



Career Goals and L2 Motivation

An Investigation of Chinese College English Major's L2 Motivational Drives

This dissertation is presented to the Faculty of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Masters in Education, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages degree programme

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I certify that all of the material included within this dissertation which is not my work has been appropriately acknowledged and referenced. I also certify that no material has been included for which a degree has previously been conferred upon me.

Dedication

To my family, without whose support this would not have been possible.

Thank you.

Abstract

This dissertation focuses on Chinese college English majors' language learning motives from a *Career Goals* perspective. To realise this, the most prominent motives which have been found to influence Chinese college students in their English language learning endeavours are assessed and compared in relation to the *Career Goals* motive. In addition, the effect that different year groups attribute to the prominence of this motive is also considered.

To collect the required information, an established, contextually appropriate motivation questionnaire was adopted, modified and ultimately utilised after a period of relatively robust testing. It was administered to 143 students enrolled at a well regarded university in Suzhou, a city in Eastern China. Coverage was afforded to eight motivational drives, with the specific focus being on the participants' language learning motives at this specific juncture in their academic studies.

The subsequent results have indicated that *Career Goals* are a leading motivational force for action regarding English majors' academic endeavours, and that this is true for all year groups. It was also illustrated that year group plays no significant role in determining to what extent this is the case, with results suggesting a generic universal strength of appeal. These are findings that also indicate that the motivational construct upon which this research was based has now become dated and, as such, is in need of a re-evaluation.

Based on the relevant literature, the personal experiences of the researcher and recent developments within China, the implication is that the language learning motives of the participants are inextricably bound up within the present day socio cultural environment. The recommendation therefore is that in the best interests of this particular cohort of students pedagogic changes are required, with more being done to aid learners to further channel their language learning efforts to the best effect.

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List of Abbreviations

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
AMTB	Attitude/Motivation Test Battery
L2	Second/Foreign Language
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research Aims and Focus

In late 2005, I started working in China as a university teacher for English language undergraduate students, or college English majors as they are referred to in China (a description I shall adopt for the purpose of this study). To my surprise, the majority of them seemed to be almost totally unprepared for the world of work. Most of these students were highly competent linguists and extremely motivated language learners, but few seemed to possess the presence of mind to consider the purpose to which they would realistically put their skills upon graduation. To help redress what transpired to be a problematic oversight, the focus of my dissertation is to study college English majors' language learning motivation from a *Career Goals* perspective so that three particular aims can be addressed. The first aim is to enlighten readers on the extent to which *Career Goals* are found to motivate English majors with their language learning endeavours. This will enable appropriate supporting action to be initiated. The second aim is to assess if age affects the relative prominence of *Career Goals* as a language learning motive. This finding will determine if the resulting recommendations can be applied generically to the target population or, if differentiated action is necessitated between year groups. The final aim is to consider if the most notable L2 motivational construct for undergraduate students concerning L2 motivation is in need of a review. This will help to further motivational research within China.

1.2 Research Rationale

Justification for focusing on college English majors and assessing the prominence of *Career Goals* comes from the fact that the students who I have taught, and those who I shall teach in the future are situated in an environment where the labour market has saturated, and graduate unemployment is increasing (Partridge and Keng, 2008; Eimer, 2009). It is essential therefore that future students are not only motivated, but that they are driven by career goals. However, associated research has actually suggested that the vast majority of students enter university without really considering their future career direction (Ding, 2004; Partridge and Keng, 2008). As such, they have tended to be driven only minimally by employment considerations (Gao et al.,

2004). For the more affluent, who are opportunity rich, this may be understandable (Wen, 2006), but for the vast majority it is not. With English majors specifically in mind, if this is indeed indicative of their professed outlooks, then something is seriously awry, because their degree no longer confers upon them an obvious competitive advantage within the employment market. Considering this, it is almost impossible to justify why one would select an English language course in current economic climate if it does not act as an intended means to an end. Having acted in a pastoral role in the past, I have witnessed firsthand the struggles and difficulties that many former students subsequently faced in even securing work, let alone that to which they may have aspired. It is for this reason that the focus here is on the prominence of *Career Goals* as an L2 motivational drive. This is because not only is it important that learners' have clear employment designs for their studies, but it is also essential that they can channel these to the best effect. The findings that are generated within this paper should therefore shed important light on these matters.

