

# **Motivational Strategies implemented in Mandarin classrooms in England**

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**Doctor of Philosophy**

I, Sin Manw Lam (Sophia), confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Abstract

Learning a foreign language is beneficial for an individual as it can facilitate linguistic awareness and broaden the horizons of learners in multiple facets. There has been growing interest in learning Mandarin within the United Kingdom, with more than a 20% constant increase in the uptake of GCSE Mandarin since 2014. However, a lack of research in teaching Mandarin in secondary schools coupled with low continuation rates in Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) in England has led to the need for relevant research to inform practitioners is of paramount importance.

Previous research has found that teachers' motivational strategies have impact on students' motivation but is also culturally and contextually dependent. Additionally, preparing learners with language learning strategies can promote their self-efficacy and sustain their motivation. On the other hand, Mandarin Chinese, which is a character language, has its distinctive features and assumed to have transferability of pedagogical approach compared to that of European languages.

This study aims to investigate the motivational strategies implemented in Mandarin classrooms in England. By adopting Dörnyei's (2001) Motivational Strategies Framework, in particular, the third phase which is to maintain and protect motivation, the study explores the perceptions and use of motivational strategies of the teachers, as well as how the students respond to the teachers' practices.

Qualitative methodology was employed. Four secondary schools, including two academies, one independent school and one comprehensive school participated in the research. The empirical data of the study consisted of seven teacher interviews, 24 lesson observations, 156 student questionnaires and eight student focus group interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected.

The study found that the Mandarin teachers used six out of eight of the motivational strategies in this phase. More importantly, they were based on the distinctive features of Mandarin and developed language-focused pedagogy, such as building knowledge of radicals, the use of pictorial image, and the creation of idiosyncratic stories. It also contributes to motivational effects of the teaching methodology – Communicative Language Teaching of MFL in England. The study shed light on motivational strategies on foreign language other than English in an Anglophone context and provide insights to teaching and learning Chinese as a foreign language.

## Impact Statement

This study explores the motivational strategies implemented by Mandarin teachers to enhance and sustain the motivation of GCSE students in England. The findings of this study on teaching and learning Mandarin as a foreign language and motivational strategies has a crucial impact both inside and outside the academy.

Inside the academy, the present study first broadens the linguistic and geographical reach of previous works in motivational strategies, as it is one of a few studies that apply the Motivational Strategies Framework to examine a foreign language other than English in an Anglophone context. By analysing the teaching strategies used in Mandarin classrooms with complement lesson observations, the present study is also one of a few empirical studies in the last decade that is concerned with how the implementation of motivational strategies and the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) can be motivating in foreign language classrooms. The pedagogical knowledge produced here could inform teachers' practices in terms of motivational strategies in Mandarin classrooms and other foreign languages, both within the school contexts of the present study and also widely within the English secondary school contexts.

Second, the present study also bridges the gap between motivation theories and classroom practices. It has investigated classroom practices based on the theoretical framework developed in language education that represents an important contribution to the body of work. The work provides a link between the motivation theories and classroom pedagogy in Mandarin language classrooms that promotes a theory-driven teaching approach in the foreign language teaching in England.

Third, in the field of teaching Mandarin as a foreign language, the significant impact of this study is the proposition of ways for non-native Chinese teenagers to learn Mandarin Chinese effectively. The present study presents how the distinctive features of Mandarin lead to the development of Mandarin-focused learning strategies based on the distinctive features of Mandarin Chinese. By exploring the current teaching approach adopted by the Mandarin teachers in this study, it offers significant reference to the linguistic elements that Mandarin teachers need to consider in their teaching.

Outside the academy, the findings and implication of the present study have been disseminated to a wider audience through i) Presentation in conferences; ii) Training

workshops to Mandarin teachers. First, the findings of the study were presented in different conferences in the field of education held at the United Kingdom, Greece and Hong Kong. Second, based on the findings of the present study, the researcher organised two professional development workshops in London and Scotland for Chinese Mandarin teachers. This is an extended project of this PhD study which is funded by UCL Train and Engage, which not only shared the findings of the study to more than 40 Mandarin teachers across the United Kingdom but also provided subject and pedagogical training to Mandarin teachers as informed by the study. Finally, it is intended that the findings and implications of this study will be published in academic and professional journals.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgement .....	3
Abstract .....	4
Impact Statement.....	5
Figures .....	12
Tables.....	13
Chapter 1 Introduction .....	14
1.1 Importance of foreign language learning .....	14
1.2 Establishment of Mandarin learning in England .....	16
1.3 What is Chinese Mandarin?.....	18
1.4 Challenges of teaching and learning Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language .	23
1.4.1 Low continuation rate in MFL in England .....	23
1.4.2 Slow progression rate of Mandarin Chinese learning.....	24
1.4.3 Motivation and Chinese language learning.....	25
1.4.4 Effective Mandarin teaching strategies are needed.....	27
1.4.5 The call for UK specific Mandarin teaching strategies .....	27
1.5 Research Questions .....	29
1.6 Structure of the thesis.....	31
Chapter 2 Literature Review .....	32
2.1 Language Learning Motivation.....	32
2.1.1 Social psychological period .....	33
2.1.2 Cognitive-situated period .....	34
2.1.3 Process-oriented period.....	36
2.1.4 L2 Motivational Self System .....	38
2.2 Motivational Strategies .....	39
2.2.1 Motivational practices.....	39
2.2.2 Motivational strategies implemented by teachers .....	40
2.2.3 Empirical research of Motivational Strategies Framework.....	49
2.3 MFL Teaching in England .....	53
2.3.1 Modern Foreign Languages in National Curriculum .....	53
2.3.2 MFL Teaching methodologies.....	58
2.4 MFL Motivation in England .....	69
2.4.1 Self-efficacy of MFL learners .....	70
2.4.2 Learning strategies of MFL learners .....	72
2.4.3 Teaching Mandarin as a foreign language.....	74

2.5 Conclusion.....	86
Chapter 3 Methodology.....	88
3.1 Research approach.....	88
3.2 Sampling participants .....	90
3.2.1 Participating schools.....	92
3.2.2 Teacher participants .....	95
3.2.3 Student participants.....	96
3.3 Research tools.....	97
3.3.1 Teacher semi-structured interviews .....	97
3.3.2 Student questionnaires .....	98
3.3.3 Student focus group interviews.....	99
3.3.4 Lesson observations.....	99
3.3.5 Triangulation .....	100
3.4 Role of the researcher .....	100
3.5 Data collection .....	102
3.5.1 Pilot study.....	102
3.5.2 Main study.....	105
3.6 Data analysis .....	108
3.6.1 Familiarising with the data .....	109
3.6.2 Generating initial codes .....	110
3.6.3 Searching for themes .....	112
3.6.4 Reviewing and defining themes.....	114
3.7 Trustworthiness .....	115
3.7.1 Credibility .....	115
3.7.2 Transferability .....	116
3.7.3 Dependability .....	116
3.7.4 Confirmability.....	117
3.8 Ethical considerations.....	117
3.8.1 Ethical issues in data collection .....	117
3.8.2 Potential risk to participants and/or researchers .....	118
3.8.3 Confidentiality and anonymity .....	118
3.9 Conclusion.....	119
Chapter 4 Mandarin-specific Motivational Strategies.....	120
Overview of Findings.....	120
Introduction .....	120



4.1 Development of Mandarin-focused learning strategies .....	121
4.1.1 Pinyin as an assisting tool .....	122
4.1.2 Radicals as building blocks .....	125
4.2 Mandarin-specific pedagogy - Chinese characters .....	127
4.2.1 Component teaching .....	128
4.2.2 Semantic component.....	130
4.2.3 Phonetic component.....	132
4.2.4 Pictorial image.....	134
4.2.5 Creating idiosyncratic stories .....	135
4.3 Mandarin-specific pedagogy - Chinese vocabulary .....	141
4.3.1 Explain morphemes of Chinese characters .....	142
4.3.2 Use of compounding.....	145
4.4 Mandarin-specific pedagogy - Chinese grammar.....	148
4.4.1 Perception of Chinese grammar .....	148
4.4.2 Chinese grammar = formulas? .....	149
4.4.3 Grammar formula and its principle .....	151
4.4.4 Oversimplification of Chinese grammar.....	154
4.5 Raising cultural awareness to enhance motivation of students .....	155
4.5.1 Inclusion of culture is restricted by GCSE examination .....	155
4.5.2 Culture-related content promotes motivation of students .....	156
4.5.3 Integration of Chinese culture into teaching.....	158
4.5.4 Trip to China provides authentic language learning experiences.....	160
4.6 Conclusion.....	162
Chapter 5 Motivational strategies implemented in Mandarin classrooms .....	164
5.1 Setting specific learning goals.....	164
5.1.1 Clear learning goals in Mandarin lessons .....	164
5.1.2 High expectations towards students' Mandarin performance .....	166
5.2 Stimulating and enjoyable activities .....	168
5.2.1 Starter – whet the appetite .....	168
5.2.2 Communicative activities are motivational .....	169
5.2.3 Classroom activities designed based on four skills .....	171
5.2.4 Practice and repetition .....	178
5.2.5 Assessment for learning .....	181
5.2.6 Use of authentic materials .....	182
5.2.7 Games and competitions .....	185

5.3 Promote cooperation amongst learners.....	187
5.4 Allowing learners to maintain a positive social image.....	191
5.4.1 A balance of praise and error corrections .....	191
5.4.2 Unique identity as a Mandarin learner .....	193
5.5 Developing learner autonomy .....	194
5.6 Conclusion.....	198
Chapter 6 Discussion .....	200
6.1 According to Dornyei’s Motivational Strategies Framework, what are the Mandarin teacher’s perceptions of motivational strategies implemented in the Mandarin classrooms? .....	201
6.1.1 Protecting the learners’ self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence ..	201
6.1.2 Exam-oriented teaching approach .....	204
6.1.3 Partial version of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).....	207
6.1.4 Creating learners’ autonomy .....	209
6.1.5 Promoting cooperation among the learners.....	210
6.1.6 Maintain a positive social image of learners .....	211
6.2 What are the perceptions of the students towards the Mandarin teachers’ practices?.....	212
6.2.1 Culture: the disparity between teachers and learners .....	212
6.2.2 Games and competitions with pedagogical purposes are motivating .....	213
6.2.3 Challenges are motivating .....	214
6.2.4 Assessment promote extrinsic motivation of Mandarin learners .....	214
6.2.6 A unique language learner identity.....	216
6.3 According to Dornyei’s Motivational Strategies Framework, how do the motivational strategies enhance and sustain the motivation of GCSE students? ....	217
6.4 Conclusion: The need for a refined Motivational Strategies Framework .....	220
Chapter 7 Conclusion.....	224
7.1 Recapitulation of purpose and findings.....	224
7.2 Limitation of the research.....	226
7.3 Challenges during the research .....	227
7.4 Contributions of the study .....	228
7.4.1 Theoretical contribution.....	228
7.4.2 Methodological contribution.....	229
7.4.3 Pedagogical contribution .....	230
7.4.4 Professional contribution .....	230
7.5 Implications and recommendation of future studies.....	231

7.6 Autobiographical reflection .....	233
References .....	235
Appendices .....	262
Appendix 1 - Comparison of National Curriculum Programme of Study from 1991 to 2014.....	262
Appendix 2 – Interview schedule for teacher semi-structured interview.....	267
Appendix 3 – Student questionnaire .....	269
Appendix 4 – Interview schedule for students’ focus group .....	274
Appendix 5 – Lesson observation form .....	275
Appendix 6 – Summary of Lesson Observation.....	276
Appendix 7 – Example of lesson observation summary .....	280
Appendix 8 – Extract of deductive codes .....	286
Appendix 9 - Transcription extract of lesson observation .....	289
Appendix 10 - Information sheet and consent form (teacher) .....	292
Appendix 11 – Information sheet and consent form (student) .....	294
Appendix 12 – Parents’ letter .....	296

## Figures

Figure 1 The three elements of Pinyin

Figure 2 The three elements of Chinese characters

Figure 3 The strokes of the Chinese character 永

Figure 4 Semantic component of different characters

Figure 5 Different levels of Chinese

Figure 6 Gardner's socio-educational model (Gardner, 2010, p.88)

Figure 7 Motivational Strategies Framework (Dörnyei, 2001, p.29)

Figure 8 The multilevel interactive-activation architecture (Taft, Liu & Zhu, 1999, p.95)

Figure 9 Examples of simple character and compound character

Figure 10 Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Figure 11.1 Presentation of English meaning, Chinese characters and pinyin

Figure 11.2 Presentation of English meaning and Chinese characters

Figure 11.3 Presentation of Chinese characters

Figure 12 Chinese characters - different levels of education

Figure 13 Compounding strategy used in Year 11 classroom

Figure 14 Refined Motivational Strategies Framework

## Tables

- Table 1 The uptake of GCSE MFL from 2011 to 2017
- Table 2 Summary of Motivational Strategies in different countries and contexts
- Table 3 Comparing the NCPoS in 1990 and 1995
- Table 4 Summary of the data collected
- Table 5 Profile of the schools participated in the research
- Table 6 Profile of the Mandarin teachers
- Table 7.1 Level of the student participants
- Table 7.2 Number of years of the student participants have been learning Mandarin
- Table 7.3 Chinese related background of the student participants
- Table 8 Summary of data collected in the pilot study
- Table 9 A form to record general classroom atmosphere
- Table 10 Summary of the lessons observed
- Table 11 Summary of the teacher interviews
- Table 12 Summary of student focus group interviews
- Table 13 Examples of initial inductive codes
- Table 14 Examples of initial deductive codes
- Table 15 Examples of description of codes
- Table 16 Examples of merging deductive and inductive codes
- Table 17 Example of development of theme – Communicative Language Teaching
- Table 18 Elements interested the GCSE students learning Mandarin
- Table 19 Examples of topic and objectives of the lessons observed
- Table 20 Structure of Judith's Year 10 lesson
- Table 21 Structure of David's Year 10 lesson
- Table 22 Games used in the Mandarin lessons observed
- Table 23.1 Details of Motivational Strategies Framework research
- Table 23.2 Comparison of the findings of various Motivational Strategies research

## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Importance of foreign language learning

The educational value of learning a foreign language lies in its ability to enable learners to gain experiences that extend beyond their mother tongue. Hawkins (1981) states that foreign language learning “*contributes to an understanding of the polyglot world, and emancipate the learner from parochialism.*”(p.32) No doubt learning a foreign language is beneficial for an individual as it can awaken linguistic awareness and broaden the horizons of learners, to attain a wider acceptance of others. Furthermore, foreign languages have the unique potential to break down barriers between people and countries and promoting a sense of universalism (Lawes, 2007). Despite the recognised benefits of learning a foreign language, there appears to be an insurmountable gap in teaching foreign languages in secondary schools in England. It is not learning a foreign language that is difficult, rather learning it in the classroom and during adolescence. Scholars, teachers, and politicians have been looking to overcome this challenge of foreign language learning in England for almost a century to no apparent avail (Dobson, 2018).

Foreign language learning in England is very much a product of the education system of its time, and as a result, is also equally rooted in the ideas of the time. In 1963, the Newsom Report described that foreign languages were taught primarily to the students with top abilities in grammar schools<sup>1</sup> and half of the secondary modern schools<sup>2</sup>. In the early 1970s, comprehensive schools<sup>3</sup> which admitted pupils of all abilities were a

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<sup>1</sup> The term grammar school was first used in the 14<sup>th</sup> century for a type of school founded to provide free or subsidised education for children, usually boys, in a particular locality. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many grammar schools had deteriorated and were reformed by the Grammar School Act (1840). By 1990, only about seven per cent of local authorities had retained any grammar schools. No new grammar schools have been created and the total is now 166. Selection for grammar schools was traditionally based on the eleven plus examination (Lawton & Gordon, 2004, p.109).

<sup>2</sup> The Hadow Report on *The Education of the Adolescent* (1926) recommended the division of secondary education into two types: the grammar school, for the most intellectually able pupils, and the secondary modern school, which would cater for most adolescents between the ages of 11 and 15. The curriculum to be offered in the latter was to concentrate initially on offering good broad education, but in the later years of schooling, a more practical bias was to be introduced into the curriculum. The White Paper on Education Reconstruction in 1943, which set the pattern for tripartite, recommended three types of school – grammar, technical, and modern – corresponding to supposed psychological categories of pupils (Lawton & Gordon, 2004, p.222).

<sup>3</sup> The 1944 Education Act legislated for secondary education for all, but did not specify any one type of secondary school organisation. Circular 144/1947 set out various forms of organisation and defined a comprehensive school as ‘one which is intended to cater for the secondary

contemporary phenomenon in most areas of England. Many language teachers were used to teaching the most able pupils, therefore they found teaching foreign languages in comprehensive schools a daunting task. The learners' differences in ability were also of a much wider range and so too was their willingness to learn. In 1973, the UK became a member of the European Economic Community (EEC). Within the education sector is the concern of the language competence in the country, as it might prevent the country from gaining the full benefits as EEC membership (Lawes, 2007). Within this economic context of Britain in the 1970s, the 'Ruskin Speech' by Prime Minister James Callaghan in Oxford given in 1976 has set off a new direction in the UK's education policy. Policymakers and wider society began to view foreign language teaching and learning as a 'useful' activity. Proficiency in a foreign language gradually became perceived as a *skill* that is to be made accessible to *every pupil* (Dobson, 2018).

In England, Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) was one of the foundation subjects compulsory for every pupil until the GCSE level (Year 7 to Year 11) in 1991. The first National Curriculum (DES, 1991) stated that pupils in the key stage 3 and key stage 4 are required to study a modern foreign language as a foundation subject. Yet, modern foreign language only referred to languages specified as official languages of the institutions of the European Community, which included French, German and Spanish. Approximately 90% of all pupils taking MFL studied one of these three main languages. Other languages are regarded as *community languages* that can only be taught as an additional language under the condition that pupils are studying one or more of the *modern foreign languages*. In other words, the study of other non-European languages, for instance, Chinese, Japanese and Russian was not encouraged<sup>4</sup> by the specifications of the 1991 National Curriculum.

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education of all children in a given are'. After many local education authority experiments with tripartite systems (grammar, technical and secondary modern schools) in the 1950s and 1960s, the comprehensive alternative rapidly gained in popularity during the 1970s. The 1976 Education Act attempted to make comprehensive schools the only kind of permitted secondary school but was repealed by the 1979 Act, after the election of the Conservative Government under Margaret Thatcher. Nevertheless, by 1988 comprehensive schools were catering for 86 per cent of pupils in England (Lawton & Gordon, 2004, p.51).

<sup>4</sup> In the National Curriculum Programmes of Study (1999), it stated that schools must offer, in key stages 3 and 4, one or more of the official working language of the European Union (Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Modern Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish). Schools may, besides, offer any other modern foreign language. Non-EU languages count as a foundation subject only when offered to pupils alongside the possibility of studying an official

In 2013, a critical change in MFL policy occurred, when the National Curriculum stated that '*Teaching may be of any modern foreign language and should build on the foundations of language learning laid at key stage 2, whether pupils continue with the same language or take up a new one*' (p.2). MFL in schools now includes major European or world languages, such as Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish and Urdu. '*Schools may choose which languages they teach*' (p.2) and bear no restrictions for the choice of the students. Therefore, there is neither the notion of a *modern foreign language* nor *community language* any more, as all languages are classified as mainstream languages under the new MFL National Curriculum. The autonomy of schools to choose which languages to teach has provided space for the rise in demand for Mandarin learning in UK schools.

## 1.2 Establishment of Mandarin learning in England

Mandarin learning in England has shifted from an enrichment course to being part of the formal MFL curriculum. In 2007, The National Centre for Languages (CILT) released its first report on the teaching and learning of Mandarin in the UK, which described the initial development of the teaching of the language in the country. It reported that among the 400 randomly sampled schools in England, 7-8% of state secondary schools were providing some degree of Mandarin teaching. 40% of the schools offering Mandarin were outside of curriculum time. Nearly 80% of respondents were keen to develop Mandarin further in their schools within the next few years. Over the next six years, Mandarin learning has developed rapidly in the United Kingdom. In 2014, Alcantara Communication published *The teaching of Chinese in the UK*, which mapped the development of the language throughout the years and served as a guideline for the future development of Mandarin teaching in British schools. There were more than 13% of maintained secondary schools and 46% of independent schools offering Mandarin Chinese (Tinsley & Board, 2014). This brought the total up to more than 600 secondary schools offering Mandarin across England (Carruthers, 2012). The inclusion of Mandarin as an MFL contributed to the rapid development of the language in secondary schools.

Increase in GCSE uptake is also observed since Mandarin has raised its status from enrichment language to becoming one of the mainstream languages. In a recent British

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working language of the EU. A pupil may, therefore, study any modern foreign language that the school offers, but the offer must include an EU language.



Council Report, Tinsley and Doležal (2018) stated that there has been a decline in numbers taking French and/or German, while Spanish and Mandarin has increased rapidly over the past few years. There was only 58,700 entries of Spanish in 2011 and increased to 88,000 in 2018, having 49.9% increment and such trend reached a plateau in the last five years whereas there is a constant gradual increase of the uptake of GCSE in Mandarin Chinese (DfE, 2018).

	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Changes</b>
<b>French</b>	166,167	158,730	146,349	133,536	117,010	↓26.6%
<b>German</b>	60,362	55,839	52,328	46,510	42,300	↓29.9%
<b>Spanish</b>	89,949	89,920	94,067	92,652	88,000	↓2.2%
<b>Mandarin</b>	3,369	3,785	4,033	4,163	4,061	↑20.5%

*Table 1 The uptake of GCSE MFL from 2011 to 2017*

Investment from the UK government and private initiatives have contributed to the development of Mandarin teaching. The UK government, in collaboration with the British Council and University College London (UCL) Institute of Education (IoE), launched the Mandarin Excellence Programme (MEP) in 2016. Since then, the number of MEP schools has been increasing rapidly across England. As of September 2019, 75 schools are delivering the programme. Students in the MEP program receive four hours of Mandarin lessons each week. More than 1000 students will be participating in Mandarin intensive courses in China in 2019/2020 academic year. By 2020, 5000 secondary school students are expected to be proficient in Mandarin (Institute of Education, Confucius Institute for Schools, 2017). Therefore, the positive impact of MEP is prominent.

In addition, the Swire Chinese Language Foundation, a private initiative, offered long-term funding to operate Mandarin learning centres. The initiative is significant to the development of Mandarin teaching. In 2017/2018, the Foundation supported approximately 7,000 pupils across 101 schools to learn Mandarin in the UK (Swire Chinese Language Foundation, 2019). The Language Trends in 2018 shows that there are 32% of independent schools and 8% of state schools offering Chinese as a GCSE option, and there has been a steady increase in the number of schools offering Chinese every year.

The importance of Mandarin learning is also advocated at the societal level. In the recent *Languages For The Future* report by the British Council (Tinsley & Board, 2017), Mandarin ranked second to Spanish in terms of importance of a language to learn. The top five most important languages to learn are Spanish, Mandarin, French, Arabic and German. The indicators considered both economic and non-market factors, including future trade priorities, the public's language interest, and levels of English proficiency in other countries. The report provides a reference of what language to teach in the post-Brexit period. The report states '*The UK is at a turning point. It is preparing to leave the European Union (EU), a process which will fundamentally change not only its relationship with the countries of the EU, but also with the rest of the world*' (p.4). In summary, the UK is currently a fertile context for the development of Mandarin Chinese learning.

### 1.3 What is Chinese Mandarin?

There are more than two hundred spoken dialects of the Chinese language, and Mandarin is the official one being spoken in China. Mandarin, also known as Putonghua (普通话) is widely spoken in different places, such as Taiwan, where this spoken language is known as Guoyu (国语). In Singapore, where it is known as Huayu (华语) and is one of the four official languages in the country. Although the official spoken language of Hong Kong is another Chinese dialect called Cantonese, Mandarin is a compulsory subject in schools in Hong Kong because of its biliterate (i.e. Chinese and English) and trilingual (i.e. Cantonese, Mandarin and English) language education policy (Education Bureau, 2019). It is estimated that more than 1.4 billion people are speaking Mandarin Chinese in the world.

Mandarin is a tonal language, having four tones with the change of tone resulting in a difference in meaning. In Mandarin, the pronunciation of a character is represented by the *pinyin* system, which is the Romanisation of the Chinese phonetic system and is represented by the English alphabet. Pinyin of a character is usually comprised of three elements, namely initials (声母), consonants (韵母), and tones (声调). Figure 1 illustrates the three elements of pinyin of the character 妈 pronounced as mā means mother.



Figure 1 The three elements of Pinyin

There are 21 initials, 39 consonants and four tones (Xing, 2006). The change and confusion in tones creates a challenge for native-English speaking learners (McGinnis 1997; Shen 1989). While Mandarin tones have a wider pitch range than non-tonal languages, native English-speaking learners are less sensitive to the minor tonal differences in the language and have difficulties in identifying and producing the highest and lowest pitch points (Xing, 2006). Furthermore, some consonants and vowels are absent in English, for example the vowels, *e* and *ü*, the three groups of initials: retroflexes *zh*, *ch*, *sh*; palatals: *j*, *q*, *x* and sibilants *z*, *c*, which native-English speakers have found more challenging to produce (*ibid*).

Chinese, in its written form, is represented by Chinese characters (汉字). There are two formats of Chinese characters: Traditional Chinese (繁体) and Simplified Chinese (简体). In 1986, the Chinese government proposed the Simplified Character List (i.e. 简化字总表) which simplified the traditional characters according to rules. This aims to make Chinese characters easier to learn. Both China and Singapore use the Simplified Chinese characters, whereas Hong Kong and Taiwan use the Traditional Chinese format. In either Simplified or Traditional Chinese, each Chinese character is comprised of three elements: phonetics (i.e. the sound of the character), semantics (i.e. the meaning of the character) and semiotics (i.e. the shape of the characters) which is presented by different strokes (see Figure 2). One of the distinctive features of Chinese characters is the lack of grapheme-phoneme correspondence of Chinese characters. That means, the written form of a Chinese character does not precisely represent the pronunciation of the character, and learners are required to acquire the three elements separately.

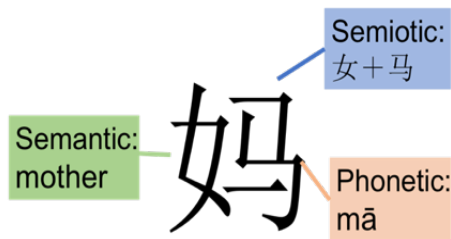


Figure 2 The three elements of Chinese characters

In a Chinese character, the orthographic system has three levels: i) the stroke, ii) radicals and/or components, and iii) the full character. The first level is a stroke, the smallest element of a character and there are 31 types of strokes in the process of writing Chinese characters (Xing, 2006). The writing of Chinese characters is also governed by specific rules, for example, the writing of a character is to commence from the left to the right and from the outside to the inside. In Figure 3, it shows the Chinese character 永, which consists of eight strokes and four types of strokes are identified with the corresponding names.

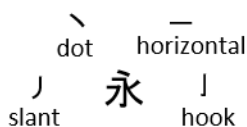


Figure 3 The strokes of the Chinese character 永

The second level is the radicals. Each Chinese character is composed of a radical and/or one or more components. In Chinese, there are 214 radicals (Xing, 2006) and each character has one semantic radical which signifies the *semantic category* of the character (Ho, Ng & Ng, 2003). For example, the Chinese characters 海 (sea), 湖 (lake) and 河 (river) share the same semantic radical 氵 which represents *water* as these characters are all related to different forms of water. In other words, the semantic radical provides a clue to infer the meaning of the character (*ibid*). A radical can be an independent character, for instance, 人 means people. While this is a character, 人 can also be combined with another component 木 (wood) to form the character 休 which means rest. Some characters have three or more components, for example, 程 (i.e. 禾, 口, 王). The semantic radical can be positioned on different sides of a character, Figure 4 presents the semantic radical of different characters and the corresponding meanings.



Figure 4 Semantic component of different characters

In the field of Chinese as a foreign language, radicals (部首) and components (部件) are sometimes used interchangeably. The former refers to semantic radicals and the latter refers to the remaining parts of the character. In this thesis, radicals only refer to the semantic radical of a Chinese character whereas components are used to represent the chunks of a Chinese character, including semantic radicals.

The third level is the full character that comprises one radical and/or component(s). During the Han dynasty (AD 25-220), Xu Shen (许慎) (AD 58-148) derived six principles termed *liù shū* (六书) of how Chinese characters are constructed and formed. The six principles are pictographic (象形)<sup>5</sup>, indicative (指事)<sup>6</sup>, ideographic (会意)<sup>7</sup>, semantic-phonetic (形声)<sup>8</sup>, mutually interpretive (转注)<sup>9</sup>, and phonetic loan (假借)<sup>10</sup>. The first four principles are considered of greater importance, especially the semantic-phonetic principle as more than 85% of Chinese characters are constructed by this principle (Xing, 2006). The semantic-phonetic character is composed of two radicals, the semantic radical (形符) and phonetic radical (声符). The semantic radical represents the *semantic category* of the character, for instance, 河 means river and 海 means the sea. Both of the characters are composed of the radical 氵 which means water. The phonetic radical represents the *sound* of the character, for example, 少

5 Pictographic characters are derived from drawings of object, for example 月 moon, which is similar to the shape of the moon.

6 Indicative characters use symbols to express abstract meanings, for example, 上 is using a point above a horizon line to indicate the concept of *above* and a point below a horizon line to mean *below* 下.

7 Ideographic or associative characters are the combination of pictographic and indicative principles, for example, when the sun 日 combines with the moon 月 and forming 明, which means bright.

8 Semantic-phonetic characters are formed by one pictographic form and a phonetic form, with the former one representing the *category* of the character and the latter representing the *sound* of the character.

9 The interpretive character refers to two characters that share the same ideograph and same or similar phonetic components, for example 老 and 考.

10 The phonetic loan principle refers to a character that borrowed its form and sound from another existing pictograph to express abstract meaning. For example, 来 originally means wheat but was then borrowed to express the meaning of *to come*.

shǎo, 炒 chǎo and 吵 chǎo, which share the same vowels *ao*. The six principles derived by Xu Shen enables teachers to organise the construction of Chinese characters in a logical and systematic way.

After the *character* 字, the next level is 词 *word*. Norman (1988) defined the usage of a word as a unit “*which has a specific meaning and can be used freely*” (cited in Xing, 2006). In Chinese, more than 80% of words are polymorphemic, which means they are a combination of more than one morpheme. A morpheme is the smallest unit of a language that can be associated with meaning and grammatical function (Taft, Liu & Zhu, 1999). The importance of morphemes in building words is a distinctive aspect of Chinese (Packard, 2000). New vocabulary concepts in Chinese are generally transparent as more sophisticated concepts may be built from simpler ones (McBride-Chang, Shu, Zhou, Wat, & Wagner, 2003).

An example of this can be illustrated by the term 电脑 which means *computer*. It is composed of two characters: 电 meaning electricity and 脑 meaning brain. The two characters ‘electricity’ and ‘brain’ combine together to form a new meaning: *computer*. The character 电 electricity can also be combined with other characters to form new words, such as 电 (electricity) and 视 (vision) which means *television* 电视, and 电 (electricity) and 梯 (stair) means *escalator*. Chinese vocabulary is thus semantically transparent, which suggests that raising the morphological awareness of learners can enhance the learning of new vocabulary, or the recognition of associations amongst words (McBride-Chang et al, 2003).

However, there are certain words that cannot stand alone and are classified as bound morpheme, for example, 芹菜. The former character 芹 can only mean *celery* when it is combined with 菜, which means vegetable. Another type of word is binding words, of which an individual character of the word has no morphemic status, and the characters can only bind with other characters to create a meaning. For example, 蚯 only occurs with 蚓 to form 蚯蚓, which means *earthworm*. There are some words that combine together to form a coherent concept, but this concept is not the actual meaning of the word, for instance, 小 means *small* and 心 means *heart*. When combined, however, they form the word 小心 which means *beware*. These words are called opaque words.

Lastly, words may be loaned from another language and individual characters have been chosen purely because the sound of the Chinese word bears audible

resemblance to that of the original language. For example, 巧克力 qiǎokèlì share similar sounds with chocolate, but the three characters in the word share no relevant semantics to chocolate. It is also important to understand that one of the main challenges of learning Mandarin is that the sheer quantity of Chinese characters is massive, totalling more than 30,000 Chinese characters. Nevertheless, understanding how the words are formed can combine different characters and form new meanings.

In Chinese, forming a sentence means putting words into a certain order. It is a discourse-oriented language which changing the position of a word within a sentence can change the meaning of the sentence even though the form of the word remains the same. Figure 5 summarises different levels of Chinese.

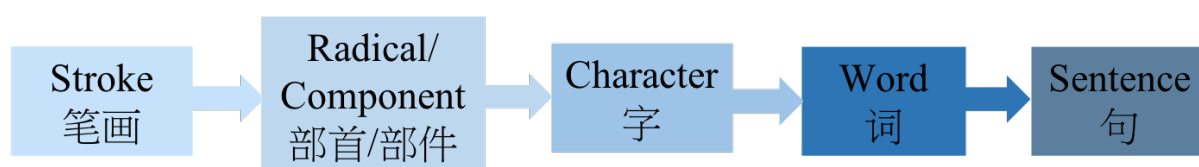


Figure 5 Different levels of Chinese

This overview of the structure and distinctive features of Chinese Mandarin provides a backdrop to explore some of the specific challenges of teaching and learning Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language in England, as described in section 1.4.

## 1.4 Challenges of teaching and learning Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language

### 1.4.1 Low continuation rate in MFL in England

In general, students in the UK have a low continuation rate and have relatively low competence in foreign language learning. The Nuffield Foundation (2000) reported that nine out of ten children discontinued learning languages at the age of 16. In 2012 the European Commission's survey on language competencies across Europe found that only 9% of 15-years-olds in the UK were competent beyond a basic level in their first foreign language. This was compared to 42% of their peers in other European countries (European Commission, 2012). In addition, the most recent report by the British Council's *Language For the Future* (2017) published that only 37% of British adults (18-34 year olds) were capable of holding a basic conversation while travelling abroad. The lack of competence in foreign language skills among British learners

seems to be a noteworthy problem. Attempts to explain this phenomenon have taken many forms.

From a global perspective, English is regarded by many as a lingua franca, hence it is argued that the wide use of the language globally inhibits the incentives of pupils to learn a foreign language when everyone yearns to speak English to them (Csizér & Lukac, 2010). From a social standpoint, the negative publicity in the media regarding the poor foreign language performance in the UK, coupled with the misconception that foreign languages are for ‘linguists’ only, further discouraged pupils’ motivation (Lanvers & Coleman, 2017). In terms of the policy, the cancellation of the ‘*Languages for All*’ policy in 2004 has contributed to the decline of the uptake of GCSE MFL (Coleman, 2009; Coleman, Galaczi & Astruc, 2007).

In 2004, the compulsory policy to learn a foreign language in Key Stage 4 (KS4) has been abolished. This means that in state schools in England, pupils are required to study MFL from Year 3 to Year 9 (i.e. KS2 and KS3) but not during GCSE (Year 10 and Year 11) or A-level (Year 12 to Year 13). This decision is widely viewed as a contributing factor to the substantial decrease in the number of students studying a language up to GCSE since then. MFL has always been regarded as a difficult subject compared to other subjects and is comparably harder to achieve good grades (Mori, 2014). Thus, when given a choice it may explain why MFL has appeared a less popular subject choice to students and schools. In 2017, only 47% of pupils sat for an MFL at GCSE compared to 76% in 2002 before the abolition of the compulsory policy. In 2011, the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) (DfE, 2016), which attempts to promote five core subject areas including a foreign language at GCSE, did cease the decline of foreign language take-up at GCSE and has maintained the uptake of pupils at an average of 48% from 2013 to 2017 (Tinsley and Doležal, 2018). However, overall the low continuation percentage of MFL at GCSE level is still a problem faced by UK schools and this is the context in which Mandarin has been introduced.

#### 1.4.2 Slow progression rate of Mandarin Chinese learning

Due to the above-mentioned distinctive features of Mandarin Chinese in section 1.3, Mandarin learners have a relatively slow progression rate (Orton, 2016). The US Foreign Service Institute in Washington classified languages according to the difficulty of learning. Within this classification, Mandarin is in category V whereas French is in category I, meaning that native English speakers may take approximately 2200 hours



to become proficient in Chinese compared to 600 hours for French (Foreign Service Institute, n.d.). Mandarin as a character language has significant linguistic and cultural differences with alphabetic languages, and as such, demands exceptional effort for native speakers of alphabetic languages, such as English, French and Spanish, which follow the rule of phoneme-to-letter correspondence. Alphabetic languages allow for the use of alphabetic principles to decode print words and access their pronunciations or meanings (Rayner, Foorman, Perfetti, Pesetsky, & Seidenberg, 2001). For example, to teach the word 'teacher', the French teacher would say '*professeur*' [pʁɔfɛsœʁ]. However, in Mandarin, the absence of grapheme-phoneme correspondence means pronunciation of a character cannot be represented by the form of the character, thus, learners would have to first learn that the romanisation of Mandarin 'lǎoshī' means teacher, followed by matching 'lǎoshī' with the characters '老师' and then linking '老师' with the meaning and concept of teacher. These extra steps in the learning process not only dramatically increase the time needed to teach the language, but also demand considerable capacity and effort from the learners.

The slow rate of progress in Mandarin learning also leads to a decline in learner's motivation (CILT, 2007; Du & Kirkebaek, 2012; Orton, 2016). Most students who chose to learn European languages at GCSE could reach a language proficiency that is sufficient to read newspaper articles. However, learners who completed Mandarin Chinese at GCSE level could only manage to master what is equivalent to Year 1 or Year 2 in Chinese lessons in China. This is mainly due to the orthographic differences between students' first languages (e.g. English and Chinese). Thus, encountering difficulties and the lack of accomplishment in Mandarin are deemed to be the reasons for students to lose their motivation in learning Mandarin (Orton, 2016). Without sustaining their motivation, the desire to learn Mandarin in many learners wanes, resulting in high drop-out rates of Mandarin learners in secondary schools (CILT, 2007).

### 1.4.3 Motivation and Chinese language learning

Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) defined motivation in language learning as "*the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out*" (p. 65). Motivation is regarded to be the impetus to continue the language learning process. A large number of cases proved that learners with

sufficient motivation can achieve considerable knowledge of a language regardless of their language aptitude (Ellis, 2013; Gardner 2001). In the last few decades, motivation research provided insights into how students behave and the reasoning behind their behaviours. Yet, little is known about the motivation of students in England learning Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language. Research in MFL showed that pupils' motivation decreases over the course of their language learning journey (Macaro, 2008). The decline in language motivation attributed to multiple factors, including teachers' practices, inadequate contact with the target language community, practical use in daily life, and family support (Campbell & Storch, 2011; Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998; Shum, Gao, Tsung & Ki, 2011). The research suggested that if teachers can take into account these factors when adopting motivational strategies, students' motivation in learning Mandarin Chinese will likely be enhanced (Brophy, 2004). Hence, if language education aimed to prepare graduates with sound Mandarin Chinese proficiency, understanding what and how to implement motivational strategies were implemented to *sustain* the motivation of language learners is of paramount importance.

Wang (2009) examined pupils' motivation, attitudes, and teachers' perception of pupils' motivation in learning Mandarin in England. However, the study initially aimed to report Mandarin development in UK secondary schools but was unable to analyse pupils' motivation in depth. Gardner's instrumental and integrative motivation was used as the theoretical framework. It revealed that English pupils' motivation for learning Mandarin is a mixture of both orientations. Instrumental motivation, such as the notion that Mandarin will be useful for future employment, and integrative motivation, such as the level of interest in the language, were identified. The findings are relatively general and apply to all other languages without taking the unique attributes of Mandarin into account. Tinsley and Board (2014) also reported similar findings that Mandarin learners have a clear idea of the growing economic importance of China, and they perceive that being able to speak Mandarin would be useful to them in the future. However, it should also be noted that the principal motivating factor identified in this research which kept the pupils engaged with the language was not the idea that 'Chinese is important for my future career', but rather the day-to-day experiences of learning Chinese with classmates and teachers (Mori, 2014; Tinsley & Board, 2014). Thus, there is much value in exploring what the motivations of learners are in terms of learning Mandarin beyond the beginning level proficiency.

#### 1.4.4 Effective Mandarin teaching strategies are needed

Extensive research provided us with sound evidence of the link between the usage of motivational strategies and students' motivation in an English Foreign Language (EFL) classroom (Alison & Halliwell 2002; Brophy, 2004; Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998). These studies indicated that the frequency of strategies implemented showed to directly influence students' motivation (Bernaus and Gardner, 2008). Given that these or other similar studies were conducted in the context of EFL classrooms, the degree to which such claims are applicable to British learners participating in Mandarin learning is unknown. More importantly, if research aims at promoting the greatest motivational gain in students' language learning, studies that justify the actual motivational power of a particular strategy within a specific teaching and learning environment should be conducted (Chen, Warden & Chang, 2005; Gardner & Tremblay, 1994). Therefore, teachers can gain a more complete understanding of the specific optimal conditions required for implementing a particular motivational strategy to enhance students' motivation in foreign language classrooms.

It is obvious that the possession of effective teaching strategies became a crucial element for learning Mandarin as a foreign language in England. Tinsley and Board (2014) reported that Mandarin learners admit that although they still regard Mandarin as a difficult language, the goals they were asked to achieve were no more demanding than those for other subjects, and it gave them a sense of achievement to be learning something which many regarded as impenetrable. Thus, if effective methods were applied, the difficulty of Mandarin could become an advantage of the language. Moreover, even though pupils felt that it is essential to master both the character and the sound system, they also recognised that many aspects of Chinese were comparatively simpler than French or Spanish, for instance grammar (*ibid*). Hence, not only are effective teaching strategies significant, the teaching strategies that are specific to Mandarin learning are also essential.

#### 1.4.5 The call for UK specific Mandarin teaching strategies

In response to the growing interest in Mandarin within the UK, University College London (UCL) Institute of Education (IoE) Confucius Institute developed a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Mandarin since 2011, which became one of the main providers of Mandarin teacher training in England. The programme

aims to offer a permanent UK-based teaching force. In addition, the British Council developed a programme training Chinese Language Assistant (CLA) programme, which train CLAs, also known as Hanban teachers to complement the work of local Chinese teachers. Yet, Xiang (2019) found that the Hanban teachers who are trained in China expressed that they have limited pedagogical knowledge in reference to the UK school context. Therefore, not only is the need for more locally trained Mandarin teachers becoming a pressing issue, the knowledge of teaching Mandarin in England to inform the practitioners is also significant.

Diamantidaki, Pan & Carruthers (2018) organised a survey to understand the challenges encountered by the UCL IoE PGCE Mandarin students from the first cohort of 2011 to the year 2015. One of the main challenges PGCE students faced was the lack of research in Mandarin to inform their practice and to nurture critical thinking. The inadequacy of Mandarin-focused input is mainly due to limited research in the UK. Most of the studies that do exist merely provide an overview of the subject development, such as evaluating teacher training, teaching materials or statistics of pupils' uptake (see Wang, 2009; Wang and Higgins, 2008; Zhang and Li, 2010; Zhu and Li, 2014). Scant research is relevant to Mandarin pedagogy, in which most of the available research concerns learners' difficulties with particular aspects, for example, tones (Hu, 2010) and intercultural competence of learners (Álvarez & Qian, 2013; Jin, 2014). These few empirical studies in teachers' practice and pupils' motivation have very limited impact on improving the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of the language.

Besides, most available research into Mandarin as a foreign language was conducted either in the United States or Australia (for review, see Xing, 2006). Most of the studies also revolved around higher education contexts or adult learners, with little attention paid to secondary school pupils. In addition, different policies across these countries have made the transferability of the findings to the English context impossible, as they are all unique and distinct. Though Mandarin is being taught very much the same way as European languages in schools in England, findings from European language research may not provide an appropriate and accurate insight into Mandarin teaching and learning. This is due in large part to the nature of the languages – European languages are alphabetical while Mandarin is a character-based language. This defining attribute of Mandarin has further isolated itself from the available mainstream and efficient MFL pedagogies. To address the lack of research surrounding Mandarin

Chinese pedagogy, Diamantidaki et al (2018) published *Mandarin Chinese Teacher Education*, which is the first book that includes a collection of research conducted in Mandarin classrooms in England. It aims to support teachers and promote solutions to the issues arising from teaching and learning Mandarin in the UK, all the while generating discussions and research in the field. Yet, research into how Mandarin as a foreign language could be effectively taught in England is still an area of critical demand.

## 1.5 Research Questions

This study focuses on the motivational strategies implemented by the Mandarin teachers in the GCSE classroom, by analysing how teachers enhance and sustain the motivation of the pupils according to the distinctive features of Mandarin. Its overall research purpose is to contribute to the development of MFL Mandarin pedagogy, particularly in a lower-intermediate foreign language classroom. Within the overarching purpose of the study, there are two main aims: first, to examine the practices of Mandarin teachers in GCSE classrooms according to Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework, and second, to investigate how students respond to practices implemented by the teachers to sustain their motivation of learning Mandarin.

The **Overarching research question** of the study is:

**According to Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework, what are the practices implemented by Mandarin teachers to enhance and sustain the motivation of GCSE students in England?**

According Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework, it is assumed that teachers have an impact on the language motivation of students. There was also interest in knowing how teachers think in order to motivate students in addition to what they do in the classrooms. How the students respond to the teacher's actions shows the impact of the practices, thus understanding the practices of the teachers is significant.

### **Sub-questions**

**1) According to Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework, what are the Mandarin teacher's perceptions of motivational strategies implemented in the Mandarin classrooms?**

The purpose of this sub-question is to explore what the Mandarin teachers think of motivational strategies as suggested in the Motivational Strategies Framework in GCSE classrooms, particularly the activities that the teachers used in their classrooms. An additional aim is to explore the Mandarin-focused practices of teachers that motivate the students.

## **2) What are the perceptions of the students towards the Mandarin teachers' practices?**

This sub-question addresses the inadequate voices of students in MFL Mandarin learning in England. It aims to understand the response of students to the motivational strategies that are implemented by the teachers. Even if the teachers believe the practices to be motivating, unpacking whether or not the students perceive these practices as motivating is significant.

## **3) How do the motivational strategies suggested by Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework enhance and sustain the motivation of GCSE students?**

This sub-question concerns the implementation of motivational strategies by teachers from the perspectives of both teachers and students. It acknowledges the commonalities and differences between the two perspectives in terms of how to sustain the motivation of Mandarin learning. The purpose of this sub-question includes justification and modification of the theoretical framework - Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework (2001), in the context of MFL Mandarin classrooms.

The study adopted a qualitative approach, focusing on four schools in England, involving interviews, lesson observations and questionnaires. In doing so, the study contributes to the body of empirical and pedagogical knowledge that informs the practices of Mandarin teachers in terms of motivational strategies in Mandarin teaching not only at GCSE level, but also at other level of proficiency. Furthermore, since foreign language learning has been dominated by European languages, more empirical evidence for the appropriateness of applying the methods used in teaching European languages for Chinese is required. The development of pedagogy can inform how young non-native learners of Chinese can best learn the language (Carruthers, 2012). It is hoped that this research can facilitate a substantial development of the teaching and learning Mandarin in the UK in the future.

## 1.6 Structure of the thesis

**This chapter** outlines the background of this study, including the context of foreign language learning (i.e. MFL) in England, the distinctive features of Chinese Mandarin and the specific focus of this study. **Chapter 2** describes the development of motivation theories in the last few decades, and reviews the literature on MFL policies in England so as to identify the research gaps which form the present study. It also reviews the empirical research in ways of promoting learners' motivation, motivational strategies implemented by teachers and teaching Mandarin as a foreign language, and discusses the relevance of adopting Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework in the present study examining the practices of the Mandarin teachers in GCSE classrooms. **Chapter 3** provides an account of this study's methodology. It first details the epistemological stance of the researcher, followed by the data collection procedures, and explains the rationale for particular steps and decisions. It also describes the data processing, in particular the analysis procedures. The next two chapters present the findings of this study according to the theoretical framework – Motivational Strategies Framework developed by Dörnyei. **Chapter 4** examines the most significant motivational strategy - *Protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence* which highlights the importance of Mandarin-focused learning strategies according to the distinctive features of Mandarin. **Chapter 5** presents the motivational strategies that *sustain and protect* the learners' motivation, including *i) Setting specific learning goals, ii) Stimulating and enjoyable activities, iii) Promoting cooperation among learners, iv) Allowing learners to maintain a positive social image* and *v) Developing learner autonomy*. This chapter identifies the implementation of these motivational strategies in Mandarin GCSE classrooms and the responses of students to these practices, highlighting the effectiveness of these strategies to the students' motivation in learning Mandarin. **Chapter 6** draws upon the previous studies in motivational strategies, compares and contrasts the implementation of motivational strategies in the present study to those in other contexts. Finally, **Chapter 7** summarises the findings of this study and discusses its contribution to knowledge and research on motivational strategies and Mandarin as a foreign language. In acknowledging the limitations of this study, it also proposes some recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

This study is based on the premise that motivation has a fundamental role in foreign language learning. In this chapter, four sections explain the theoretical framework that underpins this study and supports this premise. Firstly, it reviews the historical development of motivation theories since the 1980s, from the focus of measuring learners' motivation of learners to motivational practices that motivate them. It is then followed by detailed explanations of the theoretical framework employed in this study – Motivational Strategies Framework developed by Dörnyei (2001). The framework aims to capture the dynamic nature of motivation and provides pedagogical strategies for motivating language learners. As the present study was conducted in England, it addressed the MFL teaching in the National Curriculum and the recommended teaching methodologies. Additionally, the last section reviewed the motivation for learning MFL. Lastly, the teaching of Mandarin as a foreign language in other contexts provides a solid ground-work for exploring Mandarin teachers' practice in England.

It is important to state that the overarching purpose of the research is to examine and justify the applicability and revise the Motivational Strategy Framework based on the case of Mandarin. The focus of this research is to investigate Mandarin teachers' pedagogy at GCSE level in England. By adopting Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework which suggests practices that can be implemented in language classrooms directly, it also provides a lens for the researcher to understand the practices used by the Mandarin teachers, in particular, those practices that are recognised as motivating and effective by both Mandarin teachers and their students.

### 2.1 Language Learning Motivation

This section presents a critical review of the L2 motivation which forms the basis of this study. It aims to provide an overview of the key themes in L2 motivation research since the 1980s until the turn of the century - the so-called 'social-psychological', 'cognitive-oriented' and 'process-oriented' periods referred to by Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011). The purpose of this is to establish the theoretical framework of the study. The section concludes with more recent developments in the L2 motivation field, namely L2 Motivation Self System, which is related to self and identity models and complex dynamic system theories.



### 2.1.1 Social psychological period

Motivation is vital to successful learning and is regarded as one of the key factors influencing outcomes, and is perhaps considered more important than aptitude (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). In the social-psychological period, L2 motivation theories emphasise on the relationship between individual language learning perspectives and the social-psychological context of L2 communities. Several scholars developed relevant L2 motivation theories in this period of time, including Clément's concept of linguistic self-confidence (Clément, 1980, 1986), and Schumann's acculturation theory (Schumann, 1986). The most influential work among these theories is the socio-educational model (see Figure 6) developed by Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert in Canada, in which French and English are the official languages of the country. The fundamental tenet of the model is that *"students' attitudes towards the particular language group are bound to influence how successful they will be in incorporating aspects of that language"* (Gardner, 1985, p. 6). The socio-educational model explained that L2 motivation comprises of three components: i) motivational intensity; ii) desire to learn the language; iii) attitudes towards learning the language. The attempt is to highlight how language learning is different from other academic subjects, in that it could be influenced by learners' attitudes towards another ethnolinguistic group, which was a radically new concept at the time.

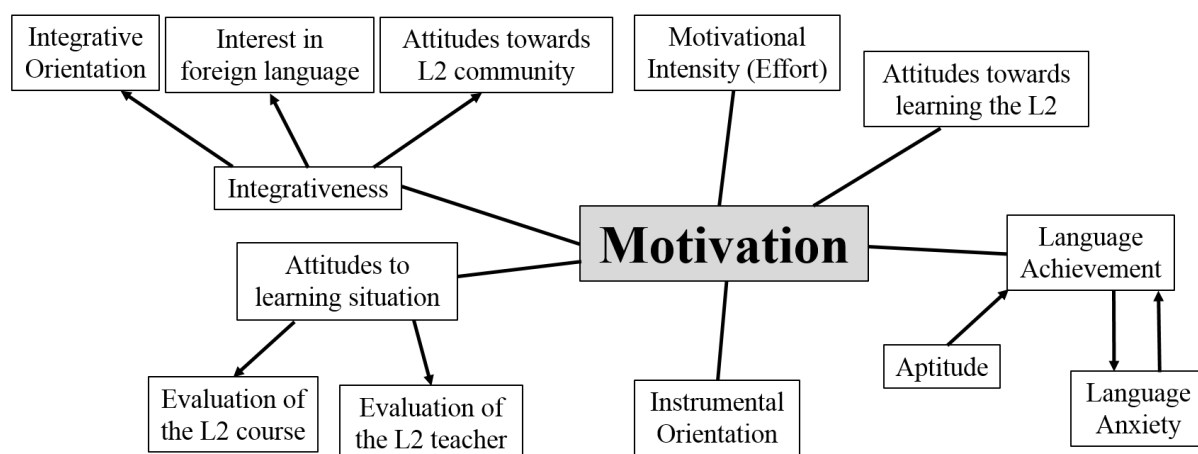


Figure 6 Gardner's socio-educational model (Gardner, 2010, p.88)

The two prominent orientations - 'integrative' and 'instrumental' have become widely known concepts associated with Gardner's work in the past few decades. *Integrative motivation* refers to favourable attitudes toward the target language community, possibly a wish to integrate and adapt to a new target culture through the use of the

language (Gardner, 1985). On the other hand, *instrumental motivation* refers to utilitarian motives in learning a language, such as getting a higher salary or better career developments (*ibid*). It is believed that integrative motivation is more likely to sustain language learning inspiration than instrumental motivation, and has primacy over it. Research also suggests that integrative motivation is the predictor of language learning success and is necessary for learners to go beyond intermediate levels (Dörnyei, 1990; Gardner, 2001; Lamb, 2004; Yashima, 2009).

