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A Crosslinguistic/Cultural Perspective of Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language in Canadian Universities

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A CROSS-LINGUISTIC/CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE OF LEARNING CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT AND KEY WORDS

This study examines adult student learning of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) in a Canadian university context, focusing in particular on how students' diverse prior language(s) and experiences influence their CFL learning and how student motivation develops. It aims at gaining a better understanding of the nature of adult CFL learning; at yielding pedagogic implications and raising questions for further research. Framed by sociocultural theory and cognitive linguistic perspectives, the research was guided by the following questions: 1) What elements of Chinese as a foreign language challenge student learning? 2) How do students' prior language(s) and language learning experience influence their CFL learning? 3) How does student motivation influence CFL learning and develop in CFL study? This is a qualitative multicase study with university students in Canada studying Chinese as a foreign language. Multiple data collection methods were employed such as survey, interviews, observation, and review of students' written work. This study yielded the following pedagogic and research implications:

The pedagogical implications for CFL curriculum development and pedagogical improvement point to: 1) the importance of pedagogic knowledge in CFL instruction; 2) the need to attune curriculum and syllabus to students' learning characteristics, needs, interests, and expectations; 3) the need for commitment to prompt feedback on students' assignments; 4) the importance of identifying opportunities for experiential learning to stimulate student motivation; and 5) the importance of offering students socio-psychological support in addition to academic support; as well as 6) encouraging peer collaboration. Specific to CFL instruction, the study indicates the need to pay particular attention to the teaching of Chinese tones and characters.

The implications for further research can be focused on the inquiries into: 1) comparison of the errors by students from different language backgrounds (e.g. Oriental languages and European languages) to capture the learning characteristics of CFL learning; 2) CFL learner internal and external conditions for transfer of prior knowledge; 3) learning motivation: the influence of different contexts on motivational intensity (e.g. CFL learning in China and Canada); or the influence of different motivational orientations on students' achievement.

Key Words: CFL learning, prior language, error analysis, cross-linguistic/cultural influence, language transfer, interlanguage, multilingual learning, CFL learning motivation.

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CHAPER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Overview

In this introductory chapter, I first introduce the background to the research, including the literature background in the area of second language pedagogy as well as pedagogical development of Mandarin Chinese in North America; the current situation of Chinese language teaching and learning in university Chinese language programs in Canada; and my personal experience as the investigator teaching Chinese as a foreign language, which initiated this study. Then, I present the rationale for the research and the research questions as well as the parameters of this study followed by a brief discussion of culture learning in learning a second/foreign language. Finally I briefly introduce the rest of the chapters.

1.1 Background to the Research

The status of a language seems inevitably influenced by historical, social, as well as political forces. With the increasing economic and political development and global influence of China, Mandarin Chinese as a second/foreign language has been brought to the attention of the North Americans. There is reportedly a growing demand for learning Chinese among university students in North America (Wu, 2010). This prompts the pressing need for research on the nature of adult learners learning Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) in Canadian universities. In Canada, although CFL student enrolment at the universities is increasing rapidly, research on adult CFL learning for university students and CFL pedagogical development has been limited. My research project is designed as a way to bridge this gap.

A piece of research is inevitably associated with the investigator's background and experience, and reflects in some way his/her inner mind as well as academic background. It was my experience

teaching Chinese as a foreign language that initiated this research project. When teaching international students Chinese in China, I invested a lot of efforts in improving teaching techniques, helping students solve their problems in their studies, and tried to make the class learner-centered. Following my observations, intuition and students' feedback on my teaching, I tried to adjust my teaching methods to suit students' interests and meet their expectations. Therefore, teaching has been a valuable learning experience for me and at the same time offered me opportunities to observe students' problems and their learning characteristics in the language classroom.

Based on my observations, I found students of Japanese origin had different problems from those of European language backgrounds, such as French, English, and Russian, particularly when learning Chinese tones and characters. The pronunciation of most Japanese students of the Chinese phonemes and the tones was clearly much closer to that of native speakers, compared to English, French, and Russian students, who had had the same amount of training, or were otherwise at the same proficiency level. For other Japanese students, they did have problems with Chinese tones, but might commit different errors compared with their peers from European language backgrounds. Japanese students were obviously more capable of learning Chinese characters than their European classmates in terms of handwriting or memorization. Following my intuition, I took it for granted that the students' L1 must have exerted influences on their learning of Chinese. I also observed that teaching methods played an important role in student learning motivation although a teacher could never suit every student's interest. Well-structured quality classroom instruction did make differences in student engagement and learning outcomes. But I never questioned why and how students learned Chinese that way and made progress in learning the new language. I never gave any thought to the question: What is my intuition telling me about CFL learning?

Observing Chinese classes and teaching Chinese in Canada, I had opportunities to observe the

same phenomena again although the context was different, and the students in Canada were more diverse than those in China in terms of their language and culture backgrounds. Having opportunities to observe student learning, I also became more and more attentive and more curious about the questions that were so easily overlooked: How did these students learn Chinese given their different linguistic backgrounds? How did their L1 exert influence on their learning of Chinese? Why did some students seem more motivated than others? Why did some students enjoy the class, while others did not? Why did some students learn Chinese faster and better than others even though they had the same training? These questions occurring in the daily classroom routines appeared so simple and common, to such an extent that they were easily ignored or taken for granted. But as my experience and observations accumulated, I was getting more and more aware that there must be some elements underlying the observables that were worth in-depth examination. Then some hunches or epiphanies occurred to me about the causes or reasons behind these observable phenomena. However, hunches or epiphanies need to be examined through field research. That was where and how I was motivated to start this piece of research.

Reading the literature regarding second/foreign language (L2) acquisition, particularly the literature in the area of ESL, greatly expanded the spectrum of my views on L2 pedagogy which was illuminative to the study and development of CFL pedagogy. The literature review on the other hand enabled me to identify the research problems that challenged my intuition and my preconceptions about CFL teaching and learning, stimulated the research questions, and prompted this study.

1.2 Rationale and the Research Questions

Due to the challenges associated with learning CFL, information provided by some Chinese program directors in Canadian universities (personal communication) shows the dropout rates,

particularly at the CFL beginning proficiency levels, are high in Canada, because most students tend to find Chinese too difficult (Erbaugh, 2007). Hence, few students persevere with their CFL study to reach the advanced levels. The Chinese program directors said that students at the beginning levels represented the largest population of CFL adult learners in CFL programs in Canadian universities (personal communication). Hence, studies on the pedagogical development and research on CFL teaching and learning at the lower levels are relatively more compelling.

From a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), foreign language (FL) or additional language (AL) learning is inevitably influenced by learners' prior knowledge and experience. Because of high immigration to Canada, many CFL students possess a multilingual and multicultural background, and their prior knowledge and experience is multifaceted. Exploring CFL development in this context necessitates attention to the influence of students' prior knowledge, particularly their prior linguistic knowledge, and their language learning experience.

Furthermore, language acquisition is a complex and long-term process. It involves not only the development of learners' linguistic knowledge and competence, but is also related to their cognitive (e.g. learning abilities), meta-cognitive (e.g. learning strategies), and affective (e.g. motivation) development (Gardner, 1985, 1996, 2010; R. Ellis, 1997; Williams, 1994; Dörnyei, 2001, 2003). Foreign language learning such as CFL in most areas in Canada takes place in an English language context, an environment where the official language, English and L1 of most students is used as the medium of instruction. There is almost no opportunity for students to practice or use the target language in real-life situations. Students learn the target language just in the classroom and from the textbook. Foreign/second language (L2) learning that is isolated from our lived experience can be a difficult and boring task, which presupposes the importance of motivation. Thus exploring the development of student motivation in CFL learning was an important dimension of this study.

With the aforementioned rationale, I intended to explore the following aspects of CFL learning: a) the challenges in CFL learning; b) the influence of students' prior languages and experience on CFL learning; and, c) the development of student motivation. The questions that guided my research were as follows:

1. What elements of Chinese as a foreign language challenge student learning?
2. How do students' prior language(s) and language learning experience influence CFL learning?
3. How does student motivation influence CFL learning and develop during CFL study?

In the CFL literature, research on CFL pedagogy seemed to be predominantly experimental. In order to gain a qualitative understanding of the nature of CFL learning, naturalistic qualitative studies on adult learning of CFL are highly needed. This exploratory study was designed as such to examine how students were challenged in CFL learning; and the impact of their prior linguistic knowledge and experience on their cognitive and affective development in CFL learning, with an attempt to yield implications that may facilitate the improvement of CFL pedagogy and to raise questions for further research.

It is commonly held that a qualitative mode of research seeks to examine insiders' views rather than test hypotheses (Cohen et al, 2007), although investigators inevitably have certain presumptions in mind before starting doing a piece of research. Qualitative research is usually complex in design and broad in scope (Seliger & Shohamy, 1997). The context for the field research, the methodology, and the instruments used for data collection may possibly result in different findings than originally proposed. Hence, the above research questions are relatively more general and open ended. Thus, setting theoretical and methodological parameters is a necessary step to determine the approach, objective, design, and data collection methods for this study.

1.3 The Parameters

This study aims to explore the nature of CFL learning in university classes, examining how students' prior linguistic knowledge and language learning experiences influence their CFL learning; how CFL students make strategic use of their prior linguistic knowledge to improve their current learning while coping with the challenges of the target language; and, how student motivation influences CFL learning and develops in the learning process. First, I see foreign language acquisition as a sociocultural phenomenon. Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory seems appropriate to serve as a lens through which learners' cognitive, metacognitive, and affective factors can be systematically scrutinized without being isolated from students' sociocultural background and the sociocultural context of language teaching and learning. From a sociocultural perspective, Williams (1994) contended,

> Learning a foreign language involves far more than simply learning skills, or a system of rules, or a grammar; it involves an alteration in self-image, the adoption of new social and cultural behaviors and ways of being, and therefore has a significant impact on the social nature of the learner (p.77).

This suggests that in addition to examining student learning of the linguistic knowledge of the new language, it is important to scrutinize learners' affective and culture development, and the development of their motivational orientation which is seen as the core of L2 learning motivation (Gardner, 1996, 2010). More specifically in this study, student motivation in learning was an important dimension being explored. Based on the qualitative nature of the research questions, a qualitative approach in a sociocultural perspective is a more tenable approach than an experimental method for this study.

Exploring how CFL students were challenged in learning the Chinese linguistic system is another dimension of this study. Taking into account of both learners' internal and external factors, a cognitive

linguistic perspective seemed appropriate in keeping with sociocultural theory, and could be adopted to frame my understanding of CFL learning in this regard. Hence a cognitive linguistic view was incorporated into the frame of sociocultural theory. The theoretical framework of reference for this study is to be discussed in the next chapter.

In terms of the methodology for this study, Seliger & Shohamy (1997) claim that the framework for examining L2 research evolves from four parameters: a) synthetic vs. analytic approaches; b) heuristic vs. deductive objectives; c) high vs. low control of research context or variables; and, d) explicit vs. implicit data collection procedures (see Seliger & Shohamy, 1997, pp. 25-8). In view of the parameters for this study, first, it was analytic, exploratory, and started out to look into student learning of the Chinese linguistic elements with an attempt to depict the learning process and examine particular challenges for CFL study. Second, it was inductive, as it was driven by open-ended research questions; it started from scrutiny of CFL learning and student motivation in the instructional setting, aiming to yield pedagogic implications and possible research questions rather than being driven by hypothesis testing. Third, there was no control on the research context and the factors involved; all research settings were naturalistic. The data collection in this study was both explicit (e.g. survey and interview) and implicit (e.g. observation and analysis of written assignments). In general, the methodology adopted for this study was qualitative and interpretive, which provided more room for inference and interpretation.

Language and culture are interconnected with each other. Hence language learning presupposes learning of its culture. Language and culture, and culture learning in L2 are discussed next.

1.4 Language / Culture and L2 Learning

Functionalists view language as a social semiotic and a resource for humans to accomplish social life and achieve special purposes (see Halliday, 1978, p.75); the sociocultural perspective views

language as a means mediating not only human functioning with the sociocultural environment, but also human mental functioning in learning and knowing (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p.59). Thus, language is seen as a tool for learning. Literature shows that in L2 learning, learners' prior language(s) and experience provides a knowledge base (Odlin, 1989), laying a cognitive foundation (Corder, 1983), facilitating phonological and semantic associations (Corder, 1983; Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). Exploring how learners' prior knowledge, particularly their prior language(s), influences their CFL learning is an important dimension in this study.

Culture has been defined in many ways from many perspectives. From a sociolinguistic perspective, Halliday (1978) contends that culture includes modes of thought and action. It is the beliefs and values of the members of a society where language is used as a medium for the members of the society and plays a central role in learners' intellectual development and their adoption of the culture of the society. In this sense, "culture cannot be instructed in the same ways as language is taught, and can best be learned through direct and vicarious experiences" (Hall, 1973, p.xiv-xv). Edward Hall views culture as "non-verbal language", "silent language, the language of behavior" (Hall, 1973, p.xiv-xv). Geertz's (1973) anthropological view, seeing culture as socially established structures of meaning, seems most widely accepted and referenced:

> Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance that he himself has spun; I take culture to be those webs, the analysis of it to be, therefore, not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning (p.5).
>
> It [culture] denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life (p.89).

I assume "symbols" and "symbolic forms" here are related to language. Human languages can be seen as a special kind of symbols. Geertz (1973) viewed language as one of the major carriers of

meaning, at the core of an account of a particular culture. Although the term "language" is not mentioned in this definition, it entails the function of language to sustain the development of culture. Since human knowledge and conceptions, and the patterns of meanings are transmitted mainly by language, it is obvious that language and culture are inseparable and mutually constituted.

Halliday (1989) emphasizes the role of cultural context that contributes to the meaning of language that we choose. From the speakers' viewpoint, we can choose appropriate language to communicate our intentions, ideas and views according to the specific sociocultural context; whereas, from the listeners' viewpoint, the meaning of language is socially and culturally situated and dynamic which is subject to their interpretations. In both cases, language is the carrier of culture, and culture is embedded in language. Different languages in different cultures may reflect their social organizations, their history, beliefs, values as well as their world views in different ways. Different cultural groups may have quite different ways of understanding the basic functions of language (R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 1995). Thus, language and culture are interconnected and coexist with each other. This points to the importance of culture learning in L2 as Byram (1989) states from a pedagogic view,

> …… In addition to the cultural meanings carried by the functions of language, language embodies the values and artifacts of a culture through referential meaning. In order to teach these linguistic meanings, the language teacher needs to analyze the values and artifacts to which they refer, an analysis which is other than linguistic (p.43).

Byram's view seems to coincide with Saville-Troike's (2003) point that culture entails the community stock of knowledge and values that foreigners may not learn easily. Byram has explained the importance of learning the culture while learning the language, and for L2 teachers how to integrate culture into language teaching rather than just include it in the language curriculum linearly. Culture can be integrated into language teaching whenever it is involved, and facilitates language learning. Hence, it

should be incorporated into language learning rather than being avoided. In this study, I also paid attention to how CFL students learned the target language culture while learning the target language, and how culture learning was facilitated by the instructor in the CFL curriculum.

1.5 Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the background to the research, the rationale and the research questions; presented the theoretical and methodological parameters; and briefly discussed the interrelation of language and culture, and culture learning in L2 learning. In next chapter, Chapter 2, I discuss in detail the theoretical framework and present the review of pertinent literature. In Chapter 3, I introduce the research methodology and the research design, presenting the data collection methods and the procedure of data analysis. I demonstrate and discuss the research findings from the survey in Chapter 4; findings from error analysis and crosslinguistic influence in Chapter 5; and findings related to student motivation in CFL learning in Chapter 6. The final chapter, Chapter 7, covers the discussion of conclusions and implications of this study as well as recommendations for the improvement of CFL pedagogy and questions for further research.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.0 Chapter Overview

In this chapter, I discuss the theoretical framework for this study and my review of the literature pertinent to the research questions. More specifically, first, I discuss the theories that were adopted to frame my interpretation of the evidence collected in relation to the research questions. Second, I give a brief introduction to Chinese linguistic characteristics, the phonetics, the characters, and the grammar, compared and contrasted with the English linguistic system where possible, particularly the contrast between the English intonation system and the Chinese tonal system; then literature on Chinese pedagogy and the existing research findings. Third, I discuss the literature on multilingualism and multiple language acquisition; cross-linguistic/cultural influences (CLI) and L2 learning, particularly error analysis, the key concepts and the related suppositions; the previous research findings in CLI and their relevance to this study. Fourth, I present the literature on motivation and L2 learning. Different perspectives of L2 learning motivation and motivational theories used in L2 learning are discussed in relation to CFL learning in this study.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

In contemplating the way language is acquired, I view it as largely a sociocultural and cognitive phenomenon, and adopted Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) and Cognitive Linguistic perspective (Croft & Cruse, 2004; Adamson, 2009) as the frame to inform my analysis and interpretation of the data for my inquiry and my understanding of CFL learning.

Sociocultural Theory (SCT), a theory of human mind and learning, holds that human higher mental functioning involves both internal factors at the intrapersonal level and external factors at the

interpersonal level (see Vygotsky, 1978, p.41; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p.31). L2 learning, as a phenomenon of higher mental functioning, involves L2 learners' internal factors, such as cognitive-affective factors, and external factors, such as the learning environment and sociocultural context. From a cognitive-linguistic perspective, L2 learning is viewed as both an internal mental process as well as an external communicative process, involving the use of strategies that explain how the L2 knowledge system is developed and used in communication (see R. Ellis, 1997, p.16). This is a common ground shared by these two perspectives. Hence, it should be reasonable to say that SCT is compatible with cognitive linguistic perspectives in many ways. Both of these perspectives are built upon cognitive psychology and focused on learning and development. A cognitive theory of L2 acquisition facilitates my understanding of the process of CFL learning from a cognitive perspective: how CFL knowledge is acquired and how CFL competence is developed; SCT serves as a lens through which I tried to understand the nature of CFL learning from a cultural-historical view with special attention to the influence of learners' prior knowledge and experience on their learning of the new language, and how students' motivation develops through their CFL learning. A more detailed discussion of the the two theoretical perspectives is given respectively in Sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.3.

2.1.1 Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory incorporates three interrelated components of human cognition: interaction, learning and development. It views higher forms of human mental functioning as "mediated by auxiliary means" (p.41) that are "culturally constructed" (p.60), through artifacts and human language. Higher mental functions are built upon both our cultural and biological inheritances (Vygotsky, 1978, p.55; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Language learning, as higher human mental functioning, is inevitably influenced by sociocultural factors. Due to the sociocultural factors involved

in the developmental process of language learning, it seems impossible to ignore these factors while investigating how language is learned.

I draw from Vygotsky's (1978) notion of higher-order mental functioning. It is the assumption that higher mental functions originate in interpersonal interactions that enable new modes of communication, and this in turn "creates new forms of a culturally-based psychological process" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.40), so that learners have more opportunities to have more complex interactions with each other, with the people around them, and with the environment. This will result in "the internal reconstruction of an external operation" (p.56), which is called "internalization" (p.56), and this produces greater improvement of learning, as Vygostky (1978) maintained that "an interpersonal process is transformed into an intrapersonal one" (p.57). The function in learners' cultural and psychological development first appears "*between* people (interpsychological)" (p.57), then "*inside* the child [or the learner] (intrapsychological)" (p.57); while "the transformation of an interpersonal process into an intrapersonal one is the result of a long series of developmental events" (p.57). He argued that there is an inherent developmental relationship between these two planes of mental functioning: interpersonal or social and intrapersonal or mental (see Vygotsky, 1978, p.57). As Vygotsky-inspired scholars Wertsch (1985) argued, "higher-order human mental functions are subject to intellectualization or conscious realization" (p.27). I assume this is the way a new language is acquired. In an educational setting, CFL learning involves higher mental functioning derived primarily from social interaction and participation in classroom learning activities, either with the instructor or among the peers. This is the process in which students internalize what they have learned and externalize or apply their knowledge through participating in social activities. This is also a process of transformation that results in the development of their language competence and motivation. Hence, this study examines the ways in which student participation transforms their CFL learning, and ultimately results in the development of their linguistic,

meta-linguistic abilities as well as their motivation in CFL learning.

In the field of second language acquisition (SLA), language is no longer seen as a system of signs isolated from its actual use in our real-life contexts. People are becoming more and more aware of the importance of the contexts that differentiate the nuances of the meanings of the language we use in our real life. Language is embedded in the experience of its speakers and the context in which it is used (McGinn, 1997, p.57). This position aligns with Wittgenstein's notion of the "language game" that "the meaning of the language does not reside in abstract underlying sentences in the mind of speakers and listeners, but in the activity transpiring in the worksite…." (McGinn, 1997, p.57). Heritage (1984) shares this notion and states:

> Understanding language is not, in the first instance, a matter of understanding sentences but of understanding *actions—utterances*—which are constructively interpreted in relation to their contexts. This involves viewing an utterance against a background of *who* said it, where and *when*, *what* was being accomplished by saying it and in the light of what possible *considerations* and in virtue of what *motives* it was said (pp.139-140, italics in original).

In language learning and acquisition from a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky 1978; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), language as systematic symbols has important functions linking thinking to communication. In a functional linguistic view (Halliday, 1978), language in the form of systematic symbols has the literal meaning or original meaning, and the meaning potential or contextual meaning which refers to the meaning when language is used to make sense in context. Vygotsky (1978, p.87) recognizes both psychological and sociological functions of language that can only be actualized in use, which puts the emphasis on the importance of context in language learning. In this study, I also paid attention to how context influences students' CFL learning.

Vygotsky (1978) differentiated two levels of learner's cognitive development: the actual level of development already obtained and the level of cognitive functions in relationship to those at a higher

level needed for the learner to move to the next higher stage. This is the key point of Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Thus, ZPD is defined by Vygotsky (1978) as: "The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p.86). Based on Chaiklin's (2003) interpretation, there are three key points that are seen as sources of ideas in ZPD: a) "generality assumption" (p.41) that ZPD can generally be applied to any aided learning process; however, Chaiklin emphasizes that Vygotsky's concern was learners' development rather than mastery of the content; b) "assistance assumption" (p.41) that learning needs to be assisted by a more capable individual, but what is more important is to understand how the assistance relates to learners' development; and, c) "'potential assumption', which can be a target for meaningful, interventive action" (p.43). It is an assumption that learners have potential to improve their capabilities based on the assistance, which is seen as a tendency of maturity rather than the actual quality of a learner (Chaiklin, 2003).

In order for the learner to realize his/her potential and development, assistance from a more capable individual is necessary. This study also examined how students' competence in CFL developed with the assistance of an expert, the instructor; how they made sense of their experience in CFL learning in terms of the development of their motivation; and how their learning experience influenced their perceptions of CFL instruction. I view students' CFL learning as a process inevitably influenced by cultural-historical forces, involving acculturation and motivation.

2.1.2 Sociocultural Theory and L2 Motivation

L2 learning and motivation are not only influenced by the social context, but also socially constructed and constrained in the sense that successful L2 learning does not solely depend on the

motivated learners themselves, but is also partly conditioned by the social environment and practices (Ushioda, 2008). "Motivation is not located solely within the individual but is socially distributed and created within cultural systems of activities involving the mediation of others" (Rueda & Moll, 1994, p.131-2). These viewpoints are in accordance with Gardner's (1996, 2010) view that learning motivation is a learner internal attribute, but can be influenced by external factors. Hence Ushioda (2008) holds that Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (SCT) can illuminate the socioculturally constructed nature of motivation in that it can be potentially used to frame the analysis of language learning motivation.

The core concept of sociocultural theory is the principle that the internalization of higher-order cognitive functions is realized through social interaction with more capable individuals. (see Vygotsky, 1978, p.52) Ushioda (2008) states, this principle can also be applied to L2 learning motivation which emphasizes the distinction of: a) "the organismic impetus to learn and to regulate one's actions"; and, b) "the socialization of motivation for culturally constructed goals and activities" (Ushioda, 2008, p.25). As Lantolf holds, in the process of socialization of motivation, L2 learners can gradually learn to appropriate their culturally valued patterns of thinking, their goals, and intentions (see Lantolf, 1994, p.419). The sociocultural perspective has the implication, as Ushioda (2006) has noted that the development of motivation can be fostered from L2 learners' natural inclinations and motives, rather than from externally imposed goals. It also emphasizes "the way in which motivation is stimulated and develops through participation and interaction" (see Ushioda, 2008, p.25). This study seeks to explore how students' motivation grows in CFL learning, and what motivational orientations influence their CFL learning.

As Lantolf and Thorne (2006) point out, current linguistic theorists are showing more and more interest in the sociocultural perspective of L2 learning and research, taking into account the social, cultural, and historical contextual dimensions of language. Language is viewed as resources for humans

to realize their intentions, and its emphasis is on the meanings and functions of language used in specific contexts. Functional linguistic (Halliday, 1978, 1989) and cognitive linguistic (Adamson, 2009; Taylor, 2008; R. Ellis, 1997) perspectives are the leading approach that is building this scholarship.

2.1.3 Cognitive Linguistic Perspective

The cognitive linguistic view emphasizes that language demonstrates general cognitive processes, and should not be seen as a separate, isolated system of rules that is independent from the human conceptual system. It shares a similarity with generative linguistics, but differs from it in important ways, as Adamson (2009) points out,

> [Cognitive linguistics] (CL) is like generative grammar in that it aims to show the relationship between utterance (or phonological representation) and meaning (semantic representation). However, CL is unlike generative grammar in that it attempts to show this relationship as directly as possible, without using highly abstract devices like empty categories and traces. A CL description involves only three kinds of structures: phonological, semantic, and symbolic (p.101).

From Adamson's viewpoint, we can see the significant difference between generative linguistics and cognitive linguistics. CL sees language as inseparable from our experience. "Language is understood as being grounded in lived human experience with the real world and crucially reflecting the human perceptual system and human understanding of the spatial-physical-social world we inhabit" (Tylor, 2008, p.459). This echoes Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (Lucy, 1992), namely, linguistic relativity that the language we speak influences our perception of the world around us. Even though we perceive the same thing, on the same occasion, we may react differently and give attention to different elements that are readily encodable in our language. Tylor's cognitive-linguistic point also conforms to Halliday's (1978, 1989) functional linguistic view in that he too emphasizes human experience and the social

context of language and L2 acquisition and learning. Language acquisition and learning is usage-based; hence, second language acquisition is in effect second language cognition (N. Ellis & Robinson, 2008). In a cognitive linguistic view, L2 learning is understood as a general cognitive process, in which learners' prior linguistic knowledge and competence are considered to be part of the influencing factors (Corder, 1974).

In a cognitive linguistic perspective of L2 acquisition, linguistic knowledge is viewed as similar to other types of knowledge, and L2 learning strategies are the same as those used in learning other subjects, e.g. using prior knowledge to facilitate L2 learning (Corder, 1983; R. Ellis, 1997; Tylor, 2008). This view contrasts with generative linguistic theory of L2 acquisition that views linguistic knowledge as different from other areas of knowledge, and sees the process of L2 language acquisition as different from the learning process of other subjects.

In a cognitive linguistic view (Watson-Gegeo, 2004), linguistic concepts develop through human existence and experience. Human linguistic competence develops through the same processes as other cognitive strategies. Without a cognitive base that is developed in interaction with the environment and with the speech community, language learning is almost impossible (Berg & Wu, 2006; R. Ellis, 1997; Croft & Cruse, 2004, Robinson & N. Ellis, 2008). From a cognitive linguistic perspective, linguistic knowledge and understanding of its meaning is conceptual, and the knowledge of language is established on the actual use of language (Robinson & N. Ellis, 2008). It can be argued that learning a language demands the same cognitive ability as in learning other subjects. However, this is opposed to generative linguistic perspectives. In the generative linguistic view (Chomsky, 1965, 1986, 2000): a) language is seen as an autonomous cognitive faculty differing from nonlinguistic cognitive abilities; b) the meaning of language is truth-conditional; and, c) methods for natural science need to be adopted for the analysis of language, using highly general and abstract categories to organize linguistic knowledge.

"Generative linguistic theory is concerned with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community…." (Chomsky, 1965, p.3) without consideration of the context where the language is used. This approach to L2 learning ignores the role of sociocultural context in learning the target language.

Croft and Cruse (2004) propose three hypotheses as a guide to the cognitive linguistic approach to language in response to the generative linguistic approach to language learning: a) "language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty" (p.1); b) "grammar is conceptualization" (p.1); and, c) "knowledge of language emerges from language use. Language and cognition create and influence each other, which are situated in context and are embedded in human experience" (p.2). The cognitive linguistic approach should be compatible with the Sociocultural Theoretical framework in which the studies of cognition are the central concern.

From a generative linguistic perspective, learners' interlanguage competence is conceptualized as an abstract system of rules that dictate learners' use of the language (see R. Ellis, 1997, p.34). It emphasizes the analysis of what L2 learners have acquired, rather than their performance (R. Ellis, 1997). In a cognitive linguistic view, although interlanguage does not reflect the system of rules of the target language, it reflects the L2 learners' construction and understanding of how the language works according to their levels of development in language acquisition.

In cognitive accounts, linguistic knowledge is considered to be interconnected with practical use. Language is conceptualized as a semantic network, involving complex interconnections between various units (McClelland et al, 1986). L2 learning is a process in which the semantic network of L2 learner language and L2 mental abilities are developed (R. Ellis, 1997, p.30). This notion is related to Cummin's (1981) theory of bilingualism and cognition that being bilingual or multilingual provides one with a cognitive advantage due to the already established knowledge foundation and the learner's improved

cognitive ability for learning a new language; or the ability to transfer what one already knows to a new language learning situation.

However, R. Ellis (1997) points out that it may not always be possible to categorize particular theories of second/foreign language acquisition as either cognitive or linguistic exclusively, as often both perspectives are integrated. That is, the development of students' cognitive and linguistic abilities are interrelated and mutually facilitative, as Robinson and N. Ellis (2008) maintain, "Cognition and language create each other" (p.3). In this study, elements from both perspectives are incorporated to frame my understanding of students' learning of the target language. The focus of this study was on the acquisition of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) by university students in Canada. A brief overview of the major features of Chinese language in contrast with English appeared necessary to set up a basis for identifying areas of difficulty for CFL learners. For this review I draw on the work of Chao (1968a, 1968b), DeFrancis (1984, 1986, 1989), Chu (1983), Li and Thompson (1977, 1981), Wang and Yang (2008), Hanley et al (1999), G-T Chen (1974, 1979), and P. Chen (1999), among other scholars in the arenas of Chinese linguistics and Chinese pedagogy.

2.2 The Modern Chinese Language

The Chinese language in this study refers to the Modern Standard Chinese, the official language of the People's Republic of China, with *Putonghua* as the commonly shared spoken form of Chinese by people from all dialectal regions in China. *Putonghua* was formally defined in China in 1956 (J. Wang, 1995, in P. Chen, 1999) as follows, accommodating three aspects: phonology, lexicon, and grammar:

> *Putonghua* is the standard form of Modern Chinese with the Beijing phonological system as its norm of pronunciation, and Northern dialects as its base dialect, and looking to exemplary modern literary works in *Baihua* 'vernacular literary language' for its grammatical norms (p.24).

Modern Chinese is also referred to as Mandarin by people outside China. Phonologically there are four tones in Modern Standard Chinese. A Romanized *Pinyin* (spelled sound) system is used as the phonemic representation, and simplified characters are used as its written form. There are numerous regional dialects and sub-dialects in China. Some of them are not mutually intelligible to each other, so *Putonghua* serves as a lingua franca or standard language. According to Y. Hu (1995), besides Mandarin Chinese, there are seven other dialects that are commonly spoken in the east, middle-east, southeast and south of China. The seven major dialects are: Wu, Xiang, Gan, Hakka, Cantonese, Northern Min, and Southern Min (Y. Hu, 1995). People from all dialectal regions share the same written form of Chinese.

DeFrancis (1989) uses the term "grapheme" to refer to "the basic graphic unit in a script that corresponds to the smallest segment of speech represented in writing" (p.54). DeFrancis (1989) considered graphemes as "the basic operational unit without which a script simply could not function" (p.54). DeFrancis (1989) pointed out that "English graphemes are alphabetic letters that either singly or in combination represent phonemes", whereas, "Chinese graphemes are characters that singly represent whole syllables" (p.54). The writing system in languages like English is said to be phonemic or phonographic; while that in Chinese, in the form of characters, is syllabic and logographic, one character representing one syllable (see DeFrancis, 1989, p.55). Modern spoken Chinese is phonemically represented by Romanized alphabets, the *Pinyin* system, but the writing system is represented by the logographic characters. This is where it differs from European languages like English or French that use alphabets in both phonetic and writing systems.

In terms of the Chinese grammatical system, according to Chu (1983), there are no tense markers, but instead there are aspect particles such as *zhe* (着), *le* (了), *guo* (过), suggesting the fulfillment of an action or a shift of condition. Particles are also used at the end of phrases or sentences to indicate a

question. In Chinese, the sentence structure of a question is exactly the same as a statement (subject + verb + object), but sentence particles such as *ma* (吗); *ne* (呢); *ba* (吧); *le* (了), are used at the end of the question, marking it as a question. The plural form is not indicated grammatically except in pronouns and polysyllabic nouns that refer to people (e.g. 先生们 xiān shēng men, gentlemen). So there are no verb conjugations, no singular/plural forms of nouns, and no forms showing subject-predicate agreement in Chinese grammar. Concepts of plural and past tense are expressed at syntactic or discourse level explicitly or implicitly rather than through morphological inflection.

Due to the grammatical features of Chinese as mentioned above, Chinese grammar may appear quite simple compared to that in English or French. However, Chinese syntax is highly complex. There is a category of Chinese words, known as relational words or pseudo words, functioning as prepositions. According to linguistic analysis by Li and Thompson (1977) and Chao (1968a), Chinese readers and listeners rely on word order and relational words to retrieve syntactic information in sentence processing. Understanding individual word meanings and their semantic relations is the key to uncover the meaning of a sentence. This view presupposes and supports the subject/topic notion of linguistic properties. Based on this notion, English is characterized by subject-prominent property, featuring Subject-Verb-Object word order, and subject omission is strictly restricted; while Chinese bears the feature of topic-prominent, and topic plays a dominant role (see Li & Thompson, 1981, p.78; Chao, 1968a, p.41). See the following two examples and compare the syntactic features of Chinese (with *pinyin*) and English:

a) 这种鸟 (this kind of birds, as the topic**)**，我很喜欢， 很好看， 尤其是那彩色的羽毛。

- Zhè zhǒng niǎo, wǒ hěn xǐ huān, hěn hǎo kàn, yóu qī shì nà cǎi sè de yǔ máo. (*Pinyin*)
- **This kind of birds** (as the topic), I like (them). (They) look good, particularly their colorful

feathers.

b) 这些书 (*these books,* as the topic**)**，我很欣赏，信息载量大， 很值得拜读。我都看过了， 而且还做了笔记, (我) 建议你们也读一读。

- Zhè xiē shū, wǒ hěn xīn shǎng, xìn xī zài liàng dà, hěn zhí dé bài dú. Wǒ dōu kàn guò le, ér qiě hái zuò le bǐ jì, wǒ jiàn yì nǐ mén yě dú yi dú. (*pinyin*)
- T**hese books** (as the topic), I love **(them); (they)** bear rich information, (**and are**) well worth reading. I have read (**them**), and also taken notes (**from them**), (**I**) suggest you read (**them**) too. (This is a word-for-word translation from the Chinese version).

In example a), “these birds” is the topic, followed by further information about the birds. In example b), the structure of the English version looks similar to the Chinese version, “These books” may be put in the object position after the verb “love” in English, but it is more appropriate to view it as a topic in Chinese because what follows “these books” are comments or further information about the topic. This type of syntactic structure does exist in English, but is more prominent in Chinese.

As Li and Thompson (1981) also noted, subject is a syntactic notion, suggesting a direct relation with the verb, and its semantic scope is just constrained to its predicate within the sentence; while topic is a discourse notion, running across several sentences to form a topic chain in the discourse. In this type of discourse structure, the subject tends to be determined by context semantically, not necessarily by sentence structure. Learning these Chinese linguistic structures and elements can be a great challenge for CFL students. Another challenge is known as the interference of the English intonation system on CFL students’ learning of Chinese tones. It is necessary to compare and contrast Chinese tones with the English intonation system and analyze the nature of the interference of English intonation within CFL

learning of Chinese tones. In Section 2.3, I discuss my review of the literature on the English intonation, briefly introducing Palmer's (1924) work to lay some groundwork for the contrast and analysis of English intonation and Chinese tones. This is intended to facilitate understanding of the interference of English intonation system within CFL learning that may result in CFL students' problems in learning Chinese tones.

2.3 English Intonation

In Palmer's (1924) view, intonation in English refers to "all phenomena connected with pitch or tone…" that express "various forms and shades of emphasis (such as word-prominence, word-group prominence, intensity, command, doubt, concession, reassurance, etc)" (p.7). This indicates that the English intonation system includes not only the phonetic and phonological system, but also involves syntactic and pragmatic elements. These phenomena contrast with the Chinese tonal system which is only phonetic, phonological, and partly syntactic. To determine, classify, and analyze these phenomena, Palmer (1924) divided English speech into *Tone-Groups*. He proposed, "A *Tone-Group* may be defined as *a word or series of words in connected speech, containing one and only one maximum of prominence*" (italics in original) (p.7). Except for some special *Tone-Groups* that have no nucleus, "Each Tone-Group contains a **Nucleus**, which is the stressed syllable of the most prominent word in the *Tone-Group*; and "the nucleus corresponds to what is usually called *sentence-stress*" (p.7). Linström (1978) states, "A tone-group can be regarded as representing a unit of information" (p.132) or sense unit. According to Palmer (1924), a common *Tone-Group* in English may be composed of head + nucleus + tail. "Any syllable or syllables preceding the nucleus in the same *Tone-Group* is termed the 'Head' of the group" (p.17); while "any syllable or syllables following the nucleus in the same *Tone-Group* is termed 'Tail' of the group" (p.10). The concept and the analysis of *Tone-Group* make it easier for contrast and

comparison between English intonation and the Chinese tonal system. Palmer (1924) summarized four characteristics of *Nucleus Tones* in English as follows:

a) "the **Falling**" tone (p.8), e.g. I'm glad to **hear** it.

b) "the **High-Rising**" tone (p.8), e.g. Well, it all de**pends,** you know.

c) "the **Falling-Rising**" tone (p.8), e.g. That's not a**stonishing**.

d) "the **Low-Rising**" tone (p.8), e.g. Don't forget to **write.**

However, as Palmer (1924) pointed out, "The terms 'falling' and 'rising' are relative, not absolute; the *range* of a falling or rising tone varies according to the degree of animation of the speech" (p.8). These characteristics of Nucleus Tones seem to indicate that there are more rising tones than falling tones in English. But this may not be true taking other factors into account, as there is a set of invariable and variable rules for what tone the Head-syllable(s) and the Tail-syllable(s) should take respectively, governing their pitch range in relation to the Nucleus Tones in a Tone-Group (Palmer, 1924). However, Crystal (1969) uncovered the "inter-tone-unit relations" (p.235) and drew our attention to the fact that "tone-units do not exist in isolation, but work in sequences in connected speech" (p.235). He emphasizes "tone collocation" in connected speech, and pointed out that "acceptable connected speech is not simply a matter of degree from acceptable tone-unit pronunciation, but involves modifications, additions, and deletions within the tone-units on which the connected speech is based" (p.236).

Taking into account of the tones of the Head-syllable(s) and the Tail-syllable(s) in a *Tone-Group*, the falling tone seems most prominent in English intonation. For comparison and analysis of English intonation and Chinese tonal system, Chinese linguistic features, particularly the phonological characteristics, are introduced in Section 2.4. Section 2.4.2 gives a more detailed list of research findings through comparison and analysis of the English intonation and the Chinese tonal system conducted by Chen (1974) and White (1981).

2.4 Chinese Linguistic Characteristics and CFL Learning

The Foreign Service Institute (FSI) of the U.S. Department of State has defined Chinese as a Category IV language because studying Chinese requires the most instructional time for speakers of English to achieve their proficiency goals (Jorden, 1992, in Chiang, 2002, p. 43). This officially legitimated the challenge of CFL learning for English-speaking students. In Canada, the enrolment of CFL students in the universities is reportedly much lower compared to other foreign languages especially European languages. Linguistic typological difference or linguistic distance is assumed to be one of the main reasons, as Chinese and English differ from each other typologically in some important ways: 1) tonal vs. non-tonal in phonology; 2) non-inflectional vs. inflectional in morphology; 3) no tense marker vs. tense markers in grammar; 4) morphemic vs. alphabetic in the writing system.

Previous research in Chinese linguistics and Chinese pedagogy show that the phonological system, particularly the four tones (Lin, 1985; Miracle, 1989; Wayland & Guion's, 2004; White, 1981; Ye & Connine,1999; Shen, 1989; J.Y. Chen, 1999; Chiang; 2002; Chen, Q.H., 1997; Tao & Guo, 2008; T.N. Huang, 1990; Winke, 2007; Xing, 2006; C.K.Leong, 2006; Hua & Dodd, 2000), and the writing system, the logographic characters (DeFrancis, 1984, 1986, 1989; Hayes, 1987; Wang & Yang, 2008; Hanley et al, 1999; H.C. Chen, 1996; Leong & Hsia, 1996; Zhang, 2009; Wu & Shu, 2006; Everson, 1988, 1998), as well as the tense-aspect (Chu, 1983; Fan, 1984; Smith, 1991; Berg & Wu, 2006) are the most prominent and challenging linguistic features in Chinese, compared with Romance or Germanic languages. They constitute the major challenge to CFL learners. The discussion of the Chinese linguistic features and the literature review regarding the research, teaching and learning of the Chinese linguistic elements are given next. The following section is focused on two tasks: a) briefly introducing Chinese phonological characteristics; b) discussion of the review of the research findings on English-speaking

students learning Chinese tones.