1.3 Dissertation Organization

Following on from this introductory chapter, this dissertation is organized into six distinct but co-dependent sections: Chapter 2 highlights the background information related to this piece of work. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical underpinnings that have influenced and positioned this study. Chapter 4 provides an account of the enquiries research design. Chapter 5 analyses the actual results. Chapter 6 broadens the discussion by considering the results in light of the existing literature, and chapter 7 ties everything together, allowing follow-up research to be initiated.

Chapter 2 Background Information

2.1 The Employment Prospects of English Majors

There is no doubt that the employment market is changing within China. It has been doing so quickly for the past ten years, as the country has continued with its long held reform and open door policy and further embraced international trade. These are developments which have culminated with China's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2002, and successful bidding and hosting of the 2008 Olympic Games. They are also the reason why the global lingua franca, the English language (Crystal, 2003; Seidlhofer, 2005), has assumed such an importance to the country. In acknowledgement of this, educational policy stipulations, reflecting macro-economic commercial interests (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996; Maley, 1995; Ross, 1992; Zhang, 1993), have made the language part of the mandatory curriculum up to tertiary level, elevating the importance of an English education exponentially in the process (Yang 2008; Wu, 2001). It now facilitates entrance to and graduation from university (Hu, 2004), acts as a pre-requisite in the pursuit of postgraduate and overseas study, and, not surprisingly, ensures eligibility for employment and promotion opportunities within the public and private sectors (Ng and Tang, 1997; Thorgersen, 2002; Zhang, 2003). For prospective and current college English majors however, this widespread adoption of the language (Yang, 2008), up to an advanced level of proficiency, all presents something of a predicament.

The reason for this is that all graduate students, by default, are now competent English users, with the academically bright and career savvy students tending to enrol on more financially lucrative programmes such as medicine, engineering and business. This has meant that specialist undergraduate English programmes have therefore lost their competitive edge. As if this was not enough to contest with, the competition for coveted employment places has only increased further, as English majors now also face competition from the growing number of overseas educated students opting to return home to ply their trades (Yuan and Xie, 2010). Compared to language specialists, not only do these students bring with them potentially more desirable qualifications garnered under culturally diverse conditions and, through association, obvious linguistic capabilities (Gu and Schweisfurth, 2006), but they also have relatively affluent parents who may well be

viewed as useful social acquaintances by would be employers. The one saving grace for English majors, however, is that their advanced language skills (Zhao and Campbell, 1995) do still manage to position them favourably in the eyes of some. It also sets them up for relatively straight forward admission on to programmes of further study, which is an attractive option in itself. The result is that, for those who do have clear *Career Goal* designs, it may offer an effective way by which to propel oneself onto the employment fast track.

2.2 The Role of Career Goal Motivation

Taking into account the increasing quality and numbers of potential candidates competing for coveted employment positions, it is unlikely however that the more attractive opportunities will materialise unless two pre conditions are met. The first is that one excels in one's studies. The second is that a learner has deliberately set out to pursue these ends through tailoring their language learning endeavours appropriately. For this to be the case, one has to have some strategic career based designs in mind. The problem is that college English majors have typically not been found to display such tendencies, being motivated instead by alternative features. This is probably because, like most Chinese undergraduates, they are untrained in assuming personal responsibility for their own lives (Mills, 2011). Through duty bound obligation, they have had to accept their parents' often over active hand in orchestrating their educational paths from a young age (Chao, 1994). However, with technological advances making it impossible for parents to second guess so far in advance what skills the market will require in the future (Puttnam and Barber, 2009), it is imperative that the learners themselves also buy into the importance of what they are working towards and are actively motivated by it; at least if they are to increase their chances of being successful. This is especially important at university where social rather than academic interests will probably exert the greatest influence over the way in which time and effort is spent (White, 2006), and parents now detached from their children are unable to micro-manage to the same extent.

It is with this in mind that the focus of this dissertation on the prominence of *Career Goals* as an L2 motivational drive for college English majors assumes importance, because over the past decade this motive has arguably become the most justifiable and merit worthy reason to explain why one would pursue an English

language undergraduate degree. After all, if one has no strategic career designs for a less than competitive course in information rich China, in light of rising prices, falling salaries and increasing job market competition, then questions need to be asked as to why. Ten years ago when Gao et al. (2004) conducted a large scale exploratory research project to uncover what motivated college students to learn English, it was understandable that, of the thirty most frequently given reasons, only one made explicit reference to employment considerations. This was probably because at the time pressure was quite simply minimal. For example, job opportunities were relatively plentiful, graduate numbers modest, and the availability of adept linguists constrained. Subsequent developments and a radically different societal backdrop clearly suggest that it is no longer likely that *Career Goals* can afford to be only a minor motivational language learning feature. It is also unthinkable that they now warrant being subsumed, without recourse, within a generic and somewhat imprecise (as regards its exact scope) construct such as *Individual Development* which is what Gao et al. (2004) then deemed appropriate. The implication is that, for anyone wishing to evaluate English majors' L2 motivation, it is impossible to present an accurate picture of the most prominent motives if adequate coverage is not afforded to learners' employment designs.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

