system which focuses more on students' individual needs when compared to China's

exam-oriented education system which only focuses on test skills.

What is the most important factor that affects the reading motivation of Chinese ESL students with different reading proficiency levels?

According to Komiyama (2013), who developed the MREQ in the first place by revising the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire created by Wang and Guthrie (2004), Intrinsic Motivation plays the most important role in characterizing L2 reading motivation because it accounts for more than 50% of the variance explained by the five factors altogether. However, the means report in this study shows different results than Komiyama's (2013) finding. For the Chinese ESL students who participate in this study, whether from Group A or B, Factor 3 (Extrinsic Academic Compliance) is the biggest motivator for reading in English. This means for most of the Chinese students in this ESL program, the most important goal for them to read is for academic purposes. Since the only way for those students to obtain full admission to this university is to pass all the exams at the end of this ESL program, it is easy to understand why participants rank Academic Compliance as the most important factor that motivates them to read.

I understand that academic purpose is considered as more important than other factors for students whose only goal currently is to accomplish this ESL program successfully. However, what makes me feel confused is that in this study, none of the seven participants (no matter from Group A or B) who participate in the semi-structured interviews shows any interest in reading in English particularly, though most of them claim that they like reading in general. In addition, Factor 1, which is considered by Komiyama (2013) as playing the largest role in reading

motivation is actually perceived by low-proficiency participants as of the least importance compared to academic goal.

How is it that the most crucial reading motivator in one study becomes the least important factor in another? As I continue each interview, I notice that none of the participants considers reading as a factor that would have any impact on their everyday life for now. Therefore, based on learners' own judgment, they would prefer to spend more time on practical skills such as speaking and listening which have been neglected in the context of EFL learning in China.

What are their self-identified motivations and how the process of learning ESL in an authentic English speaking environment affects Chinese ESL students' identity?

The findings in this study further suggest that none of the participants shows any personal attachment to reading in English itself during the interviews. According to them, authentic reading materials are not as interesting as those in Chinese due to cultural differences, and reading in English is more for academic reasons than for fun. All the participants in this study tend to see reading in English as course assignments rather than an enjoyable activity, which means their self-perceived reading motivations are strictly related to academic reasons.

Furthermore, it appears that participants do not perceive reading as of special importance for their ESL learning, rather, they prefer to focus more on the improvement that they have or have not achieved in enhancing their listening and speaking. It seems to the participants that advantages brought by learning ESL in an authentic English speaking environment are more related to student-centered learning experiences.

As Norton (2013) states, identity is a complex concept that is "socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing over time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways within a single individual" (p.2). In this study, five out of the seven participants who participated in the semi-structured interviews exhibit a slight transformation of their desire to identify themselves with the native speakers of English, meaning learning in an authentic English speaking environment has to a certain degree had an effect on their identity construction. However, P5 and P18 demonstrate different results. For instance, P5 appears to be experiencing dual identities. On the one hand, she exhibits an extremely great extent of identity transformation because of her strong will of integrating into the local community and be part of it in the future. On the other hand, she is worried about not being able to achieve full integration due to cultural differences caused by not-grew-up in Canada. In the case of P18, his identity could be seen as not being changed at all. In fact, he manages to maintain his "native" identity on purpose. The fact that P18 has a clear goal of going back to China as soon as he obtains his undergraduate degree leads him to think it is unnecessary for him to blend in.

Furthermore, Norton (2013) also argues that a learner's identity construction and transformation should be understood in relation to his/her past, present and future. A learner's changing identity construction and motivational tendencies are not only based on his/her relation with the larger social world, but also they are related to his/her own expectation for the future, adaption to the present, and experiences from the past.

In this study, P5 is more motivated by her future pursuit, that is to live in a country where she could be herself, while P18 is driven by his past failure in order to earn himself a brand-new

start when he goes back to China. The rest of the participants are investing in the present in order to maximize their access to the target language resources. Therefore, each language learner's identity transformation varies based on individual differences, and changes through time and space, because it is difficult for a learner to either embrace a whole new identity or retain his/her native identity completely.

5.2 Implications

First of all, this study shows that previous English reading proficiency levels of Chinese students in this ESL program are positively correlated to their reading motivation levels, which rejects my assumption that all ESL learners would be highly motivated despite their previous English reading proficiency levels. That is to say, learning in an authentic English speaking environment does not have an apparent effect on students' motivation or investment in reading specifically.