The concept of instrumental and integrative motivation has been widely researched in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). However, since English is a lingua franca, attitudes to the target language speakers and their culture lose meaning (Dörnyei, 2012). There have been discussions of re-evaluating the concept of integrativeness as the target language community, which is not necessarily identifiable with a specific ethnolinguistic community. On the other hand, the adaptation to the target culture other than English might be different from that of English. In addition, Gardner's macro L2 motivation perspective never made significant impacts among the micro-social context in which instructed language learning occurs, nor does it relate to the day-to-day realities of L2 teachers and learners. Thus, this has led to a significant shift in the focus and nature of research on L2 motivation.

### 2.1.2 Cognitive-situated period

This shift gave rise to a range of new L2 motivation theories, typically drawing on related research in the field of psychology, a more 'micro' perspective which focuses on motivation situated in the classroom or specific learning situations. For example, expectancy-value theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), attribution theory (Weiner, 1992), self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 2001), self-worth theory (Covington, 1992), and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Two prominent motivation constructs of self-determination theory (*ibid*), extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, have initiated abundant research in the cognitive-situated period. *Intrinsic motivation* refers to "*motivation to engage in an activity because that activity is enjoyable and satisfying to do.*" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p.39) Whereas *extrinsic motivation* implies utilitarian motives, a means to an end or the avoidance of negative consequence (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Self-determination theory portrays extrinsic and intrinsic motivation lying along a continuum where through the process of self-regulation, extrinsic contingencies are progressively transformed into intrinsic

motivation (Noels, Pelletier, Clément & Vallerand, 2003). It is also believed that social environments such as the language classrooms can facilitate intrinsic motivation of learners (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Learners who are more intrinsically motivated, are likely to continue studying a foreign language (Ramage, 1990). Relatedness of intrinsic motivation is found to be most consistent predictor of a self-determined orientation. That means, a sense of welcome from the target language community is essential for internalising the language into the self and making this possibility a reality (Comanaru and Noels, 2009). Building on the socio-psychological period, extrinsic motivation appears to be closely linked to instrumental orientation as conceptualised by Gardner. Yet, a correlation between integrativeness and *intrinsic motivation* has never been convincingly established.

Another progressive L2 motivation theory in this period is the self-efficacy theory. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as “*people’s judgments of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances*” (p. 391), and this plays a determining role on how challenges and goals in a specific task are approached (Pajares, 2008). In other words, self-efficacy is the belief that we hold about our capability to accomplish specific tasks in particular situations. Self-efficacy is an essential component of motivation, as ‘the belief’ of the learner determines the levels of persistence the learners can show (Macaro, Graham & Woore, 2016). Empirical evidence suggests that self-efficacy beliefs may be responsive to changes in the instructional context, which in turn seems to imply that instructional interventions designed to raise self-efficacy might be effective in the motivation to achieve (Zimmerman, 2000; Schunk & Pajares, 2002). There are three factors hypothesised to affect students’ level of self-efficacy at the outset of a given activity:

- Prior experiences (e.g. similar tasks or through observation of other people modeling the new task);
- Personal qualities (e.g. abilities, aptitudes);
- Social support, which is the extent of significant others encouraging the students to learn, facilitating their access to educational resources, and teaching them self-regulatory strategies (e.g. goal-setting, self-evaluation and the use of learning strategies). For instance, parents’ academic aspirations for their children were found to influence the children’s self-efficacy and affect the children’s academic achievements (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, 1996).

It is suggested that when students are engaging with the task, personal factors (e.g. information processing) and situational factors (e.g. teacher's feedback) provide them with indications about their performance and skills. If their evaluation is positive, their motivation and self-efficacy are enhanced. Yet, a negative evaluation may still not necessarily lead to the loss of self-efficacy or demotivation if the students believe that putting in more effort or using different strategies will lead to better performance (Schunk & Pajares, 2002).

Another motivation theory developed during the 1990s, and relevant to the present study, is language learning strategies. Learning strategies are the actions that learners take in order to decode, process, store and retrieve language. They are also the decisions they make to allow the learning process to become easier, faster and more enjoyable (Oxford, 1990). Research of learning strategies assumes that there is an inter-relationship between motivation and the learning strategies. It is suggested that deploying effective language learning strategies lead to high levels of motivation and language learning success. Thus, learners continue on with their language learning journey. On the contrary, it is believed that learner strategy training can 'cure' the reluctant learners (Macaro, Graham & Woore, 2016). This means that a demotivated learner can get back on course on to being motivated by being taught how to use strategies more effectively, leading to the mastery of the language as well as greater success in learning than before.

The cognitive-situated period in the 1990s focused on the motivation of learners in specific situations, which Crookes and Schmidt (1991) sought to expand 'the motivation research agenda'. Researchers also started to recognise that motivation was not only a static product but a dynamic process fluctuating over time. This has led to the process-oriented period in the next subsection.

### 2.1.3 Process-oriented period

In the process-oriented period, various motivation theories have focused on describing the temporal organisation of motivation and attempted to capture the motivational processes as they happen in time. William and Burden (1997), Ushioda (1998), Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) developed various motivation models that presented the motivation of learners regarding in successive stages and highlighted the dynamic nature of motivation.

Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) developed a process model that attempted to integrate the temporal dimension into the theorisation of L2 motivation. It emphasised the complexity and ever-changing development of learners' motivation. The essential tenet of the model is that the intensity of the motivation of an individual rises and falls over time, and the model represented these changes by separating the process into several discrete temporal segments and organising them in a progression cycle. There are three distinct phases: the pre-actional phase, the actional phase, and the post-actional phase. However, not much empirical research has been done to justify the model. It is mainly because the model suggested the motives of learning in language classrooms example? rather than practices that can be directly implemented in daily teaching. This has raised an increasing desire among motivation scholars not only to use theory to inform practice, but to derive theory from practice.

Ushioda (2016), among others, argued that alongside the development of the process-oriented perspectives on L2 motivation, qualitative research approaches needed to be given more importance, as quantitative methods were not suited for the exploration and representation of the dynamic nature of motivational processes. Ushioda (2009) constructed a theoretical framework for the study of motivation around the notion of 'inter-individual' as well as 'intra-individual' variations of motivation over time. According to Ushioda's framework, to sustain the motivation of a learner, there are two possible dimensions, namely positive (past) learning experiences and future goals. She argued that the sustained motivation a learner experience were subject to different degrees of influence from these two dimensions, which varies from individual to individual and crucially within an individual at various stages of the learning experience. This shifted the notion of motivation research from traditional variable-centred approaches towards a more person-centered analysis, integrating both personal and contextual factors (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009), thereby allowing for a more dynamic and situated approach to the study of motivation.

Furthermore, L2 motivation research lacks experience-based insight from teachers and real classroom settings (Ushioda, 2008). Dörnyei and Csizer (1998) interviewed 200 practising teachers in Hungary. The research aimed to investigate what teachers considered as the most important teaching strategies that had built up and maintained motivation, and how often teachers employed each strategy in their classes. Self-report questionnaires were used in the research. The results were then suggested as the 'Ten Commandments', which are the macro strategies for motivating language learners. The

importance of this research is that it provides insights for researchers to carry out further research that is engaged in real and practical education-related tasks, such as designing learning environments, curricula, and schemes for the assessment of learning. However, the Ten Commandments developed in the research only presented motivation as a static product. Thus, Dörnyei (2001) based on the Ten Commandments and Process-model theory developed a four-stage motivational strategies model which suggested 35 language classroom teaching macro strategies. The development of this model aimed to demonstrate the implications that were directly relevant to classroom practice and could develop and support students' motivation. This model will also be adopted as the main theoretical framework of the present study and will be explained in detail in section 2.2.

#### 2.1.4 L2 Motivational Self System

The most recent motivation research has been outlined by Dörnyei (2009), proposing a new conception of motivation, the L2 Motivational Self System. The L2 Motivational Self System consists of three dimensions:

- The Ideal L2 Self, that is, the L2-speaking person we would like to become, which acts as a motivating factor because we desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal self;
- The Ought-to L2 Self, that is, an L2 – knowing the person we feel we ought to become in order to avoid possible negative outcomes;
- The L2 Learning Experience, which concerns situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (Dörnyei, 2009, p.29).

The L2 Motivational Self System aimed to increase the understanding of individual variation in L2 learning. Both the *Ideal* and *Ought-to L2 Selves* concern future motivational perspectives, whereas the L2 Learning Experience concerns the past and present of L2 learning and L2-related experiences. Although in the last decade, more than 70% of research in motivation has been focused on the L2 Motivational Self System (Boo, Dörnyei, & Ryan, 2015), the present study primarily concerns on the pedagogy that could enhance and sustain the motivation of learners, rather than merely focus on learners' motivation. Thus, the Motivational Strategy Framework developed by Dörnyei was adopted as the theoretical framework of the study, in order

to investigate the motivational strategies implemented by Mandarin teachers in their classrooms and how they apply to the distinctive aspect of Mandarin learning.

In the past few decades, the motivation theories have been developed from a macro toward a micro perspective. The focus was moved from analysing the whole relationship between L2 community and learners, for example, the socio-educational model, to looking at particular language classes, within these classes, specific individual language learners and teachers' practice, such as self-determination theory and motivational strategies model. After that, the scholars attempted to identify the contextual factors perceived to be in dynamic interplay with motivation. Motivation research has focused on the process and experience over time, instead of the measurable causes or learning outcomes. Therefore, relevant research became more complex and intended to describe motivation in a more precise way. In the last decade, Dörnyei has been the main scholar in L2 motivation research, and the most recent theories proposed by him, including complex dynamic system theory and directed motivation current, were aligned to the change of this motivation research trend. Motivation research designs are now focused on a particular moment of the language classrooms, taking snapshots of learners' motivation to contribute to portray a fuller picture of the whole language learning process.

To continue this historical development of motivation theories, taking into account both teachers and learners, the present study references from the well-developed motivation theories in the last few decades, and attempts to investigate teachers' practice at the particular level of pupils (i.e. GCSE) in the context of England.

## 2.2 Motivational Strategies

This section attempts to present empirical studies in the application of motivation theories in language classrooms, and relevant findings of effective motivational strategies. Moreover, it also explains how the present study draws from the previous studies in terms of literature and methodology to justify the adoption of the theoretical framework in this study.

### 2.2.1 Motivational practices

De Cecco and Crawford (1974) frames the motivational functions of a teacher by categorising the classroom practices into four groups, which are arousal, expectancy,

incentive and disciplinary. The functions present an inextricable link between the appropriate learning atmosphere and classroom management. It is suggested that a motivational environment is necessary to initiate students' motivation (Dörnyei, 2001) but the exact happenings in a classroom are not specified. In other words, how a teacher's teaching is related to students' learning towards motivating their learning requires more clarification.

According to Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), the motivational strategy is defined in two perspectives, *(i) instructional interventions applied by the teacher to elicit and stimulate students' motivation* and *(ii) self-regulating strategies that are used purposefully by individual students to manage the level of their own motivation*. The focus of the former is in teachers' practices with the latter emphasising the autonomy of learners. To further elaborate the concept, instruction intervention refers to all kinds of activities that happened in the language classroom, which are not restricted to learning tasks but also represent the procedures of teaching, interactions between the teacher and the students, and how the teacher engages the students in their learning.

Besides, self-regulating motivational strategies that motivate an individual to learn a target language both inside and outside the classroom can also be a determinant factor towards the success and failure of a language learner (Guilloteaux, 2013). It is suggested that effective implementation of motivational strategies by teachers can promote self-regulating motivational strategies of the learners, yet little attention has been paid to the investigation of the relationship between teachers' practices and students' motivation. Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) combine teachers' and students' perspectives to define motivational strategies, assuming that in the process of language learning, teachers and students rely on each other and recognise the influence of teachers on students' motivation. Furthermore, a teacher is the only agent who permeates almost every issue of students' learning, feeling and experience in foreign language classrooms (Chambers, 1999).

### 2.2.2 Motivational strategies implemented by teachers

Researchers have attempted to identify the perceptions of teachers towards the importance of motivational strategies and the effect of strategies employed in classrooms as a way to enhance the motivation of students. Dörnyei (1994) proposed a hundred motivational strategies for the language classroom, which then initiated a series of studies related to teachers' practice in English as a foreign language (EFL)



context. William and Burden (1997) also suggested the importance of applying a motivation model in classroom practices. They proposed a cognitive approach model that focuses on the interactions between the internal and external factors that influence the decisions made by an individual. For instance, the learners' intrinsic interests (internal) interact with the language learning environment (external) in the forms of classroom behaviour or engagement in tasks. They then suggested twelve ways for language teachers to draw upon the proposed model to direct their classroom practices, for example, recognising the complexity of motivation, enhancing intrinsic motivation, giving informational feedback, involving learners in setting language-learning goals and helping move towards a mastery-oriented style. Nevertheless, the guidelines are only a conceptual reference and include neither teacher nor student behaviours within the classroom. Empirical evidence is also absent to justify its applicability and effectiveness.

Chambers (1999) also suggested ways of motivating reluctant learners using techniques such as providing immediate rewards like 'well-done stickers', improving the teacher-pupil relationship by giving them time and support or offering a variety of tasks and materials. The practices suggested above share the commonality of teaching strategies in general and certain common-sense practices. They can be regarded as basic teaching skills as they are not subject-specific (Macaro, 2003). In addition, the differences in the practices for different levels of students and the teaching of different contents or in different contexts are not addressed. There is very little mention of the relationship between the individual's cultural identity and the culture of the target country. Thus, it is important to view motivational strategies implemented by language teachers as something more than a recommendation of generic skills (Macaro, 2003).

There are a few studies regarding motivational strategies implemented in Mandarin in foreign language classrooms. Cai and Zhu (2012) examined the impact of an online community project on the motivation of students who learned Chinese as a foreign language. The study also investigated students' perceptions of motivating and demotivating features of the project. Guided by L2 motivational self-system framework, the research reported that motivating features mostly focused on the alternative learning resources and tools provided to them through the online learning community. Not only the study confirmed that learners' experience of L2 learning is of a fluid and dynamic nature, but also implied that language teachers can employ a wide range of strategies to stimulate and enhance students' motivation by influencing students' learning experiences. It is also suggested that activities which allow students to receive

feedback from their peers in the same class as well as from other advanced learners beyond the classroom environment enhanced the motivation of students.

Wen (2011) found that the more the students felt that learning Chinese was personally meaningful and fun, the more they engaged in the learning process. For non-native Chinese speakers, even though the task of learning Chinese is indeed demanding, and continuation requires sustained efforts and self-regulatory learning strategies but classrooms where they are provided opportunities to speak Chinese with classmates and have fun in learning sustained their motivation. The element of 'fun' could include challenging tasks under the learners' control or practicing language skills via communicative activities. Thus, the learners would continue their learning because of the positive learning experience and sustained their motivation.

To further understand teachers' perception on the use of motivational strategies as mentioned in section 2.1.3, Dörnyei and Csizer (1998) interviewed 200 practising teachers in Hungary and suggested the 'Ten Commandments' that are the macro strategies for motivating language learners. The Ten Commandments include,

- Setting a personal example with your own behaviour.
- Creating a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.
- Presenting the tasks properly.
- Developing a good relationship with the learners.
- Increasing the learners' linguistic self-confidence.
- Making language classes interesting.
- Promoting learner autonomy.
- Personalising the learning process.
- Increasing the learners' goal-orientedness.
- Familiarising learners with the target language culture.

The report aimed to provide empirical data about the perceptions of language teachers in terms of the effectiveness of motivational strategies. The Ten Commandments then initiated research in different contexts to understand the motivational impacts of language teachers' practices.

A seminal piece of research was conducted by Cheng and Dörnyei (2007), which reported a modified replication of the Dörnyei and Csizer's (1998) study in which 387 Taiwanese teachers of English were interviewed in Taiwan. The primary purpose was

to investigate the transferability of the ten macro strategies across different cultural and ethnolinguistic contexts. The results showed evidence that several principles such as 'displaying motivating teacher behaviour', 'creating a pleasant classroom climate', 'promoting learners' self-confidence' and 'presenting tasks properly' resonated in the context of Hungary. These strategies could be concluded as favourable teaching practices in the two contexts. In contrast, one of the macro strategies 'promoting learner autonomy' was ranked to be the least important (i.e. 10<sup>th</sup> among all the strategies) by Taiwanese teachers whereas it was relatively more important in Hungary. This can be attributed to the influence of contextual beliefs and values. The study provides insights into the discrepancies of teachers' implementation of motivational strategies due to culture. More empirical evidence from other contexts was found to support the claim. The following Table 2 presents six pieces of research that are highly relevant and were conducted in different countries based on the Ten Commandments. They illustrate the commonalities and discrepancies of the implementation of motivational strategies by language teachers in different contexts.

<b>Author(s)</b>	Dörnyei & Csizer	Cheng & Dörnyei	Asante, Al-Mahrooqi & Abrar-ul-Hussan
<b>Year</b>	1998	2007	2012
<b>Country</b>	Hungary	Taiwan	Oman
<b>Level</b>	All levels	All levels	High school to university
<b>Participants</b>	200 teachers	386 teachers	286 teachers
<b>Language</b>	English	English	English
<b>Top 5 Motivational Strategies found to be effective in the context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set a personal example with your own behaviour.</li> <li>- Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.</li> <li>- Present the tasks properly.</li> <li>- Develop a good relationship with the learners.</li> <li>- Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set a personal example with your own behaviour.</li> <li>- Recognise students' effort and celebrate their success.</li> <li>- Promote learners' self-confidence.</li> <li>- Create a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.</li> <li>- Present tasks properly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Show students you care about them.</li> <li>- Provide students with positive feedback.</li> <li>- Show your enthusiasm for teaching.</li> <li>- Encourage students to try harder.</li> <li>- Be yourself in front of students.</li> </ul>

<b>Author(s)</b>	Wong & Wong	Esen Sucuoglu	Tavakoli, Yaghoubinejad, & Zarrinabadi
<b>Year</b>	2017	2017	2018
<b>Country</b>	Hong Kong	Cyprus	Iran
<b>Level</b>	Secondary School	Secondary schools	All levels
<b>Participants</b>	50 teachers, 150 students	96 teachers	185 teachers
<b>Language</b>	English	English	English
<b>Top 5 Motivational Strategies found to be effective in the context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Familiarising learners with L2-related values.</li> <li>- Proper teacher behaviour.</li> <li>- Recognising students' effort.</li> <li>- Promoting learners' self-confidence.</li> <li>- Making learning tasks stimulating.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I help learners accept the fact that they will make mistakes.</li> <li>- I indicate to my students that I believe in their effort to learn and their capability to complete the tasks.</li> <li>- I raise my students' awareness of the importance of self-motivation.</li> <li>- I monitor student progress.</li> <li>- I focus on the motivational flow and not just the information flow in your class.</li> <li>- I encourage students to adopt, develop and apply self-motivating strategies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set a personal example with your own behaviour.</li> <li>- Promote learners' self-confidence.</li> <li>- Recognise students' effort and celebrate their success.</li> <li>- Present tasks properly.</li> <li>- Create a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.</li> </ul>

*Table 2 Summary of Motivational Strategies in different countries and contexts*

In addition, the cross-cultural awareness of teachers when employing motivational practices is seen as an important issue. Ruesch, Bown and Dewey (2012) asserted that if students were taught by non-native teachers who are less familiar with ways of motivating students about the culture they are teaching in, motivation in the classroom can decrease because of these cross-cultural differences. However, native-speaker teachers, especially those without language teaching training might not have high cultural awareness. On the contrary, non-native speaker teachers who are greatly attracted by the language may have more awareness of teaching cultural content. Further investigation of the cross-cultural awareness of both native and non-native teachers as well as the Chinese Mandarin curriculum in England might provide insights into the motivational strategies used by the teachers. In addition, in the case of Mandarin, the long history and richness of Chinese culture captivate and attracts the interest of pupils. To effectively teach an Eastern language (e.g. Mandarin) in the Western context (e.g. England), it is crucial to prepare both the teachers and students for cross-cultural differences. Hence, the motivational challenges in language classrooms could be reduced (Ruesch, Bown & Dewey, 2012).

Furthermore, Xiang (2018) explored the construction of the professional identity of seven Hanban teachers in the UK, who had teaching experiences in China but were new to the British school context and worked as teaching assistants. The study found that the UK school contexts in terms of language learning environment, education system, academic and linguistic needs of learners were different from that in China even though the target language being taught was the same. The transition process of the professional identity of the teachers as well as pedagogical knowledge revealed the cross-cultural factors in different teaching contexts.

As mentioned before in section 2.1.3 during the Process-oriented period, researchers developed various models and attempted to describe the ever-changing motivation of learners in successive stages. The Ten Commandments identified motivational strategies that can be implemented in language classrooms but did not present the multidimensional and dynamic nature of classroom teaching. Thus, Dörnyei (2001) developed the Motivational Strategies Framework which consisted of four phases namely i) Creating the basic motivational conditions, ii) Generating initial motivation, iii) Maintaining and protecting motivation and iv) Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation, by way of suggesting 35 motivational practices in language classrooms for teachers to apply (See Figure 7).

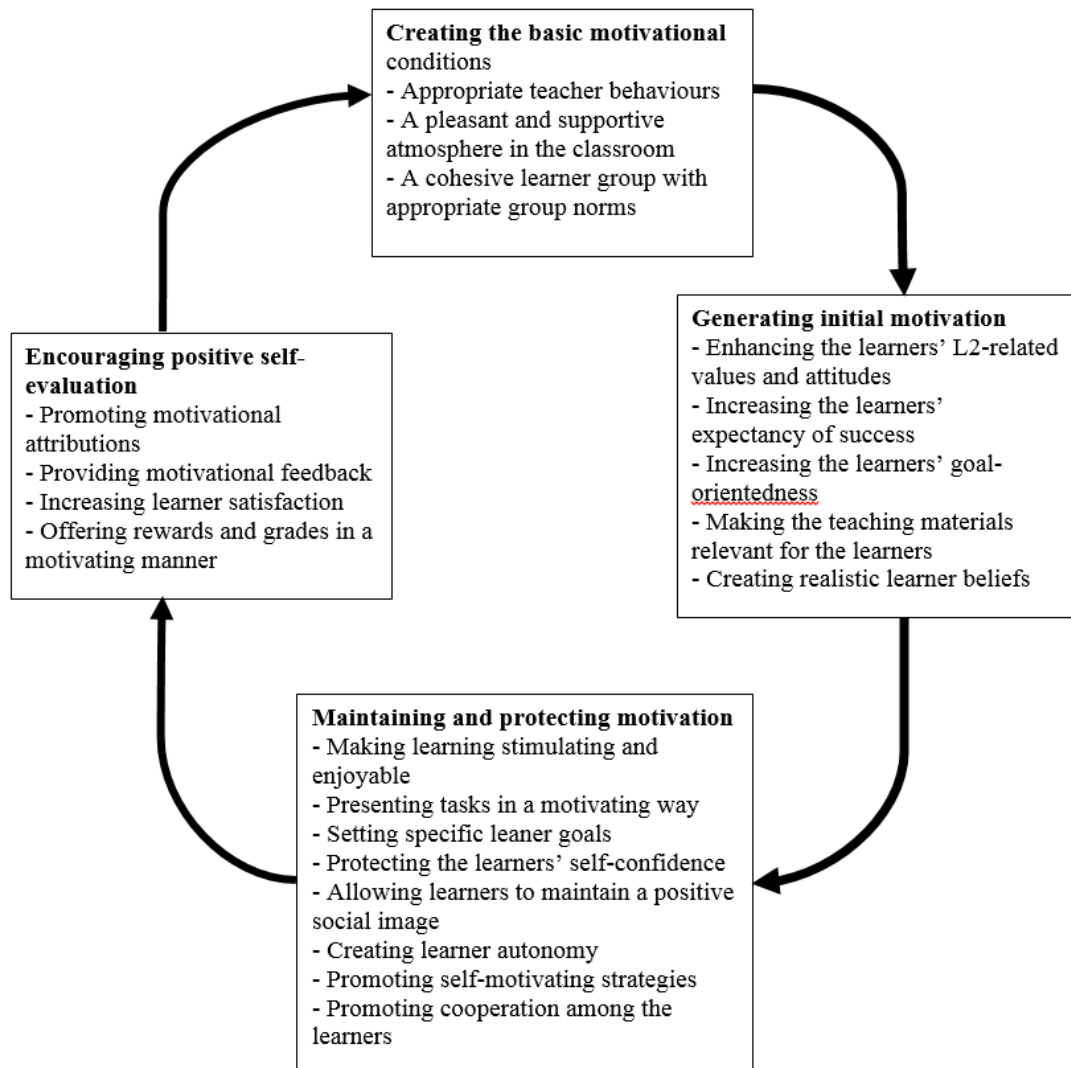


Figure 7 Motivational Strategies Framework (Dörnyei, 2001, p.29)

The first phase includes three sub-conditions, which are appropriate teacher behaviours, a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom, and a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms. It aims to set up a backdrop and conditions for learners to start the language learning process. This phase is followed by generating initial motivation. This phase includes four sub-conditions, which are enhancing the learners' L2 related values and attitudes, increasing the learners' expectancy of success, increasing the learners' goal-orientedness, making the teaching materials relevant for the learners, and contributing to learner beliefs.

The third phase is generally regarded as the most crucial phase as it is the execution of motivational strategies by teachers and includes different ways of doing so - ranging from the manner we present the administration of the tasks, to teaching the learners

how to motivate themselves. During the commencement of the first two phases, a set of new motivational influences, including positive and negative come into force. Dörnyei (2001) asserts that unless motivation is actively maintained and protected during this phase, as the natural tendency of an individual to get tired or bored of the activity, to lose sight of the goals set, or to be distracted from the task will lead to the petering of the initial motivation that has been generated. This phase thereby aims to focus on particular activities in a language classroom and what is happening in the classroom to nurture the motivation of learners actively. The last phase is 'encouraging positive self-evaluation', which focuses on the appraisal and reaction of learners' performance. Learners' experiences in language learning are closely tied to the future, and teachers' practices can promote rather than hinder learners' future efforts. It aims to provide macro-strategies that teachers can help learners to consider their achievement in a more positive light.

The importance of this model is that it provides teachers with practical, systematic and flexible references on how to motivate learners at different stages, levels or contexts. It also raises the concern of the linkage between motivation theories to pedagogy. The comprehensiveness of the model is recognised and will be adopted as the foundation of the present study. The motivational strategies model addresses not only the temporal organisation of language classrooms but also the ever-changing nature of pupils' motivation. However, "*a fraction of the long list of strategies*" is suggested for application in particular classrooms, and "*what we need is quality rather than quantity*" (Dörnyei, 2001, p.136). In particular, in the context of the GCSE level, which heavily focuses on examination success as well as the instrumental view of language learning in England being a worthwhile investigation of the motivational strategies implemented by the Mandarin teachers. Instead of focusing on all phases, the present research aims to investigate a particular motivational phase of the model and give an in-depth exploration of teachers' motivational strategies in the third phase *Maintaining and protecting motivation*.

Since there is a concern on the high opt-out rate of Mandarin learners, how to sustain the motivation of learners to go beyond beginner level is one of the focuses of the study. It is assumed that teachers' practice in GCSE language classrooms is concentrated in the third phase, such as *Creating learner autonomy*. Focusing on one of the phases does not imply the absence of motivational strategies from the other phases in the classrooms. In other words, motivational strategies in the first two



phases such as providing a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom and making the teaching materials relevant for the learners are expected to be found in this study but are not the main objective of the investigation.

Furthermore, language learning situations vary in many aspects. It is suggested that the motivational strategies in Dörnyei's model are reliable, but they are not definite golden rules. Differences amongst learners in their proficiency level, age, culture and attitudes towards the target language may promote or reduce the effectiveness of some strategies. Larsen-Freeman (2000) suggests that teaching methods should not be understood as prescriptions for classroom behaviour and also shouldn't be imposed on teachers as a strict set of procedures to follow. Instead, they should be used to help expand a teacher's repertoire of techniques and provide an avenue for professional growth. Moreover, if teachers are taught about different methods in ways that encourage them to reflect critically on their use and the underlying principles of learning and teaching associated with them, this should enable teachers to make their own choices as to what to do in their classrooms. On the other hand, the broader prescriptive of culture in education in England might alter the teaching methodology of teachers in the classrooms (see section 2.4 of this chapter).

Although the Motivational Strategies Framework guides the examination of the motivational practices implemented by the Mandarin teachers in this study, it does not suggest that these strategies should be used in Mandarin classrooms. Thus, this study aims to explore how teachers are *Maintaining and Protecting the Motivation* of pupils at GCSE level in learning Mandarin. The study not only sheds light on Mandarin learning as a foreign language, but it also provides a significant reference to the teaching practices of Mandarin in England, particularly to intermediate level learners.

### 2.2.3 Empirical research of Motivational Strategies Framework

Based on the motivational strategies model developed by Dörnyei in 2001, Guilloteaux and Dörnyei conducted (2008) an observational study in 40 classrooms which involved 27 English teachers and more than 1,300 students in South Korea and developed an instrument Motivation Orientation of Language Teaching (MOLT) observation scheme. Students' motivated behaviours were categorised into three areas — attention, participation, and volunteering. The assumption was that when at least two-thirds of students were looking at the teacher, following his/her movement, or not displaying any inattentive or disruptive behaviour, the students were attentive in the learning task of

the lesson. Thus, the motivational strategies implemented by the teacher can be regarded as a form of stimulation towards students' motivated behaviour. The study found a significant correlation between teachers' motivational strategies and students' motivated behaviour in a foreign language context and is demonstrating how the teachers can foster motivation in the classrooms. The research has been replicated in other settings to enrich empirical evidence on the motivational strategies (Ellis, 2009).

Papi and Abdollahzadeh (2012) investigated 741 students from 26 secondary schools taught by 17 teachers in Iran based on Guilloteaux and Dörnyei's study. The study confirmed the correlation between teachers' practice and students' motivation, while there was no correlation found between the motivated behaviours of students in the classroom to their L2 selves. Such findings attest to Dörnyei's (2001) idea that an imaginary picture of one's desired L2 self cannot result in actual motivated behaviour unless conditions are satisfied and decisive steps are taken to facilitate the realisation of ideal L2 selves.

These two studies used the frequency of the motivational strategies implemented by teachers to determine whether it resulted in motivated behaviours. The motivated behaviours of students were then evaluated by the number of students engaged in the learning activities. Thus, it was used to determine the effectiveness of teachers' practice (Sugita and Takeuchi, 2014). However, it may be argued that the frequency in the usage of motivational strategies does not translate into the impact of students' motivation. Also, these studies are limited by the fact that they come primarily from cross-sectional studies which means that the data was collected at only one point in time. Therefore, some longitudinal research in motivational strategies were conducted in an attempt to understand the change in pupils' motivation.

Moskovsky, Alrabai, Paolini, and Ratcheva (2013) investigated the pattern of students' motivation throughout certain periods and attempted to generalise the correlation between teachers' motivational strategies and students' motivation. They conducted a quasi-experimental design, which focused on assessing the effects of motivational strategies used by Saudi English teachers in an eight-week course. 14 teachers and 296 Saudi EFL learners from high school to university level participated in the study. The experimental treatment involved class-time exposure to ten preselected motivational strategies based on Dörnyei and Csizer's Ten Commandments, while the control group received traditional teaching methods. Self-report questionnaires

examined students' language learning motivation and compared week one to week eight. The main finding of the study was that students' motivation increased, particularly in the following constructs - motivational intensity, intrinsic motivation and integrative motivation. Appropriate interventions by the teacher designed to stimulate motivation would lead to positive changes in trait motivation, which had more prolonged effects (Guilloteaux, 2013). Additionally, language anxiety was diminished in the experimental group. The significant differences between these variables attribute to the experimental treatment employed in the groups. On the other hand, the results do not imply that the teachers in the controlled group did not implement motivational strategies in the classroom; instead, the occurrence and use of strategies were spontaneous and random.

Deniz (2010) evaluated the effectiveness and frequency of motivational strategies from the perspective of students. The results showed that some strategies were regarded as important by the students but were not used as frequently as the students expected, such as 'Break the routine by developing realistic beliefs about English' and 'Present various auditory and visual teaching aids'. This revealed that there were either alignments or misalignments between different parties' perceptions of motivational strategies. In other words, what the students found motivating might not be the same as the practices used by the teachers. There were other studies (e.g. Sugita & Takeuchi, 2014; Wong, 2014) in recent years, which involved both students' evaluation and teachers' use of motivational strategies, to give a more complete picture of the effectiveness of motivational strategies used by teachers. Sugita and Takeuchi (2014) presented a longitudinal study, which involved one instructor and 222 full-time undergraduate EFL students from five language classes. The participants filled in four self-report questionnaires throughout the semester, and the teacher's frequency of motivational strategies were assessed. Instead of implementing a theoretical perspective, the study selected from a pilot of studied 17 motivational strategies, such as 'Start the class exactly on time', 'Provide individual support for each student' and 'Speak in English with proper pronunciation'. The students regarded these practices motivating; yet, the study also found that none of the motivational strategies suggested showed a significant correlation to students' motivation.

Previous research in Motivational Strategies proved that the effectiveness of motivational strategies was cultural and contextual dependent (e.g. Asante, Al-Mahrooqi & Abrar-ul-Hassan, 2012; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Moskovsky et al., 2013;

Papi & Abdollahzadeh, 2012; Sugita & Takeuchi, 2014; Wong, 2014). This shows there are many reasons behind the implementation of motivational strategies by teachers, for instance, language policies at the school or governmental level, curriculum and assessment design, teacher training, etc. Wong (2014) pointed out that there were no motivational strategies that were viewed to be effective across different contexts, even though the language taught was the same - English as a foreign language. It is therefore impossible for a specific motivational strategy to always motivate every student in any situation, as different variables are involved, including culture, teacher and students' relationship, teaching and learning styles, or the composition of classes (Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007). Thus, the exploration of motivational strategies implemented by teachers takes into account the contextual factors (i.e. in the case of this study is the GCSE MFL in England).

Dörnyei (2001) asserted that the Motivational Strategies Framework has contributed to the application of motivation theory into practice, focusing on the pedagogy in language classrooms rather than the motivation of learners. The previous research aimed to answer two questions: What are the motivational strategies implemented by teachers in the language classrooms? How do these motivational strategies have an impact on learners' motivation? One of the most significant findings was that teachers' motivational strategies were correlated to learners' motivation, and teachers' instructions can promote their motivation. Instead of using a self-report questionnaire to identify the motivational strategies implemented by teachers, recent research attempted to investigate the teachers' instructions, design of classroom activities or other relevant elements in a classroom that can promote learners' motivation. In language classroom contexts, it is typically a series of nuances that might eventually culminate a long-lasting effect (Dörnyei, 2001). In other words, motivating classroom activities are not dramatic motivational events that reshape the students' mindsets from one moment to another. Thus, to explore the motivational strategies implemented by teachers, the present study used a qualitative approach, including teachers' interviews and lesson observations to illustrate the teachers' practices and the responses of the students.

It must be emphasised that most of the empirical research was conducted in learning English as a foreign language context, and none of them was conducted in England or contexts of learning other languages. Investigating the applicability of the model in Mandarin learning classrooms not only examines the contextual bias of the model but

also sheds light on effective practices in Mandarin classrooms. Additionally, the participants in previous research were mainly university students rather than secondary school teenagers, regarded as the most age-appropriate for foreign language learning. To fill the research gaps, this study focuses on foreign language learners other than English (i.e. Mandarin), who are studying in secondary schools at GCSE level (i.e. Year 10 and Year 11) and are supposed to have intermediate proficiency of the language.

## 2.3 MFL Teaching in England

This section aims to review the teaching methodologies suggested for MFL in the last few decades, along with empirical studies so as to portray the emerging MFL motivation picture in England and set the rationale of the present study.

### 2.3.1 Modern Foreign Languages in National Curriculum

This research project was undertaken in the context of MFL in England, it is important to examine how the National Curriculum Programmes of Study (NCPoS) has suggested in terms of teaching methodologies of MFL teaching, as well as how the NCPoS has been changed throughout the years. In addition, the methodology adopted in KS3 is also influenced by the requirement of GCSE. The NCPoS aimed to provide a guiding reference to schools and language teachers on the purpose and objectives of the subject, as well as the attainment level of the students. The first National Curriculum was introduced in 1991 by the government according to the Education Act in 1988. Since 1991, the NCPoS has been revised four times, in 1995, 1999, 2007 and 2013. In 1991 and 1995, the NCPoS stated the theme as *Learning and using the target language*, which is aligned with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): the exclusive use of target language, the use of target language to communicate, and the promotion of pair/group work. CLT was then recommended to be the suggested teaching methodology in MFL in England. Yet, due to the changes of the NCPoS throughout the years, the teaching methodology of MFL classrooms might have undergone changes and as a result, CLT has been redefined in response to the NCPoS. In Appendix 1, it compares the content of the NCPoS of the five versions and presents how the notion of CLT has been changed accordingly. There are three main changes of the NCPoS throughout the years which explains the relevance to this research project.

### i) Decentralisation of the MFL policy

The NCPoS has been criticised for being prescriptive and has restricted the autonomy of teachers (Mitchell, 2003), this can be traced back to the first NCPoS in 1991 (See Table 3). The NCPoS in 1991 consists of two parts. The theme of part I is *Learning and Using the Target Language*, which states six sub-themes of language learning, such as communicating in the target language and developing cultural awareness. Part II is *Area of Experience*, which presents seven areas of MFL lesson topics such as *Everyday Activities*, and *Personal and Social Life*. The document details the objectives of the subjects in different skills and the classroom practices that teachers can implement.

	1991	1995
<b>Main theme</b>	<b>Learning and using the target language</b>	<b>Learning and Using the Target Language</b>
Sub-themes	1. Communicating in the target language (i.e. speaking and writing) 2 Understanding and responding (i.e. listening and reading) 3. Developing language learning skills and awareness of language 4. Developing cultural awareness 5. Developing the ability to work with others 6. Developing the ability to learn independently	1. Communicating in the target language 2. Language skills 3. Language-learning skills and knowledge of language 4. Cultural awareness
Teaching Content	Area of experience i) Everyday Activities* ii) Personal and Social Life iii) The World Around Us iv) The World of Education, Training and Work v) The World of Communication vi) The International World	Area of experience i) Everyday activities ii) Personal and social life iii) The world around us iv) The world of work v) The international world

vii) The World of Imagination and Creativity

i) Everyday Activities*	i) Everyday activities
- home life	- the language of the classroom
- daily routines	- home life and school
- shopping	- food, health and fitness
- food and drink	
- going out	
- leisure activities and sports	
- youth culture	
- school life	
- school holidays	

Table 3 Comparing the NCPoS in 1990 and 1995

The NCPoS in 1995 followed a similar structure to the previous one, with a reduced content as it was criticised with far too much content for limited lesson time (Mitchell, 2003). The NCPoS in 1990 and 1995 were comparatively comprehensive and exhaustive, providing teachers with the themes that can be taught in MFL lessons. However, the NCPoS in 1999 was abridged into two pages, neither suggesting the attainment level of students nor teaching content.

In 2007 NCPoS, the document yet again detailed how MFL was suggested to be taught in schools. For instance, the *key concepts* explained the terminology involved, the *key processes* elaborated the language learning process to help learners make progress. In addition, the *curriculum opportunities* stated the suggested teaching methodology. It is important to note that in the most recent NCPoS in 2013, there was a tendency of decentralisation of MFL policy which represents a substantial contrast from earlier iterations (Parrish and Lanvers, 2019). The two-page document presented two themes *i) Grammar and vocabulary* and *ii) Linguistic competence*, which briefly described some guidelines according to the two themes. Most importantly, there weren't any levels of attainment involved nor suggested content. In other words, teachers got to decide what to teach, how to teach, and what were the proficiency levels of the students.

## **ii) Re-interpretation of CLT**

In the NCPoS in 1991 and 1995, there was a dominance of communicative competence of learners and a promotion of exclusive use of the target language in MFL. For instance, in NCPoS in 1991, one of the objectives is “*the development of pupils’ ability to communicate in writing*”). In NCPoS in 1995, the first part of the document is about “*Learning and using the target language*”. Thus, it builds up the consent that CLT is the proposed teaching methodology of MFL teaching in England. Yet, in 1999, the NCPoS clearly encouraged optimizing learners’ involvement in meaningful target language use. On the other hand, it also referred to the need for metalinguistic understanding and explicit grammar study (Mitchell, 2003). This initiated the discussion on the balance between the extent to use the target language and teaching grammar explicitly. This dilemma still remains unresolved in the UK (Norman, 1998; Pachler, Barnes & Field, 2009). Macaro (2008) addressed that the exclusive use of target language has made MFL teachers feel ‘guilty’. These language teachers found it almost impossible to ensure that the level of the target language input could be understandable by all students.

The NCPoS in 2013 focused on explicit grammar teaching, with one of its only two themes as *Grammar and vocabulary*. The document has no mention of ‘use of target language’. Another theme is *Linguistic competence*, focusing much on accuracy of language. For instance, “*transcribe words and short sentences that they hear with increasing accuracy*”, “*express and develop ideas clearly and with increasing accuracy, both orally and in writing*” (DfE, 2013). There was a clear shift from the communicative approach to emphasizing grammar learning. Cooke (2014) interviewed seven MFL teachers and reported that the communicative approach was adopted in a superficial way among the MFL teachers. Their practices are mostly ‘weak communicative practice’. Therefore, the implementation of CLT by Mandarin teachers in their classroom practices was under the effect of NCPoS 2013.

## **iii) The degradation of culture**

The importance of learning a language is that it provides opportunities to access the culture of the target language community (Lawes, 2000a). Developing cultural awareness of learners was one of the key themes in the NCPoS since 1990. The focuses were mainly the use of authentic materials, and to compare and contrast the students’ own countries with the target language communities. It is noticeable that in



NCPoS 2007, it suggested that the understanding of cultural *diversity* and developing an *international outlook* (DCSF, 2007) would attribute significantly to language learning. However, the space to describe the development of cultural awareness of students has gradually decreased. In the NCPoS in 2013, culture is no longer one of the subthemes, and it is merely mentioned in the subtheme *linguistic competence*, states “*Read literary texts in the language to stimulate ideas, develop creative expression and expand understanding of the language and culture*”. Marginalising the importance of culture in NCPoS is opposing one of the significant benefits in foreign language learning. Thus, it is worth exploring how teachers translated this into their classroom practices.

To sum up, the National Curriculum Programmes of Study (NCPoS) determines the content of what will be taught and sets attainment targets for learning. Yet, in the NCPoS in 2013, the absence of prescribed teaching content of MFL from the government could not provide as much guidance as compared to that in the 1990s. It can be argued that schools and teachers have the autonomy to make decisions on the classroom teaching methodology, and the freedom to determine the students’ language attainment level. Since the 2000s, the re-emphasis on grammar and the accuracy of MFL has shifted away from the implicit grammar teaching of CLT. The debate on “whether grammar should be taught explicitly” still remains unanswered. As Littlewood (2014) stated,

*“CLT now serves not so much as a label for a specific approach but as an umbrella term to describe all approaches that aim to develop communicative competence in personally meaningful way” (p.349).*

It is important to note that the orientation of National Curriculum in European languages has had an important influence on Mandarin Chinese. Therefore, how Mandarin teachers practise in response to the NCPoS, in particular, how CLT is translated in their classrooms is of paramount importance. In addition, the notion that culture is a significant component of language learning is not being mentioned in the NCPoS 2013, and has shown a decrease in attention paid in terms of developing cultural awareness of learners. It is under such context that this research project is conducted to investigate the classroom teaching of MFL, specifically on Mandarin Chinese, an under-researched but gradually expanding foreign language in the UK.

### 2.3.2 MFL Teaching methodologies

From the perspective of classroom teaching, this section introduces three main approaches employed in the teaching of MFL, including Grammar Translation, the Audio-lingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Additionally, the ambiguity of recommending CLT as the suggested teaching methodology has defined the current MFL teaching as the so called '*Post-Communicative Language Teaching*'. This is further explained in details at the end of the section.

#### 2.3.2.1 Grammar Translation

Grammar Translation has dominated foreign language teaching in England from the 1840s to the 1940s. It approached the language through detailed analysis and memorisation of its grammar rules and extensive lists of vocabulary, followed by their applications in tasks including translating sentences and texts in and out from the target language (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). In addition, the learning of grammar is deductive (Gollin, 1998), students are taught the rules first followed by application in very structured written activities, in which high levels of accuracy is expected (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004; Meiring & Norman, 2001). The major focuses of Grammar Translation are reading and writing skills, whereas little to none systematic attention is paid to speaking or listening (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Thus, much of the lesson is dedicated to memorising vocabulary, reading, and the translation of foreign language texts (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). Most importantly, "*The first language is maintained as the reference system in the acquisition of the second language*", with much of the teaching delivered in the students' native language (Stern, 1983, p.455). Grammar Translation assumes that students acquire one grammatical item at a time and are able to demonstrate the mastery of the knowledge before moving on to the next (Nunan, 1998). This premise is controversial as it presents that "*language is learnt in a once-and-for-all linear fashion*" (Klapper, 1997 p.24).

Grammar Translation is a cognitively challenging method (Klapper, 1997). Students' learning experience is a tedious process of memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary (Richards & Rogers, 2001). The attempts to master grammar rules with little attention to apply them purposefully in communication, coupled with controlled classroom activities, might make students struggle to apply them in real-life context (Klapper, 1997). The teaching of MFL was an elite subject in England, with most of the students

possessing high academic abilities. Grammar Translation demands less on the teachers. Yet, in modern secondary schools with a diverse group of students, Grammar Translation was unpopular among school children (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The inadequacy of language skill applications and communication engagement inhibits the promotion of Grammar Translation. As a result, there has been changes in the foreign language teaching methods. The changes reflect the needs and the goal of proficiency improvements for language study, in addition to changes in the nature of language learning theories. However, Grammar Translation is still continued to be widely used in some parts of the world today in modified forms (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

### *2.3.2.2 Audio-lingual Method*

Between the 1950s and 1980s, the Audio-lingual method influenced practices in English schools (Grenfell, 2007). The Audio-lingual Method developed from behaviourist theories of learning was proposed by Skinner (Cooke, 2014). It supported the notion that language is a learned behaviour and is acquired through imitation. The Audio-lingual method is primarily an oral approach to language teaching. The process of teaching involves extensive oral repetition with the focus on immediate and accurate speech, language output is thus a formation of habits (Ellis, 2015; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In addition, the teaching of listening comprehension, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary are all related to the development of oral fluency (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In the Audio-lingual method, the target language is used as the medium of instruction with limited grammatical explanation. Most of the lesson time is dedicated to repetition and drilling of the language, which is proposed to be a teacher-centred method. In the process of language learning, correct pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonations are emphasised (*ibid*). The emphasis on speaking by the Audio-lingual method contributed to the revision of the O level syllabus with an addition of oral examination in the 1960s.

However, the widely used Audio-lingual Method started to decline in the 1980s. One of the characteristics of the Audio-lingual method is drilling - a concept of repeatedly practising isolated structures, which offers no opportunities for learners to practise the target structure in a communicative context (Ellis, 2006). Students did not only often find transferring skills outside classroom difficult, but the experiences of studying through audiolingual procedures are also boring and unsatisfying (Richards & Rodger,

2001). Furthermore, the teaching of grammar is essentially inductive as learners acquire grammatical rules from sentence patterns rather than being taught by teachers explicitly (Brown, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The cognitive perspective advocated by Noam Chomsky argued that the use of language should not be imitated behaviour. It should be created as a new form of underlying knowledge of abstract rules. The role of abstract mental process is learning rather than defining learning simply as habit formation. The decline of the Audio-lingual method with a lack of alternative approach has led to the proposal of various innovative and experimental approaches, such as Total Physical Response, the Silent Way and Whole Language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). These approaches have avoided translation or rote repetition in language learning, which are disparate from the Audio-lingual Method. Nevertheless, the drilling techniques of the Audio-lingual method has many incarnations. This method is based on repetition, substitution and extension – techniques that are still apparent in MFL lessons nowadays (Cooke, 2014).

### *2.3.2.3 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)*

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged at a theoretical level in the 1970s (Brumfit & Johnson, 1979; Swan, 1985; Widdowson, 1978). Spada (2007) states the general consensus definition of CLT:

*“It is a meaning-based, learner-centred approach to L2 teaching where fluency is given priority over accuracy and the emphasis is on the comprehension and production of messages, not the teaching or correction of language form.”*  
(p.272)

In CLT, the conveying of messages is more important than the accuracy of the language. Therefore, the aim of CLT is to develop communicative competence when language is used as a means of communication (Widdowson, 1978). Hymes (1971) defined communicative competence as the notion that knowing a language includes more than the knowledge of the grammatical rules (i.e. linguistic competence) as well as knowledge on the rules of language use (i.e. communicative competence). The introduction of such concepts has broadened the conceptualisations of language at that time which focused strictly on linguistic competence (Spada, 2007). Hymes’ work expanded the foreign language teaching to more than an exclusive focus on the accurate use of grammatical forms. It was evident that knowledge of a language

included knowing how to use forms appropriately in different contexts (Spada, 2007; Ellis & Shintani, 2014).

According to the goal of CLT, Michael Halliday (1975) proposed the theory of the functions of language. It aims to define the communicative competence of learners, and the functions that learners use to converse about personal experiences with the language. The theory distinguished seven basic functions of actual language use including that of communication (cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.160):

- The instrumental function: using language to get things;
- The regulatory function: using language to control the behaviour of others;
- The interactional function: using language to create interaction with others;
- The personal function: using language to express personal feelings and meanings;
- The heuristic function: using language to learn and to discover;
- The imaginative function: using language to create a world of the imagination;
- The representational function: using language to communicate information.

The seven functions of language promote language skills in all types of situations (Nunan, 1991). The theory differs from the previous approaches which have always neglected the application of the target language. To acquire the language and to put it into application, CLT proposed that the acquisition of a language should involve an extensive use of the target language. It is also essential to discuss the underpinning learning theory of CLT as this influences the implementation of CLT in classroom settings.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is rooted from the Natural Approach proposed by Stephen Krashen, which aroused an extensive discussion in second language acquisition in the 1980s. The Natural Approach consists of five hypotheses, including the Acquisition - Learning Distinction, the Natural Order Hypothesis, the Monitor Hypothesis, the Input Hypothesis and the Affective Filter Hypothesis. Among the five hypotheses, the Input Hypothesis attempts to answer the crucial theoretical question about how we acquire language. The central idea of Input Hypothesis is that an individual acquires language via input. It includes what we read and hear, which are the underpinning assumptions of CLT. The claim suggested that language acquisition occurs when the learner moves from stage 'i' to stage 'i+1'. The current level of competence is 'i' and 'i+1', instead of a definite level, it represents the language

condition that is 'a little beyond', and is 'roughly tuned' (Krashen, 1982). The linguistic competence, context, the knowledge of the world, and extra-linguistic information help to understand the 'i+1' language directed to the learner. In addition, the 'i+1' is provided automatically when the communication is successful as well as the input being understood and sufficient.

The key tenet of the Input Hypothesis is the emphasis on optimal input. Four characteristics of optimal input for the acquisition of a language classroom are illustrated. They include comprehensibility, interest and/or relevance, not being grammatically sequenced and the need to be in a sufficient quantity (Krashen, 1982). In MFL classrooms, the language directed to a learner is the major source of input in language learning (Klapper, 2003). However, critiques have been focused on the imprecision and vagueness of the 'current level' and interpretation of 'a little beyond' 'i+1' state (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). The criticism has led to the doubt of the practicality of the theory. Most importantly, Input Hypothesis focused on acquisition of first language when language input is abundant compared to the limited exposure to foreign language in MFL classrooms, where comprehensive input to the learners are not available (Klapper, 2003). Critiques were also focused on how the learner acquired grammar that was explicitly governed by rules, and how the learner was able to realise the forms or structures that were not yet acquired (Smith, 1981). Smith (1981) argues that the acquisition process could be stimulated by both implicit knowledge on the language, the comprehensible input and explicit knowledge as a result of rising consciousness. The vagueness of the Input Hypothesis formula resulted in poor conceptualisation of CLT into classroom practices, and unclear individual interpretations on the approach by language teachers. (Klapper, 2003).

Early in the 1980s, Willam Littlewood, one of the pioneers who conceptualised CLT into classroom practices, proposed two main categories of communicative activities, namely Functional communication activities and Social interaction activities (Littlewood, 1981). Functional communication activities refer to activities which emphasise the functional aspect of communication, in other words, the main purpose is to allow meanings to be conveyed as effectively as possible. The principle underlying functional communication activities is that the teacher structures the situation so that learners have to overcome an information gap or solve a problem (Littlewood, 1981, p.22). Social interaction activities refer to the functional effectiveness of the language as well as the acceptability of the forms that are used (Littlewood, 1981).

One of the features of CLT is the use of task-based learning. Previous studies have shown that students and teachers find completing tasks a motivating and effective method of learning language (Du and Kirkebaek, 2012). Julkunen (2001) further discussed the connection between language learning tasks and motivation and have suggested that some language learning tasks may be used to intensify learners' motivation in language learning. Ellis (2009) states the following criteria to distinguish a teaching activity from 'a task' (p.223),

- The primary focus should be on 'meaning' (by which is meant that learners should be mainly concerned with processing the semantic and pragmatic meaning of utterances).
- There should be some kind of 'gap' (i.e. a need to convey information, to express an opinion or to infer meaning).
- Learners should largely have to rely on their own resources (linguistic and non-linguistic) in order to complete the activity.
- There is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language.