3.1 L2 Motivation: A Simple Definition

With this dissertation firmly rooted within the L2 motivational domain, it is important to establish exactly what is meant by the term L2 motivation. Intuitively this may seem easy enough, as by definition alone one might simply suggest that if motivation refers to the driving force or forces behind a course of action (Gardner, 2001a), L2 motivation, by association and inference, must therefore refer to the driving force or forces that initiate and sustain learners in their attempts to acquire a language. To do justice to the term however, it is also important to afford some scope to the magnitude of effort which is exerted in the process. Therefore, for the purpose of this dissertation, L2 motivation is regarded as referring to and accounting for the driving force or forces behind why a language is studied, with what amount of effort, and ultimately, for how long (Dörnyei, 2001).

3.2 L2 Motivation: A Complex Construct

Despite the seeming simplicity of the term however, L2 motivation, as a construct, is in fact incredibly complex. This is because motives are personal to the individual who attributes importance to them, potentially limitless in scope, and bound only by the strength that they command at any given point in time. Therefore not only are they liable to fluctuations in terms of their action wielding intensity, but they are more than apt to be replaced or disappear with the passage of time (Maslow, 1943). To complicate matters further, motives can also originate and be regulated from deep within one's subconscious (Freud, 1966), meaning that to evaluate them in their entirety requires examining underlying attitudes as well as explicit drives. The problem is that this evaluation requires assessing one highly complex phenomenon through multiple and only potentially co-dependent features. This is an approach fraught with issues, of which the most notable is how to ensure that attitudes do in all actuality equate to motives. For this reason it is unsurprising that so little consensus exists concerning the conceptual range of reference of the motivational construct, or that over the past half a century researchers have tended to limit their evaluative scopes.

Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972), in their now famed study, defined a clear evaluative focus when they explored motivation in bilingual but politically fragmented Canada from integrative and instrumental perspectives. The former term refers to a desire to learn a language in order to communicate with and, at times, become like members of a valued L2 community (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011), and the latter to the importance placed upon acquiring some tangible benefit associated with language proficiency. However, what began as a localised study soon went on to command a far reaching influence, dominating debates for decades. The truth is that it probably would not have, had the transferability of integrative motivation not been over extolled and its universal importance over extenuated (Clement and Kruidenier, 1983). What brought this to fruition was Gardner's (1985, 2001b, 2010) decision to focus heavily upon this one motivational feature within his Socio Educational Model, rather than give due weight to the numerous alternative motivational drives equally deserving of attention (Crookes et al., 1991; Dörnyei and Schmidt, 2001). It is for this reason that the Self Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985) and the Process Model (Dörnyei and Otto, 1998) have been met with such widespread acclaim in subsequent years. In the following sections I will therefore discuss the complexity of L2 motivational field through considering three of the most well regarded motivational models and highlight the key constructs of each. This is will enable the motives that drive college English majors to be better understood.

3.2.1 The Socio Educational Model: Integrative Motivation and the Socio Cultural Environment

Designed to highlight the key factors which affect language acquisition, the principal tenets of the Socio Educational Model are motivation, one's inherent natural language learning ability and the socio cultural environment. What this model does particularly well is highlight the influential role that the social environment and underlying culture play in influencing the amount of effort a language learner is likely to exert towards a course of action (Chambers, 1999), alongside the justifying reasons for this. This awareness raising is achieved in two ways. Firstly, the motives which have emerged as the key tenets of the Socio Educational Model originate from socio cultural influences. For example, integrative and instrumental motives owe their origins to situational influences in what was a bicultural country. This is because when Gardner and Lambert conducted their initial motivation studies in the French speaking central provinces of Canada where a

strong affiliation to the underlying French cultural heritage was apparent, localized Anglophone communities tended to either learn the language for pragmatic instrumental designs, or through a more enduring integrative desire. Secondly, the Socio Educational Model clearly highlights how the motivation exhibited within a particular language learning context is influenced by the socio cultural milieu. For example, when society values or supports attempts to acquire a language then, in all probability, a learner's L2 motivation will be positively affected. Alternatively, when it does not, the reverse is almost certain to hold true. This is a supposition which is also extendable to the micro institutional environment. Of course, exceptions to this arise, but, as a general rule of thumb, the external environment certainly plays a significant role in shaping the nature, strength and longevity of one's motives. What this model does less well, however, is give enough coverage to the numerous motives which exist and impact upon a language learner which are not directly derived from or influenced by environmental considerations. This is because the motivation construct is over heavily focused on integrative motivation. Given how the term's connotations now appear dated (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009) and, even at the time, seemed to be constrained by socio geographic boundaries, this is problematic. The reason for this is that integration is a motive that is bound by socio cultural conditions. It is unlikely therefore to be a motivational force for students in very different contextual situations.

3.2.2 The Self Determination Theory: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

In contrast, the Self Determination Theory is a macro motivational proposition. By grouping motives predominantly under two all subsuming umbrella headings, the theory overcomes the issues associated with Gardner's preference to focus almost exclusively on integrative motivation. The first is termed intrinsic motivation, and refers to language learning for the pleasure this in itself generates. The second term, labelled extrinsic motivation, contrastingly accounts for all of the other driving forces responsible for an individual's language learning endeavours. This term can also be seen to incorporate Gardner and Lambert's instrumental and integrative motives (Gardner, 2001b). It is worth noting that intrinsic and extrinsic motives are not irreconcilable polar opposites. They simply represent two ends of a sliding scale along which an individual's motivational orientations are liable to move, given time and dependent upon the circumstances. It is also worth noting that extrinsic motivation has often been found to undermine intrinsic motivation, as language learning undertaken to meet extrinsic designs dissipates one's natural intrinsic interest (Lepper and Greene,

1978). The advantage of this motivational construct is that it attempts to broaden the focus in a way that Gardner failed to do. For example, the emphasis does not rest solely on a single motive. Instead, equal scope is afforded to motives which derive from the macro and micro environments, as well as those unique and potentially deeply personal to the individual, which are regulated as much by inherent cognitive processes as they are socio psychological ones. If a complaint is to be levelled at this motivational framework, then it is that the Self Determination Theory fails to delve into the true complexity of the motivational construct. Instead, it simply offers a way to categorise the numerous motives which exist and operationalise them under two simplistic motivational headings, albeit in something of a lop-sided manner.

3.2.3 The Process Model: Motivation's Temporal Dynamic

The Process Model, which is a language learning motivational paradigm that assesses motives along a time continuum, manages to overcome Deci and Ryan's failure to do justice to the actual complexity of L2 motivation and the imbalanced way in which the construct is portrayed. It does so by organising L2 motives along a temporal axis as they pertain to pre action, action and post action. Pre action motives refer to those which drive a language learner to actually embark on a course of action. Action based motives, also referred to as situated executive motives, are those which maintain this course up until its completion. Post action motives account for the forces which play a part in the retrospective evaluation process. The greatest strengths of this model are twofold. Firstly, being a synthesis of previous frameworks (Dörnyei, 1994; Williams and Burden, 1997), most notably those which have been designed to be as inclusive as possible, it highlights the situation specific micro motivational forces that drive language learners. This is something that Deci and Ryan failed to do, despite their theory having the capacity for this. Secondly, the temporal design built upon the time continuum premises of Heckhausen and Kuhl (1985) allows apparently contradictory motives to be reconciled by recognizing that they may simply occur at different stages of the motivational process (Dörnyei, 2003). The drawback to the Process Model is that it was designed with the generic classroom in mind. Therefore, although the Model's stipulations are easily extendable to account for the motivational forces that drive language learners, irrespective of the setting, its motives are not, because they are too limited, and afford too little coverage to course and country specific drives.

3.3 L2 Motivation Research in China

The aim of this research is to determine how prominent *Career Goals* are as an L2 motivational drive when compared with the most notable situation specific alternatives both within and beyond the confines of the classroom. The difficulty is that up until relatively recently there were few notable localised L2 motivational studies and, of those to have emerged, almost all have simply drawn on the Western devised classical and expanded models (Qing and Wen 2000; Wang and Liu, 2002; Wen, 2001; Yang, 2002). They have therefore typically failed to fully explore language learning motives which are inherently tied into the Chinese socio cultural context, or which are unique to Chinese college students' unique psyches. These psyches are shaped by an environment steeped in history and tradition, an upbringing in a period of social upheaval and cultural fusion, and the fact that the learners in question are in a major transitional stage in their lives. It is also problematic that not only have the subsequent findings been compromised by methodological flaws (Gao et al., 2004), but they have also been somewhat predictable. This is because common sense alone suggests that motives prominent under particular circumstances, such as integrative motives were in Canada, are unlikely to display anywhere near the same degree of prominence when tested under socially diverse conditions (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). In this instance, these conditions situate a learner in an environment far removed from any large scale English speaking populations and where the state has, until fairly recently, paced the influx of western influence, including that of language.

The results from China have therefore tended to indicate that importing motives amounts to little more than field testing the extent to which they are internationally transferable, rather than discovering what really motivates language learners. This is because many of the imported motives are found to bear little direct relevance to learners. For example, integrative motivation was discovered to be nowhere near as prominent in China as it was in Canada thirty years earlier (Hua, 1998; Shi, 2000; Warden and Lin, 2000), even with the demographic differences between the participants accounted for. This over reliance on the old motivation research conducted in the West, which, through its nature, clearly does not address the Chinese situation, inhibited L2 motivation research within China up until the turn of the century. In fact, in a country famed for its stringent reliance on examinations to act as progressive checkpoints and social filters, the only notable

situation specific motive to emerge during this period was an instrumental one termed certificate motivation (Hua, 1998; Shi, 2000). This was not only found to be more prominent than integrative motivation, but it is also finding which was also replicated regionally in Taiwan, where Warden and Lin (2000) found that the systematic requirement motive (in a socio educational sense) tended to be the most prominent for language learners.

In twenty first century China though, one noteworthy situation specific motive hardly does justice to the actual complexity of college students L2 motivational drives. Righting this motivational void was something that remained unaddressed until Gao et al. (2004) decided to conduct rigorous large scale empirical research which focused on identifying the most prominent situation specific executive motives for the learners in question. To achieve this end, an inductive, bottom up study was initiated. Firstly, participants were asked to specify all of the L2 motivational drives which they held to be of importance to them in their English language learning endeavors. Secondly, a questionnaire that pooled together all of the most prominent motivational features was devised, administered and the data statistically tested to assess which items hung best together. The result was that seven prominent L2 motives were identified. These were categorized as: *Intrinsic Interest*, *Immediate Achievement*, *Learning Environment*, *Information Medium*, *Individual Development*, *Social Responsibility* and, *Going Abroad*. Of the seven micro motives to emerge though, it transpired that the culturally unique *Intrinsic Interest* was the most prominent. This was a motive that was indicative of an interest in the target language, an associated culture and in language learning in general, but with a clear absence to any sought after end state rewards such as socio cultural integration. Conceivably, this is a finding which made perfect sense ten years ago. English majors then faced relatively little difficulty in finding work. Fluency in a foreign language was admired and an abundance of employment opportunities existed. This allowed English majors to study a subject simply because they liked it without having to consider whether it would enhance their employment prospects. These were factors which, in effect, negated the influence of *Career Goals* as a motivational force. In today's stringent environment, it is unlikely that this laissez faire attitude is sustainable.

With almost ten years having passed since Gao et al. (2004) conducted their initial motivational study, it is clear that not only have conditions within China changed, but so too has the importance of English and the nature of today's cohort of English majors. Their interests, outlooks, hopes and aspirations no longer reflect the nationalistic employment ensured perspectives of their predecessors who took part in the previous

research study. As such, one could argue that the actual motives which were derived might be in need of re-evaluation. In light of the insights that were offered during preliminary informal discussions though, this is almost certainly not the most pressing concern. The vast majority of motivational drives which were identified still appear to bear considerable relevance to current English majors. What does seem to have significantly changed is the weighted prominence attached to these drives, alongside the emergence of a *Career Goals* focus. As far as motivational prominence of alternative driving forces are concerned (Gao et al., 2004), the emphasis has certainly shifted from suppositions which purport that intrinsic motives outweigh less enduring (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006) extrinsic ones (Lin et al., 2003). This has been demonstrated most notably by Gao and Xu (2011) who have illustrated that, in Beijing, the most prominent L2 motives for college English majors are indeed no longer intrinsic in nature. To arrive at this conclusion, Gao and Xu (2011) drew on the earlier work of Gao et al. (2004) and utilized the same