Beliefs about Language Learning: A Study of Post-secondary Non-Native

Learners of Chinese and Teachers of Chinese in North America

By

Yanping Cui

B.A., Hebei University, China, 1985
M. A., Hebei University, China, 1998
M.Ed., University of Northern British Columbia, 2006

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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University of Victoria

Supervisory Committee

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Dr. Richard King, Department of Pacific and Asian Studies
Outside Member

Abstract

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Dr. Tim Pelton, Department of Curriculum and Instruction
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Learner beliefs about language learning influence the language learning process. Addressing learner beliefs is central to enhancing teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes. To date, most previous research has described beliefs of learners of related second/foreign languages. In this study, belief dimensions were examined using a standardized survey of beliefs, BALLI, which was completed by 218 post-secondary beginning learners of Chinese and a modified BALLI completed by 62 teachers of Chinese at North American universities. Dimensions were identified using Exploratory Factor Analysis and a model of the relationship between dimensions developed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), a statistical technique for testing and estimating causal relations using a combination of statistical data and qualitative causal assumptions. A theoretical framework was established that integrated cognitive and metacognitive domains. The learner beliefs were described and compared between three sub-samples of learners, non-Asian students, Chinese-origin students, and non-Chinese Asians. Chinese and Asian students tended to have more similar beliefs than non-Asian students.

The research used a mixed-methods design: quantitative data from the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with six Chinese language students and six Chinese language instructors. Quantitative data analyses identified four belief dimensions: Motivation for learning Chinese; Formal language learning strategy (FLLS); Communication-oriented learning strategy (CLLS); and Difficulty of language learning. Learners overall reported high motivation to learn Chinese while concurrently acknowledging a language difficulty hierarchy and seeing Chinese as a difficult language. Both Chinese-origin and non-Chinese origin Asians reported more agreement with beliefs in FLLS than non-Asians. In contrast, non-Asians reported stronger support for CLLS than their Chinese-origin counterparts. Overall, teachers exhibited comprehensive knowledge about language learning. Comparisons between teacher and learner beliefs overall found more mismatches than matches. Compared with learners, teachers reported less agreement with beliefs in FLLS, but

more support for CLLS. A hypothetical learner belief model, derived from the BALLI and based on the theoretical framework, was constructed and tested using SEM, which illustrated the causal relationships among the belief dimensions. Within the model, learners who were highly motivated to learn Chinese tended to believe in FLLS whereas learners who believed in FLLS rejected CLLS. In addition, beliefs in difficulty of language learning in general and Chinese learning in particular also led to rejection of CLLS. The model was tested against the results from the student interviews and the model was confirmed. These results demonstrated the role of cultures in shaping learner beliefs, thereby providing insight into teaching practices. The mismatches between learner and teacher beliefs need to be addressed because continued differences could lead to classroom tension and a potential loss of motivation.

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Acknowledgements

A heartfelt thank you goes to my supervisor, Dr. Robert Anthony, for his time and support throughout my time in the doctoral program. His academic guidance meant a lot to me. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Tim Pelton and Dr. Richard King for their understanding and support they provided to me during this process.

My gratitude also goes out to my friends who supported me in the journey of completing this process. Their encouragement was important to me.

Finally, I express my deepest thanks to my parents and grandmother and families for their unending and unselfish love, support, and encouragement for my graduate studies in Canada. I would not have completed this dissertation without their support.

Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the present study in relation to the purpose and the rationale. What follows is the theoretical framework in which the study is grounded. Finally I formulate five research questions this study seeks to delve into.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the present study are to examine beliefs about language learning held by North American post-secondary beginning learners of Chinese, followed by comparisons of the belief systems of learners from three linguistically and culturally different backgrounds (non-Asian, Chinese-origin, and non-Chinese Asian); examine language learning beliefs of teachers of Chinese; compare and contrast learner and teacher beliefs; and explore whether there is a causal model of language learning beliefs of beginning learners of Chinese. These research endeavors seek to infer theoretical, pedagogical and curricular relevance that language learning beliefs have for Chinese learning and teaching and to contribute to second language (L2) /foreign language (FL) teaching and learning in general.

1.2 Rationale for the Present Study

This section addresses the rationale for the study by first discussing the role beliefs play in language learning and teaching. The fundamental premise in this study is that in order to enhance the effectiveness of teaching Chinese, to motivate students from various backgrounds towards learning Chinese, and to improve their learning achievements, it is important to examine learners' beliefs about language learning/Chinese learning and the impact of learners' ethnicity on beliefs, identify their belief structure, and compare learner beliefs with teacher beliefs. The possible contribution of culture to beliefs is also considered.

Individual differences in learner beliefs have been identified as a factor with a profound influence upon the language learning process (Dornyei, 2005; Hortwiz, 1988, 1999; Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003). Rifkin (2000) has argued that learner beliefs about language learning are central to whether or not learners can succeed in mastering a foreign language. They have reported that positive yet realistic beliefs can help learners overcome frustration and sustain motivation, thus facilitating language learning. By contrast, unrealistic beliefs or misconceptions can result in decreased motivation and increased frustration, which becomes an impediment to successful language learning (Bernat, 2007; Horwitz, 1988). Learner beliefs have been found to be shaped by a number of variables, one of which is culture (Kern, 1995; Young, 1999). Nevertheless, the relationship of learner beliefs to culture is still inconclusive (Horwitz, 1999).

By the same token, teacher beliefs play a major role in guiding teachers' educational practices such as defining teaching tasks and organizing knowledge and information needed to implement the tasks (Nespor, 1987). As such, teachers should understand their own beliefs or theories and maintain a constant personal reflection. It is through becoming aware of their own beliefs that they come to understand their implicit educational theories and how such theories influence their instructional practices (Williams & Burden, 1997). The significant role learner and teacher beliefs play in language learning and teaching warrants inquiries into the nature of and the relationship between learner and teacher beliefs.

A number of researchers have found that many learners hold mistaken beliefs about language learning and in some domains of L2/FL learning and teaching mismatches exist between teacher and learner beliefs (Bernat, 2007; Horwitz, 1988; Peacock, 1999, 2001; Siebert, 2003). More importantly, mistaken beliefs are detrimental to language learning and the mismatches can lead to classroom tension, students' dissatisfaction, anxiety, and potentially

learning outcomes (Brown 2009; Peacock). As such, an awareness and investigation of the nature of student and teacher beliefs and the possible gap between the two sets of beliefs is central to understanding and improving L2/FL learning and teaching. Given the role culture may play in shaping beliefs, it is equally important to examine beliefs of students who are from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds, and compare their beliefs with those of their teachers.

Another important reason relates to research effort that has been devoted to examination of structural dimensions that constitute language learning beliefs. Although researchers have endeavored to identify belief dimensions, there is no further effort to confirm and validate these dimensions discerned and establish the structural causal relationships between and among these dimensions, thus resulting in a dearth of knowledge about how the identified belief dimensions are related to each other in influencing language learning process.

As such, of central interest in the present study is an investigation of beliefs about language learning and teaching, specifically Chinese, a non-cognate foreign language. The majority of the existing studies of learner beliefs deal primarily with English, French, Spanish, and German (e.g. Brown, 2000), with a focus on cognate languages. Relatively little research has been conducted on beliefs about non-cognate languages, such as Chinese. There may be differences between the effect of beliefs on languages that are related (cognate languages) and languages that are not (non-cognate languages). Potentially different relationships may exist when the languages are more distantly or not related, such as English and Chinese. These differences appear to make learning Chinese distinct from learning cognate foreign languages.

For this reason, studies of learners of non-cognate languages require theories pertaining to learning non-cognate foreign languages. The present study will thus fill in a void in that it will not only make contributions to theories or to new evidence to test existing theories but also

provide opportunities for new theories and for implications for curriculum design, instruction of Chinese, and teacher education program (which will be addressed in Significance of the Study).

Furthermore, research focusing on Chinese is particularly necessary and important for several reasons. The Chinese language has been gaining increasing popularity across the world with its learners from a variety of backgrounds (Duff & Li, 2004; Furman, Goldberg & Lusin, 2007). Therefore, emerged is the rapid growth of teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCAFL). Out of pace with it is the paucity in the literature that has focused on TCAFL, particularly beliefs about Chinese learning and teaching. Most research deals primarily with English, French, Spanish, and German (e.g. Brown, 2000; Brown, 2009; Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995; Schulz, 1996; Bernat, 2007). Merely a few studies have delved into beliefs about Chinese teaching and learning (see Chen, 2003; Duff & Li, 2004; Le, 2004; Samimy & Lee, 1997; Wang et al., 2009). It is worthy of note that the dearth of studies on language learning beliefs held by learners of Chinese has also occurred in China. The few studies mentioned above were conducted by researchers outside of China, regardless of the fact that the teaching and learning of Chinese as a second language has witnessed a history of over fifty years in that land. The existing relevant literature in China encompasses the study of the teaching and acquisition of Chinese phonology, vocabulary, grammar, characters, discourse; Chinese pragmatics, learning strategies, assessment, textbooks, cultural studies, and the application of technology in teaching and learning Chinese (Cui, 2005; Sun, 2009). A few studies have explored the affective domain, such as anxiety, attitudes and preferences for types of classroom interaction, in teaching and learning Chinese as a second language (Ding, 2009; Ni, Wang & Jiang, 2004; Wu & Liu, 2009; Zhang & Wang, 2002). An extensive search for literature including four major journals on teaching and learning Chinese as a second language has located, to my best knowledge, no

studies that have examined teachers' and students' beliefs about Chinese learning and teaching as a second language. As such, I am aware of no studies to date in either China or outside of China that have been carried out to examine learner and teacher beliefs, and to compare and contrast them. Neither is there a study that has investigated learners' belief structure and how components within this structure interact with each other to impact language learner behavior and learning process. Hence, there exists a research gap that needs to be bridged.

Notwithstanding the growing body of literature on beliefs about learning and teaching the cognate languages, findings from the existing literature may not be as illuminating as far as the beliefs about the teaching and learning of Chinese are concerned. The Chinese language is typologically unrelated to the cognate languages, such as English, French, German, and Spanish, with very different grammatical, phonological, and orthographic and cultural systems (Cui & Lapadat, 2009; Duff & Li, 2004). Unlike cognate languages, Chinese is a tonal language without alphabets[1] and consists of a logographic writing system which employs a large number of symbols, known as characters, to represent individual words or morphemes (Cui et al.). A change of tones in one character can lead to an entirely different meaning, thus causing misunderstanding. Unlike cognate languages, non-cognate languages are more demanding for English speakers to tackle than cognate foreign languages (McGinnis, 1994; Pease, 1996; Samimy et al.; Wang & Hugginsb, 2008). As noted in Wang and colleague's report (2008), it may require speakers of European languages four times as long to move from beginner to operational levels in Chinese as compared to learning another European language like Italian, French or Spanish. The learning of Chinese and its instructional practices should be, therefore,

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[1]Pinyin, written in the form of alphabets, is the official phonetic system for transcribing the sound of Chinese characters into Latin script and is invariably used to teach Standard Chinese and help people pronounce the word. It may also be used as an input method to enter Chinese characters into computers.

subject to the nature of the language, with characteristics of their own. The uniqueness of the

Chinese language warrants an exploration of teachers' and students' beliefs or perceptions about

the teaching and learning of that language.

In addition, the number of Chinese-origin learners of Chinese is expanding exponentially

in the Chinese language classrooms on university campuses (Li & Duff, 2008; McGinnis, 2005).

Due to the unavailability of Chinese courses which can connect Chinese-origin students to their

prior language and culture, these students are treated either the same as non-Chinese-origin

students and placed in classes primarily developed for foreign language learners and for which

they are overqualified, or are seen disdainfully by administrators, teachers and classmates as

false beginners (students who have a high level of Chinese but pretend to be beginning learners

for easy grades) (Le, 2004; Li et al. 2008). An inevitable issue associated with this kind of mixed

class is that either non-Chinese-origin students are intimidated by Chinese-origin students or

low-proficiency Chinese-origin students by high-proficiency Chinese-origin students (Li et al.),

which has been argued to contribute to the high attrition rate among students without Asian

backgrounds (Le; Norman, 1996; Pease, 1996; Wen & Johnson, 1997). It may be that Chinese-

origin learners of Chinese may differ in beliefs about Chinese learning and teaching from

learners with non-Chinese backgrounds. The ethnic and linguistic diversity of students in

Chinese classes has posed challenges to instructors in their choice of teaching materials,

instructional methods, and classroom interaction (Li et al.). For the purpose of better

understanding students and informing teaching practices, there exists a need to investigate the

belief systems of the diversified students in relation to Chinese teaching and learning.

The 2011 census shows that Chinese is the second most common immigrant language in

Canada, after Punjabi (Statistics Canada, 2012). Almost 1,112,610 people reported Chinese as

their mother tongue, accounting for 16.3% of all immigrant mother tongues. In the United States, Chinese (including both Mandarin and Cantonese) is the second most common FL spoken by those residing within the U.S., following Spanish. To date, 2.9 million Americans regularly speak Chinese at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Aside from the growing number of people speaking Chinese as their mother tongue outside of China, there has arisen, with the increasing importance of China as an economic and political power in the world, a greater need than ever across the world in learning Chinese not only to meet the needs of the business community, but also to raise learners' future career prospects to the international level (Wang et al. 2008). Research in an effort to improving Chinese language pedagogy is valuable not only for non-Chinese-origin students who wish to become global citizens and/or gain an advantageous edge in the global community but also for Chinese-origin students' placement in language classes.

1.3 Significance of the Study

An understanding and comparison of ethnically different learners' and teachers' beliefs about language learning as well as examination of learner belief dimensions and a causal belief model will contribute to the literature on beliefs theoretically as well as pedagogically. Riley (1997) has pointed out that students' beliefs are dismissed as unimportant by some teachers, researchers, and theoretical linguists. What is deemed as important is the beliefs "enshrined in linguistic theories or technical grammars by Chomsky or Halliday" (Riley, pp.127-128). While learners have been recognized to have their own beliefs about language learning, these beliefs are seen less valuable than scientific theories (Barcelos, 2003). Consequently, research on foreign languages (FL) has traditionally centered on the teaching and learning of vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing skills; developmental orders in the acquisition of grammatical structures; the assessment of FL proficiency; the effectiveness of FL learning in computer-

mediated communication (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Pica, 2000; Warschauer & Healey, 1998); teachers' decision-making process, socialization, and apprenticeship from sociocognitive and sociocultural perspectives (Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Duff & Uchida, 1997; van Lier & van Lier, 1996). Over the last decade or so, beliefs about language learning have begun to receive growing attention and become a challenging domain in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) in applied linguistics (Barcelos, 2003). In this challenging domain, language learning beliefs held by learners of Chinese are still rather under-explored.

For these reasons, results from the present study will make contributions to the development of existing theories by providing new empirical evidence as well as opportunities for new theories by exploring the Chinese language. The juxtaposition of students' and teachers' beliefs will offer some illuminating and useful insights into their thinking processes and behaviors regarding language learning and teaching. Results of the role of ethnic language and culture backgrounds in this study will contribute to the development of theoretical explanation for some of the differences in beliefs among FL learners. The few previous studies either compared the beliefs of teachers and students treating students as a single group (Samimy et al. 1997) or compared the beliefs of linguistically and culturally diverse students learning Chinese in China without taking into account teachers' beliefs (Le, 2004). Moreover, no studies have sought to identify learner belief dimensions, establish and test the causal relationships within the dimensions. The findings of this study will thus be the first to provide empirical insights about the comparison of the beliefs of teachers and students of Chinese from diverse ethnic backgrounds about Chinese language learning and teaching as well as to establish and test a causal model of learner beliefs about language learning.

Results of this study will have pedagogical significance. Chinese instructors have been confronted with a number of challenges ranging from the high attrition rate for intermediate and advanced Chinese classes, composition of the students in class, and choice of teaching materials to the development of effective and engaging instructional resources and the design of appropriate curriculum. In the meantime, language teachers may also be faced with a challenge from themselves. Research has shown that language learners as well as teachers hold some inappropriate beliefs about FL learning/teaching which have influenced their learning/teaching practices (see Breen, 2001; Horwitz, 1988; Peacock, 1999). Developing an understanding of learner and teacher beliefs will make teachers aware of the potential obstacles to effective learning/teaching and possibly consider a change in their beliefs. Only when inappropriate beliefs are identified and changed will effective change in teachers' practices occur (Kennedy, 1997). Therefore, results from this study will generate lens from which Chinese teachers can reflect on their own practices as well as offer profound insight into teacher education programs.

What's more, results from this study will illustrate learner beliefs and help non-cognate language teachers, particularly Chinese language teachers, better understand the nature of language learning beliefs held by learners of Chinese, the similarities and differences among learners of different ethnic backgrounds and the role of ethnic languages and cultures in influencing learning Chinese. Results will also help Chinese language teachers improve their chances of finding appropriate instructional approaches to teaching Chinese and bear consequences for possible instructional interventions in the classroom in order to effectively resolve the differences, if any, in learner and teacher beliefs. The information revealed in this study will assist the curriculum development of non-cognate foreign languages, particularly Chinese, and teacher education programs.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework the present study relies on consists of four models/systems: (a) Horwitz' (1988, 1999) system of belief about language learning, (b) Wenden's (1998, 1999) model of metacognitive knowledge, (c) Oxford's (1990) system of language learning strategy, (d) Ryan and Deci's (1985, 1990) model of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The components comprising each of these conceptual systems/models are directly or indirectly connected to and interact with each other in influencing language learning belief systems, and therefore the theoretical framework is a result of the integration of different components from the four models. This conceptual framework serves as the foundation for understanding how language learning beliefs comprised of varied dimensions operate in the language learning process and why such understanding matters. More importantly, this framework lays the conceptual groundwork for constructing possible pathways between and among language learning belief dimensions with a view to creating a likely causal relationship model.

1.4.1 Horwitz's (1988) System of Belief about Language Learning

Learner beliefs about language learning are preconceived notions about learning a second/foreign language. Learners develop their own opinions or theories about language learning and these opinions likely influence learners' effectiveness in the classroom. Learner beliefs seem to "have direct relevance to the understanding of student expectations of, commitment to, success in, and satisfaction with their language classes" (Horwitz, p. 283). In other words, learner beliefs shape attitudes that eventually influence motivation, which in turn guides learning behaviors and consequently learning outcomes. Learner beliefs have an impact on learners' use of learning strategies (Wenden, 1987).

Horwitz's logically-derived language learning beliefs, as demonstrated in the *Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory* (BALLI) (Horwitz, 1988) encompass five major dimensions. They are (a) beliefs about the difficulty of language learning, which pertain to the general difficulty of learning a foreign language and the specific difficulty of a target language; (b) beliefs about foreign language aptitude, which touch upon the existence of language learning aptitude; (c) beliefs about the nature of language learning, which concern a range of issues relating to language learning process; (d) beliefs about learning and communication strategies, which are most directly connected to learners' actual language learning practices; and (e) learner motivations and expectations, which deal with desires and opportunities learners associate with the learning of the target language. The present study adopts the concept of Horwitz's belief system represented by the BALLI, with slight modifications to the BALLI dimensions, which will be addressed in detail from logical as well as statistical perspectives in Chapters 3 and 4.

1.4.2 Wenden's (1998, 1999) Model of Metacognitive Knowledge

In Wenden's model, metacognitive knowledge is defined as "information learners acquire about their learning" (Wenden, 1998, p. 519), which involves "the nature of learning, the learning process, and humans as learners, including themselves" (p. 435). In SL/FL literature, metacognitive knowledge is also referred to as learner beliefs (see Horwitz, 1987; Wenden, 1998). Flavel (1987) contends that beliefs about language learning are a component of metacognitive knowledge. The present study adopts the trend in SL/FL that aligns metacognitive knowledge with learner beliefs.

Metacognitive knowledge is divided into three categories, namely, person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategic knowledge (Wenden, 1998). Person knowledge refers to the

general knowledge individuals or learners have acquired about cognitive and affective factors that influence learning in general and their own learning experience in particular, such as age, language aptitude, and motivation. Person knowledge also includes individuals' self-efficacy beliefs about their ability to organize and manage the necessary resources to learn and maintain efforts in addition to beliefs about their ability to achieve particular learning goals. Task knowledge refers to an understanding of the cognitive demands of a task (Alexander, Schallert & Hare, 1991) and involves three components relating to the purpose of a task (for example, to expand one's vocabulary), the nature of a task (such as learning languages differs from learning mathematics), and the demands of a task (for example, the knowledge and skills required to perform a particular task). Strategic knowledge refers to general knowledge about learning strategies with regard to what they are and why they are useful as well as specific knowledge about when and how to employ them. Wenden proposes strategic knowledge as a separate category because it plays a unique role in the learning process. Specifically, this knowledge encompasses the learning strategies of individuals employ to facilitate their learning. Wenden further notes that the resulting accounts from interviews and questionnaires that require individuals or learners to retrospect upon their stored knowledge about learning strategies are also evidence of strategic knowledge, because these strategies are what "learners may actually use or think they use or should use" (p. 519).

  Linking Howitz's beliefs about language learning to metacognitive knowledge indicates that the five logical belief dimensions and their constituent items fall into one or more of the three types of knowledge. Each of Horwitz's first two belief dimensions, including difficulty of language learning and foreign language aptitude, involves both task knowledge and person knowledge, while the next two dimensions, such as the nature of language learning, and learning

and communicative strategies, deal with task knowledge and strategic knowledge. The dimension of motivations and expectations highlights person knowledge.

Metacognitive knowledge is closely connected with metacognitive strategies, which are conceived of as "general skills through which learners manage, direct, regulate, guide their learning, i.e. planning, monitoring and evaluating" (Wenden, 1998, p. 519). Implementation of these strategies is referred to as self-regulation in cognitive psychology and learner autonomy in FL/SL learning. Metacognitive knowledge is a pre-requisite for self-regulated language learning in that it informs the planning of decisions taken at the outset of learning and the monitoring processes that regulate the completion of a learning task" (Wenden, 1998, p.528). As noted by Perkins and Salomon (1989), metacognitive strategies are weak if they are not linked to a rich knowledge base.

In many cognitive activities of language learning, metacognitive knowledge plays an important role, as it relates to language use, language acquisition, and multiple types of self-instruction. Deployment of such knowledge characterizes the approach of successful language learners in that this knowledge boosts learning outcomes, facilitates recall, comprehension of written texts, and completion of new types of learning tasks, and improves the rate of progress in learning as well as the quality and speed of learners' cognitive engagement.

Metacognitive knowledge is also central to the learning process of planning, monitoring and evaluating. Learners' person knowledge influences their selection of learning objectives and standards they set for evaluating learning outcomes. For example, the stronger learners' self-efficacy beliefs, the more challenging learning goals will be and the more efforts learners will take to overcome hurdles faced in the course of learning. Learners' task knowledge, such as their understanding of learning process and their role in it, guides and informs the manner in which

learners plan and evaluate their learning. Wenden's (1987) study of L2 learners' beliefs about language learning indicates that learners who believe using the language is the key to successful learning stress the need to learn to speak, choose practice strategies and evaluate positively learning activities that offer an opportunity for oral communication. Similarly, strategic knowledge affects self-regulation of learning in that it guide learners in choosing strategies to cope with learning tasks and difficulties encountered. As well, metacognitive knowledge influences monitoring, "the regulatory skill that oversees the learning process that follows the initial planning" (Wenden, 1998, p. 525). In this process, this knowledge allows learners to assess how well learning is progressing towards a goal, and to make decisions about whether or not to adjust earlier learning choices depending on the effectiveness of these choices. Metacognitively well-developed learners can successfully cope with new learning situations.

1.4.3 Oxford's 1990 Model of Language Learning Strategies

In Oxford's 1990 model, language learning strategies are conceptualized as "steps taken by students to enhance their own learning (Oxford, 1990, p.1) and "specific actions taken by the learner to make language learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more transferrable to new situations" (Oxford, 2001, p. 166). Learning strategies facilitate learning by aiding the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information and affect achievement in second language acquisition (Gardner, 1988; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daley, 2002; Wenden, 1999). Successful language learners employ more effective learning strategies than less successful language learners.

Strategies good language learners use are classified into six broad categories, including metacognitive, affective, social, memory, cognitive and compensatory. Metacognitive strategies

refer to strategies learners use to regulate their own learning process. Affective strategies are the ones learners use to manage their emotions and attitudes, such as anxiety reduction. Social strategies are strategies through which learners work with others to learn the language. Memory strategies, such as structured review, are used to store information into memory and recall it as needed. Cognitive strategies refer to strategies that can help learners use the new language, such as analyzing contrastively and summarizing. Strategies that can assist learners to overcome knowledge limitations are compensatory strategies, like guessing meanings intelligently.

According to Oxford's synthesis of research on language learning strategy, a multitude of factors can affect learning strategy choice. They include: years of study (duration); degree of awareness; affective variables, such as attitudes, motivation level/intensity, language learning goals, motivational orientation; language being learned (target language); personality characteristics; learning style; aptitude; career orientation; national origin; language teaching methods; age; sex; and task requirements. For the scope of the present study, only related factors are elaborated on.

Among the factors mentioned above, motivational level is very influential in language learning and choice of learning strategies. Gardner's (1985) contended that "The prime determining factor [in language learning success] is motivation" (p. 83), because motivation, along with attitudes, determines the extent to which a person is actively engaged in language learning. Highly motivated learners employ strategies more often than less motivated learners and achieve higher levels of proficiency. For example, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) found that of all the variables measured, motivational level was the single most powerful influence on university language students' reported use of LLS. Motivational level was found to substantially affect the likelihood of students' use of strategies in four out of five factors: formal rule-related

practice strategies, functional practice strategies, general study strategies, and conversational input elicitation strategies. Schmidt and Watanabe (2001) also discovered that use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies is most affected by motivation, and among the types of pedagogical preferences investigated, approval of challenging activities was most affected by motivation.

Years of study is also pivotal to students' choice of LLS. For instance, Bialystok (1981) noted that as students advanced to a higher-level, formal practice with rules and forms was less and less effective. Oxford and Nyiko (1989) found that foreign language students who had studied the target language for a minimum of four or five years employed communication-oriented strategies significantly more often than less experienced students (see also Schmidt & Watanabe, 2001). Tyacke and Mendelsohn (1986) reported that lower-level students tended to focus on developing grammatical competence and master the linguistic code, and depend on their teacher more than higher-level students.

Degree of metacognitive awareness is another important factor in influencing strategy use. Learners' metacognitive knowledge about themselves and about their learning process has an impact on their selection of LLS (Wenden, 1998). It has been found that even ineffective learners were aware of and utilized a number of strategies and the only difference between effective and ineffective students was that the former reported greater frequency and wider range of strategy use (Chamot, O''Malley, Kupper & Impink-Hernandez, 1987).

As can be seen, the language learning strategies Oxford addressed in this model directly relate to the metacognitive knowledge and strategies that Wenden elaborated on in her model (1998). In the meantime, the factors discussed above that affect choice of LLS, such as motivation, provide a link to the possible relationship between the language learning belief dimensions revealed in Horwitz's belief systems (1988). While years of study is not specified in

Horwitz's belief systems, as an important factor that impacts LLS, it is indirectly connected to them. Motivation is a multi-faceted construct. As a constituent dimension in the belief systems and a significant influence on LLS, it merits a further description.

1.4.4 Model of Motivation by Ryan and Deci (1985, 2000) and Gardner (1985)

Motivation in language learning is always associated with Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972), whose work laid the foundation for research on SL/FL learning motivation. Gardner (1985) has noted that motivation encourages greater overall effort and results in greater success in terms of language proficiency and achievement. Gardner and Lambert (1972) categorized motivation into integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation refers to learner's desire to learn an L2 in order to integrate into the target language community, whereas instrumental motivation is characterized as a desire to learn an L2 in order to gain something practical, such as securing a job or obtaining a course credit. Gardner and Lambert's dichotomous categorization has given rise to varied alternative, complementary models, one of which is Ryan and Deci's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in self-determination theory (SDT). The present study largely adopts Ryan and Deci's model, with some adoption of Gardner's motivational model.

Self-determination theory proposes two overarching types of motivation, namely, intrinsic motivation (IM) and extrinsic motivation (EM). Intrinsic motivation is seen as motivation to engage in an activity for its own sake, largely out of enjoyment and interest, and is primarily focused on "psychological needs—namely, the innate needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p, 57). An intrinsically motivated person "is moved to act for fun or challenge entailed" (Ryan & Deci, p. 56). The underlying assumption is that when people can determine by themselves an activity to perform, they will "seek interesting situations

where they can rise to the challenges that the activity presents" (Noels, Pelletier, Clement, & Vallerand, 2000). By acting on their inherent interests and striving to overcome obstacles posed by the activity of their free choice, they grow in knowledge and skills, thus developing a sense of competence. Feelings of competence alone will not enhance IM unless they are accompanied by a sense of autonomy (Ryan & Deci, p. 58). In other words, in order to maintain IM, people should experience perceived competence as well as the process of making their own choice, or having self-determination. As such, optimal challenges, positive performance feedback, to name only a few, can enhance IM (Ryan & Grolnick, 1986; Schmidt & Watanabe, 2001). Conversely, negative feedback and competition pressures diminish IM because people perceive these as controllers of their behaviour (Deci & Cascio, 1972; Reeve & Deci, 1996). An autonomous, supportive (rather than controlling) learning environment can drive learners' greater IM, curiosity, and desire for challenges (Ryan & Grolnick; Grolnick, Deci, & Ryan, 1997). As such, learning environments should facilitate learners' IM by supporting their psychological needs for autonomy and competence.

Extrinsic motivation (EM), on the other hand, refers to engaging in an activity that leads to a separate outcome, or for instrumental reasons. EM does not necessarily mean a lack of self-determination. Rather, different forms of extrinsic motivation vary in their degree of autonomy and are located along a continuum. For example, the motivation to learn Chinese simply to meet the program requirement differs from the motivation to learn Chinese for a better career prospect. Although both cases involve instrumentality, the latter contains a sense of personal choice, while the former suggests compliance with a regulation, an external control. Accordingly, the two forms of extrinsic motivation differ in their relative autonomy. Simply put,

seen as a continuum, different forms of motivation can range from amotivation to passive compliance to active personal commitment.

According to SDT, all types of extrinsic motivation entail a desire to gain rewards or avoid punishment (external regulation), enhance ego or avoid feelings of guilt (introjection), achieve a valued personal goal (identification), or express sense of self (integration). Identification and integration involve a high level of volition, with integration being the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation. Ryan and Deci (2000) note that "the more one internalizes the reasons for an action and assimilates them to the self, the more one's extrinsically motivated actions become self-determined" (p. 62). Integration of values and behavioral regulations into one's own self can generate greater persistence, more positive self-perceptions, and better performance.

Ryan and Deci (1983) distinguished IM and EM and classified various forms of motivational orientations into a systematic framework. This framework, based on psychological mechanisms (self-determination and perceived competence), is instrumental in explaining how different types of motivation are related to learning outcomes.

It is worthy of note that there is some overlap between Gardner's (1985) integrative motivation and Ryan and Deci's intrinsic motivation in that they both emphasize positive attitudes towards language learning (Noels et al., 2000). However differences also exist in that reasons behind integrative motivation are not associated with personal enjoyment in the activity per se (Noels, et al.). Instrumental motivation and extrinsic motivation, however, are similar in that both orientations involve acting on an activity that results in an outcome separated from the individual and the activity per se. As such, in the present study, the constructs of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation reflected in Ryan and Deci's self-determination theory are

combined with Gardner's integrative motivational orientation to form three constructs of the

motivational model of language learning.

The four models and systems addressed above reveal the dimensions of language learning

beliefs, metacognitive knowledge, and metacognitive strategies as well as the importance of

these dimensions in language learning. Within this integrated framework, the foundation and

logical connection is made through the BALLI. Wenden's metacognitive knowledge is utilized

as part of the framework because all the BALLI items are associated with one of the three types

of metacognitive knowledge. Adoption of Oxford's model of language learning strategy is

attributed to the fact that one of the underlying dimensions of the BALLI relates to language

learning strategy, which belongs in strategic knowledge. Another important dimension of the

BALLI is motivation, which falls into either person or task knowledge and leads to the

integration of the model of motivation by Ryan and Deci, and Gardner. The underlying

dimensions of the BALLI encompass all the elements addressed in the other three models

adopted. The four models integrated, particularly Oxford's model, show how these belief

dimensions interact between and among one another, the relationship among these dimensions,

and the factors that may shape these dimensions and their relationships. For example, Oxford's

model illustrates how language learning factors, such as motivation, years of study, and/or the

target language, affect choice of language learning strategies. As such, the integrated and

interconnected framework not only guides this study by demonstrating language learning

processes but also is used as a conceptual foundation to construct a language learner belief model.

1.5 Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What dimensions underlie beliefs of North American post-secondary beginning learners

of Chinese about language learning?

2. What beliefs do beginning learners of Chinese hold about language learning, and how do language learning beliefs of beginning learners of Chinese from different ethnic backgrounds compare with one another?

3. What beliefs do teachers of Chinese hold about language learning?

4. How do the language learning beliefs of teachers compare with those of beginning learners of Chinese, and how do teachers' beliefs compare with those of beginning learners of Chinese from different ethnic backgrounds respectively?

5. Is there a model that can account for the causal relationships between beginning learners' belief dimensions about language learning?

1.6 Conclusion of Chapter 1

In this chapter, I outlined the purpose and the rationale of the present study, followed by addressing the significance of the study. I also developed and elaborated on a theoretical framework of language learning beliefs that is comprised of four components from four models or systems related to language learning. While research on language learning beliefs has been in existence for decades, a lack of comprehensive conceptual guidance has made such research fall short of theoretical depth and richness. Drawing on four models, this study has endeavored to conceptually ground the study to account for language learning beliefs and more importantly, to establish the basis for constructing a hypothetical language learning belief model to better understand leaner beliefs. This integrated conceptual framework serves as the guidance for the five research questions and the chapters that follow.

Chapter 2 Review of the Literature

In this chapter, I present an overview of the research on beliefs about language learning held by learners and teachers with a view to portraying a landscape of this field. Then I focus on reviewing research on language learning beliefs that is most pertinent to the present study, including studies on beliefs about the nature of language learning, structural belief dimensions, the factors that relate to beliefs, and comparisons of learner and teacher beliefs about language learning. I also specifically review studies on beliefs held by learners of Chinese.

2.1 Overview of Research on Beliefs about Language Learning

2.1.1 Definition of Beliefs about Language Learning

While described as an important individual difference factor in L2/FL learning (Brown, 2009; Dornyei, 2005; Horwitz, 1988), beliefs also are difficult to define. Pajares (1992), in his review of the research on this topic, regards beliefs as a "messy construct", one that has not always been depicted with much precision and which "travels under the alias" of: "attitudes, values, judgements, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertories of understanding, and social strategy, to name but a few that can be found in the literature" (p.309). Other terms used to delineate beliefs include: folklinguistic theories of learning (Miller & Ginsberg, 1995), learner representations (Holec,1987), representations (Riley, 1994), a philosophy of language learning (Abraham & Vann, 1987), metacognitive knowledge (Wenden, 1986, 1987), cultural beliefs (Gardner, 1988), learning culture (Riley, 1997), the culture of learning languages (Barcelos, 1995), culture of learning (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996), and language

learning beliefs (Kalajia & Barcelos, 2003).

Amid the plethora of terms, some perceive beliefs as preconceived notions or metacognitive knowledge, while others see beliefs as not only a cognitive concept but also social and cultural constructs derived from one's experiences and problems (Kalajia & Barcelos, 2003). Irrespective of the diversified terminology, a general consensus has been achieved that beliefs about foreign language learning pertain to the nature of language and language learning. Accordingly, Kalaja and colleague have broadly described beliefs about language learning as "opinions and ideas that learners (and teachers) have about the task of learning a second/foreign language" (p. 1).

What is worth special note is that in defining beliefs, one of the greatest confusions results from their relationship to knowledge. Zheng (2009) has noted that in the literature, knowledge is sometimes seen as distinctive from beliefs by nature, or in other research employed as a grouping term without distinction between what we know and what we believe. Various empirical studies on beliefs about language learning, however, have not distinguished knowledge and beliefs in a clear-cut manner as they are seen to be inextricably intertwined (Horwitz, 1988; Verloop, Driel, & Meijer, 2001; Wenden, 1987; Woods, 1996). Because of the blurry boundary between knowledge and beliefs in the literature on second language acquisition, knowledge and beliefs about language learning tend to be used interchangeably (Wenden, 1987). As such, in the present study, I adopt the broad definition of beliefs about language learning as opinions and ideas that learners or teachers hold about learning a second/foreign language, without treating beliefs and knowledge as separate constructs.

2.1.2 Research on Beliefs about Foreign Language Learning

The interest in beliefs about L2/FL learning began in the mid-1980s. Hortwiz (1985, 1988) was the first to stimulate the interest in learner and teacher beliefs by developing an instrument, known as the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI). The BALLI was intended to measure student opinions on a range of issues and controversies pertinent to language learning. The creation of this instrument was based on free-recall tasks and group discussions with both foreign language and English as a second language (ESL) learners and teachers to identify common beliefs about language learning. The instrument contained 34 items to assess student beliefs that fell into five logical categories: (1) the difficulty of foreign language learning; (2) foreign language aptitude; (3) the nature of language learning; (4) learning and communication strategies; and (5) motivation and expectations. The participants were asked to rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The instrument was then pilot-tested with 150 first-semester foreign language students at the University of Texas at Austin (Horwitz, 1985). Horwitz (1988) stressed that a single composite score should not be derived from the BALLI due to the multidimensionality of beliefs measured.

Recent years has seen a remarkable growth of the interest in beliefs about L2/FL learning and teaching (Brown, 2009). Existing research has examined the cognitive, metacognitive, and social aspects of beliefs. Barcelos (2003) categorized the studies in way of three approaches, namely, the normative approach, the metacognitive approach, and the contextual approach. The categorization of the three approaches was based on the definition of beliefs, methodology, and the relationship between beliefs and action.

The cognitive aspects of beliefs about L2/FL learning are addressed in studies that use the normative approach. Within this approach, researchers see beliefs as preconceived notions or misconceptions (Hortwitz, 1985, 1987, 1988), or perceptions (Bell, 2005; Levine, 2003), which

are depicted as "cognitive entities to be found inside the minds of language learners" (Kalaja, 1995, p. 192). This perspective posits that beliefs about L2/FL learning influence future behaviors (Barcelos, 2003). Studies situated within this perspective have used Likert-scale questionnaires to investigate student and teacher beliefs. The most often used questionnaire in these studies is the BALLI developed by Hortwitz (1987, 1988), either in the original version (Bernat, 2004; Kern, 1995; Oh, 1996) or in the adapted one (Diab, 2006; Le, 2004; Mantle-Bromley, 1995). Other studies have designed questionnaires of their own (Davis, 2003; Brown, 2009; Mori, 19993). In addition to questionnaires, some researchers have included interviews as a way of validating questionnaires (Sakui & Gaies, 1999). These studies have covered: (a) beliefs students and teachers hold concerning L2/FL learning in general (Bernat, 2004; Diab, 2006; Hortwitz, 1985, 1988, 1989, 1991; Kern, 1995; Mantle-Bromley, 1995), (b) contributors to the formation of beliefs (Bernat, 2006; Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Bernat & Lloyd, 2007; Horwitz, 1999), (c) the impact beliefs have upon learning (Hortwitz, 1989; Kim-Yoon, 2000; Kunt, 1998; Le, 2004;Yang, 1999), and (d) comparisons between students' and teachers' beliefs (Bernat, 2007; Brown, 2009; Davis, 2003; Polat, 2009). However, empirical evidence is still limited that can unravel the nature of the relationship between beliefs and learning behaviors.

The metacognitive approach, as the name suggests, examines the metacognitive aspects of beliefs about L2/FL learning. Within this approach, beliefs are defined as metacognitive knowledge, specifically "knowledge or concepts about language learning" (Wenden, 1986, p. 163) and "theories in action" (Wenden, 1987, p. 112). Metacognitive knowledge was proposed by Wenden (1986, 1987, 1999, 2002) and has been employed as the framework in this line of studies. While characterizing this knowledge as relatively stable, Wenden (1999) also acknowledges that it may change over time. Corresponding studies are largely focused on

students' metacognitive beliefs. To investigate these beliefs, researchers mostly use interviews and self-report (Gram, 2003; Wenden, 1986) as well as questionnaires (Victori, 1992, cited in Barcelos, 2003; Wang, Spencer & Xing, 2009). Metacognitive knowledge is seen as closely related to autonomous, self-directed language learning and learner strategies (Wenden, 1999; Wang et al.), and therefore is essential to helping students to become autonomous.

The contextual approach explores the social aspects of beliefs about L2/FL learning. Beliefs within this approach are characterized as contextual, or situationally conditioned, dynamic, and social (Barcelos, 2003; Sakui & Gaies, 1999). Rather than employing questionnaires, researchers investigate beliefs by using qualitative methods, including ethnographic classroom observations (Allen, 1996; Barcelos, 2000), semi-structured interviews (Alanen, 2003), diaries and narratives (Hosenfeld, 2003; Kalaja, 2003), metaphor analysis (Kramsch, 2003; Ellis, 2001), and discourse analysis (Kalaja, 1995).

In the next section, I review studies mostly using normative and/or metacognitive approaches. The review begins with studies focused firstly on learners' language learning beliefs and then on teachers' language learning beliefs, followed by comparison of learners' beliefs with teachers'. The review ends with studies on language learning beliefs held by learners and teachers of Chinese.

2.2 Overview of Learner Language Learning Beliefs Studies

With regard to research instruments, there are two lines of research on learner language learning beliefs. One line, the major line, employs the BALLI to examine learner beliefs, while the other line uses questionnaires devised by researchers themselves (Amuzie & Winke, 2009; Diab, 2006; Sakui & Gaies, 1999; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003).

From the perspective of research purposes, existing studies have delved into (1) the nature of learner language learning beliefs (Horwitz, 1988, 1999; Oh, 1996; Tumposky, 1991), (2) the structural dimensions of learners' beliefs as well as (3) the relationships between learner beliefs and various aspects of L2/FL learning (Bernat, 2006, 2007; Brown, 2009; Fujiwara, 2011; Le, 2004; Loewen, Li, Fei, Thompson, Nakatsukasa, Ahn & Chen, 2009; Rieger, 2009; Samimy et al. 1999; Yang, 1999). For example, some studies describe what beliefs learners hold about language learning (Horwitz, 1988, 1999; Oh, 1996). Other studies deal with the possible factors that may shape learner language learning beliefs, such as culture and family background (Bernat & Lloyd, 2007; Fujiwara; Horwitz, 1999; Siebert, 2003), experiences (Kuntz, 2000); gender (Bacon & Finnemann, 1992; Siebert, 2003), and personality traits (Bernat, 2006). Still others examine the L2/FL learners' beliefs in relation to affective factors such as motivation (Kim-Yoon, 2000; Banya & Chen, 1997), anxiety (Banya & Chen; Horwitz, 1989; Kunt, 1998; Le, 2004; Truitt, 1995); attitudes (Banya & Chen); language learning strategies (Park, 1995; Yang, 1999); learner autonomy (Cotterall, 1995; Wenden, 1991); achievements (Samimy et al.); language proficiency (Huang & Tsai, 2003; Mantle-Bromley, 1995; Peacock, 1998, 1999); and the context specificity (Chawhan & Oliver, 2000; Cotterall; Kim-Yoon).

From the perspective of language learning contexts, existing studies can be classified into (1) foreign language learners in North America learning cognate foreign languages (Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995; Rifkin, 2000) and non-cognate foreign languages (Kuntz, 2000; Mori, 1999b; Oh, 1996; Rifkin; Samimy & Lee, 1997; the present study), (2) foreign language learners in study abroad programs in a target language country (Atlan, 2006; Le, 2004), (3) foreign language learners in different institutions and at different levels of instruction (research institute vs. private colleges and beginning learners vs. intermediate/advanced learners) (Rifkin), (4) learners of

English as a second language in an English speaking country (Bernat, 2004, 2007; Cotterall, 1995; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003), (5) learners of English as a foreign language in Japan (Saki & Gaies, 1999), Korea (Park, 1995; Truitt, 1995; Kim-Yoon, 2000), Mainland China (Wang & Intarprasert, 2009), Hong Kong (Benson & Lor, 1999; Peacock, 1999), Taiwan (Yang, 1999), Russia (Gaies, Stephen, Galambos & Cornish, 1999; Tumposky, 1991), North Cyprus (Kunt, 1997), Gorgia (Polat, 2009), Iran (Maftoon & Shakouri, 2012), Tailand (Fujiwara, 2011), Hungaria (Rieger, 2009), Brazil (Barcelos, 1995), Lebanon (Diab, 2006), Turkey (Tercanlioglu, 2005), and Malaysia (Nikitina, 2006).

The overview of the literature presented above is intended to create a panoramic view, showing that the research in this filed has been growing with regard to quantity and scope. Nonetheless, for the purpose and scope of the present study, in the section that follows I only review the studies that are most pertinent to the purpose of the present study. I begin with reviewing studies focused on the nature of beliefs about language learning, followed by research on the structural dimensions of language learning beliefs derived from the BALLI. Next is the review of studies on the relationship of language learning beliefs with various learning aspects, including language learning strategy, language proficiency and achievements, cultural and family background, and years of study as well as characteristics of good language learners.

2.2.1 Nature of Learner Beliefs about Language Learning

Existing research on the nature of language learning beliefs is generally descriptive in that it largely utilizes descriptive statistics to describe, explain, and elaborate on learner beliefs. Horwitz (1988) is one of the pioneers in research on beliefs about language learning. She developed and administered the BALLI to 241 American students of German, French and

Spanish. The results showed strikingly consistent overall patterns of responses across the three target language groups. While most students recognized the difficulty of learning a foreign language, they underestimated the time commitments for mastering a foreign language and had unrealistic expectations for language learning achievement. The students overwhelmingly endorsed the statement that it is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language. Although many students were aware of the importance of communication-oriented activities, they believed in the importance of learning vocabulary and grammar rules, translation, repetition and practice in the language laboratory, and correct pronunciation in learning languages. Horwitz noted that overemphasis on vocabulary and grammatical rules would lead students to spend most of their time memorizing vocabulary and grammatical rules at the cost of other language learning tasks.

Furthermore, students supported, to some extent, some of the approaches required to participate in communication-oriented activities associated with, for example, correctness in speaking and guessing unknown words. However, they showed concern about making errors. Horwitz cautioned that over-concern about correctness would create difficulty for students being comfortable with and participating in communicative activities. As well, the majority of the students did not have strong desires to know the foreign culture; nor did they associate strongly the target language skills with better job opportunities. Lack of strong instrumental and integrative motivation for learning the target language may explain why the majority of students would probably quit language study when it becomes more difficult and time-consuming.

Using the BALLI, Tumposky (1991) explored the beliefs about language learning held by university ESL students from the Soviet Union and university students of Spanish and French in the U.S. The results revealed that although studying different languages in different

sociolinguistic settings, the two groups of students held similar beliefs about language learning in some aspects. Both groups showed strong endorsement of the existence of foreign language aptitude, children's superiority in language learning, a difficulty hierarchy of languages, and the primacy of repetition and practice, and excellent pronunciation. Both groups reported moderate willingness to guess unknown words. However the two groups also showed differences that may influence their choice of learning strategies and persistence with which they work towards language proficiency. For example, compared with the Soviet students, American students placed more value to the learning of grammar rules and vocabulary as well as showed more tolerance with making errors. American students also professed more timidity of speaking the target language than the Soviet students, which Tumposky attributed to the peculiarities of the situation. The Soviet students had just arrived in the US and were eager to meet with Americans. Furthermore the Soviet students gave much higher ratings to the item on the importance of speaking the target language in their own country. As such, the Soviet students reported much more instrumental motivation for learning the target language than American students. The researcher argued that the presence or absence of a society attitude may be a factor affecting learners' learning strategy and persistence in their studies.

Focused on 20 adult Vietnamese ESL learners in Australia, Bernat's BALLI study (2004) found that the respondents generally endorsed the concepts of special abilities for foreign/second language learning and language difficulty level hierarchy. Like in other most BALLI studies, respondents overall reported strong support for the traditional approach with prioritized grammar rules, vocabulary, translation, correct pronunciation, repetition and practice, and timely error correction. Conversely, respondents did not report as much favour of communication focused activities, such as guessing unknown words and feeling free to say anything even if it was

incorrect. Despite their strong instrumental and integrative motivation for learning English, respondents did not show much confidence in their ultimately being able to speak English well.

In a study of the first-semester German and English language majors in a Hungarian university, Reiger (2009) found that respondents reported high degrees of motivation to learn their respective target language and tended to believe that focus on learning vocabulary or grammar rules and how to translate can make language learning successful. Reiger noted that in the context of English and German language learners, they attached more importance to the traditional approach to language learning than to the communicative approach.

2.2.2 Structural Dimensions of Language Leaner Beliefs Derived from the BALLI

The BALLI is the most widely used measurement instrument for research on beliefs about language learning. In designing the BALLI, rather than using statistical methods, Horwitz (1985, 1988) logically classified the 34 Likert-scale items into five dimensions: (a) difficulty of language learning, (b) foreign language aptitude, (c) the nature of language learning, (d) learning and communication strategies, and (e) learner motivations and expectations. Researchers in earlier BALLI studies had adhered to Horwitz's logically-derived belief dimensions until Kuntz (1996) raised concerns over the reliability of these belief dimensions in her critique of BALLI studies. The methodological constraint that Horwitz and other researchers were subject to in categorizing beliefs pointed to the need of utilization of statistical methods.

Ever since, substantial research efforts have been devoted to identifying the underlying structural dimensions/factors of learner beliefs through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the BALLI responses (Le, 2004; Nikitina & Furuoka, 2006; Park, 1995; Truitt, 1995; Yang, 1999). Subsequent related studies using EFA sought to produce statistically meaningful and logically

interpretable factors of the BALLI. Given that in EFA, categorizing and labelling factors are subjected to researchers' decisions and judgment, the structural dimensions of learner beliefs discerned in different studies conducted in various contexts vary to some extent, which will be seen in the following review. While there is some similarity of factors, some BALLI items do not factor consistently across studies.

Furthermore, among these BALLI studies, few have employed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to validate the factors discerned through EFA. EFA serves to uncover the underlying structural dimensions of a relatively large set of survey items, whereas CFA seeks to test whether survey items comprising the identified factors are consistent with the hypothesized measurement model from EFA. There is no single study that has tested the measurement model constructed based on the BALLI, thus resulting in a dearth of knowledge about how the identified belief dimensions influence and are related to each other.

Using the 35-item BALLI (with one more added item), Yang (1999) investigated Taiwanese students learning EFL at six universities in Taiwan. Her factor analysis discovered four dimensions: (a) self-efficacy and expectation (6 items), (b) value and nature of learning spoken English (9 items), (c) foreign language aptitude (7 items), and (d) formal, structured study (7 items), with Cronbach's alphas, the internal consistency reliability, varying from .52 to .71. Out of 35 items, 29 were integrated into one of the four factors. Kuntz (1996) claimed that the results of Yang's study suggested a unique belief structure of the sample examined, that is, Taiwanese EFL students

In a study of university students learning English as foreign language in Korea, Trutt (1995) factor analyzed the BALLI responses and found five factors/dimensions: (a) the value and nature of learning English (6 items), (b) self-efficacy/confidence in speaking (5 items), (c) the

importance of correctness/formal learning (6 items), (d) the ease of learning English (5 items), and (e) motivational factors (3 items). The five factors included 25 out of 34 items. Cronbach's alpha was not reported.

Park (1995) reported on a four-factor learner belief structure in his study of Korean university EFL students, including (a) motivational beliefs and beliefs about formal English (9 items), (b) self-efficacy and beliefs about social interaction (7 items), (c) beliefs about learning spoken English (5 items), and (d) foreign language aptitude (4 items). Park's study discovered motivational beliefs and beliefs about formal English as the first factor, pointing to the importance and relationship of motivational beliefs and formal English learning beliefs. Altogether 25 out of 34 items were chosen to be included into the structure and Cronbach's coefficient alphas were not reported. Park's four-factor belief structure somewhat overlapped Yang's four-factor belief structure.

Oh (1996) singled out five factors after administering the BALLI to first and second-year American university students of Japanese, a non-cognate language. The five factors were (a) motivation/ confidence in speaking Japanese (7 items), (b) importance of formal learning (3 items), (c) value of knowing Kanji (2 items), (d) foreign language aptitude (2 items), and (e) the importance of correctness (4 items). Oh noted that there were overall similarities and differences between the belief structure she identified and Horwitz's. Compared with the lower rank or lack of motivational factors in most previous studies, Oh's study identified motivation as the major component of the first factor, suggesting the magnitude of motivation and its likely relation to the difficulty level of learning Japanese. Learners of non-cognate foreign languages might attach more importance to the specific characteristics of the target language. Altogether 18 out of 34

BALLI items fell into their corresponding factors, and there was no report on Cronbach's coefficient alpha for each factor.

A somewhat similar pattern was also reported in a study of Chinese university students studying English as a foreign language (Wang, 2005). Wang identified five dimensions: (a) motivational beliefs and strategies (10 items), (b) perceived difficulty of English learning (4 items), (c) language differences and value of learning English (3 items), (d) importance of formal learning (3 items), and (e) foreign language aptitude (3 items). This study found motivational beliefs and strategies as the first factor, further pointing to a relationship between motivation and language learning strategies. Out of the 34 items, 23 were included and no Cronbach's coefficient alpha was reported.

Le's (2004) study of American learners of Chinese participating in a summer study abroad program in China found five factors: (a) motivation and aptitude in learning foreign language (12 items), (b) the nature and characteristics of learning Chinese (7 items), (c) self-efficacy and strategies used in learning spoken Chinese (5 items), (d) perspectives on foreign language learners (3 items), and (e) the difficulty of Chinese and strategies for learning Chinese (4 items). Like Oh's and Wang's studies, Le also found motivation to be the first factor, combined with aptitude, indicating that respondents in this study were motivated and aptitude-oriented. Le's study also included the difficulty of Chinese and strategies for learning Chinese as factors, which, however, none of the other studies (Yang, 1992; Park, 1995; Truitt, 1995; Oh, 1996; Kunt 1997; Kim-Yoon, 2000) identified as a factor. This result might suggest that the students in this study were more attentive to the difficulty of language learning and emphasized strategies for language learning more than their counterparts in other studies. Out of the 34 items, 31 were included in the five factors and there was no report on Cronbach's coefficient alpha for

each factor. Le concluded that his structural dimension of the BALLI items was overall consistent with Horwitz's logical categorization.

The BALLI study by Nikitina and Furuoka (2006) examined undergraduate students learning Russian at a Malaysian university. The study identified four factors: (a) motivation (4 items), (b) aptitude (2 items), (c) strategy (2 items), and (d) ease of learning (2 items). The Cronbach's alphas were not reported. The factor structure was similar to that proposed by Horwitz (1988), except that it was a four-factor structure, with the exception of one factor missing, that is, the nature of learning. However, only 10 out of the 34 items were used in the final results, with most items eliminated due to lower communalities or cross-loadings. Irrespective of the small number of items retained, Nikitina and Furuoka asserted that the dimensional structure proposed by Horwitz was empirically supported in their study.

Most recently, using a 35-item BALLI, Fujiwara's (2011) study of EFL university students in Thailand identified a five-factor belief structure, which was claimed to be similar to the Horwitz model. Fujiwara's belief structure consisted of: (a) learning and communication strategies (8 items), (b) important aspects of language learning (6 items), (c) expectations and difficulty of learning English (6 items), (d) nature and aptitude of language learning (9 items), and (e) difficulty and ability of language learning (6 items). All 35 items were grouped into their respective factors, despite the low loadings of a couple of items. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha for each factor ranged from .49 to .59.

To sum up, among the studies reviewed thus far, the number and content of factors derived from exploratory factor analysis more or less varied from study to study. Although some dimensions identified were similar to those categorized by Horwitz (1988), other items that comprised their corresponding factors differed from those in Horwitz's study. In other words, the

item grouping proposed by Horwitz (1985, 1988) was not entirely replicated for the students in

other studies (Fujiwara, 2011; Le, 2003; Nikitina & Furuoka, 2006; Oh, 1996; Yang, 1999;

Wang, 2005). Nevertheless, some survey items and factors were more consistently identified

than others. The relatively stable factors may appear under a distinct label in different studies,

but the constituent factor items were approximately similar. These items included:

Motivational beliefs
- I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak the target language very well.
- I would like to learn the target language so that I can get to know the people better.
- If I learn the target language well, it will help me to get a good job.
- If I get to speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.

Beliefs about formal language learning
- Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning grammatical rules
- Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning vocabulary words
- Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from my native language

Beliefs about communication-oriented learning activities
- It's okay to guess if you don't know a word in the target language.
- If beginning students are permitted to make errors in the target language, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.
- You shouldn't say anything in the target language until you can say it correctly.

It appears that three dimensions of BALLI can be clearly and relatively consistently

identified. Other than the three factors, other factors and survey items were less stable, meaning

that some of the items that Horwitz conceptually identified as measuring one dimension were

likely to measure a different dimension in other BALLI studies. The variation of item grouping

suggest students may interpret the BALLI items more or less differently due to the target

language being learned, their proficiency level, and personal language learning experience,

and/or cultural backgrounds.