2.4.1 Chinese Phonological Characteristics

In terms of Chinese syllabic structure, according to P. Chen (1999), the method that is commonly used by Chinese linguists to analyze Chinese syllabic structure is the three-component frame: initials (consonants), finals (vowels), and tones, which is assumed to be more effective than the phonemic inventory of consonants and vowels for the analysis of European languages (see P. Chen, 1999, p.34). The initials (consonants) of Modern Standard Chinese are illustrated in Table 1 with the transcription of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) (P. Chen, 1999; Ladefoged, 2011). (Also see reference for *IPA transcription of *Pinyin*: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinyin)

Table 1 The Initials (Consonants) of Modern Standard Chinese

(adapted from P. Chen, 1999, p. 35)

Bilabials	b [p]	p [p^h]	m [m]	f [f]
Alveolars	d [t]	t [t^h]	n [n]	l [l]
Dental sibilants	z [ts]	c [ts^h]	s [s]	
Retroflexes	zh [tʂ]	ch [$tʂ^h$]	sh [ʂ]	r [ʐ]
Palatals	j [tɕ]	q [$tɕ^h$]	x [ɕ]	
Velars	g [k]	k [k^h]	h [x]	

The finals (vowels) of Modern Standard Chinese is illustrated in Table 2 with the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) transcription (See P. Chen, 1999, p.35).

Table 2 The Finals (Vowels) of Modern Standard Chinese

(adapted from P. Chen, 1999, p. 35)

	i [i]	u [u]	ü [y]
a [a]	ia [ia]	ua [ua]	
o [o]		uo [uo]	
e [ə]			
ê [ɛ]	ie [i̯ɛ]		üe [yɛ]
ai [ai]		uai [uai]	
ei [ei]		uei [uei]	
ao [au]	iao [iao]		
ou [ou]	iou [iou]		
an [an]	ian [i̯ɛn]	uan [uan]	üan [yɛn]
en [en]	in [in]	uen [un]	ün [yn]
ang [ɑŋ]	iang [iɑŋ]	uang [uaŋ]	
eng [əŋ]	ing [iŋ]	ueng [uəŋ]	
ong [ʊŋ]	iong [yŋ]		
er [ɑɻ]			

Among tonal languages, the Chinese tonal system has its own distinguishing features that differentiate it from other tonal languages that have three levels of pitch (low, middle, and high). According to Q. H. Chen (1997), "there are only two basic oppositions in the tonal system in standard Mandarin Chinese: 1) high versus low (Tone 1 [5-5] versus Tone 3 [2-1-4]); 2) rising versus falling: Tone 2 [3-5] versus Tone 4 [5-1])" (p.23). The syllable is the basic speech unit of Chinese. There is a fifth tone, which is called the *neutral tone* (NT) or *light tone* (LT) used on an unstressed syllable without

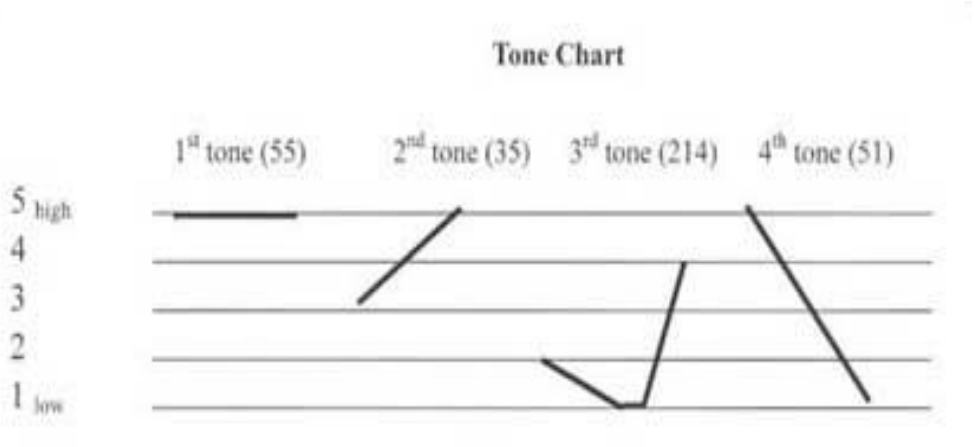
a tone mark on the syllable. A neutral tone cannot be pronounced in isolation, but is preceded by another stressed tone. Each Chinese character has only one syllable. Wang and Yang (2008) summarized four types of syllable structure: V (vowel) like *ou*, CV (consonant-vowel), such as *lao*, VC (vowel-consonant) like *en*, and CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) such as *zhang*. But the majority of the syllable structure is CV, and always analyzed into initial (consonant) plus final (vowel), or onset plus rime. There are no acoustic consonant blends in Chinese although there are some CVC combinations such as nasal consonants –n [n] and -ng [ŋ] in the written form of the syllable structure (see Wang & Yang, 2008, p.126-7), but they are acoustically vowels.

Phonologically, Chinese is a tonal language, and tones distinguish meanings of individual characters, which can be either morphemes or words (Chao, 1968b; Li & Thompson, 1981; Wang & Yang, 2008). Pike (1948, in Ye & Connine, 1999) defined a tonal language as "having lexically significant, contrastive, relative pitch for each syllable" (p.610). The standardized Chinese, *Putonghua*, is shared by Chinese people from different dialectal regions in China. Almost every Chinese syllable must carry a tone, and each tone represents a fixed pitch pattern, being either level or contoured. The Chinese linguist Yuan-Ren Chao (1948, in Ye & Connine, 1999) developed a method to measure and depict the four lexical tones in Mandarin Chinese on a pitch scale of 5 points, which helped uncover the mystery of Chinese tones. Each of the four types of stressed syllable in Modern Chinese has a differing characteristic of pitch pattern. The pitch patterns are illustrated by Chao using the 5-point pitch scale to represent the pitch range of the tones. 1 refers to the lowest value and 5 indicates the highest value (Ye & Connine, 1999). The four tones in Modern Chinese can be depicted as in Table 3 using 5-point scale, and visually by the tone chart:

Table 3 The Name and Numbered Pitch Scale of the Four Tones in Chinese

(adapted from Xing, 2006, p.87)

The four tones	Name of the tones	Pitch scale
The first tone (Tone 1 or T1)	high-level	[5-5]
The second tone (Tone 2 or T2)	high-rising	[3-5]
The third tone (Tone 3 or T3)	low-dipping or falling-rising	[2-1-4]
The fourth tone (Tone 4 T4)	high-falling	[5-1]



(This tone chart is selected from www.echineselearning.com)

There is only one factor; that is, tone sandhi that may change the Chinese tones substantially. The four tone sandhi rules are illustrated with examples as follows (see Cheng, 1973; Zhang, 2005, pp. 47-50):

1. When there are two 3rd tones in a sequence, the first syllable becomes the 2nd tone, and the second syllable becomes a half-3rd tone (H-T3) which only falls but does not rise (Zhang, 2005, p. 47).

   e.g. nǐ hǎo → ní hǎo 你好(Hello)

   (2-1-4) + (2-1-4) → (3-5) + (2-1-1) (numerical scale)

běn lǐng → bén lǐng 本领 (talent)

2. When a 3rd tone is followed by a first, second or fourth tone, or most neutral tone syllables, it usually becomes a half-3rd tone (the tone scale changes from 2-1-4 to 2-1-1) (Zhang, 2005, p. 47).

   e.g. běi fāng 北方 (North) (T3+T1→ H-T3 + T1)

   lǚ yóu 旅游 (travel) (T3+T2 → H-T3 + T2)

   měi lì 美丽 (beautiful) (T3+T4 → H-T3 + T4)

3. When three 3rd tones are in a sequence, either of the two different situations will occur.

   a) If the first word is two syllables, and the second word is one syllable, the first two syllables become 2nd tones, and the second word remains the 3rd tone (Zhang, 2005, p. 48).

      Two- syllable word + one-syllable word → two 2nd tones + one 3rd tone

      e.g. xiǎo jiě zǎo → xiáo jié zǎo (xiáo jié + zǎo) 小姐早 (Good morning, miss)

   b) If the first word is one syllable, and the second word is two syllables, the first syllable becomes the half-3rd tone (H-T3), the second syllable becomes the 2nd tone, and the third syllable remains the 3rd tone (Zhang, 2005, p. 48).

      e.g. hǎo lǎo bǎn → hǎo láo bǎn (hǎo + láo bǎn) 好老板 (good boss)

4. Special case of tone sandhi with the words 一 (yī) and 不 (bù) (see Zhang, 2005, p. 48-50).

   a) 一 (yī, one) changes to T2 if it is followed by T4.

      e.g. y í y àng 一样 (the same) y í b àn 一半 (half)

      y íc ì一次 (once) y íg è一个 (one piece of…)

   b) 一 (yī) changes to T4 if it is followed by T1, T2, T3.

      e.g. yì bān 一般 (generally) y ì m áo 一毛 (ten cents/a dime)

y ìhu ír 一会儿 (a moment)　　yì qǐ 一起 (together)

yì tǒng 一桶 (one bucket of)

c) 一 (yī) changes to neutral tone when it is between two single characters.

e. g. k àn yi k àn 看一看 (take a look)

shǔ yi shǔ 数一数 (check/count)

d) 不 (b ù, not, no, without) changes to T2 if it is followed by T4.

e. g. b údu ì 不对 (not right)

b úq ù 不去 (not go)

b úy ào 不要 (not want)

Although canonically there are only four tone sandhi rules, in actual oral speech, the pitch constantly changes (DeFrancis, 1984). The four tones in Chinese should not be seen as fixed notes on a pitch scale, but as relative and changing in specific phonetic and phonological contexts, and each tone may be influenced by its neighbouring tones in a tonal unit which can also be a sense unit. Hence, it may not be a difficult task to pronounce an individual tone correctly. However, it takes greater efforts for CFL students to learn and acquire these subtleties of the tones and pronounce them properly in a specific sentential and discoursal context (see Huang, 1990, p.45).

Due to the simplicity of the Chinese syllable structure, the predominant Chinese syllable structure is consonant + vowel (CV), and there is only a small number of syllables other than CV (Hanley & Huang, 1999), "resulting in a larger number of homophones in spoken Chinese. The number of homophones is reduced somewhat by the use of tones …… since the tone of a syllable indicates a change in meaning" (Wang & Yang, 2008, p.127). For instance, with the syllable [la], Table 4 shows

four different characters can be found with four different tones and meanings:

Table 4 Meanings Distinguished by the Four Tones in Chinese

(adapted from Xing, 2006, p.87)

Characters	Pinyin	Pitch Scale	Meaning
拉	[lā]	5-5	to pull
砬	[lá]	3-5	a large piece of stone
喇	[lǎ]	2-1-4	horn (a musical instrument)
蜡	[là]	5-1	candle

Chao (1968b) maintained that

> The usual vocalic and consonantal phonemes are known as segmental phonemes, since they occur segment by segment in temporal succession, while the elements which occur simultaneously with the segmental phonemes, such as stress and intonation, which do not occupy extra time in speech nor space, are known as suprasegmental phonemes (p.38).

But Chao (1968b) pointed out,

> The case of tones in tonal languages is an important exception because a tone is a simultaneous element that plays very much the same part as a consonant or a vowel. The pitch pattern of a word in Chinese, and in other tonal languages, is thus as much a part of the make-up of words as the consonants and vowels and should be put on a par with the segmental phonemes even though it occupied no additional time and exists simultaneously over and above whatever is the voiced part of the syllable. This is because the individual tones in Chinese are at the lexical level which are grammatical and differ from the English intonation system (p.39).

This suggests greater challenges for CFL students in learning Chinese tonality than learning other Chinese linguistic elements, particularly for students at the elementary level.

2.4.2 Previous research on learning Chinese tones

The phonetic structure of spoken Chinese is relatively simple compared to that of English, but why are tones so difficult for English-speaking students? Research (Chiang, 2002) on students' perspectives of CFL learning shows some students have difficulty in memorizing the tones. They feel overwhelmed by the large amount of memorization while others often stumble over particularly difficult tone combinations. They cannot memorize and pay attention to tones when speaking. G.T. Chen's (1974) research with English-speaking CFL learners revealed more specific problems:

1) The normal pitch range of English speakers is narrower than that of native Chinese speakers (p.168-169). Native Chinese speakers' pitch range was wider (1.5 times wider) than English speakers (p.170). This is supported by White (1981), Q.H. Chen (1997), and Lin (1985) that there are a great number of level tones and non-fully-realized contour tones that do not exist in Chinese with students' tonal errors. This could be taken to explain why English-speaking students tend to produce unrecognizable tones that do not exist in native Chinese at all.
2) Data from G.T. Chen's (1974) study show the most frequent contour in both Chinese and English is the falling contour, compared to the rising contour. This phenomenon may serve to explain why English-speaking students have more difficulties in learning the Chinese rising tones (p.169).

White (1981) did a contrast and comparison between English intonation and Chinese tonal system, analyzed English-speaking students' problems, and concluded as follows:

1) The domain of the tones in English and Chinese is the primary difference (see White, 1981, p.32), for instance, in Chinese the tone is actualized on one syllable; while in English the tone may be realized on one, or two, or more syllables.
2) Tones in Chinese are used to convey separate lexical meanings, but that is not the case in English. They may be unattended to by native speakers of English who are not aware of the tones

acoustically or functionally (p.52).

3) The difference in the mechanism of stress in English and Chinese results in a large number of observed learner errors. Stress in English is associated with pitch height which is common in Chinese tones; thus, English speakers tend to mistake the Chinese high tones as stress (p.52).
4) The potential pause, a distinctive feature of Chinese, is problematic for English speakers. That is, word boundaries in English are marked, not only by pauses but also by phonological features and/or stress. However, in Chinese it is the potential pause that distinguishes two monosyllabic words from one dissyllabic word. For instance, 会谈 (huì tán, negotiate, negotiation), these two characters can be a dissyllabic word used as a noun (negotiation), no pause between them in this case. But they can also be two monosyllabic words which should be read separately (there is a pause between them). In this case, 会 (huì) becomes a modal verb, means will/can do…, while 谈 (tán) becomes a verb (negotiate), then they constitute a "modal verb + verb" structure. So this example is used here to illustrate the importance of identifying sense units and potential pauses in appropriating tones. But to identify potential pauses requires students' comprehension of the semantic and contextual meaning of the word or words in a specific sentential or discourse environment. This is a great challenge to CFL students, which is also taken to be the evidence of L1 transfer (p. 53).
5) English speakers tend to transfer their use of intonation to express emotion and attitude rather than to differentiate sentence types, which involves not only linguistic, but also psychological and sociological factors. But most of these studies concur that the learning of tones may also be affected by learners' background or prior learning experience of tonal languages. But all these conclusions call for further empirical investigation to confirm (p.53).

Miracle (1989) did an acoustic study by recording and analyzing segments of students' speech with particular attention to the variation in the fundamental tone patterns, and compared the patterns with those of native speakers in similar sentence environments. The finding shows the rising tone is most problematic, which coincides with Li and Thompson's (1977) finding that students have physiological difficulty in learning and expressing T2 and T3. This could also be attributed to the lingering interference from the English intonation system. This finding is compatible with the finding from Q.H. Chen (1997), which serves to be evidence to explain that English speakers have problems in learning the rising tones in Chinese. All these problems in CFL learning converge to the point that the influence of English L1 is prominent.

Wayland and Guion's (2004) research suggests that prior experience with tones may be transferrable to the perception of tones in learning another tonal language. Adult CFL students in North America come from diverse linguistic backgrounds. For a great many of them, English is not their L1. But does English in this case still have influence on their CFL learning? Since they have other linguistic backgrounds in addition to English, are there any factors that may influence students' perception of Chinese tones? These questions still remain unanswered in the literature and were explored in this study.

2.4.3 Chinese Orthographic Features and CFL Learning

In terms of the writing system, Chinese differs in many important aspects from the languages with alphabetic writing systems that are commonplace in the West (Hanley et al, 1999). As H. C. Chen (1996) noted, in terms of the physical layout, written Chinese "is formed by evenly spaced, box-like elements" (p.49), and are characters that contrast strikingly to the strings of words in English. Chinese characters "are made up of strokes and components in a constant, square-shaped area, and they may have a relatively high complexity of construction" (p.49). Different characters vary in the number of strokes

and differ in structure.

The phonemic structure in languages with an alphabetic writing system is represented by a small number of letters; while Chinese words are represented by characters, which consist of a great number of visual symbols (Hanley et al, 1999). Chinese characters differ from alphabetical writing as they are composed of graphs, while alphabetic writing is constructed on the basis of syllables (Hanley et al, 1999). "…. characters in Chinese represent morphemes rather than phonemes, where a morpheme is defined as the smallest unit of meaning in a language" (Hanley et al, 1999, p. 173). Therefore, it is widely held that Chinese characters do not directly represent the spoken form of the language. Compared with English that has complicated inflections, the words in Chinese without inflectional forms are easier for L2 students. However, L2 students have to make special efforts in memorizing a great number of new words, along with their tones and characters aurally as well as graphically (Chiang, 2002).

According to Wang and Yang (2008), strokes are the smallest elements of characters, and each Chinese character is composed of basic strokes. There are about 31 basic strokes, and sets of specified strokes that are combined to form radicals. There are about 541 in total basic components of Chinese characters. "The combination of strokes must follow certain stroke-positional constraints, and random combinations of strokes produce illegal radical forms" (Wang & Yang, 2008, p.125). "Some radicals are independent characters themselves with unique pronunciations and meanings, while others (238 in all) are not" (p.126). "These radicals must be combined with other radicals to form characters, and they have no corresponding individual pronunciation associated with them" (Wang & Yang, 2008, p.126). In terms of the structure of the characters, each radical in a compound character takes a specified position (ibid), i.e. a two-radical character is typically configured into one of the three structures within the character (Liu, 1999, p.28): "either left-right structure", like 昨; "top-bottom structure", as 员, or "outer-inner" (or

enclosure, or semi-enclosure structure), such as 国, 同. Liu (1999) puts Chinese characters into two categories in terms of structural complexity: “single-component characters” and “multiple-component” (compound structure characters) (p.36). Single-component characters are composed of one radical, while compound ones contain two or more radicals.

H.C. Chen (1996) maintains, “Chinese characters generally represent lexical morphemes rather than phonemes; many of them may in principle provide some clue to pronunciation” (p.50). Actually about eighty-two percent of Chinese characters are semantic-phonetic compounds with one part (mostly on the left-hand side) related to the meaning, called radicals, and the other part (often on the right-hand side) related to the sound which is assumed as a sound cue (Zhou, 1978, in H.C. Chen, 1996). These phonetic elements provide a clue as to how the characters should be pronounced. H.C. Chen (1996) points out that “the meaning component is mostly very vague, and does not necessarily bear the root meaning of the character, and the phonetic side just gives a hint to the sound” (p.50). “These phonetic components do not necessarily indicate the exact pronunciation of the character; some parts of the characters may serve as phonetic cues in some complex characters, but as radicals in others” (p.51). For example, 马 (mǎ, horse) is single-component character, but it can be used as a radical, e.g. 驰 (chí, gallop). It can also be used as a sound cue in different characters, e.g. 妈 (mā, mum). Only about thirty-nine per cent provide correct pronunciation (Zhou, 1978, in H.C. Chen, 1996).

In terms of semantic properties of Chinese characters, one character can be combined with many other characters to form phrases with slight changes in meaning. How can we identify the different shades of meaning of one character in different phrases? Context is crucial in determining the shades of meaning of the characters. H.C.Chen (1996) wrote, “it is reasonable to conclude that, as compared with many alphabetic writing systems, the script-speech relationship in written Chinese is highly opaque”

(p.51). Hence it is widely held that the sound is more predictable from the phonetic component than the meaning from the semantic radicals. This view is supported by DeFrancis (1984). It contrasts with the traditional view that Chinese is pictographic or ideographic. In reality, there are only 18 percent of the Chinese characters that are pictographic and ideographic (H.C. Chen, 1996). These Chinese linguistic characteristics add to the difficulty of CFL learning.

In modern Chinese, there are no marked lexical categories and inflectional markers of number, gender, and case for nouns, or tense and aspect for verbs, in contrast to English and other languages with alphabetic writing systems (H.C. Chen, 1996). Chen (1996) also noted that the concordance rules at the sentential level, such as subject-verb agreement, are also absent in modern Chinese. "Various forms of syntactic and semantic information are not usually carried by individual words in Chinese, but are carried by the sentential context as a whole" (H.C. Chen, 1996, p. 58). H.C. Chen (1996) proposes that "readers of Chinese may have to use a more diffused, context-dependent strategy to extract the relevant message from individual words, whereas readers of English may rely on a more focused, word-dependent strategy" (p.58) to obtain information.

It is generally admitted that learning Chinese characters is one of the two most challenging tasks (the other is learning the tones) in the acquisition of the Chinese language as a foreign language (Zhao, 2005; Xing, 2006; Liu, 1999). Questions raised and explored in this area include: L2 learning characteristics of Chinese characters; the strategies or the effective ways to learn the characters; the similarities and differences between learners of Chinese as L1 and those of Chinese as L2; how to use the research findings on the strategies in teaching Chinese characters to L2 learners; the relationship between character competence and other language skills, etc. (DeFrancis, 1984; Everson, 1988, 1998; Ke, 1996, 1998, 2005; Zhang 2001; Yang, 2000; Zhao, 2005). These studies appear to converge to the point that understanding the structure of the characters and mapping the relationship of the sound,

meaning and form is first and foremost to reduce students' workload of rote learning solely by memorization.

There are other research findings and reports that show different learning characteristics among CFL students, students learning Chinese as a heritage language (CHL), and native students of Chinese (Yang, 2000). When Zhao (2005) analyzes CFL learning characteristics and challenges, he pointed out that CFL learners' backgrounds play an important role in their learning of Chinese characters. He categorizes CFL learners into two groups, namely, a) students from language backgrounds that are influenced by Chinese culture since ancient times and adopted Chinese characters as part of the writing system in their languages such as Korean, Vietnamese, and Japanese; and b) students from European language backgrounds. Students with some Chinese linguistic/cultural knowledge are reported to perceive Chinese characters in quite different ways. As Zhao (2005) noted, students with European language backgrounds are not used to the strokes visually and have difficulties in formulating the relationship between the sound, meaning, and the form of the characters. This is due to the differences between the Chinese orthographic system and the alphabetic writing system in European languages. First, Chinese orthography carries more semantic information rather than phonetic; in contrast, the orthography of languages with alphabetic writing systems carries more phonetic information than Chinese characters. Therefore, L2 students from a language background with alphabetic writing that carried more phonetic information rely more on phonetic information when learning their L1, so they rely more on their sense of hearing and are visually used to linear composition of alphabetic words, while the structure of Chinese characters is more complicated and two-dimensional, consisting of strokes and dots. Chinese L1 learners use more visual sense when learning the characters (see Zhao, 2005, pp.81-82). Chinese L2 learners from a language background with alphabetic writing system tend to learn the Chinese phonetic (*pinyin*) system much faster and even the writing system, and conduct oral

communication through listening and speaking, but may not necessarily be competent in reading and writing Chinese characters.

In Xing's (2006) view, it is compelling to develop a comprehensive model on which more effective teaching and learning of the three components of the characters can be implemented. Based on the existing studies, I intended to explore how Chinese characters challenge the students from different language and cultural backgrounds.

In addition to the aforementioned linguistic characteristics in Mandarin Chinese, tenses-aspect is another distinctive feature in the Chinese grammatical system, which is discussed in the following section.

2.4.4 Tense -Aspect in Chinese and CFL Learning

Although both English and Chinese share the concept of tenses and aspects, the ways of expressing the tenses and the aspects differ a lot from one another; hence, it is inappropriate to translate the forms of tenses across the two languages. In the Chinese grammatical system, tense is not expressed explicitly through inflecting the verbs or changing syntactic structure, but it is expressed implicitly using temporal adverbs where necessary.

Smith (1991) noted, "the Mandarin Chinese language has a rich aspectual viewpoint component", with "two perfectives, two imperfectives, and a neutral (or constant) viewpoint" (p.343). Morphologically, Chinese is simple, and "many forms have multiple functions" (Smith, 1991, p343). However, "the line between lexical and grammatical categories is not always clear, especially for morphemes that indicate the perfective" (p.343). For instance, *le* (了) and *-guo* (过) are reportedly to be the most problematic with CFL students (G.T. Chen, 1979). For example,

e.g. 他去**了**中国. Tā qù **le** zhōng guó. He has gone to China.

他去**过**中国. Tā qù **guo** zhōng guó. He has been to China.

These two morphemes differ in time span: *le* spans from the initial to the final points of a situation, while --*guo* includes a change of state subsequent to the final point. But CFL students are often confused and have problems when using them in specific context. 了(le) has both lexical and grammatical functions. See the following examples based on the analysis by G. T. Chen (1979).

G.T. Chen (1979) analyzed the usage and function of aspect markers *le* (了), –*guo* (过), and –*zhe* (着), and offers a distinction of the cases where 了 *le* is used for different functions (see G. T. Chen, 1979, p.30):

1) Action –*le* (verb + le, --le is a verb suffix)

e.g. 他上个星期看**了**他父母. Tā shàng gè xīng qī kàn **le** tā fù mǔ.

He visited his parents last week. (He did visit his parents….., a statement)

2) Event *le* (sentence + le, le is a sentence particle)

e.g. 他上个星期看他父母**了.** Tā shàng gè xīng qī kàn tā fù mǔ **le**.

He visited his parents last week. (The whole event has completed)

3) New development *<u>le</u>* (used at the end of a sentence, indicating new situation has emerged).

e.g. 他上个星期看**了**他父母**了.** Tā shàng gè xīng qī kàn **le** tā fù mǔ **le**.

He visited his parents last week. (a new plan, or a new event that may be unexpected)

Chen's analysis of the aspect markers above may greatly facilitate students' understanding of Chinese aspects. Due to the subtle strands of meanings and functions, it is often quite challenging for

students to really master the usages and functions of *le*.

There are two imperfective viewpoints in Chinese marked by *zai* (在) and *–zhe* (着). They differ in that *zai* focuses on the dynamic internal stages of activities, while *–zhe* has a static focus on states (Smith, 1991). The following are two typical examples:

e.g. 郑楠**在**写信. Zhèng Nán **zài** xiě xìn. Zheng Nan is writing a letter (activity)

他**在**床上躺**着**. Tā zài chuáng shàng tang **zhe**. He is lying on the bed (state)

Considering most of the participants recruited in this study were at elementary to near intermediate proficiency levels, the usage of the aspect markers *--guo* (过）and *–zhe* (着）had usually just been introduced. More detailed discussion of the aspects may not be necessary. Hence, further explanation of these tense markers is omitted. In this study, the inquiry along this line centers on students' problems with the understanding of the usages, meanings, and functions of the aforementioned aspect markers in context, and their reproduction of these morphemes.

Crosslinguistic/cultural approaches to L2 learning inevitably presuppose comparative and contrastive analysis of learners' prior language(s) and the target language. Multilingualism and multiple language learning as well as linguistic distance are the important concepts involved which are discussed respectively in the next sections.

2.5 Multilingualism and Multiple Language Learning

Due to the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of immigrants and First Nations people, Canada is a linguistically and culturally diversified society. In Franceschini's (2009) view, "the concept of multilingualism is to be understood as the capacity of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to

engage on a regular basis in space and time with more than one language in daily life" (p.33). But in this study, I used this term to refer to both participants' capability and their experience of learning or practice of more than one language(s) when they participated in my research. In terms of the multilingual community, there are social, institutional, discursive and individual levels. In this study, multilingualism was conceptualized at the individual level, within individual cases. I intended to explore how participants' former language(s) and language learning experience influenced their learning of the target language. Due to CFL student' multilingual and multicultural backgrounds, the observed phenomena regarding multilingualism and CFL learning explored in this study include the influence of L1 or mother tongue (Corder, 1974); non-native language transfer (e.g. Vildomec, 1963; De Angelis & Selinker, 2001 in Herdina & Jessner, 2002); or frequent use of prior language and crosslinguistic influence (e.g. Albert & Obler, 1978) as well as metalinguistic awareness and language learning (Thomas, 1988).

Herdina and Jessner's (2002) Dynamic Model of Multilingualism (DMM) offers me a broader view on some of the important notions: a) "a multilingual system is not reducible to multiple monolingualism" (p.19); b) "transfer phenomena are seen as significant features in a multilingual system" (p.19); c) "crosslinguistic influence is seen as an umbrella term for the effects of transfer and interference" (p.26); and, d) "multilinguals have great advantages over matched monolinguals" (p.61).

In the Dynamic Model of Multilingualism, the multilingual system is seen as a complex dynamic system with its own parameters rather than the result of putting two or more languages together linearly (see Herdina & Jessner, 2002, p.19). This view aligns with Cenoz and Genesee's (1998) point on trilingualism that "bilingualism does not hinder the acquisition of an additional language, and to the contrary, in most cases bilingualism favors the acquisition of a third language" (p.20). Cenoz (2003) also asserts, "Studies on the effect of bilingualism on third language acquisition tend to confirm the advantages of bilinguals over monolinguals in language learning" (p.82). Herdina and Jessner (2002)

also point out that the advantages of multilinguals over monolinguals not only lies in language competence acquired, but also in cognitive and social development achieved by multilingual speakers/learners ("multilingual learners" is more relevant to the situation of most of the participants in this study). First, learning more than two languages facilitates the development of new skills such as metacognitive strategies, and increases metalinguistic awareness (see Herdina & Jessner, 2002, p.61-62). Second, research suggests multilingual speakers/learners show greater cognitive flexibility, creativity, and problem-solving abilities (see Herdina & Jessner, 2002, p.64). Third, the use of more than one language enhances learners' cultural sensitivity and social communicative competence (see Herdina & Jessner, 2002, p.64-65). However, they also mentioned the challenge such as language management that multilingual speakers/learners may face.

In this study, one of the dimensions of the inquiry is how students' prior knowledge and experience influence their CFL learning, looking into crosslinguistic/cultural influence and multilingual transfer phenomena from students' prior language(s) into their target language learning. According to DMM (Herdina & Jessner, 2002, p.61-65), learning more than two languages fosters the development of learners' cognitive and metacognitive strategies as well as metalinguistic, metapragmatic and sociocultural awareness.

DMM coincides with O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) notion of language learning as a cognitive skill or process. Summarizing Anderson's (1985) theory of learning strategies in terms of process, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) categorized learning strategies into three stages a) "cognitive stage" (p.25), a stage of learning the linguistic knowledge such as the vocabulary and grammatical rules; b) "associative stage" (p.26), a stage of associating "various elements and components" (p.26) of the target language learned, and learning to use the linguistic knowledge for communicative purposes; and, c) "autonomous stage" (p.26), a stage of becoming and being native-like in using the target language. In

terms of characteristics, learning strategies are categorized into three types: "metacognitive, cognitive, and social affective" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 45). This cognitive account of language learning strategies "provides a mechanism for describing how language learning ability can be improved". (p.19)

Weinstein and Mayer (1986) maintain that learning strategies aim to facilitate learning, and they are learners' conscious and intentional move to enhance learning. They are used to "affect the learner's motivational or affective state, or the way in which the learner selects, acquires, organizes, or integrates new knowledge" (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986, p.315). Hence, "strategies may have an affective or conceptual basis" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p.43). Based on these notions, it is reasonable to see learning strategies as demonstrated cognitive or meta-cognitive abilities.

In this study I tried to link crosslinguistic transfer at the learners' conscious level to the development of learners' learning strategies, and tried to see how students consciously make use of their prior linguistic knowledge to facilitate their current learning of the target language.

2.6 Cross-Linguistic/Cultural Influence and CFL Learning

Research in cross-linguistic influence (CLI) or transfer has been fruitful in the past two decades. Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008) provided a summary of the landmark findings from the research in crosslinguistic influences from the pre-1990s (see Jarvis & Pavlenko 2008, pp.11-13).

In the framework of sociocultural theory (SCT), both L1 and L2 learning, as a higher mental functioning, are simultaneously part of a process of cultural development. Hence, in the L2 learning process, L1 influence or transfer on L2 learning presupposes cultural lines of influence or transfer.

Some low-level target language errors are taken to be the consequence of typological transfer from the L1 (Green, 1996), for example, the auxiliary verb *be* in English is used as a predicate between the

subject and the adjective, while in Chinese syntactic structure, in most cases, the auxiliary verb 是 (*shi*) is not used as a predicate between subject and the adjective as it is in English. But due to the influence or transfer from English, the auxiliary verb 是 (*shi*) is often used where it is not supposed to be by CFL students. Sharwood Smith (1979) views language transfer within a cognitive paradigm as a problem-solving procedure, or strategy, taking advantage of prior knowledge to solve problems in L2 learning.

In a sociocultural perspective, L2 learning is a cognitive developmental process, and is simultaneously a process of cultural development, influenced by learners' prior linguistic and cultural knowledge and experience. A foreign language classroom has its own context and culture created by foreign language learners, as Kramsch (1993) contends that "contexts are alignments of reality along different axes: linguistic, situational, interactional, cultural, and intertextual" (p. 46). Context is shaped by participants in dialogue with one another, exchanging and negotiating meanings that belong to a community stock of common knowledge and draw on a variety of past and present experiences and texts. Context is created by language as a form of social practice. CFL students are from increasingly diverse backgrounds; they create their own culture, a third culture in the foreign language classroom.

Sociocultural theory holds that the process of learning specific tasks in a classroom is also a process of learners' own cultural formation (Werstch, 1985), a process of learners' identity formation and reformation (Cummins, 2001), or acculturation which was defined by (Schumann, 1986) as "the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language group" (p. 379). Schumann (1986) also states that "any learner can be placed on a continuum that ranges from social and psychological distance to social psychological proximity with the speakers of the target language" (p.379). It can be assumed that CFL may also be a developmental process of getting acculturated into Chinese culture for CFL students.

Theories of L2 learning that ignore learners' prior linguistic knowledge can be considered incomplete (R. Ellis, 1997). Corder (1978) makes an important point that unlike child language learning that begins with no knowledge of the language, adult L2 learners begin with cognitive structures already developed, in conjunction with comprehensive knowledge of a L1 system. Corder (1978) assumes that L2 learners might follow a restructuring continuum, going from the L1 to the target language when acquiring the phonological system, and progress along a developmental continuum, moving from simple to complex forms and structures when learning the syntactic system. Corder (1978) also assumes another possibility; namely, that learners in a natural setting follow a developmental continuum, while in formal classroom settings they progress along a restructuring continuum. A third view is that "both restructuring and developmental processes are operating together in language learning and that there is a great deal of variability in the way the interlanguage of different individuals develop" (Corder, 1978, p.79). All these three viewpoints are in line with the sociocultural perspective in the sense that they take into account the mediating role of L2 learners' prior knowledge and competence in L2 learning, and on the other hand, they emphasize the importance of learners' capability to organize and control mental function in learning.

Along the developmental continuum or L2 language, as Corder (1983) claims, "knowledge of the mother tongue is a cognitive element in the process and might reasonably be expected to affect decisively the order of the developmental process, although in certain cases it may be invisible or unexplainable" (p. 88).

However, Corder's (1983) concern is that the influence from the mother tongue seems to be ignored due to the shift "from a concern with the formal properties in language learning, that is, the acquisition of the linguistic system, toward a functional standpoint, where the emphasis is placed on communicative skills" (p. 85). This in turn results in another shift of concern that "has more to do with

fluency than with accuracy" in target language use (Corder, 1983, p.86). Accordingly, the objective of L2 instruction has also shifted from corrective teaching of the formal linguistic system of the target language to the development of a native-like knowledge and competence of the target language system.

Corder's (1983) cognitive account of L2 language development was revolutionary three decades ago in the sense that he views L1 as a valuable resource which L2 learners actively draw upon in interlanguage development. This view contrasts with the behavioural approach that sees L1 as an impediment or interference in L2 learning. Rather than taking L1 and L2 systems as two separate entities, Corder (1983) views these two as "inextricably intertwined with each other" (p. 89). "When scrutinizing one of them, you inevitably look into the other". (p.89) Corder's viewpoint can be linked to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, as Corder takes into account L2 learners' L1 or mother tongue which presupposes a cultural-historical approach to L2 acquisition and learning.

CLI is generally considered as both a positive influence or transfer manifested as facilitation of target language learning, and negative transfer, the results of which are errors. In the literature of L2 learning, errors have been given more attention than facilitation because the ultimate goal of L2 learning is to minimize errors. Moreover, it is the errors that provide the important evidence when we attempt to describe the developmental process of any L2 or interlanguage (Corder, 1967). Error analysis in this study is used as a method to explore the development and the nature of CFL learning, which is discussed in Section 2.10. Before the discussion of error analysis and the existing research findings some important concepts and their respective literature review that are related to error analysis are discussed in the following three sections: a) linguistic/cultural distance and language learning; b) context/background knowledge and CFL learning; and, c) interlanguage continuum..

2.7 Linguistic/Cultural Distance and Language Learning

Linguists have developed the concept of linguistic distance which refers to the extent to which languages differ from each other although it might be difficult to measure the exact distance (see Chiswick & Miller, 2004, p.6). It may refer to the distance among the different varieties of one language, or the distance between two typologically different languages. In this study, it refers to the latter case. Halliday (1978) argues that the language distance between any pair of languages is partly determined by linguistic typological considerations (language as system) and partly by sociolinguistic considerations (language as institution). R. Ellis (1997) posits language distance "can be viewed as linguistic or psycholinguistic phenomena (e.g. by determining what learners think is the degree of difference between their native language and the target language)" (p. 327).

In Lado's (1964) view, linguistic distance determines the speed and ease of L2 learning. That is, the more distant linguistically between L1 and L2, the longer it takes to learn. From a typological perspective, if L2 learners' first language is closer to the target language, it would be expected that these learners can attain a higher level of the target language than those whose first languages are more distant from the same target language, given that other conditions are the same (Lado, 1964). For instance, it can be intuitively identified that there is a much greater distance between Chinese and English than the distance between French and English. Although it may be difficult to construct the measures of linguistic distance, the concept of linguistic distance is still enlightening for L2 or foreign language learning. In the case of this study, I paid attention to how students perceive the linguistic/cultural distance between their L1 and Chinese, and how students' perception and the linguistic distance may affect their learning.

Research by Chiang (2002) on U.S. university students' perspectives shows that some students think learning Chinese characters is especially difficult; while other students think learning Chinese characters is easy and fun because Chinese characters make more sense than the linear alphabetic writing system due to their logographic features. But why do CFL students have such strikingly different

perceptions on Chinese characters? One possibility is that students' perceptions have been influenced by their different prior learning experiences, the features of their first language, or other previously acquired languages; or they approach Chinese linguistic elements in different ways and develop different learning strategies. It can be postulated that the same Chinese linguistic characteristics may pose different reactions or problems to students from different backgrounds and result in different learning outcomes. These factors related to individual CFL learners constitute a driving force of my inquiry. Context and background knowledge are also important factors that affect target language learning, and explored in this study.

2.8 Context /Background Knowledge and CFL Learning

Context and the function of language have been an enduring topic. Scholars such as Hymes (1972), Brown and Yule (1983); and Halliday (1989), as well as Kramsch (1993) and Goffman (1981) have contributed a lot along this line of study. Hymes (1972) noted "The key to understanding language in context is to start not with language, but with context" (p.xix). Hymes' anthropological view on language learning has profound implications for L2 pedagogy. Indeed, the cultural context of the target language society contains enough background knowledge that can greatly facilitate the understanding of the target language meanings for all practical purposes (Kramsch, 1993, p.46).

In L1 learning, the language mostly comes from spontaneous utterances in context. The context and background knowledge is therefore an integral part of the language that can be learned simultaneously. However, in L2 learning, especially when it occurs in an L1 environment, the target language input is not backgrounded by the context as it is in the original context of the target language. It is widely held that L2 instruction should be oriented towards proficiency. In learning and understanding CFL interlanguage, students are supposed to learn the background knowledge that

involves Chinese people, their culture, their mode of thinking, and belief system. But CFL learning in a Canadian context presupposes that students lack ready access to this body of knowledge. This is where CFL learners are challenged since it is most likely that they do not share the knowledge and experiences of the native Chinese community (Saville-Troike, 2003) even if they have learned the linguistic forms of the Chinese language.

Van Dijk (1977) holds that "the natural language discourse is not always explicit, and that there are propositions which are not directly expressed, but may be inferred from other propositions that have been expressed" (p. 108). He further notes, "If such implicit propositions must be postulated for the establishment of coherent interpretations, they are what we called missing links" (p.108). If there are too many "missing links", learners' comprehension of the meaning and context may be hindered, and they may have difficulties in capturing what the speaker or writer really means even if they know every single word in the text. Thomas (1995) distinguished three levels of meanings: a) abstract meaning; b) contextual meaning; and, c) speaker meaning (see Thomas, 1995, p.2). According to Thomas, we may claim that words that are not within a context only bear abstract or literal meanings, while words used in specific contexts may have denotations that differ from their abstract meanings. The denotations include historical, social, and cultural meanings which constitute the context and background knowledge of the target language. This calls for CFL learners' familiarity with the contexts where these differential meanings originated. Sociocultural context and background knowledge of L2 constitute an important body of knowledge that is inseparable from L2 linguistic knowledge. It should be logical to assume that without learning this part of knowledge, L2 learning would be incomplete. In this study, my concern was about whether CFL students' lack of background knowledge of the target language affected their learning of the target language, and whether the instructor gave attention to this problem.

2.9 Interlanguage Continuum

Selinker (1972) first introduced the concept of interlanguage and coined the term, describing L2 learners' language as a developing system intermediately located somewhere between the learners' first language and the target language.

"Interlanguage was defined as a system immediate between the mother tongue and the target language" (Corder, 1983, p. 89). Corder (1983) shares his seminal and influential view on interlanguage three decades ago and comments on the research on interlanguage that "acquiring a language is a creative process in which learners are interacting with their environment to produce an internalized representation of the regularities they discover in the linguistic data to which they are exposed" (p. 87). But Corder (1983) pointed out the weakness of this account, as it ignores learners' learning environment (instructional or natural); L2 learners' backgrounds, such as their learning experience, their existing knowledge, their L1 or mother tongue; and their affective factors such as motivation. This suggests the importance of the sociocultural approach, giving full attention to L2 learners' prior learning experience and existing knowledge.

Selinker (1972) identified some elements of the cognitive nature of interlanguage, such as L1 transfer; strategies of L2 learning, and transfer of training, e.g. L2 learners may be more competent in reading and writing than listening and speaking due to more intensive training in reading and writing. R. Ellis (1997) views interlanguage as a cognitive process of L2 learners, "with the assistance of learning strategies, building mental grammar of L2", which "are perceived as dynamic and subject to change" (p.352). "Interlanguage is said to be systematic because learners behave 'grammatically' in the sense that they draw on the rules they have internalized" (R. Ellis, 1997, p.352). Thus L2 learner language is a dynamic cognitive developmental continuum, constantly changing, and influenced by multiple factors.