A task is a 'work-plan' and as such, task designers (i.e. language teachers) cannot determine the outcomes of their planned tasks as the expected task outcomes are influenced by other variables during the learning process (Ellis, 2009). In relation to learner motivation, it is suggested that certain learning tasks can be more attractive and motivating than others, such as tasks with an optimal amount of uncertainty and unpredictability or, open tasks (Julkunen, 2001). It is suggested that motivating learners to continue learning the language and encouraging active participation may be more important than developing their linguistic accuracy and fluency in the is context (Ruan, Duan and Du, 2015).

#### *2.3.2.4 Critique of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)*

Communicative Language Teaching has had many different interpretations and implementations since it was introduced. This is due to the fact that different methods overlap in several ways (Krashen & Seliger, 1975; Nunan, 1991; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). More importantly, all such methods have instructional techniques and strategies that differ in their effectiveness according to different contexts and groups of learners (Spada, 2007). For instance, drilling is applied in both the Audio-lingual Method and CLT, which ensures that the learners acquire the vocabulary or grammatical rules.

Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001) argues that the field of L2 teaching has reached a point where the accumulation of theoretical, empirical, and pedagogical knowledge is too sophisticated to be conceptualised in terms of methods. Thus, the concept of CLT is served as a general approach rather than a specific method (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1997).

In CLT classrooms, language learning is a natural process. Teachers provide activities and language samples to help stimulate the acquisition process (Howart, 1984). In other words, CLT advocates the choice of topics and activities that resemble real-life communication. Authentic texts and tasks are used with a focus on the learning process itself (Mitchell, 2000; Nunan, 1999; Wingate, 2018) rather than emphasising grammar learning or application. It is suggested that the participation of the learners in communication activities help them achieve increasing success so as to improve learners' motivation (Littlewood, 1981). Lu and Li (2008) also found that for non-native Chinese students, they are more motivated to learn the language and pay more attention to oral communication skills rather than the literacy skills such as reading and writing.

A number of studies which examined the activities of language classrooms have proved that the implementation of CLT is problematic (Block, 2002; D'Arcy, 2006; Grenfell, 2000; Klapper, 2003; Meiring and Norman, 2001; Pachler, 2000). The studies have found that classroom activities are structured as formulaic tasks in the lessons, and the title of 'communication' was not communicative. Grenfell (2007) commented that it was no less behaviouristic than the repetitive skill practice exercises of the 1960s. Mitchell (2000) explained that the narrow focus on pragmatic communicative goals in MFL leads to insufficient educational challenges in the lesson, causing negative impacts on pupil motivation. The prescribed phrases for narrow communicative situations do not equip pupils to extend the language use outside classrooms. In other words, the pupils were learning a language that cannot be applied in the real world (Wingate, 2018).

D'Arcy (2006) conducted a study of interaction and instruction of French lessons in KS3 and KS4. The study presented the lesson observations on the differences in the interaction versus instruction proportion between three teachers from comprehensive schools. In KS3, the research found that interactions dominated the lessons, whereas in KS4 interaction and instruction have a closer percentage. In addition, a sense of



rush and the lack of time in KS4 changes the affective environment and teachers were less available to respond to the pupils, especially the ones who needed extra support. A significant finding is that the teachers' focus has shifted from the pupils to the examination grades in KS4. The teachers' mentioning of 'examination' and the interaction activities in the classrooms were filled with the examination requirements. D'Arcy suggested that an overall balance of language teaching and coverage of syllabus examination was significant. In other words, the exam-oriented approach in KS4 should not be encouraged.

Wingate (2018) investigated the teaching practices and evaluated the application of CLT in MFL classrooms. Fifteen lessons in German, Spanish and French at KS3 were observed. The classroom activities were analysed on their focus of meaning and the opportunities they allocate for the active use of the target language. It was found that MFL lessons were dominantly teacher-led and the activities were tightly controlled, which entirely focused on linguistic forms and required minimal use or production of the target language by pupils. In addition, the promotion of pair and group work and activities in CLT were purely used for the practice of grammar and vocabulary. The researcher suggested that the desire of MFL teachers to make language learning look easy and fun was worrying as pupils may feel underrated and become increasingly demotivated as they proceed through KS3, realising that they can do no more than reproducing individual words and phrases. The findings revealed the inadequacy of research on teaching practices in language classrooms as well as the pupils' non-positive perceptions towards the activities in the MFL classrooms. Most importantly, the CLT approach was interpreted as pseudo-communicative 'fun' activities, which functioned as a disguise of form-focused exercises. Lastly, the researcher advocated that the goal of MFL teaching could be achieved through activities with 'interactional authenticity' (Andon and Eckerth, 2009), which would offer more intellectual and linguistic challenges to pupils.

The CLT has been 'blamed' for the low motivation MFL learning, which has resulted in the decline of uptake in the GCSE by students (Block, 2002). Ofsted revealed that pupils reached a linguistic plateau quite early in their secondary school stage and could seemingly produce little independent languages by the end of Key Stage 3 (Dobson, 1998). A more recent Ofsted report 'Key Stage 3: the wasted years?' showed significant weaknesses in the teaching of MFL in KS3 compared to other subjects, based on the fact that pupils were not challenged or engaged sufficiently. There was

evidence of effective teaching over time leading to strong levels of achievement. Yet, this was often not the case in MFL, and the pupils found MFL difficult or dull (Ofsted, 2015). Thus, the current research took a pragmatic stance on how teachers motivate students to learn foreign language at GCSE level.

### *2.3.2.5 Cultural Awareness*

The importance of learning a foreign language is that it provides opportunities to access the culture of the target language community (Lawes, 2000b). There are two distinct approaches to the teaching of culture through language. The first approach, high culture, refers to the teaching of the art, literature, history, etc. of the target language culture. It also refers to 'Culture with a capital C'. The second approach refers to a development of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). Within this approach, culture is reconceptualised as a dynamic construct evolving around a shared way of life. It emphasises on attitudes and behaviours, the understanding of which relies on skills development rather than knowledge acquisition. There has been discussion of focuses on the two approaches leading to dichotomy between high culture and ICC. Yet, Hennebry (2014) suggests that a dual approach might go some way to bridging the gap. For ICC, an essential element is the need for critical evaluation of one's own and other cultures. This requires domain knowledge so as to think critically, and could be contributed by high culture as it aimed to build a knowledge base about the target culture. With the knowledge of the target culture, learners are then able to evaluate through the application of the ICC principles.

Coperias Aguilar (2002) suggested that ICC is a step beyond communicative competence. Kramsch (1995) argues that language teachers are becoming dissatisfied with purely functional uses of language. They supplement the acquisition of 'communication skills' with some intellectual legitimate, humanistically oriented, cultural 'content' (1995, p.83). However, one of the problems regarding ICC is about how to acquire it. It is because the required knowledge, attitudes and skills proposed by Byram (1997) are aspects that have to be developed and cultivated, rather than transmitted in the classroom. There is no doubt that a foreign language teacher should make sure that students acquire some amount of cultural awareness and intercultural competence if they want to provide education in its fullest sense (Mughan, 1999). Thus, in order to operationalise ICC, Byram (1997) suggests a model based on five Savors presented in Figure 10. The model offers a foothold for teachers to design pedagogies that equip

language learners to engage in meaningful and productive dialogue, furthering their intercultural understanding.

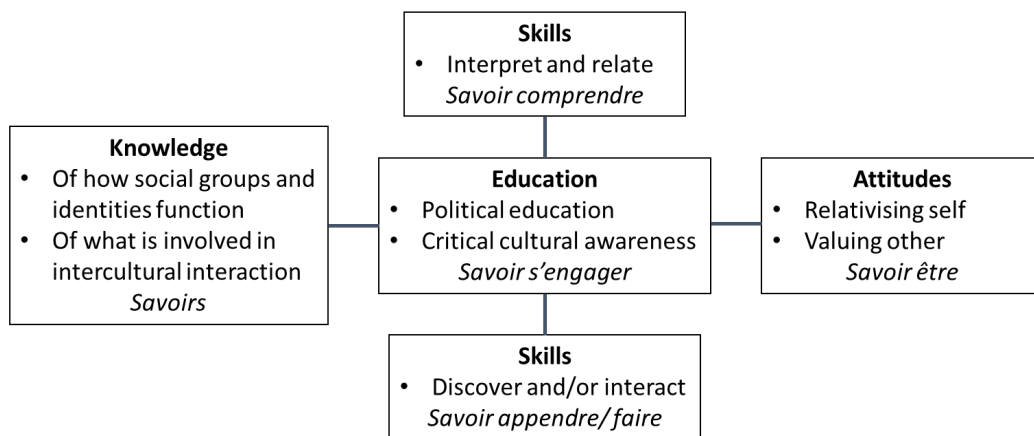


Figure 10 Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence

It can be revealed that the National Curriculum Programme of Study (NCPoS) in 2011 has explicitly adopted some elements of ICC in MFL teaching. It stated that,

*The study of languages should include:*

- *Learning about different countries and cultures;*
- *Comparing pupils' own experiences and perspectives with those of people in countries and communities where the target language is spoken.*

The document further explained the key concepts involved, including 'Intercultural understanding', 'Other cultures', and 'Different ways of seeing the world'. However, the emphasis of culture and language has been degraded in the most recent NCPoS (2013) as explained in 2.3.1.

In England, there are few studies conducted to investigate foreign language teaching and culture. Starkey (2007) reveals that MFL teachers possess a clear commitment to promote the intercultural competence of learners, acknowledging the importance of a bicultural nationalist. In other words, the MFL teachers emphasises on their students' moving away from being monolingual or mono-cultural. However, the study reports that they also encountered difficulties because of xenophobia among their students, compounded with issues of teaching materials. It addresses the additional challenge in the availability of appealing teaching materials that present the target culture as

“exotic”. Thus, such materials reinforce stereotypes and encourage the concepts of otherness and differences.

Hennebry (2014) studied foreign language teachers’ perception of cultural awareness in four countries, namely England, France, Spain and Ireland. It was found that the foreign language teachers in England displayed a range of perspectives on the role of culture. Teachers acknowledged cultural awareness as a means of enhancing language learning motivation. On the other hand, the teachers agreed that culture has a positive impact on students’ learning but it can be optional. Even though the teachers did feel sufficiently equipped to teach in a cultural dimension, they were not allowed with the space and freedom to develop cultural awareness in their teaching. It was mainly because there was limited time allocated for language teaching, with a priority placed on linguistic proficiency and examinations as set by the school curriculum. The author suggested that teacher education might need to equip language teachers with skills and strategies for the inclusion of culture within these constraints.

The previous two studies focused on the teaching of European languages. Lu and Li (2008) administered a motivation questionnaire to 181 university students including 42 non-Asian non-Chinese students who enrolled in Chinese language classes in the United States. The results showed that for non-Asian non-Chinese students, the more they want to learn about Chinese culture, the more confident they are in their language learning. In other words, integrative motivation is significant in fostering their confidence in their language abilities. It is suggested that language teachers need to be paid attention to and sustain students’ interest in Chinese culture. Wen (2011) also found that broad exposure to Chinese culture, both integrated with the curriculum and in the form of extra-curricular activities can help learners develop a sustained interest in understanding Chinese culture. Ruan, Duan and Du (2015) suggested that integrating cultural elements into language tasks was consistently rated by non-native Mandarin learners as being very motivating. It is because the more they learned about Chinese culture, the more they wanted to learn more about the language or travel to China.

In the UK, Zhu & Li (2014) conducted a study to investigate the representation of culture in Mandarin classrooms. The research found that Mandarin teachers in the Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in the UK perceived culture primarily as customs and practices, which was a reminiscent of the four Fs – food, fairs, folklore

and statistical facts. It shows that the representation of culture in the Chinese language teaching is very basic and restricted to traditional customs or stereotypically Chinese symbols, such as landmarks (i.e. the Terracotta Army, the Great Wall), festivals (i.e. Chinese New Year) and food (i.e. Chinese food). In addition, the Mandarin teachers constructed the notion of Chinese culture by accommodating topics that interested the students. At the university, culture is integrated into language teaching with an attempt to explain the origins of some of the customs, such as gift giving, acceptance and complement paying. It is noteworthy that expectations from teachers and students in terms of Chinese culture are low. Some of the teachers appear to know relatively little of the Chinese culture. Furthermore, some students explicitly rejected the idea of learning culture through learning language and seemed to believe that language and culture were separate things. Students appeared to be lacking interest in topics beyond textbooks content.

## 2.4 MFL Motivation in England

As mentioned in 1.4.1, one of the challenges of teaching MFL in England is the low continuation rate beyond KS3. The abolition of the compulsory policy to study an MFL in KS4 in 2004 has led to a decrease in the uptake of GCSE MFL. Pupils have few incentives to learn a foreign language. Pupils in the public sector in England are only required to study a foreign language from Year 3 to Year 9 (i.e. KS2 and KS3) but not during GCSE (Year 10 and Year 11) or A-levels (Year 12 to Year 13). Lanvers (2017a) recently reviewed the research of MFL motivation in the UK in the last two decades. The evaluation of previous studies revealed not only a lack of literature on L2 motivation studies in the UK. They also showed the volatility of the current UK language learning landscape and its complication. In general, Lanvers (2017) reported that motivation and self-efficacy of MFL learners are reasonably high at the primary level but declines steadily at the secondary level. Even for students who opt to study MFL beyond Year 9, their motivation, enjoyment and self-efficacy remain low, when compared with other subjects (Graham, 2002, 2004, 2006a; Graham, Macfadyen & Richards, 2012).

Moreover, MFL students in Key Stage 3 (Year 7 to Year 9) possess low motivation and are dominantly motivated by the compulsory policy (Coleman, Galaczi & Astruc, 2007; Evans & Fisher, 2009; Graham, 2003, 2004, 2006; Lanvers, 2016; Taylor & Marsden, 2014; Williams, Burden & Lanvers, 2002). The motivation of students to learn a foreign

language was due to parental and educational expectations. It leads to low continuation rates in the non-compulsory phase (i.e. Key stage 4 and Key stage 5). Only a minority of students reported L2 Ideal types of motivation, such as showing respect to the L2 community or not being embarrassed by the lack of language skills compared to other nations (Lanvers, 2016, 2017b). MFL is regarded as a subject that lacks enjoyment, lacks understanding, and lacks curriculum progression (Lanvers, 2017a; Mitchell, 2003). Poorly applied teaching methodologies at the secondary level seem to be a significant contributor to these problems (Wingate, 2018). Additionally, the high-stake exams at age 16 and 18 lead to a focus on teaching for exams and repetitive teaching (Evans & Fisher, 2009; Macaro, 2008), offering little intellectual stimulation (Wingate, 2018).

The following subsections draw upon previous studies on MFL teaching and learning in England to present the research gaps of this study. In section 2.4.1 and 2.4.2, self-efficacy and learning strategies will be discussed. Since the focus of this study is to investigate Mandarin teachers' pedagogy at GCSE level in England, the inclusion of learning motivation theories (i.e. self-efficacy and learning strategies) are used to inform rather than as part of the theoretical framework of this study.

#### 2.4.1 Self-efficacy of MFL learners

The primary source of self-efficacy is the experience of mastery of the target language. The mastery experiences are relevant to how an individual achieves and values the activity (Macaro, Graham & Woore, 2015). In England, research was conducted to investigate the self-efficacy of the learning of European languages among pupils (Erler & Macaro, 2011; Fisher, 2001; Graham, 2002, 2004). Findings revealed that in general, pupils had a low level of self-efficacy for many aspects of L2 learning. Most importantly, they perceive their lack of success in L2 learning due to uncontrollable factors, such as their own innate language ability, the difficulty of the tasks they are set, or the 'strangeness' of the language they are studying, rather than the reality (Erler and Macaro, 2011; Graham, 2004). The perception of the students is that they cannot learn a foreign language and attribute to uncontrollable qualities. On the other hand, students with a high level of self-efficacy attributed their success to effort, high ability and efficient learning strategies, which resulted in a higher level of achievement, and had a greater possibility to continue learning the language.

Graham (2003) conducted a study examining the self-efficacy of Year 11 to Year 13 students of French from ten schools and colleges. Even though 68 percent of the respondents expected to attain (B to A\*) in GCSE French, only 19 percent of the respondents considered continue studying French at AS level. It is worrying that even high-achieving students tend to have low self-efficacy in MFL learning. The research implied that it is important to enhance the motivation of the students by promoting a high self of self-efficacy such as evaluating the success of language learning, focusing on the effectiveness of strategies used rather than innate ability. Another study was conducted by Graham (2006b) which sought to investigate the impacts of learning strategies training on learners' self-efficacy, in particular their listening skills. The results indicated that the promotion of the learning strategies enhanced self-efficacy of the students, and students who had received feedback had made the most significant gains in certain aspects of self-efficacy on listening. The pedagogical implications were strengthening learners' self-efficacy beliefs for language learning, giving them a greater sense of control over their learning, while improving their performance by using the right learning strategies.

Wang, Spencer and Xing (2009) investigated the effects of second-year university students' metacognitive beliefs and strategies on learning Chinese as a foreign language. The study confirmed that students should be encouraged to analyse their own learning process so as to improve their metacognitive learning strategies, which will reinforce motivational aspects of self-efficacy. Most importantly, high confidence in learning abilities is not adequate for improvement in performance, having appropriate metacognitive strategies are also required. It is suggested that connecting language learners' beliefs and learning strategy is as crucial as strategy training programs to attend students' belief about their foreign language learning. Therefore, language teachers needed to help students to analyse the learning process and identify effective strategies, leading to improved language learning and higher levels of self-esteem and confidence.

Enhancing the self-efficacy of MFL learners seem to be one of the ways to encounter the low motivation of MFL in England (Macaro, Graham & Woore, 2016). Helping learners to achieve more than they might expect, including overcoming gaps in their linguistic knowledge, and understanding a broader range of more challenging texts. These aspects not only aim to enhance the self-efficacy of learners but also the level of challenge (*ibid*). Thus, it is crucial to prepare learners with the tools needed in order to

meet that challenge. One of the most helpful ‘tools’ are the language learning strategies promoted in the National Curriculum Programmes of Study since 1995, with *Language-learning skills and knowledge of the language* as one of the sub-themes. Developing language-learning skill is believed to be the essential skills for learners to make progress in foreign language learning (DfES, 2007).

#### 2.4.2 Learning strategies of MFL learners

Language learning strategies are the actions that learners take to decode, process, store and retrieve language. They are also the decision to make the learning process easier, faster and more enjoyable (Oxford, 1990). Research into learners’ language learning strategies assumed that there is an inter-relationship between learners’ motivation and their learning strategies. It is suggested that deploying effective language learning strategies lead to high levels of motivation and language learning success. Additionally, ‘learner strategy training’ can ‘cure’ the reluctant learners (Graham, 2007). It means that a demotivated learner can be motivated when effective strategies are taught, leading to a higher chance of language mastery and greater success in learning than before.

Previous research found positive impacts on students’ language learning if language learning strategies were taught (e.g. Grenfell & Harris, 1997; Graham, 2007; Macaro & Graham, 2008). The research then extended to determine which strategies are applied by individual learners when they are tackling language tasks (Grenfell & Harris, 1997). Erler and Macaro (2011) examined the relationship between the decoding ability (i.e. the ability to relate graphemes to phonemes) of Year 7 to Year 9 pupils in French as a foreign language. Self-reported use of decoding, and the dimensions of motivations specifically in terms of self-efficacy were examined. The decoding ability of the pupils was elicited via written rhyme and word segmentation tests. It was found that after three years of studying French, students who claimed to have regular decoding practice in a range of language learning tasks were unable to decode accurately. The students attributed the inability to decode to the “strangeness” of French rather than the failure of teacher or teaching method. The research suggested that language-specific learning strategies were needed in order to promote self-efficacy of the students.

Another recent research conducted by Macaro (2017) aimed to explore the strategies that learners deploy to understand a teacher’s L2-only explanation of new L2 words.



Findings have suggested that most respondents used a very narrow range of strategies. The students almost exclusively resorted to strategies related to cognates in order to understand a new word. Even though non-cognates were presented to the students, most of them deployed 'cognate spotting' as a default strategy, looking for resemblance in English from the target words. They appeared to be unwilling or lacking the strategies to use the context of the explanation to help them arrive at the meaning. On the other hand, Mandarin learners in England could not use 'cognate spotting' to understand Chinese characters. It is therefore necessary to develop a different set of strategies due to the distinctive features of Chinese Mandarin.

A lack of learning strategies among foreign language learners in England is a critical problem as it seems to have negative impacts on the self-efficacy of pupils' language learning. Grenfell (2007) suggested a research direction of language learning strategies that was more skill-specific, which was a move to concentrate on the quality of strategy uptake. This was proposed to create the conditions of the 'strategic classroom', finding effective strategies for learners and assimilate them into their learning process. Covington (1998) stated that "*the concept of learning strategies bridges the domains of effort and ability, so that trying hard in sophisticated, strategic ways, is commensurate to increasing one's ability to learn.*" (p.71) Thus, the by-product of effective strategy use is that it promotes independent learning and learner autonomy. These have been identified as being of crucial importance to learners (Macaro et al, 2016). Being able to select from an increased range of strategies and evaluate them for their effectiveness empowers learners to have more control in the language-learning process.

In summary, the research mentioned above concluded that language learning strategies were important to the self-efficacy of learners, and are language-specific. In addition, the motivation of a learner can be enhanced by increasing the level of self-efficacy, which in turn motivates learners to continue on their language learning process because of the belief of their mastery of experience. Yet, the aforementioned research was conducted on the learning of European languages (i.e. alphabet language). It is crucial to justify the transferability of these studies to Mandarin learning, which is of a different typology, and to provide further empirical evidence on how Mandarin GCSE pupils develop language-focused language learning strategies, so as to prepare the pupils to cope with the disparities between different languages.

### 2.4.3 Teaching Mandarin as a foreign language

Section 1.3 provides a premise of the distinctive features of Chinese Mandarin. The previous research suggests that the teaching methodology of Chinese Mandarin, especially Chinese characters are different from that of European languages. Since teaching Chinese Mandarin as a foreign language is a developing field of study, there have been considerable studies emphasising the focus on the development of different language skills, particularly on reading skills. From the cognitive perspective, limited studies provide empirical evidence from classroom settings. The review on the findings of these studies in this section hopes to provide insights to inform Mandarin specific pedagogy. This section starts with an overview of different components of the Chinese Mandarin, followed by the pronunciation of Chinese characters, radicals and components, Chinese characters, vocabulary and grammar.

Taft, Liu and Zhu (1999) developed a multilevel interactive-activation model to explain the activation process of Chinese Mandarin. It suggests that different components of Chinese are hierarchically organised in levels (see Figure 8) as mentioned in Section 1.3.

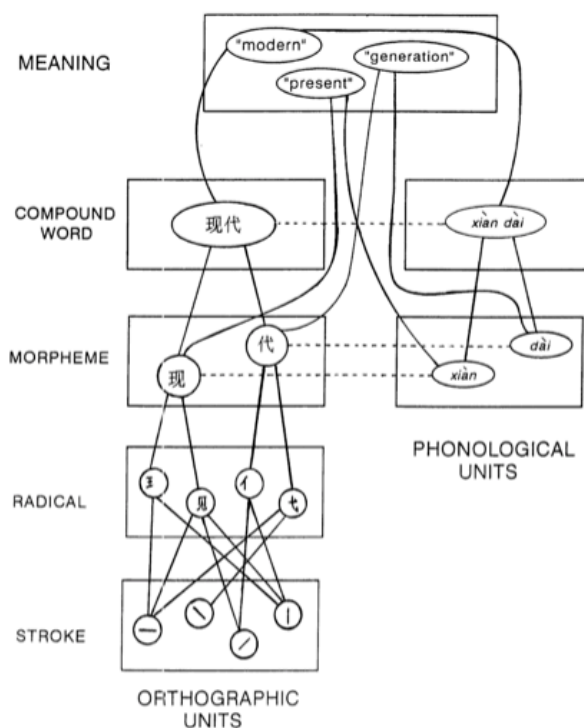


Figure 8 The multilevel interactive-activation architecture (Taft, Liu & Zhu, 1999, p.95)

The model illustrates the orthographic units (i.e. semiotic) of characters on the left, phonological units (i.e. phonetic) on the right, and meaning units (i.e. semantic) are at the highest level. At the morpheme and whole-word levels, there are both orthographic and phonological representations. The application and response to a word are at different points of the model, which depends on the task requirements. For instance, if a lexical decision response is required, the response could be based solely on whether or not an orthographic representation at the word level exists. However, it is also possible that the semantic representation is needed to make the decision. The importance of this model is that it illustrates different levels to acquire Mandarin Chinese. This model initiates a series of research at various levels of Chinese learning, including stroke orders, radical awareness, lexical compounding, etc (e.g. Chu & Leung 2005; Shu & Anderson, 1999; Taft, Zhu & Peng, 1999; Wang, Yang & Cheng, 2009), thus providing guidance to develop Chinese Mandarin specific pedagogy for learners. In other words, the model implies that preparing Mandarin learners with the learning strategies to acquire different components of Chinese is essential. Not only do these strategies enable learners to encode and decode the language, these are also the 'tools' developed to contribute to the belief of students in terms of the mastery of Mandarin Chinese.

#### *2.4.3.1 Pronunciation of Mandarin Chinese*

Alphabetic languages allow for the use of alphabetic principles to decode print words and access their pronunciations or meanings (Rayner et al, 2001). The pronunciation of Chinese characters, on the other hand, is not available in the written form of Chinese characters, even in semantic-phonetic characters. (Zhang, Lin, Zhang & Choi, 2019). Thus, *pinyin*, the romanisation of the pronunciation of Chinese character, is used to assist learners in learning the pronunciation of characters (Lee & Kalyuga, 2011b).

Previous research has suggested that the provision of pinyin has positive impacts on the vocabulary knowledge of Chinese learners (Zhang, Lin, Zhang & Choi, 2019). Having pinyin complementary to Chinese characters which acts as a tool to present the pronunciation for the learners, links the semiotic and phonetic elements of a character together. Research has also suggested that the usefulness of pinyin is depended on learner's prior language proficiency and experiences with pinyin, as well as the level of the provided support (Lee & Kalyuga, 2011a). Lee & Kalyuga (2011a) found that partial pinyin is more beneficial compared to that of full pinyin and no use of pinyin for learners

beyond the beginner level. Full pinyin refers to a condition in which all the characters were transcribed with pinyin whereas partial pinyin condition refers to only potentially new or key characters were transcribed with pinyin. From the cognitive perspective, learners might need to cross-reference the spoken and visual sources from the presentation of pinyin accompanied by verbal instruction, which is the same information. The duplication of pronunciation information might leave insufficient cognitive resources for learners to process, comprehend and recognise the characters, as well as learning the pronunciation. Thus, the partial presentation of pinyin is more beneficial when applied to certain aspects of language learning, in particular to learning the pronunciation but not in sentence comprehension or recognition of characters. (Lee & Kalyuga, 2011a; Preston, 2018).

Although pinyin, which uses the English alphabet, is more manageable for native-English speakers to learn, the similarities between the two systems might lead to confusion for learners. It is important to acknowledge the problems of this assistant tool. McGinnis (1997) suggested the term *the can effect* to describe the situations when pinyin spellings could be confusing. 'Can' is pronounced as /ts'an/ in pinyin but is pronounced as /kən/ in English. In addition, some letters used in pinyin are hard to interpret and the corresponding sounds are hard to pronounce for English speakers as they are phonetically different and absent (McGinnis, 1997; Xing, 2006). Examples include the three groups of initials (retroflexes: zh, chi, sh, palatals: j, q, x and sibilants: z, c) It is crucial to understand how the Mandarin teachers at GCSE level teach non-native speakers the pronunciation of Chinese characters, including use of pinyin in the learning process as well as differences of Mandarin pronunciation as compared to English. The importance of pinyin in the learning of Chinese characters is that if a learner can pronounce a word correctly, the learner would be able to give out the meaning of a word (Everson, 1998; Jiang, 2003). In other words, pinyin is an important tool for students to master the pronunciation of Mandarin to promote self-efficacy of learners.

#### *2.4.3.2 Component teaching*

Tse, Marton, Ki, & Loh (2007) proposed the strategy which stresses a close analysis of the main components of Chinese characters. The strategy is based on the distinctive features of Chinese characters. There are two types of characters: simple characters and compound characters (see Figure 9). In a simple character, there is only one

radical whereas there are two or more components in the compound characters (Huang, 2005; Su, 2001). Among the compound characters, 80.5% are semantic-phonetic characters, which consist of two functionally identifiable components (Zhou, 1978). One is the phonetic component that offers information related to the character's pronunciation, and the other is the semantic component that provides an aspect of the meaning of the character (Lü et al, 2015).

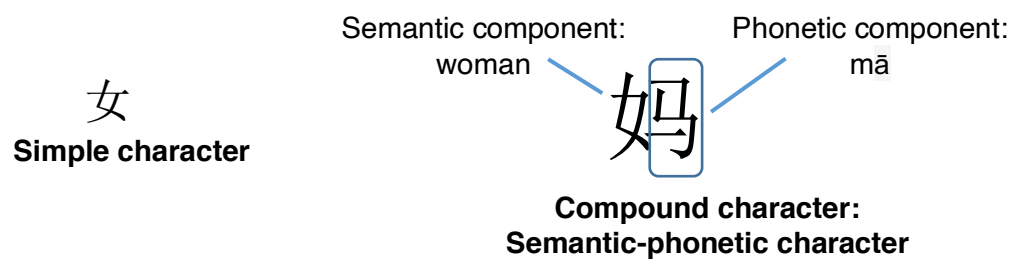


Figure 9 Examples of simple character and compound character

Since semantic component are related to the meaning of the character, it is often considered equivalent to morphemes (Packard, 2000; Shu & Anderson, 1997; Taft et al., 1999). For instance, the character 妈, with the left component (i.e. semantic component) 女 representing the *semantic category*, in this case meaning women; the right component (i.e. phonetic component), 马 mā represents the pronunciation, which shares the same initial but in different tones.

Previous research has also shown that learners who are making good progress in reading skills are aware of and are trying to use the information in the radicals and phonetics of compound characters (Ho, Ng & Ng, 2003; Tsai & Nunes, 2003; Shu, Chen, Anderson, Wu, & Xuan, 2003). The studies showed that component teaching helped students to make good progress of their reading skills. Developing four skills follows the notion of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Furthermore, the reading process of a character involves the radical awareness and is relevant to predict word-reading skills and reading comprehension (Shum, Ki & Leong 2014; Tong & Yip, 2015). This is another example to support that the implementation of CLT can help promote the motivation of learners. Additionally, radical awareness refers to the sensitivity to use linguistic information contained in compound characters' constituent - the radicals (Wong, 2017). Shen & Ke (2007) suggested that learners' radical

knowledge and sensitivity progresses alongside their overall proficiency and are related to their language-specific learning strategies (Jackson, Everson & Ke, 2003).

Research also has shown that radical awareness plays an essential role in both native and non-native Chinese speakers' literacy development (Wong, 2017). Lü, Koda, Zhang & Zhang (2015) found that native-Chinese learners were sensitive to semantic component information during character processing while William (2013) observed that non-native higher intermediate Chinese learners utilised both semantic and phonetic component to decode Chinese characters. It seems that the enhancement of radical knowledge and raising radical awareness of Chinese learners is vital for the progression of language proficiency. The pedagogical implication is that learners can benefit from explicit instruction on the functional relationship between semantic components and character meanings (Jackson, Everson & Ke, 2003; Shen, 2000; Taft & Chung, 1999; Lü et al, 2015). In doing so, the teachers can promote analytical and construction approaches to the lexical development of learners (Lü et al, 2015; Wong, 2017).

However, it is important to note that the meaning inference power of semantic components is limited. Shen & Ke (2007) explained that although semantic components facilitate character learning, the utility of semantic component information is restricted by other properties, such as its functional transparency (Shen & Ke, 2007; Lü et al, 2015). There are two types of semantic components, transparent semantic and opaque semantic component. The former one gives a reliable cue for the meaning of a character, for example 姐, which means elder sister, and consists of the semantic component 女 (women). The opaque semantic component however, does not and cannot be used to infer the meaning of the character, for example, 增 which means *increase*, consists of the semantic radical 土 (soil) that is not relevant to the meaning. In other words, even though semantic components facilitate the reading of Chinese characters, it is limited by the relevance of semantic components to the meaning of the character.

Since there are more than 80% of Chinese characters which are semantic-phonetic compounds (Li and Kang, 1993), learners may be able to learn the sound of a character if they are familiar with the cues provided by the phonetic radicals (Chen, Shu, Wu & Anderson, 2003; Taft & Chung, 1999). However, the cueing function of the phonetic component is not as strong as that of the semantic component in a character

(Ho, Ng & Ng, 2003; Shu, Chen, Anderson, Wu & Xuan, 2003; Zhu, 1987). Zhu (1987) found that in the 3,700 frequently used Chinese characters, 184 are with the semantic radical ‘扌’. Among the 184 characters, most of them are related to the meaning of “hand” or “motion”, for example, 打 (hit), 握 (shake). On the other hand, the predictive accuracy of the pronunciation of compound characters from its phonetic radical is about 40%, which drops to 26% if tones are taken into consideration (Shu et al., 2003; Zhou, 1980; Zhu, 1987).

The above-mentioned studies inform the present study in the following aspects - a lack of previous studies on teaching Chinese characters in the UK at all levels of learning, in particular how the teachers teach different components (i.e. semantic and phonetic components) of a character to non-native Chinese speakers. Hence, looking into how the Mandarin teachers teach Chinese characters in England at GCSE classroom will definitely shed lights to the field.

#### *2.4.3.3 Chinese character learning strategies*

Ki & Lau (2012) proposed that there are four levels of character learning, namely character recognition, word pronunciation, component recognition and character writing. Studies have investigated how Mandarin learners develop basic Chinese character recognition skills (Hayes, 1988, 1990; Sergent & Everson, 1992). Others have examined how the learners process larger units of text (Everson, 1986, 1998). Ke (1996) investigated the relationship between Chinese character recognition and the production of foreign language university learners. The research found that there is a relationship between character recognition and production. Learners at the beginner level tend to produce characters of low density more accurately than characters of high density. In other words, the more strokes a character possesses, the more mistakes a learner will tend to make in production (Chin, 1973; Ke, 1996). Ke (1996) also showed that there is a correlation between character recognition and character production, which means that learners who are poor in character recognition are also poor in character production. Most importantly, according to different levels of character learning, learners are required to have complete mastery of the character so as to enable accurate production of the characters when recognising them with only partial information (Ke, 1996). The pedagogical implications of the research are that instructions of teachers increase the average performance on both character

recognition and production of the learners, and character production required a precise understanding of individual characters.

In terms of teaching practices of characters, Wu, Li & Anderson (1999) concluded that drill-and-practice predominated in the teaching of characters to beginning learners. This means that the teacher reads new characters to the learners and shows them how to write the character, with careful attention to the positions of components and the order of strokes. Students read new characters repeatedly, including whole-class readings and individual turns. Sometimes, the teachers might tell 'stories' about some characters to make them memorable but most of the characters are taught using arbitrary mnemonics instead of analysing the structure of a character. The research also found that retaining characters is not only difficult but also time-consuming. This is a very good example of CLT that the students seemed to somehow rely on their spoken language skills for remembering the meaning of these characters (Everson & Xiao, 2009; Ke, 1996, 1998).

Not only is it important to understand the pedagogy of teachers in teaching Chinese characters, it is also significant to explore the language learning strategies adopted by non-native Chinese learners to memorise characters. Such an understanding can help learners have control over the learning process, which will reduce the difficulty of character learning (Shen, 2004). Research has been conducted to investigate the most commonly used learning strategies by Mandarin learners at different levels of proficiency (Hayes, 1988; Shen, 2004). Hayes (1988) found that the non-native beginning learners of Chinese used both visual and graphic strategies in encoding Chinese characters in a word context. Yet, they relied heavily on graphic structures to recognise previously exposed characters in a sentence context. McGinnis (1999) found seven types of learning strategies used by university non-native Chinese beginning learners. The most frequently used strategy is rote repetition, followed by creating their own idiosyncratic stories about the characters. However, the use of orthographic knowledge as a cue was not a strategy preferred by beginning learners. Meanwhile, Ke (1998)'s study of first-year university Chinese beginning learners considered the knowledge of radicals more useful than creating their own stories about the appearance of characters in learning new characters.

Shen (2005) interviewed 95 university students in Chinese classes from beginner to advanced level, which aimed to investigate the learning strategies used by the students.



The research showed that among the various commonly used cognitive strategies, orthographic-knowledge-based strategies were most heavily used. This means that the students made use of the three aspects of radical knowledge: graphemics, semantics and phonetics as cues to encode characters. This is mainly due to the logographic nature of Chinese characters. Shu & Anderson (1999) also theorised that learners with greater insight to the internal structure of characters would more easily learn to read. It is because learners can analyse the characters into different functional components, and differentiate every character as a unique, undifferentiated combination of strokes.

Anderson, Ku, Li, Chen, Wu & Shu (2013) also found that students, who are becoming skilled readers, have a multilevel visual representation in which the levels are a whole character, including major components (e.g. semantic radical), subcomponents and strokes. Thus, the aforementioned research found a correlation between the use of orthographic knowledge and the knowledge of the character. In other words, for learners with limited orthographic knowledge, the ability to use such knowledge in character learning would be limited. The pedagogical implication is that introducing orthographic knowledge systematically, particularly radical knowledge, can significantly facilitate character learning. Besides, analysing a character and the systematic review of characters regularly, such as revising characters before the lesson or character quiz, are also effective strategies in character learning (Shen, 2004).

A recent study was conducted to understand how the Mandarin teachers help secondary school students learn Chinese characters in England. Preston (2018) administered questionnaires to ten teachers which listed fourteen strategies using aids to learn Chinese characters. The most popular methods were namely, i) Explain the structure of characters; ii) Give regular vocab test and explain radicals and their meaning; iii) Encourage students to use their imagination and creativity; and iv) Play games and run class competitions about recognising characters. Preston (2018) commented that the problem with these approaches was that they rely heavily on short-term memory. Some of the ways to encourage orthographic awareness include giving learners opportunities to explore characters on their own (Scrimgeour, 2011). This enables students to make sense of characters and figure out the logic of the system (Preston, 2018; Scrimgeour, 2011).

#### 2.4.3.4 Vocabulary learning

Ceccagno & Basciano (2007) and Xing (2006) suggested that lexical compounding is the most productive method of word formation in Chinese. In Chinese, there are 75% to 80% of Chinese words which are disyllabic or multisyllabic compound words (Packard, 2000; Taylor & Taylor, 1995; Xing, 2006). Compound words mean a word comprised of two or more characters (Xing, 2006). Zhou, Marslen-Wilson, Taft & Shu (1999) suggested that morphemes in compound words were essentially words themselves, although there are bound morphemes in Mandarin Chinese, for example 葡萄 meaning grapes, in which either 葡 or 萄 has an individual meaning, but grapes are meant when 葡萄 is combined. From the cognitive perspective, the morphological component of a compound word is used to link between the visual input and lexical representation (i.e. meaning). Morphological segmentation in compound words encompasses activation of the meaning, which initiates the interaction between form and the meaning of the constituent morphemes. For instance, the conceptual meaning of 足球 (football) is activated by both 足 (foot) and 球 (ball), which are component morphemes. In compound words, headedness is the key factor differentiating lexical compounding structures in Chinese. Roughly 90% of the compound nouns are right-headed and 85% of the compound verbs are left-headed (Packard, 2000; Sun, 2006). For example, the compound nouns, 网 (net) 球 (ball) which means tennis; 牛 (cow) 肉 (meat) which means beef; 书 (book) 店 (store) which means bookstore, all have the key formant on the right. On the other hand, 跑 (run) 步 (steps), meaning running is an example that has the key informant on the left.

Furthermore, it is proposed that the morphological transparency of compound words should be taken into consideration when semantic information is retrieved from constituent morphemes (Dronjic, 2011; Zhang, 2016). For example, *appendicitis* in Chinese is 盲 (blind) 肠 (intestine) 炎 (inflammation), in which the component morphemes form a new meaning but to a certain extent can reflect the symptoms of appendicitis. Thus, even though compounding is a prominent method of word formation in Chinese, there is still no consent as to what extent is meaning retrieval efficiently conveyed from segmental morphemic information in compounds. Another example is kangaroo 袋 (pocket) 鼠 (mouse), the individual morphemes are insufficient to represent the whole meaning, as the two component morphemes carry a new whole-word conceptual representation (Dronjic, 2011). In other words, understanding the

morphemes in learning new Chinese words might help learners to learn the words but not when students decipher the meaning of new Chinese words.

Not only does the compounding of Chinese words favour the learning of words as a whole, Ke (1998) also found that learners placed more value on learning the characters holistically through repeated writings of characters, especially practising characters as a compound word rather than the characters individually. Some studies have found positive relationships between morphological awareness and vocabulary knowledge (Carlisle & Fleming, 2003; Ku & Anderson, 2003). They suggested that morphological awareness was identified as a significant factor predicting vocabulary knowledge across different levels of learners (Ku & Anderson, 2003). Yet, it is noteworthy that character identification and learning are fundamental to compound characters segmental ability (Everson & Ke, 1997; Shen & Ke, 2007). Research has been conducted widely in the teaching of Chinese characters, whereas the roles of morphological awareness in expanding the vocabulary of Mandarin learners are scant in existing literature.

Recent research by Zhang (2016) found that once learners have initial character knowledge and decoding skills, teachers could then make use of their pre-existing linguistic resources to facilitate further. Hence, learners could be instructed to draw upon their knowledge of characters and morphemes to decipher the meanings of morphologically complex compound words or new compound words. Aligned with previous studies (e.g. Carlisle & Fleming, 2003; Ku & Anderson, 2003; Zhang 2015), Zhang (2016) found that morphological awareness is the facilitator of vocabulary knowledge, including character knowledge, word meaning knowledge, and the segmental ability played in the Chinese vocabulary acquisition. The pedagogical implication of the research is that teachers are encouraged to directly teach learners how to segment and extract core semantic information from compound words, and use that information to memorise words. This approach can reinforce prior vocabulary knowledge and assist in deciphering unknown words.

#### *2.4.3.5 Chinese grammar*

Chinese is a discourse-oriented language (Li and Thompson, 1981) whereas English or most of the European languages are sentence-oriented languages (Yu, 1993). The former means that Chinese has much more flexibility in terms of form while the latter is

mostly governed by rules or laws (Wang, 1945). For instance, in Chinese 安全 means both safe and safety. The change in the position within the sentence does not change the form of the word. However, in English, *safe* is an adjective and *safety* is a noun, and changes in the position of the word in a sentence change the form of the word. Chinese grammar is structured differently from that of English. Such differences must be acknowledged when it is being taught as a foreign language.

In terms of tense, Liu (2015) describes Chinese verbs as 'tenseless', as the verb form remains unchanged no matter when the event happens. Event time may be inferred with an explicit time adverb or aspect markers. In some cases, it may rely completely on the context for temporal references (Liu, 2015). However, there are two ways to describe the time in Chinese, namely, perfective versus imperfective. For perfective marking, the default perfective 了 *le* marks an event as actualised, and the experiential 過 *guò* requires the additional notion of discontinuity. For the imperfective aspect, the preverbal progressive 在 *zài* signals the ongoing of an action; the durative suffix 著 *zhe* converts a dynamic verb into a durative state. On the other hand, English marks tense relations on the verb, for example, the past tense is characterised typically by the verb ending with -ed or by other irregular forms. Yet, Chinese lacks such a grammaticalised way of expressing tenses through the verb (Li & Thompson, 1981; Sun, 2006). Chinese expresses tense using either time expressions or relies heavily on contextual information to help draw inferences about event time (Liu, 2015). For example, 我 (I) 昨天 (yesterday) 去 (go) 了 (aspect marker) 看 (watch) 電影 (movie), the whole sentence means I went to watch a movie yesterday. The verb does not change the form, and the time expression 昨天 (yesterday) provides the precise timing of the event. The time expression can also be changed to 上午 (morning) or 前天 (the day before) to represent that it is an actualised event without changing the form of verb 去 with the aspect marker 了.

The aspect marker in Chinese is a very different notion from that of tenses. Aspects include a particular viewpoint for describing the event itself. There are two commonly recognised perfective markers in Chinese: the simple perfective 了 *le* and the experiential perfective 過 *guò*. Both markers follow the verb (i.e. verbal suffix) to express that the event is terminated and bounded by a reference of time, but the use of 過 *guò* further implies discontinuity, which is not required in the use of 了 *le* (Li & Thompson, 1981; Sun 2006). It is important to note that in Chinese there are two

different uses of 了 *le*. The perfective, verbal suffix particle 了 *le* is attached to the verb representing the termination of the action denoted by the verb. In contrast, the perfect, which is at the end of the sentence (i.e. sentence-final particle) 了 *le* serves to mark an event or situation as currently relevant within a discourse. It is thus functioned as a discourse marker in presenting the relevance of the current event to the immediate context. Even though the two different 了 *le* possess the same form, they have two different functions and syntactic positions. It is essential to understand the different functions of aspect markers in Chinese and find out how this can be taught to native-English speakers who have completely different notions of acquiring grammar.

Mandarin Chinese uses 在 *zài* in front of a verb to mark the progressive aspect, expressing an unbounded, ongoing event from close proximity. Givón (1993) describes the progressive aspect as using a wide-angle lens to “zoom in” the event and placing the observer right at the scene. It is important to note that 在 *zài* is only compatible with durative processes that contain an internal interval which is not present in instantaneous events (Smith, 1991). For instance, the progressive 在 *zài* is not compatible with verbs denoting an instant change, such as 赢 *yíng* (win) or 死 *sǐ* (die). Instead, 在 *zài* can be used to describe 写字 *xiě zì* (write) or 跑步 *pǎobù* (run). The pedagogical implication is that since Chinese grammar is different from that of English and European languages, linguistic knowledge of Mandarin teachers is significant. Chinese lacks grammaticalised marking of tenses and the differences in event time cannot be distinguished by verbs. Chinese employs distinct aspect markers to express the perfective versus imperfective viewpoints of events, and different aspect markers are semantically compatible with certain events such as in the example of 在 *zài*. Hence, the teaching of grammar in Chinese is not only about learning aspect markers but also about the semantic compatibility of aspect markers (Liu, 2015).

The distinctive features of Chinese Mandarin and the relevant Mandarin-focused pedagogy can be summarised as follows. First, Chinese is a Character Language, with a commonly used lexicon of more than 3,000 Chinese characters. The massive quantity of Chinese characters is found to be a major difficulty in acquiring the language. Secondly, there are approximately 250 simple characters, accounting for 4% of all characters; the remaining are compound characters. The complexity of the internal structures of characters is one of the recurring challenges for non-native Chinese speakers. Thirdly, there is no grapheme-phoneme correspondence in Chinese

characters, extra steps are required to link the three elements of each character. Fourthly, there are more than 75% to 80% of Chinese words that are disyllabic or multisyllabic compound words (Packard, 2000; Taylor & Taylor, 1995; Xing, 2006). The morphemes of compound words are essentially words themselves, and the two morphemes carry a new whole-word conceptual representation (Dronjic, 2011). Lastly, Chinese is a discourse-oriented language which means Chinese is not strictly governed by rules. It is flexibility in terms of form (Li & Thompson, 1981). As such, it can be seen that the distinctive features of Mandarin Chinese are different from that of English or European languages. Hence, teaching Mandarin as a foreign language is unlike teaching other alphabet languages.

## 2.5 Conclusion

The literature review chapter highlights the key issues and challenges surrounding the language motivational strategies research, in particular teaching foreign language (other than English) in the context of England.

As reviewed in 2.1, historical development of motivation theories currently focuses on looking at particular language classes. Within these classes, specific individual language learners and teachers' practice, such as the self-determination theory and L2 Self System were observed. The scarcity of research in motivational practices of language teachers initiated the employment of Motivational Strategies Framework in the present study. In addition, theoretical discussion and empirical research are in agreement that teachers' motivational practices have direct impact on students' motivation. However, Cheng and Dörnyei's (2007) study also found that motivational strategies are cross-cultural as well as context-specific. The challenge, then, is in the context of teaching a non-European language – Mandarin – in an Anglophone country such as England, as to how the Mandarin teachers' practices sustain the motivation of students. The challenges are twofold. First, the National Curriculum Programme of Study (NCPoS) since 1990 has been orienting MFL teachers' practices (see 2.3.4). The implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in European languages poses controversial discussions of teachers' practices in the classrooms. It is therefore significant to understand the practices of Mandarin teachers in the context of teaching MFL at GCSE level under imminent examination pressure. Secondly, motivation of MFL learners in England; in particular their self-efficacy is low and a narrow range of language learning strategies is used by the students. (see 2.4.1 and

2.4.2). On the other hand, disparities between the alphabet-based language (English) and the character-based language (Chinese Mandarin) suggest that Mandarin-specific pedagogy for non-native Chinese learners is needed (see 2.4.3). Hence, previous studies in teaching and learning Mandarin as a foreign language have presented how the language has been taught based on its distinctive features.

The next chapter begins by explaining how the methodology approach attempted to address the issues identified in this literature review, followed by the presentation of collected data and analysis procedures.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

In this chapter, the coherence between the epistemological stance and the methodological approach adopted will be explained and justified. The first part focuses on the link between the research design and the preliminary understanding of motivation research. It is then followed by laying out of the linkage between the methodological paradigm and epistemology, which supports the employed research methods and the data collection and procedures of analysis. The last section reflects on the reliability of the research as well as ethical considerations.

### 3.1 Research approach

A qualitative, interpretivists approach that seeks to understand people's first-hand experiences from the perspective of the individuals is employed in this study (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2010). Interpretivists believe that reality is socially constructed as people's experiences occur within social, cultural, historical or personal contexts (Given, 2008; Hennink et al., 2010). In addition, there can be multiple perspectives of reality as opposed to a single truth. People in such a context construct reality by interaction and engagement in the process of interpretation (Robson, 2011). It is therefore valued-bounded and context-dependent. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), interpretivist is

*“seen as a subjective rather than an objective undertaking, as a means of dealing with the direct experience of people in specific contexts, and where social scientists understand, explain and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants; the participants themselves define the social reality.” (p.19)*

The knowledge that can be obtained with this view of the world is then “situation-specific” and aims to yield a rich description of the context. The primary objective of this research is to investigate the motivational strategies implemented by Mandarin teachers in GCSE classrooms, in other words, what are good practices that can motivate students sustaining to learn the language. A qualitative approach is adopted in this research as it accounts for the contextual influences of people's lives (Cohen et al., 2007). From a wider perspective, Mandarin is as one of the MFLs, and the implementation of CLT in Mandarin classrooms under the contextual influence of MFL,



mainly designed to teach European languages such as French, Spanish and German, has an impact on the teachers' practices. From a micro perspective, Mandarin classrooms are also socially constructed contexts where interactions between Mandarin teachers and GCSE students in every classroom is unique. The richness of data collected will not be achieved by neglecting the interactive and co-constructive nature of the people in context (Ushioda, 1994). In other words, understanding the practices of Mandarin teachers and the responses of GCSE students to the teachers' practices provides rich data for this research. Moreover, within the past few decades, motivation theories have been progressing from a macro perspective analysing the whole relationship between L2 community and learners (i.e. socio-educational model) to a micro perspective, looking at particular language classes, and within these classes, at specific individual language learners. Scholars have attempted to identify the contextual factors perceived to be in dynamic interplay with motivation and have focused on the process and experience of language learning over time (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Ushioda & Chen, 2011b). Therefore, this research aims to capture the complexity of motivation and describe the learning process in a more precise way, only in the classroom setting. This study is a process of understanding the Mandarin teachers' practices in the classrooms and the experiences of the students in learning Mandarin. The researcher engaged in a process of re-describing the teaching of Mandarin teachers in secondary schools in England will attempt to turn lay accounts into social-scientific explanations of Mandarin pedagogy in GCSE classrooms.

To achieve the research purpose and answer the research questions, a case study design was adopted as the overarching inquiry strategy. The case study is a research strategy and an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context, in this case, the GCSE Mandarin classrooms (Cohen et al., 2007). By using multiple sources of evidence, case study provided an in-depth investigation of a group – GCSE Mandarin teachers and their students, to achieve the descriptive and exploratory analysis of motivational strategies implemented in the GCSE classrooms in England. Instrumental case studies examined a particular case to gain insight into a theory – Motivational Strategies Framework, through multiple sources of evidence. The multiple sources of evidence in this study included GCSE Mandarin teacher and student interviews, student questionnaires and lesson observations. Adopting multiple research tools attempted to capture unique features that might otherwise be lost in

larger-scale data, and these unique features might hold the key to the understanding of the teaching and learning of GCSE Mandarin classrooms.

### 3.2 Sampling participants

The study intended to investigate the motivational strategies implemented by Mandarin teachers at GCSE level, and how the students responded to the teachers' practices. Purposive sampling was employed to recruit the participants of the research. Since the research aimed to capture the motivational practices of Mandarin teachers in GCSE classrooms, criterion sampling is applied to recruit schools which have a well-established Mandarin curriculum (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). In other words, the schools that are offering Mandarin as an MFL in the formal curriculum instead of enhancement class were the priority, and it is hoped to yield rich information of teaching Mandarin at GCSE level from a well-developed curriculum. The participants of the research are secondary school Mandarin teachers and GCSE Mandarin students (Year 10 and Year 11) in England. By applying maximum variation sampling, there are four schools including three different types (i.e. one comprehensive, one independent and two academies) who participated in this research. The range of variation in this research enables the determination of whether common themes and patterns can be found in Mandarin teaching and learning at different types of schools (Gall et al., 1996). In addition, as this is not a funded research, the geographic accessibility of the participants due to financial expenses were considered. Thus, schools in London where the researcher is based were made the priority. The following Table 4 summarises the data collected in this research.

<b>School</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Lessons observation</b>	<b>Student questionnaire</b>	<b>Focus Group</b>
School A	Comprehensive	2 native Chinese 1 native English	16 lessons	Year 10: 41 Year 11: 27	Year 10: 2 groups Year 11: 2 groups
School B	Independent	1 native English	3 lessons (one double lesson)	Year 10: 25	1 group
School C	Academy	2 native Chinese	2 lessons (all double lessons)	Year 10: 51	2 groups
School D	Academy	1 native Chinese	3 lessons	Year 10: 12	1 group
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 schools</b>	<b>7 teachers</b>	<b>24 lessons</b>	<b>156 students</b>	<b>8 groups</b>

*Table 4 Summary of the data collected*

### 3.2.1 Participating schools

Invitation emails were sent to headteachers of the schools which offered Mandarin from KS3 to GCSE levels. The data collection period was from February to June 2017. Many schools declined to participate as the data collection period coincided with the time when schools were preparing their students for the GCSE examination. Four schools agreed to participate in the research and dates for the data collection were arranged in February and March. Yet, one of the schools opted-out on the day of the first lesson observation in April due to personal reasons of the Mandarin teacher. However, one of the participants introduced the researcher to the Head of Mandarin in another school, who agreed to participate in the research through the snowballing sampling (Gall et al., 1996). Four schools with a mix of both state and independent schools resulted in rich data, after which a data saturation state is not determined by the number of participants was reached (Cohen et al., 2007). The profile of the schools, including language policies, weekly contact hours, class size and examination board of Mandarin GCSE is explained in Table 5.

<b>School</b>	<b>Language policy</b>	<b>Weekly Contact hours</b>	<b>Class size</b>	<b>Examination board</b>
School A - Comprehensive	In Year 7, all the students are required to learn either French or Spanish until Christmas and there is a seating test. The students are then divided into fast-track (top-set) or slow track. The top-set of students can choose German or Mandarin as their second foreign language. There are ten classes in each cohort, having four top-set groups, two of them selected Mandarin and two of them selected German. The students who are learning Mandarin also learn Spanish or French at the same time.	2 hours 30 minutes	20	Edexcel GCSE
School B - Independent	In Year 7 and Year 8, Mandarin is compulsory for every student. In Year 8 and Year 9, the students can choose to continue or opt-out to take the GCSE. The students who take the GCSE have two opportunities to make the decision. It is compulsory to learn at least one foreign language for the GCSE, and the school offers a wide range of languages for the students including Latin, European languages, Russian, Mandarin and Japanese. GCSE Mandarin is optional for the students and these students are the first cohort of the GCSE Mandarin of the school.	2 hours 40 minutes	25	IGCSE
School C - Academy	This is a newly established academy in East London, with less than ten years of history. The first Mandarin GCSE cohort will be in 2019. It is compulsory for every student to learn either Spanish	3 hours 20 minutes	25-30	Edexcel GCSE

or Mandarin from Year 7 to Year 11. The students state their preferences in Year 7 but are not guaranteed their language of choice. The school aims to attain a high percentage of EBacc, so every student is required to take a foreign language at GCSE level.

School D - Academy	All students are required to have one hour instruction of Chinese culture every fortnight from Year 7 to Year 9. The learning is focused on the cultural and historic aspects of China. At the GCSE level, Mandarin is optional and the students are selected by the teachers based on their performance in Year 9.	3 hours	12	AQA GCSE
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*Table 5 Profile of the schools participated in the research*

### 3.2.2 Teacher participants

Mandarin teachers who are teaching GCSE Mandarin (Year 10 or Year 11) were invited to participate in the research. There was no particular criterion for teaching experience or qualification of the teachers. Seven teachers participated in the research, with five native-Chinese speakers and two native-English speakers. The teachers have a diverse education background and teacher training. The teaching experiences of most teachers are mainly between three to five years (i.e. five teachers out of seven) while the two others possess nine years (Judith) and 17 years (Hannah) of teaching experiences respectively. Three teachers have Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), three others followed other recognised routes, and Joseph has no prior teacher training. A diverse background of participants provides the possibility to understand a variety of motivational strategies implemented by teachers having different backgrounds. The following Table 6 shows the profile of the teachers and the pseudonyms used for them.

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>First language</b>	<b>Education background</b>	<b>Teacher training</b>	<b>Teaching experiences</b>
Judith	Chinese	Undergraduate: Education, China Masters: Education, UK	PGCE	9 years
Mary	Chinese	Undergraduate: Biochemistry, China	PGCE	5 years
Mark	English	Undergraduate: Spanish and Portuguese, UK Masters: East Asian studies, UK Chinese: HSK 6	Recognition route	5 years
Joseph	English	Undergraduate: Chinese, UK	No prior teacher training	3 years
David	Chinese	Undergraduate: Economics, China Masters: Sports Management, UK	Recognition route	3 years
Hannah	Chinese	Undergraduate: English,	Graduate	17 years

		China Masters: TESOL, UK	Teachers Programme	
Ruth	Chinese	Undergraduate: Chinese and English, UK	PGCE	3 years

*Table 6 Profile of the Mandarin teachers*

### 3.2.3 Student participants

All the students who are studying GCSE Mandarin were invited to participate in the research. Considering the level of study, it is assumed that the students have been learning Mandarin beyond the level of a beginner and possess sustained motivation to continue the process of learning the language. The following Table 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 present the demographic background of the student participants.

Year	Percentage
Year 10	82.7%
Year 11	17.3%

*Table 7.1 Level of the student participants*

Since the data collection period was from February to June 2017, most of the Year 11 students were preparing for the GCSE examination, hence there was an imbalance of the ratio with Year 10 (i.e. 82.7%) and Year 11 (i.e. 17.3%) students.

No. of years	No. of students	Percentage
2 Years below	2	1.3%
2 Years	5	3.2%
3-4 Years	49	31.6%
4-5 Years	77	49.7%
5 Years and above	22	14.2%

*Table 7.2 Number of years for which the student participants have been learning Mandarin*

According to the questionnaire, most of the students have been learning Mandarin for 3 to 5 years, which accounts for a total of 90%, which means the students started learning Mandarin in year 7 or 8. Only 3.2% of students who have been learning Mandarin for more than 5 years.



Chinese related family background	Percentage
Yes	9.6%
No	90.4%

*Table 7.3 Chinese related background of the student participants*

One of the purposes of this research is to investigate how non-native speakers learn Mandarin best, a language which is different from English or alphabet-based languages. The majority of students have no Chinese-related family background, but there are 9.6% of students who expressed that they have family members who are Chinese, in which mostly one of the parents or relatives are Chinese or half-Chinese. Some have relatives living in Hong Kong, and only two students out of 156 student participants are Malaysian Chinese.

### 3.3 Research tools

Four research tools were used to collect data, which attempts to understand the perspectives of teachers and students in motivational strategies. The research methods include, i) semi-structured interviews with Mandarin teachers; ii) questionnaires to GCSE Mandarin students; iii) focus group interviews with GCSE Mandarin students and iv) observations of Mandarin lessons. The following section explains the implementation of the research methods and how the research tools are triangulated.

#### 3.3.1 Teacher semi-structured interviews

The interview questions (see Appendix 2) focused on Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework, involving eight aspects of the third phase ***Maintaining and Protecting motivation***, in particular, what strategies the teachers consider as important and how they implement various strategies in their language classrooms. The semi-structured interview was used to find Mandarin teachers' perceptions on how to sustain the motivation of pupils (Silverman, 2013). Semi-structured interviews encourage the Mandarin teachers to respond open-endedly and to answer a question in his or her terms (Scott & Morrison, 2006). The data from the interviews elicited an in-depth understanding of the experiences of a small group of participants, and semi-structured interviews provided greater flexibility for the researcher to introduce probes for

expanding, developing and clarifying participants' responses (Cohen et al., 2006). The relatively open framework to gather information from the Mandarin teachers resulted in new themes and issues emerging in the course of data collection, for instance the emphasis of a trip to China and Mandarin-specific learning strategies (i.e. radical as the building block of Chinese characters), thus gaining insights of the real situation of Mandarin classrooms in England.

### 3.3.2 Student questionnaires

Questionnaires were used in this research with the aim to describe the attitude of the respondents – GCSE Mandarin students. It was a relatively direct and versatile method capable of gathering a large amount of data in a short period of time (Dörnyei, 2007). The purpose of the student questionnaires was to attempt to understand the perception of students in terms of their motivation of learning Mandarin, self-efficacy of learning Mandarin and their responses to the teachers' practices in learning Mandarin at GCSE level. It is important to note that the questionnaire was not aimed to generalise the data and provide descriptive data, instead, it helped to shape the focus group interviews which intended to elucidate a more in-depth understanding of the students' perceptions.

There are three parts of the questionnaire (see Appendix 3). The first part is about the students' experiences of learning Mandarin and their motivation. The second part of the questionnaire is based on the design of self-efficacy research (Graham, 2002; 2004), capturing the confidence of the students in learning Mandarin in general and different skills of the language. A numerical rating scale was adopted so that students could express the extent of their attitude towards different areas of learning. The third part of the questionnaire was based on their attitude presented in the second part, on how the teachers' practices and the learning strategies they have adopted contribute to their confidence of various aspects, including pinyin, characters, speaking, listening, etc. The open-ended question design permitted greater freedom of expression, and could provide greater richness in data (Cohen et al., 2011; Dörnyei, 2007). For instance, many students expressed that their confidence was based on the practices they have had; in the focus group interviews, the researcher delved into how the students practiced Mandarin outside the classroom and they were able to elucidate a wide range of learning strategies employed by them. Furthermore, the language used in the questionnaire was simple and direct and it took less than 15 minutes for the students to complete the questionnaire.

### 3.3.3 Student focus group interviews

Focus group interviews with the GCSE students were conducted after the administration of student questionnaires. Four to six students in each class (i.e. 20% - 30% of the whole class) were recruited for the focus group interview. Focus group interviews allowed the researcher to have direct interaction with the GCSE Mandarin student participants (Scott & Morrison, 2005). The focus group interview questions (see Appendix 4) also aimed to gather data of the students' attitude, values and opinions on their learning of Mandarin (Cohen et al., 2007). The composition of the group is expected to be homogeneous, as the recruited students are all non-native Chinese speakers, having similar language proficiency and having studied in the same GCSE Mandarin class in which they experience the same Mandarin teaching. Focus group interviews enabled the explicit use of *group interaction* as research data, not only capturing how ideas and knowledge develop and operate within a given cultural context (Kitzinger, 1994) but also as a justification of their views when challenged by their peers. Moreover, GCSE students' voices in Mandarin learning were also absent in research, participation in which would allow them to speak out in their own words and let their voices be heard (*ibid*). The focus group interviews greatly expanded the responses of the students from the questionnaire. Focus group interviews are highly efficient methods as qualitative data can be collected from several people at the same time (Robson, 2011). Data from a total of 37 students would not have been obtainable (i.e. eight focus groups) and would otherwise have been impractical on a one-to-one basis, especially in conjunction with the teacher interview data, lesson observations and the student questionnaires.

### 3.3.4 Lesson observations

Lesson observations provide opportunities for the researcher to listen, watch and record what the Mandarin teachers say and do in specific contexts – GCSE Mandarin classrooms (Scott & Morrison, 2006). It also offers first-hand educational experiences for the researcher to validate what the Mandarin teachers say in interviews. Non-participatory lesson observations were employed, which attempted to minimise the *reactivity* effect, whereby the teachers and students might behave differently when the researcher was present and participated in the class (Cohen et al., 2007). The researcher sat at the back of the classrooms before the lesson started and did not engage in any classroom activities. There were two tools used in this research method,

i) observation field notes and ii) an audio recording of the lessons. The field notes were used to record the activities in the lessons, and aspects of the lessons that could not be captured through audio recording, for instance, PowerPoint presentation of the teachers, notes on the whiteboard, and the learning atmosphere. The recording of the lessons was complementary to the field notes, ensuring that there is no missing information in the process of data analysis. On the other hand, the restrictions on what the researcher may be able to observe which raises concerns about representativeness will be taken into consideration in data analysis (Scott & Morrison, 2006). Lesson observations are thus used as a complementary device to triangulate the data collected through the teacher interviews, student questionnaires and student focus groups.

### 3.3.5 Triangulation

Triangulation of data was performed in this research for improving the credibility of research and to check out the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Robson, 2011). Having the teacher interviews as the dominant data, it aimed to explore the perceptions of teachers in the implementation of motivational strategies. The student questionnaires attempted to understand the motivation of the students and the Mandarin learning of the students, whereas to provide more in-depth understanding, the student focus group interviews expanded and validated the responses of the students. Lesson observations, as a complimentary research method, were enabled to collect data in a real classroom setting to demonstrate the implementation of the motivational strategies as mentioned by the teachers, as well as the students' responses. Collecting two sources of data (focus group interviews and questionnaire) from the same group of participants, data triangulation is performed to validate data through cross verification to obtain consistency of findings. The multiple data sources in this research aimed to produce rich, robust, comprehensive and well-developed findings.

### 3.4 Role of the researcher

The nature of the qualitative approach is a complex balancing act, in which the role of the researcher needs to be recognised and acknowledged (Hennink et al, 2010). The subjectivity of the participants (emic) and the researcher (etic) is taken into account and recognised. The background and values of a researcher also influence the

interpretation and observation of understanding the social world (*ibid*). In terms of personal reflexivity, the professional background and experience of the researcher as a Chinese and Mandarin secondary school teacher in Hong Kong come into play here. Yet, the researcher's experiences in Hong Kong teaching Chinese as a first language is not the same as teaching Mandarin as a foreign language in the United Kingdom. Being fully cognizant of this, the researcher has observed MFL lessons in secondary schools and have taught Mandarin from the beginner to advanced levels in a public school as a cover teacher in the spring term of 2016 to gain insights on the teaching of foreign language teaching in England, particularly the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching. In hindsight, "*the researcher is the instrument*" (Patton, 2001, p. 14), and the researcher is familiar with the learning content at GCSE level by studying the textbook, specification, and past examination papers. Furthermore, the researcher has observed one week of Mandarin lessons of the teacher that the researcher covered for, who also shared all her teaching materials, thereby allowing further transferring of the previous teaching experience to the context of the UK.

In terms of interpersonal reflexivity, the researcher is aware of the situational dynamic between her and the school or the participants, which can impact the creation of knowledge (Hennink et al., 2010). During the data collection process, the researcher has explained clearly that the aim of the research is not to assess their teaching, and the adoption of non-participatory observations and the usage of audio instead of video recording are attempts to maintain a non-threatening atmosphere in the data collection process. In addition, the Mandarin teachers were able to decide the arrangements for the teacher interviews, student focus group interviews, lesson observations, and the administration of student questionnaires. While the researcher's previous teaching experiences contributed to a smooth data collection process, it is unavoidable that the presence of a researcher altered the dynamic of the context which the teachers might implement different teaching strategies, or the students behaved not exactly the same. For instance, one of the teachers expressed that the students were more disciplined and less chatty when the researcher was in the classroom. Also, a teacher arranged an activity focused on developing learning strategies to learn new vocabulary after she mentioned it in the interview.

In terms of theoretical openness, the research design and data analysis are guided by the theoretical framework of the research – Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies

Framework. The adherence to the framework attempts to minimise the bias of the researcher as a Mandarin teacher, who has personal beliefs and values regarding the motivational strategies of a language classroom. It can be argued that the lack of a distinct boundary between the researcher’s dual identities, a teacher and a researcher have implicitly and explicitly influenced the research. Yet, the researcher considers herself as a researcher rather than a teacher during data collection. The continuous self-reflection in the process does not aim to paralyse the research process, but it is instead significant to find a balance between comprehensive reflexivity and blocking out the participants’ voice (Hennink et al, 2010).

### 3.5 Data collection

#### 3.5.1 Pilot study

The pilot study was a trial in preparation for the main study. It aims to develop and test the adequacy of research instruments as well as to have a clear definition of the focus of the study (Robson, 2011). The pilot study was conducted in School A (i.e. a comprehensive school) from late February to early March. Three teacher interviews, 10 lesson observations, and 40 student questionnaires were conducted in the pilot study, however, there was not enough time to do student focus group interviews. Table 8 below summarises the data collected from the pilot study. The decision-making processes that were developed during the pilot study are described, followed by the main study in the next section.

<b>Teacher interview</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Lesson observed</b>	<b>Student questionnaire</b>
Judith	Year 10	Y10-1	2 lessons	20
	Year 11	Y11-1 & Y11-2	4 lessons	Nil
Mark	Year 10	Y10-2	2 lessons	20*
Mary	Year 10	Y10-2	2 lessons	

\* Mark and Mary share the teaching of the same class.

*Table 8 Summary of data collected in the pilot study*

Several methodological modifications resulting from the pilot study are worth mentioning. First, in terms of the students’ questionnaires, the clarity of questions, type of questions, layout, time needed to fill in the questionnaire, and comprehensiveness of data collected were experimented (Cohen et al., 2011). The design of the student

questionnaires was aimed to understand the self-efficacy of students in learning Mandarin. One set of students reported the reason behind their learning confidence in the questionnaire that require them to rate the extent to which they agreed with the statements like “I am just good at that kind of content.”, “I try hard.”, “It’s just bad luck.”, “I use poor techniques of strategies.” etc. The statements were adopted from previous self-efficacy research in MFL learning (Graham, 2002; 2004). Whereas the other set of students were given open-ended questions to explain different levels of confidence in various language areas (e.g. listening, reading, writing, pinyin and speaking). It is important to note that the explanations of the open-ended question group did not match any of the statements adopted from previous research in self-efficacy. Not only were the explanations of the students more comprehensive and detailed, but they also demonstrated how the students’ views might be biased or influenced if they were given *the reasons* of being confident or not being confident in foreign language learning. For instance, the students wrote, “*I am good at memorisation.*”, “*I practice them the most in and out the classroom*”, “*It is logical and easy to understand*”, etc. This finding has led to the challenge of the perceptions of adults towards students’ articulation of their learning, as well as the factors which have been widely assumed to be the reasons behind the performance of high- or low- achievers. In other words, the findings from the students’ questionnaires concerning self-efficacy of students in learning Mandarin will shed lights on understanding the reasons of confidence of students in MFL.

The second modification is applied to the student questionnaire. From the preliminary data analysis, most of the students reported that “Chinese is interesting” as the reason of learning the language, which aligns with previous research and reports of the Mandarin learning in the UK (CILT, 2007). In order to elucidate the elements or aspects that interest the students, the question was changed to “*What are the three interesting things in learning Chinese?*”, which intended to investigate why it appears to be interesting to the students and to enable an adequate response range. In the main study, there are 12 aspects summarised from this question that the students found interesting in Mandarin learning, for example, *Chinese characters, Chinese culture, speaking, going to China*, etc. This provided new insights about the interesting elements in Mandarin learning as perceived by the students rather than expressing a general statement about presence of interest.

The third methodological modification involves the design of lesson observation forms. In the pilot study, the researcher attempted to quantify the events that happened in the

lesson which failed to describe the richness and uniqueness of motivational strategies implemented by the teachers. Thus, the lesson observation is modified to consist of three elements (see Appendix 5). First, general information of the lesson, such as date, time, topic and objectives; second there are five columns that recorded what was happening in the classroom (emic) and the comments of the researcher (etic). Third, a form was developed to record six elements of the lessons, including *task difficulty, engagement, L2 Use, participation, enjoyment and interaction*. In the lesson, the researcher ranked these six elements according to the extent observed L (low), M(medium) and H(High) (see Table 9). The rationale of this form is to provide an idea of the atmosphere of lessons in general, in particular the non-visual aspect of the lesson, such as the engagement and enjoyment of students. The data from the form is not used for analysis, instead, it helps the researcher to have a better understanding of the lesson while referencing the audio recording as well as to record the visual aspects of the lesson in a more precise way.

Task Difficulty	L	M	H
Engagement	L	M	H
L2 use	L	M	H

Participation	L	M	H
Enjoyment	L	M	H
Interaction	L	M	H

*Table 9 A form to record general classroom atmosphere*

The piloting of qualitative approach is important, particularly because various research tools were used in this research (Holloway, 1997). There were many minor modifications after the pilot study such as improvements of interview techniques to avoid asking leading questions, changes in the observation schedule which was too tight in the second week of the pilot study, etc. The above-mentioned modifications not only enabled an in-depth understanding of the topic, but also the richness of the data collected may contribute to the methodological advancement of qualitative research in foreign language motivation. Lastly, the inclusion of data in the pilot study to the main study is not a cause of concern because the study does not involve intervention and contamination of the responses of participants being exposed to the same situation. In addition, the pilot study successfully tested the research instruments and was improved by modifications and not the redevelopment of the instruments (See Appendix 3). Most importantly, the data collected was relevant to the researcher questions. Therefore, the data in both pilot study and main study was included for analysis (Holloway, 1997). To sum up, the testing of research instruments in the pilot study ensured that the data



acquired will answer the research questions (Cohen et al., 2007), and define a clear focus for the research.

### 3.5.2 Main study

The main study was conducted from March to June 2017. In the main study, the four schools were visited, including the pilot school where more data was collected. The sequence of the data collection was suggested to start with lesson observations, followed by teacher interviews or student questionnaires, and student focus group interviews. Such a sequence was intended to provide some understanding of the teachers' teaching before conducting the interviews. Also, it is important to build rapport with the students as they might not want to share their views to a complete stranger in the classroom. The data collection procedures were explained to the Mandarin teachers after which they decided the dates to collect the data.

For the lesson observation, three to six lessons were observed in each Mandarin class. Since the research objective was to explore motivational strategies implemented by the teachers, without specifying particular language skills or learning topic, the lesson observations were conducted according to the teaching schedule of the Mandarin teachers in the academic year. Table 10 summarises the lessons observed in this research.

School	Teacher	Date	Year	Topic
School A	Judith	Year 11	21 Feb 2017	Vocabulary revision
			23 Feb 2017	Vocabulary revision
			1 Mar 2017	Vocabulary revision
			26 Apr 2017	Future plan, education and work
			2 May 2017	Vocabulary revision
	Judith	Year 10	23 Feb 2017	Question words and jobs
			28 Feb 2017	Jobs and future plan
			1 Mar 2017	Jobs and future plan
			26 April 2017	Jobs and work experience
			27 April 2017	Job and occupation
Mark	Year 10	20 Feb 2017	Jobs and future	
		22 Feb 2017	GCSE Speaking assessment	
		Mary	Year 10	10 Feb 2017

			21 Feb 2017	Future jobs
			24 Apr 2017	Vocabulary
			25 Apr 2017	Future job - listening
School B	Joseph	Year 10	9 May 2017	My dream house
			12 May 2017	Vocabulary Test
			10 May 2017	My Town
School C	Hannah	Year 10	17 May 2017	Jobs
			24 May 2017	Job application
	David	Year 10	17 May 2017	Job application
			24 May 2017	Job application
School D	Ruth	Year 10	12 Jun 2017	Listening Revision – Environment
			14 Jun 2017	Environment
			16 Jun 2017	Environment – part 2

*Table 10 Summary of the lessons observed*

All the dates to conduct the teachers' interviews and the administration of student questionnaires were based on the arrangement of the Mandarin teachers. The questionnaires were distributed by the researcher in the lesson, so that the rationale of the questionnaires. The researcher also explained to the students that they are free to leave the questionnaire blank if they did not want to complete it and the Mandarin teachers did not have access to their questionnaires. However, under the supervision of the Mandarin teachers, the students felt obliged to fill in the questionnaires. Two of the Mandarin teachers did urge the students who were not filling in the questionnaire. A teacher in School A requested the students to fill in their initials because the teacher thought that the students would take it more seriously if asked to do so. The researcher did mention to the students that she did not know their initials and all the questionnaires were distributed and collected by the researcher.

The teacher interviews were conducted during the teachers' free lessons, mostly in an empty classroom or the staff common room. The interview of teacher Ruth only lasted for 18 minutes and did not cover all the questions as she was very busy, and the researcher did not manage to set up another time to finish the interview. However, the data collected is enough to be worth using for analysis. Table 11 summarises the details of the teacher interviews.

<b>School</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Duration</b>
A	Judith	24 February 2017	45'35
	Mary	28 February 2017	18'02'
		06 March 2017	38'10
	Mark	24 March 2017	59'11'
B	Joseph	09 May 2017	1'02'48
C	David	24 May 2017	58'25'
	Hannah	17 May 2017	41'06'
D	Ruth	16 June 2017	18'53

*Table 11 Summary of the teacher interviews*

The student focus group interviews were conducted mostly on the last day of the lesson observations. This is because the students would have been more familiar with the researcher, who has had lessons observed at least two to three times. The participation of the focus group interviews was on a voluntary basis. In School A, all the students in the focus group were selected by the researcher, the students who were interested put up their hands and the researchers randomly picked the students. In School B and School C, the students were not very active, and the teachers helped to invite some of them to participate in the research. In School C and School D, the students in the focus group were more advanced students of the class who were selected by the teacher. The focus group interviews were conducted in the classroom in which the students had familiar surroundings (Cohen et al., 2007), either during the lesson or during lunchtime, which depended on the arrangements of the Mandarin teachers. The Mandarin teachers did not have access to the classroom during the interviews. As the facilitator of the focus group interviews, the researcher presented an un-authoritative figure to the students, who emphasised the importance of listening to the students' voices (Robson, 2011). Furthermore, even though there were some students who were relatively more outspoken than others, however no students dominated the discussion and a balance of participation among the students was maintained. Table 12 presents the summary of student focus group interview.

<b>School</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Duration</b>
School A	10	11 May 2017	32'34'
	10	25 April 2017	46'32'

	11	16 May 2017	24'11'
	11	18 May 2017	41'39'
School B	10	10 May 2017	25'59'
School C	10	17 May 2017	32'32'
	10	24 May 2017	26'34'
School D	10	16 June 2017	33'12'

*Table 12 Summary of student focus group interviews*

English was the language used in the questionnaires and to conduct the focus group interviews. For the teacher interviews, the teachers were free to choose the language that they preferred to speak. All the teachers used their native language dominantly and occasionally used Mandarin or English in the interviews. This was done because it is important to ensure that the participants can express and present their ideas comfortably (Dörnyei, 2007).

### 3.6 Data analysis

The purpose of data analysis is to describe a phenomenon (Flick, 2014). In this research, the phenomenon dealt with the motivational strategies implemented by the Mandarin teachers to sustain the motivation of the GCSE students. In qualitative data analysis, interpretation is the core activity (Hennick et al., 2010). In this study, interpretation aimed to understand or explain the four types of data collected, including i) teacher interviews, ii) student focus group interviews, iii) student questionnaires and iv) lesson observations, and to understand the internal logic of the data in the context. The overall approach to analyse the data in this research was thematic analysis. It is because this research was guided by the theoretical framework, Dörnyei (2001) Motivational Strategy Framework, which included data from teachers and students, by recognising patterns from the groups relating their perceptions of the motivational strategies.

Thematic analysis is a search for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the phenomenon (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) as it reports experiences, meanings and the reality of the participants in specific contexts (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) states that thematic analysis *“is a form of pattern recognition within the data, where emerging themes become the*

*categories for analysis.*” (p. 82) To recognise the pattern, a ‘good code’ which captures qualitative richness of the phenomenon is significant (Boyatzis, 1998, p.1). Coding is a process of labelling and categorizing data and has a central role in thematic analysis. The process of thematic coding involves the identification of themes through the iterative process – reading and re-reading the data (Robson, 2011). Braun and Clarke proposed six phases of thematic analysis, which is used to guide the data analysis procedures of the study.

Since the focus of the study are teaching strategies of GCSE Mandarin teachers, the teachers’ interviews are the dominant data. In the process of data analysis, thematic coding is used to analyse the teacher’s interviews first, then the codes developed were used to analyse other data sources. The lesson observation data are the complementary, providing evidence for the classroom practices that mentioned by the teachers in the interviews. Triangulation is performed by comparing what the teacher said in the interview and their practices in the classrooms. Additionally, student questionnaires act as an exploratory instrument to investigate the attitudes of GCSE student towards learning Mandarin. The student questionnaires provided insights to conduct an in-depth investigation of the GCSE students’ perceptions in the focus group interviews.

### 3.6.1 Familiarising with the data

Transcription involves making a written record of an interview or group discussion for data analysis (Hennink et al., 2010). The content of the Mandarin teacher interviews and student focus group interviews have social or cultural meanings attached to it, thus, a verbatim transcript that captured information in participants’ own words, phrases and expressions was necessary. The data of teacher interviews were transcribed by the researcher, and the focus group interviews were transcribed by three undergraduate students who were former students of the researcher. The interviews of native-Chinese speaking teachers were mostly conducted in Mandarin. Simultaneous translation and transcription were conducted in the five native-Chinese Mandarin teacher interviews. While the researcher was transcribing the interviews, she translated the verbatim from Chinese into English. This involved listening to segments of the recorded interviews, considering an appropriate translation and writing down the translation into a transcript.

In order to maintain consistency with the translation, a list of terms used by the interviewees were created to ensure that the translation and transcriptions was systematic and consistent. The researcher is aware that the process of translation and transcription is an interpretative act, in which meanings are created, rather than simply a mechanical act of putting spoken sounds on paper (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). Thus, the transcriptions aimed to preserve the colloquial style of language and phrases used by the participants as some expressions hold cultural meanings that the researcher retained for analysis. For example, the Mandarin teacher described Chinese grammar as 形散神不散, which the researcher could not find a translation for. Transcribing and checking the transcriptions of the teacher interviews allowed the researcher to be familiar with the data. The focus group interviews, they were all conducted in English. The researcher listened to the recording and collated the accuracy of the transcriptions. The data analysis then started by reading and analysing the student questionnaires which provided an initial idea of the teachers' practices. This was followed by the listening of the recordings of teacher interviews again during which initial ideas were noted down. With regards to field notes, the researcher tried to organise the lesson observation notes on the same day or by the end of the week. The researcher read all the data at least once before proceeding to the generation of initial codes.

### 3.6.2 Generating initial codes

Nvivo 11 qualitative data analysis software is used for coding the teacher interviews and focus group interviews. Since this study is focused on the GCSE Mandarin pedagogy, the data of teacher interviews serve as the dominant data to drive the process of data analysis. First, the researcher generated codes from the data of teacher interviews and students' focus group interviews. At this phase of coding, the researcher was aware of the potential of 'losing the context' and over-fragmentation of the raw data (Bryman, 2016). One way the researcher tried to avoid this was by applying codes to every sentence, and code the extract as chunks rather than a sentence. This kept the interpretations open and did not result in arbitrary conclusions. There are 41 codes generated in this phase and 10 sub-themes. Table 13 shows the some of the inductive codes that generate from the data.

Code	Category
After school class	Support from teachers
Feedback	
Teacher's role	
Teaching materials	
Technology	
Chinese characters	Learning strategies
Pinyin	
Pronunciation	
Radicals	
Word	

*Table 13 Examples of initial inductive codes*

Then a different set of codes were generated according to data of the theoretical framework - Dörnyei's (2001) Motivational Strategies Model. In the third phase of the model, ***protecting and sustaining motivation***, eight macro motivational strategies were proposed, and there are micro motivational strategies suggested in each macro motivational strategies. The deductive approach generated an exhaustive list of 97 codes according to the framework and previous literature (See Appendix 8). Table 14 shows the codes in one of the macro motivational strategy *Making learning stimulating and enjoyable*.

Code	Category
Linguistic focus	Breaking the monotony of learning
Language skills focus	
Communication	
Organisational format	
Sequence of activities	
Unexpected event	Interesting and enjoyable
Challenge	
Interesting content	
Novelty element	
Intriguing element	
Exotic	

Fantasy	
Personal element	
Competition	
Tangible outcome	
Active participants	Student involvement
Specific roles	

*Table 14 Examples of initial deductive codes*

In addition, description of each code defines what the theme concerns and how to know when the theme occurs. Table 15 shows the description of some codes - both inductive and deductive codes.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
Challenge	Deductive	Tasks in which learners need to solve problems, discover something, overcome obstacles, avoid traps, find hidden information, etc.
Novelty element	Deductive	The activity is new or different or unfamiliar or totally unexpected.
Competition	Deductive	The opportunity to compete can add excitement to learning tasks.
Objectives	Inductive	Clear objectives for the lesson and for every activity in the lessons.
Variety of activities	Inductive	Different activities in one lesson or one activity that train different language skills.
Practices	Inductive	Practices within the lessons and outside the lessons, including how to practice, what to practice and who to practice with.

*Table 15 Examples of description of codes*

### 3.6.3 Searching for themes

An iterative process was carried out to compare, merge, reduce, and reorganise the two sets of codes generated deductively and inductively (See Table 16).



Code	Type	Description	Category
<b>Technology-based approach</b>	Deductive	Emphasise independent interaction with educational technologies. Mainly focus on 'outside classroom' learning.	
<b>Hierarchical facilitator</b>	Deductive	The teacher exercise the power to direct the learning process <i>for</i> the group.	
<b>Choices and involvement</b>	Deductive	Learners are involved or have the choices about many aspects of the learning process, including activities, teaching materials, topic assignments, due dates, the format and the pace of their learning.	<b>Roles of teachers</b>
<b>Extra lessons</b>	Inductive	The teachers provide extra lessons for students e.g. catch up classes.	
<b>Support Teaching materials</b>	Inductive	The teachers develop learning materials for students to do revision outside the classrooms, e.g. the Bible, vocabulary list.	
<b>Homework</b>	Inductive	Homework policy of Mandarin, including types of homework, frequency of homework and performance of the students.	

*Table 16 Examples of merging deductive and inductive codes*

The codes were more theory-driven, as Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework and previous research in teaching Mandarin as a foreign language guided the research. In addition, some codes generated from the theoretical framework could not find any evidence in the data, for example, the code *fantasy* is absent in the data and the codes *interesting content* and *novelty element* can be merged. There are 47 codes generated in this phase, the codes were developed systematically through the entire data set, including the teacher interviews, student focus groups and the open-ended questions in the student questionnaires, attempting to identify interesting aspects in the data items that showed repeated patterns. There are many codes that were merged or reduced, and some of them were coded again. Following that, the researcher started to organise the themes according to the eight motivational strategies suggested in the phase of ***protecting and sustaining motivation***. At the same time, the data from

student questionnaires were analysed. While the researcher was searching for themes, also writing the data analysis started and this advanced the interpretation into a more in-depth analysis. Table 17 presents the development of theme – Communicative Language Teaching.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Theme</b>
Structure of lesson	P-P-P model	Communicative Language Teaching
Presentation of task		
Practices in the classroom		
Production of language		
Four skills approach	Communicative activities	
Variety of activities		
Use of authentic materials		
Repetition	Assessment for learning	
Vocabulary		

*Table 17 Example of development of theme – Communicative Language Teaching*

### 3.6.4 Reviewing and defining themes

Writing of the preliminary findings enabled the researcher to have a more in-depth understanding and interpretation of the data. In this phase, the researcher re-did the whole coding process of all the data where new codes and themes emerged. During the process of re-coding the data, codes were re-defined, merged, and a few deleted. The researcher then reviewed all the extracts under each code and the themes formed, to ensure that all of them appeared to form a coherent pattern. It was at this point that the researcher revisited the whole data set, only fine-tuning and making a more nuanced coding frame (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Hereafter, the iterative process of coding stopped. The definition of the codes and the themes were refined, and most importantly the themes and sub-themes generated not only presented a coherent pattern, but also answered the research questions. The final task is the write-up of the thematic analysis, which are Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this thesis and it is organised according to the theoretical framework of the study.

### 3.7 Trustworthiness

Qualitative research produces findings arriving from real-world settings where the *“phenomenon of interest unfolds naturally”* (Patton, 2001, p.39), and seeks illumination, understanding and extrapolation to similar situations (Hoepfl, 1997). In other words, Patton (2001) states that *“the researcher is the instrument”* (p. 14) of a qualitative research while the trustworthiness of the research depends on the ability and effort of the researcher (Golafshani, 2003). Thereby, this section evaluates the trustworthiness of the process and the products of the research (Hoepfl, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) by stating how to achieve i) credibility; ii) transferability; iii) dependability; and iv) confirmability.

#### 3.7.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to confidence in the ‘truths’ of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The design of the interview questions, questionnaires and lesson observation forms were guided by the theoretical framework, to ensure that they are fully supported by the literature and were congruent with the theoretical perspectives. In addition, the theoretical framework has been developed and discussed widely, the extension of the construct in this research was through the empirical evidence collected. During the data collection process, the researcher’s previous experiences in secondary schools allowed the understanding of the culture, setting and phenomena (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). For instance, the researcher was enabled to develop good relationships and rapport with the Mandarin teachers and the students, in which the respondents felt comfortable disclosing information that might not ‘look good’. Further concerns of the credibility of qualitative studies is the handling of data by the researcher. The full transcriptions of all interview data, the analysis of all lesson observations (i.e. examples of lesson observations summary, see Appendix 6) and questionnaires, were analysed to avoid the selective use of telling examples that support the main themes of the thesis. In addition, the re-access of raw data throughout the process attempted to establish a sufficiently detailed account of the research process. More importantly, every process of the research was recorded, and the transparency established the dependability of the study (Bryman, 2016). For instance, the schools and the participants as well as the data collection procedures were described in detail.

### *Member checking*

It can be argued that performing member checks can establish the validity of the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), yet, when data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions are tested with the participants, controversy can arise (Angen, 2000; Sandelowski, 1993). It is assumed that there is a fixed truth of reality that can be accounted for by a researcher. It is achieved by maintaining the accuracy of the data collected to ensure the perceptions of the participants were conveyed precisely. To assure that the oral data to a textual form were translated and transcribed correctly, and one focus group interview and one teacher interview were randomly selected to validate the whole transcription by a native Chinese speaker (Hennink et al., 2010).

### *3.7.2 Transferability*

Transferability refers to the findings that have applicability in other contexts (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The research is context-specific, in which the schools and the participants were described in a clear, detailed and in-depth manner (Holloway, 1997). To a certain extent, the thick description of the research can be transferred or referenced to another situation, for instance, GCSE MFL classrooms and Mandarin as a foreign language learning. However, the scope of the study limited the transferability power of the findings and bears no intention to transfer to all contexts.

### *3.7.3 Dependability*

To achieve the consistency of data, external audits can be performed which means having a researcher not involved in the research process examine both the process and the product of the research study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In 2017 and 2018, the researcher presented the preliminary findings of different data in departmental doctoral seminars, doctoral school conferences in the Institute of Education and the University of Hong Kong as well as the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Annual Conference. The conferences provided the opportunities for an outsider to evaluate the accuracy and challenge the process and findings, interpretations and conclusions supported by the data. Not only positive and valuable feedback was received in the conferences, but also an assessment of the adequacy of the research process was revealed.

### 3.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and are not researcher biased or motivated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In qualitative data, the subjectivity of the informants, their opinions, attitudes and perspectives contribute to a certain extent of bias. It is important to be aware of this subjectivity rather than consider findings as an absolute state (Robson, 2011). The researcher is part of the context that she is researching and is aware of the position, perspective, beliefs and values throughout the process as explained in section 3.4.1. Preconceptions are not the same as bias (Malterud, 2001) and the researcher had constantly reflected on the impacts of the research and kept records of the research process, including methodological decisions and the reasons for them, the logistics of the study, and reflections of what was happening in the PhD studies in terms of academic reflections. Furthermore, the authenticity of the research is maintained by collecting the data in a real school setting and conducting the lesson observations in a naturally occurring environment as this contributed to the authenticity of a real-world research, giving the participants' a voice to represent their views.

## 3.8 Ethical considerations

### 3.8.1 Ethical issues in data collection

Decisions taken at the design stage were informed by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines (BERA, 2011) but other ethical considerations emerged as the study developed, and with discussion and consultation with the supervisors. The participants of the research were first approached via email addressed to the Head teacher and the Mandarin teacher(s) who acted as a *loco parentis* by explaining the purpose and the process of the research (Robson, 2011). The information sheet and consent form for teachers (see Appendix 10) and students (see Appendix 11) were attached for review before the teachers were asked to indicate an interest in participating in the study. Interested Mandarin teachers were then offered an opportunity to ask further questions about the study in a face-to-face meeting before they decided whether or not to take part. The consent forms for the teachers, students and parents were also reviewed with the participants as part of the face-to-face meeting, and they were given ample time to read the forms before signing them (if they agreed to participate).

Once the consent has been obtained from the school and the Mandarin teacher(s), the information sheet and parents' consent forms (see Appendix 12) were sent to the parents of the students who were learning Mandarin in the school. The consent form had details regarding the students' participation in the self-reporting questionnaire, lesson observation and focus group interviews. Only if approvals were obtained from the parents and the student was the student invited to participate in the research. In other words, if either the parents or student expressed their desire to not participate in the research, the student could return the blank questionnaire and field notes would not be taken on the students; this willingness to participate or not was not to be highlighted to the class. Lastly, all the participants, both the Mandarin teachers and the students could opt-in or opt-out at any stage of the research and the procedures were stated clearly on the consent form.

### 3.8.2 Potential risk to participants and/or researchers

A potential risk related to the lesson observations was that the Mandarin teachers may think that the researcher was assessing his/her teaching. To minimise this risk, not only was the participation of the teachers entirely voluntary, but the teachers were also allowed to arrange the whole data collection process, including dates of lesson observations, focus group interviews and teacher interviews. In addition, they could opt-out of the research at any stage. For instance, in School D, the participation of the research was primarily agreed by the Head of Mandarin who was not the teacher of the GCSE class. Even though the GCSE teacher, Ruth later agreed to participate in the research, having the freedom to arrange the data collection process, the teacher was able to limit the access of the researcher and the data collected. In addition, the researcher stated the rationale of the research clearly and emphasised that the data collected will have no opportunity to be share with anyone except the researcher's supervisor. The objective of the research was to understand the teachers' practices and the students respond to the teachers' practices, and this involved no sensitive data making this study a low risk research.

### 3.8.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Participants' confidentiality and anonymity was strictly maintained. Through the use of unique identifiers, all participants were anonymised for data analysis. To identify which participants provided all levels of consent, the researcher kept a name list with initials

linked to the unique identifiers and the names presented in this report are all pseudonyms. All the raw data collected was password-protected and stored in the researcher's personal computer only. Since the researcher's former students who are studying in universities completed the focus group transcriptions, a data protection contract was set up with the transcribers to guarantee that they do not use the information from the interviews for any other purpose.

### 3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the epistemological perspective underpinning the study, the overall methodology, data collection procedures were described, and most importantly described the data analysis methods. Central to the research methodology of the study were the collection and analysis of teachers' motivational strategies in the GCSE Mandarin classrooms. All the raw data were transcribed, coded and aimed to identify patterns of the teachers' pedagogy and the students' responses. The data analysis process was theory-driven, using Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework, which is focused on teachers' practices. Hence with the teacher interviews as the dominant data, the lesson observations data provided complementary data of *what the teachers said* in the interviews and *what the teachers do* in the classrooms. Data collected in student questionnaires and focus group interviews attempted to understand the perspective of students, regarding the motivational strategies implemented by the teachers. Limitations and practical constraints related to data collection process as well as the data obtained were acknowledged, and the measures taken in consideration were also described. The process of data analysis was detailed to demonstrate how the data was processed to reach the findings that will be presented in the next three chapters. The reliability, validity and the ethical considerations of this research were also discussed.

## Chapter 4 Mandarin-specific Motivational Strategies

### Overview of Findings

The main purpose of this research is to investigate how Mandarin teachers maintain and protect the motivation of Mandarin learners at GCSE level, and how young native-English speakers can best learn Mandarin Chinese in England. As already discussed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, Mandarin Chinese presents a number of specific difficulties for learners. This chapter is based on the data collected as described in Chapter 3, which has been analysed and presented in relation to the key distinctive features of Mandarin Chinese and MFL teaching in England. To answer the research questions, the analysis chapters are guided by Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework, in particular, the third phase – **Maintaining and protecting motivation**. The two chapters focus on describing the perceptions of Mandarin teachers, the practices of the Mandarin teachers in the GCSE classrooms, as well as the students' responses to the teachers' practices. Chapter 4 presents the motivational strategy *Protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence*, which demonstrates how the teachers implement Mandarin-focused pedagogy according to the distinctive features of Mandarin Chinese. Chapter 5 aims to present the implementation of motivational strategies in the context of foreign language classrooms in England where the present study is conducted. The motivational strategies include *Setting specific learning goals, Stimulating and enjoyable activities, Promoting cooperation among learners, Allowing learners to maintain a positive social image and Creating learner autonomy*.

### Introduction

Chapter 4 presents one motivational macrostrategy – ***Protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence***. This is a crucial aspect of motivational teaching practice which can be summarised as 'building learners' confidence'. The analysis of this chapter considers not only the distinctive features of Chinese Mandarin, such as lack of grapheme-phoneme correspondence and discourse-oriented language but also the disparities between English and Mandarin Chinese, in particular, Chinese as a character language and tonal language. In other words, it focuses on how to teach Mandarin to non-native Chinese speakers so as to build their confidence and sustain their motivation. It is assumed that the distinctive features of Mandarin require its



language-focused learning strategies. This chapter is structured according to different aspects of teaching Mandarin as a foreign language, including pronunciation, Chinese character, vocabulary, grammar, and Chinese culture, illustrating motivational practices implemented by the Mandarin teachers which are contributing to linguistic knowledge of the students and building their confidence of learning Mandarin at GCSE level.

The study found that *'Protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence'* is the most important motivational strategy amongst the eight. It is related to the belief of students in terms of mastery of Mandarin Chinese. In other words, the students required to have appropriate 'tools' to learn the Mandarin, a character language that has its unique features. Thus, Mandarin-specific pedagogy is implemented by the Mandarin teachers in the study to develop fundamental knowledge of learners so as to promote self-efficacy and enhance motivation of the students.

According to the student questionnaire, the sampled GCSE students are generally confident in their Mandarin learning and reported that they have different 'ways' to learn different aspects of Mandarin. It can be interpreted as the learning strategies or 'tools' that the students used to help in their learning. More importantly, the learning strategies reported are based on the unique features of Mandarin Chinese. Therefore, this chapter aimed to unpack how the students learn Mandarin or 'what works for them' as it is the impetus to sustain the motivation of the students. This means that what works for the students to learn the language represents the effective use of learning strategies so as to sustain their motivation in learning Mandarin.

#### 4.1 Development of Mandarin-focused learning strategies

The mastery of a language claims to have positive impacts on the self-efficacy of the students, which enhances the motivation of students (Macaro, 2017). For GCSE students in the study, one of the challenges in learning Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language is the differences between English and Chinese Mandarin. As mentioned in Chapter 1, English is an alphabetical language while Mandarin is a Character Language, hence the stark contrast of the two languages is challenging for learners. The Mandarin teachers in the study were not only teaching students a new language but were also at the same time helping them conceptualize new learning strategies to learn Mandarin, such as through pinyin and radicals. The students developed these strategies at the beginning of learning Mandarin (i.e. Year 7) followed by applying the

knowledge when they go beyond beginner level proficiency (i.e. GCSE level). This section thus aims to present how teachers in this study equip the students with different learning strategies to learn pronunciation and Chinese characters so that the students are able to decode the language and tackle language tasks.

#### 4.1.1 Pinyin as an assisting tool

Pinyin assists the students in learning the pronunciation of Chinese characters. In the teacher interviews, all the teacher asserted that it is necessary to teach pinyin as it is used to present the pronunciation of Chinese characters. Judith from School A explained her view of the role of pinyin in Mandarin teaching, *“If you learn Chinese, character learning is the most important. However, without pinyin, students are unable to learn the characters.”* Since there is no grapheme-phoneme correspondence of Chinese character, pinyin presents the pronunciation in the alphabet, which assists students to learn. She further elaborated the benefits of pinyin, *“With the help of pinyin, which is also alphabet, students found it easy.”* The Romanised phonetic interpretation makes character learning more accessible.

Pinyin is used to present the pronunciation and provided a link with semiotic and semantic elements of Chinese characters, so as to assist students phonetically whilst acquiring new vocabulary. In lesson observations, when introducing new vocabulary, all teachers in the four schools presented pinyin, English translation (or pictures) and Chinese characters on one PowerPoint slide. The following three diagrams are replicated from one of the lessons by Mary from School A, and is a typical example of how pinyin was used in the GCSE classrooms in this study. The topic of this lesson was *Jobs*, and the objective of the lesson was to introduce vocabulary related to occupations and workplaces. First, Mary displayed all three elements of Chinese characters in three columns, including English translation, Chinese characters and pinyin as shown in Figure 11.1. She then requested the students to repeat the vocabulary after her by reading aloud the words and the English translation, for example, “gōngsī gōngsī, company”. With the presentation of pinyin accompanied by verbal instruction, the students were able to cross-reference the spoken and visual sources as follows:

Company	公司	gōngsī
Journalist	记者	jìzhě
Manager	经理	jīnglǐ
Salesperson	售货员	shòuhuòyuán
Shops	商店	shāngdiàn
Supermarket	超市	chāoshì
Department Store	百货公司	bǎihuò gōngsī

Figure 11.1 Presentation of English meaning, Chinese characters and pinyin

The teacher then covered the pinyin as shown in Figure 11.2, leaving the English translation and the characters, and the students followed by practicing the pronunciation of the vocabulary.

Company	公司	
Journalist	记者	
Manager	经理	
Salesperson	售货员	
Shops	商店	
Supermarket	超市	
Department Store	百货公司	

Figure 11.2 Presentation of English meaning and Chinese characters

After that, the teacher covered both the pinyin and the English translation, leaving the column of Chinese characters only as shown in Figure 11.3 which the students were requested to pronounce the vocabulary in English.

	公司	
	记者	
	经理	
	售货员	
	商店	
	超市	

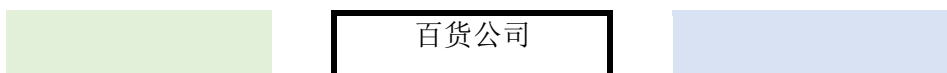


Figure 11.3 Presentation of Chinese characters

The above three figures illustrate the progressive and gradual removal of pinyin towards acquiring the characters. The Mandarin teachers in other schools also used the same approach when introducing new vocabulary. Sometimes, the teachers would use pictures to present the meaning of Chinese characters rather than English translation. Pinyin, English translations, and pictures are served to assist students learning phonetic and semantic elements of Chinese characters. From the cognitive perspective mentioned in 2.3.3.1, the partial presentation of pinyin is more beneficial when applied to learning the pronunciation so that the students have sufficient cognitive resources for learners to process, comprehend and recognise the new Chinese characters.

Being able to pronounce Chinese characters facilitates the learning of the Chinese characters' meaning (see 2.3.3.1). Mandarin teachers in School C provided pinyin in all teaching materials as it assists the students' Mandarin speaking, and as a result supports the students in writing. She said, *"Once they can speak, they have the structures in their mind, then they are able to write."* Providing pinyin in the teaching materials assists the students to speak Mandarin, thus it supports the students in writing. This is result of the assumption that if a learner can pronounce a word correctly, the learner would also be able to give the meaning of the word. Aligned with the teaching approach of the teachers in School C, a student from the same school commented in the focus group interviews that, *"When we're given a worksheet with the pinyin and the tones, that helps us learn the characters."* The pinyin in the worksheet helped her with the pronunciation and learning of Chinese characters.

In the focus group interviews, the students stated that when preparing for the speaking assessment, they *"wrote the speech in pinyin and practiced it"*. It is because pinyin is used in said scenario to represent the pronunciation instead of the writing of Chinese characters, especially for the exclusive purpose of fulfilling the speaking assessment. Pinyin also helped in the listening assessment. In one of Judith's Year 11 lesson, the students were required to write down the English translation and pinyin of the vocabulary that the teacher Judith read aloud. From the lesson observations, students were allowed to jot down the pronunciation of the vocabulary in pinyin as well as the

English translation. During the test, if the students could not recall the English translation of the vocabulary, they could refer to the pinyin and had time to think about the English translation of the vocabulary later. Instead of writing the Chinese characters, native-English speakers found it easier to write pinyin as it is the Roman version of the pronunciation. In other words, because of the distinctive feature of Chinese characters - no grapheme-phoneme correspondence, as one student said, “*what you write is not what you say*”. It was seen as difficult for learners to jot notes during the listening assessment. In this way, pinyin seems to assist learners in listening and speaking assessments.

When teaching pinyin system, some Mandarin teachers only focused on initials or consonants that are phonetically different and absent in English. All the teachers stated that pinyin was taught at the beginning of Mandarin learning or in Year 7. Hannah from School C explained her approach in teaching pinyin, “*I mainly focus on the most difficult ones only. [...] For example, zh, chi, sh, r and g, k, they always pronounce gēge 哥哥 as jiějie 姐姐.*” It is because *ge* is pronounced as [dʒ] in English, for example *gesture*. However, the pinyin *gē* is pronounced as [gɛ] similar to the word *gear* instead. Like Judith, Hannah and Mary believed that pinyin is easy for her students and she did not introduce pinyin from scratch, instead she focused on the initials and consonants that native English speakers might find confusing as described in 2.3.2 such as retroflex (zh, ch, sh) and palatals (j, q, x). Later on in this chapter, in 4.5.2, it presents how the Mandarin teacher Mary used pinyin and idiosyncratic stories to assist the students learning the pronunciations of some vocabulary consisting of the initials that are absent in English.

Overall, the teachers confirmed that pinyin facilitates the learning of pronunciation, and the inclusion of pinyin is focused on learning new Chinese characters, speaking and listening assessments.