Despite the presence of inconsistent dimensions across studies, I will attempt to factor the

BALLI again using EFA. Further, I will subsequently employ a confirmatory statistical method

to test the structural dimensions I will identify in attempts to constructing a more revealing model of the BALLI dimensions.

2.2.3 Language Learning Beliefs and language Learning Strategy

Researchers believe that learners' preconceived beliefs about language learning affect the way learners choose strategies in the process of learning a second/foreign language and some preconceived beliefs are likely to restrict learners' range and flexibility of strategy use (Abraham & Vann, 1987; Elbaum, Berg, & Dodd,1993; Horwitz,1988; Park, 1995; Wenden, 1986; Yang, 1999). Horwitz has noted that knowledge of the relationship of learners' beliefs about language learning and strategy use should provide teachers with better understandings of their students' "expectation of, commitment to, success in, and satisfaction with their language classes" (p. 283). Towards this end, several studies specifically investigated the relationship between learner beliefs and strategy use (Abraham et al.; Brown, 2006; Graham, 2003; Park; Yang; Wenden), among which, a few studies used the BALLI and Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Ghavamnia, Kassaian, & Dabaghi, 2011; Park; Yang).

In an exploratory case study of students' beliefs about foreign language learning, Wenden (1986) identified twelve explicit and prescriptive beliefs of advanced students. She discovered that students could not only distinctly describe their beliefs but also choose consistent corresponding learning strategies. She thus argued that students had explicit metacognitive beliefs about how best to learn a foreign language, and these beliefs seemed to impact students' choice of learning strategies. Young (1991) also has stressed that successful language learners develop insightful beliefs about how language learning operates and how learners should effectively use learning strategies to facilitate their learning process. Uninformed language

learning beliefs may result in use of less effective strategies, poor cognitive performance, classroom anxiety, and negative attitudes to autonomy.

Using the BALLI and the SILL, Yang (1999) investigated beliefs and strategy use of 505 EFL university students in Taiwan who had formally studied English for 6 years in middle schools and for at least one year at the university. Exploratory factor analyses on the BALLI items identified four factors relating to learner beliefs about language learning. They included (a) self-efficacy and expectation about learning English, (b) perceived value and nature of learning spoken English, (c) beliefs about foreign language aptitude, and (d) beliefs about formal structural studies. Use of the same statistical procedures identified six SILL factors, namely, (a) functional practice strategies, such as reading, writing notes, and starting conversations in English, (b) cognitive-memory strategies, such as looking for similarities and contrasts, building associations and mental imaging, (c) metacognitive strategies, such as reflecting on learning progress, planning, setting clear goals, and reviewing, (d) formal oral-practice strategies, such as practicing English sounds and talking to native English speakers and paying attention while others are speaking English, (e) social strategies, such as seeking help from English speakers and asking for repetition, and (f) compensation strategies, such as gesturing, guessing and making up new words. Correlation analyses between the four belief factors and the six strategy factors revealed that students' beliefs were strongly related to learning strategies. Specifically students' self-efficacy and expectation about learning English had an important impact upon their use of all types of learning strategies, especially functional practice strategies. As well, learners' beliefs about the value of learning spoken English were closely related to their use of formal oral-practice strategies. Beliefs about foreign language aptitude were connected with functional practice strategies, cognitive-memory strategies, and metacognitive strategies. Beliefs about

formal structural studies were significantly and negatively associated with functional practices strategies. In other words, students who believed in the priority of grammar rules, vocabulary and translation in language learning were unlikely to use functional practice strategies. This result provided empirical evidence for Horwitz's claim that certain beliefs would likely restrict use of some language learning strategies.

Similarly, Park (1995) administered the BALLI and SILL to 332 Korean EFL university students to examine their language learning beliefs and use of learning strategies. Exploratory factor analyses identified four factors, namely: (a) motivational beliefs and beliefs about formal English, (b) self-efficacy and beliefs about social interaction, (c) beliefs about spoken English, and (d) beliefs about foreign language aptitude. Four learning strategy factors were identified, including (a) independent and interactive practice strategies, (b) metacognitive strategies, (c) communication-affective strategies, and (d) memory strategies. Correlational analyses found a close relationship between strategy use and beliefs. Two belief factors, that is, motivational beliefs and beliefs about formal English were significantly correlated with three strategy factors: (a) independent and interactive practice strategies, (b) metacognitive strategies, and (c) communication-affective strategies. Self-efficacy and beliefs about social interaction were also significantly correlated with three strategy use factors: (a) independent and interactive practice strategies, (b) metacognitive strategies, and (c) memory strategies. Beliefs about learning spoken English were significantly correlated with communication strategies, while beliefs about foreign language aptitude were significantly correlated with independent and interactive practice strategies. These results suggested that while beliefs and strategy use were correlated with each other, the nature of the relationship was shaped by specific types of beliefs and learning strategies.

In a study of 60 Korean university students taking an English course, Kim (2001) used the BALLI and SILL to examine the relationship between language learning beliefs and learning strategies. The BALLI was logically divided into six categories, including motivational beliefs, beliefs about self-efficacy, beliefs about formal language, beliefs about social interaction, beliefs about language aptitude, and beliefs about practice. In the same token, the SILL was conceptually grouped into six strategies, namely, memory strategy (remembering more effectively), cognitive strategy (using your mental process), metacognitive strategy (organizing your learning), compensation strategy (compensating missing knowledge), affective strategy (managing your emotions), and social strategy (learning with others). Correlation analyses discovered the strongest relationship between beliefs about self-efficacy and metacognitive strategy. Overall, most of the strategies were reportedly correlated with three categories of beliefs: motivational beliefs, beliefs about self-efficacy, and beliefs about functional practice. Beliefs about self-efficacy were associated with all six strategies, while motivational beliefs were correlated with all but social strategy. Beliefs about functional practice were correlated with memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. Kim concluded that the stronger learners' motivational beliefs, beliefs about self-efficacy, and beliefs about functional practice, the more frequently learners used strategies.

Apart from the efforts to analyze the relationship of different belief dimensions with various types of learning strategies, a few studies employed the BALLI in a manner different from what Horwitz (1988) proposed. Adopting the BALLI, SILL, and Schmidt and Watanabe's (2001) model of language learning motivation, Ghavamnia and colleagues (2011) investigated the relationship of 80 Iranian female university students' language learning strategies with language learning beliefs and motivation. The results revealed a strong relationship between the

learners' language learning beliefs and their language learning strategies, and an equally strong relationship was also observed between learners' motivation and language learning strategies. However, rather than factoring the BALLI and generating scores from each belief factor, a single composite score was produced and used to correlate a single score calculated from the SILL. As advised by Hortwiz, the BALLI was intended to describe learners' and teachers' views on a variety of issues, namely, the five logical categories of beliefs about language learning. Given the multidimensionality of the BALL, Horwitz contended that the BALLI was not intended to yield a single composite score. Apparently, Ghavamnia and colleagues combined all items into one single score; however it was difficult to know what the sum of the BALLI would amount to. In a similar study of 80 Iranian EFL college students, Maftoon and Shakouri (2013) investigated learner language learning beliefs and strategies, using the BALLI and SILL. A significant relationship was found to be present between the two. Nevertheless, similar to Ghavamnia and colleagues' study, this study also produced a single composite from the BALLI.

2.2.4 Language Learning Beliefs, Language Proficiency, and Achievement

Learner beliefs influence learners' behaviours, particularly choice of learning strategies and linguistic outcomes. While language learning beliefs are seen as central to language proficiency and learning outcomes, research in this regard has been limited to date. Among the few existing studies, results are not conclusive (Mori, 1999a; Park, 1995; Peacock, 1999; Samimy et al, 1997; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003).

Park's (1995) BALLI study investigated the relationships among Korean university EFL students' beliefs, strategy use, and L2 proficiency. Park discovered three belief and strategy variables were significantly associated with students' TOEFL scores. One was the belief variable

related to self-efficacy and social interaction, and two were strategy variables, namely independent/interactive strategies and metacognitive strategies. Those students who reported having confidence in learning English and willingness to speak to others in English were likely to use English actively, especially outside the classroom, and to monitor their progress in English. These behaviours were found to be correlated to improvement in L2 proficiency. Nonetheless, the effect of beliefs about self-efficacy and social interaction on TOEFL scores was moderate. Park reasoned that adult L2 acquisition may be the result of information-processing, suggesting that information was learnt through the processes of selection, acquisition, construction and integration.

In a study of 187 American university students differing in proficiency levels enrolled in a Japanese course, Mori (1999a) examined the relationship between students' epistemological beliefs (i.e., beliefs about learning in general) and beliefs about language learning (a questionnaire of his own) as well as the relationship between beliefs and L2 achievement. Results showed that strong beliefs in innate ability (i.e., the ability to learn is innate and cannot be improved by effort) and avoidance of ambiguity (i.e., the need for a single, clear-cut answer) were associated with lower achievement. Learners who believed that L2 learning was easy were associated with higher levels of achievement. Results also revealed that epistemological beliefs and beliefs about language learning were for the most part unrelated. In other words, learner beliefs about language learning seemed to be task- and domain-specific. While this study found the association between certain beliefs and the L2 achievement, it was nonetheless not addressed as to whether the lower or higher achievement may also be a result of negative or positive beliefs.

Samimy and colleague's BALLI study (1997) of American leaners of Chinese discovered those students who received higher grades tended to hold motivational beliefs combined with

integrative, instrumental, and intrinsic orientations. They also reported having confidence in their ability to learn foreign languages in addition to willingness to practice the target language with native speakers. These characteristics seemed to correspond to the characteristics of good language learners identified by Stern (1983).

Peacock's BALLI study (1999), to some extent, echoed Samimy et al.'s results in that it found a statistically significant association between certain learner beliefs and language proficiency. For example, students who believed that "Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules" were significantly less proficient than learners who had a different view of the nature of language learning. Peacock suggested that students who held this belief may focus on memorizing grammar rules, to the exclusion of teacher-directed tasks or students could become very dissatisfied with a teacher who did not emphasize grammar rules in, for example, classroom tasks and marking essays. In addition, students who thought that being allowed to make mistakes in the beginning meant they would find it hard to get rid of them later on were significantly less proficient than learners who thought otherwise; so were students who believed that they should not say anything in the foreign language until they could say it correctly. Peacock asserted that these results provided empirical evidence for Horwitz's argument that certain beliefs are detrimental to L2 learning and achievements.

However, conflicting results were also reported. Tanaka and Ellis (2003) reported a study of a 15-week study abroad program for Japanese university students that examined changes in the students' beliefs about language learning and in their English proficiency measured by TOEFL. Significant changes were found in the students' beliefs relating to analytic language learning, experiential language learning and self-efficacy/confidence during the study-abroad period. However, this study did not find statistically significant associations between Japanese

EFL university students' responses to the belief questionnaire and their TOEFL scores. The researchers' explanation for this result was that it took time for changes in learners' beliefs to affect their language proficiency and the period between the questionnaire administrations and the TOEFL test was not sufficiently long enough for any effect, if any, to be significant. Interestingly, Ellis (2008), after reviewing three studies in which the relationship between learner beliefs and language proficiency was found to be weak, noted that the fact that learners held a particular belief did not guarantee that they would act on it. He emphasized that very likely beliefs impacted learning indirectly by influencing the learning strategies learners employed.

Despite the reported mixed results on the relationships between beliefs and language proficiency, there seems to exist a general pattern. Certain language learning beliefs have impact on language proficiency. Specifically, positive beliefs are related to higher language proficiency and the reverse also holds true.

2.2.5 Characteristics of Good Language Learners

Extensive research has been carried out to investigate the characteristics of good language learners (e.g. Rubin & Thompson, 1982; Stern, 1983). Good language learners are found to exhibit a similar pattern in developing their ability that distinguish them from poor language learners and are delineated as successful users of language learning strategies (Nunan, 1999). Rubin and Thompson have summarized 14 characteristics of good language learners. Good language learners:

1. find their own way and take charge of their learning;

2. organize their study of the language and information about language;

3. are creative, developing a "feel" for the language by experimenting with its grammar and

words and sounds;

4. make their own opportunities for practicing the language inside and outside of the classroom;

5. learn to live with uncertainty by focusing on the meaning of what they can understand, by not getting flustered, and by continuing to talk or listen without understanding every word;

6. use mnemonics and other memory strategies to recall what has been learned;

7. make errors work for them and not against them;

8. use linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of their first language, in learning a second language;

9. use contextual cues to aid their comprehension of the language;

10. learn to make intelligent guesses;

11. learn chunks of language as wholes and formalized routines to help them perform beyond their competence;

12. learn certain tricks that help to keep conversations going;

13. learn certain production strategies to fill in gaps in their own competence; and

14. learn different styles of speech and writing and learn to vary their language according to the formality of the situation.

Stern has argued that good language learners employ four basic strategies, namely, active planning strategy; 'academic' learning strategy; social learning strategy; and affective learning strategy. While successful language learning has been explored, little is known as to what characterizes good Chinese language learners.

2.2.6 Belief and Cultural and Family Background

Beliefs are assumed to be influenced by cultural backgrounds. To evaluate the assumption, a number of researchers have devoted their efforts to examining the relationship between language learning beliefs and cultural backgrounds. The results, however, are mixed (Bernat & Lloyd, 2007; Fujiwara, 2011; Gardner, Masgoret & Tremblay, 1999; Horwitz, 1999; Tumposky, 1991; Siebert, 2003).

Gardner and colleagues' (1999) socio-educational model of second language acquisition posit that the socio-cultural milieu influenced learner beliefs about other cultures and languages. Gardner et al. contended that early experiences in a specific socio-cultural context played a role in the development of attitudes towards and motivation for L2 learning, and experiences in the home could similarly impact attitudes and motivation. Likewise, Ellis (2001) also highlighted the influence of cultural contexts on beliefs.

Tumposky's BALLI study (1991), which was reviewed earlier, considered the differences in beliefs between Soviet students and American students to be caused by culture. She asserted that Soviet Union was a multilingual society while the US was monolingual and thereby culture seemed to influence students' beliefs in relation to motivation and choice of learning strategies. For example, American students were not as confident as Soviet students in speaking the target language with native speakers. American students appeared to be uncomfortable practicing communicative skills with native speakers of the target language even though they enjoyed practicing with them.

For a better understanding of culture's influence on language learning beliefs, Horwitz (1999) reviewed seven representative BALLI studies of American foreign language learners and Turkish, Korean, and Taiwanese students learning English as a FL/L2 to identify similarities and differences across cultural groups. Her review suggested that the differences within the same

cultural group could be accounted for by the influence of other factors, such as age, stage of life, and stage of language learning. She further stated that while the differences between American foreign language learners and EFL learners might suggest both cultural and learning context differences, cultural differences were not clear-cut. Horwitz made this claim for the following reasons: the degree of similarity of response patterns among the various culture groups, the amount of random variation on each belief item, and the amount of variation to be considered for conclusions of cultural differences. Because no inferential statistics was applied in the analysis of these studies, despite several noteworthy group differences identified, it was premature to conclude that there were cultural differences in language learning beliefs (Horwitz).

2.2.7 Beliefs and Target Language

Existing research has examined whether students learning distinct target languages, particularly cognate verses non-cognate languages, differ in their beliefs about language learning (Diab, 2006; Horwitz, 1988; Rifkin, 2000). The results have been mixed.

In the BALLI study of the first semester university students from three language groups (German, French and Spanish), Horwitz (1988) discovered that the overall pattern of responses were fairly consistent across language groups. For example, the three groups are similar in their ratings of the difficulty level of the target language, perceptions of their foreign language aptitude, the importance of learning vocabulary, repetition and practice, error correction, excellent pronunciation, and guessing unknown words. While slight differences existed in percentages of responses to most items across groups, Horwitz attributed the differences to measurement error, differences in student populations, and the special nature of the target language. Hence Horwitz concluded that the similarity of beliefs among the three different target

language groups was an important finding. However, Horwitz did not provide evidence strong and clear enough to draw such a conclusion for the reason that the mitigating factors were not taken into account, such as the ethnic composition of the learner sample.

Horwitz's argument was challenged by other studies. Oh (1996) employed the BALLI to investigate the beliefs held by students of Japanese, a non-cognate foreign language. Participants in this study included 195 university students enrolled in first- and second- year Japanese classes. Results showed similarities of some patterns to those in other BALLI studies focused on cognate languages (Horwitz, 1985, 1988, Kern, 1995; Yang, 1999). In Oh's study, both groups highly valued learning Kanji (Chinese characters borrowed or adapted by Japanese) and having an excellent pronunciation, and overwhelmingly favoured repeating and practicing. However, Oh also found that the target language may influence learners' motivational beliefs as a result of the difficulty level of the language. For instance, both groups were highly motivated to learn Japanese and optimistic about better job opportunities learning Japanese would offer. This result was not comparable with that found in Horwitz's studies (1985, 1988). Oh thus hypothesized that beliefs about the difficulty of language learning and motivation were associated with the specific target language, and perceptions of the difficulty of the target language may affect learners' confidence level in speaking this language. The results from Oh's study suggested that some beliefs may be shared by language learners regardless of the target language while others were not, especially in relation to cognate versus non-cognate languages. Oh's proposal was echoed by Rifkin's study (2000) as well as Le's study (2004) of American learners of Chinese, a non-cognate language.

In a large-scale BALLI study of American learners of 10 foreign languages, Rifkin (2000) found that learners of commonly taught languages (French, German, and Spanish) did not

necessarily hold beliefs similar to those held by learners of less commonly taught languages (Arabic, Chinese, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Swahili, and Yoruba). Eight instances were identified where significant differences were present between the two groups of learners, which accounted for 24% of Horwitz's five logical belief dimensions. These differences were largely present on items concerning motivation, difficulty level of the target language, importance of culture, confidence in speaking the language well, and the difficulty of reading and writing the language. Only one item about communicative strategies revealed a significant difference. Learners of French, German and Spanish were less likely than their counterparts to approach native-speakers to practice the language, which was interpreted as that the former learners did not consider the language they were learning to carry the strategic or practical value.

It was worthwhile to note that in Rifkin's study, the combined grouping of all the less commonly taught languages was problematic in that they differ among themselves in some fundamental aspects. For instance, Russian and Italian are cognate languages whereas others are non-cognate. Further analyses showed that learners were well aware of the intellectual challenge they were taking on. Learners of Chinese, Arabic and Japanese tended to identify the language they were learning as very difficult, while Russian was rated as difficult and French, Italian and Spanish as moderately difficult or easy. The category of African languages (Swahili, and Yoruba) did not generate a clear response pattern. Learners of Chinese were more likely to believe in the importance of pronunciation and in the value of language laboratory practice, which was attributed to the learners' recognition of the difficulties posed by the system of tones in Chinese. Specific response patterns for learners of Russian and Italian were not reported. Realizing the problematic grouping, Rifkin noted that the individual language or the difficulty of the language,

rather than the language group (commonly or less commonly taught languages) may be more important in shaping learners' beliefs, a view also shared by Kuntz (1996) and Oh (1996).

Diab (2006) further documented the influence of the target language on beliefs about language learning. Diab administered a modified BALLI to 284 university students learning English or French as a foreign language in Lebanon to investigate variation in beliefs held by students learning different target languages. These students had attended either English-medium or French-medium schools. Results revealed significant differences in beliefs held by Lebanese students from the two different language-medium backgrounds. The differences pertained to beliefs about difficulty level of the target language, guessing unknown words, error correction, and motivation. Diab thus concluded that language background was an important source of differences in learner beliefs about language learning.

2.2.8 Beliefs and Years of Study

In a BALLI study of American learners of foreign languages, Rifkin (2000) detected significant discrepancies in beliefs for 11 items (accounting for 32% of the 34 BALLI items) between learners at the first-year level of instruction and their peers at intermediate/advanced level. For example, learners in a first-year language class were more likely than their peers at more advanced levels to believe that learning a foreign language was mostly a matter of translating from English, and that making mistakes in the beginning without being corrected would cause problems later on. Learners in first-year classes reported more disagreement than their peers with the statement relating to foreign language learning aptitude. Learners in first-year classes were less supportive than their peers of the strategy of guessing unknown words. As well, learners in first-year classes were less optimistic than their peers that learning to speak the

target language would help them land a good job.

Rifkin argued that some first-year language learners held beliefs not conducive to language learning, compared to their peers at higher level of instruction. He further reasoned that the fact that learners at more advanced levels did not share some of these counterproductive beliefs may suggest that instructors were successful in adjusting their students' counterproductive beliefs. Alternatively those learners in first-year classes who held such ineffective beliefs did not proceed to higher-level classes.

2.3 Studies on Teacher Beliefs about Language Learning

Teacher beliefs about how language should be learned are likely to affect their way of teaching and hence are deemed as key to understanding what motivates teachers' actions (Richardson, 1996). Teachers' beliefs about language learning that are not consistent with contemporary theories may negatively influence their effectiveness in the classroom. Teachers, for example, who believe that if beginning students are allowed to make mistakes in the target language, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on will tend to constantly correct students' errors, which will likely cause language learning anxiety. Therefore Holec (1987) argues that EFL pre-service teachers should undergo a process of "deconditioning" to rid themselves of preconceived misconceptions which would interfere with their language teaching (p. 27).

Existing studies focused on teachers' beliefs about language learning have addressed the issues related to the nature of beliefs, their contributing factors, classroom practice, and effective foreign language teacher behaviours and attitudes (Atlan, 2006; Bell; 2005; Borg, 2003; Horwitz, 1985; Johnson, 1994; Numrich, 1996; Peacock, 1999, 2001). Participants in these studies included pre-service teachers as well as in-service teachers.

2.3.1 Nature of Teacher Beliefs about Language Learning

Horwitz (1985) reported on the typical responses to the BALLI provided by pre-service foreign language teachers on a one-semester teaching methods course. Results showed that the prospective teachers generally agreed with the concept of foreign language aptitude and children's superiority of learning languages. They also generally endorsed a foreign language learning difficulty hierarchy, seeing some languages easier to learn than others. At the same time, they had a comprehensive view of language learning in that they did not see language learning as merely a matter of translation or learning grammar rules and vocabulary. While these pre-service teachers consistently endorsed the importance of listening, repeating, and practicing in the language lab, they also supported communication-focused approaches. Horwitz suggested that teachers who used the BALLI to examine their beliefs should consciously refer to this knowledge for decision making about language teaching. Interestingly, Kern's study (1995) of 12 in-service American university teachers of French yielded similar results with regard to the various aspects of beliefs examined.

However, results from Peacock's (2001) study were somewhat different from those from Horwitz's discussed above. Peacock reported on a longitudinal study that examined the changes in the beliefs about second language learning of 146 pre-service ESL teachers (98% Hong Kong Chinese, and 2% Westerners) over their 3-year program in a university in Hong Kong. While these prospective teachers might hold some erroneous notions about language learning at the beginning of the program, it was hoped that these beliefs would change as they eventually gained knowledge about TESL methodology. The BALLI was used for the investigation, followed by subsequent track of the supposedly developmental changes these trainees might undergo over their second and third years of study. Results revealed only a few statistically significant beliefs

changes over the 3-year program. For example, the trainees' agreement with the item "It's OK to guess if you don't know a word in the foreign language" increased from 70% in the first year to 90% by the third year. On the other hand, no statistical significant changes were observed for most items. Peacock found that a considerable number of the pre-service teachers agreed that the focus of language learning should be on vocabulary and grammar rules and that people who spoke more than one language well were very intelligent. Peacock further compared the trainees' beliefs in the three aspects with those of experienced regular ESL teachers using data from another of his studies (1999). Results showed that experienced ESL teachers were significantly less likely than the trainees to agree with the items related to the three key aspects mentioned above. Hence, Peacock pointed out that when preparing classroom tasks and materials, these trainees might over-emphasize the learning of vocabulary and grammar rules at the expense of other classroom tasks necessary for foreign language learning. What's more, the trainees who believed people speaking more than one language were intelligent might negatively affect their capacity to assess their future students' progress. Peacock thus cautioned that certain beliefs that pre-service teachers held while learning to teach may negatively affect their teaching, and consequently their future students' language learning. This finding that pre-service teachers' beliefs did not change over time suggested that teacher training should raise pre-service ESL teachers' awareness of their beliefs and help them reflect on the connections between their beliefs and their practices in attempts to eliminate erroneous beliefs.

Other BALLI studies produced results somewhat comparable to those by Peacock (Atlan, 2006; Tercanlioglu, 2005). Tercanlioglu investigated the language learning beliefs of 118 preservice teachers who were in different years of a four-year teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) teacher education programme at a Turkish University. Results showed that

these preservice teachers showed strong instrumental as well as integrative motivation. A great majority of the respondents endorsed statements indicative of a traditional, restrictive view of language learning. For example, many viewed vocabulary, grammar rules and translation from the target language to the native tongue as the main focus of language learning. Repetition was almost unanimously emphasized. In the meantime, most of the participants agreed that guessing unknown words in the foreign language was important and necessary. While the great majority disagreed with the statement "you shouldn't say anything in the foreign language until you can say it correctly", a considerable number of the prospective teachers supported timely error correction in the beginning stage, and a majority stressed the importance of excellent pronunciation. As well, similar to the participants in other BALLI studies, the prospective teachers overwhelmingly supported the concept of a language learning difficulty hierarchy and language aptitude, and children's superiority in learning languages.

Atlan (2006) administered the BALLI to a total of 248 foreign language major university students in Turkey who were to teachers of English, German, French, Japanese and Arabic. Results revealed a consistent overall pattern of responses across language groups, although most of the item alternatives drew slightly different percentages of responses. In general, Atlan's study (2005) yielded results similar to those from Tercanlioglu's study.

From the BALLI studies reviewed, it appeared that the pre-service language teachers typically held traditional beliefs with regard to learning of vocabulary and grammar rules and translation with the exception of the prospective teachers in the studies by Horwitz and Kern. At the same time, teachers were supportive of the idea of guessing unknown words and saying things even though what they said may not sound correct. Interestingly, the pre-service language teachers who held traditional beliefs concerning learning of vocabulary and grammar rules and

translation were receiving academic training in non-European countries (Atlan; Peacock;

Tercanlioglu) while those pre-service teachers who held a non-traditional view were being

trained in North America (Horwitz; Kern). It seems that the institutions or the countries where

the pre-service teachers received their training played a role in influencing beliefs. In other

aspects of language learning beliefs, the pre-service language teachers showed more or less

similar patterns across the BALLI studies conducted in different contexts. Given that little

research examined and compared beliefs of pre-service teachers from different countries and

speaking different native languages, it is next to impossible to review whether ethnicity or the

native language plays a role in shaping teachers' language learning beliefs.

2.3.2 Teacher Beliefs about Language Learning and Prior Experience

Teachers learn a lot about teaching through "apprenticeship of observation", a term that

Lortie (1975) used to refer to the impact of previous experience on the formation of teachers'

educational beliefs. Studies have revealed that teachers' prior experience affect their beliefs

about language learning (Horwitz, 1985; Johnson, 1994; Numrich, 1996; Richardson, 1996)

Horwitz (1985) noted that the preservice teachers' beliefs about language teaching

methods seemed to have been greatly affected by their previous language learning experiences.

Some studies (e.g. Johnson, 1994; Numrich, 1996) reported on how pre-service ESL teachers'

beliefs were influenced by prior experience and how such experience related to classroom

practice. Johnson (1994) indicated that pre-service teachers' instructional decisions during a

practicum were based on images of teachers, learning tasks, and classroom organization they

experienced while learning a second language. Numrich (1996) also found that teachers'

previous positive or negative experiences of language learning strategies influenced their

decision on whether to promote or to avoid specific instructional strategies (Richardson, 1996).

Similar findings were also reported by LeLoup (1995) in her longitudinal study of the evolution of beliefs of preservice language teachers, which combined a Likert-scale questionnaire with a more descriptive, open-ended questionnaire. LeLoup argued that preservice language teachers enrolled in FL methods' courses brought a set of preconceived language learning beliefs to the language teaching training programmes, and these beliefs were shaped by their "internalization of how they were taught and their perceptions of how they learned" (p. 137). Her study revealed that while some of the beliefs held by preservice teachers represented "accurate appraisals of the knowledge base in language learning", others reflected "FL learning myths" that needed to be informed and revised and replaced by L2 learning theory. A key finding of her study was that many of the beliefs held by the preservice teachers underwent revision by the end of their FL methods' course.

2.3.3 Characteristics of Effective Foreign Language Teachers

Given that perceived effective teaching behaviours are considered to be discipline specific, no consensus has been reached relating to which specific behaviours constitute effective teaching. But nonetheless, researchers have come to agreement on some characteristics of effective teaching in general, irrespective of disciplines. These include enthusiasm/expressiveness, clarity of explanation, and rapport/interaction (Murray, 1991). Some researchers have devoted efforts to exploration of effective foreign language teaching.

Bell (2005) has described effective foreign language teaching as "clear and enthusiastic teaching that provides learners with grammatical (syntactical and morphological), lexical, phonological, pragmatic, and sociocultural knowledge and interactive practice they need to

communicate successfully in the target language" (p. 260). Administering a questionnaire to 457 postsecondary foreign language teachers of French, German, and Spanish, Bell reported on a number of foreign language teacher behaviours and attitudes that are considered to be effective foreign language teaching. The questionnaire used in this study included items with attributes of effective foreign language teaching found to be effective classroom teaching behaviours and attitudes in the professional literature and considered to be worthy of evaluation by current foreign language teachers. Results from this study revealed strong majority agreement on items related to the Standards for Foreign language Learning; theories related to communicative approaches to foreign language learning; small group work; negotiation of meaning; strategies for foreign language learning; and teacher qualifications. Major uncertainty is present in the profession as to the place and role of error correction in foreign language learning and teaching; how and when focus on grammatical form should be implemented; and effects of learning differences among individual learners.

Brosh (1996) reported on the characteristics of effective language teachers (ELT) as perceived by 200 foreign language teachers of English, French, Arabic, and Hebrew as well as 406 students in the Israeli educational system. Various characteristics associated with the ELT included teachers' command of the target language; use of effective teaching methods; ability to organize, explain, and clarify; ability to arouse and sustain interest and motivation; fairness to students by showing neither favouritism nor prejudice; and availability to students. However, to date, there is no study that has explored the characteristics of effective teachers of Chinese.

2.4 Comparison of Learner Beliefs with Teacher Beliefs about Language Learning

A large body of literature has delved into student and teacher beliefs or perceptions of various aspects of language teaching and learning (Bell, 2005; Brown, 2009; Davis, 2003;

Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1999; Levine, 2003; Schulz, 1996, 2001; Wennerstrom & Heiser, 1992).

Some studies have focused on comparisons of learner and teacher language learning beliefs in

general using the BALLI (Davis; Horwitz; Kern); others have centered on comparisons of

learner and teacher beliefs about specific instructional methods and activities (Eslami-Rasekh &

Valizadeh, 2004; Matsuura, Chiba, & Hilderbrandt, 2001) and use of the target language in the

classroom (Levine). Most studies conducted in the area of students' and teachers' perceptions of

instructional activities and goals have shown a general lack of congruence between students and

teachers (Bell; Brown; Spratt, 1999).

2.4.1 Comparisons of Learner and Teacher Beliefs Using the BALLI

Kern (1995) examined the extent to which American foreign language students' beliefs

about language learning corresponded to those of their teachers. A total of 12 teachers and 288

university students of French participated in this study. Global analyses of group means and

percentages revealed overall similarities between student and teacher beliefs, whereas analyses

of individuals found large differences. Many of learner beliefs did not match those of learners'

respective teachers, which pertained mostly to excellent pronunciation, timely error correction

and the importance of learning grammar rules and vocabulary. Kern suggested that instructors'

practices might not be consistent with their own beliefs because the instructors had to stick to the

requirements of their program curriculum, and for this reason, instructors' teaching practices

might have a greater impact on students' beliefs than the instructors' actual beliefs. He further

noted that the degree of congruence between teachers' and students' beliefs might "be related or

depend on other factors such as instructors' personalities, teaching styles, level of experience,

grading practices, choices and implementation of classroom activities" (p.80). Kern cautioned

that mismatches between students' and teachers' beliefs might create or increase foreign language anxiety.

Peacock (1999) also identified mismatches of beliefs between learners and teachers. He investigated the language learning beliefs of 202 EFL students and 45 EFL teachers in a university in Hong Kong. Results indicated that learners placed a significantly greater emphasis on vocabulary, grammar rules, and excellent pronunciation than did their teachers, and had a stronger preference for practice in a language lab. Similarly, more students than teachers considered ability to speak more than one language well to be a sign of intelligence. Compared with teachers, students underestimated the difficulty of learning foreign languages. Given the mismatched learner and teacher beliefs, Peacock advised that awareness of such mismatches be raised and teacher interventions be introduced in efforts to eliminate learner beliefs that were detrimental to language learning.

Siebert (2003) found similar results in a study focused on language learning beliefs of 156 ESL students and 25 teachers in three intensive academic English language programs. While similarities existed (for example, both students and teachers agreed that some languages were easier to learn than others), a number of discrepancies were discovered between students and teachers. Compared with teachers, students underestimated the difficulty of the target language. Students also placed more emphasis than teachers on the traditional language learning approach, such as importance of learning vocabulary and grammar rules, and translation.

Using an expanded BALLI, Kuntz (2000) investigated beliefs about language learning of 71 American students of Arabic and their 17 teachers in study abroad programs. Results revealed differences in beliefs between learners and teachers in relation to the nature of language learning, strategies for learning, and the anticipated product. With regard to the nature of language

learning, students reported higher ratings of the difficulty level of Arabic and teachers showed

stronger disagreement with the statement regarding the structural similarity of Arabic and

English. Kuntz attributed the mismatches in beliefs to the specific nature of the Arabic language.

Interestingly, unlike many other studies, the students reported stronger disagreement with the

statements regarding the importance of grammar rules and translation than did teachers. Kuntz

asserted that the differences may be caused by the unique way of Arabic reading scripts and

teacher beliefs in the grammar rules providing standardization for Arabic due to the distinctive

structure of Arabic. The results from this study seemed to suggest that the unique nature of the

target language, Arabic, contributed to a great extent to the difference between students' and

teachers' beliefs.

2.4.2 Comparisons of Learner and Teacher Language Leaning Beliefs in Specific Aspects

In two separate exploratory studies conducted in the US and Columbia, Schulz (1996,

2001) examined and compared student and teacher beliefs about explicit grammar rules teaching

and error correction. Students were found to be considerably more favourable towards formal

grammar instruction and error correction than their teachers—a finding Schulz called

"perturbing" (1996, p. 348). Schulz (2001) emphasized that it was important for teachers to

explore their students' beliefs regarding those factors believed to enhance the learning of a new

language and strove to tackle potential conflicts between student beliefs and instructional

practices.

On the other hand, in a study of comparisons of beliefs about grammar teaching and

learning between Georgian learners and teachers of English, Polat (2009) reported that the

overwhelming majority of students and teachers shared a consensus in the importance of grammar in language learning and teaching. Furthermore, students with high positive beliefs about the role of grammar had higher grammar grades than those without. Polat asserted that matches in beliefs between students and teachers may have led to greater success in grammar learning and/or teaching because both students and teachers likely spent more time working on grammar. From the positive side, matched learner and teacher beliefs seemed to produce concerted efforts from teachers and students to work towards the same learning and teaching goal.

Using their own questionnaire, Matsuura and colleagues (2001) assessed university EFL student and teacher beliefs about learning and teaching communicative English in Japan. The results revealed some discrepancies between Japanese EFL learner and teacher beliefs. Students were discerned to prefer traditional styles of ELT pedagogy, including a teacher-centered approach (listening to lectures), learning isolated skills (pronunciation), and focusing on accuracy (Japanese translation). In contrast, the teachers' preferences appeared to have shifted towards a learner-centered approach, integrated skills, and a focus on fluency.

Similarly, Davis (2003) investigated 97 students and 18 teachers of English at a university in Macao with a view to identifying the similarities and differences between student and teacher beliefs about the nature and methods of language learning. Results revealed matched student and teacher beliefs in eight areas and mismatched beliefs in four areas. Students were found to believe more strongly than their teachers in (1) when a second language should be introduced in schools; (2) how teachers should present grammar rules; (3) when students' errors should be corrected; and (4) what kind of materials teachers should use to teach grammar.

Levine (2003) analyzed L2 students' and teachers' perceptions about target language use

in university L2 classes. Both students and teachers reported that students used the L2 less than their teachers and even less while interacting with other students than in their interaction with teachers. Furthermore, students who perceived higher levels of target language use in their classrooms reported lower levels of anxiety about target language use.

Bell (2005) employed an 80-item questionnaire to investigate teachers' and students' beliefs about concrete principles of L2 pedagogy and abstract SLA theory. Results demonstrated that only one out of the eight items concerning grammar instruction and two out of the eight items in relation to assessment showed a high level of matches.

Diab (2005), using think-aloud protocols and semi-structured interviews, explored ESL students' beliefs about the relative effectiveness of various types of feedback on students' writing and compared students' beliefs with those of their instructors. A university ESL instructor and two of her students participated in this case study. Findings showed that some of the instructors' beliefs seemed to conflict with her students'.

In a recent Italian study, Hawkey (2006) found that both students and teachers reported endorsement of the overall value of communicative methods in ESL classes. Discrepancies, however, were also discovered in beliefs about the importance of grammar and pair-work. Students showed more favour for grammar and teachers more for discussion and pair-work.

Brown (2009), in a more recent study that involved 1,600 university students from 83 intact 1st-and 2nd-year classes across nine languages and 49 language instructors, compared teachers' and students' ideals of effective teacher behaviors. The 24-item questionnaire touched upon several areas of FL pedagogy. Results indicated that students seemed to prefer a grammar-based approach, while their teachers favoured a more communicative classroom. Significant differences were found in target language use, error correction, and group work. Brown noted

that these discrepancies between teachers' and students' beliefs highlighted the need for FL

teachers to actively explore students' beliefs and to inform students of the rationale behind

certain instructional strategies.

2.4.3 Summary of Comparisons of Learner and Teacher Language Leaning Beliefs

The review of studies on comparisons of learner and teacher beliefs shows that overall

some beliefs are shared persistently by learners and teachers, while others reveal consistent inter-

group discrepancies, and still others are variable. A summarization of beliefs that are shared,

beliefs that show difference, and beliefs that are changeable is presented below.

Consistently shared beliefs are the ones in:

- Language learning difficulty hierarchy (e.g. some languages are easier to learn than others),
- Children's superiority in language learning (e.g. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language),
- Learnability (e.g. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language), and
- Importance of repetition and practice.

Beliefs that consistently show discrepancies are the ones in:

- Importance of vocabulary and grammar rules learning (Learners were more supportive),
- Importance of translation from the target language to mother tongue (Learners were more supportive),
- Timely error correction (Learners were more supportive),
- Excellent pronunciation (Learners were more supportive),
- Ability to speak more than one languages as a sign of intelligence (Learners were more supportive), and
- Estimated time required of learning a foreign language (Learners underestimated it).

Beliefs that show variability include those in:

- Communication-focused activities (e.g. guessing unknown words),
- Instrumental motivation (e.g. If I/students learn to speak the language well, they will have better job opportunities).
- Foreign language aptitude (e.g. Some people have a special ability for learning foreign

languages), and
- Positive impact of prior language learning experience on learning another foreign language (Teachers are more supportive).

2.5 Beliefs about Teaching and Learning of Chinese as a Foreign Language

Notwithstanding the emerging body of literature of teaching Chinese as a foreign language, language learning beliefs of students and teachers of Chinese have remained underexplored both in China and the world at large. Of the existing studies, including BALLI studies, a few have delved into learner beliefs, learning strategies and achievement (Cai & Sciban, 2010; Wang, Spencer, & Xing, 2009), while others have revolved around the comparisons of learners' and teachers' beliefs (Duff & Li, 2004; Samimy & Lee, 1997). The majority of these studies are exploratory and descriptive in nature.

Cai and Sciban (2010) examined the strategies that learners of Chinese utilized in listening comprehension, and the differences in the use of the strategies between Chinese-origin and non-Chinese-origin language learners. Given that language learning beliefs were not part of this study, I will not review it in this section.

Wang and colleagues (2009) investigated the effects of 2nd-year university students' metacognitive beliefs about their ability to learn a foreign language and/or Chinese well and their corresponding learning strategies. Results revealed that metacognitive beliefs were positively associated with students' achievement of learning Chinese. Successful students were found to have confidence in their abilities. Metacognitive strategies affected students' achievement. Students who exhibited self-regulation, such as monitoring their progress, persevering at tasks and setting realistic goals, were discovered to be more successful. Wang et al. claimed that non-native speakers of Chinese should be encouraged to manage their own Chinese learning process

in order to improve their metacognitive learning strategies, which would in turn enhance motivational aspects of self-efficacy.

Duff and Li (2004), using classroom observations, questionnaires, and interviews, reported on an exploratory study that addressed instructional issues encountered in teaching Chinese as a foreign language at the university level. Participants in the study included one teacher and her 19 students. Findings revealed the sometimes conflicting views held by teachers, researchers, students, and institutions with regard to instructional methods and types of classroom interaction, particularly in the context of form-focused instruction. Specifically, whereas the teacher was committed to providing opportunities for peer interaction and practice without providing excessive error correction, repetition, or modeling, students expressed strong views about having less peer interaction rather than more as well as more error correction, repetition, and modeling.

Among the existing studies on learning Chinese as a foreign language, two studies (Le, 2004; Samimy et al., 1997) are most pertinent to the present study because of the similarity of their research focus to the present study. Le's study investigated beliefs of students from different ethnic backgrounds, while Samimy et al.' study was related to comparisons of student beliefs with teacher beliefs

Le (2004) used a modified version of BALLI to assess and compare the beliefs about foreign language learning held by 133 American college students of Chinese from three different ethnic backgrounds enrolled in a study abroad summer language program in China. Le observed similarities as well as differences among the three ethnic groups in their language learning beliefs. While students in general agreed that some languages were easier than others, students of Chinese-origin were more likely to rate Chinese as a "very difficult" or "difficult language" than

non-Asian students and non-Chinese Asian students, even though Chinese-origin students had relatively higher levels of Chinese. Non-Chinese Asians showed more confidence in mastering Chinese than the other two groups.

With regard to beliefs about the most important part of learning a foreign language, an overwhelming majority of the participants either endorsed or were neutral about learning vocabulary and learning grammar rules. This result was comparable to that from Oh's study (1996) of American students learning Japanese, but higher than that found in Horwitz's (1988) and Kern's (1995) studies. It was likely because Chinese and Japanese are both non-cognate foreign languages, and their vocabulary and grammar rules differ from cognate European foreign languages. Given the differences, learners of Chinese and Japanese might place more focus on learning vocabulary and grammar rules than those who learn European foreign languages.

With regard to learning strategies, while the vast majority of students agreed with the importance of repeating and practicing and pronunciation, Chinese-origin students valued excellent pronunciation more than the other two groups. In the meantime, the most majority disagreed with the statement that "You shouldn't say anything in Chinese until you can say it correctly". The high disagreement rate was probably attributable to the fact that students were learning Chinese in China after one-term study in the US and had to speak Chinese to cope with life there or they had more opportunities to practice what they had learned with the native speakers. Overall, the majority of students endorsed the strategy of guessing unknown words in Chinese, and non-Asians had a much higher rate of agreement than the other two groups. The high overall agreement rate was probably because a) these students had already obtained basic knowledge of Chinese prior to participating in the study abroad program and therefore had the linguistic resource to tap into, and b) the study abroad environment offered them the opportunity

to have direct contact with real life language use, which in turn encouraged them to guess more often than students studying in their home country.

Regarding timely error correction, slightly less than half students overall reported disagreement. The high rate of disagreement, compared with other BALLI studies (Horwitz, 1988), was probably due to their specific learning context in China, where students may find themselves being able to get by in real life situations even if they made errors when speaking Chinese. Another overall pattern was that students reported strong integrative and instrumental motivation to learn Chinese. They associated learning Chinese with future career pursuits and making Chinese friends. Non-Asian students reported stronger instrumental motivation, compared to other groups. As well, non-Asian and non-Chinese Asian students reported stronger motivation concerning making Chinese friends. Le concluded that students' different ethnic language and cultural backgrounds likely played a key role in these differences.

Samimy and Lee (1997) employed a modified version of the BALLI to examine the extent to which learners' beliefs corresponded to teachers' beliefs about foreign language learning in general and Chinese language learning in particular. Participants included 10 instructors and 34 first-year Chinese students who were completing their first quarter (10 weeks) of a highly oral performance-oriented Chinese program at the Ohio State University. Results showed that there was an overall good fit between the students' and their instructors' beliefs, and there were only five items which differed significantly in students' and teachers' responses. The most majority of students and teachers endorsed the concept of language learning difficulty hierarchy and regarded Chinese as a very difficult or difficult language. Students, however, underestimated the time required to master Chinese, whereas teachers did not. More than half of students felt two years was long enough to be able to speak Chinese well, while two thirds of the

teachers felt five to ten years or more was necessary. In terms of learning strategy, the students appeared more supportive of the traditional approache to learning foreign languages than did the teachers. Half of the students agreed with the statements concerning the priority of grammar rules and vocabulary in language learning, whereas only about 10% to 20% of teachers endorsed the statements. Over one third of students thought that the most important part of learning Chinese was a matter of translation from English to Chinese, while no teachers agreed.

Furthermore, more students than teachers reported support for excellent pronunciation. More students (about 60%) than teachers (40%) reported agreement with the idea of timely error correction. The responses from students and teachers seemed to be well in line with the basic tenants of the audio-lingual approach that emphasizes accuracy and repetition. With the statement regarding guessing unknown words, all teachers agreed, while 65% of students did so. A great majority of both teachers and students disagreed with the statement "You shouldn't say anything in Chinese until you can say it correctly". Furthermore, students were highly motivated to learn Chinese. Nearly all students reported that they would like to learn Chinese in order to better understand Chinese native speakers, while 85% teachers agreed. In addition, Samimy et al. examined the relationship between students' beliefs and their performance in Chinese. The students who received higher grades tended to hold beliefs characterized by high motivation. Given the small sample size, however, no conclusion should be made and care should be taken in interpreting the results.

2.6 Conclusion of Chapter 2

In this chapter, I conducted a literature review of the studies on learner and teacher beliefs about language learning, aiming to present a panoramic view of the research field, with a specific focus on the studies most pertinent to the present study. It is the hope that the literature review

can situate the present study in the broader field, while providing a focus on what issues the present study intends to address and what purposes it seeks to achieve.

The main features uncovered in this review are summarized below.

2.6.1 Patterns of the target language in shaping learner beliefs about language learning

Differences in language learning beliefs between learners of cognate languages (English, German, French, and Spanish) and non-cognate languages (Chinese and Japanese) included:

- difficulty level of the target language, and
- motivation for learning the target language.

Learners of non-cognate languages tended to rate the target language as being very difficult or difficult, while learners of cognate languages did not. Learners of non-cognate languages were highly motivated to learn the target language, whereas their counterparts were not.

Shared language learning beliefs between the two learner groups included agreement with:

- importance of vocabulary and grammar rules,
- importance of excellent pronunciation, repetition and practice,
- timely error correction,
- language learning difficulty hierarchy, and
- foreign language aptitude

The uncertain pattern of beliefs between the two groups included:

- beliefs about guessing unknown words in the target language

2.6.2 Patterns of culture in shaping learner beliefs about language learning

Le's study (2004) is especially relevant to the present study in that his study examined the language learning beliefs held by three groups of learners of Chinese (non-Asian, Chinese-origin and non-Chinese Asian). The main differences among the groups found in Le's study included:

Motivation

- Non-Asian students reported stronger instrumental motivation, compared to other groups
- Non-Asian and non-Chinese Asian students reported stronger motivation for making Chinese friends.

Learning strategy

- Chinese-origin students valued excellent pronunciation more than the other two groups.
- Non-Asians reported a higher rate of agreement with guessing unknown words in Chinese than the other two groups.
- Non-Asians enjoyed practicing Chinese with Chinese people more than the other two groups.

Difficulty of language learning

- Students of Chinese-origin were more likely to rate Chinese as a "very difficult" or "difficult language" than non-Asian students and non-Chinese Asian student

Similarities between the three learner groups were also present, which covered the following.

- All three groups tended to believe in language learning difficulty hierarchy and existence of foreign language aptitude, and necessity of culture in learning the target language.
- All three groups tended to disagree with the belief in timely error correction.
- All three groups tended to disagree with the statement that "You shouldn't say anything in Chinese until you can say it correctly"

It is worth mentioning that the respondents in Le's study were participants in a study abroad (China) program and they had previously learned some Chinese prior to attending this program. Therefore it remains unknown as to whether the exhibited patterns would hold true for beginning learners of Chinese learning the language in North America in the present study.

2.6.3 Comparisons between learner and teacher beliefs about language learning

The most related research to the present study is the BALLI study by Samimy and Lee (1997) that compared language learning beliefs held by American college students learning elementary Chinese and their teachers of Chinese. Results revealed an overall fit between learner and teacher beliefs in most aspects, but significant discrepancies existed in a few aspects.

The primary mismatched beliefs included those in:

- Excellent pronunciation (Leaners were more supportive)
- Importance of grammar rules (Learners were more supportive)
- Importance of translation from the target language to the native language (Learners were more supportive)
- Guessing unknown words in Chinese (Teachers were more supportive)
- Self-perceived ability to learn foreign languages (Teachers were more optimistic)

2.6.4 Structural dimensions of language learning beliefs

Various BALLI studies have identified belief dimensions more or less similar to as well as different from Horwitz's five logical categories (1988). Some survey items and factors were relatively stable and grouped in a more consistent fashion than others. They included:

Motivational beliefs
- I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak the target language very well.
- I would like to learn the target language so that I can get to know the people better.
- If I learn the target language well, it will help me to get a good job.

Beliefs in formal language learning approach
- Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.
- Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning lots of new vocabulary.
- Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from my native language.

Beliefs about communicative activities
- It's okay to guess if you don't know a word in the target language.
- If beginning students are permitted to make errors in the target language, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.
- You shouldn't say anything in the target language until you can say it correctly.

Other factors and survey items were relatively less stable, thereby variable across studies. The variation of item grouping suggested that students may interpret the BALLI items differently

due to the target language being learned, their proficiency level, and personal language learning experience, and/or cultural backgrounds.

2.6.5 Critique of BALLI Studies

The BALLI developed by Horwitz (1985, 1988) is a widely used instrument in measuring learner and teacher beliefs about language learning. In creating the BALLI, despite the use of free-recalls and focus groups to ensure the content validity of this instrument, Horwitz did not employ any statistical method to ensure the conceptual soundness of belief dimensions and test the reliability of this instrument. Numerous subsequent researchers who conducted BALLI studies (Le, 2004; Nikitina & Furuoka, 2006; Truitt, 1995; Yang, 1999) undertook to factor analyze this instrument for structural belief dimensions, and overall they reported satisfactory or acceptable results relating to the validity and reliability alphas of this instrument. In spite of these researchers' efforts, their studies were all exploratory in that the identified dimensions were not subjected to statistical confirmation testing, and as such, the identified dimensions were not statistically verified and confirmed, needing further examination. In addition, some researchers failed to report reliability alphas in their BALLI studies (e.g. Oh, 1995; Park, 1995), as a result of which, the reliability of the BALLI used in these studies remains unknown. As well, the criteria used to retain survey items when factor analyzing the BALLI in one study (Fujiwara, 2011) were problematic, because a couple of items with loadings as low as below 0.30 were still retained, thus leaving the results from this study open to criticism. All in all, Horwitz's BALLI has an overall acceptable content validity because her BALLI dimensions correspond to the theoretical framework in Chapter 1. As well, most BALLI studies using exploratory factor analysis reported

on acceptable reliability alphas and content validity, and therefore, the BALLI should be trusted to measure what it claims.

Additionally, the most majority of BALLI studies are descriptive in nature in that they only employ descriptive statistics to describe the data and account for learner and/or teacher beliefs. Studies of this nature lack statistical explanatory power to make inferences to more general conditions. Hence, no conclusions should be drawn on learners' and teachers' language learning beliefs and comparisons of beliefs between learner groups that can extend beyond the sample data. Researchers, therefore, should not make conclusive claims regarding the differences among groups, if any, because of lack of valid and reliable statistical evidence to support such claims.

What's more, when comparisons are conducted between different learner groups, particularly learners learning different foreign languages, the grouping of learners should be based on the cognate versus non-cognate nature of the target language they learn rather than on commonly taught versus non-commonly taught languages. Very likely, learners may employ different learning strategies to cope with cognate and non-cognate languages that are fundamentally different. However, in a couple of studies (e.g., Rifkin, 2000), the grouping of learners was based on commonly taught and less commonly taught languages, thus calling the results from these two learner group (learning commonly taught versus less commonly taught languages) comparisons into questions.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology and Methods

This chapter provides a description of the methodology employed in the present study. An overview of the design of the study is provided, followed by a detailed delineation of the participants, instruments used, data collection and data analysis procedures. A summary is provided toward the end of the chapter.

3.1 Restatement of Research Questions

For the convenience of readers, the research questions are reiterated below:

1. What dimensions underlie beliefs of North American post-secondary beginning learners of Chinese about foreign language learning?

2. What beliefs do beginning learners of Chinese hold about foreign language learning, and how do language learning beliefs of beginning learners of Chinese from different ethnic backgrounds compare with one another?

3. What beliefs do teachers of Chinese hold about foreign language learning?

4. How do teachers' beliefs compare with learners' beliefs, and how do teachers' beliefs compare with beliefs of learners from different ethnic backgrounds respectively?

5. Is there a causal model that can account for the relationships between beginning learner belief dimensions about language learning?

3.2 Overview of the Design

3.2.1 Mixed Methods Design

The present study was designed to utilize mixed-methods research. As mixed methods research has been applied widely, various definitions or stances have been proposed by

researchers. Some researchers stress the philosophical assumptions (e.g., Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), whereas some emphasize the techniques or methods of collecting and analyzing data through a mixed method approach (e.g., Creswell, 2003; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004) and still some highlight both philosophical assumptions and methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). For the purpose of the present study, I adopt the pragmatic stance advanced by Creswell (2003) (see also Johnson et al. 2004),

> [A] mixed-methods approach is one in which the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds (e.g., consequence oriented, problem-centered, and pluralistic). It employs strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems. The data collection also involves gathering both numeric information (e.g., on instruments) as well as text information (e.g., on interviews) so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information. (Creswell, pp. 12-19)

Mixed-method research is inclusive, pluralistic, and complementary, thereby advantageous in several aspects (Johnson et al., 2004). As argued by many researchers, mixed methods research can tap into the strengths of each method and delve into the depth or expand the breath of research to offset the weaknesses of either method alone, thus providing more comprehensive evidence for research questions (Creswell, 2003; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham 1989; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Creswell (2002, 2003) delineated six somewhat overlapping mixed methods research designs, based on the sequence of two types of data collection (sequentially or concurrently), the weight given to one kind of data or another, the timing of data mixing, and the extent to which a theoretical perspective (e.g., post-positivism, constructivism) is implemented to guide the research design. Among the six mixed methods designs, the sequential explanatory design is the most popular one in educational research. In this design, quantitative data are gathered and analyzed first, which represents a major aspect of the study, followed by the secondary qualitative data collection and analyses, which comprises a small component of the study. In

other words, priority is placed on quantitative data collection and analysis, while qualitative data

collection and analysis play a supportive role in that qualitative data are used to refine and

explain the results from the quantitative data. Accordingly, two types of data can or do not have

to converge or integrate, as indicated by Creswell (2002). This design is focused on explaining

relationships among variables and may or may not be guided by a particular theoretical

perspective.

3.2.2 Rationale for Choosing the Sequential Explanatory Design

A sequential explanatory design was selected in the present study for its advantages and

popularity in education research. According to Creswell (2003), the purpose of this approach is

typically to use qualitative results to assist in explaining and interpreting the findings of a

primarily quantitative study. It is grounded on the proposition that the quantitative data and

results generate a general picture of the research problem of interest, and qualitative data are

intended to provide an in-depth analysis to refine the general picture in attempts to probe key

results in more detail. This design is advantageous in that researchers as well as readers can

clearly identify quantitative and qualitative parts. Creswell (2002) emphasizes that this design

also "captures the best of both quantitative and qualitative data –to obtain quantitative results

from a population in the first phase, and then refine or elaborate on these findings through in-

depth qualitative exploration in the second phase" (p.567).

With that said, for the present study, selection of the sequential explanatory design allows

for an examination of learner and teacher language learning beliefs first via surveys and then via

interviews. Such a design as strategy of inquiry also enables me to situate numbers from surveys

in the specific contexts and words of participants, thus adding meaning to numbers. The two

forms of data complement each other in the sense that numbers from surveys offer precision whereas words from interviews pursue elaboration and clarification of the survey results and enable static numbers to be alive and meaningful. Research implemented in such a fashion adds insights that might otherwise be missed in one single method design.