The term "interlanguage" is now not only used to refer to L2 learner language that is not fully

developed in comparison with the target language (Selinker, 1972; Corder, 1974, 1983). It also refers to any language that is additionally acquired, and may or may not be fully developed, but is used as a medium of communication by speakers of different first or native languages (Seidlhofer, 2006; Jenkins, 2006). In this case, interlanguage serves as a lingua franca rather than L2 learner language only. However, as the participants' Chinese language proficiency levels did not reach the communicative level, I adopted Selinker's and Corder's notion of "interlanguage" in this study, focusing on the form rather than the function of the CFL learner language. The analysis of CFL interlanguage in this study was conducted through error analysis, as errors are such a common phenomenon in interlanguage development, particularly when the target language learning is at the lower proficiency levels.

2.10 Error Analysis

To better explore and understand CFL learners' learning of Chinese linguistic elements, the study needs to start with the observables, such as oral or written production. "Learners do make errors, and errors can be observed, analyzed, and classified to reveal something of the system operating within the learners" (Brown, 2000, p.218). Errors are part of the nature of L2 development (Corder, 1967, 1974). Hence error analysis was chosen as method to examine crosslinguistic influence on the one hand, and a vehicle to explore and understand the nature of CFL learners' learning on the other hand. In Corder's view (1967), L2 learners' errors could be significant in three ways which can be summarized as: a) they provide teachers with information about how much the learners have learned; b) they inform researchers with evidence of how language is learned; and, c) they serve as devices by which the learner discovers the rules of the target language (see Corder, 1967, p.167).

R. Ellis (1997) maintains that "transfer is, in fact, a very complex notion which is best understood in terms of cognitive rather than behaviorist models of learning" (p. 62). R. Ellis (1997) also notes that

whether an error is a result of transfer or not may depend on the interpretation of researchers. Thus, a qualitative approach to error analysis may be more heuristic, checking with background information or with research participants for explanations of the source of the errors to achieve a better interpretation of the sources of their errors.

2.10.1 Research Methods of Error Analysis

Corder (1974) developed five principles to analyze errors: a) "collection of a sample of learner language"; b) "identification of errors"; c) "description of errors"; d) "explanation of errors"; and, e) "systematicity of errors" (see pp.126-131). Evaluation of errors is also taken as a principle, but most researchers do not include it, because it is considered as a separate issue (also see Brown, 2000, pp. 216-226).

As for the first step, R. Ellis (1997) contends that learners' errors can be influenced by many factors. They may make errors in speaking, but not in writing, as a result of the different processing conditions involved. He also points out that L2 learners with different L1 background may make different types of errors.

When identifying errors from the samples collected, it is important to define what constitutes an error and to establish a procedure for recognizing errors (R. Ellis, 1997). R. Ellis (1997) and Brown (2000) maintain that description of L2 errors involves a comparison of the learners' idiosyncratic utterances with a reconstruction of those utterances in the target language. In R. Ellis' (1997) view, description of errors like identification of errors depends on L2 learners' explanation of how they come to make the errors.

According to Taylor (1986), errors may be the result of many factors, sociological or psychological. R. Ellis (1997) emphasizes that explanation of errors is most important because it

indicates the identification of the source of errors. According to R. Ellis (1997), to determine the source of errors, the following factors may need to be considered: a) the characteristics of the knowledge system of the target language and the challenges that L2 learners may have in their output of the target language; b) L2 learners' competence to tailor their language to the specific social context; and, c) L2 learners' world knowledge as well as their capability of organizing information into coherent texts (see R. Ellis, 1997, pp. 57-58). Based on these views as how to identify and explain errors, I tended to adopt a qualitative approach to error analysis, putting errors into context and taking into account students' prior language and learning experience.

2.10.2 Error Analysis in This Study

As R. Ellis maintains, it may be more practical for us to use Error Analysis (EA) as a strategy to investigate a specific research question, rather than for providing explanations on how or why individual L2 learners may commit the errors (see R. Ellis, 1997, p.70). It seems plausible in this study to use EA as a means to help gain a better understanding of how Chinese linguistic characteristics, particularly, the tones, the characters as well as the tense/aspects challenge student learning. A qualitative rather than quantitative approach to L2 error analysis is advocated by Taylor (1986). Taylor (1986) asserts, "Errors need to be explained as part of the process of writing, not merely identified and their syntax described" (p.146). Taylor (1986) believes that "what constitutes significant errors is not strictly quantifiable" (p.151), and that "we should conceive our analytical aims to lie more in interpretive traditions of a humanistic discipline" (p.151). He showed through his research on how the study of errors should be located in the whole text and how it could afford valuable insights into the process of language use.

Attention was also given to students' reaction to their errors and the instructors' feedback and treatment of students' errors. It may be more effective to offer students "both cognitive and affective

feedback" (Vigil & Oller, 1976, p.294), namely, both cognitive and emotional support from the instructors, to facilitate student learning and stimulate their motivation.

As motivation is another dimension of this study, the next section is focused on the literature review of motivation in L2 learning. Different perspectives and theories of motivation are discussed although the main literature resources are from the research and the work by Gardner and his associates.

2.11 Motivation and L2 Learning

It is widely accepted that "motivation is a multi-faceted construct that has behavioral, cognitive, and affective components" (Gardner, 2010, p.23), involving multiple variables (see Gardner, 1996. pp.34-35). It is assumed that the dynamics and complexities in L2 learning constitute comprehensive constructs of L2 motivation. The literature reviewed, regarding second/foreign language learning motivation in this study, is drawn mainly from Gardner's socio-educational perspective and Dörnyei's situated motivation in instructional settings. Some other influential theories of motivation that have been applied to L2 learning are also discussed in the following sections.

2.11.1 Socio-Educational Perspective

Gardner & Lambert (1972) maintain that language learning motivation is different from other forms of learning motivation in nature. This is because language learning is not only acquiring a body of knowledge and developing a set of skills, but also a process of shaping and reshaping learners' identities. First of all, the language learner must also be willing "to identify with the members of another ethnolinguistic group and to take on very subtle aspects of their behaviour, including their distinctive style of speech and their language" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p.135). The desire for intercultural communication and affiliation is the driving force or motivation to learn the language of the other

community. But desire is just one component of learning motivation. Gardner's (1985) conceptualization of motivation in L2 learning is illuminative for this study as can be seen from his definition below:

> Motivation in the present context refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language. That is, motivation to learn a language is seen as referring to the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity. (p.10).

Gardner emphasizes the interrelation and the interplay of the three components in L2 learning motivation: desire to learn; positive attitudes toward the learning situation and target language community, as well as conscientious efforts in learning. He maintains that each of these attributes is necessary to define motivation. "This conceptualization of motivation is basic in the socio-educational model of second language acquisition" (Gardner, 1985, p.30). In the socio-educational model of second language acquisition, motivation is seen as "an internal attribute, but one that can be influenced by external influences" (Gardner, 1996, p.32). Research by Gardner and his associates shows integrative motivation is the attribute that possibly leads to learners' success in L2 learning in the long run. Integrativeness of L2 learners' motivation is viewed as the core of the concept of Gardner's L2 motivational theory. However, Gardner (2010) points out that the construct of integrative and instrumental orientation should not be equated to the construct of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (see Gardner, 2010, p.17). In Gardner's (2010) view, intrinsic orientation refers to interest without requiring reward, but just enjoyment in learning, "while extrinsic orientation refers to performing the activity for the consequential rewards it provides" (p.17). Based on this view, Gardner holds that "both integrative

and instrumental orientations can be seen to be extrinsic that they result in rewards to the individual" (p.17).

Gardner (1996, 2010) distinguishes motivational orientation and motivation: the former "refers to classes of reasons for studying a second language" (Gardner, 1996, p.30). "Motivation, on the other hand, refers to an attribute of the individual that refers to his/her behaviors with respect to some task" (Gardner, 1996, p.30). Gardner (2010) also emphasizes that different motivational orientations can be held simultaneously by one individual in the sense that an individual may see the instrumental value of the target language while he/she may be integratively oriented. An L2 learner may still see the potential personal relevance of the integrativeness in learning the target language while he/she may be instrumentally oriented.

Gardner (2010) distinguishes between two aspects of L2 motivation: "language learning motivation and language classroom motivation" (p.9). Language learning motivation involves a cultural component of language learning, the concept of integrativeness, namely, learners' identification with the target community, which is seen as "the major focus of the socio-educational model" (p.9). On the other hand, Gardner (2010) points out that "individual differences in integrativeness will also be related to individual differences in reaction to the language learning situation" (p.9). In Gardner's view, language classroom motivation can be affected by four factors: "a) class environment; b) the nature of the course and the curriculum; and, c) the characteristics of the teacher; d) the scholastic nature of the student" (p.10). For the motivation to bring learning outcomes, "it is important that students expand efforts to learn the material." (Gardner et al, 2004, p.4). Hence motivational intensity is crucial for a motivated individual to be a high achiever in L2 learning.

The socio-educational model has been expanded to incorporate more components that are deemed compatible with one another, for instance, causal attributions, task presentation, and classroom goal

structure proposed by Dörnyei (2001, 2005), and other factors proposed by William and Burden (1997), such as intrinsic interest, self-concept, and characteristics of the learning environment. William and Burden (1997) divided the development of motivation into three stages along a continuum, namely, "reasons for doing something"; deciding to do something"; and "sustaining the effort, or persisting" (p.121). Language learning anxiety is another factor that influences learners' achievement. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) constructed the term "situation-specific anxiety" (p.90); while Horwitz (2001) divided situation-specific anxiety into "public-speaking anxiety" and "foreign language anxiety" (p.113). Foreign language anxiety seems to be a common phenomenon among foreign language learners, but the sources of anxiety may vary, which may include: personality traits; the difficulties posed by the target language itself; language background (such as monolingual or bilingual); or the learning environment in which competition may be intensive (see Horwitz, 2001, p.118). In exploring CFL students' motivation in this study, factors both internal and external that influence students' development of motivation were examined, for instance, students' career goals, their anxiety, their interest in the learning tasks in class, the learning materials as well as their perceptions of classroom instruction.

Other perspectives on motivation in the field of second language acquisition include: a) situated L2 motivation in the instructional setting (Dörnyei, 2001, 2005); b) self-determination theory used in L2 motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002); and, c) attribution theory used in L2 motivation (Weiner, 1992). These perspectives are discussed respectively in the following sections.

2.11.2 Situated Motivation in Instructional Setting

Dörnyei (2001, 2005) proposes a situated approach to studying L2 motivation that is more aware of the motivational influence of classroom dynamics: that is, the classroom environment and instructional methods as well as other course-specific or group-specific motivational components.

Dörnyei (2005) proposed four general components of motivational L2 teaching practice: a) creating a motivating environment; b) initiating motivation; c) sustaining motivation; and, d) encouraging positive motivational thinking (see Dörnyei, 2005, p.113). This approach can be seen as an expansion of Gardner's notion of language classroom motivation. Task motivation is a typical representation of this approach. As Dörnyei (2003) points out, task approach makes it possible to break down the complex and prolonged L2 learning process into smaller discrete segments for scrutiny and analysis. Learning tasks in classroom settings are essential units in which L2 learners' motivation can be examined in context (see Dörnyei, 2003, p.14). Dörnyei (2003) also discussed motivation and learning strategies which demonstrate learners' motivated learning behavior and innovation (see Dörnyei, 2003, p.16). In this study I also paid attention to the teaching techniques, the impact of the content of learning and the specific tasks used in class on student motivation in context on an ongoing basis in class. Teachers need to be equipped with pedagogic content knowledge in addition to the subject matter knowledge. This involves Shulman's (1987) theory of teacher knowledge which includes "content knowledge" or subject matter knowledge (knowledge of the discipline) and "pedagogic content knowledge" (subject matter knowledge for teaching) (see Shulman, 1987, p.8). In Shulman's (1987) view, teachers are supposed to know the the subject matter well, but also know how to bring their expertise or subject matter knowledge into a comaptible and comprehensible level to students.

From the literature reviewed, we can see that motivation in L2 learning is multi-faceted and with multi-variables, involving cognitive, social and cultural factors. Different theoretical perspectives are incorporated in this study to explore CFL learner motivation. From these theoretical perspectives, my major inquiry centers on students' development of their motivational disposition which may be associated with the following aspects: a) students' motivational state or orientation, such as integrativeness and instrumentality in CFL learning, and its influence on their CFL learning; b) their

attributional pattern of their successes and failures and the impact of the attribution pattern on their learning; and, c) their perception of the instructional methods in classroom.

2.11.3 Self-Determination Theory and L2 Motivation

According to Deci and Ryan (1985), self-determination theory conceptualizes motivation as: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. "Intrinsic motivation is based in the innate, organismic needs for competence and self-determination. It energizes a wide variety of behaviors and psychological processes for which the primary rewards are the experiences of effectance and autonomy" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p.32). Deci and Ryan (1985) emphasize that this type of motivation is rooted in one's innate needs for self-determination; namely, learners have the right to choose what to learn based on their personal interests and development. "Extrinsic motivation refers to behavior where the reason for doing it is something other than an interest in the activity itself" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p.35). This type of motivation is stimulated by the external environment. In Deci and Ryan's (1985) view, extrinsic motivation is not necessarily contradictory to self-determination in behavior performance. Rather, different extrinsic motivation may be internalized into learners' self-concept and value system and constitute a continuum on the extent to which the motivation is self-determined. Noels' (2001) research with students learning L2 revealed a correlation between Gardner's integrative orientation and intrinsic motivation, instrumental orientation with extrinsic motivation. Another study by Noels et al (2000) identified a motivational pattern that "the more internalized the reason for L2 learning, the more comfortable and persevering students claimed to be" (p.76). In this study, this perspective informed my exploration on how CFL students' original interest in the target language and their career goals influence their motivation.

2.11.4 Attribution Theory and L2 Motivation

According to Weiner's (1992) attribution theory of motivation, learners' beliefs about the causes of their academic success and failure are of great concern because this affects their motivation (see Weiner, 1992, pp.277-280). For instance, in L2 learning, if learners attribute failure to their language aptitude which is viewed as uncontrollable, they would experience feelings of hopelessness or shame and show poor performance. On the contrary, if they attribute failure to lack of effort which is perceived to be controllable, they would feel guilty and invest more effort and show better performance. In Weiner's (1992) view, L2 learners' causal attribution of the reasons why they succeed or fail in the past is crucial in determining whether their motivation will develop and sustain or not in the future. It can be argued that this causal attribution process shapes and reshapes their motivational disposition.

Weiner (1992) proposes that the attributional motivation process may play an important motivational role in L2 learning. Ushioda's (2001) research conducted through interviews with Irish learners of French supports this assumption. The research (Ushioda, 2001) on positive motivational thinking revealed two attributional patterns: a) "attributing positive L2 outcomes to personal ability and other internal factorsthat can be improved or remedied" (p.118); b) "attributing negative L2 outcomes or lack of success to temporary shortcomings to be overcome, or lack of effort, opportunity, or time" (p.118). Williams et al (2001) found that L2 learners' attribution pattern is considered to be related to students' cultural backgrounds; the factors that L2 learners attribute to their success or failures are related to the learning environment, personal interest, learning strategies, teacher/peer support, and other contingencies that may be related to students' backgrounds.

Research on attribution of students' successes and failures indicates that L2 learners' perception of both internal and external factors related to their learning seems diverse, which may deeply influence their motivational development. Internally, L2 learners' diverse cultural backgrounds and prior learning

experiences may result in their diverse patterns of attribution of successes and failures, and their different motivational disposition. Moreover, different learning environments may also arouse L2 learners' diverse reactions and shape their diverse motivational patterns.

In studying CFL learning, Ushioda's (2001) research methods and findings about students' motivational thinking is illuminative, upon which the differences or similarities of CFL L2 learners' motivational patterns can be analyzed and contrasted for further exploration, understanding and implications of L2 learning.

2.12 Summary

The literature review presented in this chapter is intended to further ground this study in former research and preview what will be scrutinized based on the research questions. The specified aspects of the literature review include: 1) Chinese linguistic features, in particular, the tones, the characters, grammar and the writing system; 2) previous research on the challenges from the Chinese linguistic system and pedagogic development; 3) multilingualism and multiple language learning; 4) Influence of prior language(s) on CFL learning; 5) context and CFL learning; and, 6) the existing literature on student motivation in L2 learning.

Due to the qualitative nature of the inquiry, this study is framed in a qualitative, interpretive paradigm. Understanding and interpretation of the data and the data collection process in this study are the primary rationale of the investigation. I embrace Wolcott's (1994) view on validity and validation in a qualitative study, addressing trustworthiness in the process of the investigation rather than at the end of the research. The research methodology, methods, and data collection as well as data analysis are to be outlined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

3.0 Chapter Overview

In this chapter, I first discuss research methodology and methods. Then I introduce the research sites, the time frame, participants, and the process of data collection. Then I elaborate on the stepwise data analyses in detail. Finally, I present an explication of my viewpoints and strategies taken to cope with the issues related to ethics and trustworthiness as well as my epistemological stance throughout the research.

3.1 Case Study as the Methodology

This study was intended to explore factors that influence CFL learning, the role of students' prior knowledge, particularly with respect to other languages they have learned, in their CFL learning, and how their learning experiences shape their motivational patterns, and how their motivational orientation impacts on their learning. This in turn determines the qualitative interpretive nature of my inquiries. Considering the focus of the research questions that involve the scrutiny of both students' interlanguage development and cognitive-affective factors, this study was framed in a qualitative, interpretive paradigm in which multicase study methodology was adopted. A more detailed discussion about the theoretical underpinnings and the characteristics of this approach is given in the next section.

3.1.1 Strength of Case Study Methods

Case study methods have been employed as the most appropriate approach for a study of this nature. A case study is "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon,

or social unit" (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). This study focuses on a social unit, two groups of CFL students. Yin (2003) summarizes the strength of case study approach as providing: a) "a naturalistic context and contemporariness of phenomenon" (p.13); b) "uncontrolled variables" (p.13); c) "multiple sources of evidence and triangulated data" (p.14). This approach would better facilitate a qualitative understanding of CFL learning than an experimental method.

Duff (2008) maintains, "case study research design entails establishing a clear, credible, coherent, and strong 'chain of evidence' " (p.109), because data collected through multiple methods in case study can be compared and triangulated to reinforce validity. Data collected for this study were from: a) an online questionnaire survey to confirm or refine the interview questions and see what can and should be observed in class; b) interviews with participants conducted for narrative data; c) non-participant observation conducted for descriptive data; and, d) participants' written work collected to check on students' progress in target language production and ascertain common problems in writing they were encountering. Data from these sources were triangulated and compared with previously developed propositions. In general, multiple data collection methods were employed for this study for enriched information to form propositions (Merriam, 1998).

3.1.2 Context and Interpretation of CFL Learning

The focus of this study is on students' CFL development which involves the scrutiny of their learning of Chinese linguistic elements and their motivational development. However, the context as related to the learning situation always needs to be considered. For instance, even at the very beginning level of Chinese when examining students' basic oral language or the way written Chinese is represented phonetically in *pinyin*, the more knowledge I have about students' prior language and learning experience, and their cultural background, the better I can understand the potential problems with the

language they use or the errors they make.

Exploring CFL and interlanguage development during the learning process, involves understanding the influence of students' prior knowledge and prior learning experiences; whereas understanding CFL learning necessitates understanding the context in which they are learning CFL. In this study, the contexts involved include: a) the instructional classroom setting where the students were learning CFL; b) students' L1 context; and especially, and, c) the target language context, including both Chinese linguistic and cultural elements. These factors are interrelated and multifaceted in the course of CFL interlanguage development. They need to be considered when examining CFL development.

3.2 The Focus of This Study and Sampling

Case study approach was adopted in this study since I intended to examine CFL learning with two groups of students as a "social unit" (Merriam, 1998, p. 27), in a "naturalistic context" with "multiple sources of evidence and triangulated data" (Yin, 2003, pp. 13-14). In terms of feasibility for a piece of research of moderate scale, it is impractical to conduct a large-scale study. With a limited number of cases, multiple data collection methods can be employed to get triangulated data. In case study, purposeful sampling is recommended by Merriam (1998). Due to the qualitative nature of this study, multicase study methods were considered as most appropriate.

The focus of the research questions is on CFL interlanguage development in the educational setting, which was ranked into two levels: 1) at the micro level, students' learning of the Chinese linguistic elements and crosslinguistic influence were explored; 2) at the macro level, students' motivation for CFL learning was examined.

Qualitative research "typically focuses in-depth intensively on small samples" (Patton, 1990, p. 169). Criterion-based purposeful sampling is the choice for this study to select "information-rich cases"

(Patton, 1990, p. 169).

Based on the purpose of this study, the participants of this research are defined as: adults including students studying in university degree programs in Canada, and professionals studying Chinese as a foreign language for interest or business, taking Chinese language courses at elementary and/or at near intermediate proficiency levels in Chinese language programs in two Canadian universities.

The rationale and impetus for the sampling are: a) student participants from two consecutive levels allow for comparison of students' learning characteristics and problems; b) students from two different Chinese programs at two universities make the comparison of two programs possible; c) adult students from different professional and academic background, and with diverse experience make it possible to compare different motivational orientations; and, d) the student population at the primary levels are reportedly much larger than those at the advanced levels, so the development of curriculum and pedagogy at these levels calls for more research.

3.3 The Research Sites and the Participants

The field research was conducted at two Chinese language programs in two universities in Canada. There were thirty-seven students, two instructors, for a total of thirty-nine participants from the two groups: Twenty-one students plus the instructor from Group A and sixteen students and the instructor from Group B. They all agreed to allow me to observe their classes, but not all of them consented to participate in the survey and interviews. Fifteen students from Group A, and fifteen from Group B, altogether thirty students responded to all or part of the online survey questions. Ten students among the thirty survey respondents were selected for individual and group interviews: six from Group A, and four from Group B. Two group interviews were also organized. The ten interview participants were selected to provide a diverse group with respect to their prior languages.

Stake (2005) makes a distinction of three types of case study: a) "intrinsic case, for understanding the intriguing nature of a particular case" (p.2); b) "instrumental case, to provide insights for wider issues" (p.2); or c) "multiple or collective case study" (p.2), "where a number of cases are studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon or general condition" (p.3). In this study, multiple cases were selected with the aim of understanding the nature of CFL learning with students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and to gain insights into the issues in CFL learning on a wider scope.

From May to July 2009, I started my research with Group A where students were at the elementary level. I first presented the information letter to the instructor and the students in the CFL class, and briefly introduced my research. After obtaining the instructor's permission, I distributed the consent form to the students in the class, and collected all the consent forms from students before I started to observe the class. All of the students (21 in total) agreed to let me observe their class. While collecting their consent form, I also asked them for their email address and emailed them the link to the online questionnaire survey. Fifteen out of twenty-one students responded to the online survey. After the survey was conducted, selecting participants for interview was the next step.

Canada is a multilingual/multicultural society. The university class reflects the diversity of the society. Thus, I consider it important to take the dicersity into account as it relates to the issue of resources needed to best assist such a range of students: some students have different L1s; while others have learned more than one or two foreign languages before taking the Chinese language course. To better represent multilingual and multicultural features among the students in the university community, I tried to recruit student participants with linguistically/culturally diverse backgrounds. My rationale for selecting participants for interview in the two groups of students was: to recruit participants with different L1s to see how students' different prior languages and cultural backgrounds might influence their CFL learning. Respondents were asked to put their L1 information at the end of their survey. Some

students did, while others did not provide their L1 information. Then I collected that information through email. Based on students' L1 information and the approximate ratio of 1:4 of the total number of students in the group, I selected six participants for interview. Among the six participants, there were three with English as L1, three with a language background other than English, such as Korean, Russian, and Vietnamese. These selected participants were deemed to represent a more diverse university student population in Canada in terms of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Confidentiality of participants' identity has been maintained. The following is some background information of the six interviewees from Group A. More detailed background information about the participants is given in chapter 6 in which a profile of each of them will be established to better illustrate the findings on their learning motivation. All the names used here are pseudonyms.

Victor was a sophomore of Russian background, majoring in history. He came to Canada with his parents when he was an elementary school student. Russian was his L1 and native language, so he was a Russian-English bilingual.

Derek was a sophomore of Korean background, majoring in economics. Korean was his L1 and native language, and English was his L2, so he was a Korean-English bilingual. He had learned some French at school and university before taking the Chinese course.

Ray was a senior university student with English as L1. He was born in Canada with an Italian background, but he had never learned to speak Italian. As all other students, he learned French in the Canadian educational system, and Chinese was the third language (L3) he ever learned. He majored in mathematics, wishing to pursue a career as a high school math teacher.

Vaine was a junior university student with a Vietnamese background, majoring in computer science. He grew up in Poland. His L1 was Vietnamese, used for daily oral communication at home and in the

Vietnamese community. His L2 was Polish, used for academic communication in the school setting. English was his L3 used as a functional language at the Canadian university. So Chinese was his L4. He was trilingual in a functional sense.

Marlene was a senior university student, born in Canada with English as her L1, majoring in child psychology. She had learned some French, was interested in China and Chinese culture, and hoped to travel in China some time in the future.

Helen was a sophomore, born and raised in Canada with English as her L1, majoring in economics. She had learned some French and some elementary Japanese before she took this Chinese course.

From September to December 2009, I continued my research with Group B where students' backgrounds were more diverse and included university students and in-service professionals. Their Chinese proficiency level ranged from elementary to near intermediate. The procedure of data collection was the same as with Group A. I presented the information letter and the consent form to students and the instructor in their CFL class, then collected the consent form before I started observing the class. All the students (16 in total) agreed to let me observe their class. I asked the students for their emails while collecting the consent form. Fifteen from this group consented to participate in the survey and responded to the online survey questions. My rationale for selecting participants for interview from Group B was the same as from Group A, with an attempt to recruit participants from more diverse language and cultural backgrounds. I selected four participants for interview in this group based on their L1 information and the same ratio 1:4 as in Group A. Among the four participants in this group, there were two participants with English L1 background, and two with other language backgrounds, namely, Italian and Hebrew. All the participants were university students, and their Chinese language proficiency was at the near intermediate to the intermediate level. Their demographic information is briefly outlined below.

More detailed information about these interview participants is given in Chapter 6. All the names used here are pseudonyms.

Maggie was in the final year of her undergraduate studies, born in Canada with English as her L1. She had a French background, but could not speak the language in a functional way although she could read and understand some French. She majored in anthropology, and had experience learning Chinese at the elementary level before; this was her second Chinese course.

Calvin was a sophomore from South Africa. He majored in economics. He was from an Italian background, and Italian was his native language and L1, while English was his dominant language. He had a complicated language background, and rich language learning experiences. He had learned some Chinese language and culture in a Taiwanese community when he was a primary school student in South Africa. Later he was sent back to Italy and studied at an Italian school for two years, taking a French course at the same time. He said he could speak Italian well, and could also speak French. He could be seen as trilingual in English, Italian, and French although his proficiency in the three languages might not be balanced. According to what he reported in the interview, English was his strongest language, then Italian and French were at about the same level enabling him to speak for communicative purposes in daily life. Chinese was the fourth language he had learned.

Bruce was a sophomore, born and raised in Canada with a Hebrew background, and Hebrew was his native language although English was his functional language. He majored in medical science. He studied Hebrew for a long time from elementary to high school, and also learned French. He studied Chinese mainly for his personal interest.

Morris was a Ph.D. student, a born Canadian, specializing in actuarial science. Before he started learning Chinese, he had learned some French as all other students educated in Canada. He had also

learned some Swedish when he stayed in Sweden for a few months for business. He was interested in Chinese for business reasons but also because he was engaged to a woman of Chinese origin.

The ten participants introduced above represent the main body of participants of this study. The background information of these ten participants was provided for the convenience of constructing a comparative cross-case or collective analysis to obtain triangulated evidence. The introduction and discussion of data collection methods and the specific procedures are detailed in the next section.

3.4 Data Collection Methods and the Procedure

Four data collection techniques were employed in this study to secure triangulated evidence for the research questions: a) online questionnaire survey; b) interview (individual and group); c) onsite observation; and, d) students' written work. The detailed procedure of the research through these methods will be presented separately in the following sections.

3.4.1 Questionnaire Survey

In this study, an online questionnaire survey was administered (see Appendix A). The questionnaire was composed of two parts: a) there were ten multiple-choice questions in Part A. Each question had four choices for answers and an option to specify additional comments. Respondents were asked to rank the choices designating --- from 5 as the most favorite, to 1 as the least favorite; b) there were thirty statements in Part B. Respondents were asked to choose a response to each of the statements, and rank each of their responses on the Likert-type Scale: 5) strongly agree; 4) agree; 3) disagree; 2) strongly disagree; 1) not applicable. Respondents also had the option to provide additional comments for each statement. Moreover, it's less intrusive due to the absence of the investigator, which can minimize

the possibility for the respondents to be influenced by the investigator.

This online survey was intended as a complement to the qualitative study (Yin, 2003). The survey questionnaire was constructed on the basis of the three research questions, and served to achieve the following three purposes: a) to collect preliminary information about students' thoughts, perspectives, interests, and motivation for CFL learning and instruction and to determine the possibility of finding potential participants for interview; b) to check if the interview questions were appropriate or feasible to collect the data for the inquiries in this study, and to confirm or refine interview questions; and, c) to obtain a preview of what could or should be observed during classroom observation.

At each research site, after I obtained the permission from the instructor and the students to do research, and collected their consent form, I started to distribute the survey questions to the students through email. Thirty out of thirty-nine participants respondended to or completed the survey. A more detailed analysis of the survey results will be presented in the next chapter.

3.4.2 Naturalistic Observation

In qualitative research, in addition to interview, naturalistic observation is a major method of data collection. Compared with interview, data from naturalistic observation is viewed as more authentic and natural because it is conducted in dynamic naturally occurring environments. While not conducting an ethnographic study, naturalistic observation with an ethnographic eye can enhance the validity of the data collected due to the unique ways of seeing and interpreting the phenomena under study. Rather than imposing researchers' own interpretation on participants, "ethnography assumes that we [investigators] must first discover what people actually do and the reasons they give for doing it before we can assign to their actions interpretations drawn from our own personal experience" (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 1-2). Hence I used some ethnographic methods in my data collection.

Observational data is obtained from firsthand encounters with the phenomena rather than secondhand account of the personal views of the interview participants (see Merriam, 1998, p.94). Hence, we can see that interview and observation are often interwoven with and complementary to each other. Interviews can be used to check the investigator's inferences about participants' performance in learning, their reaction to the immediate situation in instructional settings, and their feelings and thoughts. Conversely, data from observation can be used as reference points for subsequent interviews, which is particularly helpful for understanding ill-defined phenomena (Merriam, 1998). In classroom observation, I used a checklist (see Appendix B) to define what to observe in the CFL instructional setting with regard to the research questions. Although the focus of this study was not on the instructional methods; they could not be excluded from my observation since I observed students' reactions to and perceptions of instruction. The checklist for my observation included: a) the instructor's instructional approaches and methods including language input in class; b) student reactions to instruction; c) instructor-student communication in class; d) student peer interaction and collaboration in class; and, e) study activities in class.

My observation with Group A started from late May, 2009, and ended at the end of July. There were two sessions of class every week, and each session was one and a half hours long. Within Group A, the textbook used was *New Practical Chinese Reader* (Book 1) (2005, with a workbook and a CD of the text recordings). The predominant study activities in class were: a) the instructor led students to read *pinyin* and the text; b) the instructor asked the students to read *pinyin* or the text individually one by one, so everybody had a chance to practice and could be corrected immediately if they made errors; and, c) students practiced reading *pinyin* in pairs. Individual student oral presentation was not common in daily class routine, just at the end of the term for the final examination. When I first started to observe the class, I tried to observe the individual developmental process of student learning, particularly that of the

interview participants, but when students worked with the instructor or practiced with peers, the whole class became a little noisy. Sitting at the back of the classroom, I could not hear their individual pronunciation or reading clearly, but I could hear more clearly when the students were asked to read the text or *pinyin* individually.

During my classroom observation, I recorded the daily class routine through note taking, such as what the instructor taught and what the students did in class; and wrote my reflections separately while taking notes; or wrote my reflections after observation.

My observation with Group B started from early September until early December 2009. The textbook used by this group was *Intensive Spoken Chinese (New Approaches to Learning Chinese)*, (2001, Beijing: Sinolingual). This program puts the emphasis on improving students' oral Chinese, hence the choice of that particular textbook. But most of the time, the instructor used her own handouts to tailor the curriculum to the students' different proficiency levels and their different interest in the learning materials.

The class met once a week, and each class was two hours long. Within this group, I could sit closer, observe and hear more clearly as the class was smaller. The main study activities in this group were: a) the instructor led the students to read vocabulary, passages in the textbook or the handouts, mostly situated dialogues; b) students practiced in pairs speaking in the form of simple conversations, using the vocabulary and grammar they had learned; and, c) student individual presentations of what they had learned. As this group was at a higher level than Group A, they learned more grammar, and had more presentations in class. So I could obtain more information about students' progress, particularly their learning of tense-aspect in Chinese.

During the classroom observation, I viewed myself as a research instrument (Eisner, 1991), seeing the phenomena through the participants' eyes, and viewed all my participants as equal contributors to

my study (Cohen et al, 2007). Observation seems more important as a source of data since it advocates viewing the phenomena in naturalistic contexts. But writing field notes is equally important. According to Wolfinger (2002), "tacit knowledge is perhaps the most important consideration in determining how particular observation is deemed worthy of annotation" (p.87). Wolfinger (2002) emphasizes the influence of investigator's tacit knowledge in his/her decision on what should be recorded as field notes. In this research, in addition to the purpose of my study and my personal interest that might have influenced my decision of what was to be recorded as field notes, it was also inevitable that my prior knowledge of language teaching and my knowledge of both English and Chinese language and culture was involved in my decision-making of what was to be annotated in note-taking during the observation. In Wolfinger's (2002) view, being reflexive on the "seen but unnoticed" (p. 87) knowledge involved in writing field notes helped me achieve a better understanding of what to note down.

In addition to field notes while observing, I also recorded a three-hour student presentation in class in Group A which was part of their final examination for the term, and a two-hour presentation in Group B. The purpose of this recording was twofold: to scrutinize students' pronunciation in context; and to examine students' oral expression, using what they had learned in specific situations. When observing students in Group B in the two-hour class meeting every week, I also participated in the weekly one-hour conversation session where I had chances to observe some of the participants too. I used thematic categories and a priori codes, namely, the observation scheme (see Appendix C) from the existing literature (Corder, 1968, 1974; Gardner, 1985, 1996, 2010; R. Ellis, 1997; Dörnyei, 2003; Jarvis & Pevelenko, 2008) that was used as a guide in my data collection in observation. These categories and codes formed a baseline for this study, and facilitated the analysis of the data collected through other methods.

3.4.3 Interviews

In this qualitative study, interview was a major method of data collection. The main purposes of interview in this study were: a) to enter into the participants' perspectives, to obtain a special kind of information that I could not obtain through direct observation, such as feelings, thoughts, intensions; b) to check or confirm my classroom observations with participants. From the three types of interview: highly structured or standardized, semi-structured, and unstructured, or informal interview (Merriam, 1998), I chose semi-structured interview for my research to obtain some standardized information, and also to ask open-ended questions of all participants. This allowed me as the investigator more flexibility to modify some of the preconceived interview questions to capture the most important information which otherwise could not be obtained. On the other hand, it kept the data collection within the scope of the research and avoided redundant information.

It is crucial to try out interview questions and modify them on the basis of the data gathered at the initial stage (Merriam, 1998). In this study, I developed a set of core questions for initial interview. The questionnaire survey helped me modify the initial interview questions when interviewing each of the two groups of students at two different proficiency levels (see Appendix D for the interview questions).

Interviews in this study were conducted mainly with student participants, but also with each of the two instructors. During the research within the two Chinese language programs, I interviewed each of the instructors on two separate occasions: once at the beginning, and again at the end of the term. I conducted a twenty-minute interview with each of the instructors respectively, before my first presence in each of the classes, for the purpose of learning about the instructional plan, objectives and their expectations for students as well as some important strategies they intended to use for achieving their objectives. By the end of each of the terms, I conducted another twenty-minute interview, checking a few questions raised during my observations in class. These interviews were the wrap-up of my on-site

classroom observation with each group.

Due to many constraints and the intensive involvement into the fieldwork, it was impossible to interview all the thirty-nine participants. But altogether ten participants from the two groups were interviewed, 6 from group A and 4 from group B. Other than the initial interview with each of the ten participants, I also conducted two group interviews, and two follow-up interviews, and follow-up email communications to clarify their interview responses or some further questions on their learning. All the interviews were audio-recorded for transcription and detailed analysis at a later time. In addition to recordings of students' responses to the interview questions, I also recorded their reading of dialogues in their textbook for five minutes with each interview participant in order to examine their pronunciation in dialogue context. All the communications with the participants were conducted in English although the students were encouraged to speak Chinese whenever they were willing to.

Audio-recording seems to be the best practice to ensure the oral responses by the participants are preserved for analysis. I agree that verbatim transcription of recorded interviews provides the best database for analysis (Merriam, 1998, p. 88). In order to familiarize myself with the recorded data, to gain a deeper understanding, and to possibly catch the recurring patterns, I transcribed all recorded interviews myself. Transcribing aural data into written texts involves hermeneutic interpretation of participants' definitions and description of their situation. To enhance the trustworthiness of the data, I sent the transcriptions back to the participants to check with each of them on the accuracy of what they reported. All of them responded although most of them did not offer any feedback or comments.

3.4.4 Sample of Students' Written Documents

Apart from the online survey, interview and observation, students' written documents were also collected as an important data source, which were mainly used for error analysis, to scrutinize students'

learning of the Chinese linguistic system more specifically. Previous research on error analysis, such as errors in syntactic structures (R. Ellis, 1997) suggests that students' written work is an indispensable source for the analysis of students' errors. Written documents in this study were provided by the ten interview participants. They were mainly students' written assignments such as grammar exercises, work for reading comprehension, short essays, and quizzes in the semester I observed. These documents are the major source of evidence of student grammatical errors. Students' essays are a corpus for error analysis to a greater extent and deeper level. But in this study, the corpus of students' essays was small since their proficiency in the target language was limited and the participants did not have intensive assignments in this regard.

3.5 Data Analyses and Interpretation

There are different types of methods of data triangulation identified and advocated in the literature (Mackey & Gass, 2008; Duff, 2008). However, "methodological triangulation, using different research methods to investigate a particular phenomenon" is most relevant in this study (see Mackey & Gass, 2008, p. 181). The triangulation in data analysis in this study was conducted through comparative cross-case or collective case analyses based on individual case analysis, using data from different methods to describe and explain a phenomenon; and using cross-case analysis for triangulated evidence. In the next section, I first elaborate on how hermeneutics facilitated my understanding and interpretation of the phenomena observed and the data collected. Then I detail data analysis.

3.5.1 Hermeneutics and Interpretation

As a method of interpretation, "Hermeneutics focuses on interaction and language, it seeks to understand situations through the eyes of the participants, echoing the *Verstehen* approaches of Weber

and premised on the view that reality is socially constructed" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, in Cohen, et al, 2007, p. 27).

Hermeneutics is employed in this study to assist me in gaining understanding and interpretation of the phenomena observed; that is, participants' CFL learning, the influence of their prior knowledge, the improvement of linguistic competence, and the development of their motivation. Hence, the analysis covers both linguistic and meta-linguistic levels of analysis.

I see the data analysis as a process in which my ability to interpret both linguistic and meta-linguistic data was developed. The data analysis and interpretation in this study was ongoing with data collection. In the following section, I explain the specific process of category construction and the levels of analysis.

3.5.2 Data Analysis

At the stage of data analysis, speculation and inference are the key for interpretation, abstraction, and hypothesis generating (Merriam, 1998), leading to making informed guesses about the phenomena observed. In this study, the definition of the effects of the factors that influence students' learning was determined by a combination of participants' self-reports from the survey and the interview as well as my own inferences made through analysis of all types of data collected. I tried to employ an approach with ethnographic orientation to achieve hermeneutic interpretation of the data, and avoid, in the data analysis, the divorce of the data from the participants, their backgrounds, their prior learning experiences, and the sociocultural context, with an attempt to develop an understanding of the phenomena explored.

The data analysis in this study involved two stages (Merriam, 1998): "within-case analysis" and "cross-case analysis" (p.194). Data from each individual case was organized and analyzed briefly to illustrate a profile of each participant to make preparations for cross-case analysis which yielded the

definitive findings.

In the literature (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), there are generally two types of codes: a priori codes and grounded or inductive codes. In this study, a priori codes were from prior studies or established theories, or research questions to be addressed, or my own feelings about the data. Grounded or inductive codes, emerged from the data collected, included the new themes that arose from data analysis. My native-speaker knowledge of students' target language Mandarin Chinese, my experience of learning English as a L2 and my knowledge of English language and culture served to facilitate my analysis, understanding and interpretation of students' CFL learning in which English was the medium of instruction and communication.

3.5.3 Levels of Analysis

There were two types of data in this study, hence, two levels of analysis were conducted. The two types of data are: a) linguistic data collected from participants' written work and part of the audio-recorded data (students' reading of the dialogues from their textbook), which were mainly for error analysis; and b) non-linguistic or narrative data from interview and observation. The analysis of the data in this study was processed at two levels: a) error analysis based on the linguistic data; and b) analysis of student motivation based on the narrative data.

The analysis of the linguistic data was derived from error analysis. Corder's (1974) and Brown's (2000) principles for error analysis were employed as a guide (see Corder, 1974, pp.126-131; Brown, 2000, pp. 216-226). The analysis of student motivation in CFL learning was based on the data collected in English such as survey results, interview transcripts and some of the observation notes. Based on the analysis of the ten participants' interview responses, a profile of each of them as an individual case was established. Each profile included their linguistic backgrounds, the origin of their interest and

motivational orientation in taking the Chinese course, their career goals, and the development of their motivation. Data analysis of student motivation was intended to identify the interplay of the influences of students' prior knowledge and learning experience on the formation of their motivational orientation; and the development of their motivation in CFL learning situation.

3.5.4. The Procedure of Analysis and Category Construction

The above mentioned levels of analysis served as a general frame for the data analysis and coding in this study. When coding the data, I drew on Merriam's (1998) methods to construct the categories (see Merriam, 1998, pp.183-4). Data were first organized into two sets before coding: a) linguistic data in the form of CFL interlanguage, including the audio recording of participants' dialogue reading and student presentations in class, observation field notes, and students' written work, for error analysis and crosslinguistic/cultural comparison; b) data in English from online survey results, observation field notes, and interview transcripts for the analysis of student motivation in CFL learning. In the process of data coding, most of the codes were a priori codes from the existing literature in SLA, especially from ESL and EFL literature, but grounded codes also emerged.

The data analysis proceeded through four steps: a) organize all the data collected to prepare for analysis and coding; b) code and sub-code the data; c) triangulate data from different sources, associating the established codes with other types of data; and, d) compare the data to check if they were properly coded, and the codes were representative.

In general, the data analysis was conducted through the above four steps. More detailed procedure of error analysis and the analysis of student motivation are given in Chapter 5 and 6 respectively. In the following sections, I discuss the ethics and trustworthiness as well as my epistemological stance in this study.

3.6 Ethics and Trustworthiness

My field research experience has taught me that the legitimacy of participants' identities, investigators' positioning in research fields, and representation of participants' voices inevitably involves ethical issues.

In view of the contingency of ethical issues that intersect with the issues of identity, positioning, and representation, I paid special attention to "microethics" (Gullemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 265); namely, ethical issues that may not be covered by the principles from the ethics review committee. Field research in the complex research sites is also a dynamic, socially constructed process in which ethical issues may arise unexpectedly and require the investigator's immediate response (see Gullemin & Gillam, 2004, p.264). Ethical issues of this type may appear trivial and are often ignored but suggest potential harm for the research participants. For instance, one of my participants was very careful not to touch political issues when talking about his interest in Chinese culture. I could sense that, so I was also cautious not to invoke similar questions even though the questions were about Chinese culture. On the contrary, another participant showed his interest in introducing sensitive political issues when talking about his language and cultural background, but I just avoided it. So it is important to adjust the research questions on such occasions. I did pay attention to my interview questions to avoid intrusion into participants' privacy, but also to collect appropriate data for my inquiries. I acknowledge that "ethical tensions are part of the everyday practice of doing research" (Gullemin & Gillam, 2004, p.261). Securing the approval from ethics review committee is one thing. It is equally important to give attention to the microethics. Being reflexive kept me aware of and alert to ethically important moments that might occur anywhere at any time in the actual research process.

For a qualitative study, construction of meaning is more critical than hypothesis testing.

Understanding and interpretation are the primary concerns of this study. Therefore, evaluation of the validity and credibility should be based on assessment of how the interviews are constructed; whether the content of the documents is properly analyzed; if the conclusion rests upon data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Kvale (2002) maintains "validity in a qualitative study should be based on whether the study has examined what it was intended to examine" (p.308-309).

In this study, trustworthiness is enhanced through the entire research process, that is, to check with the participants for feedback or to confirm what they provided; to check the representativeness of the data, and triangulate the validity of data (triangulation was conducted both across cases and through different sources of data); to weigh the evidence, and identify the negative evidence, and to examine rival explanations. In the following section, I present my epistemological positioning in the process of the research and knowledge production in this study; my writing and my view towards representation in writing.

3.7 Epistemological Positioning

It is natural for researchers as human beings to bring to the investigation preconceived meanings and symbolism (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). As the researcher I was aware of the influence of my role and my identity with the participants in the research field. I was concerned not to foreground my researcher role as the subject or manipulator, and not to diminish the participants' role in the research, so that my self-positioning and the positioning of the other are not affected, and my interpretation of the situation under study is not distorted.

As Wolcott (2008) emphasizes, it is important for the researcher to position himself/herself as "a data collector, a sensitive observer, a human recorder rather than a researcher, recording as accurately as possible the phenomena under observation" (p. 69). I considered avoiding identifying myself as a

researcher as an attempt to minimize the influence of my personal biases on my understanding and interpretation of the phenomena and my participants' viewpoints. Furthermore, I viewed the process of my research as a process of coming to know myself, a process of shaping my new identity through a new way of knowing.

3.7.1 Reflexivity and My Way of Seeing

Exploring L2 learning experiences entails interpretive, cross-cultural, and comparative perspectives. In Wolcott's (2008) view, "Cross-cultural experience drawn from firsthand experience is considered to be highly desirable" (p.201). I do have cross-cultural and L2 learning experience which may have shaped my cross-cultural perspectives in my research and my identity in my relation with the participants. As a native Chinese myself, in view of Chinese culture, I'm an insider. Having L2 learning experience of English and English culture, I'm not completely an outsider of English culture. My familiarity with the Chinese language and culture and my learning experience of English as a L2 greatly helped me understand some of the circumstances English-speaking students encountered in their Chinese L2 learning, such as the influence from their English phonetic-phonological system in their learning of Chinese tones; and other challenges from the Chinese grammatical system.

Organizing and processing data in a cross-cultural and comparative framework allowed me to uncover patterns from a familiar culture (for me, it is Chinese culture) that were so obvious and pervasive that they might have otherwise escaped my attention; or patterns from cultural phenomena that are less familiar to me (like English culture). My cross-cultural experience does bring me advantages in data collection and data analysis and enables me to better understand participants from their standpoints. However, my field research has also taught me that overusing these advantages may result in bias and deviation from participants' views. In the literature, reflexivity is not seen as a research technique or

research method, but a question related to researchers' ontological and epistemological stands that shape the foundation of research. According to Lynch (2000), "the meaning and epistemic virtues ascribed to reflexivity are relative to particular conceptions of human nature and social reality" (p.26). Lynch advocates an ethno-methodological conception of reflexivity without privileging any theoretical or methodological standpoint. For me in this study, reflexivity was maintained to bracket any preconceptions in order to avoid their possible influence on my interpretation of the data and my conclusions from the findings.

3.7.2 Reflexivity and My Preconceptions

On the one hand, I have to be reflexive to minimize the influence of my prior knowledge and experience when projecting a piece of research. On the other hand, I do need preconceptions, and prior knowledge to initiate a piece of research. As Cohen et al (2007) suggest, I acknowledge the influence of my prior experiences and knowledge on my research. I am aware that my background, interest orientation, knowledge as well as personal experience have inevitably initiated and influenced my research, and even set the direction of my research,as this study was projected on the basis of my own prior experience of L2 learning and instruction.

I understand the importance of acknowledging the influence of one's prior knowledge on one's interpretation of the phenomena observed. Within the progression of the research, I did make a point of analyzing the data collected with an open mind and was always ready to modify the initial presuppositions and position where necessary. I understand it is particularly important to ensure that the data collection procedures and the data collected are maximally naturalistic. Therefore, I also acknowledge that my prior experience as an L2 learner plus my knowledge of the Chinese language and culture have been used as advantages in my research in that they facilitated my interpretation of

participants' learning experiences. My reflexivity was maintained to minimize the dominance of my preconceptions on my interpretation of the data to improve the credibility and validity of this study.

3.8. Writing and Representation

Due to the nature of my investigation with an interpretive ethnographic orientation, it is paramount to construct meaning of participants' experiences that represent their perceptions of their own experiences. It is a difficult task for the investigator to fulfill because of two contributing factors: First, it is widely held that social science researchers are expected to represent participants' multiple voices while preserving integrity and diversity of messages. But each participant as a human being is unique because of their unique background and characteristics. Each may bring different preferences and perspectives to their interpretation of their experiences. For my part as the investigator, my perspective may be different from those of the participants. In this regard, it is almost impossible for me to represent all of the participants, but I did make efforts to establish a dialogic and negotiable relationship with the participants in my field research, with an attempt to better represent participants' voices.

3.9. Summary

In this chapter, the research methodology, the data collection methods and the process of data collection have been presented. The ethical issues and the trustworthiness as well as my epistemological standpoint in this study have been discussed. The details of the stepwise data analysis, the emergent themes, the findings and discussion are to be given in Chapters 5 and 6. A summary of the survey results, the explication and discussion of the findings from the survey are to be presented in the next chapter, Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4 STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF CFL LEARNING

4.0 Chapter Overview

A summary of the findings from the online survey results is presented in this chapter (See Appendix A for the survey questions as sent to CFL students). The findings are summarized into three themes which are intended to be compared or triangulated with other findings in the later chapters. The three themes are as follows: 1) participants' positive attitudes towards the Chinese language course (see Question 1 in Part A; Statements 11-17 in Part B); 2) participants' views on CFL learning (see Questions 2-5 in Part A; Statements 18-23 in Part B); 3) participants' interest in the learning materials (see Questions 7, 8, 9, 10 in Part A; Statements 24-33 in Part B), and, 4) participants' views on instructional methods (see Question 6 in Part A, 34-40 in Part B). The findings are discussed in the following sections.

Participants' responses to the ten questions in Part A and thirty Likert-type questions in Part B are tabulated thematically and quantified for the numerical data. Following are the notes about the terms (as asterisked in Table 5) that are used in all the tables in this chapter.

Numbers for Ranking: 0 indicates no respondent marked the choice; 1 – 5 in the scale, 1 refers to the least, 5 refers to the greatest in amount or extent. Thirty respondents answered some or all of the questions. The number of respondents who responded to a particular question is indicated for each item. ***Total Resp*** refers to the total number of respondents in a specific question in the survey; ***Resp*** refers to the number of the respondents who ranked the question, or marked on a Likert Scale; ***Percent*** refers to the percentage of the respondents to a question from the total number of the responding participants.

Among the participants who responded to the survey questions some were from the beginners' class and some from the intermediate class which influenced to some extent their choices with regard to the difficulty of certain features of learning Chinese. However, as the survey was designed to gather

preliminary information only and to inform subsequent questions for interviews, and because the overall numbers of respondents were small, I did not distinguish between the classes for the survey information but will address differences in subsequent chapters on specific findings. In addition, as some of the students in Group B were also at the beginning level as those in Group A, the difference in the level of proficiency between the two groups was not clear-cut. I was not concerned with separating out data from the survey according to class level. Thus, the survey results must be read in the context that they capture initial responses to the experience of learning Chinese in the courses. The later interviews, conducted near the end of the semester courses, allow for a deeper understanding by the participants of the challenges in learning the Chinese language.

4.1 Students' Positive Attitudes towards CFL Learning

The numerical data from Question 1 in Part A and Statements 11-17 in Part B indicate that more respondents considered the advantage of taking the Chinese course as helping them understand Chinese people, Chinese culture (see Table 5), and learn about China (78% of the respondents, in Table 6, S11), opening a window to a new world (86% of the respondents, S13), broadening their scope of knowledge (almost 100% of the respondents, S14), or developing their language ability (almost 100%, S15). Fewer respondents viewed it as an advantage to prepare them for better employment opportunities (see Q 1, Table 5), or get credits for a degree.

Table 5 Participants' Views on the Advantages of Taking the Chinese Course

Question 1: What do you think is (are) the advantage(s) in taking a Chinese course?							
Numbers for Ranking* / Multiple Choices	Total Resp*	0	1	2	3	4	5

C1. I can get credits for my degree	Resp*	30	3	9	5	5	4	4
	Percent*		10	30	16.7	16.7	13.3	13.3
C2. I would like to travel around China in the future	Resp	30	2	4	6	7	9	2
	Percent		6.7	13.3	20	23.3	30	6.7
C3. I may have more employment opportunities	Resp	30	4	6	5	6	3	6
	Percent		13.3	20	16.7	20	10	20
C4. It helps me better understand Chinese people and their culture	Resp	30		4	7	6	8	5
	Percent			13.3	23.3	20	26.7	16.7

Table 6 Participants' View on the Advantages of Taking the Chinese Course (Statements 11 – 17)

Likert Scale / Statements		Total Resp	Not Applic	Strongly Disagr	Disag	Agree	Strongly Agree
S11: I chose the Chinese course because I want to learn more about China.	Resp	27	1	1	4	12	9
	Percent		3.7	3.7	15.3	44.4	33.3
S12: I chose this course because I think it facilitates my career goals.	Resp	27	1	2	7	12	5
	Percent		3.7	7.4	23.3	44.4	18.5
S13: I chose to take the Chinese course because I think learning a new language opens a window for me to see a new world.	Resp	27	0	1	0	9	17
	Percent		0	3.7	0	33.3	63
S14: Learning Chinese broadens my horizon of knowledge.	Resp	27	0	0	0	11	16
	Percent		0	0	0	40.8	59.2
S15: Learning Chinese develops my language ability.	Resp	27	0	0	0	11	16
	Percent		0	0	0	40.8	59.2
S16: Learning a new language may foster my academic growth	Resp	27	1	0	4	8	14
	Percent		3.7	0	15.3	30	52
S17: Learning Chinese provides me with a new perspective on my mother tongue.	Resp	27	2	3	1	9	12
	Percent		7.4	11	3.7	33.3	44.4

Respondents' positive attitudes towards CFL learning show their motivational orientations in the target language learning, which suggest that respondents tended to be integratively (see C2, C4 in Table 5) rather than instrumentally oriented (see C1, C3 in Table 5), since the main reason for them to choose

the Chinese language course involved their desire to learn about the target language community; and the advantages of taking the Chinese language course. Although the reasons for which the respondents chose to take the Chinese language course can be classified into two categories: integrative and instrumental (Gardner, 1985), I avoided categorizing student motivation on integrative-instrumental dichotomy. In Gardner's view (2010), a student might be both integratively and instrumentally oriented, as "an individual could be integratively oriented and still see the instrumental value of language study" (p.17). Conversely, "it is possible that an individual would be predominantly oriented to learn the language for some instrumental reasons, yet see the potential (but less personally important) relevance of some integrative ones" (p.18). Some of the survey respondents in this study seemed to be more integratively oriented while others appeared more instrumentally oriented. It is also possible that some of the respondents chose the Chinese language course for both integrative and instrumental reasons. Further findings regarding students' motivational orientation and the development of their motivation in CFL learning were expected to be obtained through participant interviews.

4.2 Participants' Views on CFL Learning

Participants' views on CFL learning involve Questions 2-5 in Part A, Statement 18-23 in Part B. Responses to Question 2 (see Table 7) indicate that most participants tended to find speaking with correct tones in complete utterances difficult. Then listening comprehension seemed to be the next difficult task; while some of them also found Chinese characters difficult. It should be noted as a caveat to these apparent findings that the survey was carried out at the beginning of the course, at a time when respondents, particularly the beginning class would have had little or no exposure to expressing Chinese tones in utterances or working with Chinese characters. Subsequent interviews carried out near the end of the course showed a greater appreciation of the difficulties of tones and characters in learning Chinese.

Table 7 Participants' Views on CFL Learning Tasks

Question 2: Which of the following learning tasks are difficult for you?								
Multiple Choices \ Numbers for Ranking		Total Resp	0	1	2	3	4	5
C1. Memorizing tones	Resp	30	3	3	7	8	4	4
	Percent		10.3	10.3	24.1	27	13.3	13.3
C2. Recognizing Chinese characters	Resp	29	2	8	5	6	4	4
	Percent		6.9	27.6	17.2	20.7	13.8	13.8
C3. Listening comprehension	Resp	29	2	2	8	5	9	3
	Percent		6.9	6.9	27.6	17.2	31	10.3
C4. Speaking with correct tones	Resp	29		1	4	8	9	7
	Percent			3.4	13.8	27.6	31	24.1

Data from Question 3 (see Table 8) show that for some students, building vocabulary seemed to be the priority; for other students who might have more vocabulary, how to use the vocabulary in specific contexts seemed to be more problematic. As in general there were more students at the beginning level than those at the intermediate level, hence it is imaginable that most students did not have much exposure to spoken Chinese nor experience of speaking Chinese for communication. Their responses need to be interpreted with this circumstance considered.

Table 8 Participants' Views on Their Problems with Oral Chinese

Question 3: What problems do you think you have when you try to speak Chinese?								
Multiple Choices \ Numbers for Ranking		Total Resp	0	1	2	3	4	5
C1. I cannot express myself clearly in Chinese	Resp	29	6	3	6	6	4	4
	Percent		20.7	10.3	20.7	20.7	13.8	13.8
C2.Sometimes I do not know what vocabulary to choose to express myself	Resp	29	4	5	3	5	5	7
	Percent		13.8	17.2	10.3	17.2	17.2	24.1

appropriately								
C3.Sometimes I feel like what I said cannot make me understood	Resp	29	3	2	9	9	6	
	Percent		10.3	6.8	31	31	20.6	
C4.I often feel short of vocabulary to express myself	Resp	29	4		6	4	8	7
	Percent		13.8		20.6	13.8	27.6	24.1

The findings reveal students' problems in CFL learning varied from phonological, to orthographic and grammatical levels. As CFL learning took place in the Canadian context, students lacked exposure to the native speaker community. They had no experience practicing the language in real life situations, which added to their difficulty in CFL learning. In a cognitive linguistic view (Corder, 1974; Croft & Cruse, 2004; Adamson, 2009; R. Ellis, 1997), linguistic knowledge is conceptual. Language learning is a cognitive process, usage-based, and inseparable from our lived experience. CFL students at the lower levels did not have much exposure to the native language environment, which could affect their concept formation. Due to the individual differences in both language and culture among the participants, the influencing factors that contribute to their problems in the target language learning may also vary. Further findings in regard to students' problems in learning the Chinese linguistic elements could be yielded from other methods such as observation and participant interviews as well as their written work, which are to be illustrated in the next chapter.

Question 4 (see Table 9) is about how students learned the Chinese tones. The numerical data reveal that some of the students had more opportunities to practice Chinese tones with Chinese friends.

Table 9 Participants' Strategies in Learning the Chinese Tones

Question 4: How do you learn Chinese tones?							
Numbers for Ranking	Total	0	1	2	3	4	5

Multiple Choices		Resp						
C1.Practicing with the teacher in class	Resp	28	1	4	2	5	8	8
	Percent		3.6	14.3	7.1	17.9	28.6	28.6
C2.Practicing with audio materials on player	Resp	28	3	7	6	6	5	1
	percent		10.7	25	21.4	21.4	17.9	3.6
C3.Practicing with audiovisual resources on computer/TV	Resp	28	4	5	10	5	2	2
	Percent		14.3	17.9	35.7	17.9	7.1	7.1
C4.By memorization	Resp	28	3	1	3	3	11	7
	Percent		10.7	3.6	10.7	10.7	39.3	25

More respondents preferred to practice the tones with the instructor in class, or to learn the tones by memorization. Much fewer respondents learned from the audio-visual materials such as the CD with the textbook and TV programs at home, as most participants seemed to rely much on the classroom instruction. They may not have had enough time to learn extra materials except the materials in the textbook and what the instructor taught them in class.

Participants' responses to Question 4 illustrate Vygotsky's notion of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p.272-3) that learning needs to be assisted by a more capable individual; the instructor can play an important role in scaffolding learning, to discover and capture the teachable moments, to bring out learners' full potential, and maximally facilitate student learning. For the CFL students at the beginning level to develop their linguistic competence, an expert's assistance appeared more important and necessary than for the students at the higher proficiency levels. First, the CFL students at the beginning level needed to develop learning strategies, such as where to find resources and how to use the resources, e.g. finding online resources, typing Chinese characters on a computer, or consulting a Chinese dictionary, using *pinyin*. According to Anderson (1985), O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p.25-26), language learning strategies, in terms of

process, can be described as three stages: cognitive, associative, and autonomous. For adult CFL students at the beginning levels in this study, although they were cognitively developed, they needed to learn the basic skills such as typing on the computer and consulting a dictionary by using *pinyin* or radicals before they could become strategic learners, associating what they had learned with their current learning to improve their linguistic knowledge and competence, and move to autonomous stage. They needed to be trained to conduct the tasks, using the right *pinyin* or radical to look up a character or a word in a dictionary, and then choose the right character or word from the list according to the context where the character or the word is used.

The data from Question 5 (see Table 10) show most participants chose to practice handwriting to help memorizing Chinese characters, while fewer participants chose to learn Chinese characters by understanding the meaning of the words or the meaning of the radicals.

Table 10 Participants' Strategies in Learning Chinese Characters

Question 5: How do you learn Chinese characters?								
Numbers for Ranking / Multiple Choices		Total Resp	0	1	2	3	4	5
C1.Memorizing by understanding the meaning of the word or the meaning of the radicals of the word	Resp	28	3	7	3	6	5	4
	Percent		10.7	25	10.7	21.4	17.9	14.3
C2.Memorizing the pronunciation	Resp	28	5	1	14	7	1	
	Percent		17.9	3.6	50	25	3.6	
C3.Learning by reading	Resp	28	5	5	5	10	2	1
	Percent		17.9	17.9	17.9	35.7	7.1	3.6
C4.Practicing handwriting to make memorization easier	Resp	28	1	2			13	12
	Percent		3.6	7.1			46.4	42.9

Learning Chinese characters by practicing handwriting to memorize them seemed to be rote

learning, a lower level of learning strategy for the beginners who have not learned much target language knowledge, and not developed learning strategies yet. Learning characters by understanding the meaning seems to be more suitable for the students at the higher proficiency levels. In a cognitive linguistic view (Robinson & N. Ellis, 2008), linguistic knowledge is conceptual, and the knowledge of language is established on the basis of actual language use. Learning characters by understanding the meaning seems to be more difficult for the beginners, as they had not learned much about the features of Chinese characters, nor do they have enough experience using the language in real-life situations. But it results in better understanding if one learns Chinese characters by grasping the meaning, as it is the characters in Chinese, not *pinyin*, that represent the meaning system.

In terms of students' views and interest in learning the Chinese linguistic elements (see Table 11), sixty-nine percent (69%) of participants (see S18) showed their ease and interest in learning the Chinese characters. However, most participants agreed (see S19, 70.2% in total, 22.2% strongly agree, 48% agree) that Chinese characters were difficult due to their complex structures.

Table 11 Participants' Views and Interests in Learning the Chinese linguistic Elements (Statements 18 – 23)

Statements \ Likert Scale		Total Resp	Not Applic	Strongly Disag	Disag	Agree	Strongly Agree
S18: It is easy and interesting to learn Chinese logographic characters	Resp	26	0	4	4	14	4
	Percent		0	15.3	15.3	53.8	15.3
S19: Chinese characters are hard to remember because of their complex structures.	Resp	27	0	0	8	13	6
	Percent		0	0	30	48	22.2
S20: Chinese tones are difficult to remember because there is no logic connection with the characters.	Resp	27	3	6	10	3	5
	Percent		11	22.2	37	11	18.5
S21: Chinese tones are not so difficult if you practice a lot from the	Resp	27	1	0	7	15	4
	Percent		3.7	0	26	55.5	15.3

very beginning.							
S22: Chinese grammar is easier than that in my first language because there is no verb conjugation.	Resp	27	3	4	4	11	5
	Percent		11	15.3	15.3	40.7	18.5
S23: Chinese grammar is not easy because I have to learn what is different from that in my first language and make sure I'm not confused.	Resp	27	1	1	11	12	2
	Percent		3.7	3.7	40.7	44.4	7.4

In learning Chinese tones, responses to Question 2 (see Table 7) show that most students felt Chinese tones were difficult, especially when they were used in sequence, but seventy-one percent (71%) of the respondents agreed (see Table 11, S21, 15.3% strongly agree, 55.5% agree) that Chinese tones were not difficult if one practised a lot from the beginning. Why did participants have different views on learning Chinese tones? It is conceivable that their previous linguistic background and learning experience might have influenced their perception on Chinese tones. It is also possible that when some participants said the tones were not difficult, they might refer to the tones pronounced individually; while others said it was difficult, they might refer to the tones in connected speech. It was expected that further findings in this regard would be obtained from the interviews with participants.

As for the learning of the grammar, More than fifty-nine percent (59.5%) of the respondents agreed (see S22 in Table 11, 18.5% strongly agree, 41% agree) that Chinese grammar was easier than the grammar of their L1 as there are no verb conjugations in Chinese. About fifty-two percent (52%) of the respondents (see Table 11, S23, 7.4% strongly agree, 44.4% agree) held that Chinese grammar was not easy as it might be confused with the grammar of their L1. As mentioned above, most of the respondents were at the beginning proficiency level and had not learned much grammar yet when they responded to the survey questions, further responses from participants' interviews may reveal the

reasons behind their different views on Chinese grammar.

4.3 Participants' Views on the Learning Materials

The findings from the survey results about participants' views on the learning materials were mainly obtained from Questions 7, 8, 9, 10 in Part A; and Statements 24-33 in Part B.

As for participants' interest in the topics of their learning materials, data from Question 7 (see Table 12) show more students were interested in the topics related to Chinese history, culture, politics, business and economics or news about China than those who were interested in Chinese literature.

Table 12 Participants' Interest in Learning Materials

Question 7: What topics of the learning materials do you think are most interesting or useful for you?								
Numbers for Ranking / Multiple Choices		Total Resp	0	1	2	3	4	5
C1.Chinese literature	Resp	28	6	4	8	4	5	1
	Percent		21.4	14.3	28.6	14.3	17.9	3.6
C2.Chinese history, culture, and politics	Resp	28	3	2	4	2	5	12
	Percent		10.7	7.1	14.3	7.1	17.9	42.9
C3.Business and economic development in China	Resp	28	6	4	2	10	4	2
	Percent		21.4	14.3	7.1	35.7	14.3	7.1
C4.The latest news about China	Resp	28	7	3	3	4	9	2
	Percent		25	10.7	10.7	14.3	32.1	7.1

Data from Q8 in Table 13 indicate sixty-three percent (63%) to seventy-four percent (74%) of the respondents obtained the learning resources from the instructor, and the rest had access to resources through communicating with Chinese people, or from the media. Fewer of them viewed travelling around China as a way to access the resources about Chinese and China. This again reflects the value of the instructor's role in student learning, to select appropriate learning materials that match students'

academic level and interest, and to possibly maximize student learning.

Table 13 Participants' Access to CFL Learning Resources

Question 8: What resources can you access to learn Chinese culture in your CFL learning?								
Multiple Choices \ Numbers for Ranking		Total Resp	0	1	2	3	4	5
C1.From the instructor	Resp	27	1	3	3	3	7	10
	Percent		3.7	11	11	11	25.9	37
C2.Through communication with Chinese people	Resp	27	2	2	6	6	6	5
	Percent		7.4	7.4	22.2	22.2	22.2	18.5
C3.Travelling around China	Resp	27	8	7	7	1	3	1
	Percent		30	25.9	25.9	3.7	11	3.7
C4.From TV programs, movies; or books and textbooks; or magazines and newspaper	Resp	27	5	2	3	9	6	2
	Percent		18.5	7.4	11	33.3	22.2	7.4

In terms of participants' views on the accessibility of CFL learning resources, data from Question 8 (see Table 13) indicate that most participants just made use of the learning resources from the instructor; fewer of them had access to resources through communicating with Chinese people, or from the media. As "the assistance assumption" in ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978, p.41) holds, any learning needs to be assisted by a more capable individual. This forefronts the importance of the instructor's role in student learning, selecting appropriate learning materials that are attuned to students' academic level and their interest as well as their backgrounds to maximally facilitate and motivate student learning.

In terms of students' interest in the topics in Chinese culture, most respondents (see Table 14, question 9 in Part A) showed their interest in Chinese historical culture such as Chinese proverbs, idioms, ancient Chinese scientific inventions, and Chinese popular culture.

Table 14 Participants' Interest in Chinese culture

Question 9: What aspects of Chinese culture are most interesting to you?								
Multiple Choices \ Numbers for Ranking		Total Resp	0	1	2	3	4	5
C1.Chinese historical: Chinese proverbs, idioms; ancient Chinese inventions	Resp	27	1	1	5	8	6	6
	Percent		3.7	3.7	18.5	29.6	22.2	22.2
C2.Folk culture: practice or observance of folk festivals	Resp	27	1	4	9	5	7	1
	Percent		3.7	14.8	33.3	18.5	26	3.7
C3.Chinese popular culture: popular songs, fashion and apparel, food, and Chinese life style	Resp	27	2	3	2	5	6	9
	Percent		7.4	11	7.4	18.5	22.2	33.3
C4.Chinese business culture: attitudes and beliefs as well as practices of business communication.	Resp	27	3	4	7	5	5	3
	Percent		11	14.8	26	18.5	18.5	11

Responses to Question 10 (see Table 15) indicate that some respondents (63.3%) were interested in Chinese culture because it could enrich their knowledge of Chinese people and the society; while others (43.3% to 46.7% of the respondents) were interested in Chinese culture due to their experience with or access to Chinese communities.

Table 15 Participants' Reasons for Their Interest in Chinese Culture

Question 10: I'm interested in Chinese culture because			
Multiple Choices (of reasons)	Total Resp	Number of Resp	Percent of Resp
C1.I have experience communicating with my Chinese friends	30	14	46.7
C2.I have access to Chinese community	30	13	43.3
C3.It is part of my heritage	30	4	13.3
C4.It enriches and facilitates Chinese language learning	30	19	63.3

Data in S24 - S33 in Part B (see Table 16) reveal that sixty-three (63%) to ninety percent (90%) of the respondents acknowledged the benefits of integrating topics regarding Chinese culture into CFL learning. Target language culture as the target community stock of knowledge (Kramsch, 1993, Saville-Troike, 2003) could enrich their language learning, and make their learning more interesting. It could also develop their Chinese cultural sensitivity.

Table 16 Participants' Views on Integrating Literature and Culture in Chinese Language Learning (Statements 24 – 33)

Statements \ Likert Scale		Total Resp	Not Applic	Strongly Disag	Disag	Agree	Strongly Agree
S24: Learning Chinese language is a way of learning Chinese culture in that some Chinese culture is integrated in the instructional materials in the textbook.	Resp	27	2	1	7	14	3
	Percent		7.4	3.7	30	51.8	11
S25: Learning Chinese language makes me more aware of and more sensitive to Chinese culture.	Resp	27	0	0	3	17	7
	Percent		0	0	11	63	30
S26: Target language culture makes target language learning more interesting and motivating.	Resp	27	4	0	1	14	8
	Percent		14.8	0	3.7	51.8	30
S27: Chinese culture refers not only to cultural facts like table manners, etc, but also Chinese people's cultural values and beliefs.	Resp	27	1	0	1	15	10
	Percent		3.7	0	3.7	55.6	37
S28: I'm interested in Chinese culture because I'm interested in learning about China and Chinese people.	Resp	27	0	0	3	16	8
	Percent		0	0	11	59.2	30
S29: I'm interested in Chinese literature because it offers new perspectives on my first language literature.	Resp	27	6	2	10	9	0
	Percent		22.2	7.4	37	33.3	0
S30: I'm interested in Chinese literature because it helps me better	Resp	27	6	1	6	10	4

understand Chinese culture.	Percent		22.2	3.7	22.2	37	14.8
S31: I'm interested in Chinese culture because it facilitates my language learning.	Resp	27	3	0	7	13	4
	Percent		11	0	30	48	14.8
S32: I'm interested in Chinese culture because it helps me learn about China and Chinese people.	Resp	26	2	0	0	15	9
	Percent		7.4	0	0	55.6	33.3
S33: I'm interested in the topics on business and economy in China as they are related to my future career	Resp	27	3	4	6	10	4
	Percent		11	15	22	37	14.8

The majority of the participants (see Statements 27, 28, 31, 32, 33) showed their interest in learning Chinese culture as it helped them learn more about Chinese people and Chinese cultural values, and facilitated their learning of the Chinese language. Data from S29, S30 show there was a small number of respondents who were interested in Chinese literature. In S29, more than thirty-three percent (33.3%) of the respondents agreed; but over forty-four percent (44.4%) of them disagreed that Chinese literature could offer new perspectives on their L1. Thus in comparison, many more respondents were interested in the topics related to Chinese culture than those who were interested in the topics regarding Chinese literature. One reason for this preference could be that their lack of proficiency in Chinese made it difficult if not impossible to read Chinese literature in the original Chinese characters, or even in *pinyin.*

Fifty-two percent (52%) of the participants (see S33 in Table 16) preferred topics that could be related to business and their future career. Some participants wished the instructor could integrate Chinese culture into the Chinese language class. These responses suggest that integrating different topics such as Chinese history and culture into the language class is a stimulating method that suits students' interest in CFL learning. Other participants wished the learning materials in class could be more related

to their daily life. This is in line with the cognitive linguistic perspective that language is inseparable from our lived experience (Tylor, 2008). Relating the learning materials in language class to students' daily life can increase the opportunity for students to use the language, and enhance their motivation. As Gardner (2010) states, "in the process of learning a second language, motivation is seen to develop through the student's reaction to the experience in the classroom and to the ability to emotionally incorporate material foreign to his/her own culture, as reflected in integrativeness" (p.26). Connecting the learning materials to students' daily life and their lived experience may develop students' learning strategies, and improve their abilities of incorporating and synthesizing foreign materials into their own culture, and enhance their learning.

In a functional linguistic view (Halliday, 1978; Kramsch, 1993), language cannot be isolated from its culture and context, and contains a lot of background information. It should be reasonable to assume that introducing target language culture into the language class facilitates target language learning in one way or another. Hymes (1972) noted, "The key to understanding language in context is to start not with language, but with context" (p.xix). As the CFL students at the lower proficiency levels did not have much exposure to the target language environment and experience of using the target language in its native speaker community since CFL learning was in the Canadian context, it is all the more important to learn the target language culture and background knowledge. This may well facilitate learning in the sense that students may understand the context of the target language more easily, which in turn would make their language learning more effective. This also accords with the cognitive linguistic view (Watson-Gegeo, 2004) that linguistic concepts develop through human existence and experience. Integrating target language culture into the language class may compensate for students' inadequate exposure to the target language environment, stimulate student interest in the target community, and enhance their motivation.

Indeed, language and culture are interconnected. Language is the carrier of culture, culture is embedded in language. The cultural context of the target community stores the background knowledge that can facilitate the understanding of the target language (see Kramsch, 1993, p.46). This might be taken to explain why the participants were interested in Chinese culture, particularly for the students at the beginning level, who did not have much knowledge of the target language and culture. Thus integrating Chinese culture into the Chinese language class appeared to be strategic to stimulate or motivate students to learn the language.

4.4 Participants' Views on CFL Instructional Methods

Data about participants' views on CFL instructional methods were mainly collected form Question 6 in Part A and Statement 34-40 in Part B. Data from Question 6 (see Table 17) indicate that the majority of the participants preferred to improve listening, speaking, grammar and build vocabulary through practicing in class with the instructor rather than through group discussion.

Table 17 Participants' View and Interest in Instructional Methods

Question 6: What instructional methods in class do you like most?								
Numbers for Ranking / Multiple Choices		Total Resp	0	1	2	3	4	5
C1.Instructor does the most talking in class	Resp	28	2	6	7	5	5	3
	Percent		7.1	21.4	25	17.9	17.9	10.7
C2.Group discussion after the teacher talk	Resp	28	4	4	9	9	2	
	Percent		14.3	14.3	32.1	32.1	7.1	
C3.Intensive practice of grammar and vocabulary with instructor and peers	Resp	28		3	2	6	12	5
	Percent			10.7	7.1	21.4	42.9	17.9
C4.Intensive practice of listening and speaking with instructor and peers	Resp	28		2	5	3	6	12
	Percent			7.1	17.9	10.7	21.4	42.9

Seventy-four percent (74%) of the respondents (see Table 18, S34, 26% strongly agree, 48% agree) preferred to learn from the instructor, rather than peer collaboration. Over eighty-five percent (85.6%) of the respondents (see S35) preferred instructor talk in class as they might have more chance to practice listening; while about sixty-three percent (63%) of the respondents (see S36 in Table 18) preferred instructor talk because they could learn more effectively in class from the instructor; while more than twenty-six percent (26.4%) of the respondents did not agree. Data from S34, S35, S36 show 63% to 85.6% of the respondents preferred to practice with the instructor rather than peer collaboration in class.

Sixty-three percent (63%) of the respondents (see S37) preferred more peer collaboration so that they could practice Chinese and find their weaknesses while thirty-seven percent (37%) disagreed. Sixty-three percent (63%) of the respondents (see S38) preferred group discussion as it might encourage them to talk in Chinese and use what they had learned in practice, while more than thirty-three percent (33.3%) disagreed. However, when responding to S39, over forty percent (40.6%) agreed, and fifty-nine percent (59%) disagreed that group discussion could make them feel at ease with oral Chinese. In responding to S40, eighty-five percent (85%) of the respondents revealed their preference for more opportunities to practice oral Chinese in class.

Data from S37, S38 show that sixty-three percent (63%) of respondents preferred peer collaboration in order to have more opportunities for oral practice. But why did fifty-nine percent (59%) of the respondents (see S39) not feel at ease with oral Chinese in group work? It can be assumed that most students might wish to practice oral Chinese, but not with peers, particularly for beginners. They might not be able to make conversations since they had not learned much vocabulary yet. S40 shows that 85% of the respondents preferred opportunities for oral practice in class, which means most students were interested in oral practice in class; however, what form the practice should take does matter. In general, students in both groups preferred oral practice in class, but they tended to prefer practice with

the instructor. Those at the higher level seemed to be more comfortable with group work. Interview reports in later chapters are expected to provide further evidence in this regard.

Table 18 Participants' Views on Instructional Methods (Statements 34- 40)

Statements \ Likert Scale		Total Resp	Not Applic	Strongly Disag	Disag	Agree	Strongly Agree
S34: I prefer lecture by the instructor as a native speaker in class to learn idiomatic Chinese.	Resp	27	3	0	4	13	7
	Percent		11	0	15	48	26
S35: I prefer instructor talk in class as it is a good opportunity for me to practice my listening.	Resp	27	1	0	3	15	8
	Perent		3.7	0	11	56	29.6
S36: I prefer instructor talk because I can learn much more and learn faster in a short time from the instructor.	Resp	27	3	2	5	13	4
	Percent		11	7.4	19	48	14.8
S37: I prefer more peer collaboration so that I can practice Chinese and find out my weakness.	Resp	27	0	3	7	13	4
	Percent		0	11	26	48	14.8
S38: I prefer group discussion as it encourages me to talk in Chinese and use what I have learned in practice.	Resp	27	1	1	8	13	4
	Percent		3.7	3.7	29.6	48	14.8
S39: I like group discussion because I feel free (I'm not nervous) to talk with peers in Chinese.	Resp	27	0	3	13	8	3
	Percent		0	11	48	29.6	11
S40: I like to have more opportunities or activities to participate oral Chinese in class so that we can put what we have learned in use.	Resp	27	1	0	3	14	9
	Percent		3.7	0	11	51.8	33.3

Comparing the data from S34, S35, S36 with the data from S37, S38, S39, it can be found in general that more respondents preferred to practice oral Chinese with the instructor than those who preferred peer group work. Overall, responses to Statements 34 to 40 suggest that although over half of the respondents preferred teacher talk, peer collaboration or group discussion, while over twenty-six

percent (26.4%) (S36) to fifty-nine percent (59%) (S39) of them tended not to prefer those learning activities in class. Yet the majority of them (S40) would like more opportunities to improve oral Chinese in class. While admitting the advantage of group work, the necessity of practicing speaking and listening in class, some of the respondents did not agree that peer work was helpful. Some of them might not feel at ease working with peers, and pointed out that peers might not be capable enough to correct their errors or contribute to the group, as they committed errors themselves and caused confusion. Further reports by interview participants in this regard can be found in Chapters 5 and 6. This has pedagogical implications: to better scaffold learning, it seems important for the instructor to adjust the instructional methods, to organize the learning activities according to students' proficiency levels, and integrate the topics that may better suit students' needs or interests and accommodate more students. Following Vygotsky's (1978) notion of the importance of creating a ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development), to enable learning development, a language teacher needs to create a scaffold by simplifying content and gearing the instructional language to a level comprehensible to the learners, slightly above their level, and by selecting appropriate instructional materials to suit students' proficiency levels.

For the stronger students, it is also an effective strategy to learn how to teach their peers who are at a lower proficiency level, as teaching may clarify their understanding of concepts or uncover their own problems which in turn would push them to improve themselves. On the other hand, although internalizing what one has learned is emphasized in the development of higher mental functions (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch & Stone, 1986), applying what one has learned can also an effective way to improve and transform the acquired knowledge (see Wertsch & Stone, 1986, p.164). Thus, it should be reasonable to assume that group work among peers in class is an effective way of learning. Peer support is always helpful for the students who need additional assistance in class. However, assistance by the instructor should not be replaced by peer collaboration. Moreover, the instructor may design activities or

tasks to encourage and facilitate peer collaboration and support in class.

4.5 Summary

The findings from the survey results are summarized into three points: a) Participants' positive attitudes towards the Chinese language course reveal that most students tended to be more integratively orientated than instrumentally motivated although the two motivational orientations were not mutually exclusive in an individual; b) Participants' views on CFL learning: respondents reported their learning strategies and their problems in learning Chinese tones and the characters; most of them emphasized that more activities and time needed to be allocated for oral practice with the instructor in class, in order to allow them to put what they learned into use. Students seemed to rely more on the instructor and classroom instruction for learning, rather than participation in group work in class, or self-learning outside class; and, c) Participants' views on CFL learning materials and the instructional methods: most participants were interested in the learning materials that could be related to Chinese history, culture or business while learning the Chinese language. Hence introducing different topics such as Chinese history and culture into the language class seems to be a stimulating strategy that can enhance student learning motivation. Although some of the participants acknowledged the benefit of pair or group work in class, the majority of them preferred to practice with the instructor because peers committed errors themselves and caused confusion. This phenomenon illustrates the necessity of expert assistance in learning, a key point in ZPD.

Further findings in this respect can be derived from the data collected through other methods as outlined in later chapters, Chapters 5 and 6. In the next chapter, Chapter 5, CFL students' problems in learning the Chinese linguistic elements identified through error analysis are to be detailed and discussed in light of the research literature in the area.

CHAPTER 5 CROSSLINGUISTIC/CULTURAL INFLUENCE IN CFL

5.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter focuses on the analysis of crosslinguistic/cultural influences on CFL learning, which in this study involves the analysis of participants' errors in CFL. The steps of error analysis are presented first, then the findings are fleshed out with details, followed by discussion.

5.1 Stepwise Error Analysis

As mentioned earlier in chapter 3, Corder's (1974) and Brown's (2000) principles for error analysis were used as a guide for my analysis of student errors in CFL. The principles are: a) "recognition of errors"; b) "descriptions of errors"; c) "the explanation of errors"; and, d) "systematicity of errors" (Corder, 1974, pp. 126-131; Brown, 2000, pp. 216-226). The detailed description and explanation of errors are given within the findings and discussion sections.

As Corder (1974) noted, "the recognition of errors depends crucially on [our] correct interpretation of the learners' intended meaning in the context" (p.127). "Learners' utterances can be overtly erroneous (i.e. superficially deviant)" (p.127), or grammatically incorrect; or "covertly erroneous utterances" (p.127); namely, learners' utterances may be grammatically or syntactically correct, but may not be interpretable within the context. As students learn a language they often express themselves using utterances that are not quite correct in the target language (in this case, Chinese), but may have features of their dominant language (e.g. English). This type of language is known as interlanguage (see Selinker, 1972, Corder, 1983), a term used in this study referring to CFL learner language, not fully developed Chinese. But how can we know what the learner intended to express? In this study, my analysis

proceeded in the following order to arrive at the interpretation of the errors in CFL learner language.

Step 1: I first organized the data from learner language, preparing for the data analysis and coding. I played and replayed the recordings of students' oral presentations given in class and the recordings of some dialogues read by each interviewee from their textbook, which were arranged at the end of each interview, and listened to these recordings a few times to recognize and identify their errors in pronunciation of the phonemes and the four tones in dialogue or speech context. Then based on participants' written work, observation notes, and the interview transcripts, I identified the morphological and morpho-syntactic errors.

Following Corder's principles of error analysis (see Corder, 1974, pp.126-131), I conducted the analysis as follows: a) put students' interlanguage into the context, checking if the sound was pronounced correctly, if the structure was grammatically correct; b) checked to see if the interpretation, made sense in the context; c) reconstructed students' interlanguage in the target language linguistic system, comparing it with the original erroneous structure to recognize and identify the errors; d) inferred the participants' intended meaning in relation to context to arrive at the understanding and interpretation of the errors; and, e) checked with the interview transcripts for the sources of the errors, speculating on the answers from the available data to infer the sources of errors.

Step 2: The errors were coded, using Merriam's (1998) methods to construct the categories, to: a) maximally "reflect the purpose of the research"; b) "be exhaustive" to accommodate all the data that are relevant to the study; c) "be mutually exclusive"; d) "be sensitizing" as to "what is in the data" so that outsiders can read and "gain sense of their nature"; and, e) "be conceptually congruent", "the same level of abstraction should characterize all categories at the same level" (see Merriam, 1998, pp.183-4).

Step 3: With the established codes above, I triangulated the data from different sources, associating the established codes with other types of data, checking students' errors with survey results and interview transcripts, analyzing the errors to look for patterns of errors, to see how students were learning Chinese linguistic elements.

Regarding the Chinese phonetic-phonological system, I looked to see: a) how they appropriated the four tones acoustically in isolation and in sentential context; b) how they appropriated stress, tone sandhi, pauses to improve pronunciation and intonation; and, c) how they distinguished homophones and homonyms.

In the case of Chinese characters, I examined: a) how they learned the strokes and the radicals of characters; and b) how they visually processed characters, distinguished similarities and differences between characters to improve their capability of learning more vocabulary.

With regards to the Chinese syntactic-grammatical system, I looked to see how they learned to identify parts of speech, syntactical structure; word order; basic knowledge of the particles such as *le*, *guo* that are related to Chinese tense-aspect.

Step 4: I compared the data from different sources and checked to see if the data were properly coded and the codes were representative. The following are the codes and sub-codes:

1) Phonetic-phonological errors: pronunciation errors, tonal errors, tone sandhi errors, pitch errors, errors of pauses, intonation errors, errors of sound recognition.
2) Morphological errors: stroke errors, radical errors, radical recognition errors, character recognition errors, character writing errors, misconception of characters.
3) Morpho-syntactic errors: lexical errors, word usage errors, word combination errors, errors of

homophone/homonym recognition; word order errors, sentence structure errors, 的 (de, adjective/possessive marker) usage errors; 得 (de, resultative verb complement structure) usage errors;

4) Misconception of tenses-aspects; errors of particle usage: particle 了 (le, past/perfect tense marker) usage errors, particle 过 (guo, perfect tense marker) usage errors.
5) C*rosslinguistic/cultural influences*: language transfer; prior language interference; language distance; perception of distance; perception of similarities and differences; target language sequencing; conception/misconception of tense-aspect; conceptual transfer; mental association; interlingual identification.

Once the data were coded and categorized, the analysis moves to "a more abstract level", "using concepts to describe phenomena", "the process of systematically classifying data into some sort of schema consisting of themes, categories, or types" (Merriam, 1998, p.187). These themes describe and interpret the data on the basis of inferences to yield propositions. Hence inferences are a critical and powerful way to achieve insightful interpretation of the data in a qualitative study (see Cohen et al, 2007, p.184). The following sets of themes emerged through the stepwise data analysis:

1) The problems identified in learning the Chinese linguistic elements that are classified as: a) phonetic-phonological; b) orthographical; and, c) morpho-syntactical.
2) The influence of prior linguistic knowledge and experience on CFL learning: a) cross-linguistic influence identified through error analysis (influence of the functional language, English); b) multilingual influence; and, c) student development of meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic strategies.

A more detailed explication of the findings and the respective discussion are given in following sections.

5.2 Problems in Learning CFL Linguistic Elements

The participants' problems in learning the Chinese linguistic system were identified through the analysis of students' errors in CFL learner language. English was the functional, dominant language in the academic setting for all participants although it was not the L1 for some of them. Hence, error analysis which was mainly qualitative was conducted through contrast and comparison between English and Chinese (CFL learner language) based on my observations and the audio recordings of the participants' pronunciation as well as their written work.

The findings (see Section.5.2.1) suggest that Chinese *pinyin* and tones are most challenging although the challenges differ for students from different linguistic/cultural backgrounds and at different proficiency levels. Chinese characters are the next most difficult task for students at the elementary level (see data and findings in Section 5.2.2). Students at the intermediate level (see data and findings in Section 5.2.3) show their problems with grammar such as Chinese tense-aspect, particularly with the usage of the particles as well as the prepositions and conjunctions. The detailed presentation of the findings and discussion are to be illustrated next.

5.2.1 Problems in Learning the Chinese Phonetic-Phonological System

The challenges in student learning of the Chinese segmental and suprasegmental phonology were identified through error analysis and observation. The errors identified and the detailed analysis are illustrated in this section.

1) The following pronunciation errors were identified with the participants at both the elementary

and near intermediate levels. Phonetically, participants demonstrated problems with the following initials (consonants) z [ts], c [tsʰ], zh [tʂ], ch [tʂʰ], sh [ʂ], x [ɕ], q [tɕʰ], r [ʐ] which are described and analyzed as follows. The definition of each of the initials below was adopted from Lu (1997).

z [ts], a "voiceless blade-alveolar affricate, produced by pressing the tip of the tongue against the back of the upper teeth and then loosening it and letting the air squeeze out through the channel…. The vocal cord does not vibrate" (Lu, 1997, p. 19). This phonetic combination exists in English as two phonemes [dz], but it appears as a final in a syllable structure, e.g. car**ds**; while it appears as an initial followed by a vowel in a Chinese syllable. e.g. **z**eng. In comparison, z [ts] as an initial seems more difficult to articulate. Also the different position of this phoneme in Chinese from its usual position in English seemed to cause students' confusion or misconception of the sound in Chinese.

c [tsʰ] "It is an aspirated voiceless blade-alveolar affricate which is produced at the same point of articulation as [ts]" (Lu, 1997, p.19). The similar phonetic sound can be found in English, e.g. ca**ts.** But it is a final in English; whereas, it is an initial and a continuant in Chinese, e.g. **c**ao. So the same individual phoneme in different syllabic contexts is articulated in slightly different ways. It is pronounced more briefly and lightly as a final, while as an initial followed by a vowel, it is pronounced more heavily and longer in duration. This difference seemed to be the reason that resulted in students' problems with the pronunciation. There is another tendency that students tended to mispronounce c [tsʰ] as k [kʰ] like the English phoneme in **c**at. This may be interpreted as the result of interference from English due to the fact that the alphabet **c** in most cases is pronounced as [kʰ]. e.g. **c**ān tīng (餐厅) is a typical example.

zh [tʂ] This is "an unaspirated blade-palatal affricate which is produced by turning up the tip of the tongue against the hard palate and then loosening it and letting the air squeeze out through the channel" (Lu, 1997, p.18). There is no similar sound in English. So students are inclined to pronounce it as [ts] instead, which is similar to the English sound.

ch [tʂʰ] This is "an aspirated voiceless blade-palatal affricate which is produced at the same point of articulation as [tʂ], but aspirated" (Lu, 1997, p. 18). There is no similar phonemic variety in English either. So students had difficulty to form a concept with this phoneme, and physically articulate it correctly.

sh [ʂ] This is "a voiceless blade-palatal fricative retroflex which is produced by turning up the tip of the tongue toward (but not touching) the hard palate and letting the air squeeze out. The vocal cords do not vibrate" (Lu, 1997, p. 18). A similar phoneme can be found in English words such as, wa**sh**, as a final, while in Chinese as in ***sh****i*, ***sh****e*, and ***sh***ou, it is an initial, a continuant, so it is pronounced slightly differently from the English phoneme in context. It seems this subtlety caused confusion for students.

x [ɕ] This is "a voiceless palatal fricative which is produced by raising the front of the tongue toward (but not touching) the hard palate and letting the air squeeze out, the vocal cords do not vibrate" (Lu, 1997, p. 18). A similar phoneme in English can be found in **sh**eep, **sh**e. Students tended to be confused by sh [ʂ] and x [ɕ] in syllabic context, e.g. *xue*, it should be [ɕ], not [ʂ]. They share similarities, but sh [ʂ] is a retroflex, while x [ɕ] is a palatal. My observation told me that [ɕ] followed by [y] added to students' difficulty in articulation. Students tended to mispronounce x [ɕ] as sh [ʂ], and [y] as [u], e. g.

xué shēng (学生). My inference is that in English there is no such a phonemic combination, so students seemed to struggle to formulate the concept and had to learn to articulate it physiologically.

q [tɕʰ] This is "an aspirated voiceless palatal affricate which is produced at the same point of articulation as [tɕ], but is aspirated" (Lu, 1997, p.17), for example, wa**tch**, **ch**eese. This phoneme is difficult when articulated with the vowel [y]. Again the combination of [ɕ] plus [y], or [tɕʰ] plus [y] is also difficult for students because there is no such a phonemic combination in English.

r [ʐ] This is "a voiced blade-palatal fricative which is produced at the same point of articulation as [ʂ], but is voiced. The vocal cords vibrate" (Lu, 1997, p. 19). It is a retroflex pronounced with the tip of the tongue curled back, touching the middle part of the hard palate and letting the air squeeze out, similar to the phoneme [ʒ] in English ("a voiced palato-alveolar sibilant", see reference at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voiced_palato-alveolar_sibilant), e.g. plea**s**ure. But they differ in that [ʐ] is a retroflex, while [ʒ] is a sibilant. The former is more difficult. Some of the students tended to pronounce it as the English sound [r] as it is in ***r****oad* ("an alveolar approximant", see reference at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alveolar_approximant). Phoneme r [ʐ] is a continuant as [ɹ], e.g. rόu (柔), rén (人). Another possibility is that students' misconception of the phoneme caused their problem, as [ʐ] is used in different syllabic contexts or phonemic combinations in Chinese other than the phoneme [ʒ] in English. So its articulation varies. This subtle difference may cause students' confusion and misconception of this phoneme in Chinese.

There are some difficult finals (vowels) for CFL students, such as ü [y], [u], and [ɿ], particularly when they are co-articulated with other consonants and vowels, and when the phonemic combinations differ from those in English, students tended to be confused or misconcceptualize the phonemes or phonetics. See the following analysis and explanations of the phenomena observed.

ü [y] This phoneme "ǔ" "is produced with the same tongue position as [i], but with the lips rounded as when pronouncing [u]" (Lu, 1997, p.12). It is used as a simple final as in ***qu, lü, nü***, or used to form compound finals, such as ***üan, üe, ün***. Again there is no similar phoneme in English, which causes students' difficulty although there is a similar phoneme in French.

q [tɕʰ] plus ü [y] as qǔ (曲) or qù (去) is composed of ***q*** and ***ü*** (not u), but there is no phoneme **ü** [y] in English, so students struggled to form a concept and pronounce it correctly.

Another example is: yu (语), as in yǔ yán (语言) (y + **ü**, written as **u**), but mispronounced as **iu** (without the two dots on top of **u**). There is no such phoneme **ü** in English, so students may not be able to hear the nuances of the sounds **u** and **ü**, so they used an approximate phoneme **iu** that does exist in English.

u [u] This is a vowel "produced with the lips pursed and the tongue in a high position toward the back of the mouth" (Lu, 1997, p.12). It can be a simple final as ***du, tu, zhu***, or it forms compound finals as ***ua, uo, uai, ui, iu, uan, uang***. It is similar to the phoneme [u] in English, but differs in the shape of the lips and the position of the tongue. In English, when the phoneme [u] is produced, the lips are not as tight as they are with the Chinese one. So the shape of the mouth is larger, and the tongue is at a lower position. Students are confused by the subtle difference, and articulated it the same as it is in English.

Other errors include the vowel [i] in the syllables zi, ci, si, zhi, chi, shi should be [ɿ] which

is not pronounced, but students tended to pronounced it. I take this phenomenon as the result of the influence from English phonetic system in which the vowel [i] is rarely unpronounced.

2) Data from the survey (see Section 4.2), interview and observation indicate that most participants found learning Chinese tones difficult. During my classroom observation, I found one participant Vaine did best with pronunciation and intonation, compared with his classmates. This prompted my association of his Chinese pronunciation and tones with his background of Vietnamese which is a tonal language. As for the rest of the participants, Derek, with a Korean background, was the second best, as I observed. Helen and Marlene obviously had more problems with the individual sounds and the tones, compared with Vaine. Victor seemed better in both pronouncing the individual sounds and the tones, but at the sentential level, he was not as good as Vaine and Derek. Ray was fine with most of the individual sounds and the tones, but he had problems with the sounds and tones at the sentential level too. All these participants shared their desire to practice listening and speaking more with the instructor in class. As I observed, I found their progress was obvious in the sense that they learned some vocabulary and could use it orally when they did pair work in class, but their pronunciation and the tones improved more slowly.

In terms of tonal production, Tone 2 (T2), Tone 3 (T3), and half-Tone 3 (H-T3) or tone sandhi (tone change) appeared most problematic. T3 was still worse. Participants tended to substitute Tone 3 with other tones. See the following examples in Table 19.

Table 19 CFL students' Tonal Errors

Pinyin	Tones (correct)	Tones (incorrect)	Written form (Characters)	English
nǐ hǎo	T2 T3	**T1 T4** or **T4 T2**	你好	Hello

	3-5 2-1-4	**5-5 5-1 or 5-1 3-5**		
péng yǒu	T2 T3 3-5 2-1-4	**T4 NT** **5-1-----**	朋友	Friend
xué shēng	T2 T1 3-5 5-5	**T4 NT** **5-1-----**	学生	Student
kāi xué	T1 T2	**T1 T4**	开学	School starts

Participants in the two groups could correctly articulate most of the Chinese tones in isolation, but they had problems in appropriating the tones in sentential sequences, and problems with Tone 3 seemed more prominent. This simultaneously indicates their problems with tone sandhi which mainly involves Tone 3. The following are some examples (see Table 20) showing their problems in appropriating tone sandhi (Errors are boldfaced):

Table 20 CFL Students' Tone Sandhi Errors

Pinyin	Pronunciation (correct)	Pronunciation (incorrect)	Written form (characters)	English
nǎi nai	T2 NT 3-5-----	**T3 T3** or **T4 NT** **2-1-4 2-1-4 or 5-1--**	奶奶	Grandma
nǎ zhǒng	T2 T3 3-5 2-1-4	**T3 T3** **2-1-4 2-1-4**	哪种	Which kind
hěn hǎo	T2 T3 3-5 2-1-4	**T4 T2** or **T1 T4** **5-1 3-5 or 5-5 5-1**	很好	Very good

It is known that rising tones are common in English. However, as aforementioned in Section 2.4.2 in Chapter 2, Chen's (1974) research shows: 1) falling tones are most frequent in both English and

Chinese; b) tones in Chinese are realized at lexical level within one syllable, while the tones in English may be realized at either lexical or syntactic level. This indicates the difference of the tone domain in English and Chinese. There are tones in both languages, but they are actualized in quite different ways. It was inferred that the domain of English tones could be one of the factors that interfere with CFL students' learning of Chinese tones.

3) Participants at the beginning level had problems in identifying word boundaries and sense units when processing printed Chinese, and could not determine tonal groups, potential pauses and stresses at the sentential level. This seems to be another factor affecting the quality of their tonal production. One participant, Victor, reported in the interview:

> V: ….. I ran into a name, I don't know, I look at the meaning, but I don't know what it means. It doesn't make any sense, then I go to the glossary of the book, I found it's a name. That actually brings a good point, for my European language background, it's very difficult when reading the words that I don't have much base in between them. I'm not sure if it's one word, two words, if they are few words, it's slightly confusing, for example, at the very beginning of this term, I read *wǒ mén* （我们, we）separately, tried to understand it, and I found it doesn't make sense, now I know they should go together, like other word combinations, *lǎo shī* (老师, teacher), *xué shēng* (学生, student), etc.

While another participant Derek said,

> D: I don't know [if] the two characters are still separate or not because there are no spaces…. So necessary are the spaces!

Their reports reveal the problems of the students at the elementary level due to the lack of knowledge base in the Chinese language. They had difficulty in identifying word boundaries, the sense units, and differentiating two monosyllabic words from one disyllabic word. This seemed to be a cause behind their problem in identifying the tonal groups and potential pauses in a sentence, which in turn resulted in their problem in appropriating the tonal production in word combinations or at sentence level.

This strongly supports White's (1981) notion of potential pause, a distinctive feature in Chinese that constitutes a challenge to English-speaking students.

It is not surprising to identify this problem with students at lower proficiency levels since word boundaries are not marked in Chinese, and there is no space between words in Chinese written texts. The notion of sense unit and potential pause is also related to Huang's (1990) view on tone sandhi. He calls for the consideration of a larger environment for the analysis of tone sandhi at the sentential level rather than individual words, which suggests the importance of explicit teaching from the beginning level to improve students' capability of appropriating their tonal production through identifying sense units and tonal groups.

5.2.2 Problems in Learning the Chinese Orthographic System

The data presented below in Section 1) and 2) about CFL students' learning of Chinese characters were the examples I collected from the written work by the interview participants. The findings about participants' problems in learning the Chinese writing system, can be classified into two categories: a) problems with stroke, radical, and character recognition in visual processing; b) problems in word recognition based on their understanding of meaning and usage of words. Errors found through error analysis of participants' written work can be categorized as: stroke and radical differentiation errors, character differentiation errors, homophone differentiation errors, and word recognition errors. Some examples for each category are listed respectively as follows:

1) Cross-case analysis shows that the following two types of errors occurred with participants at the beginning level.

✧ Stroke and radical differentiation errors: These errors were found in participants' written assignments in the term I observed, such as character handwriting, pinyin-character match exercises

as well as grammar and vocabulary exercises such as making sentences using the grammar or vocabulary learned. Some of the following errors were identified as incorrect radicals in some Chinese characters. These pairs of radicals or characters look similar but are slightly different, so they are visually confusing:

午↔牛　人↔入　贝↔见　干↔千　又↔叉　羊↔半　刀↔力　无↔天　几↔凡
己↔巳　矢↔失　因↔囚　来↔米　予↔子　牙↔乐　马↔乌　乌↔鸟　习↔匀

✧ Character differentiation errors: They were manifested in students' written work, suggesting their problems in visually differentiating similar characters based on their visual processing. See the following examples:

们↔门　要↔耍　给↔绘　得↔待　银↔钱
师↔帅　体↔本　自↔白　够→多句

2) The following types of errors occurred mainly with participants at the intermediate level, which seemed to be related to the fact that they had learned more vocabulary and there were greater possibilities for them to commit errors with homophones, homonyms as well as synonyms or near-synonyms.

Word differentiation errors: They are defined as errors due to failure to recognize phonetic codes or pronunciation and lexical meaning of printed words and speech or recording. In other words, they are errors that might be caused by participants' mispronunciation, misunderstanding of the meaning, and misuse of words or characters. This includes: a) lexical errors, errors of synonym and near-synonym recognition based on their understanding of the meaning and use; b) errors of

homophone and homonym recognition in dictation. Thus it is important to identify and analyze this type of errors according to the context.

a) Morphemic-lexical errors, errors of synonym, near-synonym, or antonym differentiation among pairs or groups of words. The examples below were collected from participants' written work such as sentence pattern drills, English-Chinese translation exercises, and short compositions:

没 (méi, not, no) ↔ 不 (bù, not, no) (negative morphemes)

没有 (méi yǒu, not exist, not happened) → 不有 (bù yǒu, wrong word, no such a combination in Chinese) (negative morpheme plus verb)

一共 (yígòng, total) ↔ 一起 (yì qǐ, together) (near synonyms)

买 (mǎi, buy) ↔ 卖 (mài, sell) (antonyms)

要 (yào, want, need, take) ↔ 想 (xiǎng, want/wish to do) (synonyms)

那儿 (nàr, there) ↔ 哪儿 (nǎr, where) (homonyms)

还有 (hái yǒu, even more, in addition) ↔ 还是 (hái shì, still, nevertheless)

In Corder's (1983) view on interlanguage, the process of learning a new language is a process for the learner to creatively interact with the environment and to produce internalized representation of what they learned. However, for the beginners, particularly adult CFL learners with their first language system already established, it might be difficult for them to incorporate new knowledge into their existing knowledge or conceptual system, and internalize the representation of what they had learned. Chinese characters for students from English background or other language backgrounds with alphabetic writing are totally a new type of symbols. Students seemed to have difficulty in visually processing and conceptualizing this type of symbols and differentiating them in isolation or using them appropriately in context.

b) Homophone and homonym differentiation errors were mainly found in dictation. When dictating certain words or characters, the instructor usually repeated three times and gave hints by putting the word in a specific context while students were required to write down the word. Other samples were collected from students' assignments such as making sentence using certain words or sentence patterns. See the samples below:

wèn wén	huì huí	jiào	gōng	zuò
问 ↔ 文	会 ↔ 回	叫 ↔ 教	工 ↔ 功	做 ↔ 作
zhōng	shì	dé	qīng qíng	qǐng qīng
钟 ↔ 中	事 ↔ 是	的 ↔ 得	清 ↔ 晴	请 ↔ 青

Some of the above sample pairs are not homophones or homonyms, because their sounds are not exactly the same, just similar or close, but confusing. The following is a report given by Calvin who often struggled with homophones, or near-homophones,

> C: Now vocabulary, so there are a lot of homonyms in Chinese where they are sort of words with different meanings, but they sound the same. When I communicate with mainland Chinese, I may not understand what they say, and so many [of the] homonyms they use. I can recognize some I learned in class, but I still cannot catch what they say. So in that way, I think Latin-based languages differentiate the words more. There is not so much repetition of words to different meanings. I'm not sure to what extent, I can't give examples, but I think they don't have so many as in Chinese. That's probably why for me vocabulary is more difficult. There are a lot of homonyms, and also the phonetics makes things difficult. For example *qing*, I'm not sure what tone it is, it means "please" (请 qǐng), but also mean "green" and "blue" (青 qīng). I don't even know, there are probably a few.

This quote shows Calvin had difficulty in differentiating homonyms and homophones in Chinese. This indicates the importance of context when processing Chinese characters, and mapping the sound

and the form of the words with the meaning. The meaning of the phoneme *qing* can only be differentiated in context. Hence, context is the key to differentiate the characters with the same sound, and identify the different meanings of homophones or homonyms. This seems to be one of the major sources of the difficulties for English-speaking students.

From a cognitive linguistic perspective, "Language is understood as being grounded in lived human experience with the real world and crucially reflecting the human perceptual system …." (Tylor, 2008, p.459). Language acquisition and learning is usage-based (N.C. Ellis & Robinson, 2008), and CFL learners can only learn to negotiate the meaning of the target language through contextualized language use. Without enough opportunity for the students to practice in context what they have learned, CFL learning can be more difficult.

5.2.3 Problems in Learning the Morpho-Syntactical System

Morpho-syntactic errors are classified as follows: word usage errors, word combination errors, word order errors, sentence structure errors, negation errors; misconception of tense-aspect; errors of particle usage: particle 了(*-le)* usage errors, particle 过(*-guo*) usage errors; 的(*de*) structure usage errors; verb complement structure errors (得 *de* structure usage errors).

1) Sentence-structure errors

The syntactic structure of different types of questions is an important topic in both Chinese and English syntax. In terms of the syntactic structure of questions in Chinese, there are four types of questions (Chauncey Chu,1983; Yip & Rimmington, 2004): a) question-word question; b) sentence-particle question; c) choice question I: V-not-V question (verb + not + verb), e.g. 去 qù + 不 bú/ 没 méi + 去 qù; go + not + go), or A-not-A question (adj. + not + adj., e.g. 好 hǎo + 不 bù +

好 hǎo; good + not + good); d) choice question II : 是 shì…还是 hái shì… (Chu, 1983, p. 184-191)

The participants exhibited confusion of the syntactic structure of different types of questions. The examples below in Table 21, 22, and 23 were selected from the ten participants' written work.

Table 21 CFL Students' Confusion of Syntactic Structure of Question Type (1)

Sentence (incorrect)	这儿**有没有**报卖**吗**?
Observed phenomenon	A V-not-V question is mixed with a sentence-particle question, the particle 吗 should be removed
Sentence (correct)	这儿**有没有**报卖? (**有-没-有** a V-not-V question, correct) Or: 这儿**有**报卖**吗**? (a sentence particle question, correct)
Pinyin	Zhèr **yǒu méi yǒu** bàomàì? Or: Zhèr **yǒu** bàomàì **ma**?
English	Are newspapers sold here?

Table 22 CFL Students' Confusion of the Syntactic Structure of Question Type (2)

Sentence (incorrect)	他**去不去**游泳**吗**?
Observed phenomenon	A V-not-V question does not need the particle 吗 at the end of the sentence.
Sentence (correct)	他**去不去**游泳? (**去-不-去** a V-not-V question, correct) Or: 他**去**游泳**吗**? (a sentence particle question, correct)
Pinyin	Tā **qù bú qù** yóu yǒng? Or: Tā **qù** yóu yǒng **m**a?
English	Is he going swimming?

Table 23 CFL Students' Confusion of the Syntactic Structure of Question Type (3)

Sentence (incorrect)	你**是**看电影**还是**听音乐**吗**?
Observed phenomenon	The particle 吗 at the end of the utterance is misused, it is not needed in a ***shì…hái shì***…choice question.
Sentence (correct)	你**是**看电影**还是**听音乐?
Pinyin	N ǐ**sh ì**kàn diàn yǐng **h ái sh ì**tīng yīn yuè?
English	Do you want to see a movie or listen to music?

The above examples reveal CFL students' confusion of the syntactic structure of different types of questions in Chinese. Among the four types of questions in Chinese as aforementioned, each type differs from the same type in English in terms of the syntactic structure. The question-word question in Chinese differs from that in English because it is not in inverted order. The sentence-particle question could be equated to yes/no question in English in that both are choice questions, but the particle at the end of the sentence was new to students and might cause confusion or difficulty for them. While the other choice question, V/A-not-V/A question, was more problematic with students, because there is no English equivalent, and again students might not form the concept yet. Conceptually, this type of question is close to the English tag question, but the structure differs. Although the syntactic structure of the different types of questions in the Chinese and English share similarities, it seems their differences caused confusion for CFL students and added to their difficulties.

Based on the analysis of the errors above, two points could be inferred: a) the CFL students at the lower proficiency levels could not formulate the concept of the two types of questions in Chinese yet; b) the CFL students might not be clear about the differences and similarities between the two types of questions in Chinese and English; in this case, the concept of the question type in English that had already established in CFL learners' mind might interfere with their conceptualization of the syntactic structure of the questions in Chinese, which in turn might be the cause of their confusion. In a cognitive linguistic view, "grammar is conceptualization" (Croft & Cruse, 2004, p.2), and linguistic knowledge is interconnected with practical use (McClelland & Rumelhart, 1986). The above errors appeared to be grammatical or morpho-syntacitcal, but they might be the problem of concept formation. Furthermore, this type of errors may also result from the interference from students' prior language(s) in the sense that students might conceptualize the four types of questions in Chinese on the basis of English, but are confused by the syntactic structures of the questions in Chinese. This indicates conceptual transfer.

2) Word-order errors (refer to Table 24 and 25, errors and the correction are boldfaced):

The following samples were taken from participants' written assignments. The main problem within the sentence is the 为 (wèi) …. structure, which can be associated with the "to …" or "for…." structure in English, but its usage differs from the English counterpart. The analysis and comparison were attempted to clarify their difference.

Table 24 CFL Students' Errors in Word Order (1)

Sentence (incorrect)	你买东西**为我**吗?
Analysis	The structure of the above sentence bears English features, putting adverbial phrases after the main verb. But in Chinese, adverbial phrases are located before the main verb, characterizing modifier-modified structure.
Sentence (correct)	你**为我**买东西吗?
Pinyin	Nǐ wèi wǒ mǎi dōng xī ma?
English	Are you shopping for me?

Table 25 CFL Students' Errors in Word Order (2)

Sentence (incorrect)	八点钟**上午**, 九点钟**晚上** (the order of time words are from specific to general)
Analysis	The word order is the same as that of English: the order for time unit words is from the more specific to the more general ones, but in Chinese, they are in the opposite order, from the general to the specific ones, e.g. "morning" precedes "eight o'clock", "evening" precedes nine o'clock". Compare the order of the incorrect and correct one, the Chinese word order and the English version, and see the difference
Sentence (correct)	**上午**八点钟, **晚上**九点钟
Pinyin	**Shàng wǔ** bā diǎn zhōng, **wǎn shàng** jiǔ diǎn zhōng
English	eight o'clock **in the morning**, nine o'clock **in the evening**

In most cases in Chinese, adverbs or adverbial phrases used to modify the verb go before the verb rather than at the end of the sentence as is the case in English. Participants put the adverb of place and

time at the end of the utterance rather than before the verb; hence, it is conceivable that the error results from the influence of English. I take these examples as evidence of interlingual transfer especially for students at the elementary to near intermediate proficiency levels, as students at these levels may rely more on their previously acquired language(s) than those at the higher proficiency levels when processing target language input, and language transfer constitutes the major crosslinguistic influences (Corder, 1974; Ellis, 1997).

3) Morpho-Syntactic Errors (see the following example in Table 26):

Table 26 CFL Students' Errors at the Morpho-Syntactic Level

Sentence (incorrect)	马大卫**是病**, **和**他头疼**和**嗓子也疼
Analysis	There are two errors in the above sentence, the wrong use of the words 病 (a verb, means "being sick") and 和 (a connector, means "and"). See the detailed analysis below.
Sentence (correct)	马大卫病**了**, 他头疼, 嗓子也疼
Pinyin	Mǎ Dàwéi bìng le, tā tóu téng, sǎng zi yě téng.
English	Ma Dawei is sick. He has a headache, and a sore throat.

病 (bìng, being sick), is a verb, indicating the change of a situation here, so it should be followed by the tense-aspect marker 了 *le*, but should not be used with 是 (shì, be), as it is not the same as "sick" (an adjective used with "be") since it is a verb.

In English, when two or more simple sentences are put together in one compound sentence, the conjunction "and" is used as a connector in between, but this is not the case in Chinese. So it is erroneous in Chinese to use 和 (hé, and) between two simple sentences, as the way "and" is used in English.

My inference is that students equated the use of 和 to "and", 病 to "sick". So this suggests students' tendency of drawing on their prior linguistic knowledge to process what they are learning in the target language.

The following sentences (see Table 27) are not grammatically erroneous, but whether they are appropriately used depends on what occasion they are used for, and what the speaker wants to express on that occasion. In the following sentences, the word 是 is used to emphasize what is stated.

*Table 27 Comparing **shi** in Chinese and **be** in English*

Sentence	Pinyin	English
他**是**常去打球	Tā **sh ì**ch áng q ù d á qi ú	He **does** go and play ball very often
他**是**很高兴	Tā **sh ì**hěn gāo xìng	He **is** very happy (**that's true**)
这衣服**是**很脏	Zhè yī fú **sh ì**hěn zāng	The clothes **are** dirty (**indeed**)

是 can be equated to English "be" in the second and third sentences above, but not in the first one because its predicate is a verb construction. In English an adjective is preceded by "be" when it is used as predicate. If 是 in the above examples is used to emphasize the attribute, status, or condition of something or somebody, the structure is similar to "be" in English.

But if the above sentences are just statements declaring existing facts, 是 should not be used. In this regard, the structure differs from the English "be + adj.". See a different version of the sentences above in the following table (Table 28). When 是 is not used, then each of the sentences just states a fact, no emphasis.

*Table 28 Statements without **shi***

Sentence	Pinyin	English
他常去打球	Tā cháng qù dá qiú	He often goes and plays ball.
他很高兴	Tā hěn gāo xìng	He is very happy.
这衣服很脏	Zhè yī fú hěn zāng	The clothes are very dirty

4) 的 (de) and 得 (de) usage errors (Errors and the corrections are boldfaced)

的 (dē) and 得(dē) share the same sound although they are semantically and functionally different. But as both are used as final auxiliary words, they exhibit the neutral tone in the text. Their syntactic structures seemed to be conceptually difficult to most of the participants.

的 is also called subordinate particle, used as an adjective marker put between a modifier and a modified to indicate the relation between them, to form an adjective or attributive phrase/clause (adjective phrase + 的 + noun), e.g. 红色**的**衣服 (red dress), 我做的作业 (the homework that I did); to form a possessive pronoun (pronoun + 的), e.g. 他**的**笔 (his pen).

得 is used as a verb complement (verb + 得 + adv.), e.g. 他的中文**讲得好** (He speaks Chinese well); or in a verb-copying structure (verb + obj. + verb + 得 + adv.) (Chu, 1983), e.g. 他**讲**中文**讲得好**. (He speaks Chinese, and speaks it well). So it occurs between a verb and its complement to indicate the relation between them. But in the negative form of the 得 structure, the negative marker 不 should be placed immediately before the complement (verb + 得 + 不 + adv), e.g. 他的中文**讲得不好.** He does not speak Chinese well. This is a difficult part for beginners. Participants' Chinese interlanguage shows their problems in differentiating the usage of these two words, and the negative form of 得 structure. See Tables 29 and 30 for examples:

Table 29 Verb Complement (1)

Sentence (incorrect)	我写**得**字对不对?
Analysis	得 should be replaced by 的 because 的 phrase is used to modify the noun 字 (word), not to complement the verb 写 (write), so the whole structure is a noun phrase with 的: 我写的+字 (的 structure as modifier + noun). 得

	structure can also be used in this sentence context, but the sentence needs to be reorganized (see the correction).
Sentence (correct)	我写**的**字对不对? Or: 我**的**字写**得**对不对?
Pinyin	Wó xiě de zì duì bú duì? Or: Wó de zì xiě de duì bú duì?
English	Is the word that I have written correct? Or: Did I write the word correctly?

Table 30 Verb Complement (2)

Sentence (incorrect)	他不会**说清楚**中文
Analysis	The sentence above used the negation word 不 with the verb (不+verb), but mixed the verb complement (the adverb) with the 不+verb structure. The negative form of 得 structure should be used, so the sentence also needs to be reorganized. There are two alternatives to allow the negative form of 得 to be used (see the correction)
Sentence (correct)	他**说**中文说得**不清楚. Or:** 他**不会说**中文, 说得**不清楚.**
Pinyin	Tā shuō zhōng wén shuō de bù qīng chǔ.
English	He cannot speak Chinese clearly. Or: He speaks only a little Chinese, and cannot speak it clearly.

It can be inferred that the main sources of these errors seem to be: a) confusion caused by homophones as the two words are pronounced the same; b) students' confusion of the respective function of these two words; and, c) interference from English grammar in that there is a grammatical phenomenon in English, such as "of" structure, or "possessive pronoun + noun" that is comparable to 的 (de). The English grammatical structure "verb + resultative complement" can also be compared with 得 (de) structure, but they differ in both structure and usage. In a cognitive linguistic perspective, learning a new language is in effect a process of cognitive and meta-cognitive development, a process of concept construction and reconstruction (Croft & Cruse, 2004; R. Ellis, 1997). The above errors seemed to indicate that CFL students had difficulty in formulating a representation of the concept of the grammatical phenomenon in Chinese as the syntactic structure of verb complement. Learning this

Chinese grammar for CFL students is a process of understanding and constructing the representation of the concept. Once concept is understood, students' learning would be much easier.

5) The usage errors of the particles 过 (-guo) and 了(-le):

There are three commonly used tense-aspect markers in Chinese: 过 (-guo),了(-le) and 着(-zhe). 了 is more commonly used, and is known as the most confusing and difficult one to master. The particle 着 (-zhe) was not part of the grammar for CFL students at the lower levels observed.

The particle 过 (-guo) is the experiential aspect marker. It denotes a past event as an experience (Chu, 1983). It occurs after verbs (verb+guo), and the negative form is 没(有) +V+ guo), but it is not used with the negation word 不 (bù) in this case as an aspect marker. Participants misused it by putting it after the object rather than immediately after the verb (see the following example in Table 31).

Table 31 CFL Students' Use of Particle ***-Guo***

Sentence (incorrect)	他和朋友一起**吃**饭**过**
Analysis	The position of 过 is wrong, not immediately after the verb 吃 (eat), but after the object. See the correction: 过 is always placed immediately after the verb.
Sentence (correct)	他和朋友一起**吃过**饭.
Pinyin	Tā hé péng yǒu yì qǐ chī guò fàn.
English	He once dined with his friends

The above error superficially indicates a syntactic error because the particle 过(-guo) structure was wrong. But the underlying error might result from a misconception of the grammatical phenomenon in Chinese or misuse of the particle 过(-guo) itself. Conceptually there is an experiential aspect in English, but it is expressed in different ways from that in Chinese. In comparison, the concept and the structure of the experiential aspect in Chinese is more complicated in that 过 (–guo) and 了(–le) both are

used to express the perfective aspect. In some cases, they are the same and can be interchangeable, but in other cases there is slight difference between them, the nuances of which can be distinguished by native speakers, but may not be distinguished by CFL students. Taking into consideration the underlying source of the error, the error itself can be both syntactic and conceptual.

The perfective aspect marker 了(*-le)* in Chinese is known as the most difficult particle for CFL students, because it is partly like the past tense and partly like the perfect form in English. In some cases, the perfective 了 may be used where a past tense is appropriate in English (Chu, 1983). Identifying the subtle semantic and functional nuances of 了 and using it properly in specific discourse contexts seemed very challenging for CFL students. See the following example in Table 32 collected from participants' written work.

*Table 32 CFL Students' Use of Particle -**Le***

Sentence (incorrect)	我**去了**寄明信片**给妈妈**
Analysis	First, this sentence takes the same word order as in English, the adverbial or prepositional phrase "to my mom" is put at the end of the sentence, but in Chinese it should be put right after the verb. Second, there are two verbs in this sentence, 去(qù, go) and 寄(jì, mail). The particle 了 should be put after the main verb 寄, or at the end of the sentence, to indicate the event has already happened. .
Sentence (correct)	我**去给妈妈**寄**了**明信片. Or: 我**去给妈妈**寄明信片**了.**
Pinyin	Wǒ qù gěi māma jì le míng xìn piàn.
English	I have sent (mailed) a postcard to my mom

It's interesting that the two correct forms of the sentence above are semantically the same although they differ in aspect with 了(le) in different positions. The subtle difference lies in their different emphases. The first one emphasizes the completion of the action 寄 (jì, post or mail), while the

second emphasizes what has been done or what event has happened. CFL students might not be able to sense the subtle difference, let alone use 了(le) properly in these situations.

In general, the two particles *–guo* and *–le* caused confusion for all the participants; hence, the CFL students' problems caused by these two particles pose very challenging questions for CFL practitioners regarding how to present and teach these particles to CFL students in order to achieve a better learning outcome.

Grammatically, the following three sentences (1), (2), and (3) with 了 in Tables 33 are not wrong, they are semantically the same, with subtle differences in emphasis due to the different positions of 了. But for Chinese L2 students, they are very confusing. They seem to be able to make correct sentences like these, but do not really understand in what specific context they are used.

*Table 33 The Usage of the Particle -**Le (1)***

Sentence (1)	高先生约李小姐去看红叶**了.**
Pinyin	Gāo xiān shēng yuē lǐ xiáo jié qù kàn hóng yè **le**.
English	Mr. Gao invited Ms. Li to see the red leaves.
Analysis	There are two verbs in this sentence: 约 (invite) and 看(see).了 here is a particle at syntactic level (sentence le), put at the end of the sentence, indicating the whole event has already happened, namely, they have seen the red leaves.
Sentence (2)	高先生约**了**李小姐去看红叶.
Pinyin	Gāo xiān shēng yuē **le** lǐ xiáo jié qù kàn hóng yè.
English	Mr. Gao has invited Ms. Li to see the red leaves.
Analysis	This sentence differs from the one above in that 了 is a particle at the morphological level (verb-le), following immediately after a verb, indicating the action "invite" has happened, but the other verb "see" is not followed by 了, so the whole event may not have happened yet. They may not have seen the red leaves yet.
Sentence (3)	高先生约李小姐看红叶去**了.**
Pinyin	Gāo xiān shēng yuē lǐ xiáo jié kàn hóng yè qù **le**.
English	Mr. Gao invited Ms.Li, and they have gone to see the red leaves.
Analysis	The particle 了 is a syntactic particle like that in sentence (1), indicating the

	whole event has happened, but the event has not finished yet.

The negative form of 了 (le) is more complicated, and the negation words 不 (bù) and 没 (méi) seemed confusing for students. The negation word 不 can be used in the same sentence with the particle 了, indicating tense-aspect, but 没 is usually not used with 了 in this case as an aspect marker, because 没 indicates something in the past that did not happen, but now is an existing fact; while 不 in most cases refers to the change of personal will or plan that prevents something from happening. See the following two samples (Table 34), sentence (1) is correct, but sentence (2) is not due to the wrong use of the negation word 没 and the particle 了.

*Table 34 The Usage of the Particle **Le (2)***

Sentence (1) negation correct	他们**不**去看红叶**了**
Pinyin	Tā mén bù qù kàn hóng yè le.
Analysis	了 indicates that they have changed their plan. This sentence is grammatically correct and makes perfect sense.
English	They do not want to see the red leaves any more.
Sentence (2) negation incorrect	他们**没**去看红叶**了.**
Pinyin	Tā mén méi qù kàn hóng yè le.
Analysis	This utterance has a problem with 了. The negation indicates the event did not happen, no past tense or perfective aspect involved, so it should not be suffixed with 了
Sentence (2) negation correct	他们**没**去看红叶**.**
English	They did not go and see the red leaves.
Sentence (2) without negation	他们去看红叶**了. Or:** 他们去看**了**红叶**.**
Analysis	Particle 了 (le) can be put at the end of the sentence (sentence le), or right after the verb “see” at the morphological level (verb + le), but if the negation word

	不 is used, 了 can only be at the end of the sentence.
Pinyin	Tā mén qù kàn hóng yè **le**. Or: Tā mén qù kàn **le** hóng yè
English	They have gone to see the red leaves. Or: they have seen the red leaves.

The following is another example provided by a participant, about the particle 了 (le) (see Table 35), which indicates the change of situation, rather than tense/aspect, so it confounded almost all the students at the elementary level.

*Table 35 The Usage of Particle -**Le** (3)*

Sentence	饭馆里有很多人,(连)一个位子都没有了.
Pinyin	Fàn guǎn li yǒu hěn duō rén, lián yí gè wèi zi dōu méi yǒu **le**.
Analysis	了 indicates change of state, not completion of an action or event. There are many tables or seats in the restaurant, but now (at this moment), all are occupied, no table left. But most L2 students at the lower levels are confused at this point. Upon seeing the particle 了, they would think it is a perfective marker, and wonder why the restaurant doesn't have tables or seats. Otherwise, they would think the restaurant has lost their tables and seats.
English	There are a lot of people in the restaurant, not a single table is left unoccupied.

This is a very typical example provided by a participant. See the following for what he reported on how he compared Chinese tense-aspect with those in his previously acquired languages, and struggled to approximate the particle "le" (了) in this utterance. As Calvin said:

> C: French, English and Italian do have a vigorous style of conjugation, and they conjugate each single word differently. Now of course, Chinese doesn't have the same sort of conjugation at all, but has the same type of verbs with different personal pronouns. But they use a certain kind of particles……and this is a very alien structure to me. ….. I don't really have a good understanding of what the particle is, esp. *le* (了) particle is difficult. *Le* functionally can change the tense into the past, but there are a lot of substitutes as you are aware ….. so the other day, I learned a sentence structure where *le* doesn't certainly change the past tense, rather indicates a changing situation, which is something we simply didn't….treat….before. In English there is the same structure but that's not the case any more. So it's going to change, so for example, ***Fàn guǎn li yǒu hěn duō rén, lián yí gè wèi zi dōu méi yǒu le***. (饭馆里有很多人, 连一个位子都没有了).

> *Le* indicates that "before they had tables and seats, but now they don't". When I first saw the sentence, I was assuming it was past tense, I understood it as the restaurant never had chairs and the space before, but that is incorrect. They used to have, but now they don't have any more. That is a sort of distinction I could make myself ….as a non-native speaker.

What does 了 indicate, past tense or perfective aspect? This question seems most challenging to students. Inference may not help them to identify the reference indicated by 了 if they do not master the usage of 了 from a discourse perspective. Students tend to take the instance as a state rather than a change of state or condition, and understand the utterance as "….the restaurant does not have tables at all". Another source of confusion might be the negation word 没有 (méi yǒu), as it usually indicates a state or a fact which can be equated to English "not available", but followed by 了, it indicates change of condition, "They had tables earlier, but now they don't have (any available)." This is a grammatical phenomenon in Chinese that shares both similarities and differences with the past and present perfect tense-aspect in English; thus, it is most confusing and problematic for English-speaking students.

As Chu (1983) noted, the perfective in Chinese may be equated to past tense in English. The above examples well support his claim although those examples can also be recast in the perfective form in English. But there are other cases where only the perfective form can be used, and there are still other cases where only the past tense can be adopted. These subtleties may be the source of the challenges for CFL students.

Tense-aspect and the usage of the particles are very subtle in context, and the analysis needs to take into account the context where they are used, shared common ground of the community, and the cultural background knowledge involved (Saville-Troike, 2003; Kramsch, 1993; Van Dijk, 1977). Thus, the learning and analysis of these particles should be contextualized. It may be difficult for CFL students to

capture their subtleties if they are taught just by putting them in some isolated sentences. Even though students could construct grammatically correct sentences with the particles in isolation, they may not structure cohesive text, using the aspect particles properly in specific contexts. The above examples with the particle 了(le) are most frequently used in our daily life, but they are also most confusing for students. In many cases, students have problems in comprehending Chinese with these particles, and using them properly constitutes a greater challenge.

Error analysis illustrated above was used as a methodology to gain insights into the developmental process of Chinese interlanguage: how students were learning Chinese linguistic elements and coping with the challenges. Error analysis serves to depict the Chinese interlanguage process, leading to a better understanding of CFL learning. In the next section I present the findings on how students' prior knowledge and experience influence their CFL learning.

5.3 The Influence of Prior Knowledge & Experience on CFL Learning

Data from all sources yielded findings regarding the influence of students' prior knowledge and experience on CFL learning, which are summarized into four themes: a) crosslinguistic influence and CFL learning strategies; b) multilingual influence and CFL learning strategies; c) context and experience vs. CFL learning; d) cultural influence. The respective findings are discussed next.

5.3.1 Crosslinguistic Influence and CFL Learning Strategies

Crosslinguistic influence in this section is focused on the discussion of the influence from English, the functional language. English was not the L1 for some of the participants, but it is their functional language in the academic setting. All participants showed prominent influence from English to varied extents, as revealed in the error analysis in Section 5.2. CFL students made various types of errors while

learning the Chinese linguistic elements. Just as Corder (1974) emphasizes, errors are inevitable and an important part of L2 students' learning. The prominent influence from the functional language English supports the following two findings: a) frequency of use of a prior language is a key factor for crosslinguistic influence (Albert & Obler, 1978); b) L2 learning is positively influenced by metalinguistic awareness (Thomas, 1988).

First, due to the participants' high English proficiency level and the frequent use of English in the school setting, English as the functional language exerted a heavy influence on CFL learning even though some of the participants had English as L2. Second, the various approaches and strategies CFL students developed in CFL learning demonstrated the positive role played by their metalinguistic awareness. While facing the challenges in CFL learning, the CFL students took advantage of their prior linguistic knowledge, and associated it with their current learning to enhance CFL learning. They simultaneously developed CFL learning strategies. The interview report given by the participant Helen serves as further evidence in this regard.

> H: I think right now for everything that is in Chinese, I have to relate back to something in English. ….like if I see the word, in pinyin, like *qu*, pronounced *qu*, sounds like English word "chew"……or something. So in my book, every time, in my textbook, I write English the word "chew" beside it. So I know how to say it. It sounds like this one because it's like qu [kw]….., it is written like English "queen" …..that's the first part of "queen", so that's how I first tried to say it , [kw] but no, it's not like that at all. It's more like this one this word (chew), so for everything I didn't know, I have to relate it back to something in English I know to read and understand it.

Helen tried to approximate Chinese pronunciation, and referred back to English to look for a counterpart. Actually the phonemes in "chew" are not the same as the ones in "qu", just close, but she developed a good strategy, making use of her prior linguistic knowledge to facilitate her learning of the new language. This manifested her metalinguistic awareness, her cognitive ability to refer back to her

prior linguistic knowledge that was relevant to her current learning, and helped her to make connections to construct new concepts, which positively influenced her current learning (Thomas, 1988).

What Helen shared coincides with the cognitive view of language learning, seeing L2 learning as a cognitive skill or process (Anderson, 1985; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Helen was a CFL beginner, with limited Chinese linguistic knowledge, but she tried to associate and synthesize what she had learned before, integrating it into the new knowledge to facilitate her CFL learning (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986).

The findings on the influence from the functional language English was detailed in Section 5.2 in the form of error analysis. In the next section I show the challenges in CFL and the learning strategies developed by the participants.

1) At the phonetic-phonological level, appropriating the tones was reported to be difficult for most participants. Findings from audio recordings and interviews indicate that the challenge could be associated with interference from the English intonation system, which aligns with previous findings by White (1981) and G-T Chen (1974). Other challenges include identifying basic functional units or sense units in order to determine tonal groups, which is seen as interference from the English writing system due to the fact that English has an alphabetic writing system with the perceptual units clearly marked by spaces in the text. But this is not the case in written Chinese where no spatial cues are provided for readers. Students from language backgrounds with alphabetic writing were not used to the Chinese writing system (H-C Chen, 1996). As one of the participants, Ray, commented:

> R: Reading is also difficult because even though you know each character, you still don't get the meaning, you still don't know whether the characters are solo or a part of the words. So that's also difficult, like you give me a sentence even if I know each character, I could still miss identifying what each of the different characters means….. I don't know the two characters are still separate or not because there are no spaces …

Unmarked word boundaries in Chinese added to CFL students' difficulty in identifying sense units and potential pauses, which poses another difficulty for students to appropriate the tones, and also caused problems in reading comprehension.

2) Participants agreed that characters were the next difficult thing after the tones. First, "Characters are hard to memorize because they are so alien and have no connection with what I have learned", one of the participants commented in his survey response. Survey results also show that over 70% per cent of the participants (see S19 in Section 4.2) said characters are difficult due to their complicated structures.

Second, they were challenged in formulating the relation of the sound (pronunciation and the tone), form, and meaning of the characters, especially the characters that share the same sound, but use different tones. This is what Victor said about how he was struggling to map a character onto its tone.

> V: I cope with the problems by drawing lines between the words, so I would separate words, I pronounce a word, and see where the next word begins, so that's what I do for each test, and mark the word for each.....If I recognize the word *lao shi*, I don't need to mark that word because I know it, or *wo men lao shi*, so I know these two words. But if I come across characters that I don't know they are a word, I found what it is, then I mark it...they are two words. That's how I do it. That's how I work on pronunciation. I don't have many problems…. I guess the other major issues are of course tones, ... I guess it's memorization. When I see a character, I don't necessarily associate it with a certain tone,....for example, ... the characters that I have learned are different characters that have different tones, i.e., *ma* (马 horse, Tone 3), then *ma* plus the square (吗 a sentence particle, Tone 1 or neutral tone), but they are two characters …..

So most of the time, they had to memorize, and were overwhelmed by the heavy load of memorization. When Helen was asked how she was learning the tones, she responded,

> H: Remembering what tones mean different things is really difficult. …… I think eventually you get it after you heard the words so many times when it just sounds right. But you have to hear a

> lot of times before you get to that point. I find any words we have learned like lesson 3 or earlier, some words in lesson 4, some words in lesson 5, If there is someone with the wrong tone, I just know it sounds wrong. I think that's just after I have heard it so many times and correct it, but figuring out what tone for different things is really difficult, often times I relate it back to the character, ….. where like in the character for "to ask" (问 wèn). On the top left corner, it has like a downward slash which were used in fourth tone. ….. I use it as a mark of fourth tone. So I find something in the character that reminds me what tone it is.

Third, as for the semantic properties of Chinese characters, one character can be combined with many other characters, and encodes different meanings, so the meaning of the characters is context-dependent, and can be relatively shifting and ambiguous. Students were challenged in capturing the meaning of the characters or words that are used in different contexts.

3) At the morpho-syntactic level, the influence that was identified was mainly in students' use of words, combination of words, appropriating word order, sentence structure, and forms of negation. Their misconception of tenses-aspects and problems with the use of tense-aspect particles such as 了(-le) and 过(-guo) seemed influenced by the features of English tense-aspect grammar. There seemed to be conceptual transfer (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008) from the conception of English tense-aspect. To capture the subtleties of the tense-aspect particles in Chinese appeared to be a great challenge to the CFL students who had not formed the concept yet.

Unlike any second language learning that occurs in an environment where the target language is used as a medium of communication outside the class when students have plenty of extra-class activities to practice the target language; the Chinese foreign language courses observed in this study were taught in a Canadian context, and the target language input was very limited and constrained in the classroom. It was difficult for students to reach a functional level in a short time. Moreover, the instructor had to use English as a medium to teach, to explain the grammar and vocabulary, except occasionally the instructor

structured or modeled one or two simple sentences that students learned from the text for communication, but mainly for practice whenever a situation occurred for the utterances to be used. Otherwise, the instructor spoke some Chinese first, and then explained in English. Thus, the classes were predominantly carried out in English. Students were functioning in English, and thinking in English to process Chinese input. Hence students could not have enough exposure to the real Chinese language environment, and lacked lived experience of the target language, which again supports the cognitive linguistic view (Tylor, 2008; Robinson & N. Ellis, 2008; Watson-Gegeo, 2004) that language is inseparable from our lived experience. Linguistic knowledge is established in the use of language, and language learning should be contextualized in its cultural environment to develop learners' linguistic competence while improving their linguistic knowledge.

5.3.2 Multilingual Influence and CFL Learning Strategies

As the result of immigration**,** students at Canadian universities are characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity, so participants in this study featured multilingualism. Some of them were bilinguals, some were trilinguals, while others had learning experience of more than one or two foreign languages, so the participants were either learning Chinese as a third or as a fourth language when participating in my research. Apart from English, participants' prior languages ranged from Bahasa (of one participant in group interview), French, Hebrew, Korean, Italian, to Polish, Russian and Vietnamese. In general, crosslinguistic influence illustrated through error analysis was the influence of English on CFL learning in this study. The influence identified through error analysis may be conscious or unconscious on the part of the CFL learners. Interview reports by some participants show crosslinguistic influence may occur from more than one prior language to the target language simultaneously. The following is a report

by a participant, Victor with Russian as L1, English as L2. He was a Russian-English bilingual, and also learned French and Japanese before taking the Chinese course.

> V: Japanese has something like a hundred different sounds. But listening is harder. I found my pronunciation is better than my listening because if I combine the different languages I learned together. I know ninety percent of the sounds I have already encountered. For example in *pinyin*, qu, fourth tone, in Russian, we have a character for qu, so we have the concept, we have a proper u without any tone, so I already had an idea of what the sound was like. I found the sound is the same without presence of tones. It's qu, Chinese takes it and contracts it, it is a similar sound, but I found the base is a kind of the same. I take away the tones, I can apply it. In the same way we have z, the same consonant, not the z in English, but z we can say that in Russian, so we have qu, ci, zi, e, like the ending in Russian. I found the sounds are similar in my language, and I found another sound in French. That was interesting for me too. That's ... how I put pronunciation together.

Although Russian is typologically different from Chinese in important ways, Victor could still find connections from his Russian L1 with Chinese to improve his learning. He shares more strategies he innovated in CFL learning as follows:

> V: ….. that could be why I found it's easier because I know..... I can take Chinese ... the basic sound, I can figure out in other languages with different combinations that would make that sound. Somebody who only knows English wouldn't have the ability to say that.... like English doesn't use *ci, chi, shi* very much, not in the same way, not *zi*. I have a kind of mental, not I know ..... I have a kind of representation of what the sound is supposed to sound [like]. I was taking my first notes, with a little bit of Russian, English, and a little bit of French. Those are the languages I was drawing from. So you would have … which .... a sound of pinyin…. by six different letters. So I think that's mainly why I think it's a bit easier, because I know the basics, but there have been sounds that I still haven't understood very well, like *zhou*, I still have trouble with that one.

So Victor developed unique ways of relating what he had learned before and his current learning, which helped him learn the new language more easily and efficiently. He learned to integrate the sounds in his L1 Russian and other languages he had learned such as Japanese and French as a basis to

formulate the concepts of the phonemes in Chinese. He tried to take advantage of his prior linguistic background to formulate concepts of Chinese phonemes, and innovatively used his prior linguistic knowledge as a resource to facilitate his learning of the new language. That was how he learned Chinese phonemes.

Another participant Vaine, a Vietnamese-Polish-English trilingual, reported how he learned Chinese *pinyin* and characters,

> V: I just use my background knowledge. We also write in Latin alphabets in Vietnamese, like Chinese *pinyin*, also together with tones on the top of the character, or the letters, yes, the letters. ….. the 6 tones in Vietnamese were similar to Chinese tones. Polish also helps me learn some difficult Chinese sounds, like *shi, chi, zhi, ci, si*, and so on. In Polish they have a lot of sounds like these.

What Vaine reported shows the strategies he developed when he tried to learn the target language, using his prior linguistic knowledge in Vietnamese to facilitate his learning of *pinyin* and the tones in Chinese, while Polish phonemes seemed to make his learning of Chinese phonemes easier.

The above interview reports by the participants reveal that for multilingual learners, more than one prior language(s) may influence their learning of the target language simultaneously. The influence came from both native and non-native languages although the extent of influence may vary. Moreover, the influence was from a mixture of languages that were not typologically the same, such as Russian and Japanese, Vietnamese and Polish. In the literature, De Angelis and Selinker (2001, in Herdina & Jessner, 2002, p.67) introduce their view of non-native language transfer which can be the result of influence by one non-native language on another. Vildomec (1963) did mention non-native language transfer, and pointed out, “if two or more tongues which a subject has mastered are similar (both linguistically and psychologically) they may ‘co-operate’ in interfering with other tongues” (p.212). However, evidence

given by the participants differs from Vildomec's finding in that the prior languages that exerted influence on the target language learning were not always linguistically or even typologically similar.

What is more profound from the evidence seems to be the learners' cognitive abilities and metalinguistic awareness that made the language transfer happen, rather than unconscious automatic transfer due to the similarity between the prior language and the target language. Their cognitive abilities and metalinguistic awareness were demonstrated through their intentional elaboration on their previously acquired linguistic knowledge, their analysis, selection, and synthesis of the relevant information to make their current learning more efficient and effective. Hence I see the participants' conscious and intentional use of their prior linguistic knowledge as the manifestation of cognitive and metacognitive capabilities developed through their use of strategies in the CFL learning process. This is in line with O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) cognitive account of language learning strategies, their belief that language learning strategies are acquired skills that are developed through language learning.

The above evidence does reveal the advantages of multilingual learners in the development of both linguistic competence and cognitive, metacognitive abilities, which echoes the Dynamic Model of Multilingualism (DMM) (Herdina & Jessner, 2002). Herdina and Jessner (2002, p.61-65) elaborated on the benefits from multilingual learning as facilitating the development of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, metalinguistic awareness. The interview reports given by Victor and Vaine revealed the development of their cognitive strategies such as recalling and elaborating on previously acquired knowledge, and associating it with what they are currently learning to construct new knowledge and concepts. Their conscious use of the strategies such as memorization, organization, and synthesis of new information and making connections between their prior linguistic knowledge with their current learning demonstrated their cognitive and metacognitive abilities as well as metalinguistic awareness. Hence, it seems reasonable to say that the findings here supports the previous findings by Vildomec (1963) and

De Angelis and Selinker (2001, in Herdina & Jessner, 2002), in that the evidence did show non-native influence on the interlanguage, but has new strands in that the influence came from a combination of native and non-native languages, a mixture of languages of different typologies.

Compared with Victor and Vaine, other participants who had different linguistic and cultural backgrounds also developed their unique strategies in CFL learning. Derek from a Korean background that bears profound influence of Chinese language and culture, also reported his strategy in memorizing the tones,

> D: When I prepared for the quiz, I gathered the words that have the same tones, so I just gathered them and made them into four groups, words that of first tone, second, third, and fourth…. So it's easier for me to memorize the words if I gather them …with the same tones. It just helps me to memorize. It's just my way, I don't know how other students get it…but I found it's easier for me to memorize the tones.

In comparison and in contrast with his L1, Derek identified some of the characteristics of the Chinese linguistic system, which seemed to help him to formulate concepts of the Chinese linguistic system and to facilitate his CFL learning. Triangulation of the interview reports given by Victor, Vaine, and Derek again suggests the cognitive and metacognitive nature of language learning strategies, which conforms to the perspective of the Dynamic Model of Multilingualism (Herdina & Jessner, 2002). It should be reasonable to say that students who have more prior linguistic knowledge and language learning experiences appeared to be more capable and more strategic in learning an additional language. They tend to draw on their prior knowledge and experience, as they have a richer knowledge base to draw upon and have developed more language learning strategies.

5.3.3 Context and Experience Related to CFL Learning

As discussed in Section 5.3.2, students' prior knowledge and language learning experience facilitate interlanguage development, but the role of the learning context and lived experience in interlanguage development cannot be ignored. Participants' interview responses reveal the importance of social experience or activities and context in facilitating memorization, understanding and internalization in language learning and acquisition. Calvin reported his unforgettable experience and activities of learning new words and phrases, and how he could keep them so deeply in mind because his learning was facilitated by the live context and personal experience rather than through rote memory from the textbook, for instance,

> C: …. But I still remember like the one festival …. where they had the leftover of fish, they don't eat all the food, they leave it over, because one of the words in the festival means like saving things……something like that….or let me give you an example, spring…., something, they turned the word upside down, like *chun tian* (春天 spring) ….. Oh, actually it is another word, *fu* (福 happy lot, good fortune). They sort of had a piece of diamond-shaped paper with the word on it upside down. So I remember that word because they set it upside down.

What Calvin shared is part of Chinese custom. In the Chinese New Year Festival, people are accustomed to putting a couplet on each side of the front door frame of the house, and sticking on the upper center of the door a big piece of red diamond-shaped paper with the large-sized word 福 (fú). The word 福 (happy lot, good fortune) is put upside down. But why is it put upside down? Because when it is upside down, it is "福倒(到)" (fú dào), means "good fortune has arrived", while "到" (dào, arrive) is pronounced the same as "倒" (upside down). So the word is used as a pun, a very common Chinese literary tradition. Fish, 鱼(yú) is often used in the same way as a pun. It sounds the same as 余 which means "extra", "leftover", or "affluent". In Chinese tradition, fish is thought of as a required dish for the

New Year family feast, portending an affluent prosperous new year. People may intentionally leave part of the fish there and do not eat all of it to symbolize "extra", or "affluence".

Calvin continued with his scenario：

C: ….. for all languages I learned, I learn things contextually and memorizing things by experiencing them. It's far easier to learn a new word when you have an experience behind it, for example, I remember the occasions when I learn specific things in a language, because I have the memory behind it, …. you don't have the same memory as something described in the textbook, it's not specifically in the memory, ….. It is not easy to reconnect when I'm trying to explain what I mean. So memorizing vocabulary, typically happens in Chinese is what I studied in the textbook, I absorb for amount of time, I rely on the textbook, I do for the test, but after the test I forget everything because I don't practice those in our daily life. But I mean if I repeat with others, or to myself, and to each other again, and having practiced before, I would be able to recognize it again. …..for example, in Italy, I learned how to say "grass" when I went out with my friends. I still remember it …. and I remember how I was joked at when getting it wrong. Those little things tell how my mind works. …..I want to get that ….. If you want to learn ten to fifteen words from textbook without the same experience …… they will be lost from long term memory..… Another example, I learned the phrase *yuán lái rú cǐ* (原来如此 So that's how it is!) from my Chinese friend. When I first heard the phrase I didn't know what the words meant or looked like, but I could figure out what the phrase meant because it was contextualized, and I can always remember it.

Morris shared the same view with Calvin,

M: In learning vocabulary, for sure, it is more helpful to learn things in context, learn different sentences and patterns that may use common words in our daily life….. Of course it helps to memorize things rather than just rote learning.

What they were trying to say is that social activities and context are crucial in learning a new language, which is assumed to be an approach more effective than rote learning from the textbook.

Just as Hymes (1972) noted, it is with context rather than language that we start our understanding of language. Without context, language is just an abstract semiotic system. Indeed, language is "inextricably bound up with the non-linguistic behaviour which constitutes its natural environment" (McGinn, 1997, p.43). Once the learner is exposed to that environment, his/her language learning will be

made much easier. The cultural context of the target society facilitates a better understanding of meanings for all practical purposes (Kramsch, 1993; Goffman, 1981).

Calvin was trying to communicate that he could learn the difficult Chinese phrase so well just because there was a specific context where the language was embedded. When facilitated by the context, he could capture the meaning more easily and remember it for a longer time. This evidence shows contextualization of cultural information of the target language is the key for L2 learners to understand the target language and culture (Kramsch, 1993). He found through his own learning experience the advantages of learning the target language through the external environment, social activities and personal experience rather than from the textbook. This approach of learning facilitated his internal mental functioning such as memorization and conceptualization.

This aligns with the sociocultural and functional perspective of L2 learning that the meaning potential of language lies in use in a cultural context and social activities rather than in the abstract linguistic form in the interlocutors' mind (Heritage, 1984; Halliday, 1978, 1975). These instances show the social and cultural nature of language on one hand. On the other hand, Calvin's experience suggests interlanguage development in the target language cultural context is more efficient and effective than in the native language environment. The reason why he could keep these words in his long-term memory was just because he learned them in context, not just by memorizing them from the textbook where the contextual information may not be enough to assist his memorization. This again conforms to the cognitive linguistic perspective (Adamson, 2009; Watson-Gegeo, 2004) that language is inseparable from context and our lived experience; linguistic knowledge is conceptual and language learning is a process of concept formation.

In a nutshell, the above evidence from participants' interviews reveals: a) the importance of learning context and experience in interlanguage development, illustrating how social experience and

activities, and a cultural context could facilitate memorization and internalization in CFL learning on the one hand, which shows the cognitive nature of L2 learning; b) the social cultural as well as contextual nature of language on the other hand; and, c) the role that students' past language learning experience plays in their current language learning. While the findings illustrated above indicate the influence of participants' prior language(s) and knowledge on their CFL learning, further findings also show the influence of their culture on the Chinese interlanguage development, which is to be discussed next.

5.3.4 Cultural Influence and CFL Learning

Data from the survey, classroom observations, and the audio recordings show the climate in the CFL classroom featured Western students' learning style: a) intensive oral practice, peer assistance and collaboration; b) not much individual practice and memorization work; c) the textbook was not the only resource for learning, as materials regarding Chinese culture were integrated into the language class based on students' interest, to enhance their motivation in CFL learning. This indicates the influence of students' culture on CFL learning.

To give students more opportunities to improve oral Chinese, the instructors in the two groups gave each student a chance to do a presentation in class, using what they had learned, mostly conversational Chinese, simple expressions and short sentences. They worked in pairs, or three or even four as a group for the presentation. Actually each pair or group acted out a play, a short scenario about their campus life, or their studies, or other daily encounters. The group at the elementary level were more creative. Each pair or group even innovatively used props which were part of Chinese culture, such as a set of Chinese tea serving cups, a Chinese handicraft that made their presentation more attractive and engaging. Each one in a group played a role, while the rest were watching. After each scenario, the audience brought up many questions in simple Chinese about what they presented, and the presenters

had to answer in Chinese too. Although they did not speak Chinese fluently, they enjoyed the opportunity of putting what they had learned to use. What I observed show that they were enthusiastic and enjoyed the experience of learning the new language in that way and felt they had accomplished something. The efforts they invested in their presentation were really impressive, and their presentations were exciting. It was an enjoyable and rewarding opportunity to observe them speaking Chinese in a functional way.

Their activity, cooperation, assertiveness, spontaneity as well as openness to questions brought the typical Western culture of school learning to the foreign language classroom. These dispositions, characterizing peer interaction and collaboration, student-instructor communication, appeared to facilitate their learning in particular. They valued and were encouraged to learn by doing or acting. This is a way of learning deemed more effective in learning a new language than rote learning. Still, most students in the two groups preferred to have instructor's support in class, for instance:

1) Survey results (see Section 4.3) show about 75% to 82% of the participants would like more opportunities to practice *pinyin*, tones, speaking, and grammar in class with the instructor.

2) Findings also reveal another tendency among these CFL students. All interview participants reported that Chinese tones were the most difficult, and they all showed their preference of practicing *pinyin* and tones with the instructor in class. Most of them were active and cooperative in class; however, they did not seem to invest as much effort outside the class to memorize the basic Chinese linguistic elements as they were supposed to. Memorization should be an important learning strategy when learning a new language, particularly at the elementary level when the basic linguistic elements need to be memorized to build a foundation. This indicates that these participants still did not put enough effort into their CFL learning, although they were motivated to learn the language.

Some of the participants were not following the instructor in class, did not complete the assignments on time, and were not as cooperative in group work as were expected, although they were generally trained to be good at critical thinking, problem-solving, and exploring what they were learning on their own terms. They were not ready to follow the instructor's guide to make sure they were prepared for the class, to meet the requirements of the assignments, and to follow the syllabus. When responding to the interview, Ray said,

> R: ….I don't know …. how to respond it. I can't say it. I just memorize them, but I forget them easily. Forget really quick. ..… Like I know it for the quiz, but three days later, I don't remember…….. For me, I found in class, I don't really want to learn much, really like to sit down, and just read it over a lot, I just like memorizing it. So when she introduces new grammar and vocabulary in class, and in the same class, she wants us to use it ..., I find it really difficult because I don't really know it yet. I haven't sat down and really absorbed it. So anything she wants us to do, that's just brand new stuff, I find it difficult…… there should be a break in each session, so that we have time to absorb……

Ray did not seem to enjoy the class as shown by what he said in the interview:

> R: To be honest, there is not huge fun in the course. I'm kind of bored, but I like it's done, and I feel accomplished. I'm a math major, what I'm doing is not really of use ….. It's a kind of up in the air. I like when I'm done ….. It makes me feel good when I'm done. When I'm in it, it's a little boring.

In the frame of the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), what Ray reported may have pedagogical implications in that students should be allowed more time to practice or deliberate on what they were taught in order to absorb and internalize the new knowledge before they could apply the knowledge. However, Ray did represent some of the students in his group as I observed. They just had different starting points and different beliefs about CFL learning. These students seemed to prefer team work, collaboration, performing and using what they had learned. In this sense, they were motivated. On the other hand, they did not seem to prepare for their class, and did not make enough effort in memorizing the fundamental linguistic elements, even though memorization was seen as a key method

for students at the elementary level. This indicates that the CFL students were motivated to some extent to learn the new language, but their motivation intensity was not that high.

On the whole, students' culture exerted more positive than negative influences on their CFL learning. In particular, their cultural traits such as openness, and sociability procured more opportunities of socialization and learning, which is held to be important for learning a new language. Hence, we may say the influence of students' culture may have an impact on the development of their motivation in CFL learning. Motivation is socioculturally constructed (Ushioda, 2008), and the growth of motivation is inevitably influenced by students' culture. In the case of CFL learning in this study, the development of students' motivation was explored in the instructional setting. Findings in this regard are given in the next chapter.

5.4 Summary

This chapter discussed the stepwise data analysis regarding some linguistic factors of learning CFL first, then illustrated the findings which were fleshed out and discussed through three categories: a) students' problems in learning the Chinese linguistic elements, which were identified through error analysis, including the problems in learning Chinese phonemes and the tones, the Chinese writing system, and the grammar, particularly tense-aspect; b) the influence of prior languages and experiences on CFL learning, or more specifically, crosslinguistic influences and CFL learning strategies; multilingual influences and CFL learning strategies, including both native and non-native influence; and finally, c) cultural influence, which could be associated with motivation. More detailed findings on motivation are to be presented and discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6 STUDENT MOTIVATION AND CFL LEARNING

6.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter focuses on the analysis of student motivation in CFL learning, and proceeds with an outline of the codes that arose from all sources, participants' motivational profiles, the findings, and the discussion. The findings are specified on the basis of the main themes: a) student language/culture background and CFL learning motivation; b) CFL instruction and the development of student motivation.

6.1 The Emergent Themes

After coding the data gathered from the survey, observations of classroom practices, and interviews, I established the following codes related to student motivation.

1) Integrative / instrumental motivational orientation
    a. Origin of personal interest; language/culture backgrounds; exposure to Chinese community and the culture.
    b. Interest, attitudes, and values given to the target language.
    c. Career goals, reasons for taking the Chinese language course
    d. Prior language/culture backgrounds and language learning experience.
2) Motivational factors derived from classroom instruction

    Curriculum and learning materials
3) Teaching methods/practice
4) Student motivation in classroom learning
    a. Students' reaction to instruction and learning tasks in class: interest, engagement, and

cooperation with the instructor or peers.

b. Students' expectations from the instructor and the course.

The main themes related to motivation that emerged from the data analysis are as follows:

1) Student language/culture background and CFL learning motivation.
2) CFL instruction and the development of student motivation.

The findings are explicated and discussed according to the themes in the following sections.

6.2. Participants' Motivation for CFL Learning

The analysis of student development of motivation was mainly through the analysis of the data from the survey, interviews, and observations. A brief introduction of each of the ten interview participants was given in Chapter 3 (methodology). These ten students were the main body of participants in this study since they were involved throughout the whole data collection process. They responded to the survey, were interviewed, and provided written assignments for me to review. Hence, setting up a profile for each of them serves to prepare for individual and cross-case analysis and comparison of participants' motivation to better present the findings and capture the developmental process of their motivation through their progress in the course. All the participants interviewed shared their language and culture background which has been detailed in Chapter 3. The profiles below developed from the interviews focus on students' motivation for taking the CFL class.

6.2.1 Participants' Motivational Profiles and CFL Learning (Group A)

Participants from Group A

1) Victor

Victor, as a history major, was interested in Chinese history and politics as well as

linguistic/cultural anthropology. This could explain why he was interested in language and culture studies. He seemed to have a good language aptitude, had learned some good language learning strategies, and outperformed his classmates in the Chinese language course. He shared his ambition to learn six languages, as he saw foreign languages as a way to learn about the history and politics of foreign countries. He had learned some French and Japanese before he took the Chinese language course. He said he was not only interested in the Chinese language, but also had a strong passion for learning about China as a whole from a historical perspective.

Victor shared his motivational orientation from a history background. He was motivated by his curiosity about Chinese history and culture as well as cultural linguistics and anthropology. He was a Russian-English bilingual and also had learned other foreign languages before taking this course.

> V: ….My goal of learning Chinese, is not just learning the language, but learning about China as a whole….. my earliest exposure to Chinese history is the .....It was the most advanced age .... I mean I have read some interesting parts about Chinese history, but not the early achievement, about Chinese culture. ....China had shifted its side. .....they were very well developed. That's my exposure to Chinese history. ….

Victor seemed happy and satisfied with this course as he expected. He liked the textbook, the teaching techniques by the professor, and his interest in Chinese seemed to be reinforced by the end of the term as he reported in the interview.

> V: My interest has definitely increased in learning this course and been reinforced by a lot of positive things. I mean I know I'm getting the first impression of ...positive ....of Chinese language and culture. I really think the way the materials were presented over the term was really good. Honestly, my expectation was very cute.....when I came in, because I thought, I expected it to be difficult, just starting a new language, I had a background that made my transition smoother than my first when I took a Japanese course because all the concepts were foreign to me, absolutely everything, but that's explainable by the fact that it was my first Eastern Asian language, or Oriental languages that I have …. Once I have that kind of exposure, things began to make more sense.

He also shared his plans for after this course, which indicates his sustained interest in Chinese.

V: ….. I mean probably one of the things that I would like to do for several weeks during the vacation is I wish I could sit down, and no other work, and work on it independently, absorb the vocabulary without rush. ….. so I'm sure, in the holiday, summer break or co-op term, all my afternoons and mornings, to myself, that I could take my time. I really hope to keep going with this course as the other courses…..

Victor was a motivated CFL learner, taking the Chinese course not only for credits, but also for his interest from a history perspective. However, his motivational intensity was not high, as he reported. He usually worked on the course, just practicing with the instructor and peers in class, doing the exercises in the workbook, preparing carefully for quizzes, and making use of his background knowledge. He did not have much time to learn the additional materials given by the instructor although he was really interested.

2) Ray

Ray was interested in China, the country, the people, and Chinese culture, which seemed to be the impetus for him to choose the Chinese language course, as he said he was more interested in Chinese culture than the language, and saw learning Chinese language as a way to achieve his goal of learning about Chinese culture. He did not work hard on the Chinese language, but just enjoyed completing the course. He had a strong passion for experiencing a short stay living in China and learning about Chinese people and their culture in real-life situations. He was planning to travel around China when taking the Chinese language course.

Ray as a born Canadian, shared a different starting point of taking Chinese course from most of his classmates, as he shared in the interview:

R: ….. I agree that China is a fast developing country, but it wouldn't be my main motivation…… I'm a Canadian, I don't have a broad view, I want to experience the culture that is really different. So I thought that Chinese course is a good way for that, so I think I take Chinese for a lot of small reasons. …..First, I think Chinese is a lot different than English and Canadian, so I want to experience the culture, I think that's something really different. I like the idea that there is not much spelling, …… like English. I like the characters. ….. Also I'm going to finish school in spring term, I have the time, I'm going to go, like I said to experience the culture. So taking this course…..

His curiosity about Chinese culture that differs a lot from his own culture brought him to the Chinese course. Interestingly, his main purpose was to learn the culture and he saw language learning was just a way to it. He also shared his feelings about this course.

R: To be honest, there is not huge fun in the course. I'm kind of bored, but I like that it's done, and I feel accomplished. I'm a math major, what I'm doing is not really of use ….. It's a kind of up in the air. I like when I'm done ….. It makes me feel good when I'm done. When I'm in it, it's a little boring. I would like to reach the advanced,….. I want to go to China. I hope I will, I can stay…. for a year. I think I should go to language school though ….. because I need to get the visa, right? …..If I don't know Chinese, and stay for a year, that will be bad. I don't think that will be fun.

Ray did have a positive attitude toward the target language community and was eager to learn Chinese culture and desire to experience the culture. He desired to learn Chinese language because he saw learning the language as a way to learn Chinese culture. He always tried to find opportunities to practice speaking, but he said he was too embarrassed because he knew he could not do well; however, as he said, he would prefer to practice with "someone in the same boat", who was at the same level as he was, so that they knew each other and would not feel embarrassed. For Ray, his feeling of being embarrassed when he could not do well shows his language learning anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Horwitz, 2001), which negatively influenced his learning of the target language, because he might have missed opportunities to practice speaking Chinese with others whenever possible.

R: I'm really embarrassed, so I tend not to use the opportunities, which is unfortunate. You can get better if you practice, but I don't want to practice because I'm so embarrassed. ….. I always tell myself I'm going to speak Chinese……but I'm just too embarrassed. Yeah, I like to practice one-on-one in our own room. I have some Korean friend. She learns Chinese as a third language, so I'm not embarrassed practicing with her because she has the same experience when she wasn't better than I am, so I'm not embarrassed.

Ray's case shows anxiety in language learning, which seems common among second/foreign language learners. But the sources of anxiety may vary as Horwitz (2001, p.118) maintains, which may include personality traits, the difficulties in the target language itself, language background, or the competitive environment. For Ray, his embarrassment might be the result of both language background and the difficulties in the target language. The interview report given by Ray shows he was monolingual, functioning in English only although he had an Italian background, and had also learned some French. So he did not have experience speaking another language for communication. But the evidence may not be enough to draw a conclusion that his monolingual background was the cause of his foreign language anxiety; this poses an important question for further research.

3) Derek

Derek was interested in Chinese culture and other current issues in China, in addition to the Chinese language. His mother had learned some Chinese in Korea when she was young, and shared with him her interest in Chinese language and culture. That family background might have influenced his choice of the Chinese language course. He thought Chinese would be very difficult to learn before taking the Chinese language course, but he said he changed his view after taking that course, as he found the Chinese language much easier than he previously thought. He was getting more interested in the language while taking the course. He decided to continue with a Chinese language course the next term.

Derek reported his starting point in learning Chinese which also differs from his classmates,

> D: I want to learn Chinese because I have some Chinese friends; when they talk in Chinese I felt left out…..Chinese are everywhere, so it's useful to learn a little bit of Chinese….. in my opinion China is one of the fastest developing countries in the world, so it will be beneficial to learn Chinese in advance …… not only because of its population, but also because of the strong national spirit of community, they are so close together … So I felt that what I will do in the future, I will be associated with Chinese people anywhere I go, so it's very necessary to learn Chinese.

His motivational orientation in choosing the Chinese course seemed both instrumental and integrative in that he was motivated by both his friendships within the Chinese community and his future career goal. His interest and confidence in learning Chinese was greatly enhanced after taking the Chinese language course, as he said in the interview by the end of the term:

> D: If I could I'd like to reach the advanced level. But it's not really easy, right? When I was in my first year, …. I decided to take French because I thought Chinese is much harder than French. ….. But now I feel that if you try hard, you can learn anything, so …now I have a little confidence that Chinese language is much easier than French, or any other languages ……Yes, it's easier than I expected. So I decided to take China 102 next semester. ….

Derek seemed to have developed a stronger desire and confidence to learn Chinese than when he first started. He was planning to continue with the course next term. He rarely practiced speaking outside class and only watched one or two movies with English captions with Chinese friends, but he said he sometimes practised speaking with Chinese friends, as he reported,

> D: like I have a very close Chinese friend, when I learned a few simple words like greetings, I used them to my friend. But even though I'm not really good, he just laughs, and I laugh, that's it, because we are really close, I don't care much about that….if he laughs.

Compared with Ray, Derek seemed to be more willing to practice speaking Chinese without being embarrassed. This can possibly be connected with his Korean-English bilingual background, as Herdina and Jessner (2002) maintain, "the use of two of more languages not only influences the linguistic and cognitive skills of multilinguals, but also their social skills" (p.64). "….bilinguals are more sensitive than monolinguals in interpersonal communication" (p.65). According to what Derek shared, he seemed to be at a more comfortable level than Ray when using the target language no matter how he did. Hence, there is a possibility that his bilingual background contributed to some extent to his willingness to use the target language.

4) Marlene

Marlene was interested in China and Chinese culture, and hoped to travel in China some time in the future. That might have been the impetus of her decision to choose the Chinese language course. She seemed to have a strong curiosity about the Chinese language, particularly the logographic characters, the history of the evolution of the characters that used to be more logographic in ancient times, but now has become more abstract than the original characters. What the instructor introduced about the history of the Chinese characters seemed to arouse her interest in the language to a greater extent. She was diligent and willing to contribute to the class or group work when participating in the study activities in class. She was at the top of the class among her peers.

In responding to the interview questions, she shared her different point of departure in choosing this course, as she commented,

M: I have never learned Chinese. I ended up choosing this course just because I need a language course, ….I thought that would be interesting to learn. It's really a popular language, a well-known language in the world. I thought it would be useful for me. Chinese is so useful in the

future because I hope to go to China one day. I will not live there, just for a visit for a vacation there and tour around, so I think it will be good to learn it, ….. to be able to use the language to understand what is going on, and be able to read the signs and the characters, to communicate with the basic stuff I have learned already.

Like most of the other participants, Marlene's interest in Chinese was reinforced through this course. As she said, in addition to learning the language, she learned some other things that were eye-opening for her, particularly Chinese history and culture that she had never learned before. Here is what she reported,

M: Yes, it makes me appreciate Chinese more, after this course, I might be able to take a second one, which is in fall, but I'm graduating, so I'm not going to have a chance any more. So I would say from a beginner into an intermediate level, where I'm hoping for, but I will learn if I'm actually in China, experiencing the culture when staying there, ….. I definitely want to visit China one day, so I will definitely improve the language over there. ….. I would say my interest in learning Chinese has been reinforced in this course. Now I realize that Chinese is so interesting….so many interesting things, I've got more interested in China and speaking Chinese, so of course, it's a very good experience. It hasn't intimidated me, so that's good. It wasn't too scary, I have been enjoying it.

Marlene reported that she practiced a lot in class and at home with the tones and characters. Her background information suggests she was an English monolingual although she had experience of learning French which was a norm for all participants who was raised and educated in Canada. She did not mention having any close Chinese friends or opportunities to access the Chinese community.

5) Helen

Helen was interested in business in China and Chinese culture, especially the Chinese ways of communication. As an economics major, she was fully aware of the globalization or internationalization of the economy and the importance of learning about the people, the culture and the business of foreign

countries. She was also aware of the great potential for business in China in the near future, and the possibility of Chinese language to become a main international language in the business world in the future. She seemed highly motivated, not only learning the Chinese language, but also learning about the Chinese society, making quite a few Chinese friends. She even wanted to be immersed in Chinese culture, and tried Chinese food and Chinese ways of communication. She was very observant of the life and customs of Chinese students on campus, which helped her understand Chinese people and culture more thoroughly. She was diligent and did very well in the Chinese language course.

Helen had French and Japanese language learning experience. She chose to take the Chinese language course because she thought it would be the future language, particularly for business. She shared her thoughts in the interview as follows:

> H: I heard that Mandarin will be the business language in the future. It's a kind of imperative if one wants to go into international business, so it is definitely part of my future career goal, and I think it will be really helpful because China is becoming powerful in international business.

Helen shared her preference for the learning materials in the textbook, the dialogues that were commonly used for daily communication, and she got interested in learning the Chinese language after that course. Here is what she said,

> H: I think what we have learned is good and practical. If we go to China, it would be very helpful. They are definitely things you would use, asking where things are, and going to someone's house, asking or introducing your nationality….are you an American or Canadian, or…. Absolutely, I think part of that, I wanted to do it when I feel relaxed, … Yes, a little bit of culture that we pick up on in this class, which is good, as to the proficiency level, I definitely plan to reach a higher level, but it will take a long time. My interest in this course? I would say it's reinforced because I found it's interesting. It just takes time to work.

Helen seemed to be highly motivated and her motivational intensity seemed higher than most of the rest of the participants. She spent more time and energy on the Chinese course. She said she had

some opportunities communicating with Chinese friends, and even spent a few hours with them for practicing oral Chinese, and went to a Chinese restaurant, having developed a taste for Chinese food.

6) Vaine

Regarding Vaine's motivation for learning CFL, he mentioned his Vietnamese family background and his father's ideas about business experiences with Chinese people in China. His father could speak some Chinese and had visited China more than once. It appeared that he was somewhat influenced by his father in choosing the Chinese language course. But he seemed more influenced by his Chinese friends in Poland and those studying and living with him in Canada when deciding to take the Chinese course. His Chinese friends both in Poland and in Canada were an important part of his life. He was interested in Chinese culture and business in China and was optimistic about using his knowledge in computer science in business. He also revealed his ambition to set up his own business in the future.

Vaine has a complicated language/culture background. He seemed to be motivated for both integrative and instrumental reasons in taking the Chinese language course. Moreover, due to his Vietnamese roots, a culture deeply influenced by Chinese culture, his background differs a lot from his other classmates. The following is what he provided in the interview,

> VA: I haven't learned Chinese before. I do meet Chinese people, and sometimes I want to understand what they say. For example, if some words come to my ear, I also ask them what they mean….what I learned before I took this Chinese course were just a few sentences. ….. For me ….? I have learned many languages. I think Chinese is more useful for me in the future. I want to go to China, and to travel around China, at least three months. I have found so many interesting places in China from internet that I would like to visit. Also my father visited China for business. So Chinese is also useful……in the future, maybe one day, I will become a businessman. I'm studying computer science, I don't know if I can be a…..computer scientist….. Chinese population is one sixth of the world's total, so anywhere I can meet Chinese people.

He was also interested in continuing to learn Chinese after this course. Here is what he said about his plan to continue with a Chinese course,

VA: I'm more interested to learn. I have some background, some basic knowledge, so it's easy for me to continue. It's not wise if I stop learning Chinese. ….. Yes, I have decided to take China 102. I want to take it in the fall term. But I'm on the waiting list ….. I don't know when I can find the answer……

Vaine's motivation seemed to be growing in the progress of the course, and decided to continue with the course next term. He said he often tried to speak some simple oral Chinese he learned with Chinese friends. He did have a lot of opportunities to practice as he was living with his Chinese friends.

6.2.2 Participants' Motivational Profiles and CFL Learning (Group B)

Participants from Group B

7) Calvin

It seemed that Calvin's childhood experience of making Chinese friends and learning Chinese had a very strong impact on his decision to take the Chinese language course. He had a strong passion to put what he learned into use and actively sought to make friends among the students of Chinese heritage, looking for opportunities to speak Chinese as much as possible. He had continued studying Chinese for many reasons: friendship with Chinese, future career as well as personal interest. He was planning for a short term study in a university in China soon. By the end of the course, his plan was already on schedule and he was preparing for the trip to China.

Calvin reported how he was motivated by his connections with the Chinese community since his childhood,

C: Why do I start learning Chinese? Well, I learned Chinese because of the friendship I made in my childhood. Friends there were mainly from Taiwan. So we learned Traditional Chinese, … I learned some Taiwanese colloquialisms in a way of speaking, so I was a little confused when I first came to Canada continuing my studies because people from mainland China spoke differently from those from Taiwan, ….. but I had to switch from Taiwanese I was sort of

expected to…. Yeah, Chinese is a memory in ….. my learning …..

On the other hand, he was also highly motivated by his career goal and tried to get the Certificate of Chinese Minor, as he said,

> C: ….. Any place (in China) would help me to move forward. So I mean, it is going to the point now, I think, where I won't be able to learn more about Chinese. I'm sort of limited……from school. What I'm hoping for now is to get into an exchange program, maybe in Beijing ….. I still have the same expenses to deal with Chinese every day. For the term and time there… for about six to twelve weeks, if I can get acquainted with someone there, it would be fantastic. Hopefully this will happen next summer. But if it does, it will be good in a number of ways. First of all, I can get a minor in Chinese language ….. It is something anyway, ….I'm motivated to go there. At level 3, I wouldn't be able to do that in June in a class setting. ….. So if I go there, …. I need to bring back what I study there….. to make sure my current university will recognize it officially. I would be really happy to say confidently in my resume ….that I can speak Chinese. That would be really good….

Calvin seemed more open and sociable than other participants, and had built a close connection through friendship with Chinese students. Thus he had a lot of opportunities to practice spoken Chinese with native speakers, but he said he was reluctant to strike up a conversation with a stranger or in public, and just felt comfortable speaking with friends and classmates. He said he might not have the chance to study Chinese in an institutional setting after graduation, but he might still have the chance to practice with Chinese people at work or in daily life. He was planning to go to China and study the language there for about two or three months.

8) Bruce

Bruce studied Chinese mainly for his personal interest in learning foreign languages, particularly because Chinese is typologically different from European languages. He seemed interested in using what he learned in class and the textbook, speaking Chinese whenever the opportunity arose. He was an active

member in the Chinese student community at the university and had made quite a few Chinese friends. His interest in Chinese language and culture also had a strong impact on his participation in campus sports events where he could find many Chinese students, as these activities offered him more possibilities to communicate with Chinese people and he sought chances to practice Chinese in natural occurring settings. He was aware that as he was pursuing a career as a medical doctor, knowing some Chinese and speaking some simple Chinese to Chinese patients might be beneficial for his patients, in addition to his specialized skills or accomplishments in medical science. Hence, he was a highly motivated student in learning Chinese.

Bruce shared his interest in the Chinese language in the interview as follow,

B: I really like Chinese first of all. People said it's the language of the future. It's the most commonly spoken language in the world. People speak it around campus, if you walk on the street, you will hear people speak it, so I really try to listen and understand them. I really really enjoy it. It isn't that there is a definite reason that I take it. …I just want to try something new and different. ……. a little.… So I don't know what exact reason that can pinpoint it. It's a kind of interest…… Yes, I'm more interested in Chinese patients….to speak to them in Chinese. …not really like functional, but just like for the fun of it. They probably like that too, just for fun….not business oriented, like….. Academically, learning Chinese also helps learning other studies as well ….. It improves your memorization skills ……

What Bruce reported shows his motivational orientation which was could be seen as more integrative than instrumental, and positive affects that facilitate L2 learning. His CFL learning seemed to be driven by his interest and desire, "internal attributes that can be influenced by external factors" (Gardner, 1996, p.32). He also shared his gregariousness and sociability, and sought out opportunities speaking Chinese with Chinese friends or anyone of Chinese origin whenever possible.

9) Maggie

Maggie had majored in anthropology, and had experience learning Chinese at the elementary level; this was her second Chinese course. Her original interest in Chinese language and culture stemmed from a visit to Hong Kong quite a few years ago, and the commercial products imported from Hong Kong and mainland China. She was deeply impressed by the exotic culture in Hong Kong when she first visited the big international metropolis. But her studies in anthropology also reinforced her interest in Chinese language and culture. As she asserted, her interest in learning the Chinese language was not just for degree credits, but to learn the language itself in order to learn about Chinese people and their culture.

Maggie seemed to show more integrative motivational orientation than instrumental although she had taken the Chinese course for degree credit when she first started. Her interest seemed to originate from her visit to China, as she shared,

> M: My purpose in learning Chinese language….. well, I major in anthropology and linguistics. My linguistics professor asked me if I wanted to learn a language, something I have never considered although I thought linguistics is an interesting subject…..I have been thinking of specific languages, but I visited Hong Kong….. I had always been fascinated by Chinese characters as opposed to alphabetic languages. So I thought if I try to learn a new language, …..that would be Mandarin Chinese. It would be the one I like to learn. Then I decided to enrol in the course.

Maggie's learning was more driven by her personal interest rather than career goals. She said she had many contacts with Chinese people and tried Chinese food at Chinese restaurants many times. She even often went to Chinese grocery stores, to buy Chinese food and tried Chinese cuisine, which shows the tendency of acculturation (Schumann, 1986).

10) Morris

Morris was interested in Chinese for business reasons, but also because he was engaged to a Chinese woman. Before joining this class, he had no experience of learning Chinese in a formal

instructional setting. But he had much more experience learning Chinese in informal daily communicative occasions with his fiancé and his Chinese colleagues; thus, he was much better in oral expression than his classmates. He was persevering in learning Chinese on his own, and had been following an online program called "Fluenz" for a long time. So he had laid a good foundation enough for him to further improve the language to reach a more advanced level. He was the top of the class. Hence he was hoping the instructor could teach him more about Chinese grammar in comparison with English grammar to help him analyze and figure out the similarities and differences, so that he might be able to learn more and faster in a short time. His goal was to reach a level of functioning in simple daily communication particularly with his future Chinese in-laws. He seemed to be more interested in learning about Chinese people and the culture than the language itself.

Morris had a special background as he studied Chinese first because of his Chinese fiancé but also for business purposes. He reported his interest in Chinese as follows:

> M: My starting point or purpose of learning Chinese is because my fiancé is a Chinese, so my goal in learning Chinese is to communicate with her parents, especially her family whenever I travel to China, if I can communicate, that will be great. That's my goal and my motivation. …..also in statistics, there are a lot of Chinese people in that field, between my personal life and my work life, I have been surrounded by Chinese all the time, so I have chance to pick up a little bit here and there, and train my ears, so this course for me, I did not start from zero because I did some studies before. …… I try to learn their way consciously to understand my future in-laws, learn their ways in dealing with things, how they communicate, and learn how to fit in.

Morris seemed to have a lot of opportunities practicing speaking Chinese with native speakers; however, he said he was unwilling to initiate speaking with people he was unfamiliar with or in public because he thought he was not that good. He shares some similarities with Ray in regard to language learning anxiety, as a result of which he might have missed many learning opportunities. But he had his unique way to learn Chinese through an online program, which was not common among other

participants.

The information from participants' profiles serves to depict the developmental profiles of their motivational orientation and the development of their motivation in general during the Chinese language course. The following section presents the findings on student motivation through analysis from a socio-educational perspective (Gardner, 1985, 1996, 2010).

6.3 Motivation: Student Backgrounds and CFL Motivation

The analysis of student learning motivation yielded the following findings which are themed as: a) positive attitudes and motivational intensity; b) attribution theory and CFL motivation; and, c) academic background and motivational orientation.

6.3.1 Positive Attitudes and Motivational Intensity

Data from all sources, survey, interview, and observation, indicate participants had positive attitudes towards the target language community (see Section 4.1), and the learning situation (see Section 6.4.3). In terms of their language background, interview reports show all of them had prior experience learning at least one second/foreign language before taking the Chinese language course. Two of them had language backgrounds that were influenced by Chinese, which were Korean and Vietnamese. Others had connections with the Chinese community or had Chinese friends. This was the information about their language and prior foreign language learning experience that might have influenced their decision to take the Chinese language course.

Their motivational orientations include their friendship with Chinese people, their interest in learning about China as a whole, and other career goals. Survey results (see Table 6, S13 in Chapter 4) show that over 96% of the respondents credited the benefits of learning Chinese language as seeing a

new world and culture, broadening their knowledge spectrum, and developing language ability. This shows students' tendency to be integratively motivated. However, their motivational intensity was not high. Findings from the survey (C2, C3 in Q4, Table 9, Chapter 4), interviews (as Ray, Derek, Helen, and Victor reported) and my observations suggest that most students did not invest much time and efforts outside class, to access and work on the additional materials available to improve their CFL learning but only studied from the materials given by the instructor or from the textbook and workbook. Some of them even did not prepare for the class, as for example, Ray reported:

> R: I just want time to absorb, and without break…and read the text ….I don't really prepare for the class… maybe I need to do the whole of the workbook , but just certain parts of it before the class. In that way, I'd have some ground to stand on for the new material.

Some of them could not follow the instructor in class, and did not engage in group work. Most of them preferred oral practice or classroom presentations.

In Gardner's (1985, 2010) socio-educational model, L2 motivation consists of three components: desire to learn; positive attitudes toward the learning situation and target language community, as well as conscientious efforts in learning. Each of these components constitutes an important facet of motivation. With the amount of efforts invested in learning that I could gather from the participants' self-report and my observations, it can be predicted that desire for learning alone would not result in great advances in CFL.

6.3.2 Attribution Theory and CFL Motivation

As mentioned above, the CFL students in the two groups observed needed to invest more time and efforts in learning the language in order to develop their proficiency in CFL. However, one of the main

reasons for not working more on the Chinese language course was, as most of them revealed in the interview, that they did not have much time for the Chinese course after class, as they had other courses at the same time. Most of them (Victor, Derek, Helen, Calvin, Morris, and Maggie) maintained that they could have learned the language better if time had allowed them to invest more efforts. Maggie reported in the interview as follows:

> M: ….. most difficult would be tones and grammar only because I did not have sufficient practice with the tones and the grammar. …… I need a relatively longer time to get used to them. But I understand …. there is not so much time available to practice. So unless I go to a community where they all speak it, then you would pick up fast, I think. ….. with repetition and confidence , I would improve.

Maggie also mentioned confidence as an important element in L2 motivation, and one of the causes for successes or failures in learning a foreign language. In general, these participants' attribution pattern about the causes of successes and failures of their learning reflects their beliefs about the role of time and efforts as well as confidence in learning, which could have affected their motivation (Weiner, 1992). The evidence from the participants' interview responses strongly supports Weiner's (1992) viewpoint.

According to Weiner's (1992) attribution theory of motivation, learners' beliefs about the causes of their academic success and failure are most important for student motivation. For example, some of the participants held it was not difficult to learn Chinese as long as one had sufficient time to practice. Others thought time for practice in class was never enough, so they did their assignments at home and practiced listening and speaking with the CD attached to their textbook. Almost all participants attributed the cause for success or lack thereof to controllable factors such as concentration, conscientious effort, and time devoted rather than uncontrollable factors such as their aptitude, or the

difficulty in the Chinese language itself, or the teaching methods. This may explain why most of these students' motivation grew and sustained with the progress of the course. Their beliefs and their attribution of the causes of success and failure reflect their cultural values of diligence and academic achievements, and these are the shaping forces of their motivational disposition. Their beliefs in time and efforts as the causes of success and failures in CFL learning have illustrated Wiener's (1992) attribution theory of motivation.

Pedagogically, it could be helpful for the CFL instructors to learn about students' beliefs and the attributional patterns of their successes and failures, to improve teaching methods in order to stimulate student motivation. Gardner (1996, 2010) has delineated the internal and external forces, the origin, and the development of L2 learning motivation, and proposes, "….motivation is an internal attribute resulting in part from external forces" (Gardner, 1996, p.25). Gardner (1996) maintains, "a teacher can't motivate a student; a teacher can only provide the setting that arouses motivation in the student" (p.25). Although student motivation is seen as an internal attribute, CFL instructors could still improve the learning situation by adjusting curriculum and instructional techniques as well as teaching materials to enhance and protect students' motivation, and make the already developed motivation sustainable for continued learning.

6.3.3 Academic Background and Motivational Orientation

According to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), motivation can be conceptualized as: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. "Intrinsic motivation is based in the innate, organismic needs for competence and self-determination …." (p.32). In Gardner's (2010) view, intrinsic orientation refers to interest without desiring reward, but just enjoyment or satisfaction in learning (p.17). In this study, I see students' varied motivational orientations in the learning materials, which might have been influenced

by their different academic backgrounds, as intrinsic motivational orientation.

Participants with different academic backgrounds showed different intrinsic motivational orientations in CFL learning. For instance, Victor, as a history major, and Maggie, studying anthropology, were interested in the topics of Chinese history, philosophy, and culture as well as Chinese characters which were seen as logographic. Victor and Maggie reported,

V: ….. Those are the parts I enjoy the most, writing up the characters and remembering the meaning. So as I work by the end of the exercise, I have a better understanding of what the words mean. I don't have to refer to them, so I can write without …. the words…..

M: I wanted to take the course on Confucian philosophy, but it was not offered last term, I'm trying to get in another course related Chinese philosophy……. I had always been fascinated by Chinese characters as opposed to alphabetic languages. So I thought if I try to learn a new language, that would be Mandarin Chinese. ….

Helen and Calvin, majoring in economics and international business, were interested in the Chinese way of communication. As Helen commented,

H: ….. It's great if you can talk to somebody on the phone….. you are going to someone's house when they may invite you to dinner or something? Typically you bought a bottle of wine, something like that, right? But what is the Chinese custom? I don't know what people are expecting from me. If you talk to somebody in China, you say this and that, …..you know how people should be doing….. But when you are doing it actually in person, like shaking hands…..I don't know how to do it. Those things are implicit and very subtle. I think that's what we need to learn…..

Ray, a math major, and Marlene, majoring in child psychology, were interested in topics on popular Chinese culture and current issues, which might be related to their plans to travel around China. According to Gardner's view (1996, 2010), motivational orientation is not motivation per se, but it can be the origin, or reason, or the goal of motivation. The participants' different academic backgrounds in

this study resulted in different motivational orientations. These motivational orientations could be the origins, or the reasons, or the goals of their motivation, which in turn constitute the basis on which student motivation starts to be constructed, develops, and sustains.

In a pedagogical view, to stimulate student learning motivation, these motivational orientations should be protected and enhanced. This suggests the importance for the instructor to learn about students' interest orientation and motivational state in order to employ different motivators such as learning materials, learning tasks, and appropriate instructional techniques, to develop and enhance student motivation. But this could be a great challenge to CFL instructors because very often students' interests vary. It is difficult to meet everyone's interests and preferences to achieve the purpose of motivating them to learn. However, the more the instructor knows the students, the more informed he/she would be to improve instruction and maximally suit students' interests.

6.4 Situated Motivation

A situated approach to motivation examines student motivation in relation to the specific learner behaviour and classroom process, comparing and accounting for different student motivational orientations and development of motivation over time in relation to the ongoing classroom teaching and learning (see Dörnyei, 2005, p.80-81); namely, the attention was on how the curriculum, the learning activities in class, and the teaching techniques influence and stimulate student motivation. The findings regarding student classroom learning motivation proceed from: a) course curricula as related to motivational orientation; b) student expectations related to motivational orientation; to c) CFL instruction as it influences development of student motivation.

6.4.1 Course Curricula and Motivational Orientation

As discussed in Section 6.3, generally the participants in the two groups in this study tended to be more integratively than instrumentally oriented in CFL learning. However, in the instructional setting, students showed different motivational orientations between the two groups, due to the different course-specific curricula and requirements as well as the dynamics of class processes. Students from the credit course (Group A) were more motivated to get higher grades although this was not the only motivator in their learning. They invested more time and energy in assignments, or in preparing for quizzes and the final exam; while those in the non-credit course (Group B) were more interested in learning something related to their business, profession, or other personal interests and purposes. Morris from the non-credit course reported in the interview about his goal as follows:

> M: What is most enjoyable in class? It depends on our goals, I'm happy to learn to converse, that's fine. I realize I lose a lot of information by not learning the characters. There is a lot of secondary information involved in the characters themselves, but if your goal is for communication, then *pinyin* really makes it easier to get you to the goal. ….. My main goal is to reach a level to communicate with Chinese in our daily life …….. I know I have a lot of time to actually practice Chinese that way, and slowly pick up a few words, a couple of words each week. So I build up. …….

Derek in the credit course group reported (see Section 5.3.2) that while preparing for the quizzes he gathered the words that share the same tones, and made them into four groups, to make it easier for him to memorize the words.

Victor in the credit course group shared his motivation by quizzes,

> V: I think the most motivating thing is actually the quizzes. When I wrote the quiz, I wrote everything I learned. So for the first portion, the character portion, I write the characters, the *pinyin*, and the meaning, so it reinforced to myself that I could understand the word, I hear it, and I could say it in certainty, that's it. That's a kind of what this course means, just getting myself to get good grades based on learning everything, and that's kind of ....how I engage in my progress.

Maggie in the non-credit group reported her interest and motivational orientation as follows:

> M: …..My B.A. is in anthropology and linguistics. Influenced by my professors, I have got interested

> in the topic related or close to Chinese history, culture, linguistics. ….. even the characters bear some traits of Chinese history, ….. like what the professor presented, the characters evolved a lot from ancient to modern Chinese…… but I'm interested to learn about that……

For students in Group A (credit course), completing assignments and preparing for quizzes to get good grades were a strong motivator. In this sense, they were instrumentally oriented, but in general, they had positive attitudes towards the target language community and the learning situation, which characterized integrative orientation. For students in Group B (non-credit), they seemed to be more intergratively oriented, but ultimately they still had their purposes, or reasons, either business reasons, or identity, or marital, etc. Overall, as Gardner (2010) emphasizes, integrative and instrumental orientations may not be mutually exclusive within an individual. For the participants in Group A, they might be more instrumentally than integratively oriented; while the students in Group B were possibly more integratively than instrumentally oriented.

Findings also suggest that student motivational orientations might evolve over time if they continued with CFL learning, which confirms Dornyei's (2001) view that L2 motivation is a dynamic changing process. Maggie's case was an example. She said that at first she had to take a foreign language course as a requirement to graduate. Then she took a second Chinese course just for interest, which indicates that her motivation developed from being instrumentally to being integratively oriented within the progress of the Chinese language course; Calvin's case was the converse of Maggie's. He had learned some Chinese just for fun at first, then for credits and a certificate. Hence, motivational orientation is a dynamic facet of motivation (Gardner, 2010; William & Burden, 1997), and needs to be sustained and enhanced in the instructional setting (Dörnyei, 2003, 2005).

6.4.2 Student Expectations and Motivational Orientation

Participants at different levels had different expectations from the course and from the instructor, and thus showed different motivational orientations in classroom learning. For example, those at the elementary level were more interested in practicing listening and speaking in class with the instructor, particularly the very basic elements such as *pinyin* and tones, which has already been discussed in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2). While those at the intermediate level were more interested in learning grammar, particularly the analysis and comparison of Chinese and English grammar, and desired more course content in that respect than the instructor actually taught.

Morris at the intermediate proficiency level, and was more interested in basic grammar and sentence structures, model conversations with sentence patterns, and usage and practice of new vocabulary. Here is what he shared,

> M: ….I think for this class, specifically, I prefer more discussion of basic grammar, and sentence structures; in future classes, we would have more model conversations with some sentence patterns, where we get slowly to learn the rules of constructing sentences that I think would be better if we have much of that, but basically if a lot of vocabulary, but not much grammar doesn't make me feel confident to construct new sentences with the vocabulary.……

In contrast to the students at the beginning level, who were interested in learning the basic linguistic elements like *pinyin* and tones, Morris was more interested in learning the grammar, and how to use the grammar and the vocabulary in actual speech, especially, since he was more focused on learning conversational Chinese; thus, he was particularly interested in using what he had learned in real-life situations. Morris also shared his opinion on the instructor's teaching methods and the student motivation as follows:

> M: One thing that reduces motivation is that we just do too much vocabulary….then you start to ….. feel lost…..I don't have a goal learning a lot of words each week maybe just one or two or three

key words, or one new sentence pattern. I can actually learn it reasonably well, and I can retain it, then I would be happy. Every class, I just learn the vocabulary about vegetables and fruits, I don't think it's very useful, then I started to feel bewildered, because you cannot remember……

As Morris shared, cramming too much vocabulary in class without contextualization and conceptualization made students feel lost or confused, as they could not internalize the vocabulary as would be the case when learning the language in situ. Calvin reported his view on what he needed to learn at the intermediate level,

C: …..Ok, I'm at a stage of level 2 learning where vocabulary I can deal with by myself. , ….. because I'm familiar with the strokes, and familiar with the radicals, so that I can piece together. I'm at the stage now where I need to practice grammatical structures to capture things that are really important to speech. ……Listen to the teacher explaining the specific grammatical structures to us in class, to getting us to repeat them, it's extremely useful. It's also most difficult …. learning how to express myself in Chinese correctly. ….. follow up….and try understanding how a native Chinese speaker would think about an idea in Chinese and …express an idea, how the ideas are formulated in the language. Basically, grammar and drills…..are very very important. You have to being able to repeat them, and practice is very important……

Calvin shared the same motivational orientation with Morris in that he was also interested in learning grammar and how to use what he had learned to express himself, so that he could ultimately reach a level to communicate with Chinese native speakers rather than just memorizing some vocabulary without being able to use it.

Student expectations from the course and the instructor and their motivational orientations discussed above coincides with what was discussed in Chapter 5 (Section 5.3.3) where students illustrated their contextualized and effective L2 learning experiences and wished the instructor could integrate learning materials that could be related to their daily life or their major area of study. Indeed, language is seen as "grounded in our lived experience" (Tylor, 2008, p.459), and even reflects our

perception of the world, from a cognitive linguistic view (Tylor, 2008; Halliday, 1989).

Most participants emphasized the assistance from the instructor and the importance of oral practice in class with the instructor for prompt feedback such as correction of pronunciation and grammatical errors. Helen preferred to practice with the instructor in class, and she reported her experience as follows.

> H: Personally, I would prefer learning the initials and finals sections. The professor would read it before we try to read it…. Basically, you can just guess based on your knowledge in English. So if she had read those a few times beforehand, you will have a kind of idea ….If she said them five times, and we said them once, then I feel like I would be better in doing like *pinyin* dictation….

Ray also revealed his need for training of listening in class.

> R: I also find there is not too much emphasis on listening. So sometimes, we just sit in class where I know what every word she says means, but when she says it, I don't know what she means because I can't process it fast enough.

In light of the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978), it foregrounds the importance of assistance from an expert individual in students' learning, particularly at the elementary level of L2. But how and when should assistance be given to students to achieve the maximum learning outcome? It points to instructors' awareness and belief of the importance of the assistance as well as their capability to uncover the best teachable moments to offer appropriate assistance.

6.4.3 CFL Instruction and Development of CFL Motivation

Gardner (2010) maintains, language classroom motivation can be affected by four factors: "a) class environment; b) the nature of the course and the curriculum; c) the characteristics of the teacher; and, d) the scholastic nature of the student" (p.10). But the first three factors are related to the teacher

and the teaching techniques. This suggests the importance of the teacher's role in developing students' motivation.

Findings from observations and interviews with the instructors indicate that the instructors, particularly the one in Group A did make conscientious efforts in stimulating students to learn in the classroom setting. The most frequently used motivational strategies employed by the instructor in Group A were: a) analyzing the structure of some of the characters to help students memorize more easily, and possibly make their learning more interesting and motivating; or explaining how the character might first be created. Some interview responses revealed that these strategies were very effective in helping students to memorize the characters and the sounds in a meaningful way, and to formulate the relation between the sound, form, and meaning of the characters, rather than by rote memorization; b) organizing group or pair work to practice pronunciation and speaking, or group/pair presentation to improve oral production in class or as part of evaluation, so everybody had an opportunity to practice; and, c) integrating Chinese culture and literature into language teaching and learning, which did make their classroom learning more enjoyable and motivating, particularly, for the beginners who were bored by the tedious *pinyin* and characters.

Marlene from Group A responded in the interview about how she was formulating the sound, form, and meaning of the characters when learning with the instructor in class,

> M: Yeah, I like how the teacher explained the characters and divided them into parts: meaning part and phonetic side. That's really helpful because it makes our memorization much easier ……the teacher sometimes explains the meaning, but she speaks really fast, I don't know which part of the words represents the meaning, and which part bears the sound cue. It helps when she breaks down the characters, and explains the elements. …. Oh okay, well, that character has like a heart in it, for example "interesting", *yǒu yì si* (有意思), right? Interesting like…there is a heart radical in it, then it's interesting to get your heart involved….so it's good….easy to remember things like that.

However, Ray from Group A expressed an opposite opinion of this strategy,

R: She (the professor) did create interesting stories to explain the construction of the characters. We didn't get to that point. I think when she goes over at the beginning; she spends a significant amount of time explaining the characters, ….the meaning side and the phonetic side, right? But once you learn the character, it doesn't matter anymore because you have already known it. Also it's not all characters can be analyzed like that….. I don't think that's very useful, because at the end of the day, you have to memorize it.

Helen (Group A) shared her experience learning characters in class,

H: …..That's interesting, for example, *qi* (气), which means air. …..That's what she said what the character looks like…..wind blows into a tree …..But when I come across the character, I thought it wind instead of air. So I started to associate it with the wrong thing. So her idea was good, you just need to have people in class come up with the right character……

Maggie (Group B) was interested in the explanations given by the instructor and said,

M: ……Like *Laoshi* (the teacher), I remembered some, she did a few times. She put up a character and explained what it meant, I guess they are ideograms….? I'm not sure what it is, but anyway it presents what it stands for….so that is very effective. That really worked well for me. Instructional methods, repeating or interactional are very helpful, and reading aloud from textbook. I like that too in class, like reading aloud from textbook. I thought it's a very useful exercise.

Unpacking and analyzing the structure of Chinese characters do help students map the form and the sound of the characters onto their meaning (DeFrancis, 1984; Xing, 2006; Zhang, 2009). However, only a small number of characters can be analyzed that way. Instructors may choose some typical ones to analyze for fun, which is supposed to raise students' interest and make their memorization easier. But students with diverse prior knowledge and learning experiences may perceive the characters in different ways. One strategy intended by the instructor does not necessarily suit every student.

Findings from survey results (Section 4.3), interview responses and observations suggest that students were interested in Chinese culture-related learning materials given by the instructor. The materials presented through PowerPoint slides were selected from a wide array of resources and covered a broad spectrum of knowledge and facts related to Chinese traditional or popular culture, ranging from the origin and evolution of Chinese characters, ancient Chinese inventions to Chinese folk festivals as well as the ethnic minority groups in China.

In the interview, Victor (Group A) revealed his interest in the additional content taught in class, which was related to Chinese culture, rather than the resources from the textbook.

> V: I would say that's been ….. what I mean I have learned. So specifically, she has covered different cultural groups in China, covered different resources, facts about Chinese language. She has also covered two songs. So it has been a pleasant kind of experience…… It's very nice that she (the instructor) just gave us material without necessarily testing us on it. It's without any pressure, that we can learn it and adapted it without feeling that we have to know this. So we have learned it, I think that's the most effective type of learning. …..you learn things that you know you don't have to know at this point. So it's kind of bonus. That's very very nice bonus to learn.

Derek and Vaine enjoyed the introduction to Chinese culture, and they found they had learned more than just Chinese language in this course,

> D: Before I took this Chinese course, I did not know much about China, I only knew that Chinese was very difficult to learn….. Now I know it is not so difficult as I heard. I have found if you make efforts, you can learn anything. I'm more interested in Chinese than before. …..Anything about Chinese culture interests me…..
>
> VA: ….. I think they are interesting. I didn't know China had so many nationalities. I didn't know I could learn so much about China, besides the Chinese language, I can also learn more about the country. After taking this course, I have begun to realize that there are so many things in China that are worth our efforts to learn and study. In this course I have learned not only Chinese language, but also the culture and so many other things about China. ….So I have got more interested in learning about China….not just the language…..

In order to achieve quality instruction and learning, the instructors observed in the two classes did try their best to stimulate student motivation by employing the following teaching techniques: a) create a motivating environment in class, e.g. arranging oral practice, giving every student chances to practice; b) initiate student motivation by asking them to present what they had learned, which was also a chance for students to evaluate themselves; c) sustain motivation, incorporating additional materials that were tuned to their interest, such as topics on Chinese culture; and, d) encourage positive motivational thinking, giving them prompt feedback on their errors which confirms Corder's view (1967) of the importance of understanding errors in relation to L2 learning. These motivational teaching practices can be associated with the motivational L2 teaching practices proposed by Dörnyei (2005, p.113).

The motivational strategies used by the instructor were effective in the sense that most of the students (Victor, Helen, Vaine, Maggie, Derek) were stimulated and thought they had learned what they wished to learn. For others (Marlene, Ray), they were even eye-opening, as they had not learned much about Chinese culture before taking the Chinese language course. In general, what the instructor did met the expectations of most students, which greatly encouraged and motivated student learning. This could be taken to explain why some of the participants decided to continue with the course the next term, which was an indication of the growth of student motivation. Thus, it can be argued that meeting students' expectations is an important way of developing and sustaining student motivation, a process in which students can learn what they wish to learn and feel accomplished, a process in which student confidence may also grow. Following are what participants reported in the interview. See Morris' report:

M: The thing is that you feel motivated when you feel you were succeeding with the instructor in class, right? You have a sense of accomplishment. You feel motivated when you do the bingo in class, write down the numbers and you actually understand when you write the numbers…… and understanding the other way too when the teacher calls all the numbers, then you feel ok, I'm

gaining something. If you are learning a sentence pattern and use the words you have learned in a new way…..like when you learn past tense or something, then you will also feel you are achieving something, then you keep motivated….. I think with adult learners, people don't have a problem with motivation, because they have a reason for being there as long as they feel they are making progress.

Calvin shared his feelings as follows:

C: What is enjoyable for me in class? It has been when I'm able to speak Chinese correctly. That's really ....really rewarding when I find I can say something in Chinese and…..a sort of…practice in class after the instructor or with my classmates. ..…even though I'm not a good speaker, I have an intuition of something incorrect or not. Having learned ….something from the textbook I'm confident with, and that I have a good feeling about it. I can tell very quickly when I'm getting out of my head what are the correct ….. and grammatically when I'm trying to approximate ……

Marlene reported her view on practicing speaking in class,

M: Yeah, she is really encouraging when she asks us to practice in class. She walks around, she was really like to focus on caring about our pronunciation, repeating what we were assigned to learn and always correct us…..very motivating when she walks around as we were doing group work, or pair work, she would identify our errors and correct us immediately…..

Findings from the above interview reports suggest as long as the course curriculum is tailored to students' needs and interests, and the instruction is effective and informative, to meet students' expectations, students' confidence would also grow, which in turn would lead to their motivational development. From the perspective of the ZPD, the assistance from the instructor not only facilitates learners' cognitive development, but also enhances their affective growth. This indicates the sociocultural and socio-educational character of the learning process when students are learning a new language. This process is social in the sense that student learning first occurs through communicating with the instructor and peers in class in varied formats, then internalizing what they have learned. It is also cultural because students' beliefs and values developed in their prior learning experiences are important factors affecting their current learning, and shaping the development of their motivational

orientation. This illustrates the core of Sociocultural Theory.

6.5 Summary

The above findings show the diverse participant motivational orientations were conditioned by academic background, personal interest, cultural values, student expectations as well as their career goals. In general, the findings regarding student motivational orientations in CFL learning delineated in this chapter suggest that student motivation is a complex and dynamic construct involving both learner internal characteristics that are cognitive and meta-cognitive, their innate needs and interests, beliefs and values; and external factors such as the context of learning, curriculum and classroom instruction. Although learner internal factors or integrative motivational orientations are the core of learning motivation, teaching professionals may enhance student motivation by creating a conducive environment and improving teaching techniques.

The next chapter, Chapter 7, focuses on the conclusions, the implications, and recommendations of the findings followed by a brief discussion of the limitations and significance of this study.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

7.0 Chapter Overview

This study was undertaken to examine the research questions: 1) What elements of Chinese as a foreign language challenge CFL learning? 2) How do students' prior language(s) and language learning experience influence CFL learning? and, 3) How does student motivation influence CFL learning and develop in CFL study? In this concluding chapter, I reflect upon the findings and the discussion presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 to see the extent to which the research questions were addressed, and draw conclusions, in an attempt to yield pedagogical implications and questions for further research. The conclusions include comments on the following: a) challenges in learning CFL and the significance of error analysis for determining those challenges; b) crosslinguistic/cultural influence and multilingual influence on CFL learning; c) student motivation in CFL learning; and, d) pedagogic implications. Finally, I discuss limitations and the significance of this study as well as suggesting areas for future research.

7.1 Challenges to Learning CFL and the Significance of Error Analysis

Students experienced challenges when learning CFL, in particular with distinguishing tones, writing characters and, at the intermediate level, in expressing tense-aspect. The error analysis enabled me to see where the errors were occurring and how the linguistic background of the participants influenced the kind of errors students made.

The different types of errors exhibited in chapter 5 partly illustrated the CFL learning process in which students were exploring the new language system while capitalizing on their prior linguistic

experience and knowledge. As noted in Chapter 5, participants' problems with Chinese tonality, characters, as well as tense-aspects were predominant. These phenomena appeared to be problems with linguistic codes in the target language at the surface level, but they could also be associated with linguistic distance between Chinese and English.

Some errors appeared to be grammatical errors, but actually were discoursal. Compared with English, Chinese has unique characteristics in syntax and discourse. For instance, Chinese bears a more topic-prominent feature as opposed to English as a subject-prominent language (Wang & Yang, 2008; Hanley & Huang, 1999). CFL students' problems in learning tense-aspect in Chinese suggests transfer of the conceptual knowledge of English tense-aspect, resulting in inappropriateness of concept or meaning in a specific context; this was mainly manifested in the incorrect use of Chinese tense-aspect particles. These problems resulted from linguistic distance and were manifested through linguistic codes at the surface level, but underlying these differences, there may be other factors that hinder CFL learning, such as students` perceptions of the target language, and cultural factors that may condition their perceptions. This prompts a line of research on the complexities of conceptual transfer. The subtlety of this phenomenon indicates that learning Chinese discourse structure could be much more difficult than learning Chinese syntax and grammar.

Student errors identified in this study show how Chinese linguistic elements challenged CFL students on the one hand, and also reveal how students coped with the challenges on the other hand. Error analysis in this study depicted the adult CFL learning process and suggests: CFL learning is not only a process of the development of students' linguistic knowledge and competence, but also a process of cognitive and meta-cognitive development; namely, it is also a process in which students learn how to learn an additional language based on their prior language and language learning experience. It is a dynamic process that is ever changing as learners make progress in their learning. Error analysis also

revealed some characteristics of crosslinguistic influence or language transfer of students' prior language(s) and multilingual influence on CFL learning, which are discussed as follows.

7.2 Crosslinguistic/Cultural Influence and CFL Learning

The two terminologies, cross-linguistic influence (CLI) and language transfer have been used interchangeably in this study due to their similarities in terms of the interaction between prior language(s) and the target language, although they may not be conceived of in exactly the same way by people from different perspectives. Language learning and development of linguistic competence as higher mental functioning also presupposes cultural development although it may not be explicit or observable as linguistic transfer.

7.2.1 Language Transfer and CFL Learning

Sharwood Smith maintains that from a cognitive perspective, language transfer can be deemed as a process of problem-solving in which learners make use of previously acquired knowledge to solve problems in their current learning (see Sharwood Smith, 1979, p.347-8). According to this view, language transfer could be either the creative activation of prior linguistic knowledge at different levels of consciousness or the activation of prior linguistic knowledge in the absence of conscious control, or both, operating simultaneously when students process L2 input. Findings from this study seemed to support these points.

Findings from my observations suggest participants' problems with Chinese phonemes and tones were mostly the result of the interference from English phonemes and intonation, the influence of which was in most cases unconscious as demonstrated in Section 5.2.1, because students might not have been aware of their problems, or how their problems migh have come. However, some of their errors in

grammar and vocabulary (see Sections 5.2.1 -- 5.2.3) might be the result of conscious but incorrect use of their prior linguistic knowledge or what they are currently learning. Since they could elaborate how they were making use of their prior linguistic knowledge, they can be assumed to have linguistic awareness of that prior knowledge and used it consciously in their learning of the new language. This suggests they exercised cognitive control at least to some extent in the continuum of unconscious to conscious level when transferring prior knowledge to their current learning. Findings from observations and interviews suggest unconscious prior knowledge transfer occurred mostly at the phonetic-phonological level, particularly in learning Chinese *pinyin* and tones. The errors resulting from unconscious transfer seemed difficult to correct. The errors that had resulted from conscious transfer in most cases occurred at the morpho-syntactic or grammatical level, for instance, the word usages and the Chinese tense-aspect. This type of transfer can be seen as learners' intentional use of learning strategies and their capabilities to synthesize their prior knowledge and construct new knowledge. As Sherwood Smith (1979) states, it can be viewed as a process of problem-solving.

The purpose of distinguishing conscious from unconscious transfer is to identify the developmental stages of L2 learners' cognitive ability. It may be difficult to draw a divide between conscious and unconscious transfer in most cases. However, it is still useful to frame language transfer to the target language in this way. Following sociocultural theory (SCT), "higher mental functions are subject to 'intellectualization' or conscious realization" (Wertsch, 1985, p. 27). That is, human mental functioning (e.g. L2 learning) is a process in which we develop our capacity to control our mental functioning; moreover, in this way, we become more aware of what the functions are (see Wertsch, 1985, p.27). Based on this consciousness, we develop greater capacity.

Making use of Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) seems most relevant in CFL learning, since CFL instructors as individuals competent in the language can facilitate students'

conscious realization in CFL learning, to achieve the learning goals. L2 acquisition involves complex interaction of strategies at different levels of cognitive control. This finding makes the inference possible that participants used their background knowledge consciously or unconsciously with intermittent cognitive control, from less controlled or unconscious influence of prior knowledge at the lower proficiency level to more controlled or more conscious use of L2 knowledge at the higher level. As students' CFL knowledge grew, and their competence developed, they gain more cognitive control and became more autonomous, and their learning became more effective. Using prior knowledge as a resource to facilitate CFL learning indicates the development of students' cognitive ability in language learning, and that they were more conscious about what they were doing and what they should do. This characterizes a decision-making and problem-solving procedure, a kind of learning strategies or development of strategic competence. Language learners may become more strategic in learning the target language when they become more proficient in the target language. Language transfer in this sense suggests the development of learning strategies. Hence it can be argued that the development of consciousness indicates the development of capacity of higher mental functioning, a core concept of SCT. Language transfer can be more complicated in case of multilingual learning which is discussed next.

7.2.2 Multilingual Influence of Prior Language(s) and CFL Learning

Some participants in this study had experience learning more than one foreign language, while others had learned more than two or three foreign languages before taking the Chinese language course. The findings regarding prior language influence on the target language learning in this study suggest that the influences were not only from one prior language, but from more than one, and from both native and non-native languages, which demonstrated the complexity of crosslinguistic influences. This

phenomenon not only shows the important role of mother tongue (Corder, 1983) or the influence of non-native language (Vildomec, 1963) on the target language learning, but also suggests the simultaneous influence of both native and non-native languages.

In the context of this finding, the effect and importance of interlanguage, representing CFL learner language, is shown. Based on this finding, it is conceivable that interlanguage development may vary depending on the influence of different combinations of prior languages and students' cognitive and metacognitive abilities. First, an individual learner may have different prior linguistic background, and thus may have different resources to draw upon in learning the target language. Second, learners may have developed different learning strategies that could be employed in learning the new language and result in differing learning outcomes.

In a word, the influence of prior language(s) on the target language learning may differ depending not only on different combinations of the prior languages, but also on individual learner learning characteristics. Some students might be more capable of using prior knowledge to facilitate their target language learning than others given their past multilingual learning experiences. For instance, among the participants in this study, Derek, Helen, Vaine, Victor, Calvin, and Bruce all had experience learning more than two foreign languages. But from the interview reports, Vaine and Victor seemed to be more capable of incorporating their prior linguistic knowledge into their learning of Chinese than others. Ray, Marlene, and Maggie, as English monolingual speakers, although they had experience learning French as L2, might have fewer resources from their prior languages to draw upon, and tended to use different strategies in learning Chinese tones and characters.

In second language instruction it helps if teachers can be familiar with the (multi-) language knowledge their students bring with them to the classroom in order to utilize their background

knowledge to facilitate language learning or to anticipate problems students may encounter because of interference from other languages they may have studied.

In addition to Chinese language learning, participants were getting more interested in Chinese history, culture, as well as business in China depending on their varied career goals. This suggests on one hand that L2 learning is not only a process of linear increments of linguistic knowledge, but also a process of cognitive development while L2 learners are developing learning strategies and linguistic competence. On the other hand, L2 learning is simultaneously a process of acculturation (Schumann, 1986), which can be associated with students' motivation in that motivation and acculturation could be mutually facilitative.

7.3 Motivation and CFL Learning

7.3.1 Motivational Orientations and CFL Learning

Although participants in this study did not show high motivational intensity, they bore different motivational orientations which might have been influenced by their different academic background, their interests, expectations from the course and the instructor, target language proficiency, as well as career goals. Student motivation in this study shares two developing patterns: some were more integratively oriented at first, then became more instrumentally oriented; while others were more instrumentally oriented at the beginning, then became more integratively oriented. In both cases, students' attitudes towards the Chinese community and the CFL learning situation were positive. In both cases, students' motivation is inevitably influenced by sociocultural context. This suggests the interdependence and interconnection between different motivational orientations. It seems uncommon for students to develop motivational orientations that are exclusively integrative or absolutely instrumental due to the influence of sociocultural factor.

Most participants in this study demonstrated an attributional belief pattern related to the causes of success and failure in their learning. They attributed the success in their learning to diligence, perseverance, and learning strategies. They attributed their failure in CFL learning to lack of effort, and learning opportunities, as well as the limited time allocated for study, rather than to lack of language aptitude or other external factors such as toughness of the target language, or inappropriate instructional methods or materials. Most of the participants attributed time and effort as the major factors leading to success. These subjective reasons for the causes of their successes and failures constitute a shaping force in the formation of students' motivational disposition. Findings in the research also suggest that instructors' support in class such as prompt corrective feedback and quality learning materials that suit students' interests are important motivators, which also enhance students' confidence in CFL learning. It points to the importance of CFL instructors' efforts to stimulate student motivation, and to improve the quality of students' involvement in the learning process.

7.3.2 Sociocultural Context and L2 Motivation

As CFL learning in this study took place in Canada, the sociocultural context was an important factor that might have contributed to the formation and development of student motivation. The sociocultural milieu is an important feature to be considered in the socio-educational model of second language acquisition (Gardner, 1985, 1996, 2010). First, Chinese is not a functional language in any case outside the Chinese communities in Canada, so CFL learning is not driven by social mobility and employment, although some participants did mention that learning Chinese might bring them some advantages in their future career. Second, Chinese is not a mandatory course in the school system; thus, it is not test-driven, or driven by a mandatory curriculum. However, this allowed the instructors the freedom to employ curricula which were flexible and adjustable to students' interests and needs. Third,

in general, Canadians do not give much instrumental value to the Chinese language compared to French for example which is an official language of Canada or to some other European languages such as German, Spanish and Italian. These factors partially explain why student motivational intensity was not high enough to push them to high proficiency in the language.

On the other hand, as Chinese does not have a mandatory curriculum, CFL students in Canada have more autonomy to choose Chinese as one of their foreign languages for credit or for personal interest, and also have some flexibility in choosing what they are interested to learn in the Chinese language course. Thus student learning is more driven by their personal interest and innate needs for knowledge and development. This may explain why most participants were more integratively than instrumentally oriented. These motivational orientations reflect the shaping force of the sociocultural context in the development of CFL learners' motivational disposition, and also indicate that L2 motivation is not only a cognitive, but also a sociocultural construct. These motivational orientations characterize L2 learners' internal cognitive-affective development.

Based on the above discussion about the influence of sociocultural context on the development of L2 motivation, we can see that the developmental process of student L2 motivation is a socioculturally mediated process (see Ushioda, 2008, p.25). It can be argued that the development of L2 learners' motivation is the result of the interplay of multiple factors: a) student prior language background and learning experiences; b) their attributional belief patterns in motivation and achievement; and, c) sociocultural context where the L2 learning takes place, which is emphasized in Gardner's socio-educational model (see Gardner, 1996, p.32). Other external factors include classroom environment and processes such as instructional methods and the learning materials, task design, motivation as influenced by instructional practices; and contact with the target language community. Findings in this study suggest that motivation in learning, as a learner internal attribute (Gardner, 1996), and an important type

of mental functioning, is influenced by both learner internal and external factors. L2 motivation does not grow solely within the individual but is also mediated by others within the sociocultural context where the L2 learning takes place.

7.3.3 Instructional Methods and CFL Motivation

As already noted, findings in this study show the instructors intentionally utilized motivational strategies as instructional methods to enhance students' motivation: a) they creatively explained and analyzed the structures of Chinese characters, tried to map the form of the characters onto the sound and the meaning, to facilitate students' memorization of characters; b) they gave corrective feedback to students spontaneously when they practiced *pinyin* and the tones in class. This was also perceived by participants as motivational; and, c) they integrated Chinese culture into language teaching, through PowerPoint presentations, offered students useful resources online, or gave them printed materials related to Chinese culture as extra curricular learning resources to broaden students' views and stimulate their interest. Students' interview responses show the resources provided were attuned to their language learning, interest, learning experience, and their proficiency level.

These findings illustrate that being familiar with students` needs and interests leads CFL instructors to make better use of their expertise and tailor it to the nature of student learning, and formulate subject knowledge into a more compatible and comprehensible form to suit students' needs, interests, and experience. This reinforces Shulman's (1987) view that teaching professionals need to be equipped with pedagogic content knowledge and know how to adjust their expertise to suit students' diverse backgrounds and dynamic learning situations to achieve best learning outcomes. Due to the nature of L2 learning which involves learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, it is all the more important for L2 teachers to selectively and strategically draw upon their subject matter knowledge, and

integrate their knowledge into instruction as needed to catch the teachable moments and create effective learning opportunities.

7.4 Pedagogical Implications

This study yielded some pedagogical implications related to the three research questions, such as: How could instructors minimize the challenges students faced when learning CFL? What role can CFL instructors play in facilitating language transfer when teaching adult CFL students with prior linguistic knowledge and learning experiences? How can CFL instructors enhance student motivation through improving teaching methods and adjusting the curriculum?

7.4.1 Pedagogical Implications for CFL Instruction

Because of the unique features of Chinese language, CFL instructors' pedagogical knowledge involves knowing how to teach Chinese characters and the tones effectively. First, with regard to teaching Chinese characters, findings (see Section 6.4.3) suggest that visualizing the characters, introducing the history of the Chinese characters, and analyzing the structure and the meaning of Chinese characters can help students map the sound, form, and the meaning of characters, and minimize the heavy load of memorization. This is a practical method welcomed by students, helping students learn the characters by understanding the meaning rather than learning by rote, but also arouses student interest in learning and enhances the learning outcome. Findings also suggest that a moderate pace and the number of characters need to be considered when introducing characters to beginners to avoid overwhelming students.

As for teaching Chinese *pinyin* and the tones, findings indicate that allowing opportunities for intensive practice in class with the instructors or among peers seems to be an effective way of improving

pronounciation and the tones. All participants in this study demonstrated a strong desire for aural-oral practice and prompt corrective feedback from the instructor in class, when learning Chinese *pinyin* and the tones. Prompt corrective feedback from the instructor was highly desired and valued by students. Hence error correction is a critical part of instructor support, and one of the most important things that students expect from their instructors. Prompt feedback on errors could facilitate student learning, as survey, interview responses, and observations show students saw prompt corrective feedback from the instructors as encouraging, stimulating, and engaging. Findings reveal prompt error treatment that improves students' autonomous learning is always welcomed and widely accepted, and should be advocated.

For students from a European language background, such as English-speaking students, it is a difficult task to learn Chinese at the beginning stages due to the typological difference or linguistic distance between these two languages. On the other hand, it could be a very tedious job to learn Chinese *pinyin* and tones because of the heavy load of rote memorization tasks at the beginning level. Students seemed to become easily bored or lost, but instructors' timely support with corrective feedback in this situation seemed critical. Evidence from interview reports (see Section 6.4.2) suggests timely corrective feedback from instructors raises students' confidence and motivation. Students reported that they felt they had accomplished something when they had learned something new from the instructor after getting feedback on their errors. Conversely, students seemed to be discouraged when they had too many uncertainties and made too many errors without prompt feedback from the instructor. They seemed overwhelmed by too many difficult tasks without instructor guidance.

In general, the instructors with the two groups of students were stringent with and put much effort into error correction, particularly with pronunciation and tonal errors, for which they could possibly provide definite answers. For considerations of the quality and effect of error correction to

maximally foster students' development of linguistic competence, first, as R. Ellis (1997) points out, the feedback on errors needs to take into account students' target language proficiency, and the correction should be tuned to an understandable level in terms of students' current target language level. Their affective state may also need to be considered. For instance, corrections need to be acceptable to students, and opportunities for students to discuss their errors should be allowed. Second, instructors' constructive feedback is crucial to arouse students' thinking, and enables students' self-correction and improvement rather than giving them definite answers.

However, it would be more conducive if the instructors could offer both cognitive and affective feedback (Vigil & Oller, 1976) to foster learning and enhance motivation. In most cases, there could be the interplay of both cognitive and affective factors on student learning. For instance, developing students' autonomous ability could also help students to maintain a positive affective state. In order to stimulate learning motivation, corrective feedback should be adjusted appropriately, such that students' affective needs are also considered. It is important and necessary for instructors to provide students with both cognitive and affective support rather than cognitive only.

In error correction, there were many factors that could have been ignored or inadequately attended to in the process of addressing errors. These factors may include but may not be limited to: instructors' understanding of the errors, of students' proficiency level, their background; the context of errors; not enough time allowed for students to grasp and absorb what they were taught; students' attention to and understanding of their own errors and the corrective feedback; their affective state to accept the correction. The interplay of these factors on the effectiveness of error correction seems unexplored, and warrants further research, which could be formulated and conducted through factor analysis.

7.4.2 Language Transfer and CFL Pedagogic Considerations

The field research was conducted in a CFL instructional setting in light of SCT and the ZPD concept, as the central concern was on how learners were learning with the aid of capable individuals in an educational setting. How could CFL professionals possibly make language transfer occur and facilitate CFL learning in the case of adult learners with prior linguistic knowledge and learning experience? What factors best contribute to help students to transfer prior knowledge to L2 learning? How could L2 instructors possibly encourage their students to transfer elements from their L1 to facilitate L2 learning?

First, CFL instructors may assist students in accessing their prior knowledge, possibly through study activities in class that allow students more autonomy to make their own decisions on what to learn, and how to achieve what they want to attain. This may encourage students to take ownership of their learning, to recognize the relevance and transferability of their prior knowledge, and develop their sense of accomplishment.

Second, CFL instructors may adjust their syllabi to suit students' interests, expectations, and career goals, to nurture their interest and stimulate their motivation. This may involve extra-curricula activities for experiential learning. Teachers can find opportunities for students to experience Chinese native culture and communicate with Chinese native speakers, and learn the language by using Chinese in real-life situations. Study abroad programs in China can offer students enriched learning experiences in an international context. Locally, field trips to Chinese communities may also be an effective way to get students involved in the target language culture. Student volunteers of Chinese origin can also be invited and organized campus-wide to communicate with CFL students. Students in both camps can make friends and learn from each other. Hence both camps can benefit from these learning activities.

Once students have the opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom to their real life, their motivation would be greatly stimulated.

Based on the findings in this study, questions for future research could focus on: 1) the influence of the English intonation system on the learning of Chinese tones, purporting to develop effective methods to facilitate the solution of the problems in learning the Chinese tones for English-speaking students; 2) CFL learner internal and external conditions for language transfer. I define the "necessary conditions" as internal conditions such as learners' cognitive abilities, motivation, interests, attitudes, and their perceptions of the possibilities for transfer to happen; and external conditions such as similarities between a prior language and the target language, the learning environment, and the instructional methods as well as the curriculum. For language transfer to be realized, both conditions may be involved. Teachers can play an important role in developing student motivation, and facilitating the activation of student prior knowledge, and make the transfer to happen.

7.4.3 Pedagogical Implications for Development of CFL Motivation

Participants in this study demonstrated varied motivational orientations, and showed some motivational intensity although it was not high enough to result in high proficiency in the language. But the tedious CFL learning process at the beginning or intermediate levels with a heavy load of memorization is a challenge to students trying to maintain motivation to learn this complicated language. Participants at the beginning level revealed their desire for intensive oral practice in class with the instructor; those at the intermediate level wished to learn more grammar and sentence pattern drills. However, time for practice in class is always limited.

To meet students' expectations and enhance motivation, the teaching techniques in this regard could be improved if CFL instructors could consider integrating visual materials such as short video

clips, or PowerPoint presentations, and online resources into classroom teaching. Participants in this study did express their interest in these types of learning resources (see Section 4.2 and 6.4.3); and students could do oral practice following the video rather than following the instructor only. First, quality information-rich visual materials could present the content knowledge more vividly to achieve the purpose of motivating students to learn, and bring better learning outcomes. Second, it could make the tedious learning process in class more interesting and engaging. CFL instructors may also create or identify opportunities for students to practice the target language in real life.

The diverse student motivational orientations demonstrated by the participants have the following pedagogical implications for CFL professionals: a) knowing students' motivational dispositions, including their background, interests, as well as their goals and expectations is paramount for CFL instructors in order for them to make informed decisions on their syllabus design and curriculum development, to be more capable of anticipating students' problems; b) it is important for CFL instructors to modify the syllabus and adjust the instructional methods and the learning materials according to the dynamic student learning situations and the diverse student population.

7.5 Limitations and Significance of This Study

As participants' target language proficiency ranged from elementary to near intermediate levels, they were not capable enough of using Chinese for communication to construct discourse, so there were not enough opportunities for me to observe their performance except for some short conversations in class among peers to practice speaking. The inadequacy of data regarding the development of student communicative competence did not yield any significant conclusions as initially proposed. But in the scrutiny of participants' motivational development, it was found that students had a strong desire to put what they learned to use, to function in Chinese whenever possible. A few of them, such as Derek,

Calvin, and Morris in particular, reported their efforts and interesting experiences practicing speaking casually with native speakers of Chinese. This raised potential research questions, such as context and students' willingness to communicate in the L2 as well as L2 confidence as related to willingness to communicate.

In terms of the methodological design, this study features a qualitative case study conducted with multiple individual cases. Multiple data collection methods were adopted and two types of data were collected: linguistic data, such as audio-recording of students' reading and their written assignments; and non-linguistic data: survey results, interview reports, and observation notes. Hence data regarding the socioculturally and functionally organized way of speaking of the target language in extended discourse contexts were inadequate to yield any findings as originally planned. However, instead, the focus of this study was oriented towards student learning of Chinese linguistic elements, their errors, and language transfer; classroom teaching and learning, and to student learning motivation in the instructional setting.

As for the significance of this study, it has generated some pedagogic implications and raised research questions as was initially proposed. It partly depicted CFL learning process in a Canadian university context, which contributes to the understanding of adult CFL learning in North America. A brief summary of pedagogic and research implications is given here as follows.

The pedagogical implications for CFL curriculum development and pedagogical improvement point to: 1) the importance of pedagogic knowledge specific to CFL instruction (e.g. teaching Chinese tones and characters); 2) attuning curriculum and syllabus to the nature of students' learning characteristics, needs, and interests, and expectations; 3) commitment to prompt feedback to students' assignments; 4) identifying opportunities for experiential learning to stimulate student motivation; 5) offering students socio-psychological support in addition to academic support; and, 6) encouraging peer

collaboration.

Questions that arose from this study for further research could include: first, error analysis can be used as a tool to investigate the features of learner errors at different proficiency levels or learners from different linguistic backgrounds, to understand the nature of learner language. More specific questions may be: How English intonation interferes with student learning of Chinese tones? What are the problems of students with knowledge of East Asian languages other than Chinese in learning Chinese tones? What are the differences and similarities between the problems of these two groups of students? Another set of research questions could be: What are the features of English students' errors at the CFL advanced level? What are the features of errors of East Asian students at the CFL advanced level? What are the differences and similarities between the features of the errors of the two groups of students?

Second, questions regarding language transfer can be as: How do learners' internal/external conditions function in language transfer in CFL learning? What learners' internal/external conditions facilitate language transfer in CFL learning? How can instructors facilitate language transfer?

Third, in terms of student learning motivation, research can be formulated on a comparison of motivational intensity between students learning Chinese in China and those learning Chinese in Canada. This can be purported to examine how the different context and other concomitant influencing factors may condition student motivational intensity. Research can also be conducted on how students' different motivational orientations affect their CFL learning achievement. This can be a correlational study, matching students' performance, motivational intensity with their learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the theoretical perspectives, namely sociocultural and cognitive linguistic perspectives have been adopted to facilitate interpretation of the data, and the findings in turn contribute to the theorization. First, the findings regarding crosslinguistic influence of prior linguistic knowledge on CFL learning indicate that a cognitive linguistic perspective brings the socioculturally organized

meaning of language to the fore, in the sense that language learning is usage-based and is facilitated by sociocultural context. Findings from error analysis suggest that learning a new language is much more than acquiring the linguistic codes, but is also a process of developing conceptual knowledge, cognitive and metacognitive abilities. This contributes to the theorization of a cognitive linguistic perspective.

Second, this study has yielded findings about L2 motivation that confirm Gardner's (1996, 2010) socio-educational model, particularly the finding about the interconnections between intergrative and instrumental orientations, and the finding about the developing patterns of the two motivational otientations. The analysis and the findings regarding student motivation also indicate that L2 learning involves a process of acculturation, and identity reformation, which is transformational.

Moreover, the influence of participants' prior language learning experiences identified on their CFL learning reflects the relationship of social interaction and cognition, which is at the core of sociocultural theory. Participants' desire for practice in class and corrective feedback from the instructor shows the potential for the instructor to make use of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) by providing scaffolding to assist students' advancement in language learning. Some student errors appeared to be linguistic, but the underlying causes were perhaps more related to the lack of exposure to the Chinese environment and the community-shared knowledge. This demonstrates the cognitive nature of language learning on one hand, and the potential for sociocultural influences to affect L2 learning process on the other.

7.6 Concluding Remarks

This is an exploratory qualitative study framed in sociocultural theory and cognitive linguistic theory, investigating adult CFL learning in a Canadian university context. More specifically, it examined the influence of prior linguistic knowledge and language learning experiences on CFL learning as well

as student motivation. Error analysis was the method employed to examine how students' prior language(s) and experience influence their learning of the Chinese linguistic elements, and how students developed learning strategies while coping with the challenges. The socio-educational model of L2 acquisition was adopted to analyze student motivation. It illuminates the development of student motivation for CFL learning. The study shows that L2 learning is not only acquiring linguistic knowledge, but also conceptual and cultural knowledge. It is not only a developmental process of linguistic competence, but also the development of cognitive and meta-cognitive abilities.

Participants in this study at different proficiency levels, from different backgrounds, with different interest orientations and career goals show different motivational orientations. This suggests the shaping force of the sociocultural context and students' backgrounds on the development of students' motivation although classroom learning might have exerted heavier influences. Findings also suggest students' motivational development was influenced more heavily and directly by the immediate ongoing classroom learning, such as the instructional methods, the learning tasks, and the curriculum. This again demonstrates ZPD theorization that the way instructors provide assistance to students' learning and their progress in learning is really important.

This research methodologically features a multiple-case study in terms of data collection methods, combining survey, interview and onsite observation, with two groups of students. This research design was based on the qualitative nature of the inquiries. First, the research questions were exploratory and open-ended, purporting to elicit suppositions or conjectures rather than testing any theory, so they are qualitative in nature. The data collected through multiple methods aimed to uncover triangulated evidence rather than statistical data. Second, the research questions cover two levels of inquiries: linguistic (e.g. analysis of errors) and non-linguistic (e.g. L2 learning motivation), with an attempt to explore the nature of CFL learning in a non-Chinese setting.

On the whole, this study investigated what it proposed to research and achieved its main purposes: a) it offered some insights into the nature of adult CFL learning in Chinese language courses in Canadian universities, and in particular into the challenges faced by students learning Chinese in a North American university classroom context. This contributes to the understanding of CFL learning process in an English-speaking context in general; b) it has generated pedagogical implications and recommendations; and, c) raised questions for further research. Finally, it should be noted that this is an exploratory study, purporting to improve the understanding of the developmental process of adult CFL learning, to contribute to SLA literature by way of prompting further research questions and pedagogical implications. Some of the findings need additional research for further examination. It is not the purpose of this study to produce findings that can be generalized to all cases in L2 teaching and learning situations. Therefore, caution for generalization of the findings should be advised.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire for Online Survey

A. Multiple choice questions

For the following questions, participants were asked to check off all that apply and rank where possible, using the numbers 5,4,3,2,1 to mark in order from "5" referring to the greatest to "1" referring to the least. Put the number that represents your rank at the end of each answer.

1. What do you think is (are) the advantage(s) in taking a Chinese language course?
    a) I can get credits for my degree
    b) I would like to travel around China in the future
    c) I may have more employment opportunities
    d) It helps me better understand Chinese people and their culture
    e) Other (specify).
2. Which of the following learning tasks are difficult for you?
    a) Memorizing tones
    b) Recognizing Chinese characters
    c) Listening comprehension
    d) Speaking with correct tones
    e) Other (specify).
3. What problems do you think you have when you try to speak Chinese?
    a) I cannot express myself clearly in Chinese
    b) Sometimes I do not know what vocabulary to choose to express myself appropriately
    c) Sometimes I feel like what I said cannot make me understood
    d) I often feel short of vocabulary to express myself
    e) Other (specify).
4. How do you learn Chinese tones?
    a) Practicing with the teacher in class
    b) Practicing with audio materials on player
    c) Practicing with audiovisual resources on computer/TV

d) By memorization
e) Other (specify).

5. How do you learn Chinese characters?
   a) Memorizing by understanding the meaning of the word or the meaning of the radicals of the word
   b) Memorizing the pronunciation
   c) Learning by reading
   d) Practicing handwriting to make memorization easier
   e) Other (specify).
6. What instructional methods in class do you like most? (Please rank your choices)
   a) Instructor does the most talking in class
   b) Group discussion after teacher talk
   c) Intensive practice of grammar and vocabulary after the instructor and with peers
   d) Intensive practice of listening and speaking with the instructor and peers
   e) Other (specify).
7. What topics in the learning materials do you think are most interesting or useful for you?
   a) Chinese literature
   b) Chinese history, culture, and politics
   c) Business and economic development in China
   d) The latest news about China
   e) Other (specify).
8. What resources can you access to learn Chinese culture in your Chinese L2 learning? (Please rank your answers)
   a) From the instructor
   b) Through communication with Chinese people
   c) Travelling around China
   d) From multiple resources: TV programs, movies, books, magazines, newspaper, textbooks.
   e) Other (specify).
9. What aspects of Chinese culture are most interesting to you?
   a) Chinese historical culture: Chinese proverbs, idioms; ancient Chinese inventions, etc.

b) Folk culture: practice or observance of folk festivals
c) Chinese popular culture: popular songs, fashion and apparels, food, and Chinese life style
d) Chinese business culture: Chinese business communication style, attitudes and beliefs about as well as practices of business communication.
e) Other (specify).

10. I'm interested in Chinese culture because
    a) I have experience communicating with my Chinese friends
    b) I have access to Chinese community
    c) It is part of my heritage
    d) It enriches and facilitates the content of Chinese language learning
    e) Other (specify).

B. Questions on Likert Scale

*The following are 30 statements. Students are asked to provide a response to each of these statements, and each response should be ranked on the Likert Scale: 5**) strongly agree; 4) agree; 3) disagree; 2) strongly disagree; 1) not applicable**. Please put a number from 5) to 1) that represents your choice on the left-hand side of each statement. Participants may give additional comments to each statement.*

1. I chose the Chinese course because I want to learn more about China.
2. I chose this course because I think it facilitates my career goals.
3. I chose to take the Chinese language course because I think learning a new language opens a window for me to see a new world.
4. Learning Chinese broadens my horizon of knowledge.
5. Learning Chinese develops my language ability.
6. Learning a new language may foster my academic growth.
7. Learning Chinese provides me with a new perspective on my mother tongue.
8. It is easy and interesting to learn Chinese logographic characters.
9. Chinese characters are hard to remember because of their complex structure.
10. Chinese tones are difficult to remember because there is no logic connection with the characters.
11. Chinese tones are not so difficult if you practice a lot from the very beginning.

12. Chinese grammar is easier than that in my first language because there is no verb conjugation.
13. Chinese grammar is not easy because I have to learn what is different from that in my first language and make sure I'm not confused.
14. Learning Chinese language is a way of learning Chinese culture in that some Chinese culture is integrated in the instructional materials in the textbook.
15. Learning Chinese language makes me more aware of and more sensitive to Chinese culture.
16. Target language culture makes target language learning more interesting and motivating.
17. Chinese culture refers not only to cultural facts like table manners, etc., but also to Chinese people's cultural values and beliefs.
18. I'm interested in Chinese culture because I'm interested in learning about China and Chinese people.
19. I'm interested in Chinese literature because it provides me with new perspectives on my first language literature.
20. I'm interested in Chinese literature because it helps me better understand Chinese culture.
21. I'm interested in Chinese culture because it facilitates my language learning.
22. I'm interested in Chinese culture because it helps me learn about China and Chinese people.
23. I'm interested in the topics on business and economy in China as they are related to my future career
24. I prefer lectures by the instructor as a native speaker in class to learn idiomatic Chinese.
25. I prefer instructor talk in class because it is a good opportunity for me to practice my listening.
26. I prefer instructor talk because I can learn much more and learn faster in a short time from the instructor.
27. I prefer more peer collaboration so that I can practice Chinese and find out my weakness.
28. I prefer group discussion as it encourages me to talk in Chinese and use what I have learned in practice.
29. I like group discussion because I feel free (I'm not nervous) to talk with peers in Chinese.
30. I like to have more opportunities or activities to participate in oral Chinese in class so that we can put what we have learned to use.

Appendix B

A Checklist of What to Observe in Classroom Setting

I. Instructor's course design, language input, and instructional methods

1. How is the course designed in general? How is it implemented with students?
2. What is the specific lessen plan for each section of instruction? How is a class conducted based on a lessen plan?
3. What unplanned scenarios may happen in class when the instructor responds to students' inquiries or solves students' problems?
4. How is the classroom instruction conducted: teacher-centered, or student-centered, or balanced?
5. What instructional materials, technology equipment, or audio-visual aids are used in class?
6. Instructor's input of Chinese language: intensity and quality, relevance to curricular objective; appropriateness of language proficiency level in relation to students' current level of proficiency
7. How does he evaluate students' learning in the situated ongoing class?
8. How much do students use the target language in class?

II. Students' reaction to instruction

9. Students' cooperation with the instruction (active or passive)
10. Student engagement and performance with the learning tasks

III. Instructor-student communication

11. Instructor's communication style, instructional purposes
12. Students' perceptions of instructor's communication style
13. Students' output of target language: errors, amount, or quality, pronunciation, tones, grammar, vocabulary, etc.
14. Instructor-student relationship.

IV. Students' peer collaboration in class

15. Student study activities in class: the purpose and the principles that govern the participants, and students' engagement, collaboration, and contribution to the activities.
16. How did the study activities in class facilitate the target language learning?

V. Informal or unplanned activities in class

17. What are those activities: purpose, significance, relevance to their overall course objectives
18. Who are the major participants or the leaders? (their willingness of using Chinese language in the activities, the amount and the quality of Chinese language used)
19. How is an activity initiated? (relevance to Chinese language and culture)
20. Student behavior and the possible implications.

Appendix C

On-Site Classroom Observation Scheme

The following are categories and a priori codes from the existing literature that were used to categorize the data collected through observation

I. Codes related to the learning of Chinese linguistic features (based on the categories used *by Hanley, Tzeng & Huang 1999, p. 173; Wang & Yang, 2008, p. 125)*

1) The Chinese phonetic system (Pinyin): correctness of pronunciation and tone signs; recognition and memorization of the four tones; appropriating tone stress, tone sandhi, and intonation; distinguishing homophones and homonyms.
2) The Chinese morphological system: recognition and memorization of characters, parts or radicals of characters, appropriating stroke orders of characters; combination of characters to form phrases or idioms; identifying antonyms and synonyms.
3) The Chinese syntactical system: Identifying parts of speech; identifying syntactical structure (subject, predicate, and object, modifiers, and the location of modifiers); word orders; sentence structures;

II. Codes related to cross-linguistic influence (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008, p. 11-12; Ellis, 1997).

Linguistic transfer; positive/negative; transfer effect; L2 production; language distance; perception of distance; similarities/differences between L1 and L2; L1/L2 structure; L2 sequencing; perceived difference; tense/aspect transfer; word order (rules); word order transfer; mental association; interlingual identification;

III. Codes used for error analysis (Corder, 1974, 1967; Ellis, 1997)

Error and mistake; covert and overt error; correctness and appropriateness; lexical, syntactical,

grammatical error; phonetic spelling error; phonological error; stroke error

IV. Codes Related to Students' Motivation in Learning Chinese L2

3) Motivational orientation: Integrative or instrumental (Gardner, 1985, 1996, 2010)

A. Origin of personal interest; family language backgrounds; exposure to Chinese language and culture prior to taking Chinese language course

B. Career goal; purpose of taking this course; perceptions on employment, social mobility, degree requirements, and academic excellence

2) Situated motivation (Dornyei, 2003, p.11):

A. Individual-specific factors: personal interests, perceptions, and goals; interest in study activities/learning tasks in class.

B. Relevance of teaching materials: relevance to students' interests, prior experiences, linguistic backgrounds, future goals;

C. Instructor-specific components: motivation impact of the instructor's personality, teaching methods/practice;

3) Willingness to be engaged in learning and using Chinese: Influencing factors (Dornyei, 2003, p.12-13)

Students' attitude towards and perception of their Chinese learning experience. Students' willingness / desire to use Chinese; students' perceived linguistic and cultural distance between L1 and the target language; students' perceived difficulties in learning Chinese.

Appendix D

Questions for Semi-Structured Interviews

1. What's your first or second language? What other language(s) do you speak or have ever learned?
2. Could you explain your starting point and purpose of learning the Chinese language?
3. What aspects of the Chinese language do you think are the most difficult: tones, characters, grammar? Could you describe the challenges?
4. What language skills do you find difficult to acquire: speaking, listening, reading, writing, or learning about Chinese culture? Please elaborate.
5. What learning tasks in class do you think are the most challenging or enjoyable: practicing speaking following the teacher, sentence pattern drills, group work /discussion, pair work/conversation, or short presentations?
6. What do you think of the four tones in Chinese? Easy or difficult? Could you explain?
7. What strategies do you use in learning Chinese tones?
8. What strategies do you use in learning Chinese vocabulary, compared with your strategies you used when you learned your first language? Could you explain in some detail if possible?
9. What resources can you access or do you prefer to learn Chinese vocabulary: learn from your textbook, watch Chinese TV programs, or any other type of readings, or practice with anybody around you in you daily life?
10. Do you learn vocabulary by memorizing the meaning (through English-Chinese translation)? Or using them in specific contexts, making sentences, composing short passages? Could you elaborate?
11. Have you ever tried to make use of learning resources available to help you learn Chinese, such as newspapers, magazines, literature, or dictionary?
12. How do you improve your oral communication? What challenges do you have in your oral communication? Could you explain?
13. What do you think of Chinese grammar compared with that of your first language? Easier or more difficult? Could you elaborate?
14. What aspects of grammar do you think are most difficult? Why?
15. How do you overcome those difficulties?

16. What instructional methods / strategies used in your class do you think make your learning easier (e.g. visualizing characters, creating interesting stories to explain the construction of some of the characters)?
17. What instructional methods or learning materials do you think are most motivating (e.g. group work or pair work in class, presentation, other study activities in class, or teacher talk, etc.)?
18. What motivational strategies do you use in learning Chinese?
19. Do you have any preferences for any topics in view of your major area of study? Could you specify and explain?
20. Do you try to find opportunities to speak with native Chinese speakers in your daily life? In what circumstances do you speak Chinese with Chinese people: speaking with the instructor when taking Chinese language course? Having fun with Chinese friends?
21. Do you feel comfortable / nervous when speaking Chinese? In terms of your language proficiency, what topics do you usually prefer to talk about (just greetings, weather, events in daily life, work, or studies, etc.)?
22. When you are trying to speak Chinese, do you think/ process in your primary language, then translate it into Chinese, or think in Chinese? Could you describe the process or give examples?
23. Have you ever experienced trying to speak Chinese but often hesitated and gave up just because you were not confident to speak the language well? Or just because you are quiet by nature? Or both?
24. Have you ever experienced failure in communication in Chinese (or in English with Chinese people) either because of language errors or unfamiliarity with Chinese customs or cultural conventions?
25. Have you ever experienced problems in understanding Chinese texts even when there is no unfamiliar vocabulary? Could you describe the situation?
26. What strategies do you use to cope with those problems?
27. Are you learning any Chinese culture in class? How do you learn Chinese culture on your own? What do you think Chinese culture should be (popular songs, fashions, foods; or Chinese history, tradition, and heritage; or all of these)?
28. What do you think of Chinese culture in your learning of Chinese language? Part of your language learning? Did you start learning Chinese for learning about China as a whole?

29. Have you ever found any aspects in Chinese culture that are interesting to you and facilitate your language learning? Could you give some examples?
30. What else have you learned about China or Chinese people through language learning?

Appendix E

Letter of Information to Instructors

A Cross-Linguistic/Cultural Perspective of Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language in Canadian Universities

My name is Xiuhua Ke, a Ph.D Student in the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research into how Canadian university students are learning Chinese as a foreign language. I would like to invite you to participate in this research, and also asking for your permission to observe your class and take field notes concerning students' learning of Chinese as a foreign language in instructional setting.

The aims of this study are to develop a better understanding of Canadian university students' experience of learning Chinese as a foreign language in educational setting; to contribute to the study of Chinese pedagogy. Information for this research will be collected by means of questionnaire surveys, classroom observations, interviews and group interviews, and analysis of students' written work. This study will span from May to December, 2009.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked for a conversational interview for about an hour, discussing the curriculum of this course, your beliefs in Chinese instruction, and your expectations on students. Written notes will be taken during the interview and the discussion. I am also asking for your permission to observe your classroom. I will come to the classroom on a weekly basis, and will take notes while observing in class. You are welcome to review my notes. The focus of my observation will be on students.

The information collected will be used for research purposes only. Neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publications or presentations of the research. Pseudonyms will be used to ensure your anonymity. All data collected will be kept confidential - locked in a cabinet and will be destroyed five years after the completion of this study.

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

Please keep this letter for your information.

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Western Ontario. If you have any questions about this research or any comments to make now or at a later time please contact me or my supervisor, Dr. Allan Pitman. Thank you.

Sincerely

Xiuhua Ke

Appendix F

Letter of Information to Students

A Cross-Linguistic/Cultural Perspective of Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language in Canadian Universities

My name is Xiuhua Ke, a Ph.D Student in the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario. I am currently conducting research into how Canadian university students are learning Chinese as a foreign language. I would like to invite you to participate in this research.

The aims of this study are to develop a better understanding of Canadian university students' experience of learning Chinese as a foreign language in the educational setting; to contribute to the study of Chinese pedagogy.

Information for this research will be collected by means of questionnaire surveys, classroom observations, interviews or group interviews, and analysis of students' written work. This study will span from May to December, 2009.

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire concerning your experiences in learning Chinese in the classroom. This will take approximately 30 minutes. I am also asking for your consent to observe you in the classroom. I will come to the classroom on a weekly basis, twice a week and will take notes while observing in class. If you do not agree to participate in the study, I will not take observation notes on you. Based on your agreement, I will also collect your written assignments and make a copy of them, then return them to you.

I will ask approximately eight students to participate in interviews as well. Each individual interview with the eight selected students will be about an hour and a half at a place on campus based on the student's agreement. All interviews will be audio recorded based on your agreement and transcribed into written format, and you will be given a copy of the transcript to review and make changes to if you wish. The interview consists of two parts: the first part asks you to answer the questions about how you are learning; the second part asks you to speak on any topic you choose for about thirty minutes to see how you are using Chinese to express yourself. You may choose your topic before the interview either about your daily routine like campus communication with your peers, or with your professors, or topics related to your studies. Follow-up interviews may be organized or we may communicate via emails instead of follow-up interviews if necessary.

The information collected will be used for research purposes only. Neither your names nor information which could identify you will be used in any publications or presentations of the research. Your name will be replaced with a pseudonym to ensure your anonymity. All data collected will be kept confidential - locked in a cabinet and will be destroyed five years after the completion of this study.

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

Please keep this letter for your information.

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Western Ontario. .If you have any questions about this research, or any comments to make now or at a later time, please contact me or my supervisor, Dr. Allan Pitman. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Xiuhua Ke

Appendix G

Instructor & Student Consent Form

A Cross-Linguistic/Cultural Perspective of Learning
Chinese as a Foreign Language in Canadian Universities

I have read the Letter of Information about Xiuhua Ke's research, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

_____
Name (please print)

_____
Signature Date

Name of the Person obtaining Informed Consent _____

Signature of the Person Obtaining Informed Consent_____

Date_____

Appendix H

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS - ETHICS APPROVAL NOTICE

Review Number: 0905-1
Applicant: Xiuhua Ke
Supervisor: Allan Pitman
Title: A Cross-Linguistic/Cultural Perspective of Learning CFL in Canadian Universities
Expiry Date: August 31, 2010
Type: Ph.D. Thesis
Ethics Approval Date: May 21, 2009
Revision #:
Documents Reviewed & Approved: UWO Protocol, Letters of Information & Consent

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This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information. No deviations from, or changes to, the research project as described in this protocol may be initiated without prior written approval, except for minor administrative aspects. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information and consent documentation, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.
Dr. Jason Brown (Chair)
2008-2009 Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board

Dr. Jason Brown	Faculty (Chair)
Dr. Elizabeth Nowicki	Faculty
Dr. Jacqueline Specht	Faculty
Dr. John Barnett	Faculty
Dr. J. Marshall Mangan	Faculty
Dr. Immaculate Namukasa	Faculty
Dr. Robert Macmillan	Assoc Dean, Graduate Programs & Research (ex officio)
Dr. Jerry Paquette	UWO Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (ex officio)

The Faculty of Education Karen Kueneman, Research Officer
1137 Western Rd. Faculty of Education Building
London, ON N6G 1G7

Curriculum Vitae

Education

- Ph.D. student, University of Western Ontario, Canada, 2006 - present.
- M.Ed. Ashland University, Ohio, USA, 2005.
- M.A. Hubei University, China. 2002.
- B.A. Hubei University, China. 1990.

Professional & Academic Experience

- Research assistant, Faculty of Education, UWO, 2006-2007.
- Teaching assistant, Faculty of Education, UWO, 2007-2008.
- Research assistant, Faculty of Education, UWO, 2009-2010.
- Guest instructor, King's University College, UWO, 2011-2012.
- Interpreter /Translator, Able Translations, 2011-2012.
- Instructor, International Language Program of Ontario, 2010-2012.
- Instructor/coordinator of the CFL program, Hubei University, China, 1996-2003.
- Administrative assistant, International Office, Hubei University, China, 1996-2003.
- Instructor, Ezhou University, China, 1990-1996.