#### 4.1.2 Radicals as building blocks

The Mandarin teachers have built a foundation of knowledge regarding radicals since Year 7, and this foundational knowledge is intended to enhance students’ ability to learn new Chinese characters which include new radicals. The Mandarin teachers regard radicals as building blocks for Chinese characters. David from School C said, “*Radicals are the basics of a Chinese character and it is a special feature of Chinese*

*character, too.*” The non-native Chinese teacher, Joseph from School B stated, *“[W]hen I was in the university, radicals was really helpful for me.”* The Mandarin teachers explained that not only are radicals a special feature of Chinese characters, it can also help to learn Chinese characters as it provides cues to the semantic element of a character. Therefore, in all four schools, radicals were taught from Year 7 and the students continued to learn new radicals as they progress towards the GCSE. Hannah, Judith and Mary described similar approaches in teaching radicals, Hannah said, *“In Year 7, the basic radicals are introduced to them and consolidate it gradually.”* Mary from School A elaborated on the content of radical teaching, *“Then you will realise that 口(mouth)、扌(hand)、亻(person)、竹(bamboo)、氵(water)、艹、艹(grass), these are the most commonly used in the [GCSE] core vocabulary, you have selected them and teach them in advance.”* The frequency of the radicals appearing in the GCSE core vocabulary list was the priority for Mary.

The importance of teaching radicals is that it provides clues for the students *“to understand the meaning of a character”* as stated by Hannah. Joseph presented similar comments, he stated, *“I think about some of the logic behind the characters.”* Joseph refers *“the logic”* to semantic radical which enables inference of the meaning – *semantic category* of a character. He gave an example, *“Look at the radical, earlier when we are explaining ‘shower’ 淋浴室, I talked about 氵 三点水 is water, so it’s gonna have that.”* Since 淋浴室 means shower room, there is the water radical 氵 in the first two characters, which hold a combined definition of ‘shower’.

However, there are limitations in applying radicals for character learning. Mary said, *“some of the radicals do not make sense”*. She gave an example: *“listen 听, why is there a mouth radical? I can’t explain.”* Mary attempted to explain to the students, *“You listen to a person singing, that person needs a mouth to sing.”* Although Mary explained that the radical ‘mouth’ has no relation to the meaning of the character, she still made the connection ‘mouth-singing’ to trigger some logical association that can lead to a better understanding of the meaning.

The students also found the radicals helpful in relation to reading Chinese characters. From the students’ perspectives, when asked whether or not radicals are helpful, most of the students in the focus group interviews said, *“Yes”*. A student from School A said *“In Mandarin, you have to learn a whole new language, you have to learn like you have to go through the basics, and then you have to like to the harder thing.”* She further

explained that learning the radicals are the *'basics'*, which enables you to understand a character easier afterwards. Similar to the teacher Joseph's comments, the student stated that knowledge of radicals helps to *"make sense of the language"* which she found helpful when she started learning Chinese. Other students also commented on how they applied their knowledge of radicals, to *"recognise the characters"* and *"guess what the character means"*, especially when they do not know the characters. The students' comments referred to semantic radicals in which they can generate the meaning through inference. In addition, in the questionnaire the students expressed that in the lessons, the teachers *"point out radicals"* or *"teach us new radicals"*, which are the practices that the students find helpful in terms of character learning. Therefore, from the perspectives of both teachers and students, it is suggested that radicals should be taught at the initial stages of Mandarin learning, as it helps students learn Chinese characters, and such knowledge will enhance continually as the students encounter new Chinese characters.

To sum up, this section 4.1 outlines that before the GCSE, Mandarin teachers equipped GCSE students with two Mandarin-specific learning strategies to decode the language, namely pinyin and radicals. The former serves as an assisting tool to aid students in learning pronunciation of Chinese characters as well as benefitting listening and speaking. The latter builds a foundation knowledge for students to learn Chinese characters by teaching commonly used semantic components.

#### 4.2 Mandarin-specific pedagogy - Chinese characters

One of the challenges in learning Mandarin is the vast amount of characters that are required to be learned and the relatively slow progress compared to learning European languages. Each character is complex and consists of three elements: namely semantics, semiotics and phonetics. There is also no grapheme-phoneme correspondence (Siok & Fletcher, 2001). In other words, learners need to learn three elements separately and extra steps are required to link them together for each character. This may slow down the teaching process. The Mandarin teachers in this study applied component in the teaching of Chinese characters. They attempted to analyse the main components of Chinese characters, including semantic and phonetic radicals, so as to link the three elements for students to learn. The Mandarin teachers demonstrate as well as encourage the students to create links amongst the three

elements of Chinese characters by using pictorial images and creating idiosyncratic stories.

#### 4.2.1 Component teaching

Identifying different components in a character facilitates character recognition and writing. Components are the core and the base for the formation of a Chinese character. When the Mandarin teachers explain the intricate details of a Chinese character, the instruction is separated into different components and the emphasis is placed on the functional relationship between semantic components and character meanings. A Chinese character is composed of a radical and/or component(s). Hannah from School C said, “When the students read a character, they don’t know how to separate it into different *parts*. *We need to teach them and let them combine together.*” Since Chinese characters are different from the English alphabet, non-native Chinese speakers have difficulties identifying different components of a character. Thus, the Mandarin teachers suggest that by separating a character into different components, the students may learn the structure of the characters so as to rebuild the characters. From the lesson observations, all the Mandarin teachers broke down the Chinese characters into different components and emphasised the semantic components. The following extract presented how the teacher Mark from School A analysed a character when teaching the topic about the question word 谁 (who).

*T First question word, anyone has any idea or thoughts of the radical. [...]*

[While the teacher was explaining the character, he circled the radical 讠]

*T What is this radical?*

*S Speech.*

[The teacher circled the second part 隹 of the character.]

*T I don't know what 隹 means.*

Mark analysed the characters with the students and emphasised the semantic component 讠 (speech) which is relevant to the act of asking a question. He identified the component on the right 隹 (zhuī) even though he did not give an explanation. His teaching showed the students the structure of the Chinese character, and the students



were able to identify two components in the character 谁 (who), including 讠 (speech) as the radical.

In another lesson, Judith analysed one of the key characters in GCSE vocabulary by separating it into different components.

T 表演, to perform. Can you say after me, 演演 perform.

Ss 演演 perform

T 演演 perform

Ss 演演 perform

T Can you see this character? A water part, a kind of feel like a window, and number eight as the two legs here.

The teacher attempted to illustrate the internal structure of characters and helped the students learn to read more effectively and efficiently. Judith analysed the character through teaching the order of strokes and explaining the shape of the three components. First, she pointed out that the semantic radical of the character is water 氵. Then she explained that the middle part looks like a window with the bottom part like two legs, which bear resemblance to the number eight 八. Instead of emphasising the components of the character 演 including 氵, 宀 and 田, Judith broke down the characters into recognisable parts according to her pictorial interpretation. By analysing a character into different components, the students learned the structures of characters which helped them to read and write the character.

The students also found that identifying radicals or components is helpful for Chinese character recognition. From the perspectives of the students, many of them responded in the questionnaire that “characters are easy to remember” or “I have techniques to remember characters”. In the focus group interviews, one of the students shared his ‘techniques’ to remember characters. The students explained that in order to decode a Chinese character, identifying different radicals is essential so as to understand the character structure as well as the differences amongst Chinese characters. Most importantly, these radicals are repetitive. He said, “Characters are just like codes, you see a lot of the same radicals and the same characters, which means basically it is the

*same thing, just sort out a character which is a completely different one.*” However, the students did not further explain whether radical refers to the semantic component or different components of a character.

Moreover, the students found that the teachers' explanation of the functional relationship between different components is useful. In the focus group interviews, some students stated that they benefited from the explicit instruction of teachers when they *“explained the details of Chinese characters”*. On the contrary, students who were not confident with Chinese characters stated in the questionnaires that *“it is hard to remember the characters”* and *“it is hard to remember the details of characters and all the strokes or radicals”*. The students who found the language difficult expressed that they found the Chinese characters complex and are unable to recognise different components within a character. Thus, understanding components of a character was shown to facilitate students' learning of Chinese characters.

#### 4.2.2 Semantic component

The teachers and students at GCSE level mainly apply semantic component knowledge, to analyse Chinese characters. In the teacher interviews, Joseph from School B said that by applying the students' radical knowledge, *“they can analyse Chinese characters, don't just copy.”* Building on the radical knowledge learned in Year 7 or at the beginning of Mandarin learning, at GCSE levels, the students are equipped with the knowledge of radicals which can be used to analyse Chinese characters instead of solely depending on rote memory.

The explicit instruction of the teacher showed the internal structure of the character so as to help the students recognise the character. In this extract, the teacher Judith also explained every stroke of the character 兼 and purposively introduced these two characters 兼 and 赚 consecutively, this enables the students to compare the two characters and show the differences of the two characters explicitly. She not only *explained* the semantic component of characters, but also *organised* several words to demonstrate how semantic components are related to the meaning of a character. The students' response revealed a sound knowledge of semantic components and this is illustrated in the example presented below. The example selected was about teaching three words in a year 11 lesson: 兼职 (part-time job), 赚钱 (earn money) and 工资 (salary). In the lesson, Judith emphasised on the radical 贝 (shell) – a shell, was a

form of currency in ancient China, hence showing that a character with 贝 as a radical is related to money.

T That's the puzzle word, 兼职, can't tell how puzzle it is. 兼职兼职 part-time job.

Ss 兼职兼职 part-time job

T You see 兼, that character, you see the two lines, lots of lines intertwined with each other in different directions. This character means to do several things, more than one thing at the same time. [...]The next one, you will see this one again, but with a radical, that means to earn money. 赚钱.

Ss 赚钱

T You see here, this is radical it means, do you remember?

Ss Money

T That's right, it's a money radical. If you put money radical next to 兼, it means earn money. It's easy for you to say the difference. No money radical? Part-time job. Money radical? Earn money, okay?

[...]

T 工资

Ss 工资

T 工资 salary, also it appears so often when we talk about jobs. 工资 工资 salary

Ss 工资 工资 salary

T 工 is from lots of words [...]资 means funding, funding. Okay, fund. Can you see a money radical again?

Ss Yes

T Yes, at the bottom, see? So salary, something to do with money. In reading is much easier to catch the word. You got work, you got money.

The radical 贝 represents the *category* of the character and is used as a clue for students to infer and recognise the meaning of the words. The teacher also compares and contrasts the similarities and differences of the two characters as both characters share the same component 兼 whereas 赚 consists of the radical 贝. The particular linguistic challenge of Chinese characters includes the complexity of the character structure, Judith analyse the characters through teaching the order of strokes, the shape of components as well as an explanation of meaning of the character. The explicit instruction of the teacher showed the internal structure of the character so as to develop students' ability to pronounce and recognise the characters. Explaining every stroke of the character 兼 and purposively introducing the two characters 兼 and 赚 consecutively enables the students to compare the two characters and show the differences of them explicitly.

#### 4.2.3 Phonetic component

Phonetic radical knowledge supports the learning of word pronunciation in character learning. When analysing Chinese characters, some Mandarin teachers demonstrated the awareness of applying phonetic radical knowledge to teach the pronunciation of Chinese characters. More than 80% of Chinese characters are classified as semantic-phonetic, which means they have a semantic radical and phonetic radical in the character to represent the meaning and pronunciation respectively. In the teacher interviews, when the non-native teacher Joseph explained how he analysed a character to the students, he said,

*“If I have time I might go into more detail and say okay this one is 寄 (jì), and this one you already know, 椅 (yǐ), from 椅子, because they learnt it. I would explain that this give you the clue about pronunciations. So rhymes...”*

Joseph analysed the character 寄 by separating it into two components. He identified that the characters 寄 (jì) and 椅 (yǐ) shared the same final -i, and explained that these two characters are “rhymes” which can provide a clue for the students to learn about the pronunciation. Joseph possessed the awareness of phonetic radicals in characters but did not further elaborate on it. On the contrary, in the interviews, teachers did not report anything about phonetic radicals of a character.

In the lesson observations, Judith from School A demonstrated how to analyse a semantic-phonetic character by identifying the phonetic components as well as the semantic ones.

*T* 风筝

*Ss* 风筝

*T* *What is this character?*

*Ss* *Wind.*

*T* *Why do we have wind for kite?*

*Ss* *Because kite needs wind to fly.*

*T* *Yes, you don't have wind, you can't fly a kite, okay? Wind 风. Second, what is this radical? Bamboo. Because originally, they are made from bamboo. Bamboo sticks combined with paper on them, that's kite. And you know why there's this character [component] here?*

*Ss* *Meaning (group chatter)*

*S* *Sound*

*T* *For the sound, this character is called zhēng as well, okay? Nothing to do with kite. That's why we call it 风筝, we use this one for the sound. This character means struggle or fight.*

Judith explained the word 风筝 (fēngzhēng) which means *kite*. When she explained the second character 筝, she described the materials that are used to make a kite, such as bamboo sticks, and then linked this to the semantic component of bamboo 竹 found in the character. She further explained the phonetic component of the character 争 zhēng. The students' responses also showed that they were better equipped with semantic components when compared to phonetic components of Chinese characters, as one student was able to answer the questions after several attempts from the class. In addition, this is the *only* extract of a Mandarin teacher analysing the phonetic component of a semantic-phonetic character among all the lessons observed.

#### 4.2.4 Pictorial image

Both teachers and students utilised the logographic nature of Chinese characters to create pictorial images to help recognise Chinese characters. Four teachers shared the same view in the interviews, Judith from School A asserted, “I used the pictogram (象形 *xiàngxíng*) aspect (shape of the characters) to associate with their daily lives.” The following extract from Judith’s lesson demonstrates how she put this teaching strategy in place into her lesson.

T      商人商人 *business people*

Ss     商人商人 *business people*

T      商人，商 *this character brings in the idea of commercial about business, anything about business or commercial you have got this character, which I think looks like a miserable businessman his business is bad, so he has a crying face.*

[The teacher Judith drew an unhappy face 囧 on the board.]

Judith’s explanation focused on the first word 商 as the students were familiar with the second character 人 (person). She not only explained the meaning of the character but also attempted to prompt students to imagine the character as an unhappy face. According to the Six Principles (六书 *liùshū*), the character 商 does not belong to the principle of 象形 *xiàngxíng*, instead, it is formed by the principle of 会意 *huìyì*. Yet, Chinese as a logographical language enabled the teacher to link the character 商 with a picture 囧, and create a story related to the English translation. Moreover, 囧 (*jiōng*) is a slang commonly used nowadays in mainland China to show embarrassment and defeat.

The students are used to being creative when using pictorial images to learn Chinese characters. During the lesson observations, the teacher Mark was asking the students to practice the new vocabulary that he just taught. As the non-participatory observer of the research, the researcher was sitting at the back of the classroom. One student who was two rows in front of the researcher showed her notes to the students behind her. It was a picture like 售. One of the terms was 售貨員, with the last character ‘員’ which means person or staff. The student made her own pictorial creation according to the

shape (semiotic) and translation (semantic) of the character. As the lesson observation note suggested, her peers were inspired by her idea and the picture was shared amongst the students.

#### 4.2.5 Creating idiosyncratic stories

Idiosyncratic stories allow Mandarin teachers and students to associate of different elements of Chinese characters, which provide clues to learn them. In the teacher interviews, Hannah explained how her students associated the Mandarin pronunciation to English as well as the meaning of the word. She stated, *“for example, kǎoshì (exam), the student said, ‘I got bad exam results, so I hide it under the couch.’”* The student associated the pronunciation of examination kǎoshì to English “couch” and linked the translation of the vocabulary, examination kǎoshì to the English word *couch* together. This provides a cue for the students to memorise the pronunciation by creating a small story.

The teacher selected the character or word to create the idiosyncratic story and related it to the students’ life. Mary from School A also implemented the strategy of creating small stories in her teaching. She explained in detail how she used this strategy in the interview.

*“As a teacher, you know the students might have difficulty in memorizing the pronunciation, then you have to think a way, a story that can help students memorising the pronunciation of the vocabulary. For example, 毕业 bìyè (to graduate), this vocabulary is very random. There is a student called Beatrice in the class, then Beatrice got graduated and she says yeah!”*

Mary associated the pronunciation of 毕业 bìyè to the name of a student Beatrice saying “Yeah!” as she graduated. The rationale to create a story for this word is that the teacher anticipated that the students might have difficulties in linking the pronunciation with the Chinese characters. Also, the context of the story is about school life and related to one of the students in the class. In other words, it is impossible to create a story for every word, and the events selected for such purposes should be something that students can relate to.

The idiosyncratic stories are suggested to link with the key radicals. Mary further elaborated her rationale for creating small stories, in terms of semiotic elements of

characters. She asserted that “*not only telling stories, but also links with the key radicals. It is because these radicals can give them a lot of clues, [...] when they encounter the vocabulary again, even though they might forget but recalling these small stories might retrieve their memory.*” Mary thinks that it is important to link the meaning to the key radicals and she pointed out that the use of small stories is to help the students memorise and retrieve the vocabulary. However, the teacher did not further explain whether the key radical she referred to was the semantic radical or components of the character.

The Mandarin teacher adopted a playful approach to encourage learning when creating idiosyncratic stories. Tackling the challenge of no grapheme-phoneme correspondence in Chinese characters, Mary demonstrated her creativity in linking phonetic and semantic elements in learning Chinese characters. The following example is a Year 10 lesson focusing on *Jobs*.

*T Try not to look at English [translation], just from the sound and the character themselves and think about the meaning, okay? First, 公司 gōngsī.*

*Ss 公司 (gōngsī).*

*T Remember? Meaning?*

*Ss Company*

*T 记者 (jìzhě)*

*Ss 记者 (jìzhě)*

*T Remember?*

*Ss Journalist*

*T zherr...gives you the clue, zherr journalist*

[Students laughed]

*T 经理 (jīnglǐ)*

*Ss 经理 (jīnglǐ)*



T Remember the meaning?

Ss Manager

T This one 售货员 (shòuhuòyuán)

Ss 售货员 (shòuhuòyuán)

T 货, goods, 售, to sell, person who sells goods, okay? Fair enough.

[...]

T Okay, say after me, 厨师 (chúshī)

Ss 厨师 (chúshī)

T 厨师 (chúshī)

Ss 厨师 (chúshī)

T This word, 师 (shī), means expert, lǎoshī. 厨师 (chúshī), you learnt kitchen which is 厨房, in a house, 厨 (chúfáng) also sounds like chew, chú...chú...is that right? Expert to make food for you to chew!

[Some students laughed]

T Can you say them out quickly?

Ss 公司 (gōngsī)

Ss 记者 (jìzhě)

T 者 (zhě), 很好。

Ss 经理 (jīnglǐ)

T Excellent, 经理 (jīnglǐ)

Ss 售货员 (shòuhuòyuán)

T 非常好！If it is hard for you, you know, salesperson what they scan, they use their hands. How to say hand?

Ss shǒu

T You need the hand to scan the goods, 售货员 (shòuhuòyuán)

Ss 售货员 (shòuhuòyuán)

T yuán员 means member of staff.

Firstly, the teacher explained the word 记者 jìzhě. The second character zhě has a similar pronunciation with the first syllable of journalist [/'dʒɜ:n(ə)lɪst/]. Secondly, the teacher associated the translation to the pronunciation of a job. A chef is responsible for cooking food, hence the teacher extended the duty of a chef “*cooking food for you to chew*” and the pronunciation of chew [tʃu:] in English, which is similar with the first word for chef, 厨 chú. Moreover, ‘teacher’ lǎoshī is a term that the students have learned before, with the second character 师 meaning expert. The teacher separated 厨师 (chúshī) into two characters and told the students that the term is pronounced as ‘chew expert’. Thirdly, the teacher linked one of the characters of 售货员 to the pronunciation of another character. The first word of 售 (shòu) 货员 is similar to 手 shǒu meaning hand which the students have learned before. The teacher then explained the duty of a salesperson, in which they use hands to scan goods, and thus linked the pronunciation of 手 (shǒu) hand to 售 (shòu), even though the tone of the two characters are not the same.

It is important to note that the initials of the three terms 记者 (jìzhě), 廚師 (chúshī) and 售貨員 (shòuhuòyuán) belongs to two groups, retroflex (zh, ch, sh) and palatals (j, q, x). These two groups of initials are more difficult for native English speakers to learn than the remaining initials in Mandarin. For instance, 记者 (jìzhě) is the unaspirated group in which the sounds are absent in English and it is difficult to detect the minor differences (Xing, 2006). It is unable to prove from the lesson observations that the teachers’ further elaborations are because of the difficulties of the initials. However, the selected extract illustrated that the teacher assisted the learning of the students by implementing different strategies other than rote memory. Also, the teacher used a

lively approach and demonstrated to the students that they can create their own stories or develop individual strategies to learn the language.

Creating idiosyncratic stories raised orthographic awareness of the students. In the interviews, Judith, Hannah and Ruth all asserted that the students enjoyed creatively finding different ways to learn Mandarin. Judith said, “*Actually, the students have a lot of ideas, you don’t have to think about that for them.*” Not only do the students have many ideas on how to learn different characters and enjoy doing so, the teachers also enabled the students to create their own unique ways to memorise vocabulary. There is another student in Mary’s lesson who shared his strategies of learning the word 计划 which means *to plan*. Here is the excerpt, which illustrates how Mary encouraged students to develop the strategy so as to memorise the characters.

*T I need a strategy on 计划 (jihua) you can remember, either the character or sound, 计划 is plan. Tom, you are good at making strategies, we all relying on you.*

*Tom It looks like a plus.*

*T It looks like a plus, positive.*

*Tom It’s a plus adding to your plan.*

*T Adding to your plan, good way! It’s a plus adding something to your plan. Good!*

*T How about the sound?*

*Ss Gee, haha [similar sound with the first word ji]*

*T Any ideas? Jennifer, any ideas? Otherwise, you will have to memorise in a hard way, no strategies.*

[...]

*T Listen to Tom, he’s got strategy for 计划.*

*Tom It’s like two people on the boat.*

*T Actually 划 huà, has got another sound 划 huá, 划 huá 船 means rowing the boat*

Ss Arh...wah...

[The students made sound with amusement.]

The first character 计 has the component of ‘十’, which looked like a plus sign, he linked the sign to the meaning of the character and created the cue *“a plus adding something to your plan”*. The students then tried to link the shape of a component to the meaning of the character. After that, he linked 划 as a picture of two people on a boat, which represents another meaning of this character. The students created small stories that helped them memorise the meaning of different words. Even though the stories might not be true to the characters’ historic back-stories from ancient times, it gives clues to the students to indicate and associate the meaning (semantic) to the character (semiotic). Furthermore, although 划 is a semantic-phonetic character, the student can make use of the pictorial feature to tell a story about the Chinese character (semiotic). Comparing the stories created by the teacher and the students, the linguistic knowledge of the teacher provided a richer relevance and a fuller explanation of different elements of the character as it is also in relation to the quality of the teacher’s subject knowledge.

The students confirmed that idiosyncratic stories aided them in learning different elements of Chinese characters. From the students’ perspective, when they were asked how to memorise Chinese characters, a student wrote in the questionnaire that *“I find characters easier to remember as I make stories for them.”* This is in line with the teachers’ perspective as well as their teaching in the classrooms. In the focus group interviews, only the students from School A highly appreciated that making small stories helped them to learn Chinese characters. Some students stated that *“The Mandarin teacher gives us different scenarios to remember the characters”* and they found the scenarios helpful. Another student stated that one of her classmates, Tom, was good at creating such stories, she said, *“He does a lot of like ‘紅色 hóngsè’ will be like ‘red is the colour of the train, and the train goes to Hong Kong.’ That’s how you will remember. And it actually really works.”* Even though the story was created by her classmate, as the story *“makes sense and it makes a good story”*, the students used it to memorise the pronunciation of the words.

The opportunities to create idiosyncratic stories promote learners’ autonomy. The teachers demonstrated to the students how to create different stories and encouraged

the students to make their own way to memorising vocabulary. One of the students in School A identified that *“You are allowed to have your own way and techniques to remember it. But in other languages, you have a one set way to learn it, but in Mandarin, you get a bit of freedom.”* The important thing is that students appreciate and enjoy the freedom to be creative and to develop their own way of learning Mandarin which is an opportunity not available when learning other languages.

The students creatively developed different ways to learn other aspects of Mandarin Chinese. In the focus group interviews, two students from School A shared how they used songs to prepare for the speaking assessment. One of them said, *“Yeah I always try to memorise my speaking, to like Christmas songs because I just know them, so I’m like singing in my head, so it stays in your brain.”* Another student agreed with him and explained how she memorised the speaking assessment as well, *“Coz it’s got like a beat, every line got a beat to it and a different beat, and if you work out the beat of it.”* The students put the content of the speaking assessment into Christmas songs which consists of rhythms and memorised content. The change of tones in spoken Mandarin is similar to the melody of songs and the students just sing out the speaking assessment. Instead of depending on rote memory, the students in School A used different ways to learn different aspects in Mandarin and they enjoy having such freedom to learn in their own preferred ways.

On the contrary, the students from School C and D reported in the focus group interviews that they just ‘practiced’ the language so as to memorise the vocabulary. A student from School C said, *“I think people do like trying to come up with stories for characters, but I thought I just have to like writing the characters over and over again and then I just rely on my muscle memory to write the characters.”* Most of the students in School C agreed with this opinion, and instead of creating small stories, they found that practicing the characters many times to be more effective and straightforward. This will be explained in detail in the next chapter subsection 5.2.4.

#### 4.3 Mandarin-specific pedagogy - Chinese vocabulary

The quantity of Chinese characters is massive, with around 75% to 80% of Chinese characters being classified as compound words (Xing, 2006). By explaining the morphemes of Chinese characters and adopting compounding, the students can expand their vocabulary in an effective way.

### 4.3.1 Explain morphemes of Chinese characters

Teaching morphemes of characters in a compound word helps to expand the vocabulary of students. In the teacher interviews, some of the teachers explained how they expanded the vocabulary of the students. Judith from School A said, *“Chinese characters are very logical. It is similar to building blocks. The more the students learned and get the idea, the more they find Chinese characters easier.”* The teacher explained how each character has its individual meaning and it is like a building block. The more they understand the morphemes of the character, the more students can build their understanding and knowledge of the language. Mark gave an example on how students might be able to guess the meaning of words that they don't know, he said the students *“can use logic”*. He further elaborated the meaning of *the logic*,

*“They can use logic if we know the context of the text, then it limits the possibilities. [...] For example 羽毛球 (badminton), and then 篮球 (basketball), they can see the 球, so it's a game a balls sport.”*

In Chinese, some words share the same character, for example, most of the sports consist of the character 球 which means ball. If the students know the meaning of the character 球, they would more likely be able to guess the translation of the word. Having 羽毛 (feather) or 篮(basket) as prefixes to the term 球 (ball) means badminton and basketball respectively. Learning morphemes of characters does indeed facilitate the learning of vocabulary (see section 2.3.3).

Organising words that share the same morpheme under the same topic promotes morphological awareness of learners. In the lesson observations, the three teachers from School A organised the vocabulary in a way that emphasised on the morphemes of characters. The topic of the lessons were *Jobs* which included many different occupations. Summarising the observation notes of those lessons, the three teachers organised the occupations based on the morphemes of different occupations, including ‘师’ (expert), ‘员’ (staff/ person) and ‘家’ (master). For instance, chef is 厨师 (chef), with the first character ‘厨’ meaning kitchen and combined with ‘师’ meaning expert, forming the word kitchen expert – chef. Other examples included ‘工程师’ (engineer) who is an ‘construction expert’, ‘服务员’ (waitress/ waiter) who is ‘service person’, 演员

(actor/actress) who is the ‘perform person’, ‘售货员’ (salesperson) who is the ‘sell goods person’, 科学家 (scientist) who is the ‘science master’ and ‘音乐家’ (musician) who is the ‘music master’, etc. By acquiring the morphemes of the three characters ‘师’ (expert), ‘员’ (staff/ person) and ‘家’ (master) and understanding their role in compound words, the students could use this knowledge to comprehend and produce many different compound words. Thus, raising the morphological awareness positively related to vocabulary knowledge of learners at different levels (Ku & Anderson, 2003).

Raising morphological awareness expands the vocabulary of the students. In another lesson, the teacher Mary explained the morphemes of characters and taught three new words.

*T First one, easy, it's university, say 大学 (dàxué)*

*Ss 大学 (dàxué)*

*T 什么是大? 大? (What is big? Big?)*

*Ss Big.*

*T Big. How to say secondary school?*

*Ss 中学 (secondary school, zhōngxué)*

*T Excellent! So 大学 (university, dàxué), university, 中学 (secondary school, zhōngxué) secondary school. How to say primary school?*

*Ss 小学 (primary school, xiǎoxué)*

*T 非常好 (Excellent!), so from one word you have learned three words. Yea? Say after me. 大学(university, dàxué).*

*Ss 大学 (university, dàxué).*

*T 中学 (secondary school, zhōngxué).*

*Ss 中学 (secondary school, zhōngxué).*

*T 小学 (primary school, xiǎoxué)*

Ss 小学 (primary school, xiǎoxué)

T Doesn't mean the size is big but the age is older. 中 (middle, zhōng) in the middle, you are in the middle, 小 (small, xiǎo), when you are little, you went to primary school. So 大(big, dà), 中 (middle, zhōng), 小 (small, xiǎo).

While the teacher was explaining the meaning of these words, she wrote Figure 12 on the whiteboard.

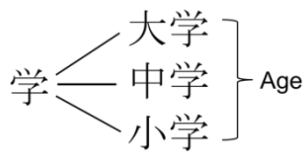


Figure 12 Chinese characters - different levels of education

In this example, the teacher aimed to teach the Chinese terminology of three levels of schools - primary, secondary, and university. In Chinese, these three words share the same character, 学 (xué) which means to learn or learning. By combining different characters 大 (big) 中 (medium) 小 (small) which represented size in Chinese, the words 大学, 中学 and 小学 means different levels of schooling. Mary further explained that it was not about the size but the age and attempts to make sense of the language. The students had learned all these characters before but did not learn the combination of the words when grouped into vocabulary terms. Separating the words into different characters and explaining the morphemes of each character, not only show the mechanisms of how Mandarin as a language works, but also expands the vocabulary of the students.

From the students' perspective, we learn in the focus group interviews that students are aligned to the views of Mandarin teachers. One of the students also thought Mandarin is a logical language, she said, "It's quite logical when you join two words and they work." Another student gave an example, he said, "you put fire and mountain together to get volcano [火山]." The student learned the vocabulary by understanding the morphemes of each Chinese character and formed a word with new meaning.



### 4.3.2 Use of compounding

The systematic use of compounding effectively expands the lexicon of students, in particular, the ones in Year 11. In Judith's Year 11 lessons, when she was revising GCSE vocabulary with the students, she used compounding in a systematic and conscious way. In the interview, she explained her rationale of implementing this strategy to expand the vocabulary of students.

*"I found it quite effective in year 11. First, the students will be very familiar with the vocabulary, for example, the word 动物园 (zoo), the students might not be able to recognise all three characters, but they definitely know that '物' is used in many words. There are a lot of extended meanings so that you can revise much more vocabulary. If you linked all the vocabulary, students can memorise them together. [...] I used this method in the past in teaching, but students cannot recall many of the vocabularies. It is because of the quantity of content they have learned. This method is the most effective in this stage, year 11."*

In the lesson observations, Judith put this strategy into practice and this was illustrated in the following extract. This was a Year 11 lesson focused on the revision of the vocabulary on the theme *Travelling*.

T 动物园, zoo (dòngwùyuán, zoo)

Ss 动物园, zoo (dòngwùyuán, zoo)

T This one 物 (wù, object), this is a very important character in GCSE, it carries so many other words.

S Cow, cow

T That's cow radical, that's it.

T What else can you make for 物 (wù, object)?

S 动物 (dòngwù, animals)

T 动物 (dòngwù) is animal

S 礼物 (lǐwù, present)

- T     礼物 (lǐwù, present) well done
- T     We got 礼物 (lǐwù, present), anything else?
- S     Pets
- T     Pets, 宠物 (chǒngwù), anything else? How about museum?
- Ss    博物馆 (bówùguǎn)
- T     博物馆 (bówùguǎn). How about shopping?
- Ss    买东西 (mǎi dōngxī)
- T     Can we have a posh way or formal way?
- Ss    [students gave different answers]
- T     购物 (gòuwù, shopping)
- Ss    购物 (gòuwù)
- T     Guys, can you see one, two, three, four, and another one, 购物中心 (gòuwù zhòng xīn), shopping centre. Five words, five words for this character. Let's practice together.

As explained by the teacher, in the lesson when the teacher Judith revised the vocabulary 动物园 with the students, 物, which means object / thing, appears in many other words. One of the students said the radical of 物 is cow. The teacher then encouraged the students to combine the word 物 with other characters and form new words, including 宠物 (pet), 礼物 (present), 购物 (shopping), 购物中心 (shopping centre) and 博物馆 (museum). The following figure 13 was replicated from the PowerPoint of the teacher in the lesson.



Figure 13 Compounding strategy used in Year 11 classroom

Implementation of compounding enables the students to link several words together and revise them at the same time. For instance, 购 means buy, and combined with 物 means shopping; 礼 means celebration, and combined with 物 means present; 博 means vast, 馆 means accommodation or space, and combined with 物 means museum. The teacher Judith demonstrated sound knowledge in morphemes of words as well as the vocabulary of the GCSE syllabus, thus her teaching with the presentation of the characters was logically structured and conceptualised. The examples in this section show how the teachers help students to expand their vocabulary. As mentioned in the interview by Judith, she thought compounding was more effective in Year 11 as the quantity of vocabulary was larger, otherwise, the students were unable to recall the words that share the same characters. The teacher hence facilitates knowledge development of students in words by making use of their pre-existing linguistic resources and decoding skills in compound words.

In the focus group interview, the Year 11 students from School A were asked about their perceptions of compounding. All the students expressed that this strategy was very helpful and effective. One of the students commented that *"You can distinguish between words and see the difference"* as the teacher explained the meaning of different characters of a word. Yet, a student said, *"It can be confusing sometimes"*. Even though this student acknowledged that compounding was effective, he sometimes found it difficult and somewhat confusing to follow along. It might be related to the presentation of the vocabulary as all the expanded words were written by the teacher on PowerPoint slides displayed on a smartboard. The students might find it difficult to recognise different words as shown in Figure 13. In general, however, the Year 11 students in School A found compounding an effective way to revise vocabulary.

The students are able to learn the morpheme of a character, form new words, then link several words, and revise them together.

## 4.4 Mandarin-specific pedagogy - Chinese grammar

### 4.4.1 Perception of Chinese grammar

There is no consensus in terms of the terminology to describe *Chinese grammar* among the Mandarin teachers. In the teacher interviews, different phrases were used by the Mandarin teachers. In School A, it is described as *word order*, as *sentence patterns* in School B, School C described as *structures* and School D as *formulas*. Judith said, “*We don’t teach grammar in China*” and this might be the reason that there are no standardised terms to explain Chinese grammar as the teacher employed the terms stated either in the GCSE Mandarin specification or from their experiences.

Most of the Mandarin teachers perceive Chinese grammar as simple. When they were asked about their perception of Chinese grammar, all the teachers except Ruth said Chinese grammar was relatively easy. Mary said that “*Chinese has an advantage, that is Chinese grammar is relatively much easier.*” The non-native teacher Mark, who is also a Spanish teacher, said, “*In Chinese, grammar is incredibly simple, it’s really not much grammar to worry about whereas in Spanish, every time you use a verb, it changes for different verbs for a different time.*” Most of the teachers claimed that Chinese grammar was the easiest aspect of Mandarin Chinese learning as it was straightforward. On the contrary, Ruth believed that Chinese grammar was definitely the most difficult aspect of learning Chinese, “*It is because English grammar and Chinese grammar is so different.*” Even though Ruth has a different perspective on Chinese grammar, her teaching approach was the same as the other teachers, she said, “*I will create a formula and ask the students to learn the formula, then arrange many practices.*” Judith from School A summarised Chinese grammar as, “*The key is that we teach them the who, the when, the where and the how.*” Mary in the same school also explained her understanding of asking and answering questions in Mandarin, she said, “*Chinese grammar is easier, you only need to replace the question words with the answer.*” It is important to note that not only do teachers use different words to represent Chinese grammar, but they also create different ‘formulas’ to teach.

In the focus group interviews, many of the students confirmed that “*Chinese grammar is the easiest part of Mandarin.*” In addition, one of the students from School C said, “*If*

*you have structure and vocabulary, you have everything.*” This means, if the students were not given the structures, which were mainly provided by the teachers, they might not be able to construct a sentence even though they have acquired the vocabulary. There is no doubt that unlike other languages, which have conjugations, changes in the forms of verbs, or singular and plurals, Chinese grammar is much simpler in the grammatical sense because the structures enable them to know how to construct a sentence, and along with the vocabulary, they are able to master the language. Therefore, the Mandarin teachers and the GCSE students asserted that it is important to learn structures or word orders in Mandarin Chinese.

#### 4.4.2 Chinese grammar = formulas?

The teaching of Chinese grammar is according to the GCSE specification. Judith from School A explained the situation, *“Tenses, according to the criteria here, there are tenses in Chinese.”* She further elaborated on her approach towards teaching tenses. *“Students only need to master three tenses: present tense, past tense and future tense, actually only “了”, “要” or “打算”, then you can use three tenses and tick, tick, tick!”* Judith interprets Chinese grammar according to the GCSE specification; it is because, in the Pearson Edexcel GCSE specification (2018), the *grammar list* (p.74) states that,

*Future intention: 打算*

*Actions in progress: 在, 正在*

*Completed actions: 了*

The teachers designed the pedagogy and made decisions according to the success criteria in MFL specifications and developed different formulas to teach Chinese grammar, which fulfilled the requirements of the examination. The specification also includes a list of conjunctions that will be tested, such as ‘虽然... 但是...’ (Even though...but...), ‘因为... 所以...’ (Because...therefore...), ‘也... 也...’ (also...also...), ‘又... 又...’ (and...and...). These conjunctions imply that sentences are structured in a particular order. As a result of these specifications, most of the Mandarin teachers created ‘patterns’ or ‘formula’ to teach Chinese grammar. Judith explained how she came up with these formulas in the interview,

*“When you teach the language for a while, you started to understand how the language works. It is something that you never thought about it as a native speaker. In China, you just speak and never think about how we speak. However, when you have to teach the language, you need to think ‘why’. Then you think the language works like this and discuss it with the others, so we decided to teach in this way. We didn’t learn these from books, we summarised these from our experiences and found that students learn well. Also, I teach according to students’ English language habits, follow the language pattern of English. Silly English, in fact, is that I use the language habit of English implemented into Chinese word order 套路.”*

As a foreign language teacher, instead of learning how Chinese grammar is structured and develop teaching strategies to teach the students how this language works fundamentally, Judith summarised ‘word order’ from her teaching experiences, so as to teach the students how to construct sentences effectively and accurately in Mandarin Chinese. This is based on her understanding of how Mandarin works as well as the students’ native language – English. However, it can also be seen that the understanding of Chinese grammar by the Mandarin teachers are shaped by the GCSE specification. Judith also used silly English to demonstrate the word order in Chinese to the students. This included the literal translation of the sentence in English so that the students were able to compare the differences between the sentence structures of the two languages. The non-native teacher Joseph shared the same view as Judith. He said, *“[I]n Chinese, if you learn patterns, that’s enough. So, you learn A在 B and then a preposition, and then that’s it.”* Joseph also summarised different sentence patterns for the students who were learning how to describe different things in Chinese, for instance, to tell the location of a place. He further elaborated that in Chinese grammar, there was no need to change the pronoun or verb, and *“it is not tricky”*, instead, Chinese grammar is very straightforward.

Likewise, in the students’ questionnaires, they generally exhibited positive attitudes towards grammar. Some of the students wrote in the questionnaire, *“Grammatical structures and characters are logical and easy to understand.”*, *“There are not many rules, so it isn’t complicated, and there are also not many contradictions in the rules either”*, *“Simple compared to western grammar (e.g. French).”* The students thought that grammar in Mandarin was straightforward and simple. The number of rules was also acceptable, and Chinese grammar always followed set rules with not many

exceptions. The perspective of the students was comparable with all the teachers in the interviews. Some of the students in the questionnaires presented that “*saying it in “Chinglish” (English words with Chinese grammar) before proper translation*” was useful. Such ‘Chinglish’ enabled the students to understand the sentence patterns so that they could follow the structure and construct sentences correctly. This strategy was adopted by most of the teachers in the study.

#### 4.4.3 Grammar formula and its principle

The grammar formulas created by the Mandarin teachers are easy to learn and the students can apply them so as to use the language immediately. In the observations, two examples were selected to present the teaching approach of Mandarin teachers in terms of Chinese grammar. The first example demonstrated that the Mandarin teachers not only created Chinese grammar formulas but also principles for the students when applying them. In School A, both the teachers Mary and Judith mentioned about ‘*repeat and replace*’ in the interview and lesson observations when teaching how to ask and answer questions in Mandarin. In the lesson observations, the teacher Judith taught the students to repeat the questions, followed by replacing the question words with the answers.

T     *什么时候 when when when*

S     *什么时候 when when when*

[...]

T     *This is super long, one of the longest question words. In Chinese it means what moment. 时候 means moment. Okay? Four characters, 什么时候, 什么时候. It's very difficult to identify this question word sometimes when you come across new questions which you are not very familiar with. So just need to remember 时候, when you hear 时候 after 什麼, then you know that's four characters, that's when. So, can you answer this question? 你什么时候起床? 起床, what's 起床?*

S     *Wake up*

T     *Wake up, good!*

[...]

T Terry你什么时候起床? (When do you wake up?)

S 我起床八点。 (I woke up at eight o'clock.)

T Oh...replace, you don't change any order, you just replace it. 你什么时候起床?  
(When do you wake up?)

S 我八点起床。 (I eight o'clock woke up.)

T That's very good. When you answer in Chinese, that's very important, you don't answer it as English order. You have to very strictly repeat, replace, because otherwise, your word order will get wrong. Okay?

T Sandy, 你什么时候吃饭? 你什么时候吃饭? (When do you eat?)

S 我时候 (I time), no, yea, 时候 (time), 我时候吃饭 (I time eat)...

T Replace, replace. No change. How to say ten o'clock?

S 十点 (ten o'clock)

T Yes, replace.

S 我十点吃饭 (I ten o'clock eat).

T Yes, you replace it, you don't change it, please. Everyone really wants to say I eat at eight o'clock. No, you have to strictly do replace and repeat.

This extract demonstrates that grammar formulas are easy to understand and follow. The students initially could not follow the 'repeat and replace' principle but after the teacher reminded the students, they could immediately manage to answer the questions correctly. In addition, the extract also revealed that sentences in Chinese are structured differently from that in English. The principle suggested by the Mandarin teacher aided the students to understand how to construct sentences in Chinese.

In another lesson, Joseph taught the sentence pattern A 在 B and then preposition, which he mentioned in the interview. The example was selected not only to present



how the teacher put forth the strategy and grammar formula into practice but also raised the potential problem of using formulas to teach Chinese grammar.

*T The grammar structure is easy, how to say pen is on the table?*

*S 笔在桌子上。*

*T Say that everyone, 桌子*

*S 桌子*

*T 笔在桌子上。 When we talk about proximity, we can use 在, but we use 离, which means away or kind of from. You use 离 when you talk about one thing in relation to another thing. So we put it in the same place, 邮局 is your favourite we put 离 we put another place, okay?*

[...]

*T This is 教, means teaching, the hall used for teaching. And we go back to this word order here, we have place A 离 place B you simply choose here near or far. What if the place is just next to the 教堂, we use near 近, close to, 近. 近 is the short version of 附近, sometimes people say 附近, 附 is in a bracket, but that's optional. You can see grammar box 附近. You don't have to use this structure if you are simply saying if something is just close by or someone is close by. For example, you can say William's place 很附近, it's nearby.*

Joseph recalled the sentence pattern that the students had learned earlier about describing the location of different objects. He mentions A 在 B preposition, which he used in the lesson “笔 (A) 在桌子 (B) 上 (on/above)” (Pen is on the table). Joseph then used the same pattern to teach the students how to describe the proximity of two places. He follows by introducing the pattern of Place A 离 place B near/ far, for example, 邮局离教堂近 which means the post office is close to the church. The sentence pattern was the same but 在 was changed to 离 and the preposition also changed to either near/close. It is important to note that “Use of 离 to state proximity or remoteness between two locations” is one of the items on the GCSE specification *Grammar list* (2018, p.76). The Mandarin teacher expected that the students could use

this sentence pattern to describe the location of objects as well as the proximity between two places.

However, in this extract, the teacher misused the word 附近 (nearby) and explained that the meaning is the same as 近 (close to). This is only valid if place A 在 place B 附近, but it is not if place A 離 place B 附近. This is not only about the use of the word in a sentence but also the subtle differences of the meaning between Chinese words, in particular when 附近 consist of the same character 近, wherein the morpheme of the character bears the key meaning of the word 附近. This revealed that Chinese grammar is fundamentally different from sentence-oriented language and should be conceptualised based on its distinctive features. The advantage of using grammar formulas was that it was easy to follow, and as the lesson observation notes suggested, the students in the lessons could apply the knowledge immediately. On the other hand, it is also very rigid and fixed. The sentence patterns or formulas were created based on GCSE specifications, which required the students to be able to express location or proximity. Thus, the Mandarin teachers created and taught the sentence patterns for the students to follow and apply. The sentence patterns are not reflective of how Mandarin Chinese essentially works nor the logic of Mandarin Chinese.

#### 4.4.4 Oversimplification of Chinese grammar

The teacher Mark raised his concerns about the oversimplification of tenses in teaching Mandarin for GCSE. He said, *“Like 要、想、了、過, these are very simple but very vague. So I think that confuses English speakers because we are used to things that are more precise.”* Mark explained *‘the vagueness’* of Mandarin makes teaching Chinese grammar by using formulas inappropriate. He further elaborated, *“What we teach in our school is that 了 is the equivalent past tense, of course, it is not true.”* Mark thought that it is easy to teach the students different formulas, but the formulas created by the teachers might not be grammatically accurate nor fully applicable in different sentences, such as the case of 了. It is because 了 can either fall after a verb (i.e. verb 了) or be at the end of a sentence (i.e. sentential 了) (Xing, 2006). Additionally, it is important to note that writing a sentence in Chinese might not be solely defined by putting words into a certain order as it is framed by the notion of European languages and the GCSE specifications.

## 4.5 Raising cultural awareness to enhance motivation of students

### 4.5.1 Inclusion of culture is restricted by GCSE examination

The emphasis on linguistic knowledge in the GCSE examination and limited curriculum time are constraints in raising the cultural awareness of the students. Mark conveyed that,

*“I think most of them would like to know because they know so little and we really have very little time in class. Because of the examination questions, we have to teach them vocabulary and keywords we don’t do many cultures at all.”*

All the Mandarin teachers hold the belief that Chinese culture is important and motivating for the students. Even though Mark believed that the students are eager to learn more about culture, the GCSE examination content and limited teaching time make it very unlikely to mention Chinese culture within the context of a classroom. In the teacher interviews, the Mandarin teachers displayed a range of perspectives on the role of culture. Judith and Mark from School A and Hannah from School B presented similar views in that there is limited time to explore culture in the GCSE classroom and curriculum. The three teachers perceived that Chinese culture teaching is independent of daily teaching. They included workshops offered to the students by the Confucius Institute, Chinese cultural events, Chinese New Year celebration or movie screenings among others in the list of Chinese culture teaching and these events mostly were introduced after the examination period.

The perception of GCSE Mandarin students expressed that Chinese culture is one of the most important elements that sustain their motivation in Mandarin learning. In the student questionnaires, the students were asked to write three things that interested them about learning Mandarin. The students expressed the following five facets that appear interesting to them when learning Mandarin. The results are shown in Table 18.

Elements	Frequency	Percentage
Chinese characters	99	28.3%
Chinese culture	67	19.1%
Speaking	32	9.1%
Future career	32	9.1%
Interesting language	24	6.8%

*Table 18 Elements interested the GCSE students learning Mandarin*

Both Chinese characters and culture ranked the highest among all the elements that interested the students in Mandarin learning, with almost one third and one fifth of the students finding Chinese characters and Chinese culture attractive and motivating respectively. The schools organized different events that enabled students to be exposed to Chinese cultures, such as Chinese calligraphy, Dragon Dance, and the celebration of Chinese New Year. The students found all these “*very fun*” and “*very interesting*”, as stated in the questionnaire.

#### 4.5.2 Culture-related content promotes motivation of students

The inclusion of current or controversial issues in modern Chinese society is intriguing to GCSE students. David from School B, Ruth from School D and Joseph from School C believe that Chinese culture is an essential aspect within the language learning process even though it is not addressed more within the teaching process. David explained his perspective on language learning and culture of the target language, he said,

*“Language learning is related to culture, introducing new ideas and new things, the students also found it enjoyable apart from having games in the lessons. Comparing their lives to some cultural aspects of China, the students are also very engaged.”*

According to David, Chinese culture is intriguing because it is different from Western culture, and the students find these new ideas and foreign concepts to be attractive. In addition, the practice of comparing and contrasting the differences and similarities between the culture in China and in the UK was a stimulating experience for the students, and they were more engaged in the learning process. David gave an example in which he showed a movie about birth control in China to the GCSE students, as the one-child policy is a sensitive topic and was a major concern of the

Chinese government in the 1980s. He said, *“If we can discuss social phenomena with the students and they can have an in-depth understanding of the society in China, this will attract or raise the interest of senior form students.”* Instead of a traditional Mandarin lesson, David used movies as the media to enhance the students’ understanding of culture and selected the one-child policy, which is a distinctively Chinese social policy, in order to facilitate discussion with the students. The birth control policy was implemented in the 1980s, and while the consequences of this policy started to slowly surface in the last decade, the teacher hoped that this can enable the students to deepen their understanding of China as a society. He also believed that the social aspects of Chinese culture that involved a thorough discussion attracted senior form students more than linguistic knowledge alone.

Similarly, in the lesson observations, Ruth from School D initiated a student discussion on pollution in China, especially during the Olympic Games. She also asked the students to compare the environmental situation in the UK and in China. Furthermore, Joseph from School C held the same perspective, and in the interview, he expressed that *“I think it’s good to talk about Chinese culture, that increases their interest in the subject but it doesn’t necessarily make them work harder on the language.”* He believes that culture is positive but for the GCSE the emphasis leans more on linguistic proficiency. Since the students can only have such discussions in English, Joseph raised his concern about the loss of language teaching time resulting from focusing on the Chinese culture. He also asserted that the knowledge of Chinese culture could not be translated into language skills and that it only provides an interest in the subject.

In the focus group interviews, the students said that they are interested in Chinese culture because there are stark contrasts with Western culture, allowing them to compare the two distinctive cultures. One of the students from School C stated that it is interesting *“to see some similarities and some differences in terms of cultures”*. Another student from School A said,

*“I do history. I do really learn about Mao and learn about Britain. Chinese history is one of the most interesting things. In London, we got like London Eye. And we have got like Big Ben. In China, they got the Forbidden City, and they got all of this stuff that I wanna learn about.”*

Being exposed to another culture enables the students to learn new knowledge of the target language as well as to reflect on their own culture. Most importantly, the

reflection is on both ancient as well as modern China society. A student from School A mentioned that,

*“There is a sort of politics and history and everything that’s happening now. And I am thinking about my life, my access to the internet, and to what my life is like at school, compared to someone who might live in China, there are many things to observe and study.”*

It is important to note that the teacher Judith arranged for the students to watch a documentary about dating in China, and the students showed immense interest in modern Chinese society as they stated in the focused group interview.

#### 4.5.3 Integration of Chinese culture into teaching

Chinese culture is seen as integral to the language teaching process. In the teacher interviews, Mary from School A was the only teacher who said, *“Cultural elements are immersed in the teaching, and I won’t spend a whole lesson teaching about culture.”* Hence, we see that for this teacher the teaching of language goes hand-in-hand with the teaching of Chinese culture. On the other hand, she also found it unrealistic to separate out Chinese culture and spare an individual lesson teaching it. Mary further elaborated on the relevance of Chinese culture to language teaching even in GCSE examinations,

*“The examination tests about festivals, tests about current affairs of teenagers, how Chinese students learn in China, what is the learning culture in China, you have to teach all this content and let them realise that the education systems are different in two countries.”*

Mary believes that learning Mandarin includes learning the Chinese culture as well, and culture is not to be separated from language learning even in the context of the GCSE examination curriculum. It is thus essential to understand the differences between different countries in terms of culture because raising the cultural awareness of students is a vital element in language teaching.

In addition, Chinese characters are rich in cultural knowledge. Mary gave an example of teaching the Chinese character which is relevant to Chinese culture 篮子 (basket), which consists of the radical of bamboo 竹. This is because, in ancient China, people used bamboo to make baskets and use baskets to carry all kinds of items of different

sizes. By explaining what life of Chinese people was in the olden days, Mary believes that the students can, in fact, learn about the Chinese characters indirectly, in particular, the radicals in addition to Chinese culture.

In the Mandarin lessons, Judith from School A demonstrates a different approach in Chinese culture from that of her interview, and her teaching of Chinese character is actually integrated with rich cultural elements. Judith included much content related to Chinese culture and aspects of daily life in China, which made the lessons both motivating and interesting. For instance, as she was explaining the Chinese character 笔 pen, she separated the character into two components: having the radical 竹 as the upper part, with the lower part of the character being 毛 fur. She then drew a picture of a Chinese brush on the board, explaining that a Chinese brush is made of bamboo and fur, which is the same as how to write the Chinese character 笔 pen.

Cultural knowledge enables students to develop a new way of looking at the world. Apart from teaching Chinese characters, when Judith mentioned ways to greet people, she gave an example in which she used past tense in a question, “吃了未?” meaning “Have you eaten yet?” This is equivalent to people asking “How are you?” or “Are you okay?” in England as she explained to the students that *“It is because in the 70s and 80s, people in China got problem to feed themselves”*, hence the reason why people ask another person if s/he has eaten already as a way of greeting. While Judith was explaining different Chinese characters, she also, at every possible opportunity, explained any stories or cultural elements that are related to Chinese culture, both in ancient and modern China.