As Norton stated (2010): "...learners invest in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital" (p.3). At this point, we would assume that learning in an authentic environment where learners have better access to the target language will shape learners with different proficiency levels all into highly motivated language learners. However, based on this study, it is important for researchers and instructors who possess the same assumption as I did to notice that this is not necessarily true. Authentic learning

environment should not be considered as a positive effect at all time, other factors should be taken into consideration as well. Learning in an authentic environment where learners are surrounded by native speakers may increase their pressure and lead to lack of confidence, especially for learners with a relatively lower proficiency.

Secondly, different from Komiyama's (2013) research results, extrinsic motivation for reading in English is not perceived by Chinese ESL students as a crucial factor that motivates them to read in this study. That is to say, language learners' motivation as well as their investment are related to their self-perceived importance of each aspect of the target language (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Learners' investment can be highly selective because different aspects of the target language may have different values based on their previous learning experiences. As in this case, the Chinese students value listening and speaking more than reading and writing because the exam-oriented education system in China focuses more on reading and writing abilities, thus students perceive the other two aspects as more important and should be invested more.

Finally, identity construction and transformation which are complex and sometimes contradictory have been exhibited by interview participants differently. Their desires of identifying themselves with the local community are based on their different living and learning experiences as well as their passion for the local culture. In most of the cases, learners may be affected by their positive experiences, and may generate interest in blending in, but none of them actually sees learning in an authentic environment as changing their identities into new ones in terms of detachment from their native identities as Chinese. Language learners are more likely to

consider learning in an authentic English speaking environment as an opportunity to achieve personal development which is hard to fulfill under a teacher-centered and exam-oriented education system before. As in the two special cases, participants' identity transformations which differ to a great extent are closely related to their personal goals for this ESL program or for future undergraduate studies. Furthermore, as for levels of proficiency, it is difficult to say to what extent previous language proficiency level is actually related to participants' identity transformation due to the fact all the participants are living in Canada less than twelve months, which is a relatively short time for identity transformation to reveal itself in an obvious way.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

Certainly there are several factors that should be taken into consideration as limitations as far as this study is concerned. First of all, what should be noted is only 33 out of 37 participants finished the questionnaires in the end, meaning the sample size is relatively small; and all the participants were selected from the same program in the same university. Even though the qualitative interviews are supplementary to the quantitative data, the generalization and representativeness are still limited. Secondly, because the duration of my study is only four weeks, it is necessary to point out the issue of time frame. The findings that are generated from both questionnaires and interviews can only be interpreted within a certain period of time and context in which they took place, however, affective factors that have an influence on one's identity as described by Norton (2013) are "...frequently socially constructed in inequitable

relations of power, changing across time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways within a single individual" (p. 2). Therefore, the shifting nature of one's identity during L2 learning has limited my capacity to fully present its intricacies. In addition, certain variables should be considered as well. As stated by Cohen et al. (2011), "the researcher has to be sensitive to the context, the cultures, the participants, the consequences of the research on a range of parties, the powerless, the powerful, people's agendas and suchlike" (p. 165). Therefore, it should be noticed that asking participants to describe their perceptions toward reading or the reading course itself may cause their concern about their privacy and unconscious pressure to fit themselves into certain pre-established modes of thoughts.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Further investigations need to be carried out in ESL reading. First, more participants should be included in future studies to reveal the motivational tendencies of ESL learners with different previous reading proficiency levels. Secondly, studies should be conducted to determine the possible identity transformation that may have an impact on participants' L2 learning achievement. Finally, these investigations should be done not only on the level of teaching and learning, but also on the level of curriculum designs. Besides, cultural context and factors should also be included in future research.

Furthermore, research on motivation specifically in different aspects of language learning should be conducted respectively, not only in the aspect of reading or English language as a

whole, because ESL learners from different cultural backgrounds may be motivated differently and exhibit selective investment tendencies based on their different previous learning experiences.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval Notice

Research Ethics

██████████████████

████████████ on-Medical Research Ethics Board
NMREB Delegated Initial Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: ███████████
Department & Institution: ████████████

NMREB File Number: ██████
Study Title: Motivation, Identity and L2 Reading: Perceptions of University ESL Students

NMREB Initial Approval Date: March 18, 2016
NMREB Expiry Date: March 18, 2017

Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
████████████	Received March 10, 2016	
Letter of Information & Consent		2016/03/09
Instruments		2016/01/22
Instruments		2016/01/22

███ has reviewed and approved the above named study, as of the NMREB Initial Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

████████████ NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Ethics Officer, ████████████████████ B Chair or delegated board member

Ethics Officer to Contact for Further Information: ██████████████████████████

This is an official document. Please retain a copy for your files.