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┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐
│ Quantitative │ ───▶ │ Quantitative │ ───▶ │ Formulation  │
│    Data      │      │    Data      │      │     of       │
│  Collection  │      │   Analysis   │      │  Interview   │
│              │      │              │      │  Questions   │
└──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘
                                                    │
                                                    ▼
┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐
│ Quantitative │ ◀─── │  Qualitative │ ◀─── │ Qualitative  │
│    Result    │      │    Data      │      │    Data      │
│  Reporting   │      │   Analysis   │      │  Collection  │
└──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘
       │                     ╲
       ▼                      ╲
┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Qualitative  │ ───▶ │ Integration & Interpretation of      │
│    Result    │      │ Results from Two Types of Data        │
│  Reporting   │      │                                       │
└──────────────┘      └──────────────────────────────────────┘
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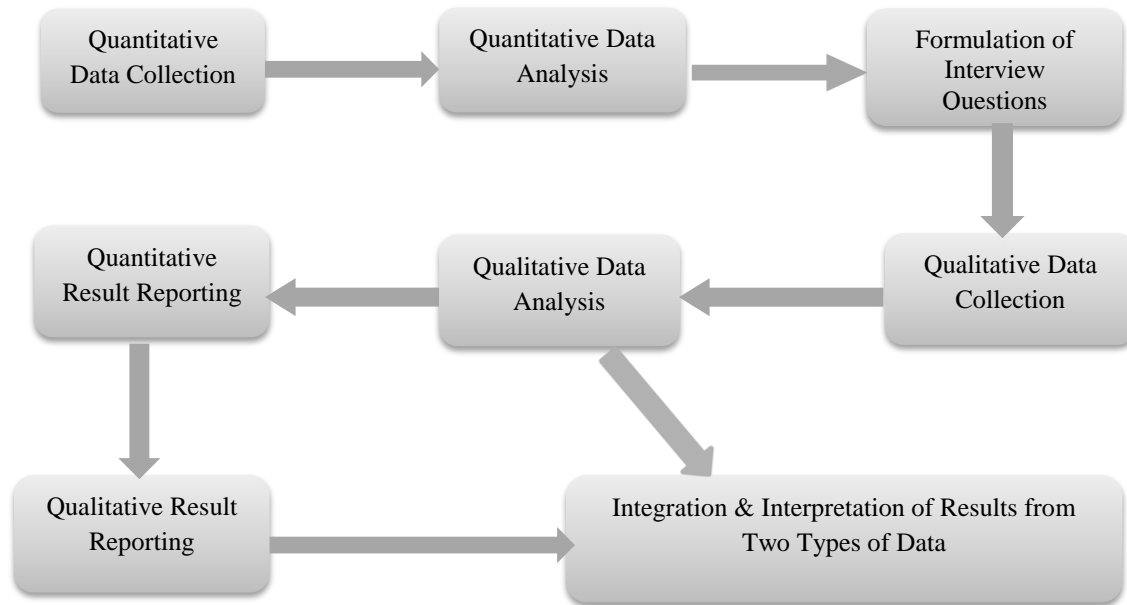
Figure 1. Flow Chart of Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting

Figure 1 illustrates the organization of data collection, analysis and reporting. As can be seen, data collection and analysis in the present study underwent five major sequential phases. The first phase began by quantitative data collection. Upon completion of the participants' responses, the second phase was embarked on by performing quantitative data analyses in attempts to formulate targeted semi-structured interview questions for the next phase of qualitative data collection. During the fourth phase, interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data, followed by the fifth phase of qualitative data analysis. Result reporting went through three phases. The first phase of quantitative result reporting began upon completion of

qualitative data analysis, followed by the second phase of qualitative result reporting. The third phase of reporting involved integration and interpretation of results from two types of data.

3.3 Participants

Participants consisted of teachers of Chinese and beginning learners of Chinese at universities and colleges in both Canada and the United States. Participants' detailed information is provided below.

3.3.1 Learner Participants

The learner sample was composed of a total of 226 learners studying first level Chinese at 26 post-secondary educational institutions in North America: 12 in Canada and 14 in the US. Although 226 learners filled out the survey, eight of them did not complete the survey and their data were disposed of, thus leaving a learner sample of 218. It was not possible to calculate the survey response rate of the learners, because the learner participants were recruited by the teachers of Chinese who agreed to send the survey link to the students they were teaching. It was unlikely to track down who actually send out the link and how many learners received the link.

3.3.1.1 Age, Gender, Ethnic Background, Native Language, Educational Background, Major, and Geographic Location

Among the 218 students who completed the online survey, their age ranged from 17 to 72, with 78.7% of the respondents aged 18 to 22. The median age was 19, and students aged 19 accounted for 44.5%. A total of 56.2% respondents are female and 43.8% male. The ethnic composition included 127[2] students of non-Asian backgrounds (64%), 47 Chinese-origin (24%)[3],

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[2] The reported total number of students here did not add up to 218, because 18 students did not indicate their ethnic background.

and 26 non-Chinese Asian backgrounds (13%). Non-Asian students consisted of White (n=116, 91%), Hispanic (n=6, 5%), and African Americans (n=5, 4%). Chinese-origin students included ethnically Chinese from any countries and areas. Non-Chinese Asians were comprised of students from Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asian countries.

With respect to native language, English was the first language of 75.8% of the respondents, followed by other languages, including mostly Spanish (11.7%), Cantonese (5.2%), Japanese (2.6%), Korean (2.5%), Vietnamese (1.8%), and Mandarin (0.5%). All those who reported being native speakers of Mandarin or Cantonese indicated that they were born outside of Canada or the United States of America (USA) and immigrated with their parents to North America at a young age.

Over two out of three respondents (68.3%) were first- or second-year students, while 23.4% were in their third- or forth-year and 8.3% were graduate students. Half of the respondents (50.3%) majored in humanities and social science, with 21.2% and 20.2% being in natural science and business majors respectively. The rest of the respondents (8.3%) had not decided which major to choose. As for geographic location, the respondents from the USA accounted for 56.2%, and the rest were from Canada, accounting for 43.8%.

3.3.1.2 Prior Chinese Language and Other Foreign Language Learning Experience

As illustrated in Table 1, the majority of students (78.1%) reported no previous exposure to the Chinese language prior to taking the first-level Chinese course. A small proportion (21.6%) indicated that they had prior exposure to Chinese dialects. Slightly over three in four (76.5%) noted no immediate family members speaking Chinese. But nonetheless, the vast majority (81.1%) had experience of learning other languages such as French, Spanish, and German

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[3] It is possible that Chinese-origin students who have English as their native language behave differently from those who have Mandarin or Cantonese as their native language. But I did not have a large enough sample size to analyze them separately. So they were pooled together.

(exclusive of English and Chinese). More than one third (36.7%) declared having learned other Asian languages, such as Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese.

Table 1

Students' Foreign Language Learning Experience

Experience of language learning	Yes	No
Exposure to Chinese or Chinese dialects	21.9%	78.1%
Immediate family influence on exposure to Chinese (parents, siblings, grandparents, spouse)	23.4%	76.5%
Experience of learning other languages (exclusive of English or Chinese)	81.1%	18.9%
Experience of learning other Asian Languages	36.7%	63.3%

3.3.1.3 Enjoyment of Language Learning, Hours of Studying Chinese, and Expectation to Continuity of Learning Chinese

Students virtually unanimously (97.2%) indicated that they enjoyed language learning. Almost half (49.2%) reported spending less than 5 hours per week studying Chinese outside of class, and a similar proportion (47.2%) enunciated spending 5-10 hours per week. A small group of students (3.6%) reported studying Chinese 11-15 hours per week. Nearly three quarters (74.1%) reportedly desired to continue to learn Chinese, while 16.8% were not sure and 9.1% said "no".

3.3.1.4 Reasons for Learning Chinese

Students were offered ten options regarding reasons for learning Chinese, and were free to choose all reasons that may apply to them. As shown in Table 2, the top five self-reported reasons for students overall included "Interest in the Chinese language" (88%) "Interest in Chinese culture" (75%), "Need for travel" (53%), "Need for my future career goal" (49%), and "Make Chinese friends" (41%).

Data showed that the three ethnic groups placed a different emphasis on reasons for learning Chinese. One common pattern is that all students, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds,

reported "interest in the language" as the top one reason. For non-Asian students, the next top

four reasons were identical to those reported by students overall. In other words, the top five

reasons for students overall were also representative of non-Asian students. For students of

Chinese-origin, "Influenced by parents or other family members" replaced "Make Chinese

friends" as one of the top five reasons. However, for non-Chinese Asians, "Make Chinese friends"

was the second top reason. "Interest in culture" and "Need for travel" stood side by side as the

third top reason, followed by "Need for my future career goal" and "Influenced by friends or

relatives".

Table 2

Students' Self-reported Reasons for Learning Chinese

Reasons for learning Chinese	Students			
	Overall	Non-Asian	Chinese-origin	Non-Chinese Asian
Interest in the language	88.0%	89.9%	89.4%	76.9%
Interest in culture	75.0%	82.4%	72.3%	46.2%
Need for travel	53.1%	56.3%	48.9%	46.2%
Need for my future career goal	49.0%	51.3%	46.8%	42.3%
Make Chinese friends	40.6%	41.2%	34.0%	50.0%
Influenced by friends or relatives.	26.6%	16.0%	44.7%	42.3%
Influenced by parents or other family members	25.5%	11.8%	63.8%	19.2%
Required by major	16.1%	17.6%	10.6%	19.2%
Required to take an elective to graduate	10.4%	9.2%	10.6%	15.4%
Other:	0.5%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%

3.3.2 Teacher Participants

The teacher sample consisted of a total of 62 teachers of Chinese who were teaching

elementary Chinese at the time of the survey or had taught first-level Chinese previously. The

sample reflected 35 post-secondary institutions: 17 in Canada and 18 in the US. A total of 256

recruitment emails were sent out to the teachers of Chinese who met this criterion, out of whom

67 responded, indicating an interest in participating in the online survey, thus a response rate of 26%. It was found that five teachers did not complete the survey and their data were therefore discarded, leaving a teacher sample of 62.

3.3.2.1 Gender, Native Language, Educational Background, and Geographic Location

Among the 62 teachers who completed the online survey, 78.6% reported being female and 21.4% being male. As high as 91% were of Chinese origin, among whom 96% were born in China, Taiwan or Hong Kong, 2% in USA and 2% in Malaysia. They all reported Mandarin Chinese or Chinese dialects as their native language. A small proportion (9%) reported being Caucasian and their native language is English.

With regard to educational background, 44.6% reported holding a PhD degree and 55.4% a Master's degree. An overwhelming majority of them (90.9%) reportedly obtained their degree in western countries, such as Canada, USA, England, Finland, Australia, and New Zealand, while 9.1% obtained their degree in China. Approximately half of them (49.1%) completed specialized training or certification for teaching a second/foreign language. Nearly seven in ten respondents (67.9%) reported being full-time instructors, teaching professors or associate professors, 26.4% being sessional instructors, and 5.7% being teaching assistants.

3.3.2.2 Experience in Teaching Chinese and Other Languages

The reported years of teaching Chinese as a foreign language in North America varied from less than 1 year to more than 10 years. Slightly less than half of the respondents (44.6%) reported having taught Chinese for more than 10 years at the time of survey, followed by 3-4 years (21.4%), 5-10 years (19.6%), 1-2 years (10.7%) and less than 1 year (3.6%). When asked about whether they had taught Chinese outside of North America, about seven in ten (69.8%)

indicated "no". Respondents who reported such experience (30.2%) noted having taught Chinese mostly in mainland China, with a few reporting Taiwan or Hong Kong. Fifty-five percent declared having taught other languages, such as English and Japanese.

3.3.2.3 Language Learning Experience Other Than English and Chinese

A majority of teachers (82.1%) reported having studied other languages in addition to English and Chinese, including Japanese, French, German, Russian, Spanish, Latin and others. Conversely, 17.9% indicated no foreign language learning experience.

3.4 Instruments

Four survey instruments were used in this study. The Beliefs About Language Learning Inventories (BALLI, Horwitz, 1983, 1985, 1988) came in two versions -- one for learners (Appendix A), and a slightly different version for teachers (Appendix B). Similarly, the Individual Background Information Questionnaires (IBIQ) was slightly different for learners and teachers respectively (Appendices C & D). The BALLI inventories were adapted to the context of learning Chinese in North America.

The BALLI for learners contained 34 items that included the 27 items in the teacher version. Finally, 14 additional items were added to the two BALLI inventories. They addressed specific features and existing issues of Chinese learning and teaching, with Le's BALLI Plus as a reference (2004).

3.4.1 The Beliefs About Language Learning (BALLI)

This popular instrument was developed by Horwitz, (1985, 1987) to assess learner and teacher opinions on a variety of issues and controversies surrounding language learning. Using logic rather than statistical analysis, Horwitz categorized beliefs into five groups for assessment:

(1) Foreign language aptitude; (2) The difficulty of language learning; (3) The nature of language learning; (4) Learning and communication strategies; (5) Motivations and expectation. The BALLI has been used extensively to examine the nature of learner beliefs, their relationship to language learning strategies, and to determine where teacher and learner beliefs might be in conflict (Altlan, 2006; Ariogul, Unal, & Onursal, 2009; Bernat, 2006, 2007; Bernat & Lloyd, 2007; Diab, 2006; Horwitz, 1985; Le, 2004; Kern, 1995; Mattheoudakis, 2007; Nikitina & Furuoka, 2006; Peacock, 1999, 2001; Rifkin, 2000; Samimy & Lee, 1997; Siebert, 2003; Tercanlioglu, 2005; Wong, 2010; Yang, 1999). Therefore, the BALLI is instrumental in determining popular beliefs of learners and teachers about language learning and teaching as well as in identifying minority groups with differing opinions (Hortwiz, 1988).

Slightly modified versions of BALLI were used in this study, which were based on the ESL version of the BALLI (Hortwiz, 1987) and the version for foreign language teachers (Horwitz, 1985). Some of the original items were technically modified for the learning of Chinese situation. For example, the word "language" in the original BALLI item ("If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take them to speak the language very well") was changed into Chinese to contextualize this statement given the dissimilarities of languages.

With regard to the internal validity (reliability alphas) of the BALLI, researchers (e.g., Le, 2004; Nikitina & Furuoka, 2006; Truitt, 1995; Yang, 1999) factor analyzed this instrument and reported on overall satisfactory or acceptable reliability alphas (see Chapter 2). The BALLI used in the present study was also subjected to exploratory factor analysis for its structural dimensions and calculation of their respective Cronbach's alphas. The results showed an overall acceptance

of BALLI's internal validity, with the reliability alphas of the four dimensions identified being .60, .62, .50 and .48.

The additional 14 items in the BALLI Plus were especially created in consideration of the characteristics of the Chinese language, the situation of learning Chinese in North America, and review of literature on teaching Chinese as a foreign language. The BALLI Plus was therefore intended to examine the learner beliefs about specific features of Chinese language learning and teaching: specifically, what aspect of Chinese is perceived to be the most difficult to learn, when Chinese characters should be introduced into teaching, and what is it that sustains learners' motivation to continue learning Chinese. For this instrument, Le's BALLI Plus (2004) was used as a reference, which comprised 13 items designed for university students who studied Chinese in a summer program in China. As a result, I selected five items for adaptation while creating nine items of my own. For example, the item in Le's study "I believe that if I can recognize the meaning of the Chinese characters, it is not important to be able to write the Chinese characters" was adapted and modified into "as long as I can recognize the meaning of the Chinese characters, it does not matter very much whether I can write them". I created the remaining nine items of BALLI Plus.

For the purpose of content validity of BALLI Plus, after the development of the 14 items, I sent them to six post-secondary senior professors or instructors of Chinese in North America for their feedback. They all confirmed the content validity of BALLI Plus with regard to its reflection of the real world of teaching Chinese as a foreign language at the post-secondary level. Further, through exploratory factor analysis and calculation of Cronbach's alpha, the BALLI Plus was observed to have acceptable internal validity, with the reliability alphas of the two identified belief dimensions being .63 and .62 respectively.

As noted by Hortwiz (1988), the BALLI was not intended to generate a single composite score from the BALLI items because of the various belief dimensions (five logical dimensions) that constituted the BALLI, and the same can be said of the BALLI Plus. As such, the overall internal consistency of the BALLI as well as the BALLI Plus inventories was not calculated.

3.4.2 Individual Background Information Questionnaires

Two detailed individual background information questionnaires were utilized to gather general information about the participants (Appendices C & D). In addition to basic demographic information, the questionnaires asked about their native language, previous foreign language learning experience/teaching experience, influence of family members and friends on learning Chinese, reasons for learning Chinese, and their educational background.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

To collect data, this study relied on two online two-part belief-and-background surveys (one for student participants and the other for teacher participants) and 12 interviews. Data collection, beginning in August 2010 and ending in November 2011, went through several steps. First, upon the publication of the teacher survey in August 2010 on LimeSurvey, a web survey program, I sent the link to the survey to the teachers of Chinese who, in their reply to my recruitment email, expressed willingness to participate in my study. The last item of the online survey invited the teachers of Chinese to volunteer for interviews to be conducted either face-to-face or online using Skype or MSN. After I received the message from the teachers that expressed interest in the interview and data analyses were completed, I made contact with them via email and arranged for interview time and mode or location.

Second, the student survey was published on LimeSurvey in September. In October, one month after students had embarked on their Chinese study and gained some knowledge about Chinese, I sent the survey link to the teachers of Chinese who, in their reply to my recruitment email, had agreed to send the link to their students while encouraging them to participate in my study. Similarly, the last item of the student survey invited students to provide their contact information if they are interested in a voluntary interview to be conducted either face-to-face or via Skype or MSN. Upon completion of data collection from the students, I conducted data analyses. Using the results, I formulated the interview questions, while at the same time contacting participants that expressed interest in an interview. Arrangements were set up concerning interview time, location, and mode. As well, upon the completion of collection of the online surveys, I downloaded all the data from the server into my personal computer while at the same time ensuring that I received confirmation from the server that the copy of data was deleted from the server.

Interviews with teacher and student participants were operated after data analyses on teacher and student participants were carried out and targeted interview questions composed. The duration of interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes each. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in offices or study rooms booked for this particular purpose, if the interviewees resided in the same city as the researcher. On the other hand, depending on the availability to the interviewees, either Skype or MSN interviews was chosen as the mode, if the interviewees resided in different cities from where the researcher lived. All interviews were either audiotaped with a digital recorder or saved as text if the interview was conducted using instant text messaging, with the exception of one student interviewee. The audiotaped interview documents were then transferred from the recorder into my personal computer. The only one student who

lived in the eastern coast of North America emailed me her written responses to the interview questions I sent to her via email after a couple of times' failure in our trying to connect via Skype.

3.6 Data Analysis

In sequential explanatory design, data analysis typically is conducted independently for both quantitative and qualitative phases (Caracelli & Greene, 1993). The analytic procedures for the integration of the two types of data were carried out through typology development. Typology development means that the analysis of one data type generates a typology that is then employed as a framework applied in analyzing the contrasting data type (Caracelli & Greene). As suggested by Caracelli and Greene, the specific strategies include conducting factor analysis of quantitative data in order to develop a set of conceptual dimensions/factors as a typology and then incorporate this typology into the categorical analysis of qualitative data, such as category development and coding.

For the purpose of the present study and in accordance with the five research questions, detailed analytic methods were designed and used. The section that follows addresses the particular approach to analyzing both types of data.

3.6.1 Quantitative Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20 was employed for the quantitative data analyses in this study. Procedures included descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and structural equation modeling. There were five stages in the quantitative analysis

1. Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the frequencies, means and standard deviations for the BALLIs (learner and teacher versions), and BALLI Plus to address

research questions 2 and 3. The purposes of calculating these descriptive statistics were: 1) to present the distribution of the participants' responses to the items on the aforesaid instruments, 2) to delineate the variation of responses in the participants' beliefs about language learning and teaching, and 3) to explore the extent to which the participants differed in their beliefs about language learning.

  2. Exploratory factor analysis was utilized to address research questions 1, 4, and 5 as well as to develop a typology for interview data analyses. Factor analysis is a statistical procedure for investigating the dimensionality of a set of observed variables in order to cluster variables into homogeneous sets and create their underlying latent constructs referred to as factors or dimensions (Byrne, 2001; Russell, 2002). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) pertains to exploration of the relations between a set of observed variables and their underlying factors in order to identify the minimal number of interpretable factors needed to account for the covariation among the observed variables. The relations are represented by factor loadings used to intuit the factor structure of the data (Byrne). Furthermore, the yielded significant and interpretable factors can be used for further valid data analyses. For this reason, EFA was performed in the present study on the learner participants' responses to the 34 BALLI items and the 14 BALLI Plus items to statistically reduce the number of variables, eliminate ambiguous, poor items, and detect the underlying dimensions or factors in the relationships among variables, that is, to classify variables.

  The number of factors to be retained was determined using the conventional standards of examining an eigenvalue larger than 1 and the scree plot of the eigenvalues of extracted factors to identify a distinguishing break in the slope of the plot (Field, 2009). Following factor extraction is factor rotation. There are two types of rotation: orthogonal and oblique rotation. In

orthogonal rotation there is no correlation between the extracted factors, whereas in oblique rotation there is. According to Field (2009), choice of rotation is determined by "whether there is a good theoretical reason to suppose that the factors should be related or independent, and also how the variables cluster on the factors before rotation" (p.439). In this study, the factors underlying BALLI were hypothesized to correlate with each other, as suggested in the literature (Gardner, 1985; Horwitz, 1988; Oxford, 1998). For this reason, principle components extraction with oblique rotation such as Promax rotation was conducted to obtain estimates of the initial factors and to determine the number of factors needed to represent the data. With regard to factor loadings that represent the correlation between a variable and a factor, Kline (1994) recommends the minimum loading of an item be set at an absolute value ≥ 0.30, which equates to close to 10% overlapping variance with the other items in that factor.

3. Factor composites were computed once the number of factors were extracted and determined. Construction of composites from the extracted factors was conducted to simplify the description of my dataset and more importantly, provide more stable measures of underlying dimensions or factors (Ackerman & Cianciolo, 2000). In the present study, belief factor composites were formed from the top loading items of each factor or factor items that made better conceptual sense if combined for comparison purposes to address research questions 4 and 5. The individual items from each factor that were not factored into their corresponding factor composites were analyzed separately.

4. With the composites derived from the extracted factors as well as the individual items, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests was computed to determine whether significant differences existed in the composites or single items across the three ethnic groups and between learners and teachers. The Scheffé post-hoc test was chosen to examine where the significant

differences were present among the three ethnic groups, as it is considered the simplest and most conservative method to control Type I error (Zar, 1999).

5. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was performed using the statistical package AMOS 20 to address research question 5. SEM is an advanced statistical approach to testing hypotheses about relations among observed and latent variables (Hoyle, 1995). Typically, SEM demonstrates "causal processes that generate observations on multiple variables" (Byrne, 2001, p. 3). It permits researchers to determine the extent to which a hypothesized model, where some latent variables are assumed to be caused by others, can account for the relationships among the variables and test the adequacy of the model (i.e. the goodness of fit). There are two parts to the causal model, the measurement model and the structural model. The measurement model estimates the relationships between the indicator (observed or measured, in this case, the survey item) variables and latent variables or factors. The structural model deals with the relationships among the latent variables. In the present study, first, a measurement model of beliefs of learners of Chinese about language learning was drawn up in accordance with the results from the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with Promax rotation for the BALLI. Following this step, the latent variables (factors) identified in EFA were combined into a full hypothesized structural model on the basis of theoretical considerations and relevant empirical evidence.

To evaluate whether a model is fit, several measures are most often recommended in the SEM literature, and thus were used in the present study. These model fit measures include the chi-square statistics, CMIN/df (chi-square divided by the degrees of freedom), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Hu & Bentler 1999), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Byrne, 2001; Hu et al.). Model fit is considered acceptable and good if CMIN/df is close to 1

and less than 2 (Byrne, 2001; Carmines & McIver, 1981), CFI value is ≥ 0.90 and RMSEA value is ≤ 0.05, as recommended by Hu et al..

3.6.2 Qualitative Analysis

It is important to iterate that the purpose of analyzing qualitative data using the typology development approach is to refine and provide specific contexts and depth to the quantitative results. Not all results from the survey data, however, can be refined and accounted for with qualitative data for the following reasons. For one thing, the ethnic composition of student interviewees was not representative of the learner sample, with only one interviewee being ethnically Chinese and others being White[4]. For another, the number of student and teacher interviewees was small. As such, unlike the survey data, the interview data were not used to generate a series of comparisons of beliefs between students of different ethnic backgrounds, between students and teachers, and between students of different ethnic backgrounds and teachers. Rather, the qualitative analysis of the interview data was intended to qualitatively delineate student and teacher beliefs using their own words as well as to provide a picture of each student interviewee's belief structure to qualitatively validate research question 5.

The first step to qualitative data analysis was to transcribe interview responses verbatim. The interviews were transcribed in English if conducted in English, while interviews were transcribed in Chinese and then translated into English if conducted in Chinese. The translation of interviews from Chinese to English was back checked by a native-Chinese speaker for verification. If any disagreement arose, the translation back checker and the researcher had a discussion to reach a consensus.

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[4] In this study, White is used to refer to a race of people who have light-colored skin coming originally from Europe.

The next step was qualitative data analysis following a typology comprised of conceptual dimensions yielded from exploratory factor analysis of the survey data (Caracelli & Greene, 1993). Guided by this typology, this step proceeded from the general to the particular. I began by initial reading of the transcriptions for a couple of times to obtain a general sense of interviewees' responses. Afterwards, using this typology as a framework, I started coding and developing categories of the interview responses that could fit into this typology. As discussed earlier, interview questions were formulated based on this typology and targeted at its constituent conceptual dimensions. As such, conscious efforts were made to seek and code evidence from the interview responses that reflected these dimensions, which then served as the major themes.

While incorporating the typology into coding responses from the data source, I developed categories by grouping the responses with similar labels and fitting various categories into their corresponding themes. This coding and grouping process was iterative. Furthermore, in coding and categorizing, if there were responses coded under multiple labels, a second coder would be consulted for a final decision of one label. The second coder did not read and code the entire transcripts. Instead she was brought in only when I needed a solution to multi-labeled interviewee responses that required one final label. Prior to consulting with the second coder, I had provided some training to her by explaining my research and the explanatory framework. In the course of coding the interview responses, attempts were also made to search for themes that might emerge independent of the framework. This attempt was intended to assess whether the typological framework was inclusive and effective in the qualitative data analysis.

3.7 Conclusion of Chapter 3

This chapter described the methodology and methods used to achieve the research purposes. This study selected the sequential explanatory design as the mixed-methods approach.

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected in a sequential manner. Typology development was employed as the way to integrate the two types of data as well as a framework to guide qualitative data analysis. To answer the research questions, various quantitative data analytical methods were utilized. They included descriptive statistics, EFA, ANOVA, and SEM. With reference to the BALLI, the various statistical techniques selected to analyze and evaluate this inventory, particularly, the structural equation modeling, are unique among the BALLI studies in that this study is the first one that generated a causal model of the BALLI. Qualitative data analysis of the interview responses was conducted in an effort to refine and account in detail for the quantitative results as well as qualitatively validate a hypothetical SEM model if possible.

Chapter 4 Quantitative Results

The purpose of the present study was to (a) investigate beliefs about language learning held by beginning learners of Chinese and teachers of Chinese in North America, (b) compare learner beliefs with teacher beliefs to unravel areas of convergence or conflict, and (c) test a hypothetical model of learner beliefs. Quantitative data were generated to assist in achieving these purposes. Results of quantitative analyses are reported in this chapter in five sections. Each section is intended to address one research question in order of sequence of the five questions. A summary is provided towards the end of each section, with key results highlighted.

For convenience of readers, the five research questions are re-stated below.

1. What dimensions underlie beliefs of North American post-secondary beginning learners of Chinese about language learning?

2. What beliefs do beginning learners of Chinese hold about language learning, and how do language learning beliefs of beginning learners of Chinese from different ethnic backgrounds compare with one another?

3. What beliefs do teachers of Chinese hold about language learning?

4. How do teachers' beliefs compare with learners' beliefs, and how do teachers' beliefs compare with beliefs of learners from different ethnic backgrounds respectively?

5. Is there a model that can account for the causal relationships between beginning learners' belief dimensions about language learning?

4.1 Dimensions of Learner Beliefs about Language Learning

This section addresses the first research question and reports on the results of exploratory factor analysis performed on the BALLI and the BALLI Plus in attempts to describe and

interpret the dimensions[5] or factors identified to underlie the BALLI and BALLI Plus survey results for students and teachers. To ensure the comparability of the present study with other BALLI studies, I separated the BALLI Plus from the BALLI for data analyses. Also of note is that I lay out the belief dimensions at the very outset for the reason that all other subsequent research questions will be presented in line with these dimensions. When presenting the belief dimensions, I also connect them to metacognitive knowledge. This connection is central to understanding the learning process in that it can reveal learners' cognitive and metacognitive activities engaged in learning.

Research Question One (Q1). What dimensions underlie beliefs of North American post-secondary beginning learners of Chinese about language learning?

4.1.1 The Structure of the BALLI

The 34-item BALLI was subjected to an exploratory factor analysis: principal components extraction with promax rotation. Scree test and the eigenvalues of greater than 1.0 were used for extracting the factors. Factor loadings of absolute values ≥ 0.30 (Kline, 1994) are considered as acceptable indicators for a factor. Factors with loadings ≤ 0.30 were seen as irrelevant or not measuring what they were supposed to measure and therefore were suppressed. Analyses yielded 12 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. Through scree test and examination of the conceptual meaning of these factors, four factors were ultimately retained that were loaded on by 23 items. The retained factors, accounting for 30% of the variance, revealed four conceptually interpretable and statistically valid dimensions underlying learners' language learning beliefs. The rotated factor matrix is presented in Table 3.

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[5] Factor and dimension are used interchangeably hereafter.

Table 3

Four-Factor Structure of the BALLI

Items	Factors			
	1	2	3	4
31. If I get to speak Chinese very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	0.65			
24. I would like to learn Chinese so that I can get to know Chinese people better.	0.57			
29. If I learn Chinese very well, it will help me to get a good job.	0.55			
5. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak Chinese very well.	0.50			
30. People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.	0.41			
20. People in my country feel that it is important to speak Chinese.	0.30			
17. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words.		0.77		
23. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.		0.64		
28. Learning Chinese is mostly a matter of translating from my native language.		0.62		
15. If someone spent one hour a day learning Chinese, how long would it take to speak Chinese very well?		0.45		
8. It is necessary to know the Chinese culture in order to learn to speak Chinese well.		-0.33		
14. It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in Chinese.			0.56	
9. You shouldn't say anything in Chinese until you can say it correctly.			-0.48	
13. If I heard someone speaking Chinese, I would go up to him/her so that I could practice speaking Chinese.			0.47	
22. If learners of Chinese are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be difficult for them to get rid of the mistakes later on.			-0.41	
21. I feel self-conscious speaking Chinese in front of other people.			-0.39	
16. I have foreign language aptitude.			0.37	
7. It is important to speak Chinese with excellent pronunciation.			-0.35	
3. Some languages are easier to learn than others.				0.68
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.				0.63
4. Chinese is:				0.52
10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.				0.39
26. It is important to practice in the language laboratory.				0.33

4.1.1.1 BALLI Factor 1. Motivation for Learning Chinese

Factor 1 obtained high positive loadings (≥.30) from six items, including items 31, 24, 29, 5, 30, and 20. The six items were well correlated, pertaining to motivation to learn Chinese. Items 31and 29 indicated that if students learned Chinese well, they would have many opportunities to use it and get a good job, reflecting what is referred to as the extrinsic or instrumental motivation (Gardner, 1985; Ryan et al., 1985). On the other hand, Item 24 manifested intrinsic or integrative motivation in that learning Chinese well would allow them to get to know Chinese people better. Item 5 demonstrated strong self-confidence (self-efficacy) in ultimately speaking Chinese well, which is deemed as one of the characteristics of an intrinsically motivated individual (Gardner; Ryan et al.). Item 30 made the association of multilingual ability with intelligence, pointing towards the type of extrinsic motivation in relation to self-image enhancement or personal goal achievement, as claimed by Ryan et al.in their self-determination theory. Item 20 showed that learners who felt others value learning Chinese as well were motivated, an indication of extrinsic motivation. As such, Factor 1 was best defined as Motivation for Learning Chinese. This factor items were associated with either person knowledge (for example, "I believe I will ultimately speak Chinese very well") or task knowledge (for example, "I would like to learn Chinese so that I can get to know Chinese people better"). The Cronbach's alpha for this factor was .60

4.1.1.2 BALLI Factor 2. Formal Language Learning Strategy

Five items received high loadings on Factor 2, including items 17, 23, 28, 15, and 8. The items that loaded highest on this factor primarily addressed beliefs about formal language learning strategies (Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words and a lot of grammar rules, and translating from the native language), which

were associated with strategic knowledge. Although not directly asking about learning strategies, these items led learners to retrospect upon their learning and can be viewed as evidence of strategies learners may actually use or think they should use (Wenden, 1998). Item 8 that dealt with the importance of culture in learning Chinese (task knowledge) received negative loading, indicating that students who preferred formal language learning tended not to attach importance to culture. Item 15 pertained to the length of time required for learning Chinese, which was relating to task knowledge. The predominant content of these items suggested that Factor 2 was best referred to as Formal Language Learning Strategy. Cronbach's alpha for Factor 2 was .62. The positive or negative correlations among the items indicated that there was communality among them, such that individuals tending to believe one of them would tend to or not to believe the others.

4.1.1.3 BALLI Factor 3. Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy

Factor 3 captured high loadings from seven items. Positive loadings were obtained by items 14, 13, and 16, while negative loadings were received by items 9, 22, 21, and 7. Items with positive loadings indicated preference for communication-oriented language learning strategies, such as guessing unknown Chinese words and willingness to practice speaking Chinese. Conversely, items with negative loadings suggested championship for accuracy in language learning, such as oral correctness, timely error correction, and excellent pronunciation. These items were the ones that directly related to learning strategies, reflecting learners' strategic knowledge about learning languages in general and Chinese in particular. However, Item 16 ("I have foreign language aptitude") was relating to person knowledge. Taken together, these items suggested that Factor 3 was best labeled as Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy. Cronbach's alpha for Factor 3 was .50.

4.1.1.4 BALLI Factor 4. Difficulty of Language Learning

Five items loaded highly and positively on Factor 4, that is, items 3, 1, 4, 10, and 26. For

the most part, they concerned general difficulty of language learning and the specific difficulty

of learning Chinese. Accordingly, this factor was named as Difficulty of Language Learning,

which was associated with learners' either person knowledge (for example, "It is easier for

children than adults to learn a foreign language") or task knowledge (for example, "Some

languages are easier to learn than others"). The Cronbach's alpha for this factor was .48.

4.1.2 The Structure of the BALLI Plus

The 14-item BALLI Plus was also subjected to an exploratory factor analysis: principal

components extraction with varimax rotation. This analysis generated five factors with

eigenvalues of greater than 1.0. Using the same criteria as implemented for the BALLI, two

meaningful factors were eventually retained, accounting for 31% of the variance. A total of 13

items loaded on the two factors, and one item was suppressed due to cross-loading. The rotated

factor matrix is presented in Table 4.

4.1.2.1 BALLI Plus Factor 1. Difficulty of Chinese Characters

Five items loaded high on this factor, including items 37, 36, 35, 39, 40, and 38. All these

items addressed the issue surrounding the difficulty of Chinese characters, which concerned

either task knowledge ("Chinese characters are the most difficult part of learning Chinese") or

strategic knowledge ("Students should start with Roman letters when they start to learn

Chinese"). For example, students who perceived Chinese characters as difficult tended to agree

that Chinese characters should be introduced about one month after students had had some taste

of the language rather than on the first day or Pinyin should be introduced first (Items 37, 36, 35

and 39). Students who deemed Chinese tones as the most difficult part of learning Chinese

tended not to see Chinese characters as the most difficult part (item 38).

Table 4

Two-Factor Model of the BALLI Plus

Item	Factor	
	1	2
37. Chinese characters should be introduced about one month after students have had some taste of the language.	0.73	
36. Chinese characters should be introduced from the first day of learning Chinese along with learning pinyin.	-0.68	
35. Students should start with Roman letters (pinyin) when they begin to learn Chinese.	0.66	
39. Chinese characters are the most difficult part of learning Chinese.	0.54	
40. Chinese characters are the most interesting part of learning Chinese.	-0.39	
38. Chinese tones are the most difficult part of learning Chinese.	-0.30	
45. I will maintain my commitment to learning Chinese if the instructor teaches Chinese in a way that meets my beliefs about Chinese learning and teaching.		0.77
46. I will maintain my commitment to learning Chinese if I receive a good grade from the Chinese class.		0.63
48. I will maintain my commitment to learning Chinese if Chinese instructors spend less time on pronunciation and grammar exercises but more time on fun communicative language learning activities.		0.60
44. Chinese instructors should know their students' beliefs about Chinese language learning and teaching.		0.57
47. Non-Asian students will maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if their classmates in the Chinese class are not almost all from Chinese background.		0.37
41. Learning Chinese is mostly a matter of being able to write as many Chinese characters as possible.		0.36
43. Learning Chinese is more difficult than learning other languages and therefore requires more perseverance.		0.33
Reliability	0.63	0.61

It is worthy of note that at a first glance, items 35, 36 and 37 appeared to be related to

Chinese teaching strategies. However, the underlying assumption of these items was related to

the argument about the sequence of introduction of Pinyin and characters due to the difficulty

level of Chinese characters. These items overall measured implicitly or explicitly the difficulty of

Chinese characters. For this reason, BALLI Plus Factor 1 was best named *Difficulty of Chinese*

Characters. Its Cronbach alpha was .63.

4.1.2.2 BALLI Plus Factor 2. Commitment to and Nature of Chinese Learning

This factor seized high loadings from seven items, namely items 45, 46, 48, 44, 47, 41, and 43. Items 45, 46, 48, 44, and 47 all pertained to the components that were likely to maintain students' commitment to continuity of learning Chinese. For example, item 45 stated that students would maintain their commitment to learning Chinese, if the instructor taught Chinese in a way that met their beliefs about Chinese learning and teaching. Items 41 and 43 concerned the nature of learning Chinese. Consequently, these items were best represented as Commitment to and Nature of Chinese Learning. Items 44, 45, 46, 47, and 48 pertained to person knowledge about what motivated them to continue to learn Chinese, while items 41 and 43 dealt with task knowledge about learning Chinese. The Cronbach alpha for this factor was .61.

4.1.3 Summary of Dimensions of Learner Beliefs

Exploratory factor analysis of the BALLI was performed to determine how the belief measures related to one another. Analyses found that 23 questionnaire items fell into four meaningful factors that underlay learners' language learning beliefs, namely, (a) *Motivation for learning Chinese,* (b) *Formal Language Learning Strategy,* (c) *Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy,* and (d) *Difficulty of Language Learning.* Each of these 23 measures contributed to one factor more than to other(s), signaling the possible existence of functional relationships between these measures.

EFA of the BALLI Plus identified two factors that contained 13 survey items. The two factors addressed the difficulty of Chinese characters and learners' commitment to and nature of Chinese learning respectively.

Language learning beliefs have been linked by Wenden (1998) to metacognitive

knowledge that consists of three components, personal knowledge, task knowledge, and strategic knowledge. Examination of the four BALLI and two BALLI Plus belief dimensions revealed that BALLI factor 1 focused on learners and learning tasks, thus embracing person and task knowledge. BALLI Factors 2 and 3 mostly related to strategic knowledge about what strategies are and about how best to learn a FL/SL and task knowledge, while BALLI Factor 4 was connected with task knowledge that was associated with what learners know about the task of language learning and person knowledge. BALLI Plus Factor 1 covered learners' task knowledge and strategic knowledge about Chinese characters, while BALLI Plus Factor 2 involved person knowledge and task knowledge.

4.2 Beliefs of Beginning Learners of Chinese about Language Learning

This section reports on the results of statistics computed for the BALLI and the BALLI Plus items in order to address research question 2 (Q2). There are two components in this section. The first component is focused on general descriptions of learner beliefs, reflected by the first part of Q2, while the second component pertains to comparisons of beliefs among the three learner groups, reflected by the second part of Q2. The presentation of the results typically centers on the items that were statistically and conceptually categorized into the BALLI and BALLI Plus factors, in order of the factor identification.

Q2. What beliefs do beginning learners of Chinese hold about language learning, and how do language learning beliefs of beginning learners of Chinese from different ethnic backgrounds compare with one another?

4.2.1 Descriptive Profiles of Beliefs of Beginning Learners of Chinese

It is important to reiterate that 24 out of 34 BALLI items and 13 out of 14 BALLI Plus items were identified to belong to their respective factors. In other words, 10 BALLI and one BALLI Plus items were excluded from this section because of their irrelevance with any of the factors. But nonetheless, learners' response distribution of these items can be found in Table 34 in Appendix F.

4.2.1.1 BALLI Factor 1. Motivation for Learning Chinese. BALLI items 31, 24, 29, 5, 30, and 20 were relevant to opportunities, desires, and centrality that learners associate with learning Chinese. Tables 5 to 10 illustrate learner response rates for the overall learner sample as well as a breakdown of learners by ethnicity. Responses to the items in this factor are reported in Table 5.

The vast majority of responses appeared to reflect learners' desire for and optimism in achieving their Chinese learning goals. A great proportion of learners overall associated learning of Chinese with many opportunities to use it (86%) and to get to know Chinese people (73%), and job opportunities (70%). These results are similar to those in Le's study (2004). While claiming that the students in their study were highly motivated both integratively and instrumentally, Samimy et al. (1997) did not report the percentages of responses to the related items. An overwhelming majority of learners of Chinese-origin anticipated many opportunities to use Chinese (96%), whereas non-Chinese Asian learners were comparatively not as highly stimulated in this regard (79%). The remarkable motivation exhibited by learners of Chinese origin was not surprising in that it demonstrated the influence of their cultural background.

Approximately four out of five non-Chinese Asian learners (79%)[6] reported agreement[7] with the opportunity to know Chinese people better (Item 24), followed by Chinese-origin and

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[6] Due to small sample sizes, small differences in percentage may be attributable to sampling errors. Therefore, a 10 point percent difference inclusive or more will be addressed.
[7] When "agreement" was reported, it referred to the agreement rate aggregated from options 4 and 5 unless otherwise specified. Conversely, the disagreement rate was aggregated from options 1 and 2.

non-Asian learners (73% and 71% respectively), implying learners' integrative motivation. A large proportion of Chinese-origin and non-Chinese Asian learners (both 75%) associated job prospects with learning Chinese (Item 29); so did their non-Asian counterparts (67%), an indication of instrumental motivation.

Table 5

Response Distribution of Motivation for Learning Chinese

Item	Group[1]	5[2]	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
31. If I get to speak Chinese very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	Non-Asian	30.6%	52.9%	10.7%	5.0%	.8%	4.09	0.83
	Chinese-origin	59.6%	36.5%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	4.55	0.58
	Non-Chinese Asian	33.3%	45.8%	12.5%	4.2%	4.2%	4.04	1.00
	Overall	38.6%	47.7%	9.1%	3.6%	1.0%	4.19	0.82
24. I would like to learn Chinese so that I can get to know Chinese people better.	Non-Asian	23.1%	47.9%	22.3%	6.6%	0.0%	3.86	0.84
	Chinese-origin	21.2%	51.9%	19.2%	3.8%	3.8%	3.85	0.98
	Non-Chinese Asian	29.2%	50.0%	16.7%	0.0%	4.2%	4.00	0.89
	Overall	23.4%	49.2%	20.8%	5.1%	1.5%	3.88	0.88
29. If I learn Chinese very well, it will help me to get a good job.	Non-Asian	21.5%	45.5%	23.1%	8.3%	1.7%	3.77	0.94
	Chinese-origin	26.9%	48.1%	21.2%	3.8%	0.0%	4.02	0.77
	Non-Chinese Asian	16.7%	58.3%	20.8%	0.0%	4.2%	3.77	0.91
	Overall	22.3%	47.7%	22.3%	6.1%	1.5%	3.83	0.90
5. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak Chinese very well.	Non-Asian	26.4%	47.1%	18.2%	8.3%	0.0%	3.92	0.88
	Chinese-origin	28.8%	53.8%	13.5%	3.8%	0.0%	4.09	0.75
	Non-Chinese Asian	20.8%	45.8%	16.7%	16.7%	0.0%	3.73	1.00
	Overall	26.4%	48.7%	16.8%	8.1%	0.0%	3.93	0.87
30. People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.	Non-Asian	6.6%	37.2%	40.5%	10.7%	5.0%	3.30	0.93
	Chinese-origin	13.5%	36.5%	38.5%	11.5%	0.0%	3.53	0.88
	Non-Chinese Asian	12.5%	29.2%	41.7%	12.5%	4.2%	3.35	0.98
	Overall	9.1%	36.0%	40.1%	11.2%	3.6%	3.36	0.92
20. People in my country feel that it is important to speak Chinese.	Non-Asian	2.5%	20.7%	28.1%	37.2%	11.6%	2.67	1.01
	Chinese-origin	17.3%	34.6%	40.4%	7.7%	0.0%	3.60	0.88
	Non-Chinese Asian	4.2%	41.7%	50.0%	4.2%	0.0%	3.54	0.71
	Overall	6.6%	26.9%	34.0%	25.4%	7.1%	3.01	1.04

Note.1.Non-Asian n=127, Chinese-origin n=47, Non-Chinese Asian n=26
2. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

Over three quarters (76%) of learners in general demonstrated strong will to ultimately speak Chinese very well (Item 5). In this respect, learners of Chinese-origin predictably showed

the greatest confidence (83%). Non-Chinese Asian learners, on the other hand, were the least confident (67%). Item 30 elicited different responses from learners overall. A total of 45% of learners considered being bilingual/multilingual as a sign of intelligence and learners who showed neutrality accounted for 40%. Among the three groups, agreement level with Item 30 showed little variation. Half of Chinese-origin learners (50%) reported agreement, followed by non-Asians and non-Chinese Asians counterparts (44% and 42% respectively). Perhaps the positive association of bilingual/multilingual with intelligence could boost learners' self-image or ego, which in turn motivated them to learn Chinese.

For Item 20 "People in my country feel that it is important to speak Chinese", learners' responses were evenly divided: one in three learners (33%) reported agreement and an equal number of learners showed disagreement. Among the three groups, non-Asian learners had a much lower rate of agreement (23%) than their Chinese-origin (52%) and non-Chinese Asian counterparts (46%).

4.2.1.2 BALLI Factor 2. Formal Language Learning Strategy Items 17, 23, 28, 15, 11, and 8 making up this factor included a range of issues with a focus on the formal language learning strategies. Items 17, 23, and 28 measured learners' opinions on the priority of learning Chinese, while items 15, 8, and 11 concerned the length of time required of learning Chinese, the role of Chinese cultural contact, and language learning aptitude. Table 6 summarizes learners' responses to these items.

Approximately half learners overall (46%) supported the idea that learning Chinese is mostly a matter of learning lots of new vocabulary words in Item 17. Among the three groups, a higher percentage of non-Chinese Asian (67%) and Chinese-origin learners (58%) endorsed this statement, compared with their non-Asian counterparts (37%). Item 23 revealed that over one

third learners (35%) shared the opinion that learning Chinese is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules. Nevertheless, variation in opinions existed among the three groups. Non-Chinese Asian and Chinese-origin learners reported greater agreement (50% and 42% respectively), whereas the agreement rate for non-Asians was 29%.

The favourable attitudes learners held towards grammar rules in language learning in the present study confirmed the results from the study by Samimy and colleague (1997). In their BALLI study of American beginning learners of Chinese, over half of learners endorsed the identical statements about grammar rules and vocabulary (58% and 50%), and over one third (35%) reported agreement with the identical statement about translation. However, in Le's BALLI study (2004) of American learners of Chinese enrolled in a study abroad program, the agreement rate of the two similar statements were slightly lower (35% and 38% respectively). On the other hand, the statement that learning Chinese is mostly a translation from the native language drew a low rate of agreement. A total of 23% of learners overall endorsed this item, while 62% rejected it. The three groups of learners did not show much variation in agreement level, ranging from 20% to 26%. The endorsement rates were 35% in Samimy et al.'s study and 15% in Le's study.

In response to Item 15 ("If someone spent one hour a day learning Chinese, how long would it take to speak Chinese very well?"), one in three learners (33%) chose "3-5 years" and 12% chose "6-10 years". A total of 40% of learners chose "less than one year" or "1-2 years", which was higher than that reported by Le (14%) but lower than that reported by Samimy et al (54%). Learners' high endorsement of "less than one year" or "1-2 years" indicated that they were over-optimistic about their mastery of Chinese. Over-optimism can result in learners' frustration when their unrealistic expectations fail to be satisfied (Horwitz, 1988; Bernat, 2008).

Table 6

Response Distribution of Formal Language Learning Strategy

Item	Group	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
17. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words.	Non-Asian	5.8%	31.4%	20.7%	32.2%	9.9%	2.92	1.12
	Chinese	13.5%	44.2%	17.3%	21.2%	3.8%	3.36	1.13
	Non-Chinese Asian	8.3%	58.3%	12.5%	12.5%	8.3%	3.58	1.03
	Overall	8.1%	38.1%	18.8%	26.9%	8.1%	3.11	1.14
23. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.	Non-Asian	1.7%	27.3%	23.1%	40.5%	7.4%	2.77	1.00
	Chinese	1.9%	40.4%	26.9%	23.1%	7.7%	3.02	1.03
	Non-Chinese Asian	16.7%	33.3%	29.2%	12.5%	8.3%	3.38	1.13
	Overall	3.6%	31.5%	24.9%	32.5%	7.6%	2.91	1.04
28. Learning Chinese is mostly a matter of translating from my native language.	Non-Asian	1.7%	18.2%	13.2%	45.5%	21.5%	2.33	1.05
	Chinese	5.8%	21.2%	23.1%	44.2%	5.8%	2.77	1.03
	Non-Chinese Asian	4.2%	20.8%	8.3%	54.2%	12.5%	2.58	1.17
	Overall	3.0%	19.3%	15.2%	46.2%	16.2%	2.47	1.07
15. If someone spent one hour a day learning Chinese, how long would it take to speak Chinese very well?	Non-Asian	8.3%	13.2%	33.1%	39.7%	5.8%	2.77	1.03
	Chinese	5.8%	15.4%	26.9%	38.5%	13.5%	2.64	1.09
	Non-Chinese Asian	8.3%	12.5%	41.7%	33.3%	4.2%	2.85	0.97
	Overall	7.6%	13.7%	32.5%	32.5%	7.6%	2.75	1.04
11. People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages.	Non-Asian	0.0%	.8%	20.7%	40.5%	38.0%	1.85	0.78
	Chinese	1.9%	1.9%	23.1%	32.7%	40.4%	1.81	0.82
	Non-Chinese Asian	0.0%	4.2%	29.2%	25.0%	41.7%	2.15	1.12
	Overall	.5%	1.5%	22.3%	36.5%	39.1%	1.94	0.91
8. It is necessary to know the Chinese culture in order to learn to speak Chinese well.	Non-Asian	23.1%	44.6%	21.5%	10.7%	0.0%	2.21	0.92
	Chinese	11.5%	53.8%	25.0%	9.6%	0.0%	2.26	0.77
	Non-Chinese Asian	12.5%	70.8%	8.3%	8.3%	0.0%	2.23	0.82
	Overall	18.8%	50.3%	20.8%	10.2%	0.0%	2.22	0.87

Note. For Item 15, 1=less than one year, 2=1-2 years, 3=3-5 years, 4=6-10 years, 5=you cannot learn Chinese in one hour a day. For all other items,1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Item 11 attracted a high level of disagreement (76%), suggesting that a majority of learners did not approve of the inverse connection between mathematics/science and language learning. Item 8 ("It is necessary to know about Chinese cultures in order to learn to speak Chinese well") obtained a high percentage of agreement (69%). Interestingly, among the three groups, non-Chinese Asian and non-Asian students reported stronger support for the statement

(83% and 78% respectively), while the Chinese-origin learners' rating of this statement was not as high (65%). This result suggested that learners of Chinese-origin did not place as high value to the Chinese culture in learning Chinese as their other counterparts, possibly because the former had had a good understanding of the Chinese culture already and as such did not perceive a greater need to learn about the culture.

4.2.1.3 BALLI Factor 3. Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy

There were eight items in this factor, including items 14, 9, 13, 22, 21, 16, and 7. In the BALLI, these items had the most direct connection with learners' language learning practices with exception of item 16. Learner responses to these items are presented in Table 7

Responses to the items related to communication strategies were wide in range. Approximately half of the learners (49%) believed that it was okay to guess an unknown word (Item 14). Among the three groups, non-Chinese Asians reported higher endorsement (58%) than learners of Chinese-origin (48%) and non-Asians (47%). For non-Chinese Asians, almost half of them had Japanese and Korean as their native language, and similarities between their language writing system and that of Chinese may make guessing easier for them. Or some of them may have had the experience of learning Chinese in their home country. However, merely 23% of learners of Chinese-origin chose Mandarin or Cantonese as their native language, as opposed to 70% having English as the native language. While being ethnically Chinese, these students may not have mastered as many Chinese characters at the time of the survey as non-Chinese Asians and therefore guessing could appear difficult for them. Non-Asians found it equally hard to guess unknown words, for English is the native language of 70% of the non-Asians, most of whom had had no prior exposure to Chinese.

Table 7

Response Distribution of Communication-oriented Learning Strategy

Item	Group	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
14. It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in Chinese.	Non-Asian	9.1%	38.0%	21.5%	25.6%	5.8%	3.21	1.09
	Chinese-origin	5.8%	42.3%	23.1%	26.9%	1.9%	3.19	0.97
	Non-Chinese Asian	8.3%	50.0%	16.7%	16.7%	8.3%	3.31	1.16
	Overall	8.1%	40.6%	21.3%	24.9%	5.1%	3.22	1.07
9.You shouldn't say anything in Chinese until you can say it correctly.	Non-Asian	3.3%	9.9%	6.6%	46.3%	33.9%	2.03	1.04
	Chinese-origin	3.8%	11.5%	13.5%	50.0%	21.2%	2.30	1.08
	Non-Chinese Asian	4.2%	12.5%	8.3%	41.7%	33.3%	2.08	1.13
	Overall	3.6%	10.7%	8.6%	46.7%	30.5%	2.10	1.06
13. If I heard someone speaking Chinese, I would go up to him/her so that I could practice speaking Chinese.	Non-Asian	4.1%	33.1%	28.9%	30.6%	3.3%	3.04	0.96
	Chinese-origin	1.9%	11.5%	34.6%	38.5%	13.5%	2.47	0.97
	Non-Chinese Asian	8.3%	20.8%	29.2%	33.3%	8.3%	2.85	1.08
	Overall	4.1%	25.9%	30.5%	33.0%	6.6%	2.88	1.00
22. If learners are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be difficult to get rid of the mistakes later on.	Non-Asian	8.3%	27.3%	16.5%	38.8%	9.1%	2.87	1.15
	Chinese-origin	17.3%	30.8%	26.9%	15.4%	9.6%	3.30	1.25
	Non-Chinese Asian	16.7%	29.2%	16.7%	29.2%	8.3%	3.23	1.24
	Overall	11.7%	28.4%	19.3%	31.5%	9.1%	3.02	1.20
21. I feel self-conscious speaking Chinese in front of other people.	Non-Asian	7.4%	35.5%	21.5%	28.1%	7.4%	3.07	1.11
	Chinese-origin	19.2%	34.6%	23.1%	19.2%	3.8%	3.51	1.16
	Non-Chinese Asian	8.3%	54.2%	12.5%	20.8%	4.2%	3.38	1.02
	Overall	10.7%	37.6%	20.8%	24.9%	6.1%	3.22	1.12
16. I have foreign language aptitude.	Non-Asian	14.9%	41.3%	36.4%	7.4%	0.0%	3.65	0.83
	Chinese	7.7%	48.1%	30.8%	9.6%	3.8%	3.43	0.93
	Non-Chinese Asian	4.2%	33.3%	45.8%	12.5%	4.2%	3.19	0.85
	Overall	11.7%	42.1%	36.0%	8.6%	1.5%	3.54	0.87
7. It is important to speak Chinese with excellent pronunciation.	Non-Asian	48.8%	44.6%	4.1%	1.7%	0.8%	4.40	0.72
	Chinese-origin	48.1%	36.5%	13.5%	1.9%	0.0%	4.34	0.76
	Non-Chinese Asian	50.0%	45.8%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	4.35	0.69

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

When it came to Item 9, a majority of learners (77%) disagreed that being unable to speak Chinese correctly should prevent them from speaking at all. Yet, 14% showed agreement, probably because they thought Chinese is a tonal language and speaking Chinese without correct tones and pronunciation would make themselves misunderstood or incomprehensible. This result was comparable with that in the studies by Samimy et al.(77%) and Le (83%).

With the statement "If students are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be difficult for them to get rid of the mistakes later on" (Item 22), learners were evenly divided between agreement (40%) and disagreement (41%). Among the three groups, Chinese-origin and non-Chinese Asians reported a similarly high agreement (48% and 46%), while fewer non-Asians (36%) showed endorsement. Preference for timely error correction from a high proportion of learners confirmed learners' support for error correction found in some BALLI studies (e.g. Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995; Samimy et al.,1997). However, Le's study of learners of Chinese did not report as high a proportion (27%) to support the identical statement. The possible reason for this low proportion was that the respondents in Le' study were learning Chinese in China, as a result of which, most of them might have discovered that the mistakes they previously had made did not pose an obstacle to their communication with Chinese people, and therefore being able to communicate mattered more. Or possibly, learning Chinese in China, which offered an authentic, interactive language learning environment, might have made most of them realize that it was easier to get rid of the mistakes they had made in the beginning. As such, there might be a difference in beliefs between learning a second language and learning a foreign language.