Similar to the view of teacher Mary from School A, her student in the focus group interview stated that, *“I have seen how culture can reflect on language and how language reflects on culture, and I can see Chinese culture comes from its language.”* The student acknowledged the close linkage between language and culture. The enhancement of cultural knowledge is inevitably important to improve language proficiency. In addition, the teaching of culture is not merely focused on cultural knowledge or facts such as introducing different places or trying different foods. Instead, the students would like to learn more about history, lifestyle, art, festivals and literary aspects of culture. One of the students from School D explained her views on learning about the culture, she said,

*“I think it’s good to merge them because if you learn about the Great Wall of China, then you can talk about it rather than just knowing what it is but not really understanding the meaning behind it. I think it’s good to be able to speak the language but you need to know what the event is as well.”*

First, the student believes that learning about culture does not include only cultural-related facts, such as *“This is Great Wall and this is how it looks like”*. Instead, historical incidents or relevant literature related to the Great Wall could be mentioned. Second, the student believes that as a language learner, it is not only about speaking the language, as the culture of the target language is the crux of learning.

To sum up, both the Mandarin teachers and GCSE students recognise the importance of cultural knowledge, and the students state that culture is one of the main elements to sustain their motivations. However, there is limited time to implement the GCSE curriculum, which mainly focuses on linguistic proficiency and examination performance. There are varying approaches to the teaching of culture found in this study and there an unfortunate lack of a systematic approach to the teaching of culture. Thus, there are two different views of Mandarin teachers in perceiving culture, with some teachers believing that culture is independent of their teaching while others thinking that culture is and should be integrated into language teaching. The point of view of the GCSE students is also mostly comparable to the former groups of teachers stating that culture is not only important in Mandarin learning but is in fact closely tied to their motivation. The inclusion of cultural content not only raised the cultural awareness of the students but also broadened the horizon of the students as they are exposed to Chinese culture that is a stark contrast to the Western culture. Compare and contrast different cultures provide opportunities for the students to reflect on their own culture as well as to gain new knowledge, which became the students’ impetus to continue learning the language.

#### 4.5.4 Trip to China provides authentic language learning experiences

Trip to China enhances the cultural knowledge of the students through experience. In the teacher interviews, all the teachers in School A, School B, and School C acknowledged the importance of a trip to China, which can motivate students’ Mandarin learning. All four schools in the study offered trips to China to GCSE students. Judith from School A mentioned that after the trip, *“some of them [the GCSE students] changed their attitudes and become more and more interested in learning Chinese.”*



She asserted that the trip was related to the affection and emotion of the students and acted as a motivation for some students to put more effort in learning Mandarin.

Similarly, Mark stated that *“Because before you go, it’s a few facts, from the media or your mom told you. When they go to China, they still don’t know very much but they seem a little bit more.”* Due to the geographical distance, exposure to Chinese culture to students is limited. The trip thus provides them the opportunity to know more about the country and people. Joseph emphasised that the student can *“see this language is useful and it is an interesting culture then the students have a higher level of motivation.”* He believes that the experiences of students using the language and seeing with their own eyes can indeed motivate the students.

Using Mandarin to communicate in real-life situations raises linguistic awareness of the students. Joseph gave an example of how the trip to China changed the students’ attitudes in learning tones. Before the trip, he told the students that tones are very important, but the students paid minimal attention. However, when the students travelled to China and failed to communicate with local people or make purchases from the market, they began to state that *“They don’t understand me, sir.”* He then told the students to try to pronounce the tones precisely and they came to the realisation of how important the tones actually were. Thus, according to the teachers, the inherent benefits of a trip to China is twofold: First, to live in China and expose the students to authentic life experiences in China through getting to know the people, thus enhance their understanding of the culture. Second, the use of language in real-life situations can effectively raise the linguistic development of students.

The students exhibit curiosity towards the culture of China, which in itself is a form of intrinsic motivation. All the students in School A claimed that the trip to China was the biggest motivation for them to study Mandarin as it was only opened to GCSE Mandarin students. The trip to China offered first-hand experience of the target culture, enabling the students to reflect on their linguistic, social and cultural development. At the time when the data was collected, only Year 11 students in School A and some students in School C and D had gone for a trip to China. The students who were going to China were not shy to show their excitement, with one of the students even saying, *“We’ll get to the airport, and just everything, because everything is in characters, we’ll be like “Oh my God...”* The student was, in reality, imagining her experience and the chance to read Chinese characters in real life. Another Year 10 student from School A

said, *“I would probably use it [Mandarin] when I go to China.”* The trip to China helped solidify the notion that Mandarin can be used effectively for communication an experience they lack outside the Mandarin classroom. The usefulness of the language or the apparent chance to use the language helped the students continue to learn Mandarin.

All the students in School A and School B said that *“it is interesting”* as *“just going everywhere”*, including museums, schools, and markets, was all about learning Chinese culture. Similar to the perspective of the Mandarin teachers, the students expressed that *“if you don’t go on those trips, then you may not be as easy to figure out how is the culture like.”* The opportunity to experience life in China enhances the cultural understanding of the students. Thus, all the Year 11 students in School A expressed that *“Going to China is the best thing in learning Mandarin at GCSE.”*

However, the students from School D had a different experience as they mostly traveled on a coach. One of the students went to the length of expressing that *“We kind of like, in the coach, and then we went out to the tourist places, and then we got back in the coach, and we went out and live in the hotel and we didn’t do much as walking around China ourselves.”* The students expected to take public transport, which they believe could have *“really gotten to see how life is in China.”* Unlike the students from other schools, the students in School D expected to meet new people to observe their way of life in China instead of traveling as a tourist. It is thus important for the students to be exposed to real-life experiences through the people of the target language for the trip to China.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

As the review of the literature in Chapter 2.3 has shown, the more recent body of research within MFL motivation in England has highlighted the importance of the development of language learning strategies, in particular, to encounter the inability of students to the ‘strangeness’ of the target language. Therefore, this analysis chapter is based on the distinctive features of Mandarin Chinese, and it presented the practices of the Mandarin teachers in ***Protecting the learners’ self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence***. The Mandarin teacher first built foundation knowledge namely pinyin and radical of the students before GCSE, then provided opportunities for them to apply such knowledge throughout the learning process at GCSE level. At GCSE level,

instruction of the Mandarin teachers attempted to raise radical and morphological awareness of the students, which has been proved to be correlated to learners' proficiency. In addition, the development of different Mandarin learning strategies enabled the students to encode and decode the language such as the use of compounding to expand the lexicon, giving the students a great sense of control over their learning so as to strengthen their self-efficacy beliefs. Furthermore, the Mandarin teachers encouraged the students to develop individual learning strategies, such as using pictorial images and idiosyncratic stories. This contributes to the sense of ownership of the students and is regarded as special learning experiences of Mandarin learning. However, the present study also revealed the oversimplification of grammar teaching which is driven and imposed by the GCSE examination. Lastly, Mandarin Chinese being culturally rich language has a long and well-established history which is intriguing to the students. In other words, motivation can be enhanced and promoted by raising the cultural awareness of the learners.

## Chapter 5 Motivational strategies implemented in Mandarin classrooms

This chapter aims to analyse the implementation of motivational strategies by the Mandarin teachers in the context of MFL in England (see Chapter 2.4). It builds on the previous studies in Motivational Strategies which have found that practices of teachers are cross-cultural (see Chapter 2.2). According to Dörnyei's framework, five macrostrategies were found to be used by the Mandarin teachers in the GCSE Mandarin classrooms, namely, *Setting specific learning goals*, *Stimulating and enjoyable activities*, *Promoting cooperation among learners*, *Allowing learners to maintain a positive social image* and *Creating learner autonomy*. Most importantly, this analysis chapter focuses on the contextual factors that contribute to the teachers practices, including the GCSE examination, National Curriculum Programme of Study (NCPoS), and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as the suggested teaching methodology in MFL in England. Therefore, the present study to illustrates the practices that motivate learners in a foreign language classroom in England. And to examine and justify the applicability and revise the Motivational Strategy Framework based on the case of Mandarin.

### 5.1 Setting specific learning goals

Setting specific and short-term goals help the students to structure their learning process. In England, teachers are advised to state the objectives of the lesson explicitly and is found to be an effective practice in the present study. This section presents the Mandarin learning goals set by Mandarin teachers and students from a micro (Mandarin lesson) to macro (Mandarin as a subject) perspective at GCSE level.

#### 5.1.1 Clear learning goals in Mandarin lessons

Having clear learning goals in the lesson serve as the standard by which students can evaluate their own performance and mark their progress. Hannah from School B explained the importance of setting objectives for the lesson, "*First of all is a strong focus (目的性強), what are the learning outcomes of the lesson and what do I expect the students to learn in the lesson. The aims are very clear.*" The learning objectives helped students realise the direction and expectation of the lesson, so that the potential applications of the content may persist. On the other hand, it also gave the Mandarin

teachers an idea of the content that has to be covered in the lesson. For instance, Joseph said, “Usually I am running out of time to finish everything I planned. The things always take longer than you expect.” Setting the objectives of the lesson enabled Joseph to frame the lesson effectively.

The specific learning goals of a lesson help learners to structure the learning process in the lesson. Among all the lessons observed, Hannah and David from School C wrote the objectives on the board in every lesson. For other Mandarin teachers, they either wrote the topic on the first PowerPoint slide or explicitly stated them at the beginning of a lesson. The following Table 19 shows the topic and objectives of the lessons observed from each Mandarin teacher.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Objective(s)</b>
Job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn to talk about ideal jobs</li> </ul>
Job application – 1 <sup>st</sup> draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To start drafting for job application</li> </ul>
Job and future plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk about jobs and what you would like to do in the future.</li> </ul>
Job and future plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise key words for jobs</li> <li>• Learn key words for future plan</li> <li>• Learn how to describe your future plan</li> </ul>
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can talk about the weather and the temperature</li> </ul>
My Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammar (i.e. to express location and proximity)</li> </ul>
GCSE speaking assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn to say and understand Question words</li> </ul>
GCSE speaking assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare answers for the questions</li> </ul>
Future plan, education and work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise the vocabulary of p.31</li> </ul>
Vocabulary revision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary test</li> <li>• Revise vocabulary p. 14 (the Bible) (i.e. Festivals)</li> </ul>

*Table 19 Examples of topic and objectives of the lessons observed*

The topics set by the teachers are built on the understanding that the purpose of language is to communicate. For instance, ‘Job and future plan’, ‘Environment’ and ‘My Town’ are relevant to ‘real world’ interactions. The objectives are also communicative,

such as 'Learn to talk about ideal jobs' and 'Talk about jobs and what you would like to do in the future', which are aimed to express personal meaning; 'Learn to say and understand Question words' is interactional as it aims to engage interactions with others. Being able to communicate in Mandarin may take several years or more. The objectives of every Mandarin lesson provide immediate extra incentives for the students to maintain their original motivation and momentum in the language learning process.

Having clear goals of the lesson allowed students to structure their learning and accomplish the tasks set by the teachers in lessons. In the focus group interviews, one of the students from School C commented that the objectives of the lessons were clearly delivered, and the lessons were well-structured. The student said, "*The way he [David] organises the lessons are really clear, and he makes sure everyone is on tasks and understand what we're actually writing.*" The student confirmed that her high engagement with learning was enhanced by the organisation of the lessons.

### 5.1.2 High expectations towards students' Mandarin performance

The Mandarin teachers set GCSE examination results as learning goals. David shared how he had designed his lessons in the interview, he said "*This is a GCSE class, so everything follows the GCSE. The GCSE vocabulary, etc.*" The goal of learning Mandarin equals to the GCSE examination. An evidence is that 11 out of 24 lessons observed were focused on GCSE examination practices. The lessons mainly prepared for speaking or writing controlled assessments in Year 10 classes. In Year 11 classes, lessons focused on revision of vocabulary and doing past papers. During the lessons, the goals set by teachers revolved around the GCSE examination. The teachers set short-term goals so as to take students through step by step process. In School B, as the students were preparing for the writing-controlled assessment, teachers kept reminding the ways to achieve good performances in the task. The controlled assessments were the sub-goals in which the students could evaluate their own performance and mark their progress.

The Mandarin teachers define the goals clearly and list steps to reach the long-term goal. Judith from School A shared her teaching plan with the Year 11 students, which helped the students to prepare for the GCSE examination. She said,

*“We are gonna do p.13 (vocabulary booklet), the homework for this weekend is p.13 vocab test. We have got ten weeks left, for these ten weeks, we can cover some pages, so obviously I can’t do the whole book. It is not possible. I will choose the ten pages which I think you might benefit the most. For these ten weeks, I don’t want anyone to fail the vocab test. That means you have to do it and take the challenge before the exam and you got so much as well. Okay?”*

This extract is from a Year 11 class in February 2017, three months before the GCSE. Judith prepared a vocabulary booklet for the students which included all the key vocabulary of GCSE examinations. It was organised according to different themes. She named the booklet *‘The Bible’*. The booklet provided students with the content of the examination. Judith mapped out the revision plan of the next ten weeks before the examination as well as the tasks for the coming weekend and the following weeks. She also explained that it was impossible to teach the whole book, which meant that the students had to revise on their own. But she provided the solution – taught the pages that the students might benefit the most. This was able to help the students structure their learning processes, thus increasing productivity and effectiveness. Most importantly, the students knew what they were doing and how much effort they had to put in order to prepare for the examination.

Furthermore, the Mandarin teachers induce high expectations towards the students and motivate them to put more effort. When teachers were asked about the expectations that all Mandarin teachers had towards their students, they referred to the GCSE performance of the students and that they expected them to obtain good results. For instance, Joseph from School C said, *“I think they are a good class and they should all get A\* and A, B for maybe a few but it depends.”* David from School B also has high expectations on student performance, *“[t]he class that you observed, there is half of the class that should obtain A-C in GCSE.”* Another teacher in the same school, Hannah stated that, *“many of the students would like to achieve an A or A\* in the GCSE.”* All the teachers in the interviews set the goal of the learners based on their GCSE performance and expected them to have good grades without mentioning how Mandarin or learning a foreign language could benefit an individual’s horizon and openness.

In the focus group interviews, the students shared the same expectations with the teachers in terms of their performance in GCSE examinations. All the students in the

interviews expressed that they wanted to get an A\*, A or B, with none of them expecting a C. The students in School C were very positive about their GCSE, with a student saying, *“He [David, the teacher] expects us to do really well. He pushes us to reach the high grades and motivate us to focus more on what we are doing.”* When the students were asked if their teacher, David, helped them become more ambitious in their examination so that they can perform better, all the students responded *“Yes!”*. One of them gave an example, *“Even today, when he’s marking our work, he would be like, ‘you can easily get an A or A\* whatever the grade, just do this if you wish to improve this or that.’”* While David was giving feedback to the students, he set clear and specific goals for the individual students as well, which challenges the students but were not outside the range of students’ capabilities.

## 5.2 Stimulating and enjoyable activities

Making learning more stimulating and enjoyable refers to breaking the monotony of classroom events, increasing the attractiveness of the tasks, and enlisting the students as active task participants (Dörnyei, 2001). The Mandarin teachers seem to use a wide variety of activities in the classrooms but these activities also appear to strictly follow certain classroom routines and lesson structures. The data shows that the teachers who sustain the motivation of the students in GCSE classrooms implemented the following strategies.

### 5.2.1 Starter – whet the appetite

The starter links the knowledge of the previous lesson with the new content. All the Mandarin teachers used the starter to consolidate the content of previous lessons. Yet, the design of starter activities varies. Three of the teachers (Ruth, Mary, and David) aimed to mainly focus on vocabulary or sentence pattern revision. The teachers either asked the students to voice the vocabulary or translate a sentence, or to read aloud some vocabulary on a whole-class basis.

Two teachers suggested that starter activities should have a clear focus and be able to build a link with the content of the lesson. Hannah from School C, she said, *“The aim [of starter] is to link the previous lesson and to tell the students what are the sentence patterns that they are going to use in this lesson.”* Aligning with the interview, Hannah did a *word search* which was similar to a crossword as a starter in one of her lessons. The words are the vocabulary that the students both learned in the previous lesson and



will use to construct sentences in the latter part of the lesson. Unlike European languages like English, word search in Chinese Mandarin involves the recognition of structures and components of the Chinese characters and does not solely rely on the. The relevance of the starter worksheet helped the students to revise the content they learned as well as support their learning of the new content.

The starter engages the students immediately at the beginning of the lesson. The non-native Chinese teacher Joseph from School C mentioned the significance of a starter is to *“get the students thinking about the language and get them focused on Chinese. In this school, the lesson is only 40 minutes, so you have to try to get them out from their English brain into a Chinese brain quite quickly.”* Joseph also considered the contextual factor and regarded the starter as not only a way to revise the learning content but also to immerse the students into the language, attempting to create a rich target language learning environment for the students.

Nevertheless, the starter activities used by the Mandarin teachers are monotonous. Among the 24 lessons observed, most of the lessons started with an activity revising and reviewing the learning content of the previous lesson only without building a linkage with that lesson. Moreover, the follow-up of the starter was taken into account. The starter of Hannah and David’s lesson in School C mostly involved the use of pen and paper, followed by a speaking practice. This requires the participation of all students and enables every student to practice the language. However, most of the teachers used questions and answers and these starters reached only a small portion of the students who were selected.

### 5.2.2 Communicative activities are motivational

Integrating different skills in the activities enabled students to be able to communicate in Mandarin effectively. Among all the Mandarin teachers, Joseph from School B is the teacher who most exemplified communicative activities and his students found the activities motivational. In the teacher interviews, Joseph said, *“Usually when you are planning a class activity, you plan for listening, reading, and different activities to suit different skills”*, The design of the lessons are not activity-led, as the teacher designed the activities according to the skills needed to be practiced in the lessons. Although the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing can be developed independently of each other, the integration of different skills can help students use the language spontaneously and allow them to generate their own language in response to stimuli. In

the lesson observation, Joseph explained the rationale of his design of an activity he did on the day of the interview.

*“I gave them a text which was basically a long paragraph of text using vocabulary and grammar that we have been studying. The students have to read it and try to understand it and then use it to write their own version for homework. This encourages reading, then their writing skills which they do it at home. [...] In the class, today I asked them to read the text to each other [...], also I asked them to prepare one or two questions so they can have classmates to respond. This means that they have to listen more carefully.”*

The text was about ‘The dream house’ in which the students learned the vocabulary of a house and a neighbourhood, such as 厨房 (kitchen), 卧室 (bedroom), 厕所 (toilet), 火车站 (train station), 电影院 (cinema), etc. The design of the activity focused on how the students communicate in real situations, describing their dream house. Reading the text provided opportunities for the students to try out what they know while writing a new text enabled them to experiment with the language. Instead of stating the grammar rules of the text, the students deduced or discovered grammar rules from the text. Moreover, asking questions to their peers involved the production of language that may not be predictable. This enables students to engage in real communication. This activity demonstrated how different skills can be developed into one activity and linked with the real world to build up the students’ communicative competence.

According to the lesson observation, the students were very engaged in the task, in particular, when the teacher asked who would like to read their questions and try the tones, most of the students raised their hands. The active participation of the students in the lesson showed the students’ eagerness to use the target language. In the focus group interviews, when asked about the activities that the students enjoyed, Joseph’s students said, *“the classroom activities are really good”* and *“innovative”* as the teacher *“was trying to make it more attractive, a bit more interesting, and a bit more fun.”* They gave an example of the activity *Find the mobile phone*, which is similar to ‘Battleship’, but the teacher included various communicative elements and made the activities more challenging. Student C from School C explained the activity,

*“So you ask the classmate where the phone is, you have to ask questions that have more than one grammar structure, and I think that helps with speaking*

*because you just can't say the same thing over and over again. So you have to think of different ways like "What room is it in?" "Where is it in that room?" "Is it on top of something?" Like the diversity of the grammar, structures helps in speaking."*

Communicative activities engaged students in interactions of real life situations – to find the mobile phone in a creative way. Having one student share information with another student who is expected to do the discovering, the students were required to use the language to fulfill their respective purposes (Littlewood, 1981). The activity also reflects the natural use of language, producing language by asking questions and the usage of different grammar structures. Thus, the interactions of the students require the use of communication strategies as well as to produce language that may not be predictable. Joseph from School B designed contextual or scenario-based activities, which allowed the students to use the target language in a less controlled manner. The activities showed a progression beyond the quasi-communicative activities and allowed for a smooth transition to the exploitation of language (see section 2.4.2). However, according to the teachers' interview and the lesson observed, only Joseph used scenario-based activities to promote the communicative competence of learners. Most of the Mandarin teachers implemented activities that focused on practice and repetition, which is the Practice stage of the Presentation – Practice – Production model (PPP) as explained elaborately in the next subsection 5.2.3.

### 5.2.3 Classroom activities designed based on four skills

The design of classroom activities is in accordance to the four skills of language learning. In the teacher interviews, all the teachers stated that it is vital to include various activities that train different skills in every lesson. The variations included the different types of language skills, for example, speaking and writing, as well as other aspects of the teaching process, such as the extent of student involvement and learning materials. Hannah from School C explained her principle of designing a lesson,

*In terms of activities, there is a wide variety of activities in the lesson. It is that activities cannot be very long. Also, a combination of both static and active activities [is needed]. Students can move, can write and speak in a lesson, a mixture of everything.*

Joseph from School B further elaborated, not only did he plan his classroom activities according to different skills, but he also tried to include different skills in one activity or learning material. He explained that in the interview,

*Usually when you are planning a class activity, I guess you [plan] for listening, reading, [and] different activities suit different skills, right? Last lesson I gave them a text, which was basically a long paragraph of text using vocabulary and grammar that we have been studying. It is just all in characters and they have to read it and try to understand it and then use it to write their own version for homework. [...] And then in the class, today I asked them to read the text to each other, so that's trying to improve their speaking and to get them thinking how each character is pronounced. [...] And then also as you saw I asked them to prepare one or two questions so they can ask the classmates to respond. That means they have to listen more carefully.*

Joseph used one text to practice reading, writing, speaking as well as listening skills of the students. By varying as many aspects and skills of the learning process as possible, the diversity of activities in the classroom allowed the learners to be more engaged in the classroom as the activities are not repetitive or fall into particular routines. With the use of Presentation – Practice – Production (PPP) Model as the standard practice in MFL lessons, the following subsections present how the adoption of the model by the Mandarin teachers include activities according to four skills so as to motivate the students' learning.

#### *The lessons are highly structured*

The lessons observed in the study are highly structured. In the teacher interviews, even though only Judith from School A mentioned about the PPP model, the lesson observation notes showed that most of the lessons were organised according to the Presentation – Practice – Production (PPP) model which grants a high level of control over classroom proceedings (Norman, 1998). The lessons were all well-organised and highly formulaic. One of Judith's lessons at School A was selected as an example to illustrate the implementation of PPP model in the Mandarin classrooms.

Grade: Year 10

Duration: 1 hour

<b>P-P-P Model</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Description</b>
Presentation	1. Presenting new	The students repeated the word two times after

	vocabulary	the teacher.
Practice	2. Consolidation of the new vocabulary	- Practice the vocabulary in pairs. - The teacher picked a student to say the sentence.
Presentation	3. Teaching vocabulary	The teacher explained each word and form short phrases.
Practice	4. Throwing soft toy	The teacher says the English meaning and passed a soft toy to a student, then the student needs to say the word in Mandarin.
Practice	5. Translation exercises	The teacher set eleven vocabulary for the students to translate in the jotter.
Practice	6. Listening exercises	The teacher read five vocabulary and the student were required to write the English meaning.
Assessment for learning	7. Checking answers	- The students checked the answers of the exercises. - The teacher checked the score of the students by showing hands.
Practice	8. Revise all vocabulary	The teacher went through all the vocabulary learned in the lesson.
Assessment for learning	9. Past paper	- The teacher selected two questions from the GCSE past paper - reading, which is relevant to the vocabulary learned in the lesson. - Checked the answers with the students and translated the reading text.

*Table 20 Structure of Judith's Year 10 lesson*

From a macro perspective, Table 20 presented the organisation of a GCSE Mandarin lesson which is highly structured. The topic of the lesson was *Jobs* and the objective of this lesson was to introduce new vocabulary on this topic. According to the PPP model, the lesson was focused on the presentation of a new language and provided different ways for the students to practice the language, including repeating after the teacher, practicing in pairs, translation exercises, and listening exercises. At the end of the lesson, the students practiced the past paper. It can be argued that doing the past paper is the *production* phase of the model as the students need to apply their previous

(i.e. reading sentences) and new (i.e. vocabulary about *Jobs*) knowledge. However, it focuses on testing the students' reading comprehension instead of associating with the independent usage of language.

*Practice stage of PPP Model helps internalisation of the target language*

Having sufficient practice, the students will be able to produce or manipulate a new language. It can be found that most of the Mandarin lessons focused on the second phase – Practice. According to the observation notes, almost all the activities in the practice phase were the Mandarin teachers asking the students to repeat after them, practicing with peers or on their own, which were all highly repetitive and to a certain extent, robotic. However, repetition is also the most significant method of internalising the target language. Most importantly, the teacher used different activities to practice the language and it did not seem to be repetitive. In addition, the events involved active participation of the students and different modes of learning, such as listening exercise, translation exercises and practice of new vocabulary.

*The production stage of PPP model develops students' autonomy*

There was progress from simpler to more demanding usages of the new vocabulary. From a micro perspective, the following extract from the lesson about event No.1 Presenting new vocabulary is highlighted. It aims to illustrate how the teacher implements PPP in an individual event of the lesson and gradually develops the students' autonomy by facilitating and exploiting the use of Mandarin.

**1. Presenting new vocabulary      The students repeated the word two times after the teacher.**

Practice	T: 工作经验工作经验 work experience Ss: 工作经验工作经验 work experience
Presentation	T: 经验 is experience. If you say the person has work experience, how to say?
Practice	Ss: 他有经验/他很有经验/group chatter T:很好, or you just say 他有很多经验。
Presentation	S: 很多? T:很多, a lot. So there is an adjective, do you remember I gave you the key character, 有, I said you can make so many

	adjectives with that. If you have something like 有压力, it's stressful, 有信心, confident, if I say 有经验, what does that mean?
Practice	S: experienced? T: experienced, very experienced. Charlie, how to say Mr. Johnson is very experience. S: Mr John 有, 很有... T: 很有经验, it actually an adjective.
Presentation and practice	T: The next one, 工作时间 S: 工作时间 T: 时间时间 time time time S : 时间时间 time time time
Presentation	T: 时间 is a very useful word, when you talk to Chinese people, do you have time for a short meeting. Then you can say you don't have time, how to say I don't have time?
Practice	S: 我没有时间 T: 我没有时间, how to say I have time? S: 我有时间 T: 我有时间, very good. 时间 is actually time.
Practice	T: Right, 工作经验, 工作时间 S: 工作经验, 工作时间 T: say it yourself. S: 工作经验, 工作时间 T: 很好, 有经验 S: 有经验
Presentation	T: this one means experienced, okay? 找工作 S: 找工作 T: 找找 look for S: 找找 look for T: I found a job, 找到, 到 means reach something, I got the target met. 找工作, I am looking for a job. I found a job! 我找到工作. 找, can you make this with other things, can you say you look for book?

Practice S: 找看书, 找书  
 T:找書 good! How to say look for football?  
 S: 找踢足球, 找足球  
 T: try not to say the first character  
 S: 找足球  
 T: 找足球, good! How to say I am looking for egg fry rice.  
 S: 我找蛋炒饭!

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Practice T: Good, how to say I look for Japan? You are looking in a map and say I found Japan?  
 S: 我找到日本。  
 T: 我找到日本。 Very good.

There is no clear dividing line between the presentation and practice of language forms, but the extract illustrated a gradual change of the emphasis from presentation to practice and then production (Pachler, Barnes & Field, 2009). Judith is the principal linguistic resource in the classroom, who reads aloud the new words and the English translation, followed by asking the students to repeat after her. The students received input and rehearsed the new language. Repetition exercises were effective in this scenario as it helped students to familiarise and internalise the new content. The PowerPoint slides were visual aids, which helped the students mime and assimilate the new words. In addition, Judith organised the new vocabulary into manageable chunks, introducing three to five new words at once. More importantly, the teacher presented the new language, followed by practicing the words and then combined and restructured the new words with other vocabulary or sentence patterns that the students had learned before, so as to enable the students to apply the knowledge immediately. The students started with the pre-communicative stage, in which they learn the new words (structural), followed by quasi-communicative wherein they apply the new words to different contexts (functional) according to the sentence structures instructed by the teachers. Thus, there was progress from simpler to more demanding usages of the new vocabulary.

It should be noted that in School A, all the teachers practiced the new words by combining them with some other vocabulary that the students have learned before, for example, in Mark's lesson, he taught the word 工作 (work). He then combined 我工作 (I



work), 我不工作 (I don't work). In Mary's lesson, she taught the word 警察 (police), followed by saying 女警察 (policewomen), 男警察 (policemen). In the interview, Mark explained this approach, and he stated that,

*"I tried to put together the words they knew but they haven't seen together before. For example, we teach them food, we teach them 牛肉, we teach them 炒饭, we don't teach 牛肉炒饭, so I put those together then they were able to understand. [...] It helps them to realize they don't have to always learn new things. They can use what they know in a different way and I try to do that a lot when it is possible."*

By combining two words that the students have learned before to form a short phrase, the teacher demonstrated the use of language to communicate different meanings - to exploit the language. In the Production phase, the Mandarin teachers arranged activities to exploit the use of language so as to develop the students' autonomy. However, in Chinese, the progress to independent production is relatively slower because of the distinctive features of the language, thus, the use of language in Mandarin as presented in the lessons is still in a limited way. In Judith's same Year 10 lesson, event no.3 *Teaching vocabulary* is selected to present how she exploited the language by encouraging the students to use the target language in different situations by applying different tenses, so as to communicate something applicable in a 'real situation'.

**5. Teaching      The teacher explained each word and form short phrases.  
vocabulary**

Presentation and practice	T: 训练训练 training S: 训练训练 training
Practice	T: Peter, how to say tomorrow I have training? S: 我明天有训练。
Practice	T: Very good. Stella, tomorrow I have swimming training. S: 我明天有游泳训练。 T: 非常好。
Production	T: Can you make a sentence yourself saying I have certain training, football training, running training, painting training, tomorrow or yesterday using future or past tense.

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Production	<p>S1: Does it mean practice? When you do a painting?</p> <p>T: It's more like training.</p> <p>S2: Yes, you can, you practice painting.</p> <p>T: Yes, that's true. If you want to say practice, rather than training it's 练习. It shares this character, look! 練 means practice or exercising, 练习画画. Right, make a sentence with your partner.</p> <p>[The students practice the sentences with the partner.]</p>
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In this extract, Judith followed the same pattern as the previous event of the lesson to introduce the new vocabulary 训练 (training). It is important to note that after the students practiced the new word, she set a task allowing students to use different tenses to express various training in a complete sentence instead of short phrases. In other words, the students were allowed to use the language to generate their own meaning. Moreover, when Judith gave examples of how to use the new words, a student raised a question about 'painting training', which does not make sense in Mandarin. The teacher then explained that another word, '练习' practice can be used when combined with painting. Yet, the teacher did not further explain when to use 练习 (practice), and when to use 训练 (training) or whether or not these two words were interchangeable. Although the students tried to use the language creatively, the activities were either vocabulary driven or focused on particular structured sentence patterns. In other words, the highly controlled activities inhibited the use of the target language in context. Also, collocations of different words were not emphasised in the lesson, thus, the language use in real life situations was very limited. In addition, this extract revealed that independent production in Chinese is relatively slower and so is the progress of learners' autonomy.

#### 5.2.4 Practice and repetition

Without reference to L1, practices and repetition are particularly significant in Mandarin for non-native speakers. Joseph said, *"I think either they do it or they don't, there is no middle for that. If they tried their best to learn it, they will get 70% to 80% but some of them just give up and then get a zero."* Unlike other European languages which has similarities with English as an alphabet language, the students need to practice so as to learn the Chinese characters and attain good results. One of the students from

School A who also learn French at GCSE commented in the focus group interview, *“For French, sometimes you can just boast but Mandarin you just can’t make things up.”* In European languages, learners can sometimes depend on cognates to learn and understand the meaning of vocabulary. However, Chinese characters that have no similarities to English, requires practice of characters repeatedly to acquire the language.

Practices and repetition is the key success to Mandarin learning. The non-native teacher Joseph said, *“You just have to copy, copy and remember.”* The teacher emphasised that repetition is significant and the only way to learn Chinese characters is through copying. In addition, Joseph said *“I just leave it to them”* as he thinks it is the responsibility of the students and he would not spend lesson time to do repetitive practices. Joseph also shared his strategies with the students, he said, *“I told them don’t just copy it for one night for half an hour, do ten minutes on Tuesday, ten minutes on Thursday, ten minutes on Sunday, spread it out so that your brain to visit it more than once.”* He believes that repetition is more effective if the students do it regularly, frequently and spend a dedicated amount of time.

Yet, the Mandarin teachers regarded writing, copying and individual repetition as low value and expected the students to complete them independently outside the classrooms. In the teacher interviews, all the teachers stated that they did not do writing or copying of Chinese characters in the lessons but instead as homework. Most of the teachers expect the students to do the practices at home, but the quantities are dependent on the students. Judith said, *“Some of them write many, many times, more than five times. When you read the students’ notes, there are a lot of practices.”* The teacher believes that the students do a lot of practice outside the classrooms.

The GCSE students recognised that practices and repetition are necessary in Chinese Mandarin learning. In the focus group interviews, when students were asked how many times they practiced Chinese characters or Mandarin, all the students said, *“Many!”* followed by laughter. Most of the students said, *“I rewrite them over and over again until I know them off by heart”* and *“I just keep writing them over and over again”*. Similar to the teacher’s perspective, the students realise that practice and repetition was important in learning Mandarin and they acknowledge the value and were able to see the ultimate goal.

Similar to the views of Joseph, the students presented that it is important to have a concrete plan in terms of how long and how often to do the practices. In the students' questionnaire, according to the students' responses, practice means revising the content repeatedly, not only considering the duration of time, such as *'spending more time'*, but also *'revise it more often'*, which means increasing the frequency of practices. Besides, some students also mentioned online platforms which could help them practice the language, such as Quizlet and Language Perfect. The teachers set up different tasks on these online platforms, for example, flashcards on the website Quizlet, that the students could access the website and practice Mandarin outside the classrooms.

Repetitive practices of Chinese characters is time-consuming but also rewarding and promising. In the students' questionnaire, one of the questions was *How to improve their performance in the areas that they are the least confident?* The answer with the highest frequency was *'Practice'*. The students thought practice could help to improve their performance. On the other hand, when the teachers were asked about the reasons why some students struggled, most of them shared the view that *"they are not attentive in class"* or *"they did not practice at home"*, as said by Mary and Joseph respectively.

One of the students from School B quantified the time he spent, *"a normal vocab test every week, maybe one or two hours"*. There was another student from School C who stated, *"It is demanding but it's not boring. You really have to have a passion."* The students in the interview all understood that Mandarin or learning Chinese characters involved abundant repetitive practices but they did not find it boring. One of the students even said, *"It is therapeutic!"* Since Chinese characters are very different from alphabetical languages, mastery of writing Chinese characters builds a sense of achievement as they acquired new content. A student described how she practiced Chinese characters' writing, which resonated with the experiences of her peers. She said,

*"I think, I am not sure about you guys, but don't you get exactly a little rhythm when you are writing certain characters and so like you kind of know... that just come naturally what it seems. Yeah, not like stroke all the black. When you look at a character and then like, you go over it loads of times and you get like a rhythm like you just... I can't explain it! It is just sequenced [laugh, everyone*

*agrees] and then you know what is going to come next. Then for the next character you got another sequence for that and then you like," ok, I know what to do.'"*

The process that the students were describing was mundane and repetitive, but she did not find it tedious. Instead, she was able to understand 'the rhythm' of writing Chinese characters which other students also agreed on. 'The rhythm' might be referred to as the sequence of writing characters, not only about the stroke orders but also about the combination of different components. Once the student practices many times and remember how the Chinese character is constructed, it makes sense to her and she has learned the structure of the character. For the student, practising Chinese characters is different from learning other subjects, and when asked to describe the process she said, "*I can't explain*". Therefore, although the students are doing the same thing repeatedly, the learning experiences and gaining new knowledge sustain their motivation.

#### 5.2.5 Assessment for learning

Regular vocabulary tests monitor students' learning progress. Some Mandarin teachers have stated that tests and assessments were motivating, and this resonated with the GCSE students. Corresponding to the previous section 5.2.4 Practice and repetition, the Mandarin teachers expected the students to do practices independently outside the classroom, and all the schools then have regular vocabulary assessments to monitor and evaluate the learning progress of the students. In School A and C, the tests add on to the whole-school assessment and were conducted during the Mandarin lessons. For example, vocabulary tests every other week. School C teacher Joseph stated that "*I suppose at this school, tests kind of motivate them. So, if they know they are going to be tested, they will work quite hard.*" School C is academically outstanding in public examinations and the students are motivated to achieve high scores in tests.

Assessments promote extrinsic motivation of the students. In the students' questionnaire, the students commented that having tests is an effective practice and contribute to their confidence, in particular, the students from School A and C. The students stated that "*the weekly tests were motivating*" and "*vocabulary tests help to break down the curriculum into digestible chunks*". This is because when assessments are an integral part of the learning process, it enables the students to do revisions regularly and to consolidate the content. More importantly, as stated by one of the

students, “Regular vocab tests make it easy to remember characters”, because then the number of characters that need to be remembered are manageable, and the regularity of the tests build up the habit of revision. Thus, assessment serves to motivate and inform the students, but also informs the teaching process and feeds into the planning and the evaluation of the students’ learning. This is because if the students do not perform well in the test, they were then asked to attend extra lessons. In other words, the teachers provide support for the students as a follow-up of the assessments.

### 5.2.6 Use of authentic materials

Authentic materials provide a link between the classroom and the outside world - MFL learning and its application. David from School C used authentic materials when he was preparing the students for the controlled assessment. It was the only lesson that authentic materials were used among all the 24 lessons observed. He used an authentic online advertisement about hiring a Mandarin speaking teacher in Dubai so as to explain the benefits of learning Mandarin to the students. He also incorporated an online video introducing Beijing, China to enrich students’ understanding of China. The objective of the lesson was preparing to write controlled assessments about why the students wanted to work in China. Even though the advertisement and the video were both in English, the students were very engaged and actively participated in the discussion. The students discussed with the teacher about whether or not they wanted to teach Mandarin overseas as well as the benefits of learning Mandarin. The following Table 21 summarises the structure of the lesson, which showed the use of authentic materials in this Mandarin lesson.

Event	Descriptions
1. Starter: worksheet	The students needed to highlight structure (connectives) and translate the meaning. The teacher walked around the classroom and give group/individual guidance.
2. Check answers for the <i>Do Now</i>	The teacher checked the answer with the students and explained the vocabulary. The teacher selected the students to translate the sentences.
3. Mandarin teacher	The teacher showed the student an advertisement which is

advertisement	hiring Mandarin teacher in Dubai. The teacher explained the benefits of learning Mandarin. “Give you some inspiration what you can do in the future.”
4. Showing a video	The teacher showed a video introducing Beijing and the life in Beijing.
5. Teaching the sentence pattern	The teacher explained the sentence pattern, 我想在中国工作, 因为...(I want to work in China because...) The teacher selected students to share the sentences they wrote.
6. Silent writing	The students combined the sentences they learned last week and wrote a paragraph.
7. Explaining the writing task of controlled assessment	The teacher explained the preparation they have done and how to get a higher grade.
8. Birthday of a student	The teacher showed a video in Chinese singing happy birthday.

*Table 21 Structure of David's Year 10 lesson*

After the discussion of the job advertisement of the Mandarin teacher in Dubai, in the following event no.4, David showed a video describing Beijing and life in the city. The importance of showing the video was that this stimulated ideas and provided insights for the students to write a paragraph about their Mandarin learning and why they would like to work in China. The advertisement helps the students to connect their language learning to the application of the real world (i.e. job application). Although they will not apply for the job in Dubai or write the job application in Chinese, it helps them to avoid producing content purely from their imagination. The high engagement and active participation of the discussion of the students during the lesson showed that the use of authentic materials was motivating for the students.

The use of authentic materials also increases the understanding and exposure of the students to the target language community. According to David, authentic materials used in the classrooms do not necessarily need to be in the target language. The videos and advertisements used in the lesson are both in English; he attempted to enhance the student's knowledge about China and Beijing, as the students had never

been there. The video provided an opportunity for the students to know more about the country so as to help the students write about their aspirations of working in China.

On the other hand, the Mandarin teachers, Mark and Joseph mentioned that their classroom activities involved the use of authentic materials, but it is difficult to find one in Chinese. Joseph said exposure to authentic material is a big challenge for the students. *“With Chinese, it’s so new that if you want some authentic videos or some authentic texts, that’s lots of things that you can’t guess. So, you need a lot of support for that.”* Mark shared similar views, in particular finding listening materials, he said *“[...] often we don’t have a suitable material and we have to make it ourselves.”* Joseph and Mark think authentic materials must be in Mandarin or target language, which the students would not be able to understand as their Mandarin proficiency at GCSE level is not very high. In addition, unlike German and French in which many words sound very similar to English, the disparities between Mandarin and English did not allow the students to *“guess a little bit”* as shared by Joseph in the interview. Nevertheless, David’s lesson provides evidence that authentic materials can be in the target language or students’ native language as one of its purposes is to increase the understanding and exposure of the students to the target language community, rather than the language of the materials. He also reported that the use of authentic materials is one of the most important factors of successful teaching.

Authentic materials extend and expand the students’ knowledge of the world beyond their contexts. In the same school but from another lesson by Hannah, the students were doing the same writing task. Instead of using authentic materials, the teacher used mind-maps to explain to the students about the summer jobs they wanted to take up, *“It’s not something big. You can’t be a doctor. It’s a small job.”* She also said, *“Make sure your past experiences can be relevant to your future plans”*. In the lesson, a student said, *“I don’t want to be a shop assistant, but I can’t write anything else, I can’t do that”*. This not only showed that the students were made to write about the jobs or were forced to aspire to work in certain jobs that they might not be genuinely interested in but also the learning task was not related to students’ actual lives. On the other hand, the use of authentic materials in David’s lesson helped students to imagine beyond their life context and expand their knowledge of the world (i.e. working as a Mandarin teacher in Dubai).



### 5.2.7 Games and competitions

The use of games and competitions provides enjoyment to the students in the Mandarin lessons. The Mandarin teachers stated in the interviews that playing games in the Mandarin classroom are related to students' enjoyment as well as the learning of the language. David from School B expressed his views about games and competitions,

*“You can have enjoyable lessons, but the students have no progress or do not learn much, so a balance between the two is important. Language learning is different from other academic subjects if I only focus on making progress, there is no enjoyment in the process of language learning.”*

According to David, games are attractive to students and bring enjoyment in the learning process. However, games could not be dominantly used in the lessons as making progress in learning is also important, hence the balance between the two is important to sustain the motivation of students. He also added that games and competitions are used more in junior forms as the students are more active whereas they were not as effective as aspects of Chinese culture to enhance the motivation of students in KS4. Hannah also stated the effect and values of games and competitions were motivating, *“Even though the students enjoy classroom activities or games, it is impossible to have them all the time as they get bored.”* Hannah highlights that games are enjoyable for students but also that the misuse of games creates boredom. The teachers emphasise the importance of when and how to use games and competitions in the lessons, and state that *“making progress”* and *“a wide range of activities”* could sustain the motivation of the students.

Games and competitions are implemented to serve particular teaching purposes, mainly the repetition of new vocabulary or sentence patterns. The frequency of games and competitions in the observed lessons was not high and the Mandarin teachers showed no tendencies to use games and competitions to either keep the students entertained or to make language learning more attractive. Instead, the use of games changed the pace of the lessons and ‘added a pinch of salt’ to the lessons by breaking the monotony of learning. During the observations, eight of the 24 lessons included one or two games, and in one of the lessons, the teacher played three games, repeating one game twice. Altogether, there were ten games used in the GCSE lessons by all the teachers except in Joseph’s lessons, none of which contained games.

Even though there were ten games used in the Mandarin lessons observed, there were only four types of games as summarised in the Table 22.

<b>Game</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Pass the soft toy	The teacher defines the English meaning and passes a soft toy to a student, then the student needs to say the word in Mandarin.	Class-based	3 minutes
Loop the slides	There is an English definition on the top right-hand corner of a slide. There are four options written in Chinese characters. Students have to say the number that represents the Chinese characters which matches the meaning as soon as possible.	Class-based	3 minutes
Beat the teacher	The teacher reads the vocabulary on the Powerpoint; the students then need to repeat after the teacher. However, if the pronunciation does not match that of the Chinese characters, the students should remain silent.	Class-based	3 minutes
Roll a dice	The students roll a dice and say the sentence according to the number of the dice and they have and record the points that they've got.	Group work	5 minutes

*Table 22 Games used in the Mandarin lessons observed*

The teachers explained the rationale of the game to the students e.g. to practice vocabulary relating to *Jobs*. The students appeared to understand what to do as observed in the lessons. The games that were used in the lessons were mostly class-based, only *Roll a dice* was in the form of group work. The games were mainly adopted to practice new vocabulary or sentence patterns that the students learned in the lesson. In other words, these games served to practice the target language repetitively in an alternative method. These games were straightforward and fast in pace. There was no winning team or rewards for these games, except in School D, in which the teacher

Ruth won the 'Beat the teacher' game. All the games were played in the lesson and lasted less than five minutes with little instructions needed.

Games and competitions make practices and repetitions fun and motivating. From the perspectives of the students, when students were asked about activities that were enjoyable in Mandarin classroom, the students mentioned that games and competitions were motivating. For instance, the students in School A, School B, and School D said 'Beat the teacher' was one of the best games. The students also named other games they played in Mandarin lessons, such as, 'Noughts and crosses', 'Word guess', 'Put the sentence in correct order'.

The students in School A expressed how much they enjoyed the teacher-student activities in the focus group interviews, Student A said, *"Any game that is a teacher-student game, it becomes so competitive like...whenever one person gets it wrong, everyone will look at the person like...No! (Laughter)"*. The learning atmosphere as described was highly engaging and everyone participated. The design of "Beat the teacher" enabled the students to have the opportunity to be the winner, if the teacher could be defeated by the students in the Mandarin language, and this created a successful experience for the students.

Moreover, class-based games and competition promote the development of cohesiveness of a group. Every student was required to put effort and was asked to engage in the game. This collective element of class-based games built up teamwork and spirit within the class and formed special memories in the process of their learning journey. Furthermore, the students experienced satisfaction after they completed the tasks together and this satisfaction was further increased by the shared experience and the joint celebrations that usually followed. Instead of being put under the spotlight, the students contributed to the group to compete against the teacher. It allowed the students to engage in the learning process and to complete the task with their peers. Moreover, the students from School D reported that the Mandarin teachers sometimes rewarded them with sweets, cupcakes or merits. The cooperation among learners will be presented in detail in the next section 5.3.

### 5.3 Promote cooperation amongst learners

The use of group or pair work maximises the opportunity for the students to speak Mandarin in the lessons. All the Mandarin teachers except Ruth from School D have

acknowledged that cooperation among learners is a powerful resource in foreign language classrooms. The Mandarin teachers reported that students' Mandarin learning and exposure are *"only in the classroom"* said by Mary, thereby one of the ways to maximise the opportunity to speak the target language is doing pair or group work in the lessons. Hannah from School B explained the rationale of the implementation of pair or group work, *"In a 50-minute lesson, they [the students] might only be able to speak one second to the teacher."* Having pair or group work allows students to practice the language with each other as the students do not have such opportunities at home. Hannah explained that *"If you ask questions to an individual student, many other students will be neglected."* This way the students were able to have more opportunities in terms of the usage of the target language.

Practices among learners reduced the language anxiety of the students. According to the lesson observations, the most frequent event of pair or group work was after the Mandarin teachers taught new vocabulary words when the students practiced the language with their peers. Even though the students repeated the vocabulary with their partners only, most of the students were engaged in activities as observed in the lessons. A student from Judith's class commented on this strategy as well, he said, *"Sometimes miss taught us maybe five to ten characters, and how they sound like, then we test each other. It's quite useful."* It is a very simple design of pair work which the students found the chance to practice the newly learned vocabulary in the lesson useful, especially they do not have the opportunity to practice the language outside of the classroom. On the other hand, cooperative situations created a positive emotional atmosphere in which the students experienced less anxiety and stress when compared with other learning formats. Furthermore, the students were able to gain a sense of satisfaction after they completed the tasks together.

Cooperation among learners promotes autonomous as the students work on tasks without the immediate supervision of the teacher. In general, all the students exhibited a positive attitude towards pair or group work and enjoy cooperating with their peers. The students in all the schools except School D expressed that *"there are a lot of activities in Mandarin"* that they can work in pairs or groups. A student from the school said, *"When we're doing writing activities, he [the teacher] doesn't need us in silence. Like, you can ask other people like, "how did you write this?"* One of the reasons that the students in this school enjoyed the Mandarin lessons was that *"you get to help your partners as well and understand what's going on."* Additionally, the setting of the

classroom in which tables are organised in groups instead of rows allowed the students to communicate and work with each other throughout the learning tasks. This also promoted autonomy among the students. In the focus group interviews, a student said, *“You can ask your friends before you have to ask the teacher and that helps quite a lot.”* Learning was structured in a way that students in the same group were interdependent, meaning they rely on each other as well as contribute to the completion of the tasks individually.

Cooperation among learners enhances students’ expectancy of success as they can count on their peers. A student gave an example of this, *“So we were given like a very long paragraph and ask us to translate it, which we can discuss it with each other. It is more fun. It is like trying to figure out a puzzle and it is better with a few people.”* When students work together, they tend to like each other regardless of ability differences. This is because in cooperative situations students are dependent on each other without immediate support from the teachers and share common goals which in turn creates a feeling of solidarity and comradely supportiveness. The opportunity that the students *“work out something together”* fosters class-group cohesiveness and is presented as an important element of pair or group work. Peer collaboration involves a synthesis of academic and social skills and responds directly to the students’ needs of sense of belonging and relatability.

Differentiated grouping promotes peer collaborations and reduces disengagement of learners. Grouping also has an impact on the students’ learning attitudes and effectiveness of cooperation among learners. Differentiated groups help to promote group cohesiveness. A student from School C shared her view in this regard,

*“They [the teachers] usually put us near people... so if you are very good at Mandarin, [they will] put us with people who struggle. So, we are trying to help them, but they also put us to somebody else who also very good, so we can work with people who are to our level and also help those who are struggling.”*

The student appreciated that they could work with people who had a good standard of Mandarin, at the same time, they were willing to help their peers who were struggling. The cooperative situation as described by the students demonstrates a sense of obligation and moral responsibility to their peers. It shows that the students are likely to pull each other along when motivation would otherwise be low. This joint responsibility

also means that in such setups the likelihood of disengagement in lessons will decrease.

Allowing the students to cooperate with people they are familiar with promotes learning motivation. In the focus group interviews, the students reported that cooperation among peers promoted learning, but it depended on *“who do you work with”* said by a student from School A. Many students made the same comment, *“Because it’s like if you can’t work well together, it doesn’t really work. But if it does, it’s really fun.”* (Student C, School B) The students believed that having someone who they were familiar with could encourage them to help each other more. Most of the Mandarin teachers presented a thorough understanding of the students outside the classroom. One of Mary’s students stated, *“Miss wants us to help each other more as well. Because if you sit with someone you don’t like, you don’t help each other much.”* The student not only understood the rationale of the seating plan but also tried to cooperate with her teacher and supported the peers in classroom learning. It is motivating as it requires unique contributions from every student in the group to succeed, thus it increases one’s effort in learning.

Furthermore, peer collaborations develop a sense of joint responsibility that has a positive impact on classroom discipline and learning. Student C from School A said, *“Some teachers think that if kids sit next to their friends, they will just talk. But actually, they don’t talk that much as they don’t want to get moved. So, it’s like you know when to stop talking and when to behave.”* The student reported that sitting with friends encouraged them to focus on their learning rather than talking to each other or being distracted in the lesson. One of the teachers in School A arranged the seats based on the academic performance and chatting patterns of the students, which resulted in students sitting with someone that they did not know or *“have nothing to talk about”* (Student B, School A). A student stated that *“We are old enough to realise that, okay, this is actually important, we should probably listen to what others say.”* Such an arrangement not only was unable to promote cooperation among learners but also demotivated the students to learn in the lesson, as they did not want to participate in the learning tasks of the lessons.

On the other hand, similar to the teacher’s interview, the students from School D reported that group or pair work was *“not so often”* but the students sometimes taught each other. Yet, when there is group or pair work, the teacher also arranged

*“competition as well against other people who can finish first and can get some more rights, but we don’t do it so often.”* Instead of promoting cooperation among peers, the teacher created competitions among students, which might intend to exploit students’ potential. However, the students in School London D did not express their enjoyment in working with their peers, and their learning in the classroom was more individual.

## 5.4 Allowing learners to maintain a positive social image

### 5.4.1 A balance of praise and error corrections

The Mandarin teachers offer students ‘good roles’ based on their strengths in the classrooms. Joseph from School B expressed that his students enjoyed speaking in front of the class, and he provided opportunities for students to succeed. He said, *“They don’t mind performing in front of the class, but it depends on the school. They are pretty confident, maybe because they are boys, maybe they don’t feel scared.”* Among the four schools, School B was the most outstanding academically, which might contribute to the confidence of the students. Most importantly, the teacher recognised the students’ accomplishments. Moreover, the Mandarin teachers praised and encouraged the students explicitly so as to maintain a positive social image. In the teacher interviews, Hannah from School B stated that *“I think encouragement is very important and to recognise the strong point (闪光点) of the students, and then praise them.”* Hannah not only knew the strong point of individual students but also gave merit explicitly so that the students also recognised their strengths.

The Mandarin teachers addressed students’ errors with caution. Joseph said, *“If they get wrong, I won’t say, ‘you are wrong!’ I just say ‘okay, you need to pronounce it this way or actually this way is better’.”* Even though he claimed himself to be a strict teacher, in fact, he had high expectations from the students’ standard. Instead of highlighting the mistakes made by the students, he provides constructive feedback which focuses on improving the students’ language so as to protect their positive images. Comparable to Joseph, Ruth from School D also mentioned that she is a strict teacher.

*“I like pointing out mistakes, I can’t tolerate mistakes. They might think these are very minor mistakes, but sometimes, there will be a negative impact on students as they think that the teacher always points out my mistakes and does*

*not encourage me. However, if I always praise them and do not point out the areas that they need to improve, I think I did not fulfill my duty as a teacher.”*

Ruth acknowledged that it is the teachers' responsibility to point out the mistakes of the students so that they can make improvements. On the other hand, she understood that error corrections could, in fact, discourage the students and she did not want the students to have a negative perception of themselves.

It is worth mentioning that in one of Ruth's lessons, she presented her approach to correcting errors of the students in the classrooms. The students learned a new word 捡起来 (pick it up) in the lesson. Later in the lesson, one of the students dropped his water bottle on the floor, then another student said in Mandarin, “把水捡起来。” which means, pick up the water bottle. While the student tried to make a spontaneous speech by using the word that he learned in real-life situations, Ruth insisted to correct the tone of one of the words he mispronounced. The student was also asked to repeat the sentence again, but he appeared to be reluctant. This shows that the teachers corrected the student's mistake in a discouraging way because of which the student might be demotivated as he was losing face in front of others. In the same lesson, the teacher implemented the game *Beat the teacher* as one of the activities, in which another student kept repeating after the teacher even when Ruth mispronounced the words. Ruth called the name of the particular student and highlighted he made the mistakes. At the end of the game, the students got zero points whereas the teacher got 14 points. It is important to note that the student was asked to leave the classroom later in the lesson as he misbehaved throughout the lesson.

Teachers' comments are the most influential to the students' confidence and motivation. The students reported that Ruth is very strict with them. When the students were asked if they were confident in Mandarin, both of the students were not confident, one of them said, “No, we are not. I don't think I would ever want to talk in Chinese to Chinese person because I feel like I just do really badly.” The students are not confident in Mandarin as they did not think they could have a conversation with a native speaker. Another student said, “Miss was tough because she says it's not good.” The students not only recognised that the teacher was strict but also, they took the comments to mean that they were not good at Mandarin and believed it.



Additionally, the two students expressed their incompetence and concerns towards their abilities to perform in the GCSE, *“It’s really difficult doing the GCSE or at least it feels it is really difficult now. Miss says all her Year 11 now is A\* and I think we would never get that really.”* It is important to note that both of the students studied other foreign languages with one of them capable of speaking German and French as well as having completed her German GCSE in Year 10. Even though they were the more able students as described by their teacher Ruth, and they expected themselves to achieve an A or A\* in the GCSE, they presented an incompetent attitude towards their language ability. Also, the two students stated that they will not study Mandarin in Sixth Form. Among the four schools, according to the students’ questionnaire, the students in School D had relatively lower confidence in their Mandarin learning compared to the other three schools.

#### 5.4.2 Unique identity as a Mandarin learner

Most of the students said they felt special and unique to be a Mandarin learner. In the focus group interview, a student from School A said, *“It looks more impressive when people know it and it’ll make you stand out a little bit.”* Mandarin is a language that is not offered in many schools and not learned by every single student in such schools. Being able to learn and speak Mandarin builds a positive image of the learners among their peers and sometimes comes across as a form of *“show off”* or *“your ego just grows bigger”*. The identity of being a Mandarin learner creates a ‘positive hero’ image and works as an unprecedented stimulant.

In all the focus group interviews, the students said that when they tried to speak Mandarin to other people, *“everyone is like WOW!”* A few students also expressed that, *“Anyone can speak Spanish!”* The students felt proud not only of being able to speak a foreign language but also a language that not many people were able to learn or master. This not only happens among their peers but also within their families. One of the students said, *“If my grandmother meets a new person, she’s like “My granddaughter learns Mandarin”.* Learning Mandarin is more than just merely learning a language, it also makes the family members feel proud of the students. Being able to speak an expanding language that is not commonly spoken compliments the identity of the learners. Another student from School C reported the attitudes of their parents on her Mandarin learning, *“Every time they see you learning Chinese, they expect you to translate everything!”* Many students in the interview expressed that their parents are

very supportive of their Mandarin learning, especially since they do not know the language and find their children's learning amazing. Some of the parents even think that the students are good enough to know everything about Mandarin Chinese.

### 5.5 Developing learner autonomy

Currently, at GCSE level, it seems that the Mandarin teachers have instilled autonomy gradually in the preceding years during which they made all the major decisions pertaining to the learning process. It is due to a lack of resources in Mandarin that the Mandarin teachers have different roles, including being the main source of knowledge, a developer of learning materials and a supporter of students' learning. First, Mandarin teachers are the main source of input regarding students' Mandarin learning. Mary from School A stated in the interview, *"The students in our school have no Chinese background and no one can help them when they go back home. Therefore, most of their learning is within the classroom."* Hannah shared exactly the same view and said *"[Mandarin] learning is quite restricted in the classroom only."* The Mandarin teachers stated that most of the learning happens in the classrooms only, and they tend to take full responsibility for the students' learning. Additionally, they say that in Mandarin lessons, it is important to *"do things that they can get feedback from the teachers"*, as stated by Mark in the interview. He refers to learning as *"writing passages, learning new vocabulary and maybe a bit of reading passages that they [the students] can't really handle on their own"*. Hence, the students' learning depends much on the teachers' input.

In School B, the students persuaded the Mandarin teacher Joseph to have extra lessons. Joseph explained the policy, *"They asked me themselves, they say we are worried that we forget everything so can you give us some extra help with writing."* The students requested to have more practice outside the classroom. The teacher is the main source of knowledge and the students depend on him as is evident from the fact that the extra classes were on a voluntary basis. In the focus group interview, when the students were asked what they would do if they had questions in Mandarin, all the students said, *"Ask the teacher"*. A student from School C said, *"Sir is like the main source because he knows it."* The students show a heavy reliance on the Mandarin teachers, which is based on the trust of the subject knowledge of the Mandarin teachers.

Second, the Mandarin teachers are the developers of learning materials to support the students' learning outside the Mandarin classrooms. In school A, Mark provided a *"glossary that includes words that the students don't understand"*, and Mary gave out *'revision packs'* to the students. She explained the rationale of the revision packs, *"It is very handy. For example, if a student thinks that he didn't learn well today in the lesson, he can refer to the revision pack and revise the content."* Mary understood that the students might not have any support from home, hence the revision packs could help the students if they were not able to catch up with the lesson. Likewise, Judith in the same school summarised all the GCSE vocabulary according to different themes and named the booklet *The Bible* which the students referred to when they did their revision.

Joseph from School B described the difficulties his students might encounter,

*"You get a text and you can't read the characters and then you are stuck because it's very difficult to look at the dictionary. You don't know the Pinyin; you just see the characters and have to find a device to draw it."*

Unlike European languages, it is not very direct and easy for students who are learning Mandarin to look up a dictionary as they cannot input the character unless they have a device, or they know the pinyin of Chinese characters. Therefore, the teachers attempted to fill the gap by offering materials that support students' learning outside the classrooms. In School D, the Mandarin department even created a Google classroom that consisted of all the vocabulary of different topics in addition to the inclusion of audio recordings for listening, so that the students can listen to the recording and test themselves. The Mandarin teachers of the school recorded all the recordings.

The students also found that resources for Mandarin learning outside the classrooms when compared to other languages is limited. Students from School D gave an example, *"There are websites to help you learn 20 different languages but not Mandarin"*. There were not many Mandarin learning resources that the students could get access to. Thus, all the students in the focus group interviews reported that the vocabulary list, Google classroom or *The Bible* were helpful to them. In School C, the students had a booklet with all the vocabulary in JinBu (a Mandarin textbook) under different topics. The students described the booklet as a *'mini-dictionary'* which they could look up whenever they encountered vocabulary that they did not know. Year 11 students from School A also shared that *"It [The Bible] is very useful. Because you got everything you need vocabulary in it."* It seems that the Mandarin teachers take full

responsibility and accountability towards the students' learning which might impede their autonomy. However, the teachers emphasised on independent interaction of the students with learning materials and instilled autonomy gradually during the process, so that the learners can be independent in the future.

Third, the Mandarin teachers are also supporters of the students' learning. All four schools in this research offered extra Mandarin lessons for GCSE students. In School A, School C, and School D, the extra lessons were based on the performance of the students and were initiated by the Mandarin teachers. Students who underachieve in the lessons or fail in tests were required to attend the extra lessons during lunchtime or after school. Having relatively less support in Mandarin outside the classrooms, the idea of the extra lessons was to help students catch up with their learning by providing opportunities to practice, and allowing the teacher the scope for further explanations and answering questions. In the lesson observations, the students who did not attain 60% in a vocabulary test were requested by Judith from School A to attend the extra lessons.

In the focus group interviews, the students elaborated on their views on the extra lesson. A student from School C reported that,

*“If we are struggling in Mandarin there are intervention classes, which really do help. [...]If you are struggling you can turn up to intervention classes and the teachers are going to sit with you one on one and you can just go through all the stuff.”*

The extra lessons aim to provide individual support to students who are struggling as well as students who want to have extra support. Mandarin teachers also committed to supporting the students' learning. In the focus group interviews, students in School D explained how important the support of the Mandarin Department as well as the teacher Ruth was. She said, *“So we can have one-to-one if we want to. And it's just with one of the teachers from the Mandarin department.”* The one-to-one was voluntary and students could enroll for the sessions according to their learning needs. In addition, the students stated how Ruth supported their learning, *“She [Ruth] always makes time, especially like with controlled assessments. If you decided to work until six o'clock, she will be working with you until six o'clock. She wouldn't say “Now I am busy”.”* The teacher Ruth was very devoted and willing to spend time to help the students to learn Mandarin after school. It can be argued that the extent of support provided by the

Mandarin teachers was at odds with promoting the autonomy of learners, however, the investment of the Mandarin teachers became an impetus to keep the students going.

In the students' questionnaires, when students were asked why they were confident in the area of Mandarin learning, one of the categories summarised was *Support and Feedback*, the students stated the importance of how the teachers' practices supported their learning so as to build up their confidence. Their responses in this category included "catch up classes", "the teacher helps students individually", "the teacher gives feedback" and other similar statements. All the students in the four schools reported that the remedial classes were helpful; the one-to-one sessions with the teacher were also highly appreciated by the students, and the feedback given by the teachers was significant as the students learned how to improve their work and the language accordingly.

The GCSE level is the starting point to create learners' autonomy. If possible, the Mandarin teachers demonstrated that they are giving the students the freedom to make choices as well as to take responsibility for their learning. However, the students were encouraged to make decisions in the process of learning rather than articulate linguistic knowledge to make decisions. In one of the lessons, Judith allowed her students to decide whether or not they would like to re-do attempts of the controlled assessments. She displayed the performance of the Year 10 students and asked,

*T: Just tell me whether you want to or not.*

*S1: Writing?*

*T: No, for speaking.*

*S2: Miss, can I do that again?*

*T: Do you want to do that again?*

*S2: Yes, which day can I do it?*

*T: End of half-term.*

*[...]*

*T: Nicole, do you want to that?*

*S3: Let me think about that.*

*T: I would say that's optional but do tell me if you want to do that.*

In the lesson, Judith allowed all the students to re-do the writing and speaking controlled assessments no matter what scores they obtained. Student 2 had a good grade, but he still wanted to re-do the task, which Judith was opened. If the students did not have a good grade or were unable to obtain a 'C' in the GCSE, for example, Student 3 Nicole, Judith tried to encourage the students to consider re-doing the controlled assessment. Through this, the teacher created an immediate purpose that was valid for the students – to improve their performance in the controlled assessments. In the teacher interview, Judith explained her perception, *“I kept telling the students they need to have plans to move up the assessment criteria.”* One of the ways to continue on the language learning process for the students was *“The education in England emphasizes the success criteria and self-assessment”* as mentioned by Judith in the interview. The teachers let the students know how to improve and which areas they had to improve on, as well as the targets that needed to be set for them to improve. Most importantly, the students had the freedom to choose rather than be forced or coerced to re-do the task. The teachers 'let go' and trust the students to take on the responsibility and have control over their own language learning.

## 5.6 Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter presented how contextual factors contribute to the implementation of motivational strategies by Mandarin teachers. The analysis highlighted that at the GCSE level, there is a strong focus not only on the examination but also the teaching content and the design of activities in the classrooms. In addition, whether or not the adoption of CLT in MFL is motivational is presented by illustrating various principles of the teaching methodology, including the PPP model, communicative activities and use of authentic materials. Other motivational strategies presented how foreign language motivation can be enhanced with reference to the teachers' practices of this study. Lastly, it is found that due to the fact that Mandarin Chinese has relatively slow progress compared to European languages, the development of learners' autonomy was also slower. In other words, the use of the target language by the learners at the GCSE level is still very limited. However, the

students possessed a unique identity as a Mandarin learner to sustain their motivation, which will be discussed in-depth in the next chapter.

## Chapter 6 Discussion

The previous two chapters presented the findings of the study in relation to the main themes and issues that emerged from the data collected from interviews, classroom observations and students' questionnaires. The current chapter aims to discuss the implications of the study by answering the overarching research question: ***What are the practices implemented by Mandarin teachers to enhance and sustain the motivation of GCSE students in England?*** The chapter is organised according to the sub-research questions. Section 6.1 presents the perceptions of the Mandarin teachers and the motivational practices they implemented in their GCSE classrooms. Section 6.2 relates to the practices that the GCSE students found motivating. Section 6.3 puts the study in a broader context and discusses how motivational strategies sustain and protect the motivation of students when compared with similar previous studies. The last section 6.4 concludes the chapter by introducing a refined Motivational Strategies Framework, focusing particularly on the third phase of the framework.

Two decades ago, Dörnyei and Csizer (1998) interviewed 200 practising English teachers in Hungary. The interview aimed to investigate what teachers considered as the most important language teaching strategies. The self-report questionnaires answered by teachers at all levels led to the development of the 'Ten Commandments', which refers to ten macro strategies for motivating language learners. The study initiated a series of motivational strategies research (e.g. Asante Al-Mahrooqi & Abrar-ul-Hussan, 2012; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Sucuoglu, 2017; Ruesch, Bown & Dewey, 2012; Sugita & Takeuchi, 2014; Wong, 2014) hoping to study the effectiveness of the strategies in different contexts. The Ten Commandments as macro strategies include *Set personal example, Create pleasant classroom, Promote learners' confidence, Make learning tasks stimulating*, etc. Yet, there was no consensus as to which motivational strategies were more effective. Instead, cross-cultural differences were found among the research: educational, contextual and linguistic circumstances led to differences in efficacy (Henry, Korp, Sundqvist & Thorsen, 2018). In order to capture dynamic aspects of motivation, Dörnyei (2001) developed the Motivational Strategies Framework based on the Ten Commandments. The taxonomy provides a catalogue of factors teachers need to take into account when implementing the learning activities. There is also a theoretical framework that can be used to analyse motivational dimensions. Dörnyei's framework neither can nor should be intended to function as a



universally applicable template. The motivational strategies suggested are not “rock-solid golden rules” (Dörnyei, 2001, p.30).

Several studies on the Motivational Strategies Framework (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Moskovsky, Alrabai, Paolini, & Ratcheva, 2013) proved that language teachers’ motivational strategies contributed to learners’ motivation. Nevertheless, all of the above-mentioned researches were conducted in the context of teaching English but not on other foreign languages. English, as a lingua franca, is currently learned in diverse contexts, the interactions among motivation, context and pedagogy are also difficult to characterise or generalise (Ushioda, 2011a; Wang & Liu, 2017). The novelty of the present study is that the same framework is applied in the Anglophone context to investigate the teaching and learning of a foreign language other than English – Mandarin Chinese. The context is opposite to most of the previous motivational strategy studies. It investigates teaching English as a foreign language in a country where another language is being spoken. Hence, it is expected that where Mandarin Chinese is taught in England, the particularities of both cultures and the education setting are likely to “render some strategies completely meaningless” while highlighting others as “particularly prominent” (Dörnyei, 2001, p.30).

## 6.1 According to Dörnyei’s Motivational Strategies Framework, what are the Mandarin teacher’s perceptions of motivational strategies implemented in the Mandarin classrooms?

### 6.1.1 Protecting the learners’ self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence

This study confirmed that *Protecting the learners’ self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence* is the most important one amongst all the eight strategies. It is corroborated by previous studies in other contexts including Oman, Taiwan, Hungary, Hong Kong and Indonesia, ranking top three in these countries (e.g. Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2001; Astutui, 2018; Cheng & Dörnyei 2007; Dörnyei Csizer, 1998; Wong & Wong 2017). Clément, Dörnyei & Noels (1994) suggested that self-confidence is a major motivational subsystem in foreign language learning situations. If learners have faith and belief in their capabilities, they would expend their energy and effort in fulfilling the teacher’s expectations, finally achieving their full potential in language learning. In other words, the cross-cultural similarity found among these studies showed the importance of learners’ self-confidence in enhancing L2 learning. The present study

found that in order to promote students' self-efficacy and mastery of Mandarin, the Mandarin teachers helped students develop Mandarin-focused learning strategies, which supported their learning and dealing with different tasks in class. Thus, the accomplishment of the tasks instilled positive motivation within them.

The importance of developing Mandarin-focused learning strategies is that it can promote self-efficacy in learners. Self-efficacy is the belief in the capabilities of learners to accomplish specific language tasks. It determines the levels of persistence that the learners show in learning a language (Macaro, Graham & Woore, 2015). It is believed that learners with a high level of self-efficacy are more likely to sustain their motivation in language learning. Interestingly, Mandarin Chinese is a character language and is different from English and other alphabetical languages. Thus, the students in this study have no reference to their L1. Mandarin teachers in the present study have a high awareness of the issue and identified these distinctive features of Mandarin Chinese. They also possessed the idea that the students' understanding about the L2 language and their ability to engage in linguistic analysis in the early stage of learning is fundamental to the education of students (Block, 2002).

The study found that Mandarin teachers built the foundational knowledge of learners in Mandarin such as pinyin, knowledge of radicals, compounding and grammar formulas so that the students can progress to learn the GCSE content. It is also found that there is a positive impact of this strategy on the students' language learning (Macaro, 1998; Graham, 2007) as they can encode, decode, process, store and retrieve the language, in particular, Chinese characters. In addition, the confidence of the GCSE Mandarin students is generally positive. The combination of findings provided some support for the conceptual premise that learning strategies bridge the domains of effort and ability so that when students are working hard in strategic ways, their ability is enhanced (Covington, 1998). As the students have confirmed, even though Mandarin is a difficult language, they did not find it difficult to learn. It is perhaps because the Mandarin-focused learning strategies prepared the students well and made the learning process easier, faster and more enjoyable (Oxford, 1990). It is also important to note that the preparation of these learning strategies is served to help students in this study pass the GCSE examination. However, it is reasonable to conclude that students with an effective strategy to use developed independent learning and learners' autonomy as by-products (Covington, 1998).

In terms of Chinese character teaching, this study also found that Mandarin teachers in the GCSE classrooms in England focused on teaching semantic components of a character and morphemes of a word. In other words, the Mandarin teachers paid less attention to the phonetic components of a character. Even though they used component teaching, they mainly analysed the semantic components and did not have a systematic approach towards the components of Chinese characters. A previous study by Preston (2018) corroborated that teachers in England used semantic radical to analyse Chinese characters. Component teaching implemented by teachers, such as allowing learners to explore and investigate characters on their own, raises the students' orthographic awareness (Scrimgeour, 2011; Shen, 2004). One of the distinctive features and challenges of Mandarin learning is that Chinese characters lack obvious phoneme-grapheme correspondence (Shen, 2004). The graphic configuration is also complex. However, Mandarin teachers and students developed their ways to learn the semiotic, semantic and phonetic elements of Chinese characters, while attempting to link different elements together (McGinnis, 1999). By creating associations between the three elements, teachers and students use pictorial images to create small stories for learning Chinese characters. Most importantly, the Mandarin teachers did not only share these strategies with their students but also encouraged them to create their own stories. This is a distinctive aspect of Chinese Mandarin learning, which promotes the ownership of knowledge among students. Thus, the students are able to develop and share their strategies with peers in learning Mandarin.

These findings are significant in two major respects. First, this is one of the few studies to investigate the Chinese characters teaching approach of GCSE Mandarin teachers in England. Secondly, the study responds the previous studies (e.g. Erler and Macaro, 2011; Graham, 2004), in which MFL students attributed 'strangeness' of a foreign language to their low motivation in language learning. This study specifically analysed the pedagogical approach of the Mandarin teachers based on the distinctive features of Mandarin, to understand how the teachers developed Mandarin-focused learning strategies to facilitate learning. It found out that semantic components, pronunciation and morphemes are the teaching focus of Mandarin teachers in GCSE. It was also revealed that the awareness of teaching phonetic components, implementation of component teaching and compounding needs to be further enhanced. It is possible that teachers employed these teaching approaches because the GCSE level of proficiency is just beyond the beginner level. The quantity of Chinese characters learned by the

students is not massive. In addition, most of the Chinese characters at the beginner level might be pictographic characters (Shu, Chen, Anderson, Wu & Xuan, 2003). Another possible reason is that most of the teachers in the study do not have Chinese language education backgrounds. Their understanding of Mandarin Chinese is mostly based on their experiences as native speakers instead of their linguistic knowledge of the language. Thus, it is important to raise the awareness of Mandarin teachers about the different elements involved in Chinese character teaching to develop students' linguistic knowledge and let them understand how the language works. Moreover, further research should be undertaken to enhance the linguistic knowledge of Mandarin teachers in England, so that they can introduce Mandarin language systematically. At GCSE level, two of the objectives are to enable learners to understand how the language works, and equip them with certain amounts of vocabulary knowledge and learning strategies. Thus, they are more capable to use the language independently and understand it in different contexts (DfE, 2015).

### 6.1.2 Exam-oriented teaching approach

In this study, one of the important findings is that the pedagogical approach of the Mandarin teachers is 'teaching to test'. Most of the lesson designs and assessments were aiming at optimising outcomes in external examinations, e.g. based on the GCSE core vocabulary. The implication of such an approach is discussed based on i) learner goals set by the Mandarin teachers; ii) controlled assessment; and iii) teaching approach of Chinese grammar.

It is suggested that students are more motivated to learn when they understand how the target knowledge, skills, or activities will help them achieve a goal in the present or future (Keller, 2010). The Mandarin teachers in the study presented clear learning objectives in the lessons and related them to the learning activities with evaluation. In contrast to Maeng & Lee (2015), the Mandarin teachers did not do so mechanically but attempted to connect them to students' interests. While the strategy *Setting specific learner goals* ranked relatively high in Taiwan (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007), Hong Kong (Wong, 2014) and the present study, it was less important in Oman (Asante, Al-Mahrooqi & Abrar-ul-Hassan, 2012) and Hungary (Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998). It is possible that the differences between cultures and educational practices contributed as some of the factors behind these dissimilarities.

Nevertheless, Mandarin teachers set either the lesson objectives or specific learner goals according to the GCSE assessment criteria. The examination driven approach is also found in the previous MFL GCSE studies. Similar to D'Arcy (2006), the present study found that Mandarin teachers frequently referred to the examination requirements and mentioned what was necessary to obtain good grades. It was particularly salient in Year 11 as the study at this stage was preoccupied with the imminent examination. The findings are consistent with that in Asian contexts in which high-stake public examinations and examination results are reported to be the underlying reasons for motivating behaviours (Wong, 2014). Thus, it results in “a *shrinkage of space to respond creatively in a dialogue between teacher and pupil*” in language classrooms (D'Arcy, 2006, p.31).

Secondly, the design of assessments by the Mandarin teachers in the study was based on reproduction rather than the production of the target language. The approach that the teachers used to prepare students for controlled assessment was to use exam-like questions and contexts when teaching. Students could then respond with what the teachers had just taught them. This approach might not thoroughly test the students' understanding but could facilitate recall. “*Helping pupils to make sense of what they are learning is the most important thing*” (Clough, 2001, cited in Capel, Leask & Turner, 2013, p. 425). Assessment is part of students' learning rather than just an acknowledgement that they have recalled the material. Assessments should test real learning which involves the production of language rather than simply the reproduction of information (Haydn, 2013). Furthermore, it is important to note that most assessments of Mandarin are either in the form of recalling vocabulary or reproducing the writings that students have memorised for the controlled assessments. They do not include an evaluation on whether the language is used independently and spontaneously. The implementation of the new GCSE specification in 2019 does not include controlled assessments. Students will be required to write short texts simultaneously during the examination, as a means to promote higher proficiency in the language (Pearson Edexcel, 2018). It is believed that this new arrangement will lead to new pedagogical practices of Mandarin teachers.

Thirdly, the GCSE examination-oriented approach revealed a problem about grammar teaching. Previous studies have demonstrated that the GCSE MFL assessment required predictable performance based on rote learning of set phrases, rather than creative language use based on grammatical understanding. (Liviero, 2017; Macaro,

2008; Mitchell, 2003). This study found that the Mandarin teachers taught students 'grammar formulas' or 'structures' to align with the GCSE assessment criteria. Since the GCSE specification is based on the learning of French, Spanish and German, Mandarin is required to adhere to the specification as part of MFL even though Chinese is essentially different from European languages. Without standardised grammar rules in Chinese, idiosyncratic Chinese grammar teaching strategies have been developed within individual schools as presented in this research. The current study provides further evidence that there has been no consensus on the terminologies used to present Chinese grammar (e.g. word order, sentence patterns) and that the sentence patterns taught in various schools are different. The teaching strategies of Chinese grammar based on the assessment criteria of GCSE examination was found to be anecdotal and in need of reviewing.

In comparison to the observations by Liviero (2017), the MFL teachers in Liviero's study and the Mandarin teachers in this study believed similarly that grammatical understanding did not develop incidentally. Instead, it has to be taught particularly through systematic comparisons between the target language and L1 structures. For example, the teachers in the study used the phrase 'silly English', referring to a literal translation of English to Mandarin, to present the sentence structures in Chinese Mandarin. Such an approach is different from previous findings regarding the teaching of European languages. The 'rules' created by Mandarin teachers might not be able to help students understand the language or to independently monitor the target language use (Liviero, 2017). It is because the sentence patterns created by the Mandarin teachers are not conceptualised based on how the language works essentially. Instead, they are structured according to the assessment criteria of GCSE. The sentences are rigid, exam-oriented and are only applicable to particular situations. Besides, the students only learned how to use such sentence patterns in specific contexts. In other words, the grammatical understanding of the GCSE students would not enable them to monitor their output independently. Therefore, in the classrooms, the target language used by the students was either rehearsed, copied or read out and later corrected. It is consistent with previous research (Ellis, 2010) that asking students to reapply the grammar rules requires an ability of abstraction that is often beyond their psycholinguistic developmental stages.

The implication regarding grammar teaching of Mandarin Chinese are twofold: First, teaching grammar formulas are based on an over-simplistic view of how GCSE

students engage with Chinese grammar. The current teaching practice aims to fulfil the GCSE examination criteria set for European languages rather than learning how Mandarin works as a language. It is an adoption of the phrasebook approach from other European languages, having most of the lessons focused on vocabulary and prescribed sentences. Such teaching approaches are widely criticised by scholars (e.g. Block, 2002; Myles, Hooper & Mitchell, 1999). Second, the marginalisation of grammar leads to the trivialisation of the language learning process. Both the Mandarin teachers and the students did not systematically approach Chinese. Instead, it shows that the Mandarin teachers design their teaching based on the GCSE MFL specification rather than their linguistic knowledge. Therefore, there is a strong argument for further research to be undertaken on the GCSE specification for Mandarin as well as to investigate appropriate approaches for Chinese grammar teaching in MFL.

### 6.1.3 Partial version of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The current study highlighted that the suggested teaching methodology in MFL - CLT was only loosely followed by Mandarin teachers. The methodology was also inadequately understood by the teachers. In the absence of an explicit national language learning infrastructure and the decentralisation of MFL teaching methodologies in the classrooms, the teaching of Mandarin, as well as other MFLs, is left to more or less informed individual initiatives (Andrews 2006; Cohen and Macaro, 2009; Liviero, 2017). The evidence in this study supports the argument. Only one teacher (i.e. Judith) mentioned about the P-P-P Model in the interview while other Mandarin teachers did not explicitly mention any teaching principles related to CLT. Consistent with Cooke's (2014) observation, the CLT approach was adopted superficially among the MFL and the Mandarin teachers in the study. It is possibly because the Mandarin teachers 'selectively' followed the CLT (Wingate & Andon, 2017). For example, the P-P-P model and pair or group work were commonly used but the use of authentic materials or the 'making activities similar to real-world activities' were rarely found in the lessons.

In addition, most of the lessons focused on the 'practice stage' of the P-P-P model, in which the activities included a repetition of vocabulary or sentence patterns rather than the application of the language (i.e. production stage). The study found that Mandarin teachers could not be claimed to be following the CLT approach. The teachers only selected some particular language teaching strategies that matched with the principles

of CLT. In other words, the Mandarin teachers did not have a thorough understanding of the application of CLT in their classrooms. They used idiosyncratic teaching strategies which best suit the students' learning (Liviero, 2017). Block (2002) observed that MFL teachers applied a *partial version of CLT*, which is neither a 'weak' nor 'strong' version of CLT as it neither works from solid knowledge on the language to opportunities for the use nor consistently adopts a position of learning a language through its use.

The *partial version of CLT* is particularly revealed in the use of the P-P-P model. Most of the lessons are highly structured as it follows the P-P-P model. There are two noticeable issues. First, the Mandarin teachers used the same routine to present tasks in the Mandarin lessons. For instance, the teachers presented the new vocabulary through PowerPoint, followed by repetition with students and group practices among peers or games. However, breaking the monotony of the lessons is an important motivational strategy (Dörnyei, 2001). In other words, it is motivating to do something unexpected in the lessons to show a wide variety of teaching strategies. Even though the Mandarin teachers implemented different activities based on four skills in one lesson, they used the same strategies to introduce tasks or materials as well as classroom activities. Second, the use of the P-P-P model in the Mandarin lessons stayed at the pre-communicative stage, having most of the activities as drills, while not making use of the language to communicate (Wingate, 2018). As a result, most of the GCSE Mandarin learners expressed that they cannot use Mandarin to communicate outside the classroom. It means that what they learned in classrooms was just knowledge that was rarely applied in real-life communications.

This raised the questions: *Does P-P-P pose a limit on how teachers motivate their learners?* and *Is CLT motivating?* The evidence of the present study did not give a definite answer. Yet, it could reflect that most of the Mandarin teachers are being conservative and non-experimental where new pedagogies are concerned. They are unable to experiment on different ways to introduce the teaching content. Besides, it could also be explained that under the pressure of examinations, teachers resort to doing things that they are confident in instead of trying new things. The teachers in the study are restrained to what they are familiar with. Their inertia means that they do not attempt to push the limits of teaching to be more creative (Wingate, 2018). It can be suggested that teacher training can focus on improving teachers' pedagogy rather than on CLT.



#### 6.1.4 Creating learners' autonomy

The evidence of this study supports the macro strategy - Creating learners' autonomy, and the previous observations in Eastern contexts, including Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong and Indonesia (e.g. Astuti, 2018; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Wong, 2014; Tavakoli, Yaghoubinejad & Zarrinabadi, 2018). The strategy was the least endorsed in terms of its importance. Therefore, it was found to have a low level of utilisation in language classrooms. Cheng & Dörnyei (2007) suggested that different cultures appear to have their perception of what autonomy entails and what the optimal degree of learner freedom is. Eastern teachers, particularly Chinese teachers, appeared to disapprove the concept of autonomy as framed by Western educators. They may even have fundamentally different understandings of this construct.

An important finding of the present study is that, since most of the Mandarin teachers are Chinese who received their education in China, teaching in England under a great influence of European language learning might construct a different understanding of 'autonomy' in this context. The Mandarin teachers in the study acknowledged that their understanding of the language is the main source of knowledge. S/he then has to transmit the knowledge to their students. This situation is consistent with the findings of Cheng & Dörnyei (2007). The teachers' preparation and assistance influence students significantly (Wong, 2008) as revealed in the present study, both on the intellectual and emotional development of their students. Even though some of the Mandarin teachers identified themselves as a facilitator role in their teaching (e.g. David), the learning of GCSE students is solely dependent on the teachers' teaching.

Although the students demonstrated a strong tendency to be dependent on teachers' instruction, the Mandarin teachers' practice gradually instilled learner autonomy. This process is reflected by the multiple roles played by Mandarin teachers, including the source of knowledge, a resources provider, as well as a supporter of students' learning outside the classroom, displaying a gradual instillation of autonomy. GCSE Mandarin learning is a starting point, in which teachers sow the seeds to nurture independent and autonomous language learners. Additionally, it is also noteworthy that having effective assistance from teachers allow students to believe their ability in completing the tasks (Pajares, 2008). Thus, it creates positive impacts on the confidence and motivation of Mandarin learners.

Moreover, the current study also found that the native-Chinese teachers adapted to the teaching in England and attempted to promote learners' autonomy to a certain extent. For instance, some of the Mandarin teachers encouraged students to create idiosyncratic stories when learning and memorising Chinese characters. Students highly appreciated such an opportunity for creativity, as they did not find it in other subjects. Another evidence is that, since Mandarin learning requires relatively more practices and repetition, all the Mandarin teachers left these practices to students so that they took up the responsibility for their learning. In addition, the Mandarin teachers always provided students with feedback and suggestions for improving their standards, rather than imposing their expectations on the students. It might be argued that the teachers could handover more teaching functions to the students themselves (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007) However, the extent that could be handed over also depends on the language proficiency of the students. Since the GCSE Mandarin level is at the lower intermediate level, it is not possible to have much independent learning. As corroborated by Cheng & Dörnyei (2007), the present study found evidence that the participating teachers supported 'reactive autonomy', another kind of autonomy, in which students displayed independence in working on the agenda that was set by their teachers.

#### 6.1.5 Promoting cooperation among the learners

The present study demonstrated that pair work was widely used in the Mandarin classroom and was highly appreciated by the students. Previous research has shown the importance of the *"dynamic of the learner group in shaping the L2 learning process"* (Dörnyei and Malderez 1997, p.65). However, the examination of group/pair work in previous MFL studies is scant (Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. A., 1994). The findings of the present study are consistent with other research in Iran, Korea and Indonesia, where language teachers believe that through collective group work with students of mixed ability, weaker students can learn from their peers whereas more able students can act as moderators. The practice also promotes the interests and confidence of the students (Astuti, 2016; Tavakoli, Yaghoubinejad, & Zarrinabadi, 2018). In the context of Indonesia, the researchers found that pair or group works could reduce students' anxiety by fostering comfortable learning environments. The argument is corroborated by the present study where the students found practising with their peers useful in especially for learning new vocabulary. In addition, group or pair works also promote cohesiveness among learners, especially when they have to 'work

something out' together. This style of learning builds up their confidence (Liu, Fisher, Forbes & Evans, 2017).

Consistent with a previous study by Wingate (2018), the present study found that group or pair work in Mandarin classrooms in England was used solely for form-focused practices. Pupils' use of the target language was restricted to the reproduction of a narrow range of words and grammatical forms. Even though the GCSE students of the present study enjoyed working with their peers, the use of pair or group work in the Mandarin classrooms only focused on the repetition of vocabulary and sentence patterns. It is undeniable that pair or group work maximises the chance for students to practice the language, especially when the class size is relatively large in the study. However, it can be argued that the teachers could be more creative to use and design more complex activities to promote cooperation among learners, such as 'Find the phone' activity designed by Joseph (see section 5.2.2), which assisted the students' learning in a less controlled manner. As Henry et al (2018) suggested that projects which took place over a timeframe longer than a single lesson could also be motivating in language learning. When a project works, enthusiasm and goal-targeted behaviours can spread among a group of students in a ripple effect as a function of cognitive, emotional, and goal processes contagion (*ibid*).

#### 6.1.6 Maintain a positive social image of learners

The present study found that maintaining a positive social image of learners is significant and the macro strategy is transferable in all contexts. Research in Hong Kong found that the concept of 'saving face' is prevalent in Chinese communities including English language classrooms in Hong Kong (Wong, 2014). The macro strategy also ranked relatively high by the English teachers in the previous studies in Korea, Indonesia and Hong Kong (Astuti, 2018; Maeng & Lee, 2015; Wong, 2014; Wong & Wong 2018). The students in this study also possess the notion of 'saving face'. It is because teenagers are relatively insecure. They are vulnerable to pressures from different aspects, in particular from their peers (Scheidecker & Freeman, 1999). Wong (2014) found that the language teachers believed that one of the motivational strategies should be keeping students emotionally and socially safe, as a respectful environment could lead to improvements in students' performance and behaviours. The present study corroborates the findings of the previous work in Indonesia (Astuti, 2016), as the Mandarin teachers did not correct the students' mistakes directly so as to

allow students to feel free to talk. The active participation of the students as reported in this research showed that they enjoyed the opportunity to speak the target language in lessons. The Mandarin teachers avoided putting students under pressure unexpectedly. At the same time, they encouraged students by giving constructive feedback to improve their language proficiency.

## 6.2 What are the perceptions of the students towards the Mandarin teachers' practices?

### 6.2.1 Culture: the disparity between teachers and learners

This study found the disparities between the perception of culture amongst the Mandarin teachers and that of the GCSE students. The GCSE students were attracted and intrigued by Chinese culture, which they claimed to be the main impetus to maintain and protect their motivations. The selection of activities and materials with a sociocultural focus encourages students to explore Chinese communities and promotes contact with the target language speakers and cultural products (Henry et al., 2018). Some examples of cultural-focused learning activities used by the teachers in this study include Chinese calligraphy, Women's Day, celebration of Chinese New Year, etc., the use of authentic materials about job application, discussion on the pollution in China, and students' sharings about trips to China. Furthermore, the students also reported that they were interested in learning Chinese because of its cultural elements and their curiosity towards Chinese characters.

On the other hand, two distinctive trends in the teaching of Chinese culture emerged from this research. One set of teachers appear to believe that culture is independent of language teaching; the others seemed to integrate cultural content into daily language teaching and believe that culture is also part of the GCSE assessment. The study revealed very different practices and beliefs of the Mandarin teachers in terms of linguistic and cultural input in the language classrooms. Gardner (1985) proposed the notion that language learners' attitudes towards the L2 culture and its people promote language motivation. Incorporating the target culture and customs into language teaching is one of the motivating ways which can enhance the intercultural competence of the learners. Yet, in consistent with previous studies, the importance of teaching the target language culture has a relatively low endorsement in Oman (Asante, Al-Mahrooqi & Abrar-ul-Hassan, 2012), Taiwan (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007), Hungary

(Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998) and Korea (Guilloteaux, 2013). Interestingly, even though the Mandarin teachers acknowledged the motivating effects of culture in their teaching, they did not find the linkage between linguistic proficiency and cultural knowledge. The Mandarin teachers claimed to be restricted by various factors. These factors include overloaded teaching content and limited time in teaching the GCSE curriculum, thus teachers had to direct teachings to examination content. Prevailing heavy emphasis on examination success in English schools made it even more challenging for teachers. The findings of the present study are consistent with Hennebry's (2014) study. Hennebry (2014) suggested that it is crucial to equip MFL teachers with skills and strategies for the inclusion of culture within constraints. In addition, the perceptions of some Mandarin teachers that culture is independent of language learning further degrade the significance of culture, resulting in the scarcity of cultural elements in Mandarin lessons. Consequently, it would lead to the loss of an opportunity to motivate students.

### 6.2.2 Games and competitions with pedagogical purposes are motivating

All the students asserted that games and competitions are motivating. This view is in line with the Mandarin teachers who also acknowledged the motivating effect of games and competitions. The teachers implemented them with clear objectives to provide extrinsic motivation for the students. For instance, the students enjoyed *Beat the teacher*, because the game was used as drilling as well as providing an opportunity for them to 'win the teacher'. The experiences of winning the game enhanced the extrinsic motivation of learners which would keep them going. In contradiction to previous studies (e.g. Wingate & Andon, 2017; Wingate, 2018), the Mandarin teachers did not arrange various types of games and competitions. The use of games and competitions observed in the study all served pedagogical purposes. They were mainly organised for drilling and practice to help students memorise new vocabulary.

In Asian contexts, the motivational strategies implemented by the teachers are influenced by the Confucian culture. For example, Chinese teachers might incline to think that game-like activities and competitions yield little pedagogical merits. Besides, they believe that serious learning is supposed to be hard work, laborious and 'not fun'. This is a belief deeply embedded in the Confucian culture (Rao, 1996; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007). However, the present study found that even though most of the Mandarin teachers were native-Mandarin speakers, they valued the pedagogical

effectiveness of games and competitions in lessons. Mandarin is one of the mainstream languages sharing the same specification and similar teaching methodology with other European languages. It can also be a way for Mandarin teachers to adapt to the cultural context of MFL teaching in England.

On the other hand, even though the students in the present study enjoyed games and competitions in the Mandarin lessons, some students stated that games should be used strategically rather than for the sake of 'fun'. This is corroborated by the observation in Astuti's (2018) study that students in Indonesia did not like 'too much fun' in the classroom as this might not help them improve their language proficiency. Yet, in the case of Mandarin learning, the Mandarin teachers did not try to use games or competitions to make the lessons 'fun'. Instead, the Mandarin teachers, based on pedagogical considerations, used games and competitions strategically for drilling practice. The use of games and competitions in the Mandarin classrooms in this study provided a new perspective to rethink what the role of such activities are. They redefine 'fun activities' in MFL lessons at GCSE level.

### 6.2.3 Challenges are motivating

Significantly, some Mandarin teachers (e.g. Ruth and Joseph) in the study have explicitly stated that they were very strict. All of them have presented high expectation towards the students' language performance. Setting high expectations encourage students to believe in themselves while motivating them to work hard. In other words, making language learning challenging is not demotivating; instead, it sets ambitious goals and encourages students to make progress. Although Mandarin learning is difficult for the students in the study, they enjoyed taking up the challenge as they were learning new knowledge.

### 6.2.4 Assessment promote extrinsic motivation of Mandarin learners

Assessment for Learning (AfL) has been defined as "*any assessment for which the first priority is to serve the purpose of promoting students' learning*" (Black, Harrison & Lee, 2003). Due to the lack of phoneme-grapheme correspondence with Chinese characters and the lack of L1 reference when compared to European languages learning, Mandarin learning progress are relatively slower. More practices are required to acquire the language. All the teachers in the study stated that repetition and practices are completed by the students outside classrooms. Tests are also used by the

teachers to evaluate students' learning progress. Black & William (2009) states, an assessment *"evidence about student achievement is elicited, interpreted and used, by teachers, learners or their peers to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better, or better founded, than the decisions they would have made in the evidence that was elicited"* (p. 9). In the present study, the Mandarin teachers used assessments as an integral part of the learning process which provided evidence for the teachers and students to reflect on the teaching and learning. Additionally, tests and vocabulary tests in the schools of this study were highly appreciated by the students as they assisted and motivated them to revise. Most importantly, assessments provided opportunities for the students to actively be involved in their learning. The tests required them to revise Chinese characters regularly as well as in a manageable quantity.

Black et al (2003) suggested that where grades and comments have been given to students, there are no follow-up actions by either teacher or students. The current study, on the contrary, showed that not only did the students find the tests results important, the teacher also reflected on the assessment information so as to improve students' learning. The students recognised that when they revised for the assessments by practising, they would perform well. Moreover, the students attributed their unsatisfactory performance to inadequate effort or attention, rather than other unchangeable qualities, such as 'I am not good at language' or 'It is too difficult for me'. The finding is contradictory to previous MFL motivation research (e.g. Graham, 2002; 2004; Macaro, 2008), and is found to be the distinctive quality of the Mandarin learners in this study. Hence, the students have positive attribution towards their learning. They are motivated to achieve good results in tests and their self-efficacy could thus be promoted (Bandura, 1997). The Mandarin teachers also provided extra support for underachieving students (i.e. extra lessons after school or during lunchtime) and used assessments to monitor their learning progress. For instance, the teachers provided feedback to the students for the controlled assessments, and they understood that feedback was important, thus responding to the feedback to improve their work. More importantly, the students stated that it motivated them to be more aware of the success criteria needed in the assessment to make improvements in their language performance (Schunk & Pajares, 2002). The rationale of the present study did not intend to explore assessments in-depth but it showed that both the Mandarin teachers and the students found that assessments promoted extrinsic motivation.

### 6.2.6 A unique language learner identity

When students experience “*a sense of continuity between what they learn and do in the classroom, and who they are and what they are interested in doing in their lives outside the classroom*”, then their hybrid identities are invoked (Ushioda, 2011a, p.204). The positive image enables students to act beyond their student identities and adds up to become a unique individual personal characteristic (Henry et al., 2018). The present study found that one of the motivational factors for the GCSE students was the unique identity as a Mandarin learner; the GCSE students, as well as their families, appeared to be proud of the students for the fact that they were learning Mandarin. The GCSE students in the study were not put off even their proficiency level of Mandarin was not high, or they might not be able to use the language in the future. Wang & Liu (2017) corroborated the finding that foreign language (other than English) learners possessed different motivation trajectories. Norton (2000) used the term ‘identity’ to refer to how a learner understands his or her relationship to the world, and how that relationship is constructed across time and space. She suggests that when learners invest in a language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wide range of symbolic and material resources, which will enhance their cultural capital, their identity and their desires for the future.

Consistent with Zhu & Li (2014), the motivations for the GCSE students in this study, who choose to take Chinese lessons and language learning in general, are very diverse. In addition, the present study corroborated with Zhu & Li’s (2014) argument that the students did not learn Chinese Mandarin mainly for future job prospects, but for the fact that they were aware of the growing economic and political power of China as it was widely portrayed by the media. In addition to the unique identity of being a Mandarin learner, the students in the present study mostly enjoyed taking on the challenges of learning this difficult language.

However, there is no previous research in England that involves an in-depth investigation of the identity of non-native Chinese secondary school learners. The present study can only observe and identify such images of students but is unable to examine the construction of the L2 self of the students. Abundant research has been conducted about the L2 self of learners in learning English as a foreign language. However, for English as a lingua franca, the notion of identity as an English learner is likely to be conceptualised in differently compared to when a learner is learning



Mandarin (i.e. foreign language other than English). For instance, the students in the study did not consider themselves to be fluent speakers of Mandarin, nor did they know any fluent Mandarin speakers other than their teachers. Instead, most of them expected to be able to speak some phrases of the language when they would travel to China in the future or to pick up some phrases when they would overhear a conversation in Chinese or a film.

### 6.3 According to Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework, how do the motivational strategies enhance and sustain the motivation of GCSE students?

This section aims to discuss the applicability of Dörnyei's framework in a broader perspective by comparing the findings of the present study, which was conducted in a specific context: Mandarin GCSE classrooms in England, to previous studies of motivational strategies in other contexts. The current study focused on investigating the motivational strategies implemented by the Mandarin teachers according to the third phase of Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework – ***Maintaining and Protecting motivation***. There are eight macro strategies in this phase of the framework, six of them were found to be used in the GCSE Mandarin classrooms in this study, namely i) Making learning stimulating and enjoyable; ii) Setting specific learner goals; iii) Protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence; iv) Allowing learners to maintain a positive social image; v) Promoting cooperation among the learners; vi) Creating learner autonomy. In other words, two macro strategies that are not presented in the findings, including i) Presenting tasks in a motivating way and ii) Promoting self-motivating learner strategies. This does not imply a complete absence of the implementation of the two strategies by the Mandarin teachers. Instead, the data collected did not provide enough substance to make interpretations of inferential analysis on how they were implemented within the contexts.

The findings of the present study are both consistent and to some extent contradictory to some findings of the previous studies about Motivational Strategies Framework. There are two existing studies (Astuti, 2018; Wong 2014) which aim to investigate the Motivational Strategies of language teachers in secondary schools and provide empirical evidence of the application of the motivational strategies as suggested by the framework. These two studies provide insights to evaluate and discuss the findings of

the present study. Table 23.1 and 23.2 compare and contrast the current study with the two previous studies on Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework.

<b>Author</b>	Wong	Astuti	Lam
<b>Year</b>	2014	2018	2019
<b>Country</b>	Hong Kong	Indonesia	England
<b>Level</b>	Secondary schools	Secondary school	Secondary schools (GCSE)
<b>Participants</b>	80 teachers	Four teachers and their students in one school	Seven teachers and 156 students in four schools
<b>Language</b>	English	English	Mandarin Chinese

*Table 23.1 Details of Motivational Strategies Framework research*

<b>Motivational Strategies Framework –</b>	Wong (2014)	Astuti (2018)	Lam (2019)
<b>Maintaining and protecting motivation</b>			
i) Making learning stimulating and enjoyable	✓	✓	✓
ii) Setting specific learner goals	✗	✗	✓
iii) Protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence	✓	✓	✓
iv) Allowing learners to maintain a positive social image	✓	✗	✓
v) Promoting cooperation among the learners	n/a	✓	✓
vi) Creating learner autonomy	✓	✗	✓
vii) Presenting tasks in a motivating way	✓	✓	✗
viii) Promoting self-motivating learner strategies	n/a	✗	✗

*Table 23.2 Comparison of the findings of various Motivational Strategies research*

It is significant to note that two macro strategies were found to be common among the three studies, namely 'Making learning stimulating and enjoyable' and 'Protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence'. 'Promoting cooperation among the learners' were found to be common in Astuti's (2018) study and the present study. In addition, 'Promoting self-motivating learner strategies' were found neither in the Indonesia nor England contexts, and was not investigated in the Hong Kong

context. The preference pattern of motivational macro strategies that emerged in this study bears resemblance to a similar inventory generated by previous studies (Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007). The comparison of the three studies in various contexts provides evidence that some motivational strategies are transferable across diverse cultural and ethnolinguistic contexts. The results of this study also supported Wong's (2014) and Astuti's (2018) findings that '*Protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing self-confidence*' and '*Making learning stimulating and enjoyable*' are the two most commonly implemented motivational strategies across different levels of proficiency, learning contexts and languages. It can also be concluded that these two macro strategies embody fundamentally important beliefs in pedagogy and can be treated universally as significant tenets for any sound teaching practice (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007). On the other hand, the present study found some discrepancies with the previous studies, such as '*Presenting task in a motivating way*' was exclusively used in the Indonesia context whereas '*Allowing learners to maintain a positive social image*' was found in the England and Hong Kong contexts. The similarities and differences of the findings amongst the three studies demonstrated that motivational strategies are specific to *contextual, cultural* as well as *linguistic* aspects.

In a wider perspective, previous research into macro strategies by the Ten Commandments developed by Dörnyei and Csizer (1998) were conducted in the contexts mentioned in Chapter 2.2.1. Even though the Motivational Strategies are not the same as those proposed in this study, these previous studies provided insights to evaluate the implementation of the six macro strategies found in this study and support a more in-depth discussion about how to sustain the motivation of language learners. Drawing upon the findings from the previous studies of motivational strategies, the discussion focused on the implementation of the motivational strategies in different contexts and languages to identify cross-cultural issues found in this study. Besides, a refined Motivational Strategies Framework of the third phase – Maintain and protect learners' motivation will be proposed in section 6.4.

As mentioned in 6.1, two macro strategies were not found in the present study, namely '*Presenting task in a motivating way*' and '*Promote self-motivating learner strategies*'. Contrary to previous studies, the present study could not find how the teachers had attempted to present the tasks in a motivating way. Hardre, Sullivan & Roberts (2008) stated that if teachers used relevance and interests as linkage strategies, they could maintain and extend the efforts of students and motivate them by catalysing their

interest. Wong (2014) also found that teachers in Hong Kong connected task content to students' lives and interests, making English learning authentic and interesting. These tasks allowed the students to translate their interests into efforts and motivated behaviours. Previous studies showed the motivational power of the presentation of tasks and thus the macro strategy was ranked high in different contexts (e.g. Wong 2014 and Tavakoli, Yaghoubinejad & Zarrinabadi, 2018), implying the importance of the strategy in motivating language learning. It could be possible that the implementation of the PPP model in Mandarin classrooms did not demonstrate a clear boundary between the presentation stage and the practice stage. In addition, the present study found that the teachers generally used the same way to introduce task or materials and to practice the target languages. It can also be argued that the context of this study is unique in a way that the Mandarin teachers perceived their freedom to experiment with materials and content to be constrained because of the pressure of examinations.

Moreover, the promotion of self-motivating learner strategies could only be identified in one or two events, such as when Judith taught the students how to type Chinese characters by using pinyin or when Joseph shared his way of revising Chinese characters on daily. Yet, the focus group data was unable to elucidate in detail the strategies that the students used to motivate themselves outside the classroom, in particular, the strategies that might involve cognitive rather than behavioural development of language learners. In addition, as Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) defined motivational strategies as *(i) instructional interventions applied by the teacher to elicit and stimulate students' motivation* and *(ii) self-regulating strategies that are used purposefully by individual students to manage the level of their motivation*, the promotion of self-motivating learner strategies in this macro strategy is more related to the self-regulating strategies used by the learners rather than a pedagogical approach of the Mandarin teachers, and thus it is out of the scope of this study.

#### 6.4 Conclusion: The need for a refined Motivational Strategies Framework

The present study expands our understanding of Mandarin learning at the GCSE level in England in the following aspects. Firstly, this study provided information in terms of what the motivational strategies implemented in GCSE Mandarin classrooms were. Secondly, the study specifically explored students' perception of the motivational strategies to see which ones were found effective. Thirdly, motivational strategies were

found to be cross-cultural. They were dependent on the context of a particular school and the target language to be taught. Fourthly, this study expanded the understanding of Mandarin specific pedagogical approaches of the teachers in England. Finally, the study supported the use of Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework as a qualitative framework to study Mandarin teachers' practices and promote students' motivation.

The present study also provides empirical evidence to theorise the key principles that sustain and maintain the motivation of Mandarin learners. The most significant motivational strategy is 'Protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence' which refers to the Mandarin teachers implemented Mandarin-specific language pedagogy to build fundamental knowledge of learners, including pinyin, knowledge of radicals, lexical compounding and grammar formulas. This provides insights for Mandarin teachers the teaching sequence when designing the Mandarin curriculum for non-native speakers. Also, 'Making learning stimulating and enjoyable' is achieved by using games and competitions with pedagogical purposes in the classrooms and having a well-designed lesson. In other words, the inclusion of interactive games or competitions and challenging tasks are the elements that suggested to be frequently used in Mandarin lessons. This may include activities such as games or competitions.

Furthermore, '*Promoting cooperation among the learners*' not only maximised the use of the target language in language lessons but also enhanced the autonomy of students through collaborative work. This motivational strategy can be seen as the mode of learning, in which classroom setting as well as the design of tasks in the lessons should have taken into consideration for a successful implementation. Additionally, '*Creating learners' autonomy*' encourages students to take responsibility for their learning by making decisions in the process. Although the development of autonomy in Mandarin might be relatively slower compared to other languages, the development of Mandarin fundamental knowledge promotes the learning ability and autonomous of students. Also, practices and repetition are relatively more important in Mandarin than in other languages, it is, therefore crucial for teachers to develop the autonomy in learners to do revisions outside the classrooms.

The present study also showed that '*Setting specific learners' goals*' is an effective motivational strategy. Even though the goals of the Mandarin classrooms mainly refer

to GCSE examination, the findings confirmed that assessment promotes extrinsic motivation of Mandarin learners. Regular assessments build up students' habit to revise language in a manageable way and mastery of language enhances the self-efficacy of learners. The present study also suggested that '*Maintain a positive social image of learners*' by avoiding putting students under spots unexpectedly is an effective motivational strategy.

Lastly, the present study found that culture was one of the most influential impetuses to sustain and enhance the students' language learning motivation. Thereby, the integration of Chinese culture into GCSE Mandarin teaching is indispensable. This strategy is related to cultural awareness among learners of the target language community. Cultural elements can be applied in different learning aspects, from learning Chinese characters, vocabulary to development of reading and writing skills. Such learning is not independent of the linguistic development of the learners. Instead, learning of cultural and linguistic knowledge are complementary to each other. However, the importance of culture is not addressed in the third phase of the framework – Maintaining and Protecting Motivation. In the second phase Generating initial motivation, there is a macro strategy Enhancing the learners' L2-related values and attitudes. The present study confirmed that L2-related values and attitudes could be enhanced by raising cultural awareness of learners. Although it is beyond the scope of the present research to compare the macro strategies in the two phases, the students in the current study did explicitly state the significance of culture in their learning. Finally, a Mandarin-specific motivational strategy – the unique identity of Mandarin learners - is found in the present study. Being able to speak Mandarin, a language being spoken by more than 1.4 billion of, is a unique Ideal L2 Self in GCSE Mandarin learners. This suggests that teachers should promote the Ideal L2 Self of learners, for example using Mandarin as a popular communication tool in the future.

In summary, the motivational strategies found to be effective in the study can be regarded as the pedagogy tools which are highly relevant and applicable to GCSE Mandarin classrooms in England, and in other teaching of Mandarin as a foreign language context. Based on the empirical evidence of the present study, it can be theorised that the following principles contribute to revising and modifying the Motivational Strategies Framework as illustrated in the following Figure 14.

<b>Maintaining and Protecting Motivation</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence</li><li>2. Making learning stimulating and enjoyable</li><li>3. Setting specific learner goals</li><li>4. Allowing learners to maintain a positive social image</li><li>5. Creating learners' autonomy</li><li>6. Enhancing the learners' L2-related values and attitudes</li><li>7. Promote the Ideal L2 Self of learners</li></ol>



*Figure 14 Refined Motivational Strategies Framework*

## Chapter 7 Conclusion

This study has critically examined the motivational strategies implemented by the Mandarin teachers in this study in England, the pedagogic impact involved in applying different practices in the GCSE Mandarin classrooms, as well as the students' perceptions and responses to these practices. Dörnyei's Motivational Strategies Framework, in particular the third phase – Maintaining and Protecting Motivation, was applied in this study. The study aimed to move beyond from English, the language that was most focused on in Motivational Strategy research, to another foreign language – Mandarin. It also aimed to step beyond the suggested MFL teaching methodology in England - Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). In so doing, the present research provided evidence that motivational strategies applied in the intermediate language classroom practices by a group of Mandarin teachers could sustain and protect the motivation of language learners. The main contention of this study is that Motivational Strategies are **contextually, culturally and linguistically specific**. The effectiveness of motivational strategies depends on the foreign language being taught, the level of proficiency as well as the language policy of the context. The present study contributes to the research in motivational strategies of a foreign language other than English as well as the teaching and learning of Mandarin as a foreign language.

### 7.1 Recapitulation of purpose and findings

The central rationale of the present study is “How do non-native Chinese speakers learn best Mandarin in England's secondary school language classrooms?” The present study stated the importance of MFL teaching in England and the development of Mandarin which had become one of the mainstream languages (Chapter 1). The rise in demand for Mandarin learning but high opt-out rate revealed a gap to be explored. In England, there have been discussions of pupils' low motivation in learning foreign languages with scant relevant studies.

Previous research has found that motivation had a fundamental role in foreign language learning, while teachers' pedagogical approaches had impacts on students' motivation (Chapter 2). Focusing on foreign language pedagogy, the present study adopted a dynamic model in an attempt to understand the motivational strategies implemented by the Mandarin teachers to sustain and protect the motivation of GCSE students. Most importantly, the study also paid attention to the responses of students



to the Mandarin teachers' practices. A qualitative approach was used as it aimed to capture the nuances of motivational practices in day-to-day teaching (Chapter 3).

The present study contended that *'Protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence'* was the most important motivational strategy. It is particularly important in the case of Mandarin learning for non-native Chinese speakers due to the distinctive features of Mandarin and the disparities between English and Mandarin. The development of Mandarin-focused learning strategies also greatly promotes self-efficacy of learners (Chapter 4).

Besides, other motivational strategies, such as *'Promote cooperation among learners'* and *'Stimulating and enjoyable activities'* were found to be motivational in the Mandarin context if applied intentionally and with organised and systematic planning (Chapter 5). Particularly, culture was found to be the main impetus to sustain the motivation of Mandarin learning, which was complementary to making progress in language learning. The learners were intrigued by the differences between Mandarin and English, the long-established history of China and rich cultural elements in Chinese characters (Chapter 5). Emphasising the target language culture is particularly important in Mandarin learning, which involves the introduction of related values.

An important finding was discovered while investigating the motivational strategy *'Setting specific learner goals'*. The imposition of European language-based specification to Mandarin, which was suitable for sentence-oriented alphabetical languages, has influenced Mandarin pedagogy. Mandarin teachers have been mainly following European language teaching methods and neglecting the essential linguistic knowledge of Mandarin (Chapter 5). In addition, the motivational strategies *'Promoting learners' autonomy'* was found to be culturally and contextually specific as most of the activities in the MFL classrooms were highly controlled by the teachers, including those in Mandarin classes. Learners were not encouraged to use the target language creatively (Chapter 5). Lastly, the student participants presented a unique identity as Mandarin learners, an identity that was built upon being able to speak an up-and-coming language that was not widely learned by non-native speakers (Chapter 5). The key findings of the study addressed the effective motivational strategies found in GCSE Mandarin classrooms and provided significant insights for researchers and teachers to enhance their understanding of teaching Mandarin to non-native Chinese speakers.

Drawing upon previous research in motivational strategies from a wider perspective, the present study compared and contrasted the implementation of the motivational strategies in various countries and across different levels of proficiency (Chapter 6). The findings revealed that some of the motivational strategies were transferrable to different contexts whereas particular motivational strategies were contextually, culturally and linguistically specific. Furthermore, the present study also suggested a refined framework of motivational strategies that could be implemented in the Mandarin classrooms in England at the GCSE level. The contributions of this research are presented in detail in a later section of the chapter (see Chapter 7.4).

## 7.2 Limitation of the research

As with any study, there are limitations. First, the four participating schools in the study are not representatives of all secondary schools in England. As such, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to school settings which are different from the ones studied. However, the present study was never aimed to generalise the findings to wider contexts. On the other hand, the recruitment of participants has considered the variability between schools in terms of the student and teacher profiles, school language policies, and the status of Mandarin in the school curriculum, to compensate for the limitations. Indeed, some findings may well apply to a wider sample of schools. As Dörnyei (2001) argued, the effectiveness of Motivational Strategies is transferrable and unique in various contexts, which is contributed by different variables of the context (i.e. the GCSE examination, Mandarin as a foreign language and CLT as the suggested teaching methodology). On the same note, the present study was conducted in three types of schools, including academies, independent and comprehensive schools, with the hope of capturing the motivational strategies adopted by different teachers in different settings. Besides, the Mandarin teachers in the study are mostly experienced practitioners and each school has a well-established Mandarin department. It is therefore still much that can be learned from the empirical findings of the studies. It is reasonable to assume that the findings found in the four schools would have as high a resemblance to other secondary schools in England where Mandarin is taught at GCSE level.

Furthermore, it can be argued that access to the participating schools limited the opportunity to observe a wider variety of Mandarin lessons. Due to the tight teaching schedule of schools and limited resources of the researcher, all the data was collected

from February to June 2017. A longer period of data collection could have provided the present study with further insights on nature and extent to the implementation of various motivational strategies by Mandarin teachers when teaching different topics. Yet, neither the changes in the motivational strategies used by the teachers nor the motivation of the learners were in the objectives of the study. Instead, the implementation of a dynamic model assumed the present study to reflect the ever-changing nature of motivation.

### 7.3 Challenges during the research

One of the significant findings of the present study is that the implementation of motivational strategies is cross-cultural. Some might argue that the researcher, as a *foreigner* in the English teaching context, would bring limitations to this study. To compensate for the limitations, the researcher has been actively engaging in the discussion of educational issues in England by attending forums, conferences and school visits, which greatly enhanced the researcher's knowledge about Mandarin teaching as well as the UK education system in general. In addition, the opportunity to teach in a secondary school in Scotland for a term was a valuable experience. The researcher possesses solid exposure to Chinese language teaching in Hong Kong and China, also with MFL teaching practices and Mandarin teaching experiences in the United Kingdom. Even though extensive local teaching experiences might be able to offer a better understanding of the context, the researcher's extensive exposure to both Eastern and Western contexts, in addition to the experiences of teaching Mandarin as both the first and a foreign language, has provided a broader and more cultural-specific perspective to investigate the motivational strategies implemented by the Mandarin teachers.

Furthermore, regarding the Motivational Strategies Framework developed and tested in EFL contexts, it can be argued that their adoption might not be able to provide an understanding of some subtle aspects in motivational strategies. Such aspects are important features in learning other foreign languages (i.e. Mandarin in the case of this study). Unlike learning English, learning other foreign languages are different. Learners tend to take up studying English as part of their education rather than because of a driven L2-specific motivational decision. Thus, the pedagogical approach of English is different from that of foreign languages other than English. However, to the best knowledge of the researcher, there is no motivational strategies framework developed

based on either a foreign language other than English or Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language. The lack of framework presents an urgent need to research in learning foreign languages other than English. The aim of employing the Motivational Strategies Framework in this study is to draw on similarities between languages on the contextual, cultural and linguistic aspects, to analyse Mandarin teachers' pedagogy. By doing so, the study hopes to lay the foundation for the development and expansion of motivational strategies for teaching Mandarin or foreign languages other than English, such as the suggested modified framework in this research.

## 7.4 Contributions of the study

Mandarin Chinese has been one of the fastest-growing MFL in secondary schools in England, but relevant research in teaching Mandarin as a foreign language is still scarce. The present study provided timely insights to Mandarin teachers, researchers as well as teacher educators regarding Mandarin pedagogy approaches that could enhance student motivation. On this note, the study aims at contributing to the knowledge and research on motivational strategies of foreign languages in the following dimensions: theory, method, pedagogy and profession.

### 7.4.1 Theoretical contribution

Theoretically, the present study broadened the linguistic and geographical reach of previous works on motivational strategies as it is one of the few studies that apply the Motivational Strategies Framework to examine a foreign language other than English in an Anglophone context. The findings confirmed the impact and effectiveness of some motivational strategies in Mandarin teaching. They also reflected the extent of the impact on individual motivational strategies. Most importantly, this study expanded the Motivational Strategies Framework to Mandarin, a language with a different typology than English. Even though there has been abundant research on the motivation of language learners, there are few studies which explore the area from the pedagogical perspective. This study also investigated the alignment and misalignment of the teachers' and students' perceptions. Therefore, the proposal of a refined motivational strategy framework based on contextual, cultural and linguistic aspects would contribute significantly to future motivational strategies research in MFL and Mandarin teaching in England.

This study also paved a new way for the discussion of MFL teaching methodologies in England. The findings apply to MFL Mandarin learning as well as to the application of CLT in England, both of which have received little empirical investigation in the existing literature. By interweaving motivational strategies and CLT at the theoretical level, the present study attempted to contribute to the discussion on whether or not CLT is motivating for students' MFL learning. Having both of them as teaching principles, it is reasonable to conclude that there are commonalities between motivational strategies and CLT in terms of their motivating impact in language classrooms. By analysing the teaching strategies used in the Mandarin classrooms, complemented with lesson observations, the present study is one of the few empirical studies in the last decade that concerns with how the implementation of CLT principles can be motivating in MFL classrooms. These pedagogical principles inform teachers' practices in terms of motivational strategies in Mandarin and other foreign language classrooms, both within the school contexts of the present study and a wider context in English secondary schools.

Besides, the present study bridges the gap between motivation theories and classroom practices. The discipline of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) was originally a study of language learning to inform language teaching (Ellis, 2010). It assumed that there was a strong link between theory and practice. However, Gass & Mackey (2007) stated that even though SLA was concerned with discovering how languages were learned, it would be premature to apply such knowledge to how they were taught. The present study investigated classroom practices based on the theoretical framework developed in language education. Borg (2010) reported that most of the school language teachers in England did not extensively acknowledge the research. This study, therefore, represented an important contribution to the body of work that provided a link between motivation theories and classroom pedagogy in the language classroom, to promote a theory-driven teaching approach in MFL education in England. In particular, the present study revealed that idiosyncratic teaching strategies were used in the language classroom. Adopting a research-informed or theory-driven teaching approach may facilitate an appropriate exchange of knowledge (Ellis, 2010; Wingate & Andon, 2017).

#### 7.4.2 Methodological contribution

The present study contributes to the emerging qualitative approach in motivation research. Ushioda and Chen (2011) suggested the use of qualitative approach to

investigate the motivation of learners. Accordingly, the research tools such as semi-structured interviews, lesson observations, students' questionnaire and focus group interviews were employed to explore the nuances of practices that resulted in sustaining learners motivation. The present study proved that such subtleties could not be achieved by self-reporting questionnaires. In the pilot study, the students' questionnaires were modified from previous self-efficacy research. Students rated the extent of their agreement or disagreement towards the statements, which were about the attribution of their language performance. When the same set of questions were asked in an open-ended format, the collected data showed a wide range of answers, but none of the answers given by the students was matching with any of the statements. The findings further confirmed the limitations of self-reporting questionnaires in describing the attitudes of language learners. In other words, the responses given by the students in the present study could provide insights to develop the self-efficacy questionnaire in future studies.

#### 7.4.3 Pedagogical contribution

One of the significant contributions is the proposition of ways for non-native Chinese teenagers to learn Mandarin Chinese effectively. The present study presented how the disparities between English and Mandarin led to the development of Mandarin-focused learning strategies based on the distinctive features of Mandarin Chinese. The revealed current teaching approaches of the Mandarin teachers could offer significant reference to the linguistic elements that Mandarin teachers had to consider in their teaching. Mandarin teachers have to possess sound linguistic knowledge and put theories into practices, to achieve a systematic and organised plan in their language teachings.

Moreover, the suggested motivational strategies framework is contextualised to i) teaching of MFL in England, ii) the learning of the Mandarin language and iii) lower intermediate levels of proficiency. In other words, the study has charted a new course for further explorations on Mandarin pedagogy in secondary schools in England.

#### 7.4.4 Professional contribution

Based on the findings of the current study, the researcher organised two professional development workshops in London and Scotland for Chinese Mandarin teachers.

Funded by UCL Train and Engage<sup>11</sup>, the project was an extension of the PhD study. Even though a high proportion of Mandarin teachers are native speakers and are highly competent linguistically, they might, however, be oblivious to the deep learning needs of their students (Orton, 2019). The project aimed to enrich the Mandarin teachers in three aspects: i) to understand the motivation and self-efficacy of GCSE Mandarin students in England; ii) to empower Mandarin teachers with Chinese linguistic and language teaching knowledge; and iii) to provide an opportunity to put theory into practice. A one-day training course was offered to more than forty Mandarin teachers in two cities in the UK. The participating Mandarin teachers responded that the workshop challenged their Mandarin pedagogical approach and enhanced their understanding of Mandarin Chinese as a language<sup>12</sup>. The project had contributed to the professional development of teachers but was not intended to provide further validation of this study's findings. Instead, the dissemination of the findings by the inclusion and engagement of Mandarin teachers increases the variety of positive ways to promote Mandarin-focused pedagogy and motivational foreign language learning. Thus, it potentially shows the applicable inter-relationships between research and teaching that may emerge as a result of the present study.

## 7.5 Implications and recommendation of future studies

For researchers in the field of motivation, the present study confirmed that the implementation of motivational strategies is contextually, culturally and linguistically specific. Most importantly, the findings are based on the teaching of Mandarin, which provides new insights for future studies investigating foreign language other than English. Besides, the present study revealed that the students possessed a unique identity as 'Mandarin learner'. The unexplored gap in terms of learners' identity could initiate research on the construct of L2 Self System, in particular, the L2 Ideal Self. Such an identity is different from the one that is developed when native English

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<sup>11</sup> Based on the new GCSE Mandarin specification, the researcher created a database according to the new GCSE Mandarin vocabulary list. The database categorises Chinese characters according to radicals, pinyin (i.e. initials and consonants) and the six principles (六书). The database also generates data about the frequency of Chinese characters and radicals used in the list. The details of the project can be found on the website: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/culture/projects/2018-train-and-engage-projects-funded>

<sup>12</sup> A paper presentation titled *Challenging Mandarin teachers' pedagogical approaches to the teaching of Chinese characters* was presented in the *International Conference on Education* between 13-16 May 2019 at the Communication Institute of Greece, Athens, Greece. The paper reported the impact of the project, including the questionnaire responses of the participants from the questionnaire and artefacts developed in the workshop.

speakers are learning European languages, or Asians are learning European languages. In other words, the construct of the L2 Self System in learning foreign languages other than English is worthy of examination. Lastly, some students in the present study were learning more than one foreign languages under the notion of bilingualism and multilingualism. Rather than focusing on individual learners of a single additional target language, broader transnational social contexts are now increasingly being factored into motivation and motivational strategies research.

For Mandarin teachers, the present study provides teaching principles as well as classroom practices in teaching and learning Mandarin. It is important to clarify that the motivational strategies suggested or the classroom practices presented in the study are not standardised or prescribed teaching procedures that Mandarin teachers should follow. Instead, the researcher contends that a systematic understanding of Mandarin-focused pedagogy and theory-based teaching (e.g. CLT) would enable teachers to develop their classroom practices according to their contexts. Additionally, the study revealed that the Mandarin teachers possessed inadequate linguistic and language pedagogy knowledge. The teaching strategies used by them were mainly based on either their own learning experiences or teaching approaches that were heavily influenced by MFL practices. Hence, Mandarin teachers are encouraged, regarding the practices of other teachers in the present study, to identify different aspects that might have impacts on the development of an effective motivational pedagogy of Mandarin in their contexts. Furthermore, the present study found that the teaching approaches of native-Chinese teachers were different from that of non-native Chinese teachers. Future exploration can be conducted to compare and contrast the two types of teachers or teachers who teach both Mandarin Chinese and other European languages to analyse and understand the differences.

For teacher educators, adopting CLT in the MFL classrooms needs to be revisited. On one hand, the study found that the participating in-service teachers implemented the approach superficially, thus the motivating power of CLT in MFL classrooms has always been challenged. On the other hand, the selective adoption of some principles in this study has shown that CLT had limited the creativity of teachers. The urgency to motivate students in the UK to learn foreign languages, as well as the effectiveness of CLT, has been on the agenda for years. Scattered views have been presented. As suggested by Wingate & Andon (2017), it may be time for a post-communicative approach, as language learning is no longer promoted in utilitarian terms such as



future career prospects. Instead, the intellectual challenges involved in the process of foreign language learning appeared to be more motivating. Accompanied by a new discussion of how to motivate pupils to learn MFL in England, a re-examination of pre-service and in-service teacher training is needed to develop foreign language teacher's understanding of main teaching approaches and related language learning theories. In addition, policy documents based on the research in the field could provide an official guideline to schools and language teachers. As a result, the MFL teachers will be able to draw on the research and bridge the gap between theories and classroom practices.

To conclude, the present study recommended what the future of Mandarin teaching might look like if practitioners continued to adopt idiosyncratic or non-systematic teaching approaches, which ignore the distinctive features of Mandarin as a foreign language. A one-size fits all language curriculum based on the linguistic features of European languages might continue to be taught in MFL Mandarin classrooms. As Mandarin is a character language, the challenges of teaching and learning the language are different from that of French, German and Spanish. The current curriculum failed to take into account the differences between foreign languages. Moreover, the heavy exam-oriented focus at the GCSE level also exacerbated the imposition of the European language pedagogy into Mandarin. This undeniably inhibits the exploration and development of Mandarin-focused pedagogy in MFL. As one of the mainstream languages, the Mandarin teachers can only follow and adhere to the standardised MFL specifications. Therefore, in response to the fast-growing demand for learning Mandarin Chinese, new specifications for non-European languages and different typology of languages are urgently needed.

## 7.6 Autobiographical reflection

From time to time, I have asked myself the question 'How to sustain and protect PhD student's (my) motivation to complete the thesis?' For me, undertaking this research study has been an invaluable and precious learning experience. I have gained much understanding in doing research, teaching and learning language, in addition to academic writing. Even though it is commonly stated that research could be frustrating, my experience was an immensely rewarding and exhilarating journey. This research study has provided me with the chance to reflect on my professional values and possible improvements to my future practices. The time to delve into the field of knowledge that I am deeply interested in has also been worthwhile. In addition, the

opportunity to share findings with Mandarin teachers and have an impact on their teaching was another unexpected reward. As Dörnyei (2007) stated, the Motivational Strategies Framework he developed are no golden rules in language teaching, and the present study attempted to take a snapshot of how the Mandarin teachers used and maximised the effectiveness of some strategies. The practices found in the study are not classroom procedures or prescriptions for successful teaching. Instead, I genuinely believe that the professionalism of teachers can be seen in their ability to identify and consider various variables, including learner' proficiency levels, culture, content, etc., and contextualise what is suggested in research into their classroom settings. A teacher can create his/her unique way of teaching to a specific group of students based on theory-driven and systematic planning. The implementation of motivational strategies intends to motivate students to learn a foreign language, which is a process of empowering an individual with knowledge, values and attitudes. Through learning a new language, self-efficacy and confidence are promoted, language learner can be exposed to other cultures and prevent parochialism, so that s/he becomes more open-minded and critical human beings.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 - Comparison of National Curriculum Programme of Study from 1991 to 2014

	1991	1995	1999	2007	2013
<b>Main theme</b>	<b>Learning and using the target language</b>	<b>Learning and Using the Target Language</b>	<b>Knowledge, skills and understanding</b>	NA	NA
<b>Sub-themes</b>	1. Communicating in the target language (i.e. speaking and writing) 2 Understanding and responding (i.e. listening and reading)	1. Communicating in the target language 2. Language skills	1. Acquiring knowledge and understanding of the target language 2. Developing language skills	Key concepts 1. Linguistic competence 2. Knowledge about language 3. Creativity 4. Intercultural understanding	1. Grammar and vocabulary 2. Linguistic competence
	3. Developing language learning skills and awareness of language	3. Language-learning skills and knowledge of language	3. Developing language-learning skills	Key processes 1. Developing language-learning strategies 2. Developing	

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4. Developing cultural awareness	4. Cultural awareness	4. Developing cultural awareness
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5. Developing the ability to work with others

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6. Developing the ability to learn independently

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<b>Teaching Content</b>	Area of experience i) Everyday Activities ii) Personal and Social Life iii) The World Around Us iv) The World of Education, Training and Work v) The World of Communication vi) The International World	Area of experience i) Everyday activities ii) Personal and social life iii) The world around us iv) The world of work v) The international world	Breadth of study During key stage 3 and 4, pupils should be taught the Knowledge, skills and understanding through (i.e. nine ways were suggested, having three of them are directly related to the use of target language): - communicating in the	Range and content The study of languages should include: - the spoken and written forms of target language - the grammar of the target language and how to apply it
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vii) The World of  
Imagination and  
Creativity

target language in  
pairs and groups, and  
with their teacher  
- listening, reading or  
viewing for personal  
interest and enjoyment,  
as well as for  
information

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i) Everyday Activities  
- home life  
- daily routines  
- shopping  
- food and drink  
- going out  
- leisure activities and  
sports  
- youth culture  
- school life  
- school holidays

i) Everyday activities  
- the language of the  
classroom  
Home life and school  
Food, health and  
fitness

Curriculum  
opportunities  
- communicate in the  
target language  
individually, in pairs, in  
groups and with  
speakers of the target  
language, including  
native speakers where  
possible, for a variety  
purposes  
- listen to, read or view  
a range of materials,  
including authentic

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materials in the target language, both to support learning and for personal interest and enjoyment

<b>Level of attainment/ Attainment targets – Level descriptions</b>	- Ten Levels of Statements of attainment with examples e.g. Level 4 a) Write a small number of related sentences from memory to find out and convey simple information or feelings. b) adapt a simple text by substituting individual words and set phrases. <b>And, for pupils learning Chinese or</b>	- Eight levels of attainment targets with descriptions. (i.e. for key stage 3 only) e.g. Level 4 Pupils write individual paragraphs of about three or four simple sentences, drawing largely on memorised language. They adapt a model by substituting individual words and set phrases. They are beginning to make appropriate use of	- Eight levels of attainment targets with descriptions e.g. Level 4 Pupils write individual paragraphs of about three or four simple sentences, drawing largely on memorised language. They are beginning to use their knowledge of grammar to adapt and substitute individual words and set phrases. They are beginning to use dictionaries or	- Eight levels of attainment targets with descriptions e.g. Level 4 Pupils write short texts on familiar topics, adapting language that they have already learnt. They draw largely on memorised language. They begin to use their knowledge of grammar to adapt and substitute the individual words and set phrases. They being to use	No descriptions By the end of key stage 3, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the programme of study.
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**Japanese:**

c) copy a wide range of characters with correct stroke order.

Example: Seek autobiographical information from a pupil in a different class, as a prelude to writing to a penfriend abroad.

Adapt a greeting card or thank-you note; fill in an official form or personal ID card based on a model.

dictionaries and glossaries as an aid to memory.

glossaries to check words they have learnt.

dictionaries or glossaries to check words they have learnt.

## Appendix 2 – Interview schedule for teacher semi-structured interview

Main question	Follow-up question
1. What is your academic background?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What did you study for your undergraduate and postgraduate?</li> <li>- Did you do any teacher training like PGCE?</li> <li>- Have you ever been to or live in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong or Singapore?</li> </ul>
2. How did you start your Chinese teaching career?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How long have you been in Chinese teaching?</li> <li>- How long have you been teaching GCSE?</li> </ul>
3. What are your guiding principles in your teaching?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How does the principles transform into the lesson you teach?</li> <li>- In your lessons, how you put the guiding principles into practice?</li> <li>- If we took a single lesson as an example, what are the elements that you will include?</li> <li>- Are you mostly interested in character teaching?</li> </ul>
4. What are the activities that you always used in the classrooms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the rationale of doing these activities?</li> <li>- How are the response of students?</li> </ul>
5. What do you think the students enjoy most about your lesson?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Please tell me the details.</li> <li>- What do you think about pair work or group work?</li> </ul>
6. What are the particular things that help to motivate students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Please give examples and details.</li> <li>- What strategies you used to motivate your students in learning Mandarin?</li> <li>- How your strategies motivate the students?</li> </ul>
7. What kind of classroom atmosphere encourage or motivate the students most to learn?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How the students behave in such classroom atmosphere?</li> <li>- How did you enhance or sustain the confidence of the students?</li> </ul>
8. What is your expectation of students' Mandarin learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How did you help the students to achieve the expectations?</li> <li>- How did you come up with the expectation?</li> <li>- Why is it important to fulfil these expectations?</li> </ul>

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- What are the benefits for students to learn  
Mandarin?

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## Appendix 3 – Student questionnaire

### Student Questionnaire (Pilot study)

1. I am in...
  - A. Year 10
  - B. Year 11
2. How many years you have been learning Chinese?
3. I learn Chinese (Mandarin) because...
4. Do you have any Chinese related family background?
  - A. No
  - B. Yes, \_\_\_\_\_
5. How well are you doing in Chinese? **Circle** the number which best matches how you feel.

I am doing **badly** in  
Chinese

1

2

3

4

I am doing **very well** in  
Chinese

5

6

6. When I do well in Chinese, it is usually because...
7. When I don't do so well in Chinese, it is usually because...
8. Think about areas in Chinese in which you have done well (e.g. listening, speaking, characters, pinyin, grammar, etc.). Name the one area where you have had the most confidence:
  - i) The *one* area I have the most confidence...

ii) Why you have been confident in this area? It is because...

Circle the *one* number from 1 to 6 which best matches how you feel about each reason below.

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree	
I'm just good at that kind of content.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It's just luck.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I try hard.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I use good techniques or strategies.	1	2	3	4	5	6
We're given easy work.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Are there other reasons? Write them here:

9. Think about areas in Chinese in which you have not done well (e.g. listening, speaking, characters, pinyin, grammar, etc.). Name the area(s) where you have had the least confidence:

i) The *one* area I have the least confidence...

ii) Why you have been least confident in this area? It is because...

Circle the *one* number from 1 to 6 which best matches how you feel about each reason below.

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree	
I don't try very hard.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I use poor techniques of strategies.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I'm just no good at that kind of content.	1	2	3	4	5	6
We're given difficult work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It's just bad luck.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Are there other reasons? Write them here:

iii) I can improve my performance in this area by...

10. Are you interested to participate in a focus group interview?

A. Yes

B. No

**☺End of the questionnaire, thank you!☺**

### Student Questionnaire (Main study)

1. I am in...
  - C. Year 10
  - D. Year 11
  
2. How many years you have been learning Chinese?
  
  
  
3. What are the three most interesting things in learning Chinese?
  
  
  
  
4. Do you have any Chinese related family background?
  - C. No
  - D. Yes, \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. In general, how do you rate your confidence of Mandarin Chinese learning? **Circle** the number which best matches your extent of confidence.

I am **not**  
confident

I am **very**  
**confident**

**1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6**

6. Please rate your confidence in the following areas of Mandarin learning. **Circle** the number which best matches your extent of confidence.

	Least confident				Most confident
i) Listening	1	2	3	4	5
ii) Speaking	1	2	3	4	5
iii) Character	1	2	3	4	5
iv) Pinyin	1	2	3	4	5
v) Grammar	1	2	3	4	5
vi) Writing	1	2	3	4	5

Think about area(s) in Chinese in which you have the most confidence and answer the following questions.



i) The area(s) I am confident of...

ii) Why you have been confident in the area(s)? It is because...

7. Think about area(s) in Chinese in which you have the least confidence and answer the following questions.

i) The area(s) I have the least confidence...

ii) Why you have been least confident in the area(s)? It is because...

iii) How would you practice improving your performance in this area? Please list three ways.

10. Are you interested to participate in a focus group interview?

A. Yes

B. No

**☺End of the questionnaire, thank you!☺**

## Appendix 4 – Interview schedule for students’ focus group

Main question	Follow-up question
1. Why would like to learn Chinese?	- What did you enjoy most in learning Chinese?
2. What do you think easy about Chinese?	- Do you think pinyin is easy? - Do you think speaking is easy?
3. What do you think difficult about Chinese?	- What do you think about Chinese characters? - What do you think about listening?
4. How do the teachers do that can help you learn?	- What is your favourite activity in Chinese learning? - How do the teachers help you to learn better? - Can you describe the Chinese lesson that you enjoy very much? - What do you think about pair-work or group work in the class? - What do you think about the homework of Chinese? -How the teachers keep you continue learning Chinese? - What are the activities that you are not interested in Chinese lessons? - What would you do if you have difficulties in learning Chinese?
5. What particular aspects that you like about Chinese?	- What do you think about Chinese culture? - Will you continue studying Chinese after GCSE? - What is your expectation of GCSE exam results?
6. How do you revise or practice your Chinese outside the classrooms?	- Do you spend extra hours to practice Chinese? - What are the ways that you find effective in learning Chinese?
7. What do you think about your Chinese standard?	- Are you confident with your Chinese?

### Appendix 5 – Lesson observation form

Task Difficulty	L	M	H
Engagement	L	M	H
L2 use	L	M	H

Participation	L	M	H
Enjoyment	L	M	H
Interaction	L	M	H

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of pupil: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic:

Resources:

Objectives:

Time	Event	Teacher	Students	Comments

## Appendix 6 – Summary of Lesson Observation

School	Teacher	Year	Topic	Summary	Remarks
A	Judith	Year 11	Vocabulary revision	- Vocabulary learning and listening test	Example of vocabulary learning and scaffolding
			Vocabulary revision	- Go through the results of controlled assessment and arrange re-exam for some students - Revise vocabulary	Include cultural elements Activity: Flash card
			Vocabulary revision	- Vocabulary test - Revise vocabulary p. 14 (the Bible) (i.e. Festivals)	Include cultural elements Activity: group work Teaching material: Vocabulary test
			Future plan, education and work	- Revise the vocabulary on p. 31	Pattern: Introduce new vocab → explain the meaning → Connect with other words → Revision → Checking
			Vocabulary revision	- Listening Test - Administration work of controlled assessment - Revision of vocabulary (i.e. jobs and future)	
	Judith	Year 10	Question words and	- To prepare for the speaking assessment	Check the students' learning

			jobs	- To learn questions words and jobs	progress
			Job and future plan	- Feedback of the speaking assignment - Question words for job	Teacher taught the students to use the google classroom
			Jobs and future plan	- Talk about jobs and what you would like to do in the future. - vocabulary (i.e. jobs and workplaces) and future tense	Include cultural elements Teaching materials: Question list for speaking controlled assessment – My life
			Jobs and work experience	- Revise and learn vocabulary relevant to work experiences and jobs	Scaffolding, combine two or more words to form short phrases, recycling of vocab
			Job and occupation	- Revise vocabulary - Two tests: vocab test and listening test	Include cultural element Teaching material: listening test
	Mark	Year 10	Jobs and future	- learn the vocabulary about jobs and workplaces	Example of making phrases (combine two words)
			GCSE Speaking assessment	- Learn how to say and understand question words (i.e. What, why, who, which, where, etc)	An example of how non-native Chinese speaker teachers Chinese grammar
	Mary	Year 10	GCSE Speaking assessment	- Prepare answers for the questions	Teaching materials: Presentation-based preparation guidelines (sentence pattern), Question list for

					speaking controlled assessment – My life
			Future jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revise key words for jobs</li> <li>- Learn key words for future plan</li> <li>- Learn how to describe your future plan</li> </ul>	Examples of introducing new vocabulary.
			Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vocabulary test and answer checking</li> <li>- Teach more vocabulary</li> </ul>	Different observation form is used - quantitative
			Future job - listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revise the vocabulary about future jobs</li> <li>- Practice the past paper of GCSE on the topic of Job and work experience</li> </ul>	The teacher sorted out all the questions under the topic from 2010 to 2014
C	Hannah	Year 10	Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learn how to talk about ideal jobs</li> <li>- Vocabulary (i.e. job, and personality) and sentence pattern (i.e. personality ...so... job)</li> </ul>	Teaching materials: vocabulary and sentence pattern. Activity: Roll the dice
			Job application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preparing the first draft of the controlled assessment (writing)</li> <li>- Vocabulary (i.e. job, workplace, personality) and sentence pattern (i.e. future tense)</li> </ul>	Teaching materials: Sample writing, outline of the writing
	David	Year 10	Job application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learn how to talk about ideal jobs</li> <li>- Vocabulary (i.e. job, and personality) and sentence pattern (i.e. personality ...so... job)</li> </ul>	

			Job application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learn the sentence patterns</li> <li>- To prepare for the controlled assessment writing task</li> </ul>	<p>Use of authentic materials: advertisement of private tutor Video about Beijing Examination skills Sing birthday song</p>
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## Appendix 7 – Example of lesson observation summary

### Pilot study

Teacher: Judith

Grade: Year 10

Duration: 1 hour

Event	Descriptions
Recap some questions in the speaking assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The teacher spoke the questions in Chinese and the students translated into English.</li> <li>- The teacher asked the students the learning progress by showing number of fingers, “1” a few, “2” not all of them, “3” quite a lot.</li> </ul>
Teaching sentence patterns and vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The teacher introduced a sentence pattern and vocabulary of different occupations.</li> <li>- The students repeated after the teachers.</li> <li>- The teacher analysed the characters while introducing the new words.</li> </ul>
Revise the vocabulary	The students revise the vocabulary with their peers.
Teaching vocabulary	<p>The teacher taught the vocabulary of different occupations.</p> <p>The teacher organised the vocabulary into groups. E.g. 医生, 护士、工厂、工程师, 小学, 中学, 大学</p>
Revise the vocabulary	The students practice the vocabulary with the peers.
Teaching vocabulary	The teacher taught the vocabulary of work places.
Revise the vocabulary	The students practice the vocabulary with the peers.
Teaching sentence pattern	<p>The teacher combined the vocabulary of family members, occupations and work place, e.g. 我妈妈是护士, 她在医院工作。</p>
Revise the sentence patten	The students practice the sentence pattern with the peers.



Translation The students worked in pairs to translate a paragraph which is similar to what the students required to write.

Read aloud The whole class read aloud the whole paragraph.

Homework instruction The teacher gave instruction how to write the paragraph.

**Main study**

Teacher: Mary Grade: Year 10 Duration: 1 hour

Engagement	L	<u>M</u>	H	Task Difficulty	L	M	<u>H</u>	L2 Use	L	<u>M</u>	H
Enjoyment	<u>L</u>	M	H	Interaction	<u>L</u>	M	H	Participation	<u>L</u>	M	H

**Event**

**Description**

Administration work Passport copy

Revision of the vocabulary on work experiences Teacher said the word in Mandarin and the students say the English meaning. More difficult words revised.

Listening exercises – past paper The teacher stated the objective of the exercise as it is related to GCSE and students performed badly in this topic.  
The teacher read the recording, asking for the key words and check the answers with the students after each question.  
The teacher went through the question one by one and translate some of the sentences.  
Some students struggled and the teacher gave them encouragement as well as to read the recordings slower.

The teacher repeated the words that the students didn't get it and she also asked the students to write down the words that they don't know.

*Remark: The students struggle and are not paying full attention to complete the task. The teacher read aloud the recordings, which is faster than the real audio and might be one of the reasons that the students struggled.*

Teacher: Judith

Date: 26 April 2017

Grade: Year 10

Duration: 1 hour

Engagement	L	M	<u>H</u>	Task Difficulty	L	M	<u>H</u>	L2 Use	L	<u>M</u>	H
Enjoyment	L	M	<u>H</u>	Interaction	L	M	<u>H</u>	Participation	L	M	<u>H</u>

Event	Description
Change of seating plan	The teacher arranged a new seating plan for the students
Check prior knowledge of student	Checked the vocabulary no.10 – 16
Teaching vocabulary	- The students repeated the word two times after the teacher. - The teacher combined the new word with words that the students learned before to form short phrases. E.g. 找, 找足球, 找书
Consolidation of the new vocabulary	- Practice the vocabulary in pairs - The teacher picked a student to say the sentence
Teaching vocabulary	The teacher explained each word and form short phrases.
Throwing soft toy	A soft toy was passing around in the classroom, a student said the English meaning while throwing the

soft toy to another student, the student who got the soft toy needed to say in Mandarin.

Translation exercises	The teacher set eleven vocabulary for the students to translate in their jotter.
Listening exercises	The teacher read five vocabulary and the student were required to write the English meaning.
Checking answers	- The students checked the answers of the exercises - The teacher checked the score of the students by showing hands.
Revise all vocabulary	The teacher went through all the vocabulary learned in the lesson
Past paper	- The teacher selected two questions from past paper (reading), which is relevant to the vocabulary learned in the lesson. - Checked the answers with the students and translated the reading text.

Teacher: David

Grade: Year 10

Duration: 1 hour 40 minutes

Engagement	L	<u>M</u>	H	Task Difficulty	L	<u>M</u>	H	L2 Use	L	<u>M</u>	H
Enjoyment	L	<u>M</u>	H	Interaction	L	<u>M</u>	H	Participation	L	<u>M</u>	H

**Event**

**Descriptions**

Starter: Translation	The teacher checked the students' jotter. The students translated the sentences into English which the teacher wrote on the board before the lesson.
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Check the answers	The teacher checked the answers and explained some of the words.
Writing sentences	<p>The students are required to write a sentence to describe themselves with the provided vocabulary.</p> <p>我是一个有活力的人。</p> <p>The students then write what are the jobs that they wanted to do.</p> <p>我想做教育类的工作。</p> <p>The personality of a student should match the job that they wanted to do.</p>
Reinforcement	The teacher picked students to speak out their sentences.
Write sentences	<p>The teacher taught another sentence pattern so that the students can show variety of language.</p> <p>The teacher invited students to speak out their sentences → The sentence is constructed by the students</p>
Teaching tense	The teacher taught about the tense that should be use in the sentences.
Progress checking	Thumb up → brilliant; thumb down → average
Translation	<p>The teacher distributed the handout.</p> <p>The students read the pinyin and translated into English.</p>
Roll the die	The students rolled the dice and they will say the sentence that is same as the no. of the dice.

Teacher: Ruth

Grade: Year 10      Duration: 1 hour

Engagement	L	M	<u>H</u>	Task Difficulty	L	<u>M</u>	H	L2 Use	L	<u>M</u>	H
Enjoyment	L	<u>M</u>	H	Interaction	L	<u>M</u>	H	Participation	L	<u>M</u>	H

There is no recording for this school's lesson observations.

Event	Descriptions
Prepare for the lesson	Write down the dates and topic
Listening exercises – Environment	<p>She taught the students how to practice listening, e.g. listen to it and read with the materials for the first time, the second time, jot down the English meaning.</p> <p>The students are required to finish the exercises.</p> <p>The teacher explained some of the vocabulary and use the words to combine with other words that the students learned before, forming new sentences.</p>
Revision	The teacher asked the students to translate five sentences from Chinese to English.
Checking answer	The teacher recapped all the questions and checked the answers with the students.
Listening exercise – Internet	<p>The teacher explained some of the vocabulary in the recording.</p> <p>The students repeated two times after the teacher.</p>
Chat room	The teacher gave the students four sentences to translate into English.

## Appendix 8 – Extract of deductive codes

### 1. Making learning stimulating and enjoyable

Code	Type	Description	Sub-theme
Linguistic focus	Deductive	Change the linguistic focus of the tasks.	Breaking the monotony of learning
Language skills focus	Deductive	Main language skills the tasks activate, e.g. a writing task can be followed by a speaking activity.	Breaking the monotony of learning
Communication	Deductive	Channel of communication by varying auditory, visual and tactile modes of dealing with learning; selectively using visual aids.	Breaking the monotony of learning
Organisational format	Deductive	Change the organisation of the tasks, e.g. a whole-class task can be followed by group work or pair work.	Breaking the monotony of learning
Sequence of activities	Deductive	Focus on the motional flow of the lessons instead of the traditional logical flow of information.	Breaking the monotony of learning
Unexpected event	Deductive	An occasional departure from what the students have come to expect.	Breaking the monotony of learning
Challenge	Deductive	Tasks in which learners need to solve problems, discover something, overcome obstacles, avoid traps, find hidden information etc.	Interesting and enjoyable
Interesting content	Deductive	Connect the topic with things that the students already find interesting.	Interesting and enjoyable

Novelty element	Deductive	The activity is new or different or unfamiliar or totally unexpected.	Interesting and enjoyable
Intriguing element	Deductive	Tasks which concern ambiguous, problematic, paradoxical, controversial, contradictory or incongruous material stimulate curiosity by creating a conceptual conflict that needs to be resolved.	Interesting and enjoyable
Exotic	Deductive	Learning about places and people which are unique and have certain amount of grandeur.	Interesting and enjoyable
Fantasy	Deductive	Tasks are inherently captivating if they engage the learner's fantasy.	Interesting and enjoyable
Personal element	Deductive	About everyday life of real people, who the students can relate the content to their own lives. It also includes the students' personal life.	Interesting and enjoyable
Competition	Deductive	The opportunity to compete can add excitement to learning tasks.	Interesting and enjoyable
Tangible outcome	Deductive	Tasks which require learners to create some kind of a finished product as the outcome.	Interesting and enjoyable
Active participants	Deductive	Tasks which require mental and/or bodily involvement from each participant.	Student involvement
Specific roles	Deductive	Create specific roles and personalised assignments for every student.	Student involvement

#### 4. Protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence

Code	Type	Description	Sub-theme
Success opportunities	Deductive	Provide multiple opportunities for success in the language class.	Experiences of success
Level of task difficulty	Deductive	Adjust the difficulty level of tasks to the students' abilities and counterbalance demanding tasks with manageable ones.	Experiences of success
Test	Deductive	Design tests that focus on what learners can rather than cannot do, and also include improvement options.	Experiences of success
Learners' strength	Deductive	Draw attention to the students' strengths and abilities.	Encouragement
Social comparison	Deductive	Avoid comparison between students, including displaying grades, wall charts, ability grouping.	Language anxiety
Competition	Deductive	Play down competition amongst students.	Language anxiety
Mistakes	Deductive	Help learners to accept the fact that they will make mistakes as part of the learning process. Do not correct every mistake that the students made.	Language anxiety
Transparency	Deductive	Make tests and assessment completely 'transparent' and involve students in the negotiation of the final mark	Language anxiety
Learning strategies	Deductive	Teach students learning strategies to facilitate the intake of new material.	Confidence
Communication strategies	Deductive	Teach students communication strategies to help them overcome communication difficulties.	Confidence



## Appendix 9 - Transcription extract of lesson observation

School A

Teacher: Judith

T: Today we are going to just the second part and we will do some past papers. Just to see how much you remember, can you check number 10-16, do you remember the vocabulary?

*The students were chatting.*

T: Tom, number 10

S: Er....

T: It's 独立 or 成功 ?

S: 独立

T: How about 將來 ?

S: future

T: 成功 ? It's successful or

S: successful

T: Is it 成功 or 休息 ?

S: It is 成功

T: 十三, is 申请 or 休息?

S: 休息

T: 十五, is it 面试 or 申请?

S: 申请

T: Joe, 十六?

S: 面试

*[The teacher asked the students the meaning of the vocabulary from 10 to 16 one by one and then went back to some of them.]*

We have to pay particular attention to these.

T: 工作经验

Ss: 工作经验

T: 经验is experience. If you say the person has work experience, how to say?

Ss: 他有经验/他很有经验/group chatter

T:很好， or you just say 他有很多经验。

S: 很多?

T:很多， a lot. So there is an adjective, do you remember I gave you the key character, 有, I said you can make so many adjectives with that. If you have something like 有压力, it's stressful, 有信心, confident, if I say 有经验, what does that mean?

S: experienced?

T: experienced, very experienced. Charlie, how to say Mr. Johnson is very experience.

S: Mr John有经验，很有...

T: 很有经验, it actually an adjective. The next one, 工作时间

S: 工作时间

T: 时间时间time time time

S : 时间时间time time time

T: 时间is a very useful word, when you talk to Chinese people, do you have time to for a short meeting. Then you can say you don't have time, how to say I don't have time?

S: 我没有时间

T: 我没有时间, how to say I have time?

S: 我有时间

T: 我有时间, very good. 时间is actually time. Right, 工作经验，工作时间

S: 工作经验，工作时间

T: say it yourself.

S: 工作经验，工作时间

T: 很好, 有经验

S: 有经验

T: this one means experienced, okay? 找工作

S: 找工作

T: 找找 look for

S: 找找 look for

T: I found a job, 找到, 到means reach something, I got the target met. 找工作, I am looking for a job. I found a job! 我找到了工作. 找, can you make this with other things, can you say you look for book?

S: 找看书, 找书

T:找书good! How to say look for football?

S: 找踢足球, 找足球

T: try not to say the first character

S: 找足球

T: 找足球, good! How to say I am looking for egg fry rice.

S: 我找蛋炒饭!

T: Good, how to say I look for Japan? You are looking in a map and say I found Japan?

S: 我找到日本。

T: 我找到日本。Very good. 找, it also looks like a character that we use all the day...我

S: wow...

1 February 2017

**INFORMATION SHEET (TEACHER):**

**Motivational Strategies implemented in Mandarin classrooms in England**

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study that examines the Mandarin teaching in England. I am a MPhil/ PhD student in the Department of Communication, Culture and Media at the UCL Institute of Education, University College London under the supervision of Dr. Shirley Lawes.

The aim of this study is to investigate the teaching of Mandarin and the motivation of students learning the language. The results of the study will inform previous research on teaching Mandarin as a foreign language and help practitioners to improve the teaching and learning of Mandarin in this country.

If you decide to participate, I would like to invite you to fill in a questionnaire, conduct an interview and lesson observations which will be audio-recorded. Field notes will also be taken during the lessons. If requested, all the data collected will be sent to you for approval of the content.

Any data obtained from you will be kept securely. At every stage of the project and beyond, your name will remain confidential. Your identity will be anonymised by the use of a unique identifier. The data and overall results of the study will share with my supervisor only. The results may also be presented at professional conferences and in research publications.

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without reason and without any impact on you. If you decide to withdraw, any data collected from you will be destroyed. If you have any queries about the study, please feel free to contact Sophia Lam by email or mobile.

It would be very grateful if you would agree to take part!

Sin-Manw Lam (Sophia)  
Department of Culture, Communication and Media  
UCL Institute of Education, University of London  
20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL

## CONSENT FORM

**Project title: Motivational Strategies implemented in Mandarin classroom in England**

- |   | <b>YES</b>               | <b>NO</b>                |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I have read and had explained to me by Sin-Manw Lam (Sophia) the Information Sheet relating to this project.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements for my participation as described in the Information Sheet. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project any time.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name:

Signed:

Date:

## Institute of Education



3 March 2017

### **INFORMATION SHEET (STUDENT):**

#### **Motivational Strategies implemented in Mandarin classrooms in England**

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study that examines the Mandarin teaching in England. I am a MPhil/ PhD student in the Department of Communication, Culture and Media at the UCL Institute of Education, University College London under the supervision of Dr. Shirley Lawes.

The aim of this study is to investigate the teaching of Mandarin in England. The results of the study will inform previous research on teaching Mandarin as a foreign language and help other schools to improve the teaching and learning of Mandarin.

If you decide to participate, I will ask you to fill in a questionnaire, which will take approximately 15 minutes and I will come to observe some of your Mandarin lessons. If you are interested in telling me more about your Mandarin learning, you will also be invited to join a focus group interview after filling in the questionnaire. The lesson observations and the focus group interview will be audio-recorded.

Any data obtained from you will be kept securely. At every stage of the project and beyond, your name will remain confidential. Your identity will be anonymised by the use of a unique identifier. The data and overall results of the study will be shared with my supervisor only. The results may also be presented at professional conferences and in research publications.

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without reason and without any impact on you. If you decide to withdraw, any data collected from you will be destroyed. If you have any queries about the study, please feel free to contact Sophia Lam at email or mobile.

I will be very grateful if you would agree to take part!

Sin-Manw Lam (Sophia)  
Department of Culture, Communication, and Media  
UCL Institute of Education, University of London  
20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL

## CONSENT FORM

**Project title: Motivational Strategies implemented in Mandarin classrooms in England**

- |   | <b>YES</b>               | <b>NO</b>                |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I have read the Information Sheet relating to this project.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements for my participation as described in the Information Sheet. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project any time.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name:

Signed:

Date:

## Appendix 12 – Parents’ letter



University College London, Institute of Education  
Culture, Communication and Media  
20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL  
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/>

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

I am currently a MPhil/PhD student in University College London, Institute of Education conducting my research supervised by Dr. Shirley Lawes. I am preparing to carry out a research project that investigates the Mandarin teaching in England. The GCSE Mandarin students will be invited to fill in a questionnaire that will take no more than 20 minutes and will explore their perspectives on learning Mandarin. The project will also include lesson observations of the GCSE Mandarin class and a focus group interview which students can attend voluntarily. The lesson observations and focus group interview will be audio-recorded. I can confirm the information provided by students in the research will be kept anonymous and confidential. In the reporting of the results, no students will be named.

I would greatly appreciate your child’s participation in this study. If you have any queries regarding your child’s participation in the research, please do not hesitate to contact me at email or on mobile. If you do not wish your child to participate, please kindly indicate this on the form below and return the form to the school by *(date)*.

I appreciate your help in this valuable research.

Yours faithfully,  
Sin-Manw Lam (Sophia)

- 
- I ***am happy for*** my child to participate in the questionnaire, lesson observation and focus group.
- I ***do not wish*** my child to participate in the research project.

Signature of parent/ guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_