Appendix B: Letter of Information

Project Title: Motivation, Identity and L2 Reading: Perceptions of Chinese ESL Students in Canada

Principal Investigator: ████████████████████████████████

Student Investigator: ████████████████████████████████

Letter of Information

1. **Invitation to Participate**

You are invited to participate in a research project exploring motivation tendencies and potential identity issues of ESL students with different reading proficiency levels because of your identity as international students who are studying in Canada.

2. **Purpose of the Letter**

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information required for you to make an informed decision regarding participation in this study.

3. **Purpose of this Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of motivation and identity on ESL students' L2 reading and to find out how motivational tendencies and language identity affect ESL students with different reading proficiency levels. It is hoped this study will contribute to the understanding of the reading motivational tendencies and the possible identity issues of ESL students with different reading proficiency levels.

4. **Inclusion Criteria**

The criteria for participating in this study are:

- Be a Chinese international ESL student who are studying in ████████ ██ Canada.

- Be available for completing a questionnaire and an interview at a mutually convenient location, date and time.

- Consent to participate.

5. Study Procedures

The anticipated number of participants in this study is 40. If you agree to participate, all of you will be asked to complete a questionnaire and 10 of you (randomly chosen) will be asked to take part in an interview. You can complete the questionnaire on your own time after school, and the interview will be arranged in the ████████████ building depending on your choice of specific place and time. Furthermore, if you agree to participate and sign the consent form, you will be asked to write down your e-mail address so that the researcher can contact you to pick up the questionnaire and arrange the interview. The questionnaire is anticipated to require no more than 30 minutes, and the interview is anticipated to take you 40 to 60 minutes. However, the specific length of the time will depend on the progress of our communication, and 60 minutes is the maximum. The interviews will be conducted in Chinese, and the data will be translated into English afterwards by ████████ All the interviews will be audio-recorded for data collection and analysis. You can refuse to allow our communication to be audio-recorded, and ████████ will transcribe the main content of your response.

6. Possible Risks and Harms

Risks and harms: Private information of participants will be required as data in this research

study, such as their names, learning experience, daily experience and personal opinions. The private information may cause participants' fear of privacy exposure. Furthermore, certain interview questions regarding to learning experience might cause distress after participating.

Followed is a list of relevant support services that participants could access if they feel distressed after participation:

███████████████████████████████

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██████████████

██████████████████████████████████████

███████████

7. Possible Benefits

Benefits: This research study may help the investigators gain better understanding of the motivational tendency differences and potential identity issues of ESL students who are studying in English speaking countries. Furthermore, ESL students with different reading proficiency levels may benefit from this study because they can improve their learning habits and solve identity issues that affect their learning achievement.

8. Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your future academic status or employment.

9. Confidentiality

Your responses, as well as your participation or non-participation will be kept confidential. All data collected will remain accessible only to the investigators of this study. There is no way for any agencies, groups and persons to access to your personal information and responses. If the results are published, your name and program will not be used. If you choose to withdraw from this study, your data will be removed and destroyed from our database. Representatives of ██ ████████████████████████████████████ may require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research.

10. Contacts for Further Information

If you require any further information regarding this research project or your participation in the study you may contact:

██████████████████████████████████

████████████████████

  If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact ████████████████████████████████████

11. Publication

If the results of the study are published, your name will not be used. If you would like to receive a copy of any potential study results, please contact:

████████████████████

████████████████████

12. Consent

Written Consent Form is included with this letter. If you agree to participate in this study, please

sign it and write down your e-mail address so that the researcher can contact you to pick up the

questionnaire and arrange the interview.

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Consent Form

Project Title: Motivation, Identity and L2 Reading: Perceptions of Chinese ESL Students in Canada

Principal Investigator: ███████████████████████

Student Investigator: ███████████████████████

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate in the interview. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Date: _____

Person Obtaining Informed Consent: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Motivation for Reading in English Questionnaire (MREQ)

1. I like reading in English to learn something new about people and things that interest me.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

2. I like reading a lot of interesting things in English.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

3. I feel happy when I read about something interesting in English.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

4. When the topic is interesting, I am willing to read difficult English materials.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

5. It's fun for me to read about something I like in English.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

6. It is hard for me to stop reading in English when the topic is interesting.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

7. I like reading about new things in English.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

8. I enjoy reading when I learn complex ideas from English materials.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

9. I like it when the topic of an English reading makes me think a little more.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

10. I like challenging myself while reading in English.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

11. I enjoy reading good, long stories in English.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

12. I like hard, challenging English readings.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

13. When an assignment is interesting, I can read difficult English materials more easily.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

14. When I am reading about an interesting topic in English, I sometimes lose track of time.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

15. When my teacher or friends tell me something interesting, I might read more about it in English.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

16. I enjoy reading in English to learn what is going on in the Canada and in the world.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

17. I am willing to work hard to read better than my friends in English.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

18. I like being the only student who knows an answer about something we read in English.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

19. I like my teacher to say that I read well in English.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

20. When I complete English reading assignments for class, I try to get more answers correct

than my classmates.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

21. When I read in English, I like to finish my reading assignments before other students.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

22. I like my friends to tell me that I am a good English reader.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

23. I want to be the best at reading in English.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

24. When some classmates read English better than me, I want to read more English materials.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

25. I like it when my teacher asks me to read English aloud in class.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

26. I like to get positive comments about my English reading.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

27. When I read in English, I often think about how well I read compared to others.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

28. I practice reading in English because I feel good when I answer teachers' questions correctly

in class.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

29. I feel happy when my friends ask me for help with their English reading assignments.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

30. Finishing English reading assignments on time is very important for me.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

31. I usually try to finish my English reading assignments on time.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

32. It is important for me to receive a good grade in my English reading course.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

33. I do my English reading assignments exactly as the teacher tells me to do them.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

34. I look forward to finding out my grades in English

reading.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

35. I want to read in English to improve my grades.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

36. I work harder on English reading assignments when they are graded.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

37. I try to read in English because I need a good score on tests like TOEFL, Michigan, IELTS,

etc.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

38. I try to read in English because I like seeing my reading score improve on tests like TOEFL,

Michigan, IELTS, etc.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

39. I practice reading in English because I want a higher reading score than my friends and classmates on tests like TOEFL, Michigan, IELTS, etc.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

40. I practice reading in English because I need to do well in my future classes.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

41. I enjoy telling my friends about the things I read in English materials.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

42. My friends and I like to share what we read in English.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

43. I like talking with my friends about what I read in English.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

44. I like joining class discussions about what I read in English.

①A lot like me ②A little like me ③A little different from me ④Very different from me

Appendix D: Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your experience with English learning in general before you came to Canada.

2. Tell me about the reason that you chose to further your study abroad. Is it out of your won willingness or is it out of other reasons, such as parents' suggestion/pressure, career needs, or for immigration to Canada?

3. Do you want to make friends with local people inside or outside class? Why?

4. Do you ever feel that it was hard for you to integrate with local communities or it was hard for you to deal with the culture differences here in Canada? If so, how? And what reason(s) do you think it is/they are? If not, why?

5. Do you like reading in general? Why?

6. Do you like reading in English? Why?

7. Do you read for fun or just for academic reasons?

8. Do you read in English other than academic materials after class? Why?

9. Do you always finish the readings for class every time or do you choose not to read them and just listen to the teachers' instruction in class?

10. Have you ever encountered any difficulties in reading in English? If so, please describe them, such as vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, etc.

11. Do you think your recent reading scores in class have something to do with your English proficiency level before you came to Canada?

12. What do you think is/are the reason(s) that you are making progress or being lagged further behind in reading in English here in this program?

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Binru Zhao

**Post-secondary   Heilongjiang University
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Degrees:**   2004-2008 B.A.

                       Heilongjiang University
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                       College French Test (Band 4)
                       2007

                       Heilongjiang University
                       Test for English Majors (Band 8, highest level)
                       2008

**Related Work   Assistant English Teacher
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                       English Teacher
                       Heilongjiang Institute of Engineering
                       2012-2013

                       IELTS Teacher
                       Harbin Global IELTS School
                       2013-2014