With regard to Chinese pronunciation (Item 7), an overwhelming majority of learners emphasized the importance of speaking Chinese with an excellent pronunciation (91%), with little variation among the three groups. The three groups of learners' remarkably strong emphasis on excellent pronunciation most likely stemmed from the fact that at the time of the survey, they just completed the period of learning Pinyin, in which instructional focus was predominately placed upon pronunciation and tones.

Given the concern over and emphasis on accuracy in speaking, nearly half learners (48%) reported that they felt self-conscious speaking Chinese in front of other people (Item 21). However, the three groups were somewhat varied in their attitudes. Non-Chinese Asian (63%) and Chinese-origin learners (54%) showed greater agreement with this statement than non-Asians (43%). Perhaps because of their self-consciousness and concern, about 40% of respondents reported unwillingness to go up to someone they heard speaking Chinese in order to practice speaking (Item 13). Among the three groups, discrepancies occurred in their willingness to practice speaking. Over half learners of Chinese-origin (52%) reported greater unwillingness than their non-Asian learners (35%), with non-Chinese Asians being in the middle (43%). The higher proportion of Chinese-origin learners showing unwillingness might result from their cultural backgrounds. In East Asian cultures, "face" matters greatly and "loss of face" is very serious (Hwang, Francesco, & Kessler, 2003; Terkourafi, 2007). If one fails to say something correctly, he/she tends to consider it "loss of face". For this reason, many students from East Asian cultures are reluctant to speak in classes if they are not positive that they can speak correctly, even though they are aware of the importance of practicing verbally when learning a foreign language. In particular, learners of Chinese-origin learning their ethnic language should supposedly be better than learners of Chinese from non-Chinese backgrounds.

4.2.1.4 BALLI Factor 4. Difficulty of Language Learning

Four items made up this factor, including items 3, 1, 4, and 10. These items were pertinent to the general difficulty of learning a foreign language and the specific difficulty of learning Chinese. Responses to these items are presented in Table 8.

An overwhelmingly large number of learners supported the notion of a language learning difficulty hierarchy. A high proportion of learners (89%) agreed that some languages are easier

to learn than others (Item 3) and it is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language

(Item 1). There was little deviation among the three groups, suggesting that learners were

unanimous that difficulty of language learning depended on the specific target language. This

result was consistent with those in Samimy et al.'s study as well as in Le's.

Table 8

Response Distribution of Difficulty of Language Learning

Item	Group	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
3. Some languages are easier to learn than others.	Non-Asian	38.8%	49.6%	9.1%	1.7%	0.8%	4.25	0.75
	Chinese-origin	44.2%	46.2%	7.7%	1.9%	0.0%	4.30	0.72
	Non-Chinese Asian	41.7%	50.0%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	4.35	0.63
	Overall	40.6%	48.7%	8.6%	1.5%	0.5%	4.27	0.73
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.	Non-Asian	53.7%	33.1%	8.3%	3.3%	1.7%	4.34	0.88
	Chinese-origin	57.7%	32.7%	3.8%	5.8%	0.0%	4.47	0.78
	Non-Chinese Asian	66.7%	29.2%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	4.50	0.86
	Overall	56.3%	32.5%	6.1%	4.1%	1.0%	4.39	0.85
4. Chinese is:	Non-Asian	19.0%	52.1%	25.6%	2.5%	0.8%	3.85	0.78
	Chinese-origin	17.3%	51.9%	25.0%	1.9%	3.8%	3.85	0.83
	Non-Chinese Asian	16.7%	54.2%	29.2%	0.0%	0.0%	3.77	0.86
	Overall	18.3%	52.3%	25.9%	2.0%	1.5%	3.84	0.80
10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	Non-Asian	17.4%	49.6%	23.1%	8.3%	1.7%	3.73	0.89
	Chinese-origin	15.4%	42.3%	21.2%	19.2%	1.9%	3.49	1.08
	Non-Chinese Asian	12.5%	58.3%	16.7%	12.5%	0.0%	3.65	0.85
	Overall	16.2%	48.7%	21.8%	11.7%	1.5%	3.66	0.94
26. It is important to practice in the language laboratory.	Non-Asian	11.6%	33.9%	45.5%	5.8%	3.3%	2.33	1.05
	Chinese-origin	7.7%	44.2%	36.5%	11.5%	0.0%	3.43	0.85
	Non-Chinese Asian	20.8%	33.3%	37.5%	4.2%	4.2%	3.65	0.89
	Overall	11.7%	36.5%	42.1%	7.1%	2.5%	3.14	0.93

Note. For Item 4, 1=a very easy language, 2=an easy language, 3=a language of medium difficulty, 4=a difficult language, 5=a very difficult language. For all other items, 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Furthermore, a total of 65% of learners agreed it is easier for someone who already

speaks a foreign language to learn another one (Item 10), with non-Chinese Asians and non-

Asians reporting higher support (68% and 67% respectively) and Chinese-origin learners lower

(58%). For the identical item, the endorsement was lower in Samimy et al.'s (34%) and in Le's

(56%). With reference to perceived difficulty of Chinese, a majority of learners overall rated

Chinese as a very difficult (18%) or difficult language (52%). Over one quarter (26%) rated

Chinese as a language of medium difficulty. The rating for difficulty level of Chinese was lower

than that reported by Samimy et al. (81%) and Le (80%). This difference might be attributable to

the timing of the survey. Participants in the present study responded to the survey upon

completion of four weeks' learning of elementary Chinese, while Samimy et al.'s study took

place when students were completing10 weeks of their Chinese class and Le's participants were

learning Chinese in China having learned some Chinese prior to attending the study abroad

program. It was possible that more respondents in the present study still had the feeling of

novelty of learning a foreign language, not having encountered the real difficult part of learning

Chinese.

4.2.1.5 BALLI Plus Factor 1. Difficulty of Chinese Characters

BALLI Plus items 37, 36, 35, 39, 40, and 38 included a range of issues related to the

difficulty of Chinese characters. Items 37, 36 and 35 addressed the issue of when Chinese

characters should be introduced, in comparison with Pinyin. Items 39, 40, and 38 directly or

indirectly assessed whether Chinese characters are the most difficult part of learning Chinese.

Learners' responses to these items are found in Table 9.

Table 9

Response Distribution of the Difficulty of Chinese Characters

Item	Group	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
37. Chinese characters should be introduced about one month after students have had some taste of the language.	Non-Asian	6.6%	33.1%	14.9%	32.2%	13.2%	2.86	1.19
	Chinese-origin	5.8%	11.5%	23.1%	55.8%	3.8%	2.62	0.99
	Non-Chinese Asian	8.3%	29.2%	25.0%	29.2%	8.3%	2.96	1.11
	Overall	6.6%	26.9%	18.3%	38.1%	10.2%	2.82	1.14
36. Chinese characters should be introduced from the first day of learning Chinese along with learning pinyin.	Non-Asian	24.8%	30.6%	15.7%	24.0%	5.0%	3.46	1.23
	Chinese-origin	30.8%	40.4%	7.7%	17.3%	3.8%	3.79	1.21
	Non-Chinese Asian	20.8%	45.8%	20.8%	8.3%	4.2%	3.73	1.00
	Overall	25.9%	35.0%	14.2%	20.3%	4.6%	3.57	1.20
35. Students should start with Roman letters (pinyin) when they begin to learn Chinese.	Non-Asian	26.4%	43.8%	16.5%	7.4%	5.8%	3.79	1.09
	Chinese-origin	26.9%	32.7%	26.9%	9.6%	3.8%	3.74	1.05
	Non-Chinese Asian	33.3%	41.7%	12.5%	4.2%	8.3%	3.69	1.29
	Overall	27.4%	40.6%	18.8%	7.6%	5.6%	3.77	1.10
39. Chinese characters are the most difficult part of learning Chinese.	Non-Asian	20.7%	32.2%	17.4%	24.0%	5.8%	3.38	1.21
	Chinese-origin	25.0%	34.6%	25.0%	15.4%	0.0%	3.79	1.02
	Non-Chinese Asian	16.7%	29.2%	20.8%	29.2%	4.2%	3.15	1.12
	Overall	21.3%	32.5%	19.8%	22.3%	4.1%	3.45	1.17
40. Chinese characters are the most interesting part of learning Chinese.	Non-Asian	18.2%	33.1%	28.9%	18.2%	1.7%	3.46	1.04
	Chinese-origin	21.2%	21.2%	30.8%	26.9%	0.0%	3.47	1.12
	Non-Chinese Asian	20.8%	37.5%	41.7%	0.0%	0.0%	3.65	0.85
	Overall	19.3%	30.5%	31.0%	18.3%	1.0%	3.49	1.03
38. Chinese tones are the most difficult part of learning Chinese.	Non-Asian	26.4%	29.8%	14.0%	24.8%	5.0%	3.46	1.25
	Chinese-origin	30.8%	21.2%	26.9%	19.2%	1.9%	3.62	1.19
	Non-Chinese Asian	37.5%	29.2%	12.5%	20.8%	0.0%	3.88	1.14
	Overall	28.9%	27.4%	17.3%	22.8%	3.6%	3.55	1.23

Note.1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Nearly half (48%) learners disagreed that Chinese characters should be introduced about one month after students have had some taste of the language and one third showed agreement (Item 37). Among the three groups, six in ten (60%) learners of Chinese-origin rejected this statement. Non-Asians were approximately evenly divided between disagreement and agreement rates (45% and 40% respectively); so were non-Chinese Asians (38% and 38% respectively). Chinese-origin learners' high agreement may be attributed to their ethnic background and their

earlier exposure to the Chinese language in particular, which may make it easier for them to accept the Chinese characters. Or most likely, they had realized the importance of learning Chinese characters in becoming proficient in their ethnic language. For non-Chinese Asians, very likely it did not matter as to when Chinese characters should be introduced due to their ethnic linguistic backgrounds, because they did not pose an obstacle and either way worked for them. What's more, their focus was more on Pinyin and tones (to be addressed for items 38, 39, and 40). For a considerable number of non-Chinese Asians, Chinese characters had been used in their native languages prior to these languages' changing to the current writing system; Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese still employ Chinese characters to a varying extent (Flyingzone, 2011).

A high proportion of learners overall (61%) agreed that Chinese characters should be introduced from the first day of learning Chinese along with learning pinyin (Item 36). Given similar language background, both Chinese-origin and non-Chinese Asian learners predictably showed stronger support for this statement (71% and 66% respectively) than their non-Asian counterparts (55%). These non-Asians wished to learn Chinese characters earlier, although Chinese characters most likely posed difficulties to them due to the lack of commonalities between the writing systems of their native languages and the Chinese writing system. This result may suggest that these non-Asians were motivated serious learners who desired to acquire Chinese characters, although becoming proficient in Chinese characters entails many years of commitment (McGinnis, 1994). The high proportion of endorsement of the idea of early introduction of Chinese characters was not consistent with the findings from earlier studies (Norman, 1996; Pease, 1996). The researchers found that most of learners of Chinese in North America, including learners of Chinese origin learning Chinese when growing up, usually were inclined to postpone learning Chinese characters and some of them even chose to avoid entirely

Chinese characters. The inconsistency of research results was probably related to the fact that the

rapid development of Chinese economy over the past decade has made it more appealing than

ever before to learn the Chinese language. This result also suggested that learners of Chinese in

this study were highly motivated with clear goals for learning Chinese, which in turn

demonstrated the growing popularity and importance of this language.

Of specific note was that 68% of respondents also supported the idea that students should

start with Roman letters (Pinyin) when they begin to learn Chinese. However, there was

somewhat departure among the three groups. Non-Chinese Asians (75%) and non-Asians (70%)

showed stronger support for this statement, compared with Chinese-origin learners (60%). The

possible reason for non-Chinese Asians' stronger endorsement may relate to their linguistic

backgrounds. While non-Chinese Asians' native languages make it easier for them to learn

Chinese characters, Chinese pronunciation entirely differs from that of their native languages

that do not have tones, hence preference for beginning with Pinyin. For non-Asians, starting with

Pinyin written in Roman letters can make their initial learning of Chinese easy to handle.

As to the perceived hardest part of learning Chinese, learners showed somewhat divided

beliefs. Over half (54%) learners overall rated Chinese characters as the most difficult part (Item

39). Among the three groups, stronger endorsement of this statement was reported by learners of

Chinese origin (60%), compared with non-Chinese Asians (46%). Over half of non-Asians (53%)

reported agreement. The possible major reason for this result is that these North American

learners of Chinese origin grew up in a Chinese environment and many of them had had such

exposure to the Chinese language. As a result, they were able to speak and understand Chinese,

since their parents and grandparents speak Chinese at home and force them to listen to Chinese.

However, they were unable to read and write Chinese characters. They had had prior knowledge

about how much effort they needed to put into in order to be able to recognize and write Chinese characters. Consequently, they viewed Chinese characters as being the most difficult.

On the other hand, half of the learners also rated Chinese characters as the most interesting part of learning Chinese (Item 40). Among the three groups, almost six in ten non-Chinese Asians (58%) showed greater agreement than Chinese-origin learners (42%), possibly because their ethnic and linguistic proximity to and their interest in Chinese as well as career-related goal contributed to this high agreement rate. The relatively low endorsement of Chinese-origin learners suggested that while being aware of the importance of learning Chinese characters, they may not find it most interesting given the substantial efforts required. One in two non-Asians reported agreement with this statement. It is thus essential to maintain learners' enthusiasm to learn Chinese characters. These groups were most likely serious learners. More than half of learners (56%) considered Chinese tones as the most difficult part of learning Chinese (Item 38). Among the three groups, a higher proportion of non-Chinese Asians (67%) agreed with the statement than Chinese-origin (52%) and non-Asian learners (56%).

4.2.1.6 BALLI Plus Factor 2. Commitment to and Nature of Chinese Learning

In this factor, items 45, 46, 48, 44, and 47 were related to the elements that can sustain learners' commitment to learning Chinese, while items 41 and 43 dealt with nature of learning Chinese. Learner responses to these items are reflected in Table 10.

Over half learners (56%) agreed that they would maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if the instructor taught Chinese in a way that met their beliefs about Chinese learning and teaching. Variation was observed among the three groups. While almost half learners overall (49%) preferred receiving a good grade from the Chinese class to maintain their commitment to learning Chinese, slightly over half of non-Chinese Asian and Chinese-origin learners reported

agreement (54% and 52% respectively), in comparison with their non-Asian counterparts (43%).

It appeared that more Asian learners tended to attach importance to good grades than their non-Asian counterparts, suggesting that in Asian cultures, academic achievement is valued to a greater extent than in western cultures. When good grades are associated with motivation to continue learning Chinese, cultural values and practices play a role in shaping learners' beliefs in this regard. This result was consistent with the results from previous cross-cultural studies (Park & Huebner, 2005; Salili, Chiu & Lai, 2001). In their cross-cultural study, Park and Huebner discovered that school performance was a significant, strong predictor of the global life satisfaction for Korean students, but not for American students. Likewise, Salili and colleagues compared the achievement motivation of Hong Kong Chinese high school students with Canadian Chinese and European high school students. They found that compared with European students, Hong Kong Chinese students and Canadian Chinese students shared a stronger socially-oriented achievement motivation that was highly encouraged in the Chinese culture. Similar results were also found in other studies, where school achievement and higher education pursuit were the most important goals for Korean and Chinese students rather than for American students (Huebner, Gilman, & Laughlin, 1999; Kim & Park, 2003; Violato & Kwok, 1995).

Item 48 solicited mixed responses from the learners. An equal proportion of learners (28% each) reported agreement and disagreement with Item 48 "I will maintain my commitment to learning Chinese if Chinese instructors spend more time on fun communication-focused activities". Slightly less than half learners (45%) showed neutral attitudes. Interestingly, one third (33%) of non-Asians disagreed with this statement, higher than Chinese-origin (19%) and non-Chinese Asians (17%). It is worth noting that more than half of Chinese-origin (54%) and non-Chinese Asian (58%) learners were neutral, as opposed to non-Asians (38%).

Table 10

Response Distribution of Commitment to and Nature of Chinese Learning

Item	Group	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
45. I will maintain my commitment to learning Chinese if the instructor teaches Chinese in a way that meets my beliefs about Chinese learning and teaching.	Non-Asian	21.5%	33.1%	34.7%	10.7%	0.0%	3.65	0.94
	Chinese-origin	15.4%	44.2%	34.6%	5.8%	0.0%	3.72	0.77
	Non-Chinese Asian	12.5%	45.8%	37.5%	0.0%	4.2%	3.62	0.90
	Overall	18.8%	37.6%	35.0%	8.1%	.5%	3.66	0.89
46. I will maintain my commitment to learning Chinese if I receive a good grade from the Chinese class.	Non-Asian	12.4%	30.6%	31.4%	19.0%	6.6%	3.23	1.10
	Chinese-origin	19.2%	42.3%	26.9%	7.7%	3.8%	3.64	1.01
	Non-Chinese Asian	20.8%	33.3%	33.3%	8.3%	4.2%	3.65	1.06
	Overall	15.2%	34.0%	30.5%	14.7%	5.6%	3.39	1.08
44. Chinese instructors should know their students' beliefs about Chinese language learning and teaching.	Non-Asian	11.6%	43.8%	32.2%	10.7%	1.7%	3.52	0.89
	Chinese-origin	9.6%	40.4%	40.4%	9.6%	0.0%	3.55	0.77
	Non-Chinese Asian	20.8%	54.2%	20.8%	0.0%	4.2%	3.81	0.98
	Overall	12.2%	44.2%	33.0%	9.1%	1.5%	3.56	0.88
48. I will maintain my commitment to learning Chinese if Chinese instructors spend less time on pronunciation and grammar exercises but more time on fun communicative language learning activities.	Non-Asian	5.8%	23.1%	38.0%	27.3%	5.8%	2.96	0.97
	Chinese-origin	5.8%	21.2%	53.8%	17.3%	1.9%	3.11	0.87
	Non-Chinese Asian	8.3%	16.7%	58.3%	16.7%	0.0%	3.19	0.80
	Overall	6.1%	21.8%	44.7%	23.4%	4.1%	3.03	0.93
47. Non-Asian students will maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if their classmates in the Chinese class are not almost all from Chinese background.	Non-Asian	8.3%	19.8%	49.6%	14.9%	7.4%	3.08	0.98
	Chinese-origin	3.8%	34.6%	38.5%	19.2%	3.8%	3.15	0.91
	Non-Chinese Asian	16.7%	25.0%	29.2%	25.0%	4.2%	3.19	1.17
	Overall	8.1%	24.4%	44.2%	17.3%	6.1%	3.11	0.99
41. Learning Chinese is mostly a matter of being able to write as many Chinese characters as possible.	Non-Asian	.8%	5.0%	21.5%	48.8%	24.0%	2.11	0.87
	Chinese-origin	3.8%	5.8%	11.5%	61.5%	17.3%	2.09	0.80
	Non-Chinese Asian	0.0%	12.5%	29.2%	33.3%	25.0%	2.38	1.10
	Overall	1.5%	6.1%	19.8%	50.3%	22.3%	2.14	0.89
43. Learning Chinese is more difficult than learning other languages and therefore requires more perseverance.	Non-Asian	17.4%	45.5%	24.8%	9.1%	3.3%	3.65	0.97
	Chinese-origin	25.0%	42.3%	21.2%	11.5%	0.0%	3.83	0.96
	Non-Chinese Asian	8.3%	41.7%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	3.31	0.97
	Overall	18.3%	44.2%	23.9%	11.7%	2.0%	3.65	0.98

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

With reference to Item 44, over half learners (56%) overall endorsed the idea that

Chinese instructors should know their students' beliefs about Chinese learning and teaching, with

non-Chinese Asians reporting higher agreement (75%) than their non-Asian (55%) and Chinese-origin counterparts (50%), suggesting non-Chinese Asians' higher expectations about teachers' role.

It has been contentious as to whether learners of Chinese origin should be placed together with learners of non-Chinese backgrounds (Duff & Li, 2004). Item 47 drew mixed responses, indicating the continued existence of this contention. Overall, one-third learners (33%) agreed that non-Asian students will maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if their classmates in the Chinese class are not almost all from Chinese background, while about one quarter (23%) showed disagreement and 44% were neutral. Discrepancies occurred among the three groups. There was little variation in the reported agreement between non-Chinese Asians and Chinese-origin learners (42% and 38% respectively). However, compared with the two groups of Asians, non-Asians showed lower agreement (28%). Additionally, non-Asian learners reported the highest neutrality (50%), compared with their Chinese-origin (39%) and non-Chinese Asian counterparts (29%). This result may implicitly convey the contradictory psychology of non-Asian learners. On the one hand, some non-Asian learners may consider it disadvantageous and unfair for them to compete against their Chinese-origin counterparts, especially those who had already had exposure to Chinese. On the other hand, these classmates of theirs may prove to be of great academic help in the course of their learning Chinese. Moreover, it was also possible that Chinese-origin learners wished to be in a learning environment where there were language learners of similar ethnic background or peers of their equals with whom they could acquire more Chinese, because some universities offer Chinese language classes to students of Chinese background whose Chinese is more advanced than that of the beginning learners.

When it comes to the nature of learning Chinese, three-quarter learners overall (75%) disagreed that learning Chinese is mostly a matter of being able to write as many Chinese characters as possible. As to item 43, a total of 63% of learners supported the idea that learning Chinese is more difficult than learning other languages and therefore requires more perseverance, with Chinese-origin learners showing the highest agreement (76%) and non-Asians the lowest (50%). The high agreement from Chinese-origin learners may attribute to the fact that most of them had some exposure to Chinese due to their ethnic background and other foreign language learning experiences. Compared with other languages, they perceived Chinese as more difficult. An alternative interpretation was that they did not want to be labeled as "false beginners" who take Chinese for easy credits, and therefore they intentionally emphasized or exaggerated the difficulty level of learning Chinese.

4.2.2 Comparisons of Learners by Ethnicity

This component addresses the second part of Q2, that is, how do language learning beliefs of beginning learners of Chinese from different ethnic backgrounds compare with one another? The results of comparisons are reported of the four BALLI and two BALLI Plus factors underlying beliefs of learners of Chinese from three ethnic groups. Discussions and interpretation of results are primarily focused on the six factor composite variables that were formed by adding up the means of factor items that could be better conceptually grouped together as well as the single factor items that were not integrated into the calculation of their corresponding factor composites due to relatively low conceptual closeness to the factor(s). For instance, the composite score of Factor 2 (*Formal Language Learning Strategy*) was aggregated from Items 17, 23 and 28 that were conceptually closely related (Learning a foreign language is

mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words, grammatical rules, and translating

from my native language). Although mathematically falling into Factor 2, Items 15 and 8 were

not as conceptually close to this factor, therefore not aggregated into the factor composite score.

Items 15 and 8 asked/stated "If someone spent one hour a day learning Chinese, how long would

it take to speak Chinese very well?" and "It is necessary to know the Chinese culture in order to

learn to speak Chinese well." They were analyzed as separate individual items.

For the convenience of readers, it is necessary to recapitulate how the statistical

comparison was performed. Exploratory factor analysis of the 34-item BALLI identified four

conceptually interpretable dimensions underlying learner beliefs regarding language learning: (1)

Motivation, (2) *Formal Language Learning Strategy,* (3) *Communication-oriented Learning*

Strategy, and (4) *Difficulty of Language Learning.* A separate factor analysis of the 14-item

BALLI Plus generated two factors, namely, *Difficulty of Chinese Characters,* and *Commitment*

to and Nature of Chinese Learning. Based on these identified factors, factor composite variables

were formed. Prior to adding up the items for the factor composite, those items whose wording

did not point to the same direction as other items' were recoded to ensure homogeneity in

direction. The single item(s) belonging in each factor that were not integrated into factor

composites were analyzed separately as individual items. Results of comparisons of means of

each factor composite by ethnicity are presented in Table 11.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on learners' ratings of the six

factor composites[8] and revealed presence of statistically significant differences in belief factors

among the three ethnic groups ($p<0.05$). These factors included *Motivation*, $F(2, 194)=8.05$,

[8] Data were checked prior to performing one-way ANOVA for normality, variance, and independence. Results showed that the data generally met all the assumptions.

p=.0004, Formal Language Learning Strategy F (2*, 194)=6.31, *p=.*002, and *Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy, F* (2*, 194)=4.50, *p=.*012.

Table 11

Comparisons of Factor Composites by Learner Ethnic Group

Factor composite	Group	Mean	SD	df	F	Sig.
BALLI Factor 1. Motivation (Items 31,24,29,5,30, 20)	Non-Asian	21.61*	2.86	2	8.048*	.000
	Chinese origin	23.64*	2.85			
	Non-Chinese Asian	22.42	3.59			
	Total	22.20	3.07			
BALLI Factor 2. Formal Language Learning Strategy (Items 17, 23, 28)	Non-Asian	8.02*	2.53	2	6.314*	.002
	Chinese origin	9.15*	2.21			
	Non-Chinese Asian	9.54*	2.58			
	Total	8.49	2.53			
BALLI Factor 3. Communication oriented Language Learning Strategy (Items 13, 14, 9, 22, 21, 7)	Non-Asian	17.88*	3.26	2	4.503*	.012
	Chinese origin	16.21*	3.56			
	Non-Chinese Asian	17.12	2.79			
	Total	17.38	3.34			
BALLI Factor 4. Difficulty of Language Learning (Items 3, 1, 4)	Non-Asian	12.44	1.80	2	.260	.771
	Chinese origin	12.62	1.48			
	Non-Chinese Asian	12.62	1.55			
	Total	12.50	1.70			
BALLI Plus Factor 1. Chinese Characters (Items 35, 37, 39, 36)	Non-Asian	12.57	3.31	2	.295	.745
	Chinese origin	12.36	2.91			
	Non-Chinese Asian	12.08	2.70			
	Total	12.46	3.14			
BALLI Plus Factor 2. Commitment to and Nature of Chinese Learning (Items 44, 45, 46, 48)	Non-Asian	13.35	2.72	2	2.077	.128
	Chinese origin	14.02	2.03			
	Non-Chinese Asian	14.27	2.60			
	Total	13.63	2.57			

Moreover, one-way ANOVA was also performed on learners' ratings of non-factor-composite BALLI items 15, 11, 8, 16, 7, 10, and 26, and BALLI Plus items 40, 47, 41, and 43. Results are presented in Appendix G (Table 35). Statistically significant inter-group differences were observed only for item 16 ("I have foreign language aptitude."), *F* (2*, 194)=3.66, *p=.*027. For ease of results presentation, this item was included in the *Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy* factor.

4.2.2.1 Motivation for Learning Chinese

Scheffe Post hoc tests of ANOVA discovered that while learners overall were highly motivated to learn Chinese, learners of Chinese origin reported significantly higher motivation (*M*=23.64, *SD*=2.85) than their non-Asian counterparts (*M*=21.61, *SD*=2.86).

The discrepancy in motivation between non-Asian and Chinese-origin learners was expected and interpretable. Given their ethnic and linguistic background as well as influence of parent(s), learners of Chinese origin were more interested in their heritage, better aware of the importance of speaking Chinese, and made more association of multi-linguistic ability with intelligence. Therefore they were motivated to learn their ancestral language, possibly participate in the burgeoning Chinese economy, and improve self-efficacy. Alternatively due to their prior more or less oral exposure to their ethnic language or influenced by their Chinese parents or other family members, they desired to learn standard Chinese and/or acquire reading or writing skills, as reflected in their background questionnaire inquiry. The ethnic, linguistic and family backgrounds of the Chinese-origin learners contributed to their greater motivation.

4.2.2.2 Formal Language Learning Strategy

Non-Asian learners were discerned to agree significantly less with *Formal Language Learning Strategy* (*M*=8.02, *SD*=2.53) than their non-Chinese Asian (*M*=9.54, *SD*=2.58) and Chinese origin (*M*=9.15, *SD*=2.21) counterparts. This result seemed to suggest the role ethnic backgrounds played in learners' choice of learning strategies. Earlier research has established the assumption that Asian learners tend to prefer rote memorization strategies and rule-oriented strategies (Huang & Van Naerrsen 1987; Oxford, 2003; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985). Asian learners in the present study preferred formal learning strategies probably because of the predominate use of such strategies while acquiring their ethnic language

that entails learning and memorizing substantial Chinese characters to be literate. Furthermore, their prior knowledge about Chinese characters and awareness of what was required to master these characters may further contribute to their choice of such strategies.

4.2.2.3 Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy

Non-Asian learners showed a noticeable preference (*M*=18.88, *SD*=3.26) for *Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy* compared to learners of Chinese origin (*M*=16.21, *SD*=3.56). No significant difference existed between non-Asian and non-Chinese Asian learners. At the item level, non-Asian learners showed stronger endorsement of item 16 ("I have foreign language aptitude.") (*M*=3.65, *SD*=0.83) than their non-Chinese Asian counterparts (*M*=3.19, *SD*=0.85).

At the factor level, cultural influence may be attributable to the presence of significant disparity. As discussed in the earlier section, in East Asian cultures, face matters. When it comes to learning languages, Chinese-origin learners might regard it as a loss of face if they mispronounced words or expressed themselves incorrectly, since they, being ethnically Chinese, were expected to speak better Chinese than others. Furthermore, they might have grown up in a Chinese dialect speaking family, such as Cantonese, and were aware of their difficulty in switching to speak Mandarin using standard pronunciation. Most Chinese dialects differ entirely in pronunciation, and people who can only speak dialects are virtually unable to verbally communicate with each other. As a result, it can be even harder for Chinese dialect speakers to learn to pronounce Mandarin correctly than those who have never learned Chinese previously. Therefore, these learners' prior exposure to Chinese probably made them more cognizant of the difficulty in adjusting their pronunciation.

At the item level, the gap in perceptions about language aptitude between non-Asians and their non-Chinese Asian counterparts illustrated how cultural backgrounds might influence self-perceptions. In Asian cultures, personal modesty is valued and advocated, whereas in western cultures positive self-perceptions are encouraged (Le, 2004).

4.2.3 Summary of learner beliefs and comparisons of learner beliefs by ethnicity

At the BALLI level, the pattern of learner beliefs showed that, overall, learners gave high ratings to the survey items that measured learner motivation and language learning difficulty. This interesting pattern indicated that learners were highly motivated to learn Chinese while still acknowledging its difficulty. On average, learners gave moderate ratings to the items that measured beliefs in formal language learning strategies as well as the items that measured beliefs in communication-oriented learning strategies.

Separation of learners by ethnicity revealed a clear pattern concerning the role of culture in influencing learner beliefs. Chinese-origin learners reported more motivation to learn Chinese than their non-Asian counterparts. Non-Chinese Asians scored in between and did not differ significantly from either of their counterparts. Asian learners, including Chinese-origin and non-Chinese origin Asians, reported more support for formal language learning strategies than non-Asians. In contrast, non-Asians reported more support for communication-oriented strategies than their Chinese-origin counterparts. Again, non-Chinese Asians scored in between and did not differ significantly from either of their counterparts. Non-Asians reported more positive perceptions about their foreign language aptitude than non-Chinese Asians.

These results suggested that the three ethnic learner groups all possessed person and task knowledge as it related to their language aptitude, what motivated them to choose to learn

Chinese, and what was required to learn Chinese as well as strategic knowledge as it related to what language learning strategies were and why they were useful. They shared some person and task knowledge, specifically with regard to the existence of language learning difficulty hierarchy, while at the same time differing to varying extent in strategic knowledge.

At the BALLI Plus level, with regard to the specific characteristics of learning Chinese, Items 36 and 35 received the highest agreement that related to the concurrent introduction of Chinese characters and Pinyin (70%) and Pinyin first (68%). Item 37 (Chinese characters should be introduced about one month after students have had some taste of the language) obtained the lowest agreement (34%). Somewhere in the middle were students who believed in Chinese characters being the most interesting part (58%) as well as the most difficult part (56%) and Chinese tones being the hardest part (56%) of learning Chinese.

In terms of commitment to learning Chinese, the item that drew the highest agreement (63%) pertained to learning Chinese requiring more perseverance (Item 43), following by Items 44 and 45 (56% respectively) that stated that Chinese instructors should know learners' beliefs and teach Chinese in a fashion that meets their beliefs about Chinese learning. Receiving a good grade appeared to be half students' drive towards commitment to learning Chinese (Item 46). Item 41 received the lowest endorsement (13%) that stated that learning Chinese is mostly learning to write Chinese characters. The last two items (47 and 48) also received low endorsement (33% and 28%) that stated that non-Asians will remain committed to learning Chinese if without Chinese-origin learners being classmates and that students will commit to learning Chinese if teachers spend more time on fun communicative language learning activities.

Separation of learners by ethnicity did not discover significant differences on the two BALLI Plus factor composites in relation to difficulty of Chinese characters and commitment to

and nature of Chinese learning. This might suggest that on the whole learners had more or less similar metacognitive person, task and strategic knowledge specifically relating to these aspects of learning Chinese.

4.3 Teacher Beliefs about Language Learning

This section presents the results of descriptive statistics performed for the teacher version BALLI and BALLI Plus items in order to address research question 3 (Q3). Given that the teacher sample was not large enough to factor analyze the two inventories, the factors generated by the learner sample were adopted to describe teacher beliefs and the sequence of result presentation is thus aligned with that for the learner sample.

Q3. What beliefs do teachers of Chinese hold about language learning?

Of specific note is that the teacher version BALLI consisted of 27 items, which were also an integral part of the 34 items in the learner version. Additionally, in accordance with the factors and their constituent items produced by the learner sample, nine items from the teacher version did not fall into any of the four factors and were thus excluded from the descriptions in this section. Since the 14 BALLI Plus items were identical in both teacher and learner versions, only one item was excluded from descriptions. Nevertheless, teachers' responses to these excluded items are provided in Table 36 in Appendix H.

4.3.1 BALLI Factor 1. Motivation for Learning Chinese

For the teacher version BALLI, items of Factor 1 included 29, 30 and 20, which were

identical to those in the learner version BALLI[9]. These items concerned the teachers' perceptions on learners' reasons for learning Chinese, and the importance of speaking Chinese from others' perspectives. Teacher responses to the items are displayed in Table 12.

Table 12

Teachers' Ratings for Motivation-related Items

Item	Group N=62	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
29. If students learn Chinese very well, it will help them to get a good job.	Teacher	6.5%	59.7%	33.9%	0.0%	0.0%	3.73	0.58
30. People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.	Teacher	1.6%	29.0%	54.8%	14.5%	0.0%	3.18	0.69
20. People in my country feel that it is important to speak Chinese.	Teacher	9.7%	40.3%	43.5%	6.5%	0.0%	3.53	0.76

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Items in this factor did not attract the full range of responses from teachers. When asked to rate "If students learn Chinese very well, it will help them to get a good job", the majority of teachers reported agreement (66%), one in three (34%) were neutral, and no one disagreed. With reference to Item 30, nearly one in three teachers (31%) associated language skills with intelligence, and over half (55%) were neutral. The high neutrality suggested teachers' hesitation about making this association. When asked "People in my country feel that it is important to speak Chinese", half reported agreement while 44% remained neutral. The neutrality may suggest teachers' uncertainty of contextualizing this statement. In sum, while more than two thirds of teachers rated highly learners' career-related motivation for learning Chinese, less than one third of teachers viewed being bilingual or multilingual as an indication of intelligence.

4.3.2 BALLI Factor 2. Formal Language Learning Strategy

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[9] For ease of reading and comparisons, the item number used in this section reporting on results of teacher beliefs was made consistent with the number that showed in the learner version BALLI. But in the teacher version BALLI in the Appendix, the item number used in this section may differ.

The BALLI Factor 2 in the teacher version consists of items 17, 23, 28, 15, 11, and 8. These items measured the teachers' perspectives on formal language learning strategies. Teachers' response distribution is presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Teachers' Ratings for Items on Formal Language Learning Strategy

Item	Group N=62	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
17. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words.	Teacher	6.5%	16.1%	14.5%	40.3%	22.6%	2.44	1.20
23. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.	Teacher	1.6%	14.5%	16.1%	53.2%	14.5%	2.35	0.96
28. Learning Chinese is mostly a matter of translating from the native language.	Teacher	1.6%	6.5%	9.7%	54.8%	27.4%	2.00	0.89
15. If someone spent one hour a day learning Chinese, how long would it take to speak Chinese very well?	Teacher	6.5%	9.7%	48.4%	27.4%	8.1%	2.79	0.96
11. People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages.	Teacher	1.6%	1.6%	21.0%	45.2%	30.6%	1.98	0.86
8. It is necessary to know the Chinese culture in order to learn to speak Chinese well.	Teacher	25.8%	53.2%	14.5%	6.5%	0.0%	3.98	0.82

Note. For Item 15, 1=less than one year, 2=1-2 years, 3=3-5 years, 4=6-10 years, 5=you cannot learn Chinese in one hour a day. For all other items,1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Teacher responses to the items relating to learning strategies appeared to demonstrate teachers' rejection of traditional language learning strategies. When asked whether learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words, a majority of teachers (63%) reported disagreement. Likewise, nearly seven in ten teachers (68%) did not believe the focus of language learning should be on grammar rules. An even higher proportion of teachers (82%) rejected the idea that learning Chinese is mostly a matter of translating from the native language. The high disagreement rate of these items indicated that most teachers of Chinese did not hold the traditional views of learning languages.

As documented by other researchers (Rath, 2001; Polat, 2009), teacher beliefs often influence and guide teachers' instructional decision making and practices. It follows that teachers' beliefs in the present study suggested that most teachers tended not to practice the traditional teaching method which prioritizes grammar or form-focused instruction in classrooms. As indicated in their background information questionnaire, the vast majority of these teachers (91%) received education or training specializing on language teaching theories or second/foreign language acquisition theories in Western countries, which are home to communicative language teaching (CLT). Furthermore, they had had experiences of teaching Chinese in North America as well as learning foreign languages, and thereby had developed a repertoire of what they viewed as effective learning and teaching strategies.

When it comes to the length of time it takes to speak Chinese well, teachers generally were fairly optimistic about learners' ability to be fluent in Chinese. Almost half of the teachers (48%) chose three to five years. More than one quarter (27%) selected one to two years. Wang and colleague (2008) pointed out that it may take speakers of European languages four times as long to move from beginner to operational levels in Chinese, as opposed to learning another European language like French or Spanish. Teachers were supposed to hold a realistic view on time commitment to learning a non-cognate language as Chinese and convey this message to learners. However, in the present study, some teachers appeared to be over-optimistic. Learners, if overoptimistic about time required to speak Chinese well, may feel frustrated when their expectations fail to be met. Teachers therefore should deliver the correct message to the students. As to the importance of culture in language learning, the great majority (79%) rated it high.

4.3.3 BALLI Factor 3. Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy

The teacher version BALLI Factor 3 included items 14, 9, 22, and 7. They measured teachers' beliefs in communication-oriented language learning strategies. Teacher response distribution is found in Table 14.

Table 14

Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy

Item	Group N=62	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
14. It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in Chinese.	Teacher	32.3%	56.5%	8.1%	3.2%	0.0%	4.18	0.71
9. You shouldn't say anything in Chinese until you can say it correctly.	Teacher	1.6%	0.0%	3.2%	58.1%	37.1%	1.71	0.69
22. If learners of Chinese are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be difficult for them to get rid of the mistakes later on.	Teacher	6.5%	30.6%	16.1%	40.3%	6.5%	2.90	1.11
7. It is important to speak Chinese with excellent pronunciation.	Teacher	12.9%	53.2%	21.0%	12.9%	0.0%	3.66	0.87

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Item 14 (guessing unknown Chinese words) elicited predominant agreement from teachers (89%). As well, teachers almost unanimously (95%) rejected the statement that one shouldn't say anything in Chinese until h/she can say it correctly. Teachers' strong beliefs in meaning-focused strategies (Items 14 and 9), for the most part, echoed their rejection of formal language learning strategies. When asked whether learners of Chinese are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning without being corrected, teachers showed varied views. Slightly less than half teachers (46%) reported disagreement whereas 37% showed agreement. These mixed responses reflect the current debate in SLA literature with regard to error correction. Teachers' response pattern observed in these items suggested that teachers place more emphasis on communication rather than accuracy in learning Chinese, pointing to their tendency to adopt

communicative language teaching (CLT) which downplays the role of grammar or form-focused instruction (Spada, 2007). Teacher' favourable attitude towards CLT seemed to conform to the contemporary language teaching pedagogy.

Interestingly, item 7 pertaining to the importance of excellent pronunciation received high ratings from the teachers (66%). Teacher responses to these items revealed teachers' conflicting beliefs about language learning. On the one hand, most teachers highly advocated meaning-based strategies with a focus on fluency; on the other hand, they tended to support the idea that emphasizes accuracy in speaking Chinese. Presumably, teachers surveyed were well aware of the importance of correct pronunciation in learning languages as foreign as Chinese, especially at the early stage, and therefore they were traditional on their view of accuracy in this regard.

4.3.4 BALLI Factor 4. Difficulty of Language Learning

This factor was comprised of 5 items, namely, items 3, 1, 4, 10, and 26. Teacher responses to these items are reported in Table 15.

The vast majority of teachers supported the statements that "Some languages are easier to learn than others" (76%), "It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language" (85%), and that "It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one (74%). A total of 65% of teachers rated Chinese as a difficult/very difficult language. The item concerning the importance of practicing in the language laboratory drew divided views. Nearly half (47%) agreed with the statement while one third (34%) showed neutrality. The neutrality may be accounted for by the fact that in some colleges, no language labs are provided. As to difficulty of language learning, most teachers acknowledge a foreign language learning difficulty hierarchy. In this hierarchy, Chinese, for the most part, was ranked as a difficult language.

Table 15

Distribution of Teacher Responses to Items Related to Difficulty of Language Learning

Item	Group N=62	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
3. Some languages are easier to learn than others.	Teacher	29.0%	46.8%	12.9%	9.7%	1.6%	3.92	0.98
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.	Teacher	43.5%	41.9%	9.7%	4.8%	0.0%	4.24	0.82
4. Chinese is: 1=a very easy language, 2=an easy language, 3=a language of medium difficulty, 4=a difficult language, 5=a very difficult language.	Teacher	12.9%	51.6%	30.6%	3.2%	1.6%	3.71	0.80
10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	Teacher	11.3%	62.9%	21.0%	4.8%	0.0%	3.81	0.70
26. It is important to practice in the language laboratory.	Teacher	8.1%	38.7%	33.9%	19.4%	0.0%	3.35	0.89

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

4.3.5 BALLI Plus Factor 1. Difficulty of Chinese Characters

The composition of this factor in teacher version is identical to that in learner version, Included are items 37, 36, 35, 39, 40, and 38. Teachers' related responses are shown in Table 16.

When asked whether "Chinese characters should be introduced about one month after students have had some taste of the language", 39% of the teachers did not support this idea and 37% remained neutral. A total of 42% of teachers agreed to introduce Chinese characters from the first day of learning Chinese along with learning pinyin, while one third (34%) were neutral and about one quarter disagreed. Teachers' neutrality towards the timing of the introduction of Chinese characters suggested either their indifference to this issue or their ambiguity because there is a lack of empirical evidence with regard to which method is more effective than the other.

Table 16

Difficulty of Chinese Characters

Item	Group	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
37. Chinese characters should be introduced about one month after students have had some taste of the language.	Teacher	4.8%	19.4%	37.1%	33.9%	4.8%	2.85	0.96
36. Chinese characters should be introduced from the first day of learning Chinese along with learning pinyin.	Teacher	12.9%	29.0%	33.9%	19.4%	4.8%	3.26	1.07
35. Students should start with Roman letters (pinyin) when they begin to learn Chinese.	Teacher	12.9%	67.7%	12.9%	6.5%	0.0%	3.87	0.71
39. Chinese characters are the most difficult part of learning Chinese.	Teacher	14.5%	27.4%	46.8%	11.3%	0.0%	3.45	0.88
40. Chinese characters are the most interesting part of learning Chinese.	Teacher	6.5%	38.7%	41.9%	12.9%	0.0%	3.39	0.80
38. Chinese tones are the most difficult part of learning Chinese.	Teacher	8.1%	40.3%	27.4%	24.2%	0.0%	3.32	0.94

Note.1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Not surprisingly, the vast majority of teachers (82%) favoured the idea that students should start with Roman letters (Pinyin) when they begin to learn Chinese. Like teaching any languages, teachers start off by teaching phonetics to help learners pronounce words, and Pinyin is the official phonetic system for transcribing the sound of Chinese characters into Latin script. As to whether Chinese characters are the most difficult part of learning Chinese, 47% of teachers showed neutral attitude, while 42% agreed. Nevertheless, 45% of teachers also agreed that Chinese characters are the most interesting part, and 42% were neutral. Almost half of teachers (48%) believed that the most difficult part of learning Chinese lies in Chinese tones.

Teachers' responses to these items suggested that the beliefs teachers held were somewhat divided and some beliefs were not as divided as the others. The results also point to the debate on the major issues in relation to Chinese instruction, which is still prevalent among the teachers and will likely continue to be so. It is highly likely that when to introduce Chinese

characters does not matter very much and teachers simply employ an approach that they consider is effective. The lack of homogeneity in teacher responses may also suggest that teaching Chinese as a foreign language is a profession far from being unified and sound research is needed on the effective methods of teaching Chinese. With regard to the difficulty of Chinese characters or tones, teachers' heterogeneous responses may indicate teachers' consideration of the contexts of the statements. For example, for learners of Chinese-origin and non-Asians, Chinese characters may be the most difficult part, while for non-Chinese Asians, such as Japanese and Korean, Chinese tones are more challenging than characters (see related discussion in the learner survey).

4.3.6 BALLI Plus Factor 2. Commitment to and Nature of Chinese Learning

The composition of this factor in teacher version was also identical to that in learner version. Items 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, and 48 were included in this factor. Teacher responses to the items are shown in Table 17.

Over half teachers (55%) agreed that students will maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if the instructor teaches Chinese in a way that meets their beliefs about Chinese learning and teaching. A substantial number of teachers (47%) were in support of the association of learners' commitment to learning Chinese with good grades. Almost four in ten (39%), however, showed neutrality about this association. The recurring pattern of teacher responses indicating neutrality posed challenges in interpretation. It may indicate teachers' indifference to or their uncertainty about this issue being asked.

Table 17

Commitment to and Nature of Chinese Learning

Item	Group	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
45. Students will maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if the instructor teaches Chinese in a way that meets their beliefs about Chinese learning and teaching.	Teacher	8.1%	46.8%	30.6%	14.5%	0.0%	3.48	0.84
46. I will maintain my commitment to learning Chinese if I receive a good grade from the Chinese class.	Teacher	4.8%	41.9%	38.7%	14.5%	0.0%	3.37	0.79
44. Chinese instructors should know their students' beliefs about Chinese language learning and teaching.	Teacher	9.7%	62.9%	25.8%	1.6%	0.0%	3.81	0.62
48. I will maintain my commitment to learning Chinese if Chinese instructors spend less time on pronunciation and grammar exercises but more time on fun communicative language learning activities.	Teacher	8.1%	45.2%	30.6%	14.5%	1.6%	3.44	0.90
47. Non-Asian students will maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if their classmates in the Chinese class are not almost all from Chinese background.	Teacher	11.3%	59.7%	22.6%	4.8%	1.6%	3.74	0.79
41. Learning Chinese is mostly a matter of being able to write as many Chinese characters as possible.	Teacher	3.2%	3.2%	8.1%	61.3%	24.2%	2.00	0.87
43. Learning Chinese is more difficult than learning other languages and therefore requires more perseverance.	Teacher	16.1%	30.6%	37.1%	14.5%	1.6%	3.45	0.99

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Slightly over half teachers (53%) agreed that they should place more emphasis on fun communicative language learning activities than grammar exercises, suggesting teachers' lack of consensus on this issue. A majority of teachers (73%) believed that Chinese instructors should know students' beliefs about Chinese language learning and teaching, indicating their desire to better understand students. A similar proportion of teachers (71%) agreed that non-Asian

students will maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if their classmates in the Chinese class are not almost all from Chinese background. When asked whether "Learning Chinese is mostly a matter of being able to write as many Chinese characters as possible", the vast majority (86%) disagreed. As to whether learning Chinese is more difficult and requires more perseverance, 47% showed agreement and 37% reported neutrality.

4.3.7 Summary of Teacher Beliefs about Language Learning

The pattern for teacher beliefs indicated that teachers generally agreed with the association of learning Chinese with job opportunities (Item 29) and perceived importance of speaking Chinese from others' perspectives. However, more than half teachers remained neutral about the connection of multilingual abilities with intelligence. Teachers reported more support for communication-oriented language learning strategies than for formal language learning strategies. As well, teachers reported high agreement with language learning difficulty hierarchy.

With regard to the specific characteristics of learning Chinese, Item 35 received the highest agreement, that is, Pinyin first (80%). Item 37 (Chinese characters should be introduced about one month after students have had some taste of the language) obtained the lowest agreement (24%). Somewhere in the middle were teachers who showed agreement with Chinese tones being the hardest part (48%), Chinese characters being the most interesting part (45%) and Chinese characters being the most interesting part (42%) of learning Chinese, as well as the concurrent introduction of Chinese characters and Pinyin obtained (42%).

In terms of commitment to and nature of learning Chinese, the items that drew the highest agreement pertained to teachers' knowing learners' beliefs about Chinese learning (Item 44, 73%), and non-Asians' commitment to learning Chinese if without Chinese-origin learners being

classmates (Item 47, 71%). Item 41 received the lowest endorsement (6%) that stated that

learning Chinese is mostly learning to write Chinese characters. In the middle were Item 45 that

stated that Chinese instructors should teach Chinese in a fashion that meets learners' beliefs

about Chinese learning (55%) and Item 48 that stated that students will commit to learning

Chinese if teachers spend more time on fun communicative language learning activities (53%).

Item 43 relating to learning Chinese requiring more perseverance and Item 46 relating to a good

grade being students' drive towards learning Chinese drew close to half agreement (47%

respectively).

4.4 Comparisons of Teacher and Learner Beliefs

This section is focused on comparisons of teacher and learner beliefs in attempts to

identify matches and mismatches to address research question 4 (Q4). Similar to the comparison

among the learner groups, comparisons of teachers and learners were carried out both at the

factor level and at the item level, using the BALLI and BALLI Plus factor composites and

individual items. Discussion and interpretation of the results are presented accordingly.

Q4. How do teachers' beliefs compare with learners' beliefs, and how do teachers' beliefs

compare with beliefs of learners from different ethnic backgrounds respectively?

4.4.1 Mismatches in Beliefs between Teachers and Learners of Chinese

For comparison purposes, the factors generated from the learner sample served as the

dependent variables. Of the 27 BALLI items in the teacher version, nine items did not fall into

any of the four factors and were thus excluded from the presentation in this section. The

remaining 18 items were used to calculate factor composites. Factor composites were formed by

the items with high loadings that made conceptual sense. Those items with relative low loadings

were not integrated into factor composites, thereby used as individual items for teacher-learner comparisons.

A total of 18 items from the teacher version BALLI were factored into the four factor composites. BALLI Factor 1 was comprised of items 25, 24, and 17. BALLI items 14, 19, 23, 13, 10, and 7 made up Factor 2. The constituent items of BALLI Factor 3 included items 12, 8, 18, and 6, while items 3, 1, 4, 9, and 21 made up BALLI Factor 4.

Given that the 14 BALLI Plus items were identical in both teacher and learner versions, the two factor composites resulting from learner sample and their corresponding constituent items remained the same for the teacher sample. BALLI Plus Factor 1 thus included items 30, 29, 28, 32, 33, and 31, while BALLI Plus Factor 2 was made up of items 38, 39, 41, 37, 40, 34, and 36. The items utilized for calculation of the four BALLI and two BALLI Plus factor composites are illustrated in Table 18.

Independent-sample t-tests were performed to compare teacher and learner beliefs at the factor level. As illustrated in the table below, statistically significant differences were present between teacher and learner beliefs in four out of the six factors ($p<0.05$), namely, *Motivation for Learning Chinese*, *Formal Language Learning Strategy*, *Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy*, and *Difficulty of Language Learning*.

Further comparisons found significant gaps in BALLI Factor 1 between teachers and non-Asians, and Chinese-origin learners (Table 19). BALLI Factors 2 and 3 revealed remarkable mismatches between teachers and all the three learner groups. In addition, teachers and learners of Chinese origin showed only marginally significant incongruences in BALLI Factor 4.

Table 18

Comparisons of Belief Factors between Teachers and Learners

Factor composite	Group[1]	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
BALLI Factor 1. Motivation (Items 24, 25)	Teacher	6.90	1.02	-3.77*	.000
	Learner	7.59	1.33		
BALLI Factor 2. Formal Language Learning Strategy (Items 14, 19, 23)	Teacher	6.79	2.47	-4.68*	.000
	Learner	8.48	2.52		
BALLI Factor 3. Communication oriented Language Learning Strategy (Items 12, 18, 8)	Teacher	11.57	1.76	4.71*	.000
	Learner	10.07	2.33		
BALLI Factor 4. Difficulty of Language Learning (Items 1, 3, 4)	Teacher	11.87	1.89	-2.61	.010
	Learner	12.52	1.67		
BALLI Plus Factor 1. Chinese Characters (Items 28, 30, 29)	Teacher	9.46	2.00	1.54	.125
	Learner	8.98	2.73		
BALLI Plus Factor 2. Commitment to and Nature of Chinese Learning (Items 37, 38, 39, 41, 32)	Teacher	17.55	2.44	1.17	.244
	Learner	17.07	2.91		

Note. 1. For teachers, N=62, and for learners, N=200, with *df*=260.

Using independent sample t-tests, item level analyses discovered the existence of statistically significant mismatches between teachers and learners overall in four items. They were related to the importance of speaking Chinese from other people's perspectives (Item 17), the importance of excellent pronunciation (Item 6), Chinese tones (Item 31), non-Asian learners' commitment to learning Chinese (Item 40) (see Table 20).

Further comparisons found striking divergences of teachers with all the three learner groups in beliefs about excellent pronunciation and non-Asian learners' commitment to learning Chinese (Table 21). In terms of the importance of speaking Chinese from others' perspectives, teachers undoubtedly showed a notable gap with non-Asian learners. Incongruity in perceptions of the difficulty of Chinese tones was found between teachers and non-Chinese Asians.

Table 19

Comparisons of Belief Factors between Teachers and Different Ethnic Learner Groups

Factor composite	Group[1,2]	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
BALLI Factor 1. Motivation (Items 24, 25)	Teacher	6.90	1.02		
	Non-Asian	7.38	1.32	2.51*	.013
	Chinese Origin	8.09	1.18	5.61*	.000
	Non-Chinese Asian	7.38	1.53	1.48	.149
BALLI Factor 2. Formal Language Learning Strategy (Items 14, 19, 23)	Teacher	6.79	2.47		
	Non-Asian	8.01	2.54	3.10*	.002
	Chinese Origin	9.15	2.21	5.17*	.000
	Non-Chinese Asian	9.54	2.58	4.70*	.000
BALLI Factor 3. Communication oriented Language Learning Strategy (Items 12, 18, 8)	Teacher	11.57	1.76		
	Non-Asian	10.35	2.34	-4.00*	.000
	Chinese Origin	9.60	2.33	-4.86*	.000
	Non-Chinese Asian	10.00	2.35	-3.45*	.001
BALLI Factor 4. Difficulty of Language Learning (Items 1, 3, 4)	Teacher	11.87	1.89		
	Non-Asian	12.41	1.80	1.91	.058
	Chinese Origin	12.62	1.48	2.23*	.028
	Non-Chinese Asian	12.62	1.55	1.77	.081

Note. 1. N (teachers)=62; N (learners)=200. 2. For comparisons of teachers and non-Asians, *df*=183. For comparisons of teachers and Chinese-origin learners, *df*=107. For comparisons of teachers and non-Chinese Asians, *df*=86.

Table 20

Comparisons of Belief Items between Teachers and Learners

Item	Group[1]	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
17. People in my country feel that it is important to speak Chinese.	Teacher	2.77	0.82	-3.37*	.001
	Learner	2.53	0.87		
13. If someone spent one hour a day learning Chinese, how long would it take them to speak Chinese very well?	Teacher	2.79	0.96	0.41	.683
	Learner	2.73	1.04		
10. People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages.	Teacher	1.98	0.86	0.69	.492
	Learner	1.90	0.86		
7. It is necessary to know the Chinese culture in order to learn to speak Chinese well.	Teacher	3.98	0.82	1.71	.088
	Learner	3.77	0.86		
6. It is important to speak Chinese with excellent pronunciation.	Teacher	3.66	0.87	-6.34*	.000
	Learner	4.36	0.73		
21. It is important to practice in the language laboratory.	Teacher	3.35	0.89	-0.92	.361
	Learner	3.47	0.89		
33. Chinese characters are the most interesting part of learning Chinese.	Teacher	3.39	0.80	-0.95	.342
	Learner	3.50	1.03		
31. Chinese tones are the most difficult part of learning Chinese.	Teacher	3.32	0.94	-2.12*	.036
	Learner	3.63	1.22		
40. Non-Asian students will maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if their classmates in the Chinese class are not almost all from Chinese background.	Teacher	3.74	0.79	4.53*	.000
	Learner	3.13	0.98		
34. Learning Chinese is mostly a matter of being able to write as many Chinese characters as possible.	Teacher	2.00	0.87	-1.02	.308
	Learner	2.13	0.89		
36. Learning Chinese is more difficult than learning other languages and therefore requires more perseverance.	Teacher	3.45	0.99	-1.32	.189
	Learner	3.64	0.96		

Note. 1. For teachers, N=62, and for learners, N=200, with *df*=260.

4.4.1.1 Learner and Teacher Beliefs about Motivation for Learning Chinese

Learners overall (M=7.59, SD=1.33) reported significantly more endorsement than teachers (M=6.90, SD=1.02) of the motivation-related statements put together, such as "if students learn Chinese very well, it will help them to get a good job", and "People who speak

more than one language are very intelligent." It appeared that learners were more likely to

associate capabilities of speaking Chinese or multiple foreign languages with career prospects

and intelligence, whereas teachers did not exhibit as strong agreement. At the learner group level,

the greatest discrepancy was found between teachers and Chinese-origin learners (M=8.08,

SD=1.18), followed by non-Asians (M=7.38, SD=1.32).

Table 21

Comparisons of Belief Items of Teachers with Learner Groups

Item	Group	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig.
6. It is important to speak Chinese with excellent pronunciation.	Teacher	3.66	0.87			
	Non-Asian	4.39	0.72	183	6.06*	.000
	Chinese Origin	4.34	0.76	107	4.27*	.000
	Non-Chinese Asian	4.35	0.69	86	3.58*	.001
17. People in my country feel that it is important to speak Chinese.	Teacher	3.53	0.76			
	Non-Asian	2.67	1.01	183	-6.50*	.000
	Chinese Origin	3.60	0.88	107	0.40	.687
	Non-Chinese Asian	3.54	0.71	86	0.97	.169
31. Chinese tones are the most difficult part of learning Chinese.	Teacher	3.32	0.94			
	Non-Asian	3.46	1.26	183	0.81	.420
	Chinese Origin	3.62	1.19	107	1.40	.165
	Non-Chinese Asian	3.88	1.14	86	2.40*	.018
40. Non-Asian students will maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if their classmates in the Chinese class are not almost all from Chinese background.	Teacher	3.74	0.79			
	Non-Asian	3.08	0.99	183	-4.58*	.000
	Chinese Origin	3.15	0.91	107	-3.64*	.000
	Non-Chinese Asian	3.19	1.17	86	-2.20*	.034

A further examination of the two motivation-related items found that the major gap lay in

perceptions of the association of multilingual ability with intelligence. Less than one third of

teachers (31%) endorsed this statement, whereas half of Chinese-origin learners and 44% of non-

Asians showed agreement. Further, two thirds (66%) of teachers associated learning Chinese

with good job prospects, whereas three quarters (75%) of Chinese-origin learners did so. This

discrepancy between teachers and Chinese-origin learners may be due to the previous finding

that teachers of Chinese have tended to think that learners from Chinese background choose

elementary Chinese largely for easy credit (Li & Duff, 2008). Therefore teachers were less open

to being aware of these Chinese learners' self-efficacy needs and strong instrumental motivation.

These results suggested that teachers may have underestimated learners' motivation. This result

suggested implications regarding what teachers need to do to sustain learners' motivation, which

will be addressed in a later section.

4.4.1.2 Learner and Teacher Beliefs about Formal Language Learning Strategy

At the factor level, learners overall exhibited much more supportive attitudes (M=8.48,

SD=2.52) towards formal language learning strategies than did teachers (M=6.79, SD=2.47), and

the disparity was observed of teachers with all three learner groups (see Tables 18 & 19). In

other words, learners, irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds, reported stronger beliefs than

teachers in the priority of vocabulary and grammar rules, and translation from their native

language in the course of learning foreign languages, specifically Chinese. This noteworthy

mismatch between teachers and learners observed in the present study confirmed similar results

from other BALLI studies (Bernat, 2007; Peacock, 1999; Siebert, 2003). The study of learners of

Chinese by Samimy et al. (1998) found similar results and attributed them to the fact that

teachers are more experienced and knowledgeable about foreign language learning. Other

researchers expressed similar views (see Bernat; Peacock; & Siebert).

The more favourable attitudes learners held towards the traditional approach can have a

few explanations. Learner beliefs might be established largely on a "myth" concerning the

usefulness of grammar study that has been passed on from generation to generation of FL/L2

learners (Schulz, 1996). Learner beliefs may be influenced by their prior learning experience

and the then instructional environment, where curriculum was grammar-based, or testing method

emphasized accuracy. These experiences may have convinced learners that their learning was

facilitated by rule awareness or a focus on form was what language learning required (Kern, 1995). Learners' traditional perspectives of language learning will most likely lead learners to spend more energy in memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules (Horwitz, 1988). On the part of teachers, it is very likely that the academic and professional training on language learning and teaching they had received plus many years' teaching practices, as reflected in their background information questionnaire, have broadened and enriched their knowledge base and views about foreign language learning, thus having developed a comprehensive, balanced outlook. Therefore, teachers' preferences appeared to have shifted away from the traditional learning approach and leaning more towards a communicative approach (which will be addressed in the section that follows). Alexander and Dochy (1995) have also reported in their study of 54 adults that the top two factors that shaped their beliefs are information/knowledge and education/experience.

4.4.1.3 Learner and Teacher Beliefs about Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy

At the factor level, teachers surveyed professed a remarkably higher liking (M=11.57, SD=1.76) for communication-oriented language learning strategies than did learners (M=10.07, SD=2.33). Additionally, the pronounced divergence was detected of teachers with all the three learner groups (see Table 19). Interestingly, learners did not express as strong a desire for this strategy as did teachers. In comparison, the teachers' attitudes towards meaning-focused strategies were in consonance with the underpinnings of the Western-based communicative language teaching (CLT) which has a primacy of fluency over grammatical accuracy (Item 6). Teachers' self-reported positive stance towards CLT corresponds to the contemporary pedagogical trend in L2/FL instruction (Spada, 2007). After all, an overwhelming majority of teachers surveyed in the present study received their post-secondary education or training in

western countries (91%), and therefore were more inclined to adopt CLT. The discrepancy in

beliefs in this regard between teachers and learners was also reported in other studies (Bernat,

2007; Horwitz, 1985; Kern, 1995; Peacock, 1999; Samimy & Lee, 1999; Siebert, 2003). In their

studies, these researchers have attributed the gaps in beliefs between teachers and learners to the

fact that teachers have acquired comprehensive beliefs about language learning through language

teaching methodology courses and teaching practices in language classrooms which learners did

not go through.

4.4.1.4 Learner and Teacher Beliefs about Difficulty of Language Learning

Learners overall (M=12.52, SD=1.67) expressed more support for the concept of a

language learning difficulty hierarchy than did teachers (M=11.87, SD=1.89). Learners viewed

learning a foreign/Chinese language as difficult to a greater extent than did teachers. It is not

surprising that learners tended to think some languages are easier than others and rated Chinese

as a difficult language. When learners' ethnic backgrounds were factored in, significant

disagreement surfaced between teachers and learners of Chinese origin (Table 18). However this

difference was only marginal, thus negligible (*p*=0.03).

4.4.1.5 Learner and Teacher Beliefs at the Item Level

There was a pronounced discrepancy between learners and teachers with regard to beliefs

about excellent pronunciation. Learners showed substantially more agreement (M=4.36,

SD=0.73) than did teachers (M=3.66, SD=0.87). The significant difference was present between

teachers and all the three learner groups (Table 20). The high agreement rate for Item 6 (91%) in

the present study was comparable to that of the BALLI studies of American learners of Chinese

(Le, 2004; Samimy et al., 1997). Furthermore, the agreement rate for this item by both learners

and teachers was nonetheless higher than that in other BALLI studies of English speakers

learning other European languages or EFL students (Bernat, 2007; Horwitz, 1985; Kern, 1995; Peacock, 1999; Siebert, 2003). This pattern was likely attributable to the characteristics of the Chinese language. Unlike Western languages that use alphabetic systems, Chinese largely use ideograph systems with completely different pronunciation systems. Chinese pronunciation is both articulatory (which was more or less represented by the alphabet(s) in Pinyin) and prosodic (which was represented mostly by tones). It might be that some respondents in this study did not differentiate articulatory and prosodic aspects of pronunciation, so the concern over pronunciation might be evidence of the learning demands of the prosodic (tone) aspect. Another possibility may be that some respondents associated pronunciation with both its articulatory and prosodic aspects and deemed both as particularly important, especially at the initial stage of learning Chinese when emphasis was placed on both aspects. Still another alternative reason for the high endorsement of this item might be that some respondents treated pronunciation and tones as two separate aspects, and truly deemed pronunciation as being very important. Further data may be needed to clarify how pronunciation was interpreted. All in all, learners' over-concern about correct pronunciation may become a potential impediment to their willingness to participate in communication-focused classroom activities.

When it comes to perceptions on the importance of speaking Chinese in their country, teachers reported more endorsement (M=2.77, SD=0.82) than did learners overall (M=2.53, SD=0.87). But nonetheless, this discrepancy was observed only between teachers and non-Asian learners. It might be possible that some teachers consciously or subconsciously considered China as their country, where speaking matters with no doubt.

When asked whether non-Asian students will maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if their classmates are not mainly from Chinese background, teachers were in more

agreement (M=3.74, SD=0.79) than learners overall (M=3.13, SD=0.98), and the discrepancies emerged between teachers and all learner groups. Teachers might expect that non-Asian learners would be daunted by having Chinese-origin learners with an apparent advantage in learning Chinese, because competing with Chinese-origin learners in Chinese classes would render non-Asian learners at a disadvantageous position, which has been argued to contribute to the high attrition rate for Chinese courses among non-Asian students (Norman, 1996; Pease, 1996; Wen, 1997). The result from this study did not seem to support this argument. Instead, the results may suggest that non-Asian learners may expect to learn more if their fellow learners were more competent than they were.

With reference to whether Chinese tones are the most difficult part of learning Chinese, learners overall exhibited slightly more approval (M=3.63, SD=1.22) than did teachers (M=3.32, SD=0.94) (*p*=.036). Marginally significant, the overall discrepancy was negligible. When compared with the three learner groups, teachers significantly mismatched non-Chinese Asian learners in that non-Chinese Asians reported more endorsement of this statement (see Table 21)

4.4.2 Summary of Comparisons between Learner Beliefs and Teacher Beliefs

Comparisons between teacher and learner beliefs overall found more mismatches than matches at the factor level in that four out of the six factors revealed mismatches. One clear pattern was that compared with all three learner groups, teachers reported less agreement with beliefs in formal language learning strategies, but more support for communication-oriented strategies. With regard to motivation, teachers gave lower ratings to the related items than learners, suggesting teachers might have underestimated learners' motivation for learning Chinese. At the item level, among the 11 tested items, four showed significant gaps between

teachers and learners overall. Learners reported stronger endorsement of the importance of excellent pronunciation (Item 6) than did teachers. Compared with learners, teachers indicated more agreement with the item that stated that non-Asian learners would remain committed to learning Chinese if they did not have Chinese-origin learners in the Chinese class (Item 40).

The discrepancies between learner and teacher language learning beliefs suggested that while teachers had a comprehensive knowledge about cognitive factors involved in language learning, such as effective learning strategies and practices, they might not be sufficiently cognizant of affective factors, such as learners' motivation for learning Chinese and the factors that may affect non-Asian learners' commitment to continuity of learning Chinese.

4.5 Causal Language Learning Belief Model for Beginning Learners of Chinese in North America

A major purpose of this investigation in this study was to determine the structural relationships among the four BALLI factors identified through EFA with promax rotation using the learner sample. The review of the literature suggested that these factors may be functionally related to one another. For this reason, the nature of these relationships among the four belief factors was examined in response to research question five (Q5).

Q5. Is there a causal model that can account for the relationships between beginning learner belief dimensions about language learning?

Structural equation modeling (SEM) or causal modeling is a statistical technique for testing and estimating causal relationships represented in a hypothetical model, where some variables are assumed to be caused by others (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). SEM is a result of exploratory factor analysis combined with multiple regression analyses. The causal model consists of two parts: measurement model and structural model. The measurement model

estimates the relationship between the indicator variables (measured variables or specifically the survey items) and latent variables (factors), while the structural model tests the relationships among factors only. The relationships are represented by correlations (where two variables are considered to co-vary) or regression coefficients (where one variable is seen to be the cause of another). All these relationships among the variables are tested for significance. Finally, the model is tested against the observed measurement data to determine the adequacy of the model (i.e., goodness of fit).

In order to construct a hypothetical causal model of the relationships among the four BALLI factors, it is necessary to introduce my general approach and briefly review previous related models, theories, and studies that informed my modeling process. The four factors within the hypothetical model were derived from the BALLI factor analysis, as discussed extensively in the previous sections. The four factors were all related to Wenden's model of metacognitive knowledge (1988), Oxford's model of language learning strategies (1990) and Ryan and Deci's model of motivation. Oxford's model and other related studies were utilized as empirical evidence to specify the relationships among the BALLI factors in this model. Wenden's model was employed to account for the BALLI factors and the survey items that comprised the factors from metacognitive perspectives in attempts to reveal and interpret the interaction between and among the BALLI factors and their constituent survey items. Research has shown that learners with greater metacognitive abilities tend to be more successful in their cognitive endeavors (Schapiro & Livingston, 2000). As such, utilization of Wenden's model to reveal learners' learning process helps determine how learners can be taught to better apply their cognitive resources. Given motivation is a powerful affective factor in language learning process that involves multiple orientations, the model of motivation by Ryan and Deci and Gardner (1985)

was applied to differentiate as well as provide a detailed explanation for motivational orientations when the model was interpreted.

Oxford's model (1990) and a number of researchers (Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1999; Oxford & Nyikos, 1987; Politzer, 1983) posit that motivation has the most powerful influence on choice of language learning strategy. The strategies influenced by motivation included formal rule-related practice strategies and functional practice strategies (Gardner et al.; Oxford et al.). These empirical studies on the relationship between motivation and learning strategies were harnessed for the purpose of the relationship specification for the BALLI factors relating to motivation, formal and communication-oriented language learning strategies.

However, while motivation was the strongest predictor for choice of learning strategies, Oxford's model and other researchers have indicated that years of study and target language proficiency level also had a strong impact on language learning strategies (Chamot, O'Malley, Kupper & Impink-Hernandez, 1987; Oxford et al.). Oxford et al. found that students studying a foreign language at least five years used functional practice strategies more often than students with fewer years of study. Chamot and colleagues reported that the students of Russian and Spanish at higher proficiency levels reported more strategy use than their beginning-level peers. In addition, the target language determined, in part, choice of language learning strategies as well (Chamot et al.; Oxford, 1990; Rifkin, 2000). In other words, previous research has argued that learners employ different learning strategies in accordance with the language being learned (Chamot et al.; Oxford; Rifkin).

Research has further documented the association of motivation with how challenging the task is (Alderman, 2013). For example, a liking for challenging activities in the foreign language classroom was found to be highly associated with various aspects of motivation and motivation

was suppressed if learners believed the task lacked challenging components (Bandura, 1997; Doryei, 1990; Schmidt & Watanabe, 2001). What's more, Hortwiz (1988) has argued that some preconceived beliefs were likely to restrict learners' range of strategy use. Yang (1999) has discovered that beliefs in formal structural studies (one BALLI factor) had a significant negative correlation with functional practice strategies. These studies were employed to build the relationships among the BALLI factors relating to difficulty of language learning and communication-oriented learning strategies, and formal language learning strategies.

Overall, the theoretical models and studies discussed above reported on functional relationships between a range of factors, such as motivation, language learning strategies, years of study, and the target language and its difficulty level, but none of the studies examined these relationships within one single study. Accordingly, these models and related research evidence combined informed and laid the foundation for the model construction based on the four BALLI factors/dimensions and model testing in the present study.

Causal modeling was thus performed to hypothesize causal links between the BALLI factors underlying the measured variables under investigation. To construct the measurement model (measuring the relationship between survey items and their underlying factors), the BALLI survey items relevant to each of the identified factors using the learner sample were specified, based on the results of EFA presented earlier in this chapter. Those survey items that were not significantly associated with the BALLI factors were removed from the model. As a result, in the measurement model, all connections of the survey items with their corresponding factors were statistically significant. To build the structural model (measuring the relationships between the BALLI factors), specific correlational and causal pathways were linked between and

among the four BALLI factors. Likewise, all the relationships defining the pathways and correlations proposed were statistically significant.

The BALLI items defining these factors and the relationships among these factors are presented in the causal model in Figure 2. In the measurement model, *Motivation* was indicated by items 20, 24, 29, and 30, and *Difficulty of Language Learning* by items 1, 3, and 4. *Formal Language Learning Strategy* was indicated by items 17, 23, and 28, while *Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy* was indicated by items 7, 9, 13, 14, and 22. The structural belief model proposed that positive *Motivational* beliefs caused positive beliefs in *Formal Language Learning Strategies*, which nevertheless resulted in negative beliefs about *Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategies*. In the meantime, *Motivational* beliefs were simultaneously correlated significantly with beliefs about *Difficulty of Language Learning*. Moreover, beliefs about *Difficulty of Language Learning* led to negative beliefs about *Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategies*.
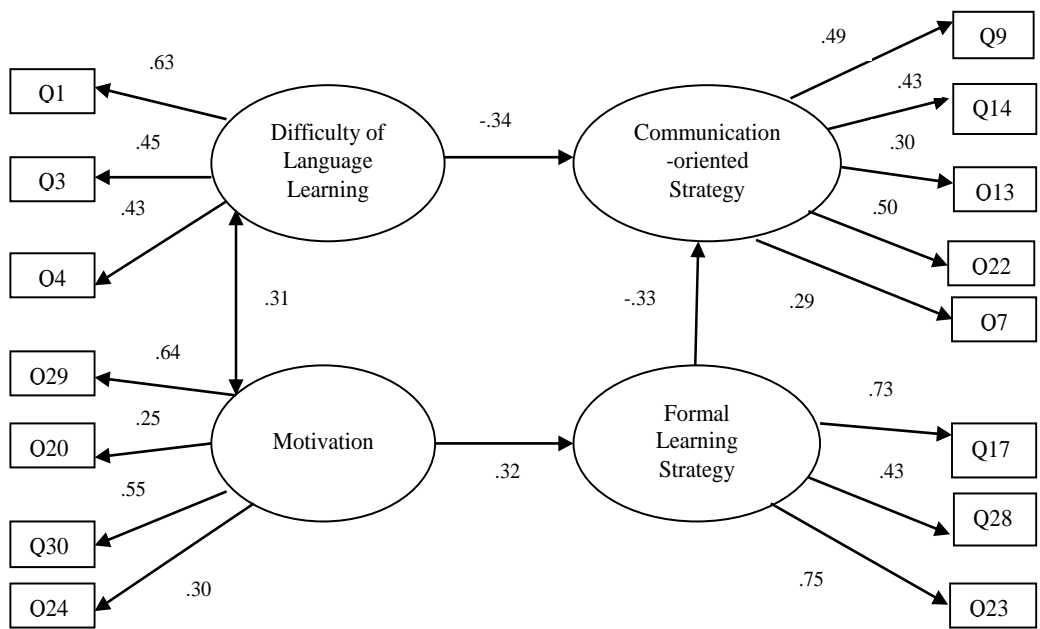
Figure 2. Causal Model of Language Learning Beliefs Held by Beginning Learners of Chinese

Simply put, there were a few causal pathways in this language learning belief model for North American post-secondary beginning learners of Chinese, where motivation had a significant impact on learner beliefs in language learning strategies. In the first pathway, motivation positively predicted learners' use of formal language learning strategies in that the learners who were highly motivated tended to hold positive beliefs about formal language learning strategies. In the second pathway, beliefs in formal language learning strategies negatively predicted choice of communication-oriented language learning strategies, where the learners with more positive beliefs about formal language learning strategies held negative beliefs about communication-oriented learning strategies, thus rejecting communication-focused strategies. Beyond these two pathways, the relationship between motivation and language learning strategies became complicated when difficulty of language learning was factored in. Motivation was correlated with difficulty of language learning in that the more motivated learners tended to hold beliefs that language/Chinese learning was difficult and challenging, and learners who deemed language learning as being challenging tended to be more motivated. In the third pathway, difficulty of language learning negatively predicted communication-oriented language learning strategies, where the leaners who viewed language learning as difficult were less receptive of communication-focused language learning strategies.

There was one inconsistency in this model, however, that required particular comment. In the literature, the target language influences learners' choice of learning strategies. In a study that examined the learning strategies of learners of French, Spanish and Germen, Politzer (1983) found that learners of Spanish engaged in fewer positive strategies than did learners of the other languages. Researchers thus argue that learners of difficult languages tend to employ more positive language learning strategies (Chamot et al.; Oxford, 1989; Politzer). Although Chinese

is a difficult language, the causal direction in this model from *Motivation* to *Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategies* was not specified for the following reasons. Firstly, in Oxford et al.'s motivation model, motivation also interacted with other variables in influencing students' choice of communicative learning strategy, and one of them was years of study. In other words, the shorter the years of study, the less likely the choice of communicative strategy. Secondly, Chinese differs entirely from Russian, French or German in that the latter were cognate languages sharing many common features with English, whereas the former is not. For English speakers beginning to learn a language as foreign and difficult as Chinese, lack of commonality between the two languages would prompt them to choose a small range of strategies, because they lacked linguistic resources to tap into for the more challenging communicative functions. Taking these factors into account, I decided not to specify a causal relationship from *Motivation* to *Communication-oriented Learning Strategy.*

Taken together, the correlational and causal relationships among the factors were consistent, for the most part, with L2/FL motivational theories and related empirical evidence. Nevertheless, in establishing these causal relationships into the theoretical framework, I also integrated my own observation and reflection by taking into account the variables such as years of study and the target languages being learned. In this model, the target language had an impact on learners' choice of learning strategies; however the impact was reflected in a manner that was distinct from the impact exhibited in previous studies (Chamot et al.; Politzer). Unlike Chamot et al.'s study, where learners of Russian reported greater strategy use than learners of Spanish, the present study postulated that the non-cognate nature of the Chinese language prevented beginning learners of Chinese from using communication-oriented strategies.

The relationships represented in this model were tested using SPSS AMOS 20 causal modeling program developed by Arbuckle (2011) to compute the variance/covariance matrix on the relevant data. SEM goodness-of-fit tests were utilized to measure the extent to which the covariance matrix predicted by the structural (path) model corresponded to the observed covariance matrix in the data. Results showed that goodness-of-fit measures provided by AMOS indicated a good fit. The relative chi-square goodness of fit index (CMIN/DF or χ^2/df) was 109.83/85, which came down to 1.29. CMIN/DF is an alternative measure of the traditional chi square value that minimizes the impact of sample size for evaluating overall model fit and "assesses the magnitude of discrepancy between the sample and fitted covariances matrices" (Hu & Bentler, 1999, p. 2). A value close to 1 and less than 2.0 is recommended by Byrne (2000) as acceptable and good. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was 0 .91, above the cut-off criteria of CFI ≥ 0.90. CFI assesses the model by comparing the χ^2 value of the model to the χ^2 of the null/independence model. Values for CFI range between 0 and 1, with Hu and Bentler recommending values greater than 0.90 indicating a good fit. The larger CFI, the better the fit. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.04, below the cut-off criteria ≤ 0.05. RMSEA is the square root of the average of the squared amount by which the sample variances and covariances differ from their estimates obtained if the hypothesised model is correct. The larger RMSEA, the poorer the fit.

The values obtained from the hypothesized model suggested that this model provided an adequate representation of the functional relationships specified among the variables and between the variables in relation to foreign language learning beliefs held by beginning learners of Chinese in North America that participated in this study. This model was built on a combination of theories and empirical evidence as well as my own observation, which were in

turn corroborated by the model. It is worthwhile to note that there are myriad of elements that can affect and shape learner beliefs and the model proposed in the present study was based on a selection of beliefs included in BALLI and supported in the relevant literature. The findings from this study resulted in a theoretical framework pertaining to language learning beliefs of beginning learners of Chinese. The framework involved metacognitive dimension, referred to as metacognitive knowledge or metacognitive beliefs about L2/FL learning (Wenden, 1986, 1991). The components of metacognitive knowledge included: person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategic knowledge. The three types of knowledge were mirrored by four underlying dimensions of learner beliefs, including *Motivation, Formal Language Learning Strategy, Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy*, and *Difficulty of Language Learning*. *Motivation* primarily focused on learners and the learning task, thus embracing person and task knowledge. *Formal Language Learning Strategy* and *Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy* pertained to strategic knowledge about what strategies are and about how best to learn a FL/SL, while *Difficulty of Language Learning* was connected with person knowledge and task knowledge that was associated with learners' general knowledge about learners and the demands of the language learning task.

As displayed in Figure 2, the four dimensions were intertwined into a structure where they metacognitively impacted and dynamically interacted between and amongst one another. Motivation (person and task knowledge) drove learners' potential choice of formal language learning strategies (strategic knowledge about language learning strategies). Learners who were intrinsically, extrinsically, and integratively motivated may think learning grammatical rules and vocabulary would enable them to master the target language, hence achieving their goals (Person knowledge and task knowledge influenced strategic knowledge about language learning

strategies). Learners of Chinese were highly motivated to learn Chinese, while acknowledging a language learning difficulty hierarchy and seeing Chinese as a difficult language. The perceived difficulty or challenges involved in language learning further stimulated their motivation (Person knowledge and task knowledge influenced and interacted with each other). Given that motivational beliefs had a direct impact on learners' beliefs in formal strategies, the learners tended to focus their attention and effort on learning grammar rules and vocabulary, because of the challenging nature of the language being learned. On the other hand, beliefs in formal strategies exerted a negative impact on learners' beliefs about communication-oriented strategies (Person and task knowledge influenced strategic knowledge about formal language learning strategies, which in turn affected strategic knowledge about communication-oriented language learning strategies). In other words, learners' preconceived beliefs in formal strategies restricted learners' use of communication-focused strategies. Furthermore, the beginning learners of Chinese who believed some languages are easier to learn than others and deemed Chinese as a difficult language did not have linguistic resources to tap into for the more challenging communication-focused strategies and ultimately rejected use of such strategies (Person and task knowledge impacted strategic knowledge about communication-oriented learning strategies).

4.5.1 Summary of the Belief Causal Model

The hypothetical learner belief model in the present study suggested the existence of some patterns in language learning beliefs, as this model was tested to offer an adequate representation of beliefs held by beginning learners of Chinese who participated in this study. Within this model, learners who were intrinsically, extrinsically and integratively motivated held beliefs in formal language learning strategies, while beliefs in formal language learning

strategies resulted in avoidance of communication-oriented strategies. In the meantime, beliefs in difficulty of language learning in general and Chinese learning in particular also led to rejection of communication-oriented strategies. Motivational beliefs were positively correlated to beliefs about difficulty of language learning. In general, learners who were motivated tended to view language learning as difficult or learners who viewed language learning as difficult tended to be highly motivated.

This model illustrated how the three types of knowledge interacted among one another and how person and task knowledge impacted the strategic knowledge and how strategic knowledge about one aspect of language learning impacted that of another. More importantly, the model revealed that beliefs in formal language learning strategies prevented learners from adopting communication-oriented strategies, which confirmed researchers' claim that restricted learner beliefs may not be conducive to language learning (Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995; Peacock, 1999). Therefore, it is essential for learners to have the proper person, task and strategic knowledge so that this knowledge can help learners develop effective strategic knowledge to positively influence their learning process. Lastly, no doubt, not every single beginning learner of Chinese in the study fell into this pattern due to individual differences, but those who did represented a pattern in language learning beliefs among North American beginning learners of Chinese.

4.6 Conclusion of Chapter 4

To conclude this chapter, examination of learner and teacher beliefs showed almost all items elicited a range of responses from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree", particularly from learners. The variability in the data in the present study resembled that in other BALLI

studies (Bernat, 2007; Horwitz, 1988, 1999; Le, 2003; Kern, 1995). Regardless, some patterns in

learner beliefs and teachers can be observed. Below are the summarized key findings.

- Learners were highly motivated to learn Chinese while still acknowledging its difficulty.

- Asian learners (Chinese-origin and non-Chinese-origin Asians) reported more support for formal language earning strategies than non-Asians, whereas non-Asians reported more support for communication-oriented strategies than their Chinese-origin counterparts.

- Teachers reported more support for communication-oriented language learning strategies, but less support for formal learning strategies, as compared with learners overall.

- Teachers gave lower ratings to the motivation-related survey items than did learners.

- Teachers reported more agreement than learners with the item that stated that non-Asian learners will maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if their classmates are not almost all from Chinese background.

- The hypothetical learner belief model showed that learners who were motivated to learn Chinese held beliefs in formal language learning strategies, while beliefs in formal strategies resulted in avoidance of communication-oriented strategies. In the meantime, beliefs in difficulty of language learning also led to rejection of communication-oriented strategies. Motivational beliefs were positively associated with beliefs about difficulty of language learning.

Chapter 5 Qualitative Results

This chapter presents the results of the interviews that were conducted with six students and six teachers who completed the survey and were from six different universities in Canada and four universities in the US. The chapter begins by delineating the background information of the 12 interviewees. Next come presentation and discussion of the major themes from the student and teacher interviews respectively to provide contexts and depth to the quantitative results presented in Chapter 4. What follows is a presentation of individual students' belief structure with a view to aligning it with the causal belief model tested in Chapter 4 and offering qualitative validation of the SEM model. These themes and depictions of individual belief structure are summarized towards the end of the chapter.

5.1 Background

This section provides background information of the 12 interview participants and interview questions. It describes how interviewees were selected and the rationale for designing the interview questions.

The target interview participants for this research project included both students and teachers who responded to the BALLI and volunteered to participate in the interviews. A total of 26 students and 10 teachers indicated that they were willing to participate in the interview and provided their email addresses. Having anticipated the respondents' possible withdrawal from the interview, I contacted via email all the 26 students and 10 teachers, requesting setting up an interview in hopes of maximizing the participation and ethnic and geographic representativeness of interviewees. However, only six students and six teachers responded to my interview request and completed the interview process. Student interviewees were interviewed in English, while all teacher interviewees were interviewed in Chinese except one Caucasian teacher, with whom the

interview was conducted in a mixture of Chinese and English.

5.1.1 Student Interviewees   All the six interviewees had one thing in common—they all had had, in addition to Chinese being learned, other foreign language learning experiences of various length, ranging from three to eight years, and the foreign languages learned included French, German, Spanish, Italian, Latin, Russian, and Japanese.

Amy, non-Asian and Canadian born, was a 3rd year undergraduate majoring in humanities in a Canadian university. She was expressive and enthusiastic about foreign language studies. At the time of the survey, she had had no prior experience learning Chinese; however she had learned other foreign languages such as French.

Bella, of Chinese-origin, was a second-year undergraduate in a Canadian university. At the time of the survey, she had not decided which major to choose for her undergraduate studies. She was born and grew up in Canada and had had some previous exposure to the Chinese language prior to taking the elementary Chinese course. As her parents spoke Cantonese at home, she was able to speak a little Cantonese. Yet, she could not speak Mandarin. She struck me as outgoing, energetic, and lively.

Cathy, non-Asian, was pursuing her third-year undergraduate studies in business at a Canadian university. She had previously learned French; but nonetheless she had had no prior exposure to Chinese. I found her assertive and expressive.

Dan, non-Asian, was a second-year computer science major from an American university. He had had considerable foreign language learning experience prior to taking beginners' Chinese course. He had learned German, Russian, Latin, and picked up some Japanese words and expressions from Japanese comics.

Jim, non-Asian, was a first-year undergraduate from a university in the US. He was

interested in Chinese history and was planning to major in international studies. His experiences with foreign language learning included learning Spanish, German, and Italian. He appeared to be passionate about the Chinese language and enjoy foreign language learning.

Ken, non-Asian, was from an American university. He was a non-degree, adult student, learning Chinese with other undergraduates. He was interested in learning Chinese and was preparing for his trip to China. He had no prior Chinese learning experience at the time of the survey; yet he had other foreign language learning experiences, such as with Spanish, French and German. He was mature and well-spoken.

5.1.2 Teacher Interviewees Commonality and differences existed among the six teacher interviewees. All interviewees are experienced language instructors who also had foreign language learning experiences, but varied in other various aspects in relation to teaching Chinese.

Ms. Bai is a Chinese instructor at a Canadian university with substantial experience in teaching Chinese. She had taught Chinese at different levels in Canada for over 20 years. She was born and grew up in Taiwan, with Mandarin Chinese as her native language. She obtained her Master's degree in social sciences in Canada. Apart from Chinese, she had not taught other foreign languages.

Ms. Fan, originally from Taiwan, is a professor of Chinese teaching elementary Chinese for a Canadian university. Mandarin Chinese is her native language. She arrived in Canada as an international student to pursue her graduate studies in humanities. Upon receiving her PhD, she started to teach Chinese at the university level in Canada. Dozens of years' experience teaching Chinese has enabled her to accumulate considerable experience teaching elementary Chinese. Other than teaching Chinese in Canada, she also had taught English for some months in Taiwan.

She struck me as fairly vocal and enthusiastic about teaching Chinese.

Ms. Gao began to teach Chinese at a Canadian university while pursuing her doctoral studies. She had taught Chinese in Canada for three to four years at the time of the survey and acquired adequate Chinese teaching experience. Her native language is Chinese, and she received her master's degree in English language and literature in China. Prior to arrival in Canada to further her education, she was a university professor in China, teaching English for five years.

Ms. Han is also a native speaker of Chinese, and began her Chinese teaching career with a Canadian university while pursuing her doctoral studies. Over three years' Chinese teaching in Canada granted her ample teaching experience. She obtained her Master's degree from a Canadian university. She had taught English for over 10 years at a university in China prior to her arrival in Canada for further graduate studies.

Mr. Lay is an associate professor of an American university, specializing in the Chinese language and revival of Chinese dialects. He is Caucasian, holding a doctoral degree. Although English is his native language, he spent a few years in China while pursuing doctoral studies, and is very fluent in Chinese. Having taught Chinese for over 10 years in the US, he had gathered enormous teaching experience. In addition to Chinese, he had not taught other foreign languages

Ms. Na is a Chinese instructor of a Canadian university, where she had taught Chinese for three to four years. Born and growing up in China, she received her PhD in Chinese language and literature from a university in China. Prior to immigrating to Canada, she was a university professor in China, teaching English for two years.

5.2 Interview Questions

As noted in Chapter 3, in designing the study, I used typology development as the analytic strategy for integration of the two types of data. Accordingly, I developed a typology based on the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the survey data. Aligned with the four BALLI and two BALLI Plus dimension/factors, the derived typology served as both a guide to formulate interview questions and an explanatory framework in analyzing interview data. As discussed in Chapter 4, the typology addressed the three aspects of metacognitive knowledge (person, task, and strategy), and consisted of six major dimensions:

- motivation for learning Chinese (person and task knowledge),
- formal language learning strategies (strategic and task knowledge),
- communication-oriented language learning strategies (strategic and person knowledge),
- difficulty of learning foreign languages, in particular Chinese (task and person knowledge),
- difficulty of Chinese characters (strategic and task knowledge), and
- commitment to learning Chinese (person and task knowledge).

It is hoped that the explanatory framework, along with the typology developed from the learners' responses to the survey data, can capture and refine learner and teacher beliefs articulated through interviews in relation to the dimensions and three types of metacognitive knowledge. According to Schapiro and Livingston (2000), learners with greater metacognitive abilities tend to be more successful learners. As such, revelation of metacognitive activities is key to understanding learners' learning, and more importantly, studying their metacognitive activity and awareness helps determine how learners can be taught to better apply their cognitive resources, thereby informing instruction.

All interviews were guided by the interview questions (see Appendix C) that were designed and tailored around this framework. As such, the interview questions were primarily inquiries into the language learning beliefs in relation to the dimensions indicated by BALLI and BALLI Plus items.

All interviews were semi-structured. The questions were raised to guide rather than control interviewees' responses. Although the guiding questions for the semi-structured interview were developed before the interview data collection began, the semi-structured format meant that I could ask other probing questions as appropriate. The interviewees responded to the questions with varying degrees of detail. For example, they responded in more detail to the probing question topics that were specific, such as what were their views on the role of vocabulary in language learning process. Some responded in less detail to questions that were generic, such as what advice they would like to offer with regard to learning or teaching Chinese. Some respondents naturally provided in more detail than others, although I made attempts to probe further when necessary and where appropriate.

5.3 Themes from the Interviews

The major themes that are described in this section were developed in accordance with the typology derived from EFA in Chapter 4. Accordingly, the six belief dimensions served as the six themes. In analyzing the semi-structured interview transcriptions, I applied the explanatory framework mentioned above. I was consciously seeking evidence from the interview data that represented the dimensions of the explanatory framework. I read through the interview transcripts first. When I found responses that addressed specific belief dimensions, I coded and categorized them under their corresponding themes. Evidence of (both positive and negative examples) from the data source was sought to fit into the themes. For instance, while coding the interview responses, I searched for evidence that showed positive as well as negative attitudes towards formal language learning strategies and then grouped it together and categorize it under the theme of formal language learning strategy. Because of the influence of the explanatory framework, aspects of beliefs about language learning, specifically Chinese learning, were

revealed through the interview questions that were formulated based on the explanatory framework.

While transcribing and coding the interviews, I also made a conscious effort to seek themes that emerged independent of that framework. However, the themes and categories all pertained to the explanatory framework, suggesting that the framework was acceptable in refining and elaborating on the quantitative results.

In the following sections, I describe the six themes and their associated categories that constituted the themes. The themes included:

- Motivation for Learning Chinese
- Formal Language Learning Strategy,
- Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy,
- Difficulty of Language Learning,
- Difficulty of Chinese Characters, and
- Commitment to Continuity of Learning Chinese.

It is worthy of note that in Chapter 4, four BALLI and two BALLI Plus factors were yielded from EFA, and accordingly, the typology reflected the six dimensions/factors. The themes and categories are presented along with examples of interviewee responses for each category. Connections are made between the themes and the explanatory framework and Wenden's model of metacognitive knowledge.

It is also important to reiterate that as discussed in Chapter 3, the interview data were not used to compare beliefs between students of different ethnic backgrounds, and between students and teachers. Rather, the qualitative data analysis was intended for a detailed depiction of student and teacher belief patterns using interviewees' own words as well as for presentation of each individual student interviewee's belief structure.

5.3.1 Theme 1: Motivation for Learning Chinese

5.3.1.1 Student Interviewees

The first theme was students' motivation for learning Chinese, which corresponded to the BALLI Factor 1 in Chapter 4. First, I located all interview responses in which student interviewees commented on their motivation for learning Chinese, as a result of which a variety of responses covering different types of motivation were identified. Guided by the motivation model by Ryan and Deci (1985, 2000) and Gardner (1985) as well as the explanatory framework, I divided this theme into two subthemes, namely, intrinsic and integrative motivation, and extrinsic/instrumental motivation. According to Ryan and Deci, intrinsic motivation is defined as motivation to engage in an activity out of psychological needs, such as enjoyment and interest, whereas extrinsic motivation concerns engaging in an activity leading to a separate result, or for an instrumental reason. Integrative motivation refers to motivation for learning the language for purposes of getting to know the people who speak that language, being interested in the culture associated with the language, and having significant others who speak the language (Gardner).

Coding of the six interviews resulted in four main categories in relation to intrinsic and integrative motivation for learning Chinese, including recurring new categories that were not covered in the BALLI but still fit into the typology (Table 22):

- interest in the language (recurring new category),
- interest in the culture (recurring new category),
- understand Chinese people, and
- travel (recurring new category).

Coding also engendered three main categories in relation to extrinsic/instrumental motivation:

- career prospects,
- program requirement (recurring new category), and
- positive self-image.

Coding of students' responses under this theme captured students' highly intrinsic, integrative and extrinsic/instrumental motivation. The categories under this theme are shown in Table 22,

along with examples of student responses for each category.

Table 22

Motivation for Learning Chinese from Learner Perspectives

Theme	Category	Example of Student Responses
Intrinsic and Integrative Motivation	Interest in the Chinese language	• *Chinese is so different from other foreign languages I've learned.* • *Chinese is a fascinating language.*
	Interest in the Chinese culture	• *Language and culture are so intertwined.* • *I am curious about my own cultural heritage.*
	Understand Chinese people	• *My girlfriend is Chinese, and I want to better understand her, her family and her friends.* • *I would like to better understand Chinese people when I travel in China.*
	Travel	• *I have planned to travel to China.* • *I will travel to Taiwan and stay there for a few months.*
Extrinsic/ Instrumental Motivation	Career prospects	• *I can speak a little Cantonese. Some jobs in Vancouver require applicants to be able to speak Mandarin.* • *If I work in the field of international business, being able to speak some Mandarin may help me.*
	Program requirement	• *The program I am in requires students to learn one foreign language, and I chose Mandarin.* • *Learning two foreign languages is the degree requirement.*
	Positive self-image	• *It is cool to be able to speak Chinese. Chinese is hard.* • *I am Chinese. My parents think those who can speak Chinese are smart.*

It is worth mentioning that in the coding and categorizing process, some responses received more than one label that belonged to different subthemes, and these responses were ultimately categorized under one subtheme. For example, when asked about their motivation for learning Chinese, Ken replied that he wanted to travel to China. His responses were concurrently coded as intrinsic and integrative motivation and extrinsic/instrumental motivation, because travel may be connected with intrinsic motivation in the sense that learning Chinese to be skilled in the language of the country to which Ken wished to travel to was related to positive feelings of competency (Noels, 2001). Alternatively, it could be considered extrinsically motivated goals, since travel led to a separate result. However, as further noted by Ryan and Deci, among different

types of extrinsic motivation, achieving a valued personal goal (identification) and expressing

sense of self (integration) involve a high level of volition, suggesting that one assimilates the

goals to the self and extrinsically motivated actions become more self-determined. According to

Gardner, motivation with a view to integration is referred to as integrative motivation. It

appeared that Ken's responses involved emotional positivity and expressed sense of self. After

pondering, I decided that motivation with an integrative orientation should be categorized under

intrinsic and integrative motivation. Then I discussed my coding and decision with a second

coder, who considered my decision to be proper.

Another example of cross-labeling related to Amy's response. When discussing the

Chinese language, Amy said,

> I've learned a couple foreign languages, like, French, Spanish and German. But they are
> easy to learn. Mandarin is hard. Some people don't like tones, but to me they sound like
> music. I love to practice with my Chinese friends. If I could speak Mandarin fluently
> someday, I'd be very proud, cause it is a difficult language.

At the outset, this response received two labels, one being difficulty of language learning, and

the other motivation for learning Chinese. This response seemed to be discussing the difficulty of

Chinese; however, closer examination indicated that Amy treated this difficulty as her motivation

to learn Chinese, because in her eyes, her being able to speak a difficult language as Chinese

would make her feel proud, thus promoting her self-image. I decided to categorize it under

extrinsic motivation. I discussed my labelling and decision with the second coder, who initially

categorized it under difficulty of language learning and endorsed my decision after discussion.

Results indicated that student interviewees exhibited intrinsic and integrative motivation

by expressing internal appreciation and enjoyment of learning Chinese. Some wished to learn

Chinese to better understand the culture and people. Bella, a girl born in Canada with Chinese

origin, indicated that she learned Chinese because of her interest in the language and the country

where it is spoken—China, which is connected with her cultural heritage. She said,

> Well, I was born and grew up in a small town in Canada, so I can't speak Mandarin. I did pick up some Cantonese from my parents. But they were busy working fulltime when I was little…they did not have time to send me to the Chinese school to learn Mandarin. Since I grew up, I've got more and more interested in Mandarin and Chinese culture. Never been to China and wish very much to visit.

Amy, a non-Asian, Canada born student, felt that learning Chinese could satisfy her desire to learn the language and her curiosity about China. She stated,

> I'm intrigued by the language and culture. Since young, I've learnt that Chinese is totally different from English and the Chinese culture is over 5000 years' old. By learning Chinese, you will learn another culture and another way of looking at the world. Learning a language gives you a better understanding of the country. Even learn how the words are derived of, and you will learn the culture behind them.

> Integrative motivation also appeared in the form of romance. Jim, a non-Asian American, had a Chinese girlfriend, who aroused his enthusiasm and desire to learn Chinese. He said,

> My girlfriend still lives in China. She can speak some English, but her family can't. So I want to learn her language. She helps me with my pronunciation, tones, and grammar. It's great. I often practice with her. If I could speak Chinese well, I'd be able to connect with her family and friends. They don't speak English. I'd love to know her family better, and her friends. This is important to me.

Ken, an adult American student, indicated that he learned Chinese because he had planned to travel to China again. He said,

> I visited China once. I was with a tour group and I did not know any Chinese at that time. With the basic Chinese I will learn, I figure I will be able to get by when I travel by myself. I love to talk to Chinese people. Of course, I can also use body language to help me. I like to make Chinese friends. They are very friendly.

Jim's responses demonstrated the close connection of his motivation with his desire to get more emotionally involved with his girlfriend and integrated with her families and friends. Such integrative orientation was also reflected in Ken's comments about his travelling to China and desire to make Chinese friends. Ken's remarks confirmed my decision of categorization of his responses as intrinsic and integrative motivation. Bella's, Jim's and Ken's comments reflected

their clear person and task knowledge. By saying he could use body language to help, Ken's comments also showed his strategic knowledge.

In coding responses relating to extrinsic/instrumental motivation, I found that all interviewees except Ken made the association of learning Chinese with employment or business opportunities. Bella, the Chinese-origin student, considered it very important for her to be able to speak Chinese because of her intention to participate in the Chinese economy. Apart from her desire to learn to speak Chinese well and seek her cultural roots, she explained that she learned Chinese to increase her chances of securing employment as well as to prepare for her potential plan to work in China. She stressed that "China's economy is booming, and lots of Canadian companies are doing business with China. If I could be fluent in Mandarin, I'd have many opportunities for a good job".

Jim and Cathy made similar connections. Jim even had a plan to look for employment in China so as to be together with his Chinese girlfriend. Cathy also indicated,

> I'm a business major. I know the world economy is pretty stagnant, but China's economy isn't. That makes it important to be able to speak Chinese…even if you only speak, like, a little, it'll still enhance your international business relations. So it'll increase my chances of landing a job.

The motivation in relation to career prospects entailed a desire to accomplish a personal goal, with positivity involved. While with a high level of self-determination, this type of motivation was categorized as extrinsic/instrumental rather than intrinsic motivation because it did not demonstrate integrative purposes. Apart from career prospects, Jim and Cathy also stated that they were learning Chinese to fulfill their degree or program requirement.

A few students also remarked that being able to speak Chinese made them look cool because Chinese is a difficult language. Jim remarked,

> I'm good at languages. I've learned a couple foreign languages. I can speak Spanish and

> Italian. But neither of them is like learning Chinese, hmmm, Chinese is the hardest. So it is cool to be able to speak Chinese.

Although he did not explicitly make the association between his ability to speak multiple languages and intelligence, Jim implicitly conveyed the idea that being able to speak Chinese can promote his self-image, which is a sign of ego enhancement, one type of extrinsic motivation (Ryan et al.). Bella held a similar opinion, agreeing with her parents who considered those who can speak Chinese to be smart. She stated,

> It takes, like, brainpower to become fluent in languages, but it's a special kind of intelligence. I think it's a talent or a knack that some people have. Others who don't have the knack can eventually learn a new language, but it would take a long time and always be poor.

Jim's and Bella's responses not only revealed their person knowledge but also their task knowledge with regard to the nature of Chinese and what would be required of learning Chinese.

Students' response to the interview question on motivation for learning Chinese indicated that each of them chose to learn Chinese for a couple of reasons rather than one single reason. For instance, Bella chose to learn Chinese not only for the purpose of learning her ethnic language and seeking her cultural roots but also for the purpose of securing a job. The first theme, along with its subthemes and their constituent categories, showed that these students had intrinsic and integrative motivation to engage in learning Chinese, mostly out of enjoyment, interest, emotional positivity, and integration. Concurrently, they were also externally or instrumentally oriented in hopes of either deriving a special benefit, such as career-related opportunities or meeting program requirements, or promoting self-image. It can be seen that all student interviewees possessed person knowledge in that they had a good understanding of themselves as learners as well as task knowledge as to why they desired to learn Chinese and

what was required to learn Chinese. This demonstrated a reinforcement of the metacognitive motivational dimension of the explanatory framework.

This theme on motivation aligned with the motivational orientations revealed by the survey items in Chapter 4 in that it included intrinsic and integrative motivation (understanding Chinese people) and extrinsic motivation (career prospects and self-image). More importantly, the new categories emergent from the interview responses, such as interest in the culture and travel, extended the scope and broadened the content of learners' motivation for learning Chinese that was not covered in the BALLI while concurrently fitting into the typology. Further, the interviewees' responses provided detailed contexts to the survey items, such as the item in Chapter 4 (People who can speak more than one language are very intelligent), as to why students made the association between multilingual abilities and intelligence, thus adding clarity and depth to the quantitative results.

5.3.1.2 Teacher Interviewees

A similar theme on motivation for learning Chinese was also determined for teachers' responses. First, I went through teachers' interview transcripts in a similar manner that I handled students' transcripts. Ultimately, I identified a range of responses covering different types of motivation. Applying the same theories on classifying motivation, I divided this theme into two subthemes, namely, intrinsic and integrative motivation and extrinsic/instrumental motivation.

Coding generated five main categories in relation to intrinsic motivation for learning Chinese, including new recurring categories:

- curiosity about and interest in Chinese (recurring new category),
- interest in and respect for the Chinese culture (recurring new category),
- intention to major in Chinese (recurring new category),
- travel and make Chinese friends (travel as a recurring new category), and
- self-perceived talent for languages (recurring new category).

Coding also engendered three main categories concerning extrinsic/instrumental motivation, including recurring new category:

- career prospects,
- program requirement (recurring new category), and
- easy credit (recurring new category).

Of note is the classification of three categories to be addressed below. Considering that students who wished to major in Chinese tended to have an inherent interest in the language and the culture, intention to major in Chinese was thus classified as intrinsic motivation. Self-perceived talent for languages was initially treated as spanning intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. After reading the transcripts carefully, I decided that this category reflected students' self-efficacy beliefs about their ability to achieve a particular learning goal as well as students' innate needs for competency, thereby eventually being classified under intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, easy credit presented a desire to avoid efforts or punishment resulting from lack of efforts, thus being classified as extrinsic motivation. Table 23 displays the subthemes and their categories under this theme, along with examples of interviewees' responses for each category.

From some of the teachers' perspective, some students were motivated to learn Chinese because they were interested in China, its language and culture, or had been to China and developed respect for the Chinese culture and civilization. Ms. Fan remarked,

> Some students think China is an ancient country with a long history and rich civilization, so they want to develop an understanding of this country through learning its language. And some students have been to China, fascinated by the historical attractions, and developed respect for the Chinese culture and its civilization.

Some teachers thought students' motivation stemmed from personal interest or curiosity in the Chinese language. Ms. Bai commented that,

> Some students have an inherent interest in learning languages and they have not learnt Chinese yet, so they choose Chinese. And some students switched to Chinese after learning Japanese for one term because they found that there are lots of Chinese

characters in Japanese, and then got curious about the Chinese language. So some just completed one Japanese course, and they wanted to step into the door to see what the language looks like.

While focused on psychological needs, the second kind of students described by Ms Bai tended to be in a "give it a shot" psychological mode. A couple of teachers believed that some students' intention to major in Chinese stimulated them. Mr Lay said,

> In my class, some students want to major in Chinese and enjoy learning Chinese. Usually these students are highly motivated, because they love the language and are interested in issues related to China. Also learning Chinese is the pre-requisite for other subject area courses. So being proficient in Chinese will prepare them for using the language as an effective means to delve into China issues when they are in their senior years of study.

Mr Lay's response indicated that intention to major in Chinese was related to intrinsic motivation, as this intention was connected with an interest in the country where Chinese is spoken. As Ryan et al described, an intrinsically motivated person is "moved to act for fun or challenge entailed" (p. 57). Two teacher interviewees associated motivation for learning Chinese with students' self-perceived talent for learning languages. Ms. Na said,

> Some students learn Chinese because they think they have talents for learning foreign languages. Usually this type of students have learned other foreign languages and they enjoy learning languages. They think they have the talent and the experience and can do a good job.

Ms Na's remarks showed that such students' positive self-efficacy about their ability to learn languages and their enjoyment of learning languages were closely interweaved. Therefore I decided to categorize it under intrinsic motivation.

In coding responses relating to extrinsic/instrumental motivation, I discovered that the teachers, especially those of Chinese origin, made the association of being able to speak Chinese with advantages students would have when navigating the job market. For example, Ms. Han remarked that the increasing influence of China's economy was a contributing factor to students' motivation to learn Chinese, particularly to students of Chinese origin.

Table 23

Motivation for Learning Chinese from Teacher Perspectives

Theme	Category	Example of Teacher Responses
Intrinsic and Integrative Motivation	Curiosity about and interest in the Chinese language	• *Some students think Chinese is unique and are very interested in it.* • *Some students just completed one Japanese course and they wanted to step into the door to see what the Chinese language looked like.*
	Interest in and Respect for the Chinese culture	• *Some students have been to China and developed respect for the Chinese culture and civilization.* • *Some students have personal interest in the Chinese culture, and some, especially those of Chinese origin wish to understand their cultural roots.*
	Intention to major in Chinese	• *Some students want to major in Chinese.* • *Some students have the intention to major in Chinese, but haven't made up their mind.*
	Travel and make Chinese friends	• *Some students want to learn Chinese in order to be able to use it when they make a trip to China.* • *Some students hope to be able to communicate with Chinese people when they travel there and make Chinese friends.*
	Self-perceived talent for languages	• *From the experience of learning other foreign languages, some students think they have a talent for languages, so they chose to learn Chinese.* • *Some students just think they are good at learning foreign languages.*
Extrinsic/ Instrumental Motivation	Career prospects	• *The influence of China's economy on the globe is increasing. Many students, particularly those of Chinese origin, are willing to learn Chinese, because they were aware that knowing this language would be beneficial to their career* • *In Canada, the number of Chinese immigrants is among the top, so lots of jobs require employees to be able to speak Chinese, for example, the banks in where I live.*
	Program requirement	• *Some programs, such as international relations and international business, require students to learn two foreign languages, so students choose elementary Chinese to meet a degree requirement.* • *Some students need to take one more language course in order to graduate.*
	Easy course	• *Some students thought language courses are less demanding than other academic courses, and therefore they don't need to spend as much time and effort as they do other courses.* • *Some students had exposure to Chinese and could speak some Chinese dialects. These students thought they could get a good grade from the Chinese class without having to spend lots of time on it.*

By the same token, Ms. Bai shared similar views to Ms Han, saying that if students could speak Chinese, they would be at a more advantageous position than those who could not when applying for jobs. Ms Gao commented,

> China is getting more and more influential on the world stage, particularly its strong economy and market. This can impact students' decision on choosing a foreign language to learn, because a strong economy means other countries' doing business with China, which means employment opportunities. These employment opportunities are connected not only with the business world but also with other areas, such as university, school etc.

Teachers' emphasis on this instrumental motivation for learning Chinese, along with the results from Chapter 4 and the learners' responses to the similar interview question, may suggest the growing importance of the Chinese language in the contemporary world. Most likely, with the rapid development of the Chinese economy, proficiency in Chinese will offer students an advantage in navigating the job market. It could also be related to the instructional impact of the teachers who emphasized the importance of learning Chinese while teaching Chinese and/or interacting with students. On the other hand, Mr Lay, the only non-Chinese interviewee, did not express such an association. Given lack of data support, this speculated difference between Chinese-origin teachers and non-Chinese origin teachers requires further exploration.

Students' passivity towards Chinese learning was also much commented on. Ms. Han stated many students enrolled in Chinese classes in order to meet program or degree requirements. For some students, there were only one or two courses left before graduating. For this reason, they chose a language course to meet degree requirements. As well, some students, especially students of Chinese origin or from Japanese or Korean backgrounds, thought that language classes such as Chinese were less demanding and less time-consuming than other credit courses, and hence they tended to think it might be easier for them to obtain credits. Unlike the first extrinsic/instrumental motivation category that involved positivity (career prospect), the last

two categories of motivation were characterized by students' passiveness in meeting academic requirements and coping with courses without exerting efforts. They all pertained to deriving a special benefit.

Teachers' response to the related interview questions revealed a variety of motivations that they considered could explain students' motivation for learning Chinese. This theme, along with its subthemes and their comprising categories, were all related to students' intrinsic and integration as well as extrinsic/instrumental motivation to engage in learning Chinese. This reveals that teachers had acquired thorough person and task knowledge as it related to who their students were and why they chose to learn Chinese. This revelation enhanced the dimension with regard to metacognitive person and task knowledge of the explanatory framework.

The findings from this theme covered the motivational orientations for learning Chinese reported in Chapter 4, such as job opportunities, as well as considerably expanded the breath of learners' motivation to include the motivational orientations that were not covered in Chapter 4. This theme, as it related to teachers' person and task knowledge, reinforced the metacognitive dimension of the framework.

5.3.2 Theme 2: Formal Language Learning Strategy

5.3.2.1 Student Interviewees

The second theme from student interviewees' responses to the semi-structured interview question was formal language learning strategy, which corresponded to the BALLI Factor 2 in Chapter 4. Coding and categorization generated four main categories that made up this theme: vocabulary, grammar, translation, and culture, with vocabulary and grammar being the predominant categories. Of note is that culture was also listed as a category under this theme for

the reason that culture occurred in a few students' responses. This was also consistent with the

results from EFA in Chapter 4, where culture fell into this factor. In coding students' responses

under this theme, I found that students were well aware about what kind of language learning

strategies were central to them, and what's more, a few had exhibited use of metacognitive

strategies to regulate their learning. The categories comprising this theme are illustrated in Table

24, along with examples of interviewees' responses for each category.

Table 24

Formal Language Learning Strategy from Students' Perspective

Category	Example of Student Responses
Grammar	• *I think that is on right track. If you don't know grammar, you don't know how to say anything, and you don't know how to apply it to different situations.* • *When I learn a language, I want to be able to speak it correctly. I want to be able to use phrases and sound like I made an effort to learn the language, rather than I've done nothing.*
Vocabulary	• *Vocabulary is very important. It seems that once you know the structure of the sentence and how you are supposed to say it, then you can build on vocabulary.* • *You still have the same vocabulary as you do in your language, but you are just learning to say them in a different way.*
Transaltion	• *I think to a certain extent, learning a new language is a translating process, especially in the beginning. .* • *When looking at a sentence of a new language, say, Spanish, I always try to translate it into English.*
Culture	• *I think culture plays a big role in learning proverbs, idioms, and colloqialisms. Because ideas only make sense if they are put into some sort of context if the sayings make any sense out of context that I would chalk up to coincidence.* • *There are certain words that are important in the culture, but there are so many cultures that speak Mandarin, so it is hard to categorize that.*

When coding this theme, I found positive as well as seemingly contradictory examples

under each category. It appeared that students all considered learning grammar to be the

foundation of language learning. Most of them stated that more classroom time should be spent

learning Chinese grammar rather than "fun" activities, because if one does not have knowledge

about grammar, one can only get by, speaking simple, poor Chinese, without being able to proceed to the next level. As for Dan, however, time spent on grammar and fun activities should be equally divided, with more weight on grammar if need be. Moreover, he added,

> It is necessary to learn grammar and vocabulary. They are the building blocks for learning any language, no point trying to speak the language without some vocabulary, and no one will understand you if your grammar is too poor. When I learn a new language, in the beginning I usually do some translation from English, it helps me. Learning the basic stuff is necessary, but sometimes boring. You've got to mix them with some fun activities. They make learning more enjoyable.

Dan's responses showed his cognitive activities: he had task knowledge (They are the building blocks for learning any language) and used this knowledge to regulate his learning, an indication of use of metacognitive strategies (When I learn a new language, in the beginning I usually do some translation from English, and it helps me). As such, these cognitive activities revealed the interaction between task knowledge and metacognitive knowledge.

Cathy's responses seemed to be contradictory initially. While acknowledging the importance of learning grammar, Cathy did not think the focus of language foreign languages was on learning a lot of grammar rules. Further exploration revealed that her perspectives made sense. In her eyes, for languages that have complex grammar rules, grammar should be the focus, while for languages that are simple in grammatical structures, learning grammar rules should not be the focus. She viewed Chinese as a language with simple grammar rules and therefore the priority of learning was not grammar; rather it was learning vocabulary. On the other hand, Jim, Bella, Amy and Dan all recognized the centrality of grammar while concurrently stressing utilization of an engaging approach to teaching grammar rules. Belle stated,

> Well, I'm interested in linguistics…. and knowing about grammar helps me understand why what I said was wrong if I made a mistake. So learning grammar rules helps me make clear and correct sentences. So I pay attention to grammar. But I think how to teach grammar is essential. I think teachers should know how to engage students. If you just teach grammar, like, here is the subject and here is the verb, I'll like get bored.

Bella's comments exhibited her person knowledge about herself as a learner interested in linguistics and strategic knowledge in that she knew that learning grammar was helpful for her and why it was so. Bella's person knowledge and strategic knowledge resulted in her choice of learning strategies in that she stated that she paid attention to grammar, which revealed how her three types of metacognitive knowledge affected her self-regulation in her cognitive endeavors-- the learning process. She appeared to employ metacognitive strategies to control her cognitive learning activities.

Jim also showed his preference for grammar. He said,

> I think honestly grammar is very important. And grammar exercises. I do the exercises, but some don't. I've noticed lots of students are more motivated with fun social exercises. But at the same time, some of them, I noticed, are losing track, like nothing able to apply what they have learned. When I go to class, even me get confused about what's been said. What concept is she applying, and what she is saying to, because sometimes I think there's too much fun in class. I mean, I'm a person of structure.

Jim's response showed that he possessed task knowledge ('Grammar is very important. And grammar exercises') and used this knowledge to plan and regulate his learning by choosing his learning strategies ('I do the exercises'), an indication of the interaction between task knowledge and metacognitive strategies. Jim's comments also seemed to imply his beliefs that grammar was instrumental in effective communication.

As for Ken who took the elementary Chinese class for travelling purposes, however, grammar, while important, was not given as much weight, compared with vocabulary. Ken replied,

> I don't care too much about grammar. I will survive just fine. I think it's the vocabulary that matters. I think it's nice to learn grammar. I think vocabulary is what makes a difference between someone who can be fluent in a language versus someone who can get by with the language. That's level 2. You can't really get to the next level unless you are willing to learn grammar. For me, I just want to learn Chinese for one term, so I'm focusing on learning more Chinese vocabulary.

In Ken's eyes, whether grammar mattered was contingent upon his learning goals. Apparently, like Bella, he had person knowledge ('I will survive just fine'), task knowledge ('Vocabulary matters'), and strategic knowledge ('Vocabulary is what makes a difference between…') and were able to utilize these types of knowledge to develop metacognitive strategies to regulate his learning, which was evidenced by his intentionally placing emphasis on learning Chinese vocabulary ('I'm focusing on learning more Chinese vocabulary'). The interaction of the three types of knowledge stood vividly revealed in Ken's responses.

The role of vocabulary was equally emphasized across all students' responses to the related interview question. All students interviewed remarked that vocabulary was a huge component in foreign language learning, and served as the connection of sounds with meanings. As noted by Ken, if one knew the vocabulary and put it into sentences incorrectly, people may still understand what he/she was saying, without the vocabulary, one could not say anything. Interestingly, some students, such as Amy, Bella, and Jim, provided positive comments on both questions related to the priority of grammar or the role of vocabulary in language learning. Very likely they wanted to communicate the idea that grammar and vocabulary were equally important. Bella commented,

> I think it's very important to learn vocabulary. The more words you know, the more you'll be able to understand what you hear and read; and the better you'll be able to say what you want to when speaking or writing.

Translation was one aspect that Jim and Amy considered indispensable in language learning, particularly in the beginning stage. Amy said,

> When looking at a sentence of a new language, say, Spanish, I always try to translate it into English. I don't think translation can be avoided, particularly in the beginning. Right now I can't remove translation from my learning process. All the new words in the textbook are followed by English translation. It helps you to remember.

Translation seemed to be an integral part of Amy's learning activities. Amy's responses unveiled her cognitive and metacognitive activities and acted as another example of how she used her person, task and strategic knowledge to develop metacognitive strategies and how these types of knowledge operated in her learning process.

Culture was another aspect that a few students considered central in language learning. Amy elaborated on culture's role. She added,

> Culture and language are so closely intertwined. I notice the shared character between 中文 and 文化. In learning Chinese, I think it's a great opportunity to share Chinese cultural beliefs to those who may not be familiar with them. It's probably faster to point out cultural differences and similarities as they arise in the language teaching, because unless you test for it, nobody pays attention to cultural assignments.

By contrast, Cathy did not approve of culture's role. She said,

> I learned French when I was growing up, and I never know anything about French culture. There're so many cultures. There are Quebec French and France French. Say with Mandarin, there's a culture to an extent. There're certain words that are important in the culture, but there're so many cultures that speak Mandarin, so it's hard to categorize that. You don't need to fully know the culture to be able to learn a foreign language, as long as you don't use derogatory or wrong words. From my experience of learning French in elementary and high school, I had never got in contact with French culture. We were able to learn without problems. So I'd apply the same to learning Mandarin.

Interestingly, a closer look at students' views revealed the nuances of students' understanding of culture's role in language learning. A few students seemed to regard culture as an inseparable component of knowing the language. Amy, however, thought learning a language was more about sharing cultural beliefs with those who did not know about them.

Students' responses to the interview questions within this theme depicted above indicated that students had person, task and strategic knowledge and the three types of knowledge influenced their metacognitive strategies, as observed in how they regulated their cognitive activities. They all had prior foreign language learning experiences and presumably developed some learning strategies that they considered were effective and applied them to their learning

situation. Their responses echoed the results from Chapter 4 in that many students placed the focus of language learning on grammar rules and vocabulary, and most students supported the role of culture in learning languages. However, the findings from student interviews also discovered what was not found in Chapter 4. For example, for the few who disagreed with the prioritization of grammar rules such as Ken, it seemed that they also acknowledged the importance of grammar rules, but nonetheless, learning grammar rules did not become their focus because of their purpose of learning Chinese. Students' exhibited emphasis on grammar rules and vocabulary raised some concern, as consistently cautioned by researchers (Horwitz, 1988; Ker, 1995; Peacock, 1999), that overemphasis on vocabulary and grammar rules would lead students to devote most of their time to memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules at the cost of other language learning tasks.

Furthermore, student interview responses also revealed what Chapter 4 did not achieve. The BALLI used in Chapter 4 could only produce results covering students' metacognitive knowledge rather than the process of students' developing metacognitive strategies. Consequently, students' comments added breadth and depth to the quantitative results. This theme showed how metacognitive knowledge and strategies dynamically interacted with each other, thereby offering evidence for the metacognitive dimensions of the explanatory framework, but with enriched content.

5.3.2.2 Teacher Interviewees

The second theme from teacher interviewees touched upon formal language learning strategy as well. There were three main categories comprising this theme: vocabulary, grammar, and culture. While coding teachers' responses, I discovered the teachers' overall unfavourable attitudes towards emphasis on this strategy. I also found that teachers had profound strategic

knowledge about learning/teaching Chinese as well as corresponding metacognitive strategies to regulate their teaching, which was frequently observed in teachers' responses. The categories under this theme are displayed in Table 25.

Table 25

Formal Language Learning Strategy from Teachers' Perspective

Category	Example of Teacher Responses
Grammar	• *Teaching grammar is absolutely essential. But I don't think the main focus of language learning is on grammar, because knowing grammatical structures of a foreign language does not necessarily mean you are able to use the language.* • *Students need to know grammatical rules. I think there is more to it than just grammar: pronunciation, vocabulary and practice. Grammar allows you to be creative with certain addition of vocabulary. In itself, it is not sufficient.*
Vocabulary	• *Vocabulary is very important; it is the cornerstone. Without it, you cannot speak anything. However, how to connect words into setences requires grammar.* • *If one thinks learning foreign langauges is mostly a matter of learning vocabulary, he/she is simpy doing word by word translation. You've got to learn Chinese sentence structures.*
Culture	• *Culture is also essential in learning a language. If you don't know the culture, you will make mistakes when speaking the language.* • *Culture is really a difficult thing to talk about and diffcult to teach. Most of the way culture is taught involves stereotypes.*

Within this theme, I discovered that all the teachers interviewed held a balanced view on the role grammar and vocabulary play in language learning. They believed that prioritizing grammar or vocabulary over others in language learning was one-sided, thereby stressing balanced learning of various linguistic aspects, as could be observed in Table 25. Mr Lay said,

> I believe students need to know some grammatical rules. I think there is more to it than just grammar: pronunciation, vocabulary and practice. Grammar, I think, is helpful in learning how to become confident. It allows you to create sentences and expressions you have never heard before. It allows you to be creative with certain addition of vocabulary. In itself, it is not sufficient. Vocabulary is very important too. Without it, you cannot say anything. You've got to teach many other things as well.

Ms Fan expressed her viewpoint by saying,

> I think we should incorporate both accuracy and fluency into our teaching. In the first

year, it is incorrect to spend most of your time on accuracy, such as perfect grammar and pronunciation and error-free utterances. We need to include some fun, communicative activities into our instruction to maintain students' interest. However, this doesn't mean accuracy is not important. When students go to the next level and if they don't have a solid foundation, very likely they won't be able to keep up with others and then drop out.

Mr Lay's comments showed that he had person knowledge ('students need to know some grammatical rules'), task knowledge concerning task demands ('there is more to it than just grammar: pronunciation, vocabulary and practice'), strategic knowledge ('Grammar is helpful in learning how to become confident') as well as metacognitive strategies ('You've got to teach many other things as well'). His remarks also illustrated how he employed his metacognitive knowledge to develop metacognitive strategies to monitor his instruction.

While addressing the necessity of teaching grammar and vocabulary, the teachers further noted that learning grammar rules and vocabulary was inadequate if one wished to become proficient, because knowing grammar and vocabulary did not necessarily mean one could use the target language. To be able to use the language, one needed to have a good understanding of the culture embedded in the language. Put in another way, teachers needed to teach everything. Ms Bai commented,

> I think it is important to learn grammar rules, because they enable you to know how sentences are built, about the types of words and word groups that make up sentences. However, I don't buy grammar-focused learning, for it does not guarantee that you can speak and use the language. I think learning vocabulary is also very important. At the initial stage, students need to gain some confidence using some words or phrases and speaking. But at the intermediate level, grammar starts to become more important. So it is necessary to learn some grammar rules to get ready for the intermediate level study. Culture is also essential in learning a language. If you don't know the culture, you will make mistakes when speaking the language. Developing fluency is the ultimate goal. So I try to teach everything.

Interesting, while all Chinese-origin teachers emphasized the positive role of culture in learning a foreign language, Mr Lay's remarks challenged the view. He said,

> There is other aspect of learning culture in language learning. Learning about foreign

culture, I am not as convinced that it is that important. I am not sure whether learning foreign culture is that important. Culture is really a difficult thing to talk about and difficult to teach. Most of the way culture is taught involves stereotypes. This is something I am worried about. On the surface it seems harmless. Stereotypes in general are problematic. It worries me when I see teachers reinforcing stereotypes. I usually don't emphasize culture when I teach.

Mr Lay's distinctive comments on culture might be based on his personal experiences in living in China for quite a few years, where he might have discovered the stereotypes he had developed from his prior Chinese learning experience in the US did not hold entirely true in the real life situation. Teachers' polarized views on culture's role in language learning were, in a way, similar to those reflected in students' responses. Interestingly, for teachers' responses, differences seemed to be present between Chinese-origin teachers and the non-Chinese-origin teacher. Yet, data were not adequate to support this speculation, and therefore requires further exploration.

This theme showed that teachers had comprehensive person, task and strategic knowledge and their metacognitive knowledge affected their potential use of teaching strategies. Teachers' responses provided contexts as to what they believed about language learning/teaching strategies and why they held such beliefs. As such, the findings from their interview data added depth and meaningful contexts to the results in Chapter 4 while at the same time bolstering the explanatory framework.

5.3.3 Theme 3: Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy

5.3.3.1 Student Interviewees

The third theme touched upon communication-oriented language learning strategy, which corresponded to the BALLI Factor 3 in Chapter 4. Coding and categorization resulted in three overarching categories that made up this theme: guessing unknown words, error correction, and pronunciation. The categories comprising this theme, as well as examples of interviewees'

responses for each category, are illustrated in Table 26.

Table 26

Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy from Students' Perspective

Category	Example of Student Responses
Guessing unknown words	• *I don't think it's applicable. I don't think that is even correct, because you can be very very wrong.* • *You'll never get it right, because there's nothing even close to it. Chinese has no cognates.*
Error correction	• *The best way to deal with a mistake is to correct it immediately so that the student is aware what the mistake was when they made it.* • *Depends. Sometimes you have to overlook mistakes. If the student keeps repeating the same mistake, the teaher should correct it.*
Pronunciation	• *It's important to speak with correct pronunciation so that everybody can understand you. If I don't speak with correct Chinese pronunciation, the Chinese would assume I'm speaking English, not Chinese.* • *It's not so important because even in English one can still understand people with poor pronunciation. It doesn't affect your communication with*

Coding and categorization of this theme revealed that among the student responses, both positive and negative responses were found for all the three categories. Overall negative attitudes towards guessing unknown words and positive attitudes towards error correction and excellent pronunciation appeared to be predominate in students' responses. For example, students who were negative, Amy, Bella, Jim, Dan, and Ken, explained that it was impossible to guess unknown Chinese words, because there were no cognates between English and Chinese. Amy stressed,

> I don't think communicative strategies work well in the beginning. Say, guessing unknown words. Good luck! There aren't many cognates between English and Chinese, unlike between French and English. But if you can't remember whether a word is this or that, go for it, and 闹笑话 (you'll make funny mistakes).

Dan also remarked,

> It's better for students to ask or look up unknown words in dictionaries to remember the exact context and never forget the meaning. Or just increase your vocabulary rather than guess, because you'll never get it right.

Amy's response showed that she had task knowledge with regard to the demands of a task in that

there should be cognates between English and Chinese in order to perform the guessing task. She

also had strategic knowledge in relation to why communicative strategies did not work well.

Dan's response showed a similar pattern.

On the other hand, Cathy preferred guessing new words. She added,

I think students should try to guess. It shows that you're trying and making effort. Because when you guess, people know that you're trying. It's very difficult to guess, but at least try. If you have enough language skills, you can describe what you're trying to say as well. And people won't feel offended by that because you're trying. Sometimes the words are so close to what you're saying. People would say "oh, I know what you're saying, it's not this, you're trying to say this". So that's a learning strategy for use as well, because you may have made a mistake when you learn, you can remember that.

In her views, students should at least try, and people may come to your help when they knew you

were trying, while at the same time you may learn something new in the process of guessing. It

appeared that guessing, for the most part, was a tough task for these students learning Chinese

due to the nature of the Chinese language and the initial stage where they were at, not having

acquired linguistic skills required to guess. Cathy's comments on the strategy of guessing

showed that she not only had task and strategic knowledge but also could utilize this knowledge

to regulate her learning, such as making efforts to try to guess.

With regard to error correction, the students interviewed unanimously commented

positively on it. Yet, their responses showed slight differences in the timing of error correction

and the type of errors that they believed should be corrected. For example, Bella, Cathy, Jim,

and Ken all supported immediate verbal error correction. Cathy remarked,

Immediately tell them ([students]) "No, this is how you say it." Just repetition again. Pick up the problem immediately and then replace it by actually the way you are supposed to say it so that your memory is really fresh. Ok. This is the wrong one, and this is the right way to say it.

Bella held a similar view. She commented,

The best way to deal with a mistake is to correct it immediately so that the student is

aware what the mistake was when they made it because if the student is in the middle of a very long phrase, by the time that he's finished and the instructor wants to correct it, the student may not remember exactly what the mistake was and how they mispronounced it.

On the other hand, Dan responded by saying that errors should be corrected some time during office hours, because it can be embarrassing for students to be called out on errors in class which might make students less willing to answer questions in class. Dan further emphasized,

> I would expect a teacher to point out the written mistakes on homework immediately while giving suggestions on how to fix them. But correcting verbal or pronunciation mistakes takes more time for some people who have difficulty differentiating pitch changes.

Cathy's, Bella's and Dan's comments further revealed their task and strategic knowledge as well as metacognitive strategies

In the meantime, Amy and Ken indicated that errors made frequently should be corrected and certain errors were acceptable at the beginning stage of learning a language. Ken said,

> Sometimes you have to overlook mistakes. When somebody is speaking to a certain extent, if he keeps repeating the same mistakes, the teacher should correct it. I find the correction helps me remember better. If she corrects me in front of everybody, it didn't bother me. I don't mind being corrected. Remember I'm an old student too. I also have gone through learning other languages before. It didn't bother me to make mistakes. When people correct me, it helps me to pronounce it better. I think it's easier she corrects mistakes immediately. But you can't do it for every single thing, especially for Chinese. I think Westerners probably make mistakes for every character and almost every tone. You have to find the words that are used the most, consistently mispronounced and correct them. I have to re-pronounce it and say it again right there. I just improved more.

Amy also remarked,

> I think certain mistakes are acceptable in the beginning. I think learning proper pinyin initials and finals is a must, but tones take a long time for many people, and if students can learn to recognize a word but have difficulty pronouncing it with proper tones at first, they may eventually learn tones. But I'm not sure.

Ken's remarks on error correction revealed that he had person knowledge (an old learner), task knowledge ('You have to overlook mistakes'), and strategic knowledge ('But you can't do it for every single thing, especially for Chinese') as well as metacognitive strategies ('I have to re-

pronounce it and say it again right there'), demonstrating how metacognitive knowledge and

strategies were at work in his cognitive activities. Likely, Amy also showed her task and strategic

knowledge as well as metacognitive strategies which she used to regulate her learning.

Responses to interview questions concerning pronunciation seemed to be situated on a

spectrum, ranging from seeing correct pronunciation as very important to not so important. Four

students, Jim, Bella, Cathy and Amy, considered correct pronunciation to be very important, and

incorrect pronunciation would create a misunderstanding. Jim said,

> It's important to speak with correct pronunciation so that everybody can understand you.
> When I speak Chinese, if I don't speak with correct pronunciation, the Chinese would
> assume that I'm speaking English not Chinese. So I think it's very important to learn the
> pronunciation, because you want others to understand you, and there's no point learning
> another language if you cannot speak it fluently.

In the meantime, their views that showed approval of correct pronunciation seemed to

reflect students' different understanding of the word "pronunciation", as evidenced by their

related comments. In Chapter 4, the majority of students endorsed the item that emphasized

perfection pronunciation, and one of the speculations was related to the assumption that some

students did not differentiate the two aspects of pronunciation--articulatory and prosodic. From

the interview data, it was not very clear as to whether Jim and Bella could differentiate the two

aspects of pronunciation. Cathy's and Amy's remarks, however, appeared to show they took

tones as one aspect of pronunciation. Cathy said,

> You should emphasize that you should be able to pronounce the word as best as you can.
> Some people try so hard that they are overcompensate, you cannot understand them
> either. So I'd say first focus on your tones. The tone part is more important. People can
> understand you if you have the tones correct, because there're so many pronunciations. In
> Canadian language, we still know what people mean, even though they don't say the
> word fully properly. But I'd emphasize tones in Mandarin. It's a little bit harder.

Amy also explained,

> I think learning proper pinyin initials and finals is a must, but tones take a long time for

many people, and if students can learn to recognize a word but have difficulty pronouncing it with proper tones at first, they may eventually learn tones. But I'm not sure.

Cathy emphasized the importance of tones while Amy focused on initials and finals. But they both singled out tones, seemingly suggesting their plausible differentiation of the two aspects of pronunciation. All these responses suggested that students associated pronunciation either with initials and finals only or with both initials and finals and tones, which may explain why the agreement rate with the related item in Chapter 4 in this study was higher than that in other BALLI studies.

Conversely, Ken and Dan did not view correct pronunciation as important as other aspects of language learning, such as understanding the Chinese culture. In their eyes, correct or incorrect pronunciation does not matter as much as long as it does not interfere with communication. Ken remarked,

I realize that the Chinese is like anybody. If you're speaking somebody's language, a foreign language, they're going to be very patient with you. I don't think perfect pronunciation is as important as being able to communicate and learning the vocabulary to get by with what you need to say.

This theme, along with its categories, provided more evidence and contexts to the results from the BALLI Factor 3 in Chapter 4, while at the same time revealing that students had developed their beliefs about communication-oriented strategies and could employ the strategies to control their learning. This theme demonstrated that students used their task and strategic knowledge to plan and monitor their learning in the self-regulatory learning process, thereby adding empirical evidence to the explanatory framework as well as replenishing the substance of the framework. In the meantime, these students' comments on communication-oriented learning strategies appeared to resonate once again with Horwitz's (1988) concern that some students' over-concern about correctness would likely pose difficulty to students' feeling comfortable with

and participating in communicative activities.

5.3.3.2 Teacher Interviewees

The third theme from teacher interviewees' responses was pertinent to communication-oriented language learning strategy. Coding and categorization resulted in three major categories that constituted this theme: guessing unknown words, error correction, and pronunciation. While coding teachers' responses under this theme, I found the predominant pattern was teachers' supportive attitudes towards guessing unknown words, generally positive attitudes towards error correction, and overall negative or neutral attitudes towards pronunciation. Additionally, teachers' responses frequently revealed that teachers not only had thorough strategic knowledge about learning Chinese, but also had metacognitive strategies to monitor their cognitive teaching activities. The categories forming this theme, as well as examples of interviewees' responses for each category, are illustrated in Table 27.

With regard to guessing unknown words, I discovered both positive and negative responses. On the positive side, all Chinese-origin teachers interviewed whose native language is Chinese encouraged students, to a varying extent, to guess unknown words. The rationale for their support, however, was three-fold. One was that if students were successful in guessing unknown words, they would feel like winning a lottery, thus becoming more motivated. Another was that guessing was required for smooth verbal and reading communication. Ms Na said,

> Students are constantly faced with the task of dealing with unfamiliar words. If you encounter new words when speaking with others, you have to guess in order to continue your communication. If you come across new words in reading, you can consult with your dictionary. Although looking up dictionaries is sometimes necessary, it will definitely slow you down. So I encourage students to guess in order for communication to go smoothly.

Ms Na's remarks illustrated her task knowledge in terms of demands of a task ('you have to guess in order to continue your communication'), strategic knowledge concerning the usefulness

of some strategy ('Although looking up dictionaries is sometimes necessary, it will definitely

slow you down'), and metacognitive strategies ('So I encourage students to guess in order for

communication to go smoothly'). Apparently, she employed her task and strategic knowledge to

monitor her teaching activities, an indication of use of metacognitive strategies.

Table 27

Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy from Teachers' Perspective

Category	Example of Teacher Responses
Guessing unknown words	• *I think guessing unknown words should be encouraged, but it should not be overused, because overusing it will make students get lazy. Consequently they wouldn't want to memorize the new words.* • *There is no good reason or way to make guesses. When you learn Spanish or German, you can find some regularities, such as cognates, that help you to guess. But Chinese does not have cognates at all.*
Error correction	• *Depends. I usually correct errors selectively. I make my decision based on when the error is made, in which context, what type of error it is, and how many errors are made.* • *I correct students' errors according to when the error is made and who makes the error. Sometimes I correct the error immediately after it is made, and sometimes I do error correction afterwards. I take into account students' personality when correcting their errors. If errors made do not interfere with communication, I won't correct them.*
Pronunciation	• *I don't think pronunciation is very important. Why? Because many Chinese people do not speak standard Chinese, and they have accents. As long as you can make yourself understood and can communicate, pronunciation is not a big deal.* • *I think good pronunciation is important, but not critical. Although I emphasize correct pronunciation in beginners' class, I also tell the class that Chinese is a tonal language. Tones are more important. If your pronunciation is not very correct, and if what you said can be understood by others and does not interfere with communication, we should not discourage students by overemphasizing the importance of correct pronunciation. Otherwise, students would not dare to open their mouth to speak.*

The third one suggested that some basic knowledge about Chinese should precede the

guessing strategy. Ms Fan explained,

> Guessing unknown words is indispensable in the learning process, particularly when time and learning aids are limited. You should try your best to guess, using the cultural and linguistic information available. I encourage students to guess, especially when they start to read, because there are always new words. If you look up every word, you will never be able to finish your reading. However you don't have the capability of guessing unless you have a solid foundation.

On the negative side, Mr. Lay, whose first language is English, was the only teacher of

Chinese that disapproved of guessing. He believed that it was impossible to guess due to absence

of cognates between Chinese and European languages, as could be seen from the quote in Table 27. It appeared that non-Asian teacher whose native language is cognate-based, opposed the guessing strategy. However, data were not adequate to support this speculation, hence requiring further exploration.

In the category of error correction, all teachers interviewed considered error correction to be entirely necessary; however the correction should be conducted selectively with regard to what errors should be corrected and whose errors should be corrected and at what time. Further some teachers did not believe it would be hard to get rid of errors later on if not corrected immediately, while others did. For example, Mr Lay said,

> Sometimes I correct students' errors immediately; sometimes I will repeat what he said wrongly, provide him with the correct one, and repeat again. Sometimes if the error does not interfere with communication, I will not correct it. Every individual student is different. Some students don't care and like to be corrected immediately. Some students are shy. Correcting their errors immediately will discourage them from speaking again. So I tend to correct them after class. Students have different personalities. Therefore, I correct errors depending on the specific situation and each individual student. This requires teachers to know every student's style. Besides, I believe students can get rid of errors later on if they are in a good learning environment and practice more.

Similar to Mr Lay, a few teachers interviewed shared such views on error correction. Ms Han remarked,

> Some students will feel upset and embarrassed if you correct them in front of others. In this situation, you don't want to make them lose face. When students make too many errors, I tend to correct those commonly made errors. Otherwise you would need to spend one hour correcting mistakes, but we have limited time. As to whether students can get rid of their errors they developed earlier, I think they can, as long as work hard.

On the other hand, some teachers such as Ms Bai believed it would be hard for students to eliminate errors later on if not corrected immediately. Yet, like others, they tended to correct errors using a suitable approach. Ms. Bai said,

> I think it would be difficult to dispose of errors later if you don't correct them in a timely manner. I use various methods to correct their error, which accommodate the specific

situation and each individual student.

It seemed that regardless of their beliefs about error correction, all teachers had the tendency to apply a flexible, suitable approach to correcting errors.

With respect to pronunciation, most teachers stated that good pronunciation was desirable, but not critical to learning foreign languages, especially when pronunciation did not pose any barrier to mutual understanding and communication. Ms Fan offered her slightly different opinion. She said,

> Whether perfect pronunciation is necessary will depend on students' learning goals. For the students who wish to become a teacher of Chinese, perfect pronunciation is very important. For those students from the business school, perfect pronunciation is not as important, because their goal is to use Chinese to do business and engage in social interaction. So as long as they can conduct basic communication in Chinese, pronunciation is not an issue at all.

However a few teachers pointed out that tones mattered more than pronunciation. This was similar to what was discovered from the same theme for student interviewees. Ms Gao said,

> I don't think pronunciation is extremely important. Even in China, there are so many people who cannot get pronunciation 100 percent right, and they speak Chinese with accent. Of course getting perfect pronunciation is what we teachers should strive for. But I believe tones matter more, and it is important to train students in the first term in developing the ability to pronounce tones correctly, because incorrect tones always create misunderstanding. I tend to focus more on tones.

It could be seen from Ms Gao's comments that her belief about Chinese pronunciation led to her focusing on tones. Ms Han also offered similar comments by saying "I believe tones are more important. Compared to Pinyin, tones are harder for students to learn, and are also more critical to their learning Chinese." In Chapter 4, a large proportion of teachers also reported agreement with the item related to excellent pronunciation. It might be possible that some teachers considered tones to be one aspect of pronunciation.

Overall, teachers' responses overall showed their preference for communicative

strategies, such as guessing unknown words, while at the same time some teachers also attached

importance to accuracy, as reflected in their comments on error correction and pronunciation.

Teachers' responses all demonstrated their metacognitive knowledge and strategies as well as

how they developed metacognitive strategies to regulate and monitor their teaching process. The

findings in this theme echoed those from Chapter 4 in that teachers were comprehensive and

balanced in their views on language learning/teaching. This theme and its associated categories

not only refined results from Chapter 4, but also uncovered what was not found in Chapter 4,

specifically the metacognitive strategies used to monitor their teaching to help students learn. As

a result, this theme was a reinforcement and illumination of the explanatory framework.

5.3.4 Theme 4: Difficulty of Learning Languages

5.3.4.1 Student Interviewees

The fourth theme from student interviewees' responses concerned difficulty of learning

languages, which aligned with the BALLI Factor 4 in Chapter 4. Three major categories

constituted this theme: level of ease of languages, age in learning languages, and difficulty level

of learning Chinese. In coding and categorizing students' responses, I found students' overall

supportive attitudes being predominate with regard to the three categories. I also found that

students had developed person, task, and strategic knowledge and metacognitive strategies to

handle their task. The categories comprising this theme, as well as examples of interviewees'

responses for each category, are illustrated in Table 28.

In the category of level of ease of languages, recognition of existence of a language

difficulty hierarchy was present in all student interviewees' comments. Specifically, target

languages that share some common features with one's native language were considered to be

easy, while those with little in common with one's native language were seen as difficult.

Dan said,

> Well, I think not all languages are equally difficult to learn. For me, I find French easier to learn than Russian, not that French is simpler than Russian, but French is more similar to English. But there's little in common between English and Chinese. Basically, you need to start from scratch.

The commonalities between languages seem to be the determinant that students relied on for their perceived language difficulty level.

Table 28

Difficulty of Language Learning from Students' Perspective

Category	Example of Student Responses
Level of ease of languages	• *I think it's very true that some languages are easier to learn than others. For example, Spanish is a lot easier than Chinese.* • *English is my native language, it has little in common with Chinese. Learning a language, say German, is much easier than learning a completely alien one.*
Age in learning languages	• *Children learn languages faster than adults. They're like sponges, and receptive to anything taught.* • *Children are still in the learning phase of their life, so they soak up the languages faster. They don't question things like grammatical rules. However, adults are better at reading comprehension than young children.*
Difficulty level of learning Chinese	• *Well, not all foreign languages are equally difficult. Chinese is so hard, but it's by no means impossible.* • *Chinese is quite difficult compared to English. Spoken and written Chinese is especially difficult, but many students still trek towards their goal.*

With regard to the role of age in language learning, I found two subcategories within this category. In one subcategory, students, such as Ken, Jim, Amy, and Bella, stated that children are at a more advantageous position than adults in that they learn new languages more easily and faster. Bella remarked,

> I think kids have an easier time with picking up foreign languages…cause they have more porous mind… better memories… more adaptable. The younger the learner, the more open the brain is to new sounds and stuff…it's difficult for adults to do these.

In the other subcategory, while acknowledging children's advantages in acquiring new languages, Dan and Cathy also believed that adults are better than children in some aspects, such as reading comprehension. Dan commented,

> I think we adults may be stronger than children at learning foreign languages….in some ways. We know better how language works…we already know how to read and build a sentence.. and how to spell words…more skilled at finding patterns.

When it came to the general impressions about level of difficulty of learning Chinese, their response pattern was fairly apparent—the interviewees were unanimous in viewing Chinese as a difficult language due to its unique writing system and tones, and as a result of a comparison of their experiences with learning other foreign languages. Jim said,

> Chinese is hard, but it's not impossible to learn. It takes time and effort. I love Chinese characters. They look interesting but hard to write. Tones are confusing and are difficult to get a handle on. You can say some funny things if your tone is off. You must practice a lot.

Jim's comments showed his person, task and strategic knowledge. Realizing the challenges lying ahead of him, he suggested using metacognitive strategies to implement the learning task, that is practice a lot.

Overall, this theme and the categories associated with the theme demonstrated that students had metacognitive knowledge, well aware of their specific learning task. The findings in this theme were consistent with the results in Chapter 4, but with more content, breadth, and depth, because students' responses explained why they endorsed the language learning hierarchy as well as how they would go about the difficult task of learning Chinese, as evidenced by Jim's comments. The awareness and understanding of the learning task exhibited by the students interviewed documented empirically the dimensions included in the explanatory framework.

5.3.4.2 Teacher Interviewees

The fourth theme from teacher interviewees' responses related to difficulty of language learning. Three major categories constituted this theme: level of ease of languages, age in learning languages, and difficulty level of learning Chinese. Teachers' responses showed their well-developed person, task and strategic knowledge. The categories comprising this theme, as

well as examples of interviewees' responses for each category, are illustrated in Table 29.

Table 29

Difficulty of Language Learning from Teachers' Perspective

Category	Example of Teacher Responses
Level of ease of learning languages	• *Generally speaking, some languages are easier than others. The point is which languages are easier. This usually depends on your native language. If English is your mother tongue, you will find it easier to learn French than Chinese. But if your mother tongue is Japanese, you may find it easier to learn Chinese than French.* • *Some languages are more complex than others, so they are hard to learn. For example, French is more complex in pronunciation and grammar than English, so it is harder to learn.*
Age in learning languages	• *I think it is much easier for children to learn foreign languages than adults. Children are able to understand words and hear small sound differences that adults often miss, which makes understanding more difficult for adults. The older you get, the more you use your mother tongue, the more it dominates your brain, and the harder it is to learn a foreign language.* • *I would say children learn languages differently from adults. Children who have an early start pick up and speak a foreign language effortlessly and with no accent, but they do not think analytically. Older students make use of their prior experience and existing knowledge to learn new languages, so they are better at learning vocabulary and reading comprehension.*
Difficulty of learning Chinese	• *According to the information online, Chinese is rated as one of the most difficult languages to learn for people whose native language is English.* • *In general, Chinese is harder to learn, compared with other language. It may take three to four times longer to learn Chinese than to learn other languages, such as Spanish, English, etc.*

Teachers' responses revealed that teachers were fairly homogeneous in seeing some languages as being more difficult to learn than others, and they attributed the varying level of difficulty across languages to one's native language as well as what was inherent in the language per se. Ms Bai said,

> Well, languages differ in their difficulty level, and students' views on the difficulty level vary depending on their background. For example, Asian students whose native language is Japanese or Korean may not consider Chinese as hard to learn. In contrast, students whose native language is English or other European languages most likely rank Chinese as a hard language.

Teachers expressed their beliefs about the role of age in learning foreign languages. Within this category, I found two subcategories that had some overlap. One subcategory asserted the superiority of children in that they learned languages faster than adults. Teachers believed that language learning became hard for adults because they tended to see things through the lens of their native language, which negatively impacted the way they saw foreign languages. Ms Gao

asserted,

> Unlike children who are more adaptable and receptive to new languages, adults are more influenced by their native language. Some influence can be positive, and some can be negative. It is not easy to mitigate or eliminate the negative transfer from the native language.

The other subcategory also looked at the advantages that adults had over children. Teachers, while acknowledging the advantages children had, believed that adult learners had access to the memory techniques and other strategies that children did not have in acquiring vocabulary and in learning grammar rules. Ms Fan responded,

> Adults have a better conceptual understanding of language, and are more adept at analyzing languages and finding patterns. This means that they are more skilled at deducing and applying language rules. In contrast, children are still at the stage of developing these skills.

Furthermore, in teachers' views, the earlier a child began a second language, the more native-like the accent he or she developed.

There was a slight variation, however, in the extent to which Chinese was viewed as a difficult language. But, by and large, among the teachers interviewed, Chinese was ranked as one of the most difficult languages or as a difficult language. Ms Han claimed,

> Generally speaking, Chinese is difficult, especially in terms of tones and Chinese characters. Tones are hard to all the students, regardless of their native language. Chinese characters are a great challenge to non-Asian students. Many of them say that the characters look like worms to them and they don't know where to start to write.

Overall, findings in this theme were in alignment with the related results in Chapter 4. Teachers elaborated on their beliefs about the difficulty of language learning and expanded understandings of the related factor in Chapter 4, as a result of which, the quantitative results were refined, substantiated and extended. Teachers' exhibited metacognitive knowledge further fit into the explanatory framework, thereby enhancing the metacognitive dimensions of the framework.

5.3.5 Theme 5: Difficulty of Chinese Characters

5.3.5.1 Student Interviewees

Difficulty of Chinese characters was the fifth theme from student interviewees'

responses, which was linked to the BALLI Plus Factor 1 in Chapter 4. Four major categories

comprised this theme: concurrent introduction of Pinyin and Chinese characters, Pinyin first,

Chinese characters the hardest, and Chinese characters the most interesting. It is worthy of note

that at a first glance, the first two categories of this theme seemed to be more related to Chinese

teaching strategies. However, students' responses that follow will show that the argument on the

sequence of introduction of Pinyin and characters was associated with the difficulty level of

Chinese characters. For these reason, these categories were coded under difficulty of Chinese

characters. This theme, along with students' responses, further confirmed the labeling of the

BALLI Plus Factor 1 in Chapter 4.The categories within this theme, along with examples of

interviewees' responses for each category, are displayed in Table 30.

In this theme, I found four categories. One was that Chinese characters and Pinyin should

be introduced simultaneously despite the difficulty of Chinese characters, because Pinyin can

help students learn Chinese characters. Bella said,

> I think it's good to have both. Concurrently, you start with basic characters first and but I
> think it's just easier to learn the characters when you know the pinyin, how to say it.
> Otherwise, it'd be too hard to learn the characters.

Jim claimed,

> I think the characters should be taught with pronunciation of them, that's the Pinyin. I
> like the characters. Pinyin helps me to learn the characters. Some of the students just
> focus on the pinyin, cause it's easy. They do the characters later when they have time. I
> think more emphasis on the characters will be better. In real world, when you go to
> China, all signs are in Pinyin.

Table 30

Difficulty of Chinese Characters from Students' Perspective

Category	Example of Student Responses
Concurrent introduction of Chinese characters and Pinyin	• *I think teaching them together helps learn pronunciation and the characters, because one associates the Pinyin pronunciation with the character, which makes reading the characters easier.* • *It's a waste of time to just start with Pinyin alone without characters. In theory, it should help students learn to speak faster, without being distracted by all the time it takes to learn to write, but people are going to have trouble pronouncing things anyway and learning Pinyin alone won't help much.*
Pinyin first	• *I like Pinyin first, because it gives me a sense of basic tones and basic initials. The characters are a bit junky.* • *Pinyin first so that we have a basic understanding, because we're so familiar with Roman letters. If characters are introduced first, it will be so overwhelming.*
Chinese characters the hardest	• *The hardest part of learning Chinese is learning the characters. Chinese is not a language of alphabets, so the Chinese writing is not related to alphabets. For me, the characters are more like pictures and I don't even know where to start the drawing.* • *I think the hardest thing is recognising and remembering the Chinese characters, and writing them by hand. And there're so many characters to learn and each represents an idea.*
Chinese characters the most interesting	• *The characters are very interesting and reveal a lot about Chinese culture, particularly its ancient culture.* • *Chinese characters are beautiful, mysterious, and intriguing. I think the writing system is one of the most fascinating scripts in the world.*

Another category concerned the support for the introduction of Pinyin first, because learning Pinyin was seen to be able to ease the process of learning Chinese and make subsequent learning of Chinese characters less daunting and overwhelming. Ken commented,

> From my point of view, I found the pronunciation is tricky, especially with the tones. I think it's good to start out with Pinyin. Help us understand how to pronounce the words. Westerners are used to associating letters with the sounds. So I like the pinyin first. I can remember them somewhat. The characters are junky. The teacher pushes students to learn characters, and I learned some characters, and I'm grateful for that. I would say they start characters the 3rd or the 4th week. I admit if I stick to the characters, I'll lose the tones and some of the pronunciation. I like the fact that I can read the characters and understand them without having to write them.

As far as the nature of Chinese characters was concerned, student interviewees saw them as the hardest part of learning Chinese because of their distinctiveness from European languages (the third category), as well as the most interesting part due to their association with history and culture and artistic images (the fourth category). The third category was more predominate than the fourth category. Dan commented about Chinese characters by saying,

> Chinese characters look difficult, and people in Mainland China use the simplified characters….people in Taiwan kept the complex character. So there are two ways of writing a character. Every word is represented by a different character….there's no link between the character and the sound. It means that you have to learn every character one by one, with its pronunciation and meaning. This is, like, as difficult as it looks, and is the hardest part. The only way I have found to learn is to find a mental hook inside the character and to invent a story about it. Our Mandarin teacher said the same thing.

Jim, however, found Chinese characters to be the most interesting part. He said,

> I'm just obsessed with Chinese characters. The Chinese writing system is quite a challenge, but this is another reason to learn it! Although it's tough, learning to read and write Chinese can give you sort of intellectual stimulation. The real beauty of the language is in the writing. In the beginning, the characters seemed pretty intimidating, but they're not randomly constructed…there's a system to their design… understanding that system makes it much easier to learn new characters. You'll find it fun to write those interesting characters… I've learned some already…just takes time and practice

Jim's response showed he was aware of the difficulty of learning Chinese characters while at the same time attributing it to the reason why he personally chose to learn Chinese. Jim appeared to clearly demonstrate a positive cyclical relationship between difficulty of learning Chinese and motivation. From Dan's and Jim's responses, it could be further observed that they had developed task and strategic knowledge as well as person knowledge in relation to learning Chinese characters. Likewise, they developed metacognitive strategies to regulate their learning, as reflected in their responses.

This theme, together with students' comments, accounted in detail for the results from Chapter 4 as well as expanded understandings of the results by addressing the metacognitive strategies. Students' person knowledge and knowledge about the learning task and strategy empirically supported the metacognitive dimensions included in the explanatory framework.

5.3.5.2 Teacher Interviewees

The fifth theme from teachers' responses was also named as difficulty of Chinese characters. It consisted of four major categories: concurrent introduction of Chinese characters

and Pinyin, Pinyin first, Chinese characters the hardest, and Chinese characters the most

interesting. Coding teachers' beliefs under this theme found teachers' related task and strategic

knowledge, based on which the teachers developed metacognitive strategies to guide their

teaching to help students learn, as will be evidenced by teachers' comments. The categories

within this theme, along with examples of interviewees' responses for each category, are

displayed in Table 31.

Coding teachers' responses related to the difficulty of Chinese characters also identified

four categories. The first category concerned the topic on the concurrent introduction of Chinese

characters and Pinyin. However, teachers' responses suggested a slight variation regarding the

amount of characters that should be introduced concurrently. One was the concurrent formal

introduction of characters and Pinyin, where approximately equal weight was placed on both, as

stated by Mr. Lay and Ms. Fan. Mr Lay asserted,

> I think the goal of teaching Chinese at the college level is to enable students not only to
> communicate orally but also to read and write Chinese. I want students who are literate.
> So I think the earlier the better. Personally, I feel Chinese characters are the hardest part
> of learning Chinese. Why do students want to learn Chinese? It is because they think
> Chinese characters are full of mystery, and they want to learn how to write them. They
> will be happy if you teach them how to write. As well, I want them to develop an early,
> quick awareness about what is required in learning Chinese. I think you need to be
> literate if you study Chinese at a college, unlike those learning Chinese outside of college
> where they don't need to learn characters. If you study Chinese in a college, when you
> are going out, you are always representative of this college. As an American going to
> China, you are representative of America. You need to represent the college and America
> well. In order to do that in a Chinese speaking world, you need to be literate.

Apparently, the rationale behind this view was that the ultimate goal of teaching Chinese

at the university level was to develop students' literacy skills; therefore Pinyin and Chinese

characters should be treated as equally important. The other variation was that the focus of the

first weeks should be targeted on Pinyin and teaching of Chinese characters should be limited to

the extent to which they should be used to help students get a sense of basic radicals and gain

some confidence. Ms Bai and Ms Han shared this view. Ms Han said,

> Teaching of Pinyin, mixed with introduction of some simple Chinese characters, can decrease students' boredom resulting from too much Pinyin and tone learning at the initial stage. At the same time, this way can increase students' sense of achievement in learning Chinese.

Table 31

Difficulty of Chinese Characters from Teachers' Perspective

Category	Example of Student Responses
Concurrent introduction of Chinese characters and Pinyin	• *I think we should teach Pinyin along with Chinese characters, because the goal of teaching Chinese at the university level is to enable students not only to communicate verbally, but also to read and write to be literate. So the earlier the introduction of Chinese characters, the better.* • *I don't think the sequence is that important and there should be an absolute separation of initially teaching Pinyin and Chinese characters. Even if we focus on teaching Pinyin the first four weeks, we also teach students some Chinese characters so that students don't feel bored of learning Pinyin alone.*
Pinyin first	• *Theoretically, I support the approach to teaching Pinyin first, because it is not difficult for students to speak Chinese, but learning Chinese characters is the most difficult part. If Chinese characters are introduced together with Pinyin and included into the test, and if the characters always make students lose marks, students will be pushed away.* • *Teaching Pinyin first without Chinese characters will enable the student to learn to speak faster than teaching them at the same time. So it will be easier for teachers to organize oral activities, which students are usually actively involved in. Oral activities can bring lots of benefits to students.*
Chinese characters the hardest	• *To students whose native language is English or other European language, the most difficult part of learning Chinese is Chinese characters. However for Asian students, such as Japanese and Korean students, Chinese characters are not hard at all.* • *The Chinese writing system is the hardest part of learning Chinese. To students, even learning to control the pen for strokes is already challenging, let alone writing the characters.*
Chinese characters the most interesting	• *Some students are obsessed with Chinese characters, because they think the characters are very meaningful and reflective of Chinese culture and history.* • *While challenging, Chinese characters, to some students, are like beautiful artistic work. They are interested in knowing how to produce such art work.*

The second category pertained to learning Pinyin first before proceeding to Chinese characters. From the perspectives of Ms. Gao and Ms Han, students should learn Pinyin first. Ms Gao explained,

> Pinyin uses Roman letters combined with a tone to represent Chinese characters and express the sounds in the Chinese language. These Roman letters will make learning Chinese characters less daunting, particularly to those students whose native language uses the Roman alphabets. Learning Pinyin first will assist students in psychologically transitioning to the more difficult part of learning Chinese characters. So Pinyin first will make speaking and practicing Chinese easier without the burden of having to learn Chinese characters.

Ms Han said,

> Pinyin is the most common way to input Chinese characters into a computer. When students learn Chinese characters, we teach them how to use Pinyin to type Chinese characters into the computer. So they need to have learned Pinyin first before gaining the skills of inputting characters into a computer.

All teachers interviewed saw Chinese characters as the hardest part as well as the most interesting part of learning Chinese. Ms Na remarked,

> Some students are interested in the Chinese culture and characters. They think Chinese characters represent the Chinese culture, as culture and language are always intertwined. And the mysterious and aesthetic aspect in Chinese characters also makes them feel fascinated.

Overall, this theme presented teachers' responses that refined the results on the BALLI Plus Factor 1 in Chapter 4 and revealed teachers' metacognitive knowledge and corresponding metacognitive strategies. The findings from this theme explained in detail the quantitative results in Chapter 4, while at the same time enhancing the explanatory power of the framework.

5.3.6 Theme 6: Commitment to Continuity of Learning Chinese

5.3.6.1 Student Interviewees

The last theme was relating to commitment to continuity of learning Chinese, which was pertinent to the BALLI Plus Factor 2 in Chapter 4. Student interviewees were asked about what may affect students' expectations of continuity of the next level of learning Chinese. When coding and categorizing students' responses to the semi-structured interview question, I discovered that, in addition to the issues addressed in the BALLI Plus, recurring new categories emerged from students' responses. Under this theme were ten major categories:

- congruence of learner beliefs and teacher beliefs about language learning,
- course grade,
- language learning activities,

- perseverance,
- a supportive learning environment (recurring new category),
- potential value of learning Chinese (recurring new category),
- interest level of Chinese class (recurring new category),
- positive learning outcome (recurring new category),
- motivation/purpose (recurring new category), and
- Chinese-origin students.

Thus this theme not only provided the meaningful contexts to the related survey results, but also added insights into the issue of student retention for learning Chinese. In the meantime, students' responses showed that students had knowledge about themselves as learners (person knowledge), what learning task and challenges they were faced with (task knowledge), what strategies were suitable for them (strategic knowledge), and how strategies could be applied to regulate learning (metacognitive strategies). The categories in this theme, along with examples of interviewees' responses for each category, are displayed in Table 32.

In the category of congruence of teacher beliefs with student beliefs were three subcategories that appeared to evenly lie along a spectrum. At one end of the spectrum were the responses from Dan and Jim that considered the congruence to be important, while at the other were the responses from Cathy and Bella that viewed such congruence was unnecessary. Somewhere in between lay the responses from Amy and Ken that considered the congruence to be something not essential, albeit helpful, to teaching.

Table 32

Commitment to Continuity of Learning Chinese from Students' Perspective

Category	Example of Student Responses
Congruence of teacher beliefs and learner beliefs	• *I think it's important for teachers to know students' belief about language learning, because knowing their beliefs and learning styles can help teachers to decide how they're going to teach.* • *Not necessarily. Teachers know that students are a little bit scared and intimadated by a language so foreign to them. It's best to start fresh not to have those beliefs on the table. Just for what the teacher said, this is how it is. That's it.*
Grade	• *If students work hard to receive a good grade, I think it'll definitely motivate them.* • *A good grade doesn't necessarily mean students will continue. They may choose to drop it (Chinese class) because it posed little challenge to them.*
Language learning activities	• *I think the majority of class time should be based on learning--80% of learning of grammar and pronunciation. The fun part should be used a reward at the end of the class. If it's just educational stuff, just grammar, you don't want to get people bored.* • *I think an equal amount of time should be spent on both activities (grammar and pronunciation, and fun communicative activities). If that's impossible, then slightly more time should be focused on studying grammar and pronunciation.*
Perseverance	• *It is fun to learn Chinese at the very beginning, it's something new. Then to really really learn it you have to keep putting in work. The novelty is worn out. Now you really have to work hard to the next level. That's where dropout comes.* • *Lots of students come into the class with an attitude of high school, especially if they are freshmen, expecting in the class they don't really need to open the book, learn the materials and get through the course. They struggle through the class.*
A friendly learning environment	• *Sometimes it's good to have the Chinese or Taiwanese classmates, saying "hey, do you understand what I am saying?". If they say "hey, good job, I can totally understand you.". That gives us motivation and gets us excited about the language.* • *It's important to have a friend you can practice with who also has the same interest and motivation.*
Practical value of learning Chinese	• *To keep students' motivation, make it (learning Chinese) useful to the real world, useful for business, for certain jobs. China makes up 90% of the labour force. That's become a motivation for people to learn the language.* • *I think students need to know that learning Chinese can give them the Chinese advantage, and get equipped for future opportunities, such as in the business world, when travelling, or learning Chinese culture.*
Interest level of the Chinese class	• *There're a lot of people who are only showing up for evaluations, so I think how interesting each class is will matter. Some students need it for their degree.* • *Chinese is difficult to learn. To attract and sustain more learners, I think learning needs to be made interesting and enjoyable.*
Positive learning outcome	• *At the end of the term, if they're still able to know the words after they finish the study, pick up the textbook and read the words, they still know the phrases, they get excited.* • *I think if you get to the point where you get the basic things as expected, you will want to continue.*
Motivation /Purpose	• *People who are just interested in the language will probably take it wherever they can get it, so they will go on.* • *For me I'm taking the class so that basically I can communicate. I really don't expect to be fluent.*
Chinese-origin students	• *I don't mind having the Chinese-origin students in my class because they can help me with my pronunciation and grammar.* • *Well, if Chinese-origin students are in my class, I don't think it bothers me very much. But sometimes it's depressing cause they pick up the lessons more quickly.*

Dan thought students' motivation would be boosted if teachers showed concern about their language learning beliefs and catered to their needs accordingly. He stated,

> Definitely I would think teachers should know their students' beliefs about language learning. Maybe not everyone would agree with me. Each student has their own belief as to what is the best method for teaching foreign languages. If teachers at least knew what their students beliefs were they might be able to understand why students have such difficulty with foreign languages.

Realizing the constraints by the curriculum, Dan further added,

> Well, in America, how classes are taught is left up to teachers. All that is given to them is a framework for teaching. They're given the curriculum and said "Go to work." Students have very little to say if a teacher wishes to teach them in a certain way because of their beliefs. If teachers do not teach in a way that can satisfy your beliefs, I would feel as though they were simply doing their jobs. I would not be hurt because maybe the class really does need to brush up on their penmanship, or pronunciation.

Students who did not care about such congruence expressed their trust of and reliance on teachers, whom they deemed as subject matter experts that are knowledgeable about instructional methods. Cathy said,

> Before I started to learn, I had the idea that Mandarin will be the hardest language ever and you'll be never able to learn it. So when I came in to learn Mandarin, I already had these stereotypical beliefs. I think teachers know that. Teachers know that students are a little bit scared and intimidated by a language so foreign to them. It's best to start fresh not to have those beliefs on the table. Just for what the teacher said, this is how it is. That's it. I think the teacher whose native language is Mandarin, she knows the language and she knows the culture, she knows everything. She has those beliefs already. She's the expert. As a Canadian coming in, I don't have the expertise that the teacher does. So it's best not to address the students' beliefs so much. So for the teacher, just express herself more. And for us we learn from that. Then maybe several months, or weeks more down the road, then compare your beliefs and what the teacher has been teaching, I suppose. that makes sense.

Students in the middle thought the congruence was not critical and what mattered was that teachers had to have a style that they believed was successful or that teachers needed to have knowledge about important beliefs. Amy said,

> I think teachers should know to the extent that it helps them learn. Say, if the class feels it benefits more from focusing on conversation in class, or focusing on learning to write

characters and etymology in class, but if they're things like attitudes towards effort, dedicated students will absorb whatever attitude the teacher brings.

Ken commented,

> I think it would be helpful for teachers to align their beliefs with students', but I don't think that's one of the more important aspects of teaching. I think it helps or it's nice but I don't think it essential or critical. I studied four or five languages before and I'm used to the rigid structure of the languages. The first thing is she has to have a style that she knows is successful.

In the category of course grade, student responses revealed two subcategories. From one subcategory's perspective, a good grade may help motivate students to continue their learning of Chinese, if it was not gained as an easy grade, and could reflect their efforts and learning progress. This perspective appeared to be more common, as evidenced by Amy, Jim, Bella, and Ken. Amy asserted,

> A good grade will certainly motivate students, but you don't want to degrade the quality of the class. You generally have three types of students: those who are really passionate about the subject, those who are forced to take the subject, such as degree requirements, etc., and those who want an easy grade. A class full of the first type can achieve more than a class full of the third type. If you make the class too easy, you'll get too many of the third type, and you'll have a big graduating class that doesn't know very much. If you make the class too hard, everybody will feel punished whether they worked hard enough or not, and you lose people from the first type. There has to be a balance.

From the other subcategory's perspective, such as Dan and Cathy, a good grade may or may not motivate students, depending on the situation. A good grade may likely mean the course posed little challenge to the student, as a result of which the student was turned off and eventually dropped the course. Cathy made her point by saying,

> Students aren't necessarily motivated because of a good grade. It depends. Sometimes, a good grade might mean they're able to memorize everything from a quiz. They're able to pass each quiz and do each quiz well. But I think a good grade that should be given is progress. When the student starts very poorly at the very beginning and at the end of the class did well. Then it's their progress that should be marked. In that sense, a good grade would help them. But also there're other people, so might use mediocre grade, say B or B+ as a motivation. You're doing good and doing well. If somebody gets A+, they think 'Oh I know it. I honestly know it. I don't need to take a course anymore.'

This perspective implied that students were motivated by language courses that can challenge their mind and demonstrate their progress.

In the category of language learning activities, most students interviewed expressed their preference of integrating grammar and pronunciation instruction with fun communicative language learning activities, but with more weight given to the former. Their comments appeared to imply their inclination towards the traditional approach. Cathy said,

> I think the fun part should be used as a reward. Whether it's at the beginning or at the end of the class, I think the majority of it should be based on learning. Say, 80% of learning of grammar, pronunciation, then at the end, do a song. That gets people excited. So they're looking forward to that, and use it as a reward. If it's just educational stuff, just grammar, people will be bored. And you don't want to get people bored.

Amy expressed her concern about and distrust of "fun" activities in class, with the implication that language learnt through fun activities were not good language. She asserted,

> My experience with modern language classes suggests that "fun" activities tend to be rather lame and reinforce a sort of sub-dialect of the language being learned that isn't too serviceable in real life. But yes, it will create motivation to continue; it allows students to learn the language on their own terms, making their own mistakes because the primary objective is to say something to participate in the game/activity. People like having ownership over the things they've learned.

In the matter of perseverance required to learn Chinese, all the students interviewed stated that, given that Chinese is a difficult language, substantial commitment or perseverance was required to progress to the next level. Jim responded by saying,

> I think Chinese is fun to learn at the beginning. You get a couple of phrases, things like that. Then you reach a level where you realize there's lots of work. Like anything, you don't go up linearly. You plateau a lot. You get to the point where you get the basic things. It's nice. Now you need to put in more work to go to the next level.

Ken offered a similar view. He remarked,

> It's best and interesting at the beginning, then there's lots of work. That may discourage students from continuing to the next level. I think that's probably true of most foreign languages in general. But I would say for me that Chinese is the most difficult language I've studied. I've studied lots of European languages and there're so many cognates.

They are much easier. So it requires perseverance to study Chinese. I don't know whether lots of the students are willing to put in the work to be truly successful. They need to put in the work required to.

Students' comments conveyed a message that perseverance is a major issue to be dealt with. It seemed that students needed to sustain a constant sense of novelty for the language while at the same time without having to put into too much effort.

A supportive learning environment was a recurring new category that was not covered in the BALLI Plus. This category involved encouragement or support from teachers and peers as well as friends with whom students could learn together and practice speaking, highlighting the value of attending to students' psychological needs. Cathy remarked,

Sometimes it's good to have Chinese or Taiwanese classmates. I say to them 'Hey do you understand what I'm saying?' If I can understand them, they say 'Hey good job. I can totally understand you'. That's motivation. Ok, they understand me and they get me. I'm doing a good job of pronouncing, and maybe I should keep going. Encouragement from classmates—'You're doing a really good job and keep up', or encouragement from the professors, 'You progressed so much.' Because lots of people, when they're saying those words, they don't know whether they're saying them right or wrong. But if they get progress update, they feel 'Yeah'. That might be enough for them to want to continue learning. So motivation is important. So support can affect students' motivation. It's also important to have a friend you can practice with who also has the same interest and motivation. L and me are roommates and we practice randomly. We shout out words we're trying to say. It's competitive and it is fun.

The potential value of learning Chinese emerged as a new category that was not addressed in the BALLI Plus. Three students interviewed, Jim, Amy and Bella, pointed to the necessity of teachers' making efforts to motivate students by stressing the potential value of and the opportunities or privileges associated with learning Chinese. Students' responses suggested the importance of extrinsic motivation with a high level of self-determination. Amy commented,

I think they (teachers) should encourage students, say things like "people who speak Mandarin have an advantage in tapping into the job market." Like the business people, it's much easier to develop an important relationship if you can speak Mandarin.

Another recurring new category within this theme was how interesting and engaging the

Chinese class is, suggesting the importance of increasing the interesting and engaging level of

Chinese classes. Four students, such as Bella, Christian, Amy, and Ken, deemed it as being one

of the factors that could affect students' commitment to the next level of study. Bella said,

> I think keeping students engaged, making it not only educational, but also an entertaining environment. That'll make students enjoy learning the language as opposed to being stressed out about it. Mandarin Chinese is a difficult language to learn from an English perspective.

Jim made suggestions regarding how to increase the interesting level. He said,

> I had a Spanish teacher who was very intensive in everything she did. She speaks Spanish the whole time, and that helped me. What she did was that she used pictures. That was very impressive. It helped explain your teaching more visually. People get a lot more than just regular teaching. There're lots of visual learners, especially when it come s to learning languages.

> Positive learning outcome also emerged as a new category that Ken and Cathy

commented on. According to Ken, students would choose to advance to the next level of learning

Chinese if they perceived that they indeed had benefited from the class and were able to apply

the language skills gained to real life situations. Cathy also said,

> Some students may be satisfied with little more than a passing grade. But many really want to learn something. Say, after one term's study, when I hear Chinese people chatting, I can understand a few short utterances…. or ask some simple questions….or recognize some simple characters, I'll feel I have learnt from the class. That'll give me motivation to continue.

These comments above showed that if what they learnt from class could stay in their long-term

memory for them to retrieve and use later, they would feel competence and the value associated

with taking the Chinese class.

One more emerging, new category was students' motivation and/or purpose for learning

Chinese. Two students, Ken and Cathy, made comments on the importance of learning goals and

motivation for students proceeding to the next level. Cathy thought students who were truly

interested in the language would continue to the next level anyway, an indication of the

significance of intrinsic motivation for learning Chinese. Ken claimed,

> For me I'm taking the class so that basically I can communicate. I think I'll be able to get by when I travel in China. I really don't expect to be fluent. For students in international business or political science, they're taking this, because they really have to be fluent in that language. They need to go to the next level.

The last category was concerning Chinese-origin students. Three students, Amy, Christian

and Dan, made comments mostly focused on the positive side. Amy said,

> I like having the Chinese students in my class because they can add to what the teacher is saying….sometimes they clarify and sometimes they give an even better example. Sometimes I feel really good that I'm talking Chinese to a person who looks Chinese.

Dan's comments contained both positive and negative elements. He remarked,

> Well, if Chinese students are in my class, I don't think it bothers me very much. But sometimes it's depressing, cause they pick up the lessons more quickly. Sometimes they talk among themselves in Chinese or maybe Cantonese so quickly that I can't follow their conversation, then I feel inferior. But they're very helpful when you ask them questions. I like practicing Chinese with them.

This finding largely echoed the result from Chapter 4. It did not fully support the argument made

in some studies that mixed class with Chinese-origin and non-Asian students might contribute to

the high attrition rate (Norman, 1996; Pease, 1996; Wen, 1997).

Overall, the findings from this theme were important in that they not only refined the

results from Chapter 4 but also broadened the scope of the BALLI Plus Factor 2 with the

emergent new categories. These recurring categories provided new insights into this topic.

Moreover, students' responses discussed above illustrated how students used their person

knowledge, task knowledge and strategic knowledge as well as metacognitive strategies to talk

about and plan their learning. Students' metacognitive knowledge and strategies, along with their

cognitive and metacognitive activities, were revealed in their responses to and comments on the

interview questions. Metacognitive knowledge seemed to play a role in students' self-regulation

of learning. What's more, these revelations help determine what strategies should be included

into teachers' strategic knowledge in hopes of promoting students' motivation for and

commitment to learning Chinese. As well, the metacognitive knowledge and strategies involved

in this theme further confirmed the metacognitive dimension included in the framework.

5.3.6.2 Teacher Interviewees

Commitment to learning Chinese was the last theme. Teacher interviewees were asked

about what may affect students' expectations of continuity of the next level of learning Chinese.

Expectedly, when coding and categorizing teachers' responses to this interview question, I found

that, in addition to the topics addressed in the BALLI Plus 2, recurring new categories emerged.

Under this theme were nine major categories, namely:

- congruence of learner beliefs and teacher beliefs about language learning,
- course grade,
- language learning activities,
- perseverance,
- a supportive learning environment (recurring new category),
- potential value of learning Chinese (recurring new category),
- interest level of the class (recurring new category), and
- motivation/purpose (recurring new category)
- Chinese-origin students (recurring new category).

Interestingly, these categories all aligned with those emerged from students' responses except

one category. In Theme 6 for student interviewees, the category entitled "positive learning

outcome" did not emerge from teachers' responses. This suggested that in general teachers and

students had similar knowledge regarding what can stimulate students to proceed to the next

level of learning Chinese. With the new emergent categories from teachers' responses, this theme

added both depth and breadth to the related results in Chapter 4. In the meantime, these

categories demonstrated teachers' comprehensive knowledge about themselves as teachers and

their students (person knowledge), what kind of teaching task they needed to cope with in terms

of the nature of the teaching task (task knowledge), what strategies they were aware of (strategic

knowledge), and how they utilized these strategies to regulate and monitor their task of teaching

(metacognitive strategies). The categories within this theme, along with examples of

interviewees' responses for each category, are displayed in Table 33.

In the category of congruence of teacher beliefs with student beliefs about language

learning, I identified two subcategories. One of them reflected the dominate view that it was

important but not critical to know student beliefs about language learning and then teach

accordingly, where appropriate, because some students' beliefs may not be conducive to learning

Chinese. Ms Gao said,

> I think students' beliefs vary depending on their goals of learning Chinese. Therefore, in the very first class, I always ask students why they want to learn Chinese. Then students told me their reasons. Chinese-origin students would say 'I am Chinese and grew up in Canada, but I cannot speak my ethnic language. So I feel very embarrassed". Some students learn Chinese simply to meet program requirements. These students may have different beliefs about learning Chinese. So it is important to learn about their beliefs and try to cater to their needs. But if their beliefs are in appropriate, I will try to do something, Say, students who just want to earn a high grade may study for quizzes or exams. In this case, I will encourage them to learn more practical and communication skills by telling them the value of learning Chinese for their career prospects. Then I will teach accordingly.

Ms Han also asserted,

> Students have different preferences for language learning or teaching methods. Knowing their beliefs helps us teachers to target our teaching. As the Chinese saying goes, shoot the arrow at the target. We teachers need to know what students want to learn and why. Knowing these is helpful to our teaching. However if we find students have incorrect beliefs or ineffective learning strategies, we should try to modify them.

The other was the opposite view that there was no need for the congruence, because

students were like a piece of blank paper when it comes to learning Chinese, as articulated by Ms

Bai and Ms Na. Ms Bai remarked,

> I figure when students first come to class, they don't have any pre-existing beliefs. To most students, Chinese is a strange language. Whatever teachers say, students tend to believe. So I think students are influenced by teachers.

Table 33

Commitment to Continuity of Learning Chinese from Teachers' Perspective

Category	Example of Student Responses
Congruence of teacher beliefs and learner beliefs	• *Students may have different language learning beliefs, which may not be 100% correct, particularly when it comes to learning Chinese. As experienced teachers of Chinese, we should tell them what are the effective ways of learning Chinese.* • *As the Chinese saying goes, shoot the arrow at the target. We teachers need to know what students want to learn and why. Knowing these is helpful to our teaching.*
Grade	• *A good grade is at least an encouragement to a student's confidence.* • *Of course, grades can be encouraging as well as discouraging. But I don't think the grade is a particularly important determinant.*
Language learning activities	• *The combination of grammar, pronunciation, and fun communicative activities is the best method. If you teach grammar in an engaging way, it will yield twice the result with half the effort.* • *To teach Chinese well, we needs to teach everything, including fun activities and boring stuff like grammar. Students are different: some like interesting activites, and some are aware they need to know grammar and have a good pronounciation in order to learn Chinese well.*
Perseverance	• *When students sign up the first year, they struggle the first year. They realize they can't make the commitment required, so they give it up. It requires lots of comitement, because the writing system is so difficult.* • *Chinese, particularly Chinese characters, are too hard to many students. Students need to invest lots of time and effort. If they are not self-determined, they don't want*
Practical value of learning Chinese	• *Tell students the practical value of learning Chinese. For example, make connections of learning Chinese to the advantages of looking for employments.* • *We should raise awareness among students that learning Chinese helps them get a seat at the table in an increasingly competitive world.*
Interest level of the Chinese class	• *If teaching is boring, students will feel that learning Chinese is both challenging and not fun. As a result, they will give up.* • *When they feel challenged, organize some relaxing activities. In a word. pay attention to their psychological state at all times.*
A supportive learning environment	• *Emotional factors are very important in determining whether students want to continue to learn. If they get along well with their classmates, they tend to register together and attend the class together.* • *If a student has made good friends in the class who are willing to go up to the next level, she/he is also willing to continue. A good way to help is to design activities that can help develop friendships among students, such as games, dialogues, etc.*
Motivation/ Purpose	• *Students' personal interest and goal are very important. If they are truly interested in Chinese culture and history, or intend to major in Chinese, they will continue.* • *Motivated serious students will continue anyway. Some students, after learning Chinese characters from the Japanese class they took, were curious about Chinese.*
Chinese-origin students	• *Some students, particularly non-Asian students, may feel it unfair to compete with those Chinese-origin students who had some prior knowledge about Chinese.* • *I think some non-Asian students may complain about being in the same class with Chinese-origin students, because their grade will be negavtively affected. This will lower their GPA.*

The category of course grade contained two subcategories of equal weight. One

subcategory pertained to the belief that a good grade served as motivation for continuing to learn

Chinese, if a true reflection of a student's hard work. Ms Gao said,

> I think a good grade, if earned by hard work, can encourage students to continue. It gives students a sense of achievement. It means their hard work bears fruits, and their efforts at learning Chinese are in the right direction. We test different linguistic skills, so if they have a good grade, it means they've accomplished their learning task. But I don't encourage those who want an easy good grade without working hard.

> The other subcategory was relating to the view that a good grade was not an essential

factor that could influence students' commitment to continuity of learning Chinese. Mr Lay said,

> Students are different in terms of their motivation for learning Chinese. Some aim for a good grade. Some think a good grade is not a big deal for them as long as they are able to communicate. Of course, students are happy if they receive a good grade. But it is not an important factor.

> In the category of language learning activities, all teachers believed fun communicative

activities should be integrated with grammar and pronunciation instruction to make teaching and

learning interesting, and accuracy should not be emphasized for the first year. Mr. Lay explained,

> I don't have a single theory about what is the best method. I think I use lots of communicative, fun things. To teach Chinese or whatever language, you need to teach everything, including playing games that help students practice speaking, and teaching those boring stuff, like grammar.

Ms Gao shared this view, adding,

> I love the idea of integrating communicative activities into teaching in addition to teaching grammar and pronunciation. Most students come to the classroom to learn Chinese with some assumption in their mind that Chinese is a difficult language. To many students, learning Chinese is daunting. If the class is full of teaching of pronunciation and grammar, students would feel bored soon. So fun and communicative activities allow students to learn Chinese in a comfortable environment. More importantly, these activities can train students' verbal skills and make learning enjoyable.

> However, while embracing the idea of integration, a few teachers also expressed their

concern over the availability of time required of this integration. Ms Fan stated,

> I think the idea is wonderful. The problem is we don't have adequate time for such activities. I think for universities in North America, all the curriculums for teaching Chinese are similar. Every school tends to specify how many lessons teachers should complete at the end of the term. To me, all curriculums set high standards. Because of the time constraints, for the most part, we don't have much time to organize communicative activities, such as pair or group work, games, etc.

This concern was also shared by Ms Bai and Ms Han. It appeared that for some of the teachers interviewed, what they believed might not be what they practiced for the institutional reasons.

All teachers interviewed described perseverance required of learning Chinese as an important factor that can make students dedicate themselves to the next level of Chinese classes. Ms Na remarked,

> I think the difficulty level of Chinese may decrease many students' motivation. Some students know that Chinese is a difficult language with regard to its orthographic system when they begin their language study, but still are willing to meet the challenge. However they are not virtually aware of how much commitment is required of learning this system until after one term's study. As a result, for those students who are not psychologically adequately prepared for the demands of the language, learning it may create an affective and motivational barrier that impacts their perseverance of learning Chinese. To keep going, you must cultivate perseverance and determination.

Perseverance seemed to be a challenge that both teachers and students were aware of. In this situation, removing affective barriers or lowering affective filters to maintain students' motivation becomes particularly important.

Another determinant of students' commitment was the awareness of the pragmatic value of learning Chinese. Most teachers interviewed, including Ms Fan, Ms Gao, Ms Bai, and Ms Na, expressed such an opinion. Ms Gao stated,

> Teachers should make efforts to enhance students' motivation for learning Chinese by highlighting the potential value of learning Chinese. We know that some students learn Chinese in hopes of getting a good grade, because they think it is easier to receive one from a language class. Of course this is an erroneous concept. In this case, we can tell them that there is much more value to that, such as more employment opportunities. I think most students wish to increase their advantages in the job market.

Furthermore, increasing the interesting level of Chinese classes was commented by half

of the teachers interviewed. Ms Na stated,

> I think we should strive to make learning Chinese enjoyable and fun rather than intimidating or too challenging. The assumption that Chinese is a difficult language seems to be widespread. In fact, it is a fallacy, nothing but speculation. Not every aspect of Chinese is hard. We should emphasize the easier part of Chinese, such as grammar. We can point out to students many parts that are easier to learn and design task-based learning activities. For example, we can teach grammar in a specific context without teaching grammar for grammar's sake. Make learning fun and enjoyable.

The comments suggested that it was essential to make learning fun and enjoyable by underscoring the easier part of the Chinese language and creating a relaxed learning atmosphere.

Another determinant of students' commitment was a supportive learning environment, which was addressed by three teachers. As Ms. Fan emphasized, it was particularly important to foster a harmonious, friendly atmosphere among students. She asserted,

> We know that creating a relaxed learning environment helps to boost students' motivation for learning Chinese, such as designing fun communicative activities. We also know we cannot afford many of such activities due to our time constraints. However we should try our best to carefully design our instruction, because one important, good by-product of pair or group work or games is the close emotional connection produced among students. If students make good friends in class, work together and help each other, and if one wants to continue to the next level, the others will do the same.

Ms. Gao and Ms. Na, on the other hand, stressed the emotional ties between teachers and students. Ms Gao remarked,

> I think teachers should always provide positive feedback first for whatever progress students make before pointing out their errors. Timely positive feedback can create a supportive learning environment and build up student confidence in learning Chinese as well as increase the emotional bond between teachers and students.

Their comments pointed towards the importance of a supportive learning environment where teachers provided positive feedback to students and students were able to make friends and develop emotional connection. All these positive endeavors could help meet students' emotional and psychological needs.

Motivation/purpose was also depicted by all the teachers interviewed as a factor that can

affect students' commitment. They believed that students chose to learn Chinese for various

purposes, which in turn impacted students' decision as to whether to continue to learn Chinese.

Ms Bai said,

> Students' motivation level is different. Some students are motivated to learn Chinese for one term only, because they just want to learn some basic Chinese for travelling purpose, with no intention to reach a higher proficiency level. Some students only need one course to graduate. So they are gone upon completing the course.

Mr Lay made comments related to the institutional reason. He said,

> I think in my school there are other reasons, but I can't speak for other schools. In my school, part of the reason is that we don't have a Chinese major. Students realize that they cannot do their major and then they have to pick another major.

> The last category in this theme was related to Chinese-origin students. When coding

teachers' responses, I found three teachers' comments on Chinese-origin students with prior

Chinese-language exposure and other students with no Chinese-language background. The

teachers saw it as a possible factor affecting students' commitment. Ms Na said,

> The placement of Chinese-origin students is a complicated issue. If these students, especially those with prior Chinese-language exposure, are placed into the same class as those with no prior knowledge about Chinese, the latter may feel that they are competing at an uneven level. Although every university has a placement test to ensure the homogeneous level of the students in the beginners' Chinese class, it is impossible for the placement to be 100% accurate. So if those with Chinese-language background receive a high grade, it will raise the average score of the whole class and as a result lower other students' score. In particular, some students hope they can receive a good grade from this class to apply for graduate schools.

Ms Han expressed her concern and stated,

> Those students with Chinese-language exposure normally can complete the task in class pretty fast. While others are still working on the tasks, they may have completed them already. When other students are aware of this, they may be a bit stressed, feeling they are being slow. Therefore their morale may be negatively affected.

Interestingly, teachers' comments seemed to deviate somewhat from students' comments on this

category, indicating their different perspectives. This finding appeared to be consistent with the

results in Chapter 4. Teacher's remarks showed support for the argument by Norman and Pease that mixed class with Chinese-origin and non-Asian students might contribute to the high attrition rate.

Overall, this theme contained a wide range of categories. The categories corresponding to the BALLI Plus Factor 2 in Chapter 4 explained in great length the quantitative results discussed in Chapter 4. Further, the recurring new categories substantially expanded understandings of the issue as it related to commitment to continuity of learning Chinese. Teachers' responses under the various categories combined revealed that teachers had a full range of metacognitive knowledge that they used to develop metacognitive strategies to regulate their teaching.

5.4 Belief Structure of Individual Student Interviewees

In this section, individual students' language learning belief structure is delineated according to the interview transcriptions of each of the six individual students. In analyzing each student's interview data, I utilized the dimensions included in the explanatory framework, particularly the dimensions in relation to the belief structure of the SEM model in Chapter 4 for the purpose of fleshing out and qualitatively validating the SEM model. The dimensions included:

- motivation for learning Chinese,
- formal language learning strategy,
- communication-oriented learning strategy, and
- difficulty of learning languages/Chinese.

First, I went through the students' interview data and the first four themes in relation to the four BALLI factors/dimensions generated by exploratory factor analysis and confirmed through structural equation modeling in Chapter 4. Then I examined each individual student's interview responses within the four themes to determine whether any causal relationships among the four factors could be identified. As a result, the structural relationship among the belief

dimensions of three individual students, including Amy, Jim, and Bella, was discerned to entirely correspond to the SEM model. The belief structure of the other three students, such as Dan, Cathy, and Ken, for the most part, aligned with the SEM model, however, with slight variations in some dimension(s). To avoid repetition, I only present the belief structure of two representative students (Amy and Jim) to showcase how the four belief dimensions, each filled with students' interview responses, interacted with one another. Given the high similarity between Amy and Bella, Bella's belief structure is not described in detail. In delineating Amy's and Jim's belief structure, I also make its connection to metacognitive knowledge to illustrate their cognitive and metacognitive activities involved in their learning. The remainder of this section is focused on elaboration on the variations of the other three students' belief structure.

5.4.1 Amy's Belief Structure

According to the SEM model, motivation for learning Chinese (the BALLI Factor 1/ Theme 1) predicted choice of formal language learning strategies (the BALLI Factor 2/Theme 2). Amy's interview responses relating to the two factors/themes were presented below.

Motivation for learning Chinese (BALLI Factor 1/Theme 1)

- Mandarin is fascinating. Culture and language are so closely intertwined. I learn Mandarin, cause I want to know more about China and its people. I have lots of Chinese friends. I practice Mandarin with them, and they help me with my pronunciation and tones.
- You can see "Made in China" everywhere. So learning Mandarin is a way to give myself an advantage in the increasingly competitive business world.
- I've learned a couple foreign languages, like, French, Spanish and German. But they're easy to learn. Mandarin is hard. Some people don't like tones, but to me they sound like music. I love to practice with my Chinese friends. If I could speak Mandarin fluently someday, I'd be very proud, cause it's a difficult language.

From Amy's interview responses, it could be noticed that she was intrinsically, integratively, and extrinsically motivated to learn Chinese. She associated knowing the Chinese

language with a better understanding of Chinese culture and people and with her future career

prospects. She appeared to be proud of the fact that she was learning Mandarin, a difficult

language. Apparently, she was well aware why she took the Chinese course, demonstrating her

person and task knowledge. What would her beliefs about formal language learning strategies

look like?

<u>Formal Language Learning Strategy (BALLI Factor 2/Theme 2)</u>

- Basic grammar is awesome. If it weren't important, everybody would just use online translators. It allows me to form new sentences, which is a cornerstone of linguistic competency.
- I think vocabulary is the key to understanding what you hear, speak and read. Without vocabulary you can't say anything. If you can recognize words very quickly, you'll pick up the grammar when you hear them in a sentence. I think vocabulary and grammar are the building blocks of a language.
- I don't think translation can be avoided, particularly in the beginning. Right now I cannot remove translation from the learning process. All the new words in the textbook are followed by English translation. It helps you to remember.

Obviously Amy attached great importance to the role of grammar, vocabulary and

translation in the language learning process. The interview data showed that Amy, who was

highly motivated to learn Chinese, adopted formal language learning strategies, an indication of

the direct impact of motivation on her beliefs in formal language learning strategies, a pathway

from Factor 1 leading to Factor 2 in the SEM model. From her responses, it could be seen that

Amy knew what was required to learn Chinese ("vocabulary and grammar are the building

blocks of a language"), what learning strategies there were ("I don't think translation can be

avoided, particularly in the beginning."), why they were useful ("It helps you to remember"), and

how she regulated her learning ("Right now I cannot remove translation from the learning

process"). These responses indicated her task and strategic knowledge as well as metacognitive

strategies. Given her preference for the formal learning strategies, would she approve of

communication-oriented strategies? According to the SEM model, students who believed in

formal language learning strategies would reject communication-oriented strategies. Amy's

related interview data are presented below.

<u>Communication-oriented Learning Strategy (BALLI Factor 3/Theme 3)</u>

- I don't think communicative strategies work well in the beginning. Say, guessing unknown words. Good luck! There aren't many cognates between English and Mandarin, unlike between French and English. But if you can't remember whether a word is this or that, go for it, and you will make funny mistakes.
- I think certain mistakes are acceptable in the beginning. I think learning proper pinyin initials and finals is a must, but tones take a long time for many people, and if students can learn to recognize a word but have difficulty pronouncing it with proper tones at first, they may eventually learn tones. But I am not sure.
- Initially, it's probably good to pronounce things very correctly, just so that you understand the concepts involved. You should pronounce initials and finals correctly.
- My experience with modern language classes suggests that "fun" activities tend to be rather lame and reinforce a sort of sub-dialect of the language being learned that isn't too serviceable in real life.

Amy stressed the impossibility of guessing correctly and the importance of very correct

pronunciation of initials and finals, reflecting her inclination for accuracy. Amy's remarks

demonstrated her tendency to reject communication-oriented learning strategies, thus

qualitatively validating the causal relationship between formal learning strategies and

communication-oriented strategies, the pathway from Factor 2 leading to Factor 3 in the SEM

model. Amy' responses further showed that she was analyzing her current task of learning

Chinese, using her prior experience with modern language classes, indicating that she had task

and strategic knowledge involved in her cognitive activities. What's more, the two types of

metacognitive knowledge influenced Amy's self-regulation of learning in that they affected her

choice of strategies and her criteria for evaluating her learning, which was reflected in her

comments on "fun" activities.

The SEM model also posits that students who were motivated to learn Chinese tended to

view learning Chinese as difficult or vice versa. The model further posits that students who

considered learning Chinese to be difficult would reject choice of communication-oriented

learning strategies. Amy's related interview data are shown below.

Difficulty of Language Learning (BALLI Factor 4/Theme 4)

- English is my native language. It has little in common with Mandarin. Learning a language, say German, is much easier than learning a completely alien one. But it's exciting to learn a challenging language, like Mandarin.
- Children learn languages faster than adults. They are like sponges, and are receptive to anything taught. So adults need to work harder.
- Even Westerners who are familiar with learning foreign languages are often used to learning languages that share etymological roots with English. Say, if you didn't know the word for "orange" in French, you could just say the English word "orange" with French pronunciation. Mandarin is much scarier. You will never find such a word.

Amy's previous responses revealed her high motivation for learning Chinese, and her

responses presented above indicated her view on Chinese being challenging and the excitement

accompanied about learning this language. Amy's beliefs in these aspects showed that the more

challenging learning Chinese was, the more motivated and excited she was, and vice versa,

thereby demonstrating the correlational relationship between motivation and difficulty of

language, as specified in the SEM model. Amy's comments also showed that the metacognitive

knowledge Amy acquired about herself as a learner (person knowledge), the language learning

task (task knowledge), and strategies (strategic knowledge) influenced her choice of learning

objectives (planning in metacognitive strategies) in that she would seek to overcome the

challenges she would encounter.

Further, connecting and examining Amy's comments on difficulty of language learning

and communication-oriented strategies found that Amy's recognition of lack of similarity

between Chinese and English became a driver for her rejection of guessing unknown words but

acceptance of very correct pronunciation of initials and finals. Her responses exhibited the causal

relationship of difficulty of language learning with communication-oriented strategies, a pathway

from Factor 4 leading to Factor 3 in the SEM model. This demonstrated that Amy drew upon her person, task and strategic knowledge to develop metacognitive strategies to regulate her cognitive learning activities.

The structural relationships revealed in Amy's comments on the four belief dimensions clearly was aligned with the SEM model, where Amy's metacognitive knowledge came into play by influencing her metacognitive strategies relative to the self-regulation of learning. In other words, Amy exhibited metacognitive knowledge and utilized this knowledge to plan, monitor, and evaluate her learning in the self-regulation learning process. Amy's belief structure demonstrated how metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive strategies interacted with each other, further reinforcing the dimensions included in the explanatory framework.

5.4.2 Jim's Belief Structure

The qualitative validation of the SEM model based on Jim's belief structure follows the same sequence and procedures implemented for Amy's. Jim's interview responses relating to motivation for learning Chinese (the BALLI Factor 1/Theme 1) and formal language learning strategies (the BALLI Factor 2/Theme 2) are presented below respectively.

Motivation for learning Chinese (BALLI Factor 1/Theme 1)

- My girlfriend still lives in China. She can speak some English, but her family can't. So I want to learn her language. She helps me with my pronunciation, tones, and grammar. It's great. I often practice with her. If I could speak Chinese well, I'd be able to connect with her family and friends. They don't speak English. I'd love to know her family better, and her friends. This is important to me.
- I hope I can speak Chinese and find a job in China. I want to find a job in a company. I may also find a job to teach English.
- China makes up 90% of the labor force. That's become a motivation for people to learn the language.
- I'm good at languages. I've learned a couple foreign languages. I can speak some Spanish and Italian. But neither of them is like learning Chinese, hmmm, Chinese is the hardest. It's cool to be able to speak Chinese.

Jim's remarks revealed his intrinsic, integrative, and extrinsic motivation for learning

Chinese. It appeared that Jim was a serious learner with a clear personal goal. His articulation of

motivation demonstrated his metacognitive person and task knowledge in that he knew himself

as a language learner and what was his purpose of learning Chinese. To achieve his purpose,

what learning strategies would Jim prefer?

Formal Language Learning Strategy (BALLI Factor 2/Theme 2)

- I think honestly grammar is very important. And grammar exercises. I do the exercises, but some don't. I've noticed lots of students are more motivated with fun social exercises. But at the same time, some of them, I noticed, are losing track, like nothing able to apply what they have learned. When I go to class, even me get confused about what's been said. What concept is she applying, and what she is saying to, because sometimes I think there is too much fun in class. I mean, I am a person of structure.
- Learning a new language, I feel like you still have the same vocabulary as you do in your language, but you're just learning to speak them in a different way. So I think you already have the prior knowledge of those words, and you just need to learn how to apply them in Chinese. Basically it's kind of like repeat and translation. I guess you could say it depends on the vocabulary. The Chinese idiom, that can be vocabulary too. In that sense, you're learning new vocabulary. Learning Pinyin and characters go along with the vocabulary you already know. I guess I would be learning more vocabulary. I think it depends on your level of understanding vocabulary, also depends on your proficiency in another language.

It was evident that Jim's beliefs about language learning were very traditional and had

strong preference for formal language strategies. From Jim's perspective, grammar was critical to

effective communication, and vocabulary was, for the most part, a transfer from the native

language to the target language, like a repeating and translating process. Jim's responses

demonstrated the direct impact of motivation on beliefs in formal language learning strategies, a

clear causal relationship between the two factors, one pathway in the SEM model. Jim's

responses were filled with instances of his person knowledge ("I'm a person of structure."), task

knowledge ("you're just learning to speak them in a different way."), and strategic knowledge

("Basically it's kind of like repeat and translation."). More importantly, he drew upon his

metacognitive knowledge to plan and monitor his cognitive activities, a sign of his using

metacognitive strategies ("I do the exercises."). What follows is how Jim's embracing formal

strategies would impact his beliefs about communication-oriented learning strategies.

<u>Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy (BALLI Factor 3/Theme 3)</u>

- I don't think it (guessing) is applicable. I don't think that is even correct, because you can be very wrong. It's the American stereotype of joke to always try to fake speaking your language. You have to know what you are saying to get the message across. Nothing can be based on. If you don't have any prior knowledge, I don't think guessing is a good thing to do. I don't think guessing is reliable.
- It's important to speak with correct pronunciation so that everybody can understand you. When I speak Chinese, if I don't speak with correct pronunciation, the Chinese would assume that I am speaking English not Chinese. So I think it's very important to learn the pronunciation, because you want others to understand you, and there's no point learning another language if you can't speak it fluently.
- I think making mistakes at the beginning will hold you back. I've noticed several people in my class who do struggle in the beginning in making mistakes and still make the same mistakes. So I would say it's important not to get messed up in the beginning. It's important to get exact point. Like everything becomes practice, if you keep making the same mistakes and you don't correct them early, they're going to stay there.

Obviously, Jim dismissed guessing unknown words for its lack of accuracy. His beliefs in

accuracy, such as excellent pronunciation and error-free utterances, resulted in his rejection of

communication-oriented language learning strategies, pointing towards the causal relationship

between the two types of language learning strategies and validating this pathway in the SEM

model. Again, Jim's comments illustrated his task knowledge ('It's important to speak with

correct pronunciation.') and strategic knowledge ('making mistakes at the beginning will hold

you back.'), which served as resources for him to draw upon in building his metacognitive

strategies to plan and evaluate learning strategies in the self-regulatory learning process.

Although there was no particular comment explicitly indicating his regulating behavior, the

entire responses revealed his thoughts and beliefs that would lead him to regulate his learning

accordingly.

How would Jim's beliefs about difficulty of language learning related to the BALLI factors/themes, such as motivation and communication-oriented language learning strategies? His relevant interview responses are presented below.

<u>Difficulty of Language Learning (BALLI Factor 4/Theme 4)</u>

- I think some languages are easier than others. Like Spanish and German are easy. Chinese, nothing is similar.
- Chinese is so hard, but not impossible to learn. It takes time and effort. I love Chinese characters. They look interesting but hard to write. Tones're confusing, difficult to get a handle on. You can say some funny things if your tone is off. You must practice a lot. I often practice with my girlfriend.

Relating to his demonstrated high motivation for learning Chinese, Jim's responses presented above explained his view on Chinese being both challenging and interesting and his determination to learn Chinese. Jim's comments relating to motivation and difficulty of language learning showed that Jim, who considered learning Chinese to be challenging, tended to be highly motivated and determined, and vice versa, hence validating the correlational relationship between the two BALLI factors/themes, as specified in the SEM model. Jim's comments also showed that his strong motivation to learn Chinese did not make him lose sight of the high difficulty level of the Chinese language and the learning task. He employed his metacognitive knowledge he acquired about himself as a learner (person knowledge) and the language learning task and strategy (task and strategic knowledge) to plan and regulate his learning objectives and process (use of metacognitive strategies).

Furthermore, connecting and examining Jim's comments on difficulty of language learning (BALLI Factor 4/Theme 4) and communication-oriented strategies (BALLI Factor 3/Theme 3) discovered that Jim's awareness of the confusing nature of tones drove him to believe in perfect pronunciation and error-free utterances, and the difficulty level of Chinese led him to reject guessing unknown words. This impact of the BALLI Factor 4 on the BALLI Factor

3 pointed towards the causal relationship between the two factors, therefore validating this pathway, as verified in the SEM model. As well, Jim's response data showed how his person, task, and strategic knowledge affected his choice of learning strategies.

The structural relationship revealed in Jim's comments on the four belief dimensions exhibited alignment with the pathways in the SEM model, where Jim's metacognitive knowledge influenced his metacognitive strategies. Jim demonstrated his three types of metacognitive knowledge about learning Chinese and employed this knowledge to plan and regulate his cognitive learning activities, suggesting the interaction of the three types of metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive strategies. In the meantime, the dimensions included in the explanatory framework were reinforced and substantiated.

5.4.3 Bella's Belief Structure

Analyses of Bella's interview data revealed that her belief structure was very similar to Amy's except for some minor differences in motivation for learning Chinese. For example, Bella was inspired to learn Chinese not only because of career prospects, but also for her desire to understand and appreciate her cultural heritage. After all, the inherent linguistic affinity as a result of ethnicity was what other student interviewees did not have.

5.4.4 Ken's Belief Structure

While coding and reading Ken's responses to all the interview questions, I found his belief structure, for the most part, came into line with the SEM model, except for some initially seeming variations. The variations will be elaborated on in line with the relationships in the SEM model. Ken's responses are presented below.

<u>Motivation for learning Chinese (BALLI Factor 1/Theme 1)</u>

- I visited China once. I was with a tour group and I did not know any Chinese at that time. With the basic Chinese I'll learn, I figure I'd be able to get by when I travel by myself. I love to talk to Chinese people. Of course, I can also use body language to help me. I like to make Chinese friends. They are very friendly.

Ken's responses showed his intrinsic and integrative motivation to learn Chinese and his awareness of learning goals (person knowledge). Given that his purpose of learning Chinese was to travel in China and get to know Chinese people, would he choose formal language learning strategies based on the SEM model?

<u>Formal Language Learning Strategy (BALLI Factor 2/Theme 2)</u>

- To me grammar and pronunciation is important. I don't mind doing all that. But that's lot of work.
- I don't care too much about grammar. I'll survive just fine. I think it's the vocabulary that matters. I think it's nice to learn grammar. Vocabulary is what makes a difference between someone who can be fluent in a language versus someone who can get by the language. That's level 2. You can't really get to the next level unless you are willing to learn grammar. For me, I just want to learn Chinese for one term, so I'm focusing on learning more Chinese vocabulary.
- I would say vocabulary is the biggest part of learning languages. I think that's true with any languages, because that's the connection of sounds and meanings. I realize that you can put sentences together incorrectly and people will still understand what you are saying. If you don't have the vocabulary, especially Chinese. Because you cannot guess, you can't guess with similar words, then you have to know the vocabulary.

From Ken's responses, it seemed that he partially adopted the formal language learning strategies in that he overlooked grammar but emphasized the supreme importance of vocabulary. His comments on grammar appeared to reflect his paradox shown in the first two comments and deviations from the SEM model. In one of his responses, he said he did not mind doing grammar and vocabulary because they were important. In another, he said he did not care too much about grammar. But nonetheless, his paradox and deviation were caused not because grammar was not essential to him but because his purpose of learning Chinese was for basic communication only that would be used when he travelled in China. Therefore grammar was not a priority for him. In

fact, his responses highlighted the importance of grammar in the sense that according to him, without grammar, one cannot proceed to the next level of learning Chinese. In essence, Ken was traditional in learning languages. Ken's comments also reflected his person knowledge ('I just want to learn Chinese for one term'), task knowledge ('grammar and pronunciation is important'), and strategic knowledge ('vocabulary is the biggest part of learning languages, because that's the connection of sounds and meanings'). This metacognitive knowledge allowed him to plan and regulate his learning by choosing strategies that he considered were suitable to him ('so I'm focusing on learning more Chinese vocabulary'). The interaction of metacognitive knowledge and strategies supported the dimensions included in the explanatory framework.

Given Ken's beliefs about formal language learning strategies, it would be anticipated that he would reject the communication-oriented learning strategies, as indicated in the SEM model.

Communication-oriented Language Learning Strategy (BALLI Factor 3/Theme 3)

- I don't think you can guess unknown Chinese words. You will never get it right, because there's nothing even close. Chinese has no cognates. You can do it in German, you can do it in Spanish, you can do it in western languages, not in Chinese.
- When somebody is speaking to a certain extent, if he keeps repeating the same mistakes, the teacher should correct it. I find the correction helps me remember better. If she corrects me in front of everybody, it didn't bother me. I don't mind being corrected. When people correct me, it helps me to pronounce it better. I think it's easier she corrects mistakes immediately. But you can't do it for every single thing, especially for Chinese. I think Westerners probably make mistakes for every character and almost every tone. You have to find the words that are used the most, consistently mispronounced and correct them. I have to re-pronounce it and say it again right there. I just improved more.
- Depends on what you want to do with it. I think it's nice to be able to have perfect pronunciation. I think you can strive for that. But I also realize that the Chinese are like anybody. If you are speaking somebody's languages, a foreign language, they're going to be very patient with you. I don't think perfect pronunciation is as important as being able to communicate and learning the vocabulary to get by with what you need to say.

Ken's comments suggested his tendency for accuracy by rejecting the strategy of guessing unknown words but embracing immediate error correction, an obvious alignment with

the path involving formal and communication-oriented language learning strategies in the SEM

model. However, his slightly ambiguous attitudes towards pronunciation seemed to marginally

deviate from this pathway, which again had to do with his goal of learning Chinese, For Ken who

was aiming for basic communication, correct pronunciation had taken a back seat. Yet, his

remarks seemed to suggest that, with a different objective, correct pronunciation would play an

important role. As such, the purpose of learning Chinese appeared to be one factor that impacts

one's choice of learning strategies. Ken's metacognitive person, task, and strategy knowledge

influenced the self-regulation of his learning process in the way of planning and monitoring of

his objective and associated cognitive learning activities. The interaction of the metacognitive

knowledge and strategies within this factor confirmed the explanatory framework dimensions.

How would Ken's beliefs about the difficulty of language learning be related to the

BALLI Factor 1 (motivation) and the BALLI 3 (communication-oriented strategies), as

illustrated in the SEM model? Ken's related interview responses are presented below.

Difficulty of Language Learning (BALLI Factor 4/Theme 4)

- I would say for me that Chinese is the most difficult language among the European languages I've studied. There're so many cognates. They're much easier. To me tones and characters are the most difficult part. We have to do everything together trying to get used to the structure of the language. I find Chinese is almost like a mental test. Nothing is impossible. But it's not easy.
- Some people can pick up languages better, you can memorize things quickly, pick up the relationships between the sounds. I do think some people have better capacity to learn languages, especially when you were a child. Every child strives to learn, because that's their way of communicating. When you get over a certain age, it's more difficult.
- The language is difficult. I would say I look at it as an adventure. It'll be different, and it's not going to be the same as learning other European languages. But it's interesting.

Connecting Ken's beliefs in the difficulty of language learning (Factor 4/Theme 4) to his

motivation for learning Chinese (Factor 1/Theme 1) found that while seeing Chinese as the most

difficult language, Ken had a strong intrinsic motivation to learn Chinese and took the learning

as an adventure. Alternatively, the fact that Ken took learning Chinese as an adventure further motivated him. This finding provided a qualitative validation for the correlational relationship between Factor 1 and Factor 4, as illustrated in the SEM model. Ken's responses in Factor 4 also revealed that he had person knowledge ("Some people can pick up languages better"), task knowledge ("There're so many cognates. They're much easier") as well as strategic knowledge ("We have to do everything together trying to get used to the structure of the language."). These types of knowledge grounded his metacognitive strategies to plan his cognitive activities ("I look at it as an adventure."), which further supported the dimensions of the explanatory framework.

Additionally, connecting and examining Ken's comments on difficulty of language learning and communication-oriented strategies (Factor 3/Theme 3) discovered that Ken's knowledge about the difficulty of learning Chinese led him to reject communication-oriented learning strategies. He thought the difficulty of learning Chinese was caused in part by a lack of cognates in Chinese that made it impossible to guess unknown words and the difficulty of tones led him to accept immediate error correction. This impact of Factor 4 on Factor 3 qualitatively corroborated the causal relationship between these two factors, a validation of the pathway from Factor 4 to Factor 3 in the SEM model. Again, Ken's response data showed how his three types of task knowledge impacted his choice of learning strategies to regulate his learning behavior (interaction of metacognitive knowledge with metacognitive strategies).

The structural relationship revealed in Ken's comments on the four belief dimensions demonstrated overall alignment with the pathways verified in the SEM model, with slight, seeming departures from the model. But nonetheless, learners adjust their learning strategies based on their purpose of learning Chinese. If his goal of learning Chinese was taken into account, these ostensible departures were interpretable, as discussed above. Examination of

Ken's responses in the four factors/themes suggested that Ken's metacognitive person, task, and strategy knowledge influenced his planning and monitoring of his learning objectives and associated learning activities, serving as not only the evidence of the interaction among the factors within the SEM model but also an reinforcement of the explanatory framework.

5.4.5 Dan's Belief Structure

While analyzing Dan's belief structure, I found his structural relationships among the four belief factors were, in general, congruent with the SEM model, with the exception of one aspect (pronunciation) relating to communication-oriented language learning strategies (Factor 3/Theme 3). To avoid repetition, the description of Dan's belief structure was mostly focused on the deviation. The interview data showed that Dan, who exhibited strong motivation to learn Chinese, tended to believe in formal language learning strategies, a validation of the pathway from motivation to formal language learning strategies in the SEM model.

His beliefs in formal learning strategies (Factor 2/Theme 2) caused his rejection of some of the communication-oriented strategies (Factor 3/Theme 3), a seemingly partial validation for the pathway from Factor 2 to Factor 3 in the model. Within Factor 3, the validated communication-oriented strategies in the model included his avoidance of guessing unknown Chinese words for reliance on dictionaries due to a lack of similarities between Chinese and English, and support for error correction. What was not validated and where slight deviation occurred pertained to his objection to correct pronunciation. He said,

> Correct pronunciation is not so important, because in English you can still understand people who speak with poor pronunciation.

His attitude towards pronunciation deviated from his tendency to emphasize accuracy, as evidenced by his responses in Factor 3/Theme 3. Dan stated,

I know how different Chinese is from other languages because I have studied German, Latin, and Russian which are all nothing like Chinese.

His response suggested that this variation might have to do with his prior learning experiences with many foreign languages, in which incorrect pronunciation did not pose barriers to his communication with others. Or very likely his prior language learning experiences made him realize that it was especially hard to acquire good pronunciation of Chinese and he had to settle down with what he could achieve in terms of pronunciation.

It appeared that Dan's extensive language learning experiences influenced his view and knowledge about language learning (task knowledge and strategic knowledge) and subsequently choice of learning strategies (metacognitive strategies). Dan's belief structure proved to be another example that showcased how metacognitive knowledge affects one's planning and monitoring in self-regulation of learning.

Furthermore, Dan, who considered Chinese to be a difficult language, had strong motivation to learn Chinese, and his motivation was also associated with the challenges involved in learning Chinese, demonstrating correspondence to the correlated relationship between motivation (Factor 1/Theme 1) and difficulty of language learning (Factor 4/Theme 4) in the model. In the meantime, Dan's beliefs in the difficulty of learning Chinese (Factor 4) caused his seemingly partial rejection of communication-oriented language learning strategies (Factor 3), as discussed above, a partial validation for the pathway from Factor 4 to Factor 3 in the model.

All in all, Dan's belief structure generally corresponded to the relationships among the four factors in the SEM model, albeit there was a slight departure. His belief structure uncovered the interaction of the three types of knowledge with metacognitive strategies.

5.4.6 Cathy's Belief Structure

Cathy was highly motivated to learn Chinese for better employment opportunities as well as for meeting program requirement. Analysis of Cathy's responses to all interview questions revealed that the most part of her belief structure matched the SEM model, with some divergence from the model. The divergence occurred largely on beliefs about language learning strategies. Analysis of Cathy's belief structure was mainly focused on the departure from the SEM model.

One ostensible divergence was relating to formal learning strategies (Factor 2/Theme 2), specifically the strategy of prioritizing grammar rules. Cathy did not think grammar was important in learning Chinese. She said,

> In some languages there're a lot of grammatical rules and in other languages there're not. In Mandarin, it's simple. When I was googling for Mandarin, I was looking at the hardest language to learn for English speakers. It actually came up with Polish. Polish is the hardest language for English speakers. Then I thought it's all these rules, grammar, just different sentence structures. I would think in certain language like that, I would think grammar is confusing, because so many rules may confuse you. You have to spend most of your time memorizing the grammatical rules. But with a language with very simple grammatical structure, it's completely different. We don't need to spend much time on grammar.

According to Cathy, for languages with complex grammar rules, grammar rules were central and should be prioritized whereas for languages with simple grammar rules, such as Chinese, grammar rules should not be the priority. When Cathy's comments on grammar were taken into account as a whole, this divergence became interpretable. In essence, grammar did matter to Cathy. Cathy's comments indicated that she used her task knowledge and strategic knowledge about languages to plan her learning and monitor learning strategies (use of metacognitive strategies).

For other formal learning strategies within Factor 2/Theme, such as the role of vocabulary, Cathy provided positive comments, which aligned with the model. She declared,

> Learning vocabulary is a huge component. The Chinese grammar structure is very simple. We don't have to learn past, present, and future. So it seems that once you know

the structure of the sentence and how you are supposed to say it, then you can always build on vocabulary. It's all about vocabulary. Unlike, say, Polish, cause I am Polish. The past, present, future tenses, and also the masculine and feminine, neutrals. There're so many rules in that. But in Mandarin, there doesn't seem to have so many rules.

Cathy, with strong motivation for learning Chinese, tended to adopt formal language learning strategies, corresponding to the pathway from motivation to formal strategies in the model.

Another divergence occurred on communication-oriented strategies (Factor 3/Theme 3). According to the SEM model, students who adopted formal language learning rejected communication-oriented strategies. Cathy, however, commented favourably on the strategy of guessing unknown words. She remarked,

It's true that you should guess. It shows that you're trying and making effort. Because when you guess, people know that you're trying. It's very difficult to guess, but at least try. If you have enough language skills, you can describe what you're trying to say as well. And people won't feel offended by that because you're trying. Sometimes the words are so close to what you're saying. People would say "oh, I know what you're saying. It is not this, and you're trying to say this." So that's a learning strategy for use as well, because you may have made a mistake when you learn, you can remember that.

It could be observed that Cathy's guessing strategy was dependent on whether one had adequate language skills for assistance. In the context of learning Chinese at the initial stage, it was simply not easy to guess. Cathy's comments showed that she was using her task knowledge to analyze her learning task for choosing what she considered was an effective strategy, an indication of interaction of task knowledge, strategic knowledge and metacognitive strategies. However, Cathy emphasized accuracy in her comments on error correction and pronunciation, which contradicted her communicative tendency of guessing. She claimed,

If students make a mistake, immediately tell them 'No, this is how you say it.' Just repetition again. Pick up the problem immediately and then replace it by actually the way you are supposed to say it so that your memory is really fresh. Ok. This is the wrong one, and this is the right way to say it.

With regard to pronunciation, she remarked,

You should emphasize that you should be able to pronounce the word as best as you can. Some people try so hard that they are overcompensate. You can't understand them either. So I would say first focus on your tones. Sometimes that r, er, or ri. The tone part is more important. People can understand you if you have the tones correct, because there're so many pronunciations. In Canadian language, we still know what people mean, even though they don't say the word fully properly. But I would emphasize on tones in Mandarin. It's a little bit harder. Do the best you can do, but don't overcompensate.

In Factor 3, Cathy preferred accuracy, as evidenced by her comments on pronunciation and error correction. One the other hand, she also showed a communication-oriented tendency, as illustrated by her comments on guessing. I found it somewhat hard to account for this variation from a linguistic perspective. It might be explained that some students were traditional in some aspects of language learning but communication-oriented in some other aspects.

For the SEM model, it is impractical to have each individual's belief structure come in line with the model and more or less divergence should be expected. Regardless, Cathy's belief structure, for the most part, corresponded to the SEM model. Cathy's beliefs demonstrated how her metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive strategies interacted with each other, further reinforcing the dimensions included in the explanatory framework.

5.5. Conclusion of Chapter 5

To sum up, using the explanatory framework, this chapter presented six themes and their associated major categories from perspectives of both student interviewees and teacher interviewees. These themes and categories added meaningful contexts and depth to static quantitative data. More importantly, some themes, such as themes 1 (motivation for learning Chinese) and 6 (commitment to continuity of learning Chinese) not only qualitatively elaborated on the relevant quantitative results, but also expanded understandings of and breadth to the themes being explored, thereby adding insights into the issues under investigation. Lastly, the detailed presentation of the representative individual students' belief structure provided a

qualitative validation of the SEM model, making it unfolded and explicitly explained in a

descriptive, clear fashion. As well, slight divergence from the SEM model was accounted for,

and possible interpretable reasons for the variations were offered. The few minor departures in

the qualitative realization of the model lend more to the degree of credibility of the model.

Chapter 6 Discussions, Future Research, and Implications

In this chapter, I address and elaborate on the research questions that were stated in Chapter 1 by using the results derived from the two types of data. While addressing the research questions, I also relate the results from this study to the previous research and the dimensions of the theoretical framework. Then I provide recommendations for future research and discuss the pedagogical, theoretical, and methodological implications that arise from this study.

6.1 Discussion

In this section, I address my five original research questions and then highlight what has been revealed by the two types of data in relation to the relevant literature and theoretical framework. My research questions were:

1. What dimensions underlie beliefs of North American post-secondary beginning learners of Chinese about language learning?

2. What beliefs do beginning learners of Chinese hold about language learning, and how do language learning beliefs of these learners from different ethnic backgrounds compare with one another?

3. What beliefs do teachers of Chinese hold about language learning?

4. How do teachers' beliefs compare with learners' beliefs, and how do teachers' beliefs compare with beliefs of learners from different ethnic backgrounds respectively?

5. Is there a model that can account for the relationships between beginning learner belief dimensions about language learning?

Question 1 situated learner and teacher language learning beliefs into the theoretical framework established in Chapter 1 by identifying the underlying belief dimensions/factors using the BALLI and BALLI Plus and linking them with metacognitive knowledge. Connecting

language learning belief dimensions with metacognitive knowledge can unveil learners'

cognitive and metacognitive activities. This revelation is central to understanding how learners

maneuver in the learning process and can provide insights into differentiation of effective

learning strategies from restrictive ones. Given that learners with greater metacognitive abilities

tend to be more successful and taking into account the characteristics of effective language

learning and teaching discussed in Chapter 2 (Bell, 2005; Brosh, 1996; Rubin & Thompson,

1982; Stern, 1983;), understanding learners' learning process can help find effective instructional

methods.

The identified six belief dimensions touched upon all the three components of

metacognitive knowledge as they related to person, task and strategy as well as related to the

models of motivation and learning strategies. They served as the foundation for the subsequent

quantitative data analyses of and comparisons between learner and teacher language learning

beliefs as well as construction of the causal learner belief model. Further, these dimensions were

employed to shape the explanatory framework to analyze and interpret the qualitative data. A

review of the literature showed that although many researchers identified belief dimensions in

their BALLI studies (Fujiwara, 2011; Kunt, 1997; Le, 2004;Park, 1995; Trutt, 1995), no further

efforts were made to systematically describe and analyze learner and teacher beliefs using the

identified dimensions as a framework; nor did these previous studies make efforts to construct

and confirm the interaction between these dimensions located within metacognitive knowledge

and explain how their relationships operate in language learning. This study has made attempts

to addressing these gaps by delineating a metacognitive profile of learner and teacher beliefs

about language learning via a combination of surveys and interviews. Further, the SEM model

was established to test and verify the dynamic interaction among learner belief dimensions,

followed by a qualitative validation of the model through interviews, thereby allowing for a revelation of learners' cognitive and metacognitive activities engaged in language learning process.

Questions 2 and 3 were intended to describe learner and teacher beliefs structured within the belief dimensions. The theoretical framework provided a lens through which learner and teacher beliefs were observed in what they looked like and how they were metacognitively related to the language learning process. The survey items were all related to the three types of metacognitive knowledge, including person, task, and strategy, and learners' and teachers' responses to these items showed that they all had metacognitive awareness and knowledge. Their metacognitive knowledge was specifically reflected by their beliefs about motivation for learning Chinese, formal language learning strategy, communication-oriented learning strategy, difficulty of language learning, difficulty of Chinese characters, and commitment to and nature of learning Chinese. The quantitative data, however, did not reveal how learners and teachers employed the three types of knowledge to monitor or regulate their language learning/ teaching process.

On the other hand, the qualitative interview data reinforced and complemented the quantitative data. The qualitative data, along with the themes and associated categories identified, captured, to varying extent, the full range of content within the belief dimensions and unveiled the process of how learners/teachers used their metacognitive knowledge to plan and regulate their learning/teaching Chinese. In other words, learners and teachers not only had metacognitive knowledge but also were aware of what worked or did not work for them and endeavoured to employ what they considered were effective strategies in learning Chinese while concurrently avoiding the ones that did not work for them, drawing on their prior language learning experience and beliefs about language learning. This type of metacognitive activities,

specifically the metacognitive strategies, could not be captured by the survey data in that the quantitative data were static and could not delve into the reasons behind certain beliefs and their thinking process.

Regardless, the interview data provided clarity, richness, breadth, and depth to learners' and teachers' metacognitive knowledge profiles, allowing for a deeper understanding of how individual students/teachers understood the beliefs reflected by different survey items as well as how they activated their metacognitive knowledge and used metacognitive strategies to monitor their language learning/teaching, as reflected in their responses to interview questions. For example, quantitative data showed that many students were supportive of the priority of grammar in the language learning process, but it remained unknown as to why it was so. Interview data revealed the various reasons for learners' support, hence adding depth to the quantitative results (see Chapter 5). When asked what could maintain their commitment to continuity of learning Chinese, learners not only provided the specific contributing factors as measured by the survey, but also those not measured in the survey, thus extending the breadth of the quantitative data and adding more insights into understanding learners.

Question 4 was designed to compare language learning beliefs among learners themselves and between learner and teacher beliefs. While these comparisons were achieved quantitatively, direct, explicit comparisons with qualitative data were not conducted due to lack of diverse ethnic composition of learner interviewees. Although qualitative comparisons of learner and teacher beliefs was not conducted and beyond the scope of Chapter 5, in presenting the specificity of learner and teacher beliefs, some trend was obvious and naturally unfolded from the qualitative data that showed the differences between learner and teacher beliefs in some dimensions, and these differences were consistent with the quantitative results. For instance,

quantitative data revealed that compared with learners, teachers reported stronger support for communication-oriented learning strategies. Qualitative data exhibited a similar trend. Learners and teachers differed in their metacognitive knowledge about person, task and strategy, as reported in Chapter 4. These results relating to the BALLI in the present study do not differ significantly from those of other comparable studies reviewed in Chapter 2 (Kuntz, 2000; Peacock, 1999; Samymi, et al., 1998; Siebert, 2003). For example, learners placed more value than teachers on the traditional learning techniques such as learning of vocabulary and grammar, error correction, and excellent pronunciation. Knowledge about this gap matters, because these discrepancies will likely have a greater bearing on practical learning and teaching. Qualitative data in this study confirmed the gap, which none of the previous comparable studies has attempted. As well, some surprising result from the BALLI Plus at the item level emerged. For example, teachers were more supportive of the idea than learners that non-Asian learners would maintain commitment to learning Chinese if their classmates were from non-Chinese background. The interview data, on the other hand, were able to uncover why this gap existed. Qualitative data showed that teachers considered it unfair for non-Asian students to compete with Chinese-origin students, whereas the non-Asia students regarded it as an opportunity for them to practice Chinese and obtain academic help. In this regard, qualitative data complemented and provided clarity and depth for quantitative data.

Question 5 tested a hypothetical causal language learning belief model for North American post-secondary beginning learners of Chinese. This causal model was established based on the integrated theoretical framework addressed in Chapter 1, through reading extensive related literature, examining empirical evidence and the four BALLI belief dimensions from the survey data, and in consideration of the characteristics of the Chinese language. As a visual

representation of the beginning learners' belief structure, this model statistically adequately illustrated the relationships among the four belief dimensions and the interplay of the three types of metacognitive knowledge. The presentation of the six individual learners' belief profiles constructed out of the interview data explained and refined, using their own words, their belief structure and how their belief dimensions metacognitively interacted and functioned within the structure, thus lending richness, integrity, and credibility to the model. The juxtaposition of the two types of data enabled a better understanding of learners' evidence-based, interactive language learning belief structure.

More importantly, this model posits that beliefs in formal language learning strategies caused learners to reject communication-oriented learning strategies, which confirmed many researchers' concerns (Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995; Peacock, 1999) and did not correspond to some characteristics of good language learners (Rubin & Thompson, 1982). Beliefs in the priority of grammar rules, vocabulary and translation are argued to restrictive language learning beliefs that could lead to counterproductive learning behavior. For example, learners' over-concern about accuracy would prevent them from participating in communication-oriented learning tasks. The interview data in this study revealed learners' cognitive and metacognitive activities and how they deployed their metacognitive knowledge in choosing the formal learning strategies over communication-oriented strategies. This revelation was important, because it suggested that some of the learners' metacognitive knowledge was restrictive such that it prevented them from using more learning strategies. Prior research has shown that learners with greater metacognitive abilities tend to be more successful in their cognitive endeavours (Schapiro & Livingston, 2000; Wenden, 1999). As such, the findings from the two types of data

underscored the importance of understanding learners' beliefs and metacognitive knowledge, and provided insights into instructional practices, which will be addressed later.

6.2 Suggestions for Future Research

The results from the present study, combined with the literature review, point to several directions for future research. Further research is needed to empirically test the effect of restricted language learning beliefs on learning outcomes/achievements by adding Chinese language learning outcomes/achievements as one additional dimension to the causal belief model. Researchers have theorised that certain learner beliefs are restrictive or mistaken in that they can negatively affect language learning (Horwitz, 1988, 1989; Kern, 1999). Horwitz claimed that if learners believed that language learning was mostly about learning new vocabulary and grammar rules, their beliefs were restrictive in the sense that learners would spend most of their time memorizing vocabulary and grammar at the cost of other language learning tasks. As a result, these restrictive beliefs had the potential to negatively impact learning outcomes. Peacock's BALLI study (1999) found a significant reverse association between learners' restricted beliefs and English proficiency of ESL students. The present study found that many students held similar restrictive beliefs to what Horwitz and Peacock discovered, as a result of which, students rejected communication-oriented learning strategies, the use of which is deemed to be one of the characteristics of good foreign language learners (Rubin & Thompson, 1983). Yet, in the present study, it was not tested whether there was a causal relationship between restrictive beliefs and learning outcomes, as it was beyond the scope of this study. Future research is thus required to test this relationship.

Future research is needed to investigate how effectively to modify learners' restrictive language learning beliefs that can be an impediment to successful language learning. While

previous research has suggested that instructional interventions be implemented to correct/adjust learners' mistaken beliefs, little is known as to what are the effective ways for teachers to confront learners' counterproductive beliefs with new information and whether intervention efforts can produce positive effects on learner beliefs. Thus there exists a great need to closely examine the effects of instructional interventions on changes to learner beliefs or learners' metacognitive growth using longitudinal data in order to further inform language teaching pedagogy as well as add empirical evidence to the related literature for theory development.

Future research might also be directed towards collecting more qualitative data from Chinese-origin as well as non-Chinese-origin Asian students for comparisons with non-Asian students. The present study conducted quantitative comparisons among three groups of students from different ethnic backgrounds. However, there were no student interviewees from non-Chinese Asian background and there was only one Chinese-origin student interviewee. Due to the ethnic composition of student interviewees (five non-Asians and one Chinese-origin student), qualitative data were incomplete for qualitative comparisons of the three learner groups in Chapter 5 to refine and explain the differences discerned in Chapter 4. To better understand learners' language learning beliefs and inform instructional methods and strategies, qualitative comparisons are warranted to delve into different learner groups' beliefs.

Another area of research might be focused on collecting more quantitative and qualitative data to compare beliefs held by teachers of non-Chinese origin whose native language is not Chinese with those held by teachers of Chinese-origin whose native language is Chinese. The interview data in Chapter 5 seemed to reveal certain discrepancies in beliefs (such as culture's role in language learning) between Mr Lay, a non-Chinese-origin instructor whose native language is English, and those Chinese-origin instructors whose native language is Chinese.

Nevertheless, one teacher interviewee's data were far from being enough to empirically support any discrepancy. To develop awareness of and better understandings of teacher beliefs and to improve instructional effectiveness, more data, both quantitative and qualitative, are needed to examine whether meaningful differences exist between the two groups of teachers. Such comparisons might be able to encourage exchange of ideas on Chinese instruction for teachers of Chinese to make the best of the both worlds in hopes of improving instructional effectiveness.

Future research could focus on classroom observation of teachers to explore the extent to which their actual teaching approach matches their beliefs. A few teachers interviewed in this study commented on the curricular constraints they had had in implementing their instructional principles. Yet, no data were available to show how they conducted instruction in the classroom and the extent to which they were constrained. Such an exploration would likely produce findings that can shed light onto curriculum development.

Further research might also build and test a causal learner belief model using data from intermediate learners of Chinese with a view to comparing and contrasting the belief structures of learners of Chinese differing in proficiency levels to provide more empirical evidence and add more insight into language teaching pedagogy.

6.3 Theoretical and Methodological Contributions

Beliefs and metacognitive knowledge about language learning that learners bring with them to classrooms have been recognized as a significant factor in language learning process and outcome in the L2 literature, thus receiving growing attention (Ellis, 2005; Horwitz, 1985, 1988). Existing studies on language learning beliefs have examined the nature of learner beliefs, their contributory factors, and their interaction with other factors involved in the learning process. While existing studies have attempted to be extensive, there are a few voids needing to be filled

that can add both depth and breadth to the existing studies. This dissertation, particularly the theoretical framework established, the causal belief model built and tested, and a focus on the Chinese language, are likely to fill these voids and contribute to the field of second language acquisition in several ways.

For one thing, the majority of studies on language learning belief are descriptive in nature in that they simply lay out learner beliefs and/or their dimensions, with no further endeavours to examine the causal relationships among these dimensions. For example, numerous BALLI studies focused on beginning learners found that many held restrictive preconceived beliefs, arguing that these inhibitive beliefs are likely to restrict learners' strategy use. However no studies have ever empirically tested this causal assumption. This dissertation fills this void by establishing and empirically testing this causal relationship. For another, although a considerable number of BALLI studies have empirically identified the belief dimensions, little research has expanded to theoretically link the dimensions and tested the linkages between and among these dimensions. The present study identified four belief dimensions from the BALLI using exploratory factor analysis, specified the relationships between and among these dimensions based on relevant models, theories and literature, tested and confirmed these relationships using structural equation modeling, and further validated them against qualitative data. Accordingly, this dissertation fills another void in this field by building and testing an overall causal language learning belief model. The conceptually demonstrated and empirically substantiated model contributes to theory development relating to language learning beliefs in second language acquisition. In particular, the SEM model contributes to theories pertaining to learning non-cognate foreign languages.

This study has established a comprehensive theoretical framework on learner beliefs that is grounded on a combination of theories and empirical studies addressing the cognitive and metacognitive domains. Earlier attempts were directed at identifying and listing the types of beliefs that language learners held, as represented by the work of Horwitz (1987) and Wenden (1986, 1987). Later research undertook to classify beliefs by linking them to metacognitive knowledge (Wenden, 1998). This classification is a step forward and instrumental in understanding learner beliefs from the perspective of metacognition. Despite this classification, most BALLI studies have not been grounded within it to examine, account for, and unfold learner beliefs. As well, to date, BALLI studies have not yielded empirically-based, sound theories to guide studies in this field. The theoretical framework established in the present study was based on Horwitz's language learning belief system and situated in metacognitive knowledge (Wenden, 1998), complemented by other related empirical studies on motivation (Gardner, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 1985)and learning strategies as well as on the factors that might impact learning strategies (Oxford, 1990). This combined framework was utilized to construct and interpret a causal belief model, which was then tested against the BALLI data with satisfactory model fit indices and subsequently validated against the interview data. The formation of this framework suggested that the framework was effective in conceptually grounding and interpreting language learning beliefs. This theoretical framework can be used as one guiding study on investigation of beliefs about language learning.

Furthermore, studies on learner beliefs about language learning are largely focused on cognate languages, and little research has been focused on non-cognate languages. This dissertation, with a focus on the Chinese language, contributes to theories development pertaining to learning non-cognate languages and to provision of substantial pedagogical insights

into the domain of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. The model tested how different belief

dimensions interacted with one another to explain language learning beliefs held by North

American beginning learners of Chinese. It can provide a lens for better understandings of how

students learning a non-cognate language conceive of language learning in general and Chinese

learning in particular and what strategies they possibly adopt in language learning process. It can

also serve as a diagnostic tool that represents the complexity of language learning beliefs and

guides where instructional interventions are needed to adjust beliefs that are inhibitive or

detrimental to language learning in order to improve learning outcomes. As well, the results from

this study offer implications for curriculum design and teacher education programs.

The dissertation makes a methodological contribution to the literature on beliefs about

language learning in second language acquisition. The study employed a mixed-method design,

with typology as the method to integrate quantitative and qualitative data. Existing language

learning belief studies typically adopt the quantitative approach or qualitative approach. The

methodological design in this dissertation and the results derived from this design add to the

validity of the study and methodologically enrich the literature on mixed-methods research as it

relates to language learning beliefs.

6.4 Pedagogical Implications

The juxtaposition of learner beliefs by ethnic group and with teacher beliefs in the present

study has detected differences between learner and teacher beliefs. Furthermore, the learner

belief model has revealed that restrictive beliefs in some aspects of language learning are causes

of avoidance of more strategy use. For instance, learners who believed in formal language

learning strategies rejected use of communication-oriented learning strategies. These results offer

much insight into foreign language instruction. Pedagogical implications are thus derived and

presented in relation to key findings.

6.4.1 Learners' language learning beliefs consisted of a set of interactive factors.

The nature of beliefs beginning learners of Chinese held about language learning was illustrated by a causal model, where four belief dimensions were either correlated with or influenced one another. Whereas some specific beliefs within these dimensions were positive and facilitative of language learning, others were inhibitive and could restrict more strategy use, thus potentially impacting learning outcomes in a negative manner. Such concerns have been expressed by a number of researchers (for example, Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995; Peacock, 1999), and the causal model along with the interview data in the present study confirmed their concerns with empirical evidence.

Despite the existence of such a causal belief structure, learners as well as teachers may not be aware of it, let alone the potential risk imposed on learners' language learning process. Accordingly, diagnosing and making sense of learners' beliefs is a worthwhile and possible undertaking, as learners are observed to be capable of bringing their beliefs to consciousness and articulating it (Hosenfeld, 2003; Kalaja, 2003). The interview data further demonstrated how learners employed their metacognitive knowledge to plan and regulate their cognitive and metacognitive learning activities. To this end, dialogues between learners and teachers regarding language learning beliefs are central in that dialogues allow learners to enhance their metacognitive awareness by examining beliefs of their own and potential impact on how they approach learning.

Raising learners' metacognitive awareness enables them not only to analyse their own learning processes, identify their resources and skills and unearth their positive qualities, but also

to realize how restrictive beliefs prevent them from more strategy use. Through this process, learners can improve their cognitive and metacognitive learning abilities, which in turn will enforce their motivational aspects of self-efficacy (Wang et al., 2009). On the part of teachers, such dialogues enable teachers to gain first-hand knowledge and insight into learners' conceptual frameworks in L2/FL acquisition. Such insight can provide teachers with channels through which activities designed would assist learners in gaining effective metacognitive knowledge about language learning, that is, knowledge about themselves, tasks, and strategies, and create a more conducive and effective learning environment. With the three types of knowledge, learners will be able to develop an informed understanding of the nature of language learning in hopes of rectifying their erroneous assumptions.

6.4.2 Noteworthy discrepancies in language beliefs were observed between teachers and learners.

Researchers propose that teachers should align their beliefs with learners' views on language learning. For example, Nunan (1988) argues that "no curriculum can claim to be truly learner-centered unless learners' subjective needs and perceptions relating to the processes of learning are taken into account" (p. 177). Block (1994) also claims that teachers should make efforts to shift their beliefs in line with learners' since teachers are better aware of what goes on in the classroom. However, as reported in the literature and substantiated by the causal belief model, learners bring various language learning beliefs into the classroom, among which, some are facilitative of language learning while others are misconceptions. It is thus advisable for teachers to take measures to promote positive beliefs while eliminating negative ones.

On the other hand, eliminating negative ones or correcting misconceptions can be a complicated task. In the literature, the results regarding whether beliefs can be changed are inconclusive. Whereas some studies have reported changes in learner and teacher beliefs (Harrington & Hertal, 2000; Murphey & Arao, 2001) and some research has inferred instructors' success in re-educating learners who adjusted their counterproductive beliefs (Rifkin, 2000), other studies have revealed that beliefs are resistant to change (Kern, 1995; Peacock, 2001; William & Burden, 1997). Such being the case, teachers should make a meticulous plan on instructional interventions that address learners' inhibitive beliefs and metacognitive knowledge in an effort to steer learners towards beliefs that are conducive to language learning success and constructive for their language learning experience. Productive metacognitive knowledge can lead to effective metacognitive strategies, which is a significant contributor to learners' success in language learning (Wenden, 1989).

In the meantime, in designing instructional interventions, an important factor should be taken into account. The contemporary curriculum emphasizes learner-centered approaches; but not all learners' beliefs are legitimate, thereby creating pedagogical and theoretical issues if all learner beliefs and expectations are to be the instructional focus. To resolve this paradox, making compromise between the two reverse points and seeking middle-ground can be an option, as recommended by Woods (2003). Woods suggests in her exploratory case study that teachers should neither teach in a manner that is entirely in line with learner beliefs and expectations even if it contradicts the general teaching approach of the language institution; nor should they ignore learner beliefs and teach only in accordance with the conventions of the institution. What is suggested is that teachers develop a set of strategies and reconcile learner and teacher beliefs to minimize the pedagogical clashes. In practice, it is recommended that teachers design

instructional activities that are effective in improving learners' linguistic competency while explaining the rationale for the choice of teaching methods and materials in an attempt to make them more acceptable to learners. Although it is impractical for teachers to tailor instruction to beliefs of each learner, teachers can cater to groups of learners by accommodating different learner types, attending to the affective and cognitive components of learner beliefs and developing defendable pedagogical techniques (Horwitz, 1999; Mantle-Bromley, 1995).

6.4.3 Learners, irrespective of ethnic backgrounds, tended to believe more in formal language learning strategies, but less in communication-oriented strategies, as opposed to teachers.

Results from this study showed that it was learners that believed more in the formal language learning approach and favoured less the communicative approach, as compared with teachers. It is important to note that the more agreement learners reported with the beliefs in traditional learning approach, the less likely they were to adopt communication-focused strategies, which was verified quantitatively and validated qualitatively.

For decades, in the SLA literature, formal language teaching has been criticized due to its priority given to grammar, vocabulary and translation and oversight of developing learners' communicative competence (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Lightbown, Spada, Ranta, & Rand, 2006); the teachers in the present study seemed equally critical. Yet, a considerable number of learners still believe in the prevailing importance of grammar rules and vocabulary, because they considered grammar rules and vocabulary to be the foundation and building blocks of language learning. Accordingly, the three groups of learners each had some reservations about and/or barriers to embracing communication-oriented strategies, whereas teachers reported strong

support. Adoption of a communicative approach to foreign language teaching is seen as one of the characteristics of effective language teaching (Dell, 2005). As indicated in the model, learners' strong beliefs in formal learning strategies circumscribed learners' embracement of meaning-focused learning strategies. Further, given that learners were at the initial stage of learning a difficult, non-cognate language like Chinese, their linguistic resources required by communicative strategies were either still inadequate/unavailable for them to tap into or learners were uncomfortable with speaking Chinese due to their concerns over errors and incorrect pronunciation. Or these learners lacked metacognitive strategic knowledge about how best to utilize communicative strategies. Such being the case, teachers should strive to discover where learners' barriers lie and help learners to remove these barriers by providing the skills and knowledge that learners can tap into to increase their metacognitive strategic knowledge. Teachers can meet students' needs by designing instruction aimed at increasing students' knowledge and skills about communicative strategies and/or modeling the most effective way to guess unknown Chinese words, how learners should handle the situation when guessing fails, and how to deal with errors if not corrected immediately.

Of particular note is that learners' beliefs and preference, such as beliefs in the prime importance of grammar and vocabulary, may not correspond to what actually benefits them. As advised by Horwitz (1988), a focus on grammar and vocabulary could lead to learners' pure memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary lists, which is seen to be detrimental to language learning. On the one hand, teachers should integrate learner needs and expectations into instructional design and practices. After all, grammar instruction is still deemed essential in contemporary SLA literature (Spada, 2007). On the other, teachers should remind students of the consequences of over-emphasis on these aspects of language learning at the expense of other

aspects. To adjust students' beliefs in the formal strategies, it is of paramount importance that teachers emphasize the importance of learning activities targeted at improving students' fluency while striking a balance between using formal and communicative approaches. Underscoring the equal importance of fluency and accuracy in language learning/teaching is deemed as integral of linguistic competency. In addition to designing classroom activities aimed at improving both accuracy and fluency, in practice teachers should also effectively incorporate accuracy and fluency into assessment to increase students' awareness of the importance of both skills. Fluency and accuracy in language learning and teaching should not be separated from each other; rather they should be inextricably linked in theories and practice.

What's more, how to teach grammar is also worthy of note. Instead of pure memorization, the current pedagogical approach is that grammar instruction requires task-based approaches or should be treated as a dynamic process that involves meaningful interaction or context rather than as a static set of prescribed rules to be learned and memorized (Nunan, 1998).

6.4.4 Learners were highly motivated to learn Chinese despite beliefs in the difficulty of learning that language.

The discrepancy in motivation between learners and teachers suggests that teachers may have underestimated learners' motivation. The pedagogical implication is that teachers should develop better awareness of learners' high motivation and endeavor to make the best use of it while adjusting teaching methods by striking a balance between formal and communicative language teaching.

Both intrinsic/integrative and extrinsic/instrumental motivation has been found to be essential factors of success in L2 learning (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; Noels, Clément, &

Pelletier, 1999). Intrinsic/integrative motivation tends to be associated with long-term success in L2 learning, while extrinsic/instrumental motivation is linked to short-term success. Although instrumental motivation is often characteristic of L2 learning, learners are rarely in one motivational orientation, but rather a combination of both orientations (Brown, 2000), the circumstance of which was reflected as well as extended in the present study.

For these reasons, teachers should frequently emphasize the practical value of learning Chinese by making connections between learning Chinese and learners' career prospects to intensify their motivation. The necessity of such efforts was also expressed by both learner and teacher interviewees in the present study. Teachers can share with learners any career-related information they obtain from different sources concerning learning Chinese and how knowing Chinese advances one's career goals. It is also advisable for teachers to make instrumental motivation personally meaningful by developing learning activities targeted at skills that will potentially benefit learners professionally.

Research has shown that intrinsically motivated learners tend to invest effort and carry the desire and affect to achieve their personal goals for self-fulfilment (Dornyei, 1994). Intrinsic motivation is also associated with learner perceptions of teachers' communicative style. Noels and colleagues noted that the more controlling and the less informative learners perceive teachers to be, the lower learner perceptions of freedom of choice and perceived competence, the lower learners' intrinsic motivation. Learners who learn an L2 in an autonomy-supportive environment where feedback facilitates their sense of competence in the learning tasks are likely to be those who actually learn because it is pleasurable and appeals to their self-concept.

It is therefore commendable for teachers to support learner autonomy by creating a positive, encouraging, supportive atmosphere in class, where they provide informative,

constructive feedback about learners' progress to enhance learners' sense of competency and self-efficacy, while enhancing the emotional ties between teachers and students. What's more, teachers should show enthusiasm and passion about the subject matter in order to sustain learners' desire for learning Chinese and influence those learners who have not been fully mobilized. Enthusiastic and passionate teachers are more likely to invest their time and energy in creating a milieu that can engage and intrigue learners and increase their motivation. Translated into teaching, the enthusiasm entails organization of interesting, engaging learning activities and/or effort in integrating technology to cater to diverse learning needs and situations.

Research shows that motivation is highly associated with learners' preference for challenging activities in the classroom (Schmidt & Watanabe, 2001). Research also suggests that the challenging level of learning tasks should be maintained at an appropriate level, because the high difficulty level may be one factor that decreases motivation for learning non-cognate languages such as Chinese (Samimy & Tabuse, 1992; Wen, 1997). In the present study, at the initial stage of learning, the students were highly motivated, although they knew that Chinese is a difficult language; however they may not be clearly aware of the actual difficulty level and efforts required to put into the Chinese orthographic calligraphy until one term later. When they realize their expectations towards the Chinese learning task may not match the reality of learning, some students may develop negative affective reactions to the language, which consequently hinders their learning motivation (Wen, 1997).

For these reasons, teachers need to exercise caution when designing learning tasks. For one thing, teachers need to design balanced effective instructional activities and engage learners at a level that is one step beyond their linguistic competency. By doing so, the learning tasks can be sufficiently challenging to stimulate learners' interest and maintain their motivation. Teachers

should ensure that learners receive some "i+1" input that is appropriate for their current stage of linguistic competency (Krashen, 1982). For another, to reduce the difficulty level of learning Chinese, teachers can make the learning task less daunting and laborious but more entertaining by increasing the interesting level of the class, utilizing computer-mediated communication and technology and highlighting the similarities between Chinese and English with respect to grammar, although there is little in common between them in terms of writing system and pronunciation. It is recommended that technology be integrated into classrooms to aid students in learning Chinese, particularly Chinese characters, and more options be offered to students. For example, students who are willing to learn hand-write Chinese characters are encouraged to do so. For students whose goal is to recognize Chinese characters, they are allowed to utilize the Pinyin keyboard on the computer as an aid for learning and typing Chinese characters and hand-writing characters is not compulsory.

Learners' strong motivation to learn Chinese sends an encouraging signal. In the meantime, teachers should be supported and held accountable for developing resources necessary to retain learner motivation in order to help learners achieve their goals and especially to prevent them getting so discouraged that they give up and simply drop out of Chinese learning courses.

6.4.5 Asian learners endorsed beliefs in formal learning strategies more than non-Asian learners did, while non-Asian learners showed more favour for beliefs in communication-focused strategies than learners of Chinese origin did.

This may be the least surprising result; but nonetheless it adds to empirical evidence for cultural influences on learners' language learning beliefs and styles (Cortazzi, 1990; Le, 2004; Simpson, 2008). This result is consistent with broader research indicating that Asians prefer a

more formal approach to learning (e.g., Biggs &Watkins, 1996). The results add insights into instructional practices and teacher education programs. While it is necessary to accommodate learners' needs, it is even more important to teach in a way that is not to reinforce language learning beliefs that are restrictive.

6.4.6 Non-Asian learners preferred having (at least some) fellow learners with a Chinese background.

In comparison with learners, teachers were more likely than learners to endorse the statement "Non-Asian students will maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if their classmates are not all from Chinese background". Even more surprising is the comparison of the same statement between the learner groups: Learners of Asian ancestry (Chinese-origin and non-Chinese Asian) reported stronger preference for this statement than non-Asian learners. One would expect that non-Asian learners would be daunted by having other learners with an apparent advantage in learning Chinese. Instead, they may expect to learn more if their fellow learners are more competent than they are. This result offers interesting insight into Chinese instruction with regard to how to design classroom activities in attempts to benefit learners with diverse needs.

6.5 Issues with the BALLI

While used extensively in examining language learner beliefs, the BALLI is far from perfection. Rather it has issues that need to be resolved. The categorization of the 34 BALLI items into five dimensions was based on logic, without being subject to any statistical test of construct validity of the survey items. As a result, in the exploratory factor analysis, some items were found to not fall into any of the factors or have low loadings or cross-loadings, suggesting

that they were poor items that did not function well in measuring language learning beliefs. Either the wording of those items was unclear or the concepts conveyed in those items were very broad so that they lacked discriminative power. For instance, the item "People from my country are good at learning foreign languages" was ambiguous in that it was unclear what this item exactly meant or intended to measure. Consequently, it did not fall into any of the BALLI factors.

With that said, I still used this instrument without modifying or fixing any of the poor factor indicators, for the purpose of making the present study comparable to other BALLI studies. In performing exploratory factor analysis and structural equation modeling, however, those poor items were eliminated and excluded from analyses, thereby adding to the validity of the present study. Furthermore, despite some poor items, most BALLI studies reported on overall satisfactory or acceptable internal validity of the belief dimensions identified through exploratory factor analysis (see Chapter 2). In addition, it is beyond the scope of the present study to fix poor BALLI items. But nonetheless, it warrants future research efforts to revise and improve this instrument.

6.6 Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations to this study that need to be kept in mind when reading and interpreting the results. These are presented below according to the design of the study and sampling procedures.

While the quantitative research method via use of a questionnaire, the BALLI in this study, provided clarity and precision, the beliefs profiled were only those identified by the researcher and thus may not involve all the beliefs learners might hold about language learning. Individuals' beliefs are a complex construct and cannot presume to be fully captured by their responses to a set of statements (Weinstein, 1994). This problem is inherent in all questionnaires

used to examine learner beliefs and attitudes (Christison & Krahnke, 1986). Although qualitative research method was also used through semi-structured interviews with a set of topics, these topics were designed in accordance with the results from the quantitative analysis in attempts to refine and explain the results, and as a result, the beliefs exhibited may not be all inclusive. Given that this research design did not include a mix of languages (both cognate and non-cognate languages) and a mix of levels of instruction (both first year and other levels), the results reported in this study pertain to the groups studied only. Extrapolations to other populations, such as learners of cognate languages or learners at higher levels of language learning, must remain hypothetical.

Furthermore, the results from this study only provided a static snapshot of learner and teacher beliefs, as the data were cross-sectional and measured beliefs at a single point in time. The current results and the belief model can be used to establish a baseline, but should be understood as representing beliefs, particularly learner beliefs, at a single point in time. The extent to which learner beliefs may be variable over time needs to be explored. Any projections into the future require more research and a longitudinal data set which would capture changes, if any, and/or trends over time.

The sample size of the learner and teacher populations precluded the possibility of interviewing individual participants. More importantly, the interviewees were chosen based on a voluntary basis, and this sampling may have created a voluntary response bias, resulting in representativeness issues. For this reason, learner interviewees in this study were not ethnically representative of the composition of the learner sample, thus making it impossible to qualitatively present the beliefs of non-Chinese Asian students.

Due to the lack of control for collecting data through online surveys, learners' subsamples varied in number, with one subgroup (non-Asian) substantially larger than the other two groups (Chinese-origin and non-Chinese Asians), creating difficulties in conducting statistical analyses as they related to learner belief comparisons by ethnicity. While measures were taken to try to make the analysis robust, the ideal situation is to achieve equal sample sizes for all the comparison groups.

6.6 Concluding Remarks

This dissertation has sought to examine language learning beliefs of beginning learners of Chinese, and compared beliefs of learners from different ethnic backgrounds and between learner and teacher beliefs. It has further built and tested beginning learners' language learning belief model.

The results are at once encouraging and cautionary. It is encouraging that the vast majority of students were highly motivated to learn Chinese and believed that they would ultimately learn Chinese well. Apparently these students should continue to receive strong encouragement from teachers, who in turn should do their utmost to maintain learners' high motivation. At the same time, students' over-optimism towards the length of time required to be fluent in Chinese is somewhat disturbing. For this reason, teachers should help students to develop realistic expectations for their language development.

It is also cautionary that student and teacher beliefs were not consonant in some major aspects of language learning, specifically beliefs about language learning strategies. They substantially differed in beliefs about grammar rule learning, pronunciation, error correction, and communication-oriented learning strategies, which required instruction invention to act upon. What's more cautionary is that students who held restrictive beliefs were found to inhibit

themselves from adopting communicative language learning strategies, which may eventually negatively impact learning outcomes.

Understanding learners' and teachers' beliefs and how they interact is important for language instruction, strategy training, and teacher education programs. Knowledge about the assumptions that learners and teachers bring into the learning situation and the casual belief structure of learners can help teachers to become aware of what beliefs students hold are facilitative of learning/teaching and what beliefs are detrimental to language learning/teaching process and how realistically students should set their learning goals. Such knowledge is constructive for language teachers to train learners in developing metacognitive awareness and subsequently correcting their own inaccurate metacognitive knowledge and strategies. This knowledge also allows teachers to reflect on learners' learning and their own teaching in efforts to provide thoughtful and effective instruction interventions by encouraging appropriate beliefs and enhancing effective use of learning strategies. Additionally, teachers' explicit discussion of beliefs about language learning with learners can foster a reflective atmosphere and cooperation between learners and teachers that can make both parties recognize issues present in the language learning/teaching process and provide opportunities to overcome barriers to learning. Finally what can benefit teachers by acquiring a good understanding of learner and teacher beliefs can equally benefit teacher educators.

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Appendix A

Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (adapted from BALLI, 1988) Student Version

Below are beliefs that some people hold about learning foreign languages. Read each statement and then decide if you: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree, (5) strongly disagree. There are no right or wrong answers. Please share your honest opinion and circle the right number.

1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language. 1 2 3 4 5

2. Some people are born with a special ability that helps them to learn a foreign language. 1 2 3 4 5

3. Some languages are easier to learn than others. 1 2 3 4 5

4. Chinese is: (1)__ a very difficult language; (2)__ a difficult language; (3)__ a language of medium difficulty; (4)__ an easy language; and (5)__ a very easy language.

5. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak this language very well. 1 2 3 4 5

6. People from my country are good at learning foreign languages. 1 2 3 4 5

7. It is important to speak Chinese with excellent pronunciation. 1 2 3 4 5

8. It is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to learn to speak the foreign language. 1 2 3 4 5

9. You shouldn't say anything in Chinese until you can say it correctly. 1 2 3 4 5

10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one. 1 2 3 4 5

11. People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages. 1 2 3 4 5

12. It is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country. 1 2 3 4 5

13. If I heard someone speaking Chinese, I would go up to him/her so that I could practice speaking Chinese 1 2 3 4 5

14. It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in Chinese. 1 2 3 4 5

15. If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take them to speak the language very well: (1) __ Less than a year; (2) __ 1-2 years; (3) __ 3- 5 years; (4) __ 5-10 years; and (5) __ You can't learn a language in one hour a day

16. I have foreign language aptitude. 1 2 3 4 5

17. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words 1 2 3 4 5

18. It is important to repeat and practice a lot. 1 2 3 4 5

19. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages. 1 2 3 4 5

20. People in my country feel that it is important to speak Chinese. 1 2 3 4 5

21. I feel self-conscious speaking Chinese in front of other people. 1 2 3 4 5

22. If learners of Chinese are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be difficult to get rid of them later on. 1 2 3 4 5

23. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules. 1 2 3 4 5

24. I would like to learn Chinese so that I can get to know Chinese people better. 1 2 3 4 5

25. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language. 1 2 3 4 5

26. It is important to practice in the language laboratory. 1 2 3 4 5

27. Learning a foreign language is different than learning other school subjects.1 2 3 4 5

28. Learning Chinese is mostly a matter of translating from my native language. 1 2 3 4 5

29. If I learn Chinese very well, it will help me to get a good job. 1 2 3 4 5

30. People who speak more than one language are very intelligent. 1 2 3 4 5

31. People in my country are good at learning foreign languages. 1 2 3 4 5

32. If I get to speak Chinese very well, I will have many opportunities to use it. 1 2 3 4 5

33. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language. 1 2 3 4 5

34. It is easier to read and write Chinese than to speak and understand it. 1 2 3 4 5

BALLI Plus

35. I want to learn to speak Chinese well. 1 2 3 4 5

36. I want to learn to write Chinese well. 1 2 3 4 5

37. Students should start with Roman letter (pinyin) when they begin to learn Chinese. 1 2 3 4 5

38. Chinese characters should be introduced from the first day of Chinese learning along with learning pinyin. 1 2 3 4 5

39. Chinese characters should be introduced about one month after students have had some "taste" of the language. 1 2 3 4 5

40. Chinese tones are the most difficult part of learning Chinese. 1 2 3 4 5

41. Chinese characters are the most difficult part of learning Chinese. 1 2 3 4 5

42. Chinese characters are the most interesting part of learning Chinese. 1 2 3 4 5

43. Learning Chinese is mostly a matter of being able to write as many Chinese characters as possible. 1 2 3 4 5

44. If I can recognize the meaning of the Chinese characters, it does not matter very much to be able to write them. 1 2 3 4 5

45. Learning Chinese is more difficult than other languages and therefore requires more perseverance. 1 2 3 4 5

46. I can maintain my commitment to learning Chinese if the instructor teaches Chinese in a way that meets my beliefs about Chinese learning and teaching.1 2 3 4 5

47. I can maintain my commitment in learning Chinese if I receive a good grade from the Chinese class. 1 2 3 4 5

48. I can maintain my commitment in learning Chinese if my classmates in the Chinese class are not from Chinese background. 1 2 3 4 5

49. I can maintain my commitment in learning Chinese if my classmates and I are at the similar starting point of learning Chinese. 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix B

Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (adapted from BALLI, 1985) Teacher Version

Part I Beliefs about Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

Below are beliefs that some people hold about learning foreign languages. Read each statement and then decide if you: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree, (5) strongly disagree. There are no right or wrong answers. Please share your honest opinion and circle the right number.

1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language. 1 2 3 4 5

2. Some people are born with a special ability that helps them to learn a foreign language. 1 2 3 4 5

3. Some languages are easier to learn than others. 1 2 3 4 5

4. Chinese is: (1)a very difficult language; (2)a difficult language; (3)a language of medium difficulty; (4)an easy language; and (5)a very easy language

5. People from my country are good at learning foreign languages. 1 2 3 4 5

6. It is important to speak Chinese with excellent pronunciation. 1 2 3 4 5

7. It is necessary to know the Chinese culture in order to learn to speak Chinese well. 1 2 3 4 5

8. You shouldn't say anything in Chinese until you can say it correctly. 1 2 3 4 5

9. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one. 1 2 3 4 5

10. People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages. 1 2 3 4 5

11. It is better to learn Chinese in a Chinese speaking country. 1 2 3 4 5

12. It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in Chinese. 1 2 3 4 5

13. If someone spent one hour a day learning Chinese, how long would it take them to speak Chinese very well: (1) __ less than a year; (2) __ 1-2 years; (3) __ 3- 5 years; (4) __ 6-10 years; and (5) __ You can't learn Chinese in one hour a day

14. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words 1 2 3 4 5

15. It is important to repeat and practice a lot. 1 2 3 4 5

16. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages. 1 2 3 4 5

17. People in my country feel that it is important to speak Chinese. 1 2 3 4 5

18. If learners of Chinese are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be difficult to get rid of them later on. 1 2 3 4 5

19. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules. 1 2 3 4 5

20. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language. 1 2 3 4 5

21. It is important to practice in the language laboratory. 1 2 3 4 5

22. Learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects. 1 2 3 4 5

23. Learning Chinese is mostly a matter of translating from my native language. 1 2 3 4 5

24. People who speak more than one language are very intelligent. 1 2 3 4 5

25. If students learn to speak Chinese well, it will help them get a good job. 1 2 3 4 5

26. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language. 1 2 3 4 5

27. It is easier to read and write Chinese than to speak and understand it. 1 2 3 4 5

BALLI Plus

28. Students should start with Roman letter (pinyin) when they begin to learn Chinese. 1 2 3 4 5

29. Chinese characters should be introduced from the first day of Chinese learning along with learning pinyin. 1 2 3 4 5

30. Chinese characters should be introduced about one month after students have had some "taste" of the language. 1 2 3 4 5

31. Chinese tones are the most difficult part of learning Chinese. 1 2 3 4 5

32. Chinese characters are the most difficult part of learning Chinese. 1 2 3 4 5

33. Chinese characters are the most interesting part of learning Chinese. 1 2 3 4 5

34. Learning Chinese is mostly a matter of being able to write as many Chinese characters as possible. 1 2 3 4 5

35. As long as students can recognize Chinese characters, it does not matter very much whether they are able to write them. 1 2 3 4 5

36. Learning Chinese is more difficult than learning other languages and therefore requires more perseverance. 1 2 3 4 5

37. Chinese instructors should know their students' beliefs about Chinese language learning and teaching. 1 2 3 4 5

38. Students can maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if the instructor teaches Chinese in a way that meets their beliefs about Chinese learning and teaching. 1 2 3 4 5

39. Students can maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if they receive a good grade from the Chinese class. 1 2 3 4 5

40. Non-Asian students can maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if their classmates in the Chinese class are not almost all from Chinese background. 1 2 3 4 5

41. Students can maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if Chinese instructors spend less time on pronunciation and grammar exercises but more time on fun communicative language learning activities. 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix C

Background Questionnaire (for Students)

Please answer the following questions or check the appropriate response. This is for research purposes only and your responses will be kept confidential at all times.

1. What is your sex and age?
    (a). Male_____ (b). Female_____ (c). Age_____

2. What is your ethnicity?
    a) non-Asian (please specify)_____
    b) Chinese born in Canada or the U.S.
    c) Chinese born on mainland China or Taiwan
    d) Chinese from another country (please specify)_____
    e) Asian – not Chinese (please specify)_____

3. What is your first language?
    a) English
    b) Mandarin Chinese
    c) Cantonese
    d) Japanese
    e) Other (please specify)_____

4. Does anyone in your immediate family speak Mandarin Chinese? Mark all those that apply.
    a) Yes, my parents (one or more)
    b) Yes, my grandparents (one or more)
    c) Yes, my brothers and/or sisters (one or more)
    d) No.

5. What was your experience with Mandarin Chinese prior to taking this course? (Mark those that apply)
    a) I often spoke this language at home with my parents
    b) I often spoke this language at home with my siblings.
    c) I often spoke this language with my grandparents
    d) I occasionally spoke this language with my parents
    e) I occasionally spoke this language with my siblings.
    f) I occasionally spoke this language with my grandparents.
    g) I never spoke Mandarin at all.
    h) I never heard family members speaking Mandarin
    i) I never heard my friends speaking Mandarin
    j) Other experience with Mandarin (Please specify)

    _____

6. Prior to taking this class, first level Mandarin Chinese, what was your experience with other varieties of the Chinese language? Please choose one of the following options:
   a) None   (GO to Question 7)
   b) I have experience with another variety of Chinese language (Please name the language)

   _____

   c) I have experience with another Asian Language (please name the language

   _____

7. Please mark all the experiences that apply to you.
   a) I often spoke this language at home with my parents
   b) I often spoke this language at home with my siblings.
   c) I often spoke this language with my grandparents
   d) I occasionally spoke this language with my parents
   e) I occasionally spoke this language with my siblings.
   f) I occasionally spoke this language with my grandparents.
   g) I could read and write Chinese characters well
   h) I could read and write some Chinese characters
   i) I can recognize a few Chinese characters.
   j) Other (please specify) _____

8. Why do you want to learn Chinese? Mark all those that apply.
   a) Influenced by parents or other family members
   b) Influenced by friends or relatives
   c) Interest in the language
   d) Interest in culture
   e) Required by major
   f) Required to take an elective to graduate
   g) Need for my future career goal
   h) Need for travel
   i) Other (list)_____

9. What year are you in?
   a) Freshman_____
   b) Sophomore_____
   c) Junior_____
   d) Senior_____
   e) Graduate_____
   f) Other (please specify)_____

10. At what age and where did you start to study Mandarin Chinese? (a)_____ (age)
    (b)_____(country)

11. For how many years did you learn this language in your country?
    a) Less than one year
    b) One year
    c) Two years

d) Three years
e) Four years or more
f) I did not learn this language in my country

12. How many years had you studied Mandarin Chinese prior to taking this first-level Chinese course?
    a) Less than one year
    b) One or two years
    c) Three or four years
    d) More than 5 years
    e) I had not learned Mandarin Chinese prior to taking this course

13. Have you learned other languages other than English and Chinese? Yes_____ No_____
    If yes,
    a) Which language/languages did you learn? _____
    b) How long did you study?_____
    c) At what age did you start to learn? _____

14. What is your major or specialty?
    a) Humanities (specify)_____
    b) Social sciences (specify)_____
    c) Medical sciences (specify)_____
    d) Education (specify)_____
    e) Sciences (specify)_____
    f) Other (specify)_____

15. How many hours do you study Chinese outside of class per week?
    a) Less than 5 hours
    b) 5 to 10 hours
    c) 11 to 15 hours
    d) 16 to 20 hours
    e) More than 20 hours

16. My goal in learning Chinese is to become fluent in
    a) Reading and writing
    b) Speaking and listening
    c) Both

17. Do you enjoy language learning? Yes_____ No_____

18. How do you rate your current level of overall proficiency in the Chinese language?
        Excellent   1 2 3 4 5 6 7   8 9 10   poor

19. How do you rate your overall proficiency in the Chinese language in comparison to the proficiency of students in your class who are of Chinese origin?
    Much better   1 2 3   about the same 7   8 9   much worse

20. How do you rate your overall proficiency in the Chinese language compared with the proficiency of students of non-Chinese, non-Asian origin in your class?
Much better   1 _2 3   about the same 7 8 9   much worse

21. Upon completion of this first level Chinese course, do you want to continue studying the second level Chinese?
Yes_____
 Why?_____

No_____
Why?_____

Not sure_____
Why?_____

Appendix D

Background Questionnaire (for Teachers)

Please answer the following questions or check the appropriate response. This is for research

purposes only and your responses will be kept confidential at all times.

1. What is your gender?
   a) Male
   b) Female

2. What is your ethnicity
   f) non-Asian (please specify)_____
   g) Chinese born in Canada or the U.S.
   h) Chinese born on mainland China or Taiwan
   i) Chinese from another country (please specify)_____
   j) Asian – not Chinese (please specify)_____

3. What is your native language?
   a) English
   b) Mandarin Chinese
   c) Cantonese
   d) Japanese
   e) Other (please specify)_____

4. What is your highest degree?
   a) PhD
   b) MA or MEd or MS
   c) BA or BS
   d) Other (please specify)_____

5. List any specialized training or certification you have completed for teaching a second
   language._____

6. Where did you receive your highest degree?
   a) Mainland China or Taiwan
   b) Canada or the US
   c) Australia or New Zealand
   d) Other (please specify)_____

7. Have you studied other languages other than English and Chinese? Yes_____ No_____
   If yes,
   a) Which language/languages did you study? _____
   c) How long did you study?_____

d) Where did you study?
e) At what age did you start to study? _____

8. How many years have you taught Chinese as a foreign/second language in North America?
   a) One or two years
   b) Three or four years
   c) More than 5 years
   d) More than 10 years

9. How many years did you teach Chinese as a foreign/second language in other country/countries? _____
   ___ I have not taught Chinese in countries other than the North America.
   Please list the country/countries_____

10. Have you taught other language(s) before in addition to Chinese?
    Yes_____ No_____

    If yes,
    a) Which language/languages did you teach? _____
    b) How long did you teach?_____
    c) Where did you teach? _____
    d) At what age did you start to teach?_____

11. What is your position at the university or college?
    a) Full time instructor
    b) Part time instructor (Sessional)
    c) Teaching assistant
    d) Other (please specify)_____

Appendix E

Interview Questions

Questions for Students

1. Please describe to me your motivation for learning Chinese?

2. What is your opinion on formal language learning strategies? Please elaborate a bit more on that.

3. What do you think of communication-oriented language learning strategies? Can you tell me a bit more about that?

4. What do you think about the difficulty level of foreign languages?

5. a) What do you think about the difficulty level of Chinese characters?
   b) What is your view on the sequence of teaching Chinese characters and Pinyin?

6. What do you think would be the major factors that can affect students' expectation to continuing with the 2nd level Chinese study?

Questions for Teachers

7. What do you think are the factors that motivate students' motivation of learning Chinese?

8. What is your opinion on formal language learning strategies? Please elaborate a bit more on that.

9. What do you think of communication-oriented language learning strategies? Can you tell me a bit more about that?

10. What do you think about the difficulty level of foreign languages?

11. a) What do you think about the difficulty level of Chinese characters?
    b) What is your view on the sequence of teaching Chinese characters and Pinyin?

12. What do you think would be the major factors that can affect students' expectation to continuing with the 2nd level Chinese study?

Appendix F

Descriptive Statistics for BALLI and BALLI Plus Items Not Falling into the Factors

Table 34

Descriptive Statistics for BALLI and BALLI Plus Items not Falling into the Factors

Item	Group	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
2. Some people are born with a special ability that helps them to learn a foreign language.	Non-Asian	13.7%	46.0%	24.2%	12.1%	4.0%	3.53	1.01
	Chinese-origin	10.6%	44.7%	34.0%	8.5%	2.1%	3.53	.88
	Non-Chinese Asian	19.2%	53.8%	15.4%	3.8%	7.7%	3.73	1.08
	Overall	13.3%	47.2%	25.2%	10.1%	4.1%	3.56	.98
6. People from my country are good at learning foreign languages.	Non-Asian	3.2%	15.3%	50.0%	24.2%	7.3%	2.83	0.89
	Chinese-origin	4.3%	17.0%	63.8%	12.8%	2.1%	3.09	0.75
	Non-Chinese Asian	0.0%	34.6%	53.8%	11.5%	0.0%	3.23	0.65
	Overall	3.2%	17.4%	54.6%	19.7%	5.0%	2.94	.84
12. It is better to learn Chinese in a Chinese speaking country.	Non-Asian	31.5%	45.2%	21.0%	1.6%	0.8%	4.05	0.82
	Chinese-origin	34.0%	38.3%	19.1%	8.5%	0.0%	3.98	0.94
	Non-Chinese Asian	34.6%	46.2%	7.7%	11.5%	0.0%	4.04	0.96
	Overall	34.1%	42.4%	18.9%	4.1%	.5%	4.06	.86
18. It is important to repeat and practice a lot.	Non-Asian	77.4%	21.8%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	4.77	0.44
	Chinese-origin	78.7%	21.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.79	0.41
	Non-Chinese Asian	76.9%	19.2%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	4.73	0.53
	Overall	79.1%	20.0%	.9%	0.0%	0.0%	4.78	.44
19. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.	Non-Asian	0.0%	6.5%	50.8%	28.2%	14.5%	2.49	0.82
	Chinese-origin	2.1%	4.3%	57.4%	25.5%	10.6%	2.62	0.82
	Non-Chinese Asian	0.0%	7.7%	53.8%	15.4%	23.1%	2.46	0.95
	Overall	.5%	7.9%	52.1%	23.7%	15.8%	2.53	.87
25. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.	Non-Asian	3.2%	20.2%	19.4%	36.3%	21.0%	2.48	1.13
	Chinese-origin	8.5%	21.3%	10.6%	46.8%	12.8%	2.66	1.20
	Non-Chinese	11.5%	15.4%	26.9%	30.8%	15.4%	2.77	1.24

	Asian							
	Overall	6.0%	20.5%	19.1%	36.7%	17.7%	2.60	1.17
	Non-Asian	35.5%	54.8%	4.8%	4.8%	0.0%	4.21	0.75
27. Learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects.	Chinese-origin	29.8%	55.3%	6.4%	8.5%	0.0%	4.06	0.84
	Non-Chinese Asian	23.1%	61.5%	7.7%	7.7%	0.0%	4.00	0.80
	Overall	35.2%	53.5%	5.6%	5.6%	0.0%	4.18	.78
	Non-Asian	33.1%	50.0%	7.3%	8.1%	1.6%	4.05	0.94
32. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language	Chinese-origin	53.2%	38.3%	6.4%	2.1%	0.0%	4.43	0.71
	Non-Chinese Asian	46.2%	42.3%	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%	4.23	0.99
	Overall	39.7%	47.2%	6.1%	5.6%	1.4%	4.18	.88
	Non-Asian	11.3%	18.5%	28.2%	27.4%	14.5%	2.85	1.22
33. It is easier to read and write Chinese than to speak and understand it.	Chinese-origin	6.4%	19.1%	29.8%	27.7%	17.0%	2.70	1.16
	Non-Chinese Asian	15.4%	38.5%	15.4%	19.2%	11.5%	3.27	1.28
	Overall	11.7%	20.1%	29.0%	24.8%	14.5%	2.90	1.22
	Non-Asian	3.2%	64.5%	31.5%	0.8%	0.0%	3.70	0.54
34. I want to learn to speak Chinese well.	Chinese-origin	4.3%	74.5%	19.1%	2.1%	0.0%	3.81	0.54
	Non-Chinese Asian	3.8%	69.2%	23.1%	3.8%	0.0%	3.73	0.60
	Overall	3.7%	67.0%	28.0%	1.4%	0.0%	3.73	.55
42. As long as I can recognize Chinese characters, it does not matter very much whether I am able to write them.	Non-Asian	0.8%	20.2%	13.7%	50.0%	15.3%	2.41	1.00
	Chinese-origin	0.0%	21.3%	21.3%	53.2%	4.3%	2.60	0.88
	Non-Chinese Asian	11.5%	11.5%	23.1%	34.6%	19.2%	2.62	1.27
	Overall	1.9%	19.6%	17.8%	47.7%	13.1%	2.50	1.01

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Appendix G

Comparisons of Non-factor Composite Items by Ethnicity

Table 35

Comparisons of Non-factor Composite Items by Ethnicity

Non-Factor Composite Items	Group	Mean	SD	df	F	Sig.
7. It is important to speak Chinese with excellent pronunciation.	Non-Asian	4.40	0.72			
	Chinese origin	4.34	0.76			
	Non-Chinese Asian	4.35	0.69	2	0.12	0.89
	Total	4.38	0.72			
8. It is necessary to know the Chinese culture in order to learn to speak Chinese well.	Non-Asian	3.79	0.92			
	Chinese origin	3.74	0.77			
	Non-Chinese Asian	3.77	0.82	2	0.05	0.95
	Total	3.78	0.87			
10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	Non-Asian	3.73	0.89			
	Chinese origin	3.49	1.08			
	Non-Chinese Asian	3.65	0.85	2	1.17	0.31
	Total	3.66	0.94			
11. People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages.	Non-Asian	1.85	0.78			
	Chinese origin	1.81	0.82			
	Non-Chinese Asian	2.15	1.12	2	1.65	0.19
	Total	1.88	0.84			
16. I have foreign language aptitude.	Non-Asian	3.65*	0.83			
	Chinese origin	3.43*	0.93			
	Non-Chinese Asian	3.19*	0.85	2	3.66*	0.03*
	Total	3.54	0.87			
26. It is important to practice in the language laboratory.	Non-Asian	3.46	0.90			
	Chinese origin	3.43	0.85			
	Non-Chinese Asian	3.65	0.89	2	0.62	0.54
	Total	3.48	0.88			
40. Chinese characters are the most interesting part of learning Chinese.	Non-Asian	3.46	1.04			0.68
	Chinese origin	3.47	1.12			
	Non-Chinese Asian	3.65	0.85	2	0.39	
	Total	3.49	1.03			
41. Learning Chinese is mostly a matter of being able to write as many Chinese characters as possible.	Non-Asian	2.11	0.87			
	Chinese origin	2.09	0.80	2	1.14	0.32
	Non-Chinese Asian	2.38	1.10			

	Total	2.14	0.89			
43. Learning Chinese is more difficult than learning other languages and therefore requires more perseverance.	Non-Asian	3.65	0.97			
	Chinese origin	3.83	0.96			
	Non-Chinese Asian	3.31	0.97	2	2.43	0.09
	Total	3.65	0.98			
47. Non-Asian students will maintain their commitment to learning Chinese if their classmates in the Chinese class are not almost all from Chinese background.	Non-Asian	3.08	0.98			
	Chinese origin	3.15	0.91			
	Non-Chinese Asian	3.19	1.17	2	0.18	0.84
	Total	3.11	0.99			

Note. Analysis of variance showed significant differences for Item 16 only, where non-Asians reported higher ratings than the other two groups. No significant difference was found between Chinese-origin and non-Chinese Asian students.

Appendix H

Descriptive Statistics for Items Excluded from Factor Analysis for

Teachers

Table 36

Descriptive Statistics for Items Excluded from Factor Analysis for Teachers

Item	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD
2. Some people are born with a special ability that helps them to learn a foreign language.	27.4%	58.1%	11.3%	1.6%	1.6%	4.1	.8
5. People from my country are good at learning foreign languages.	0.0%	12.9%	64.5%	17.7%	4.8%	2.85	.70
11. It is better to learn Chinese in a Chinese speaking country.	40.3%	43.5%	12.9%	3.2%	0.0%	4.21	.79
15. It is important to repeat and practice a lot.	53.2%	43.5%	1.6%	1.6%	0.0%	4.48	.62
16. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.	1.6%	14.5%	48.4%	30.6%	4.8%	2.77	.82
20. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.	1.6%	24.2%	17.7%	51.6%	4.8%	2.66	.96
22. Learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects.	8.1%	64.5%	16.1%	11.3%	0.0%	3.69	.78
26. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language	33.9%	43.5%	16.1%	6.5%	0.0%	4.05	.88
27. It is easier to read and write Chinese than to speak and understand it.	1.6%	0.0%	19.4%	71.0%	8.1%	2.16	.63
35. As long as I can recognize Chinese characters, it does not matter very much whether I am able to write them.	4.8%	22.6%	29.0%	37.1%	6.5%	2.82	1.02

Note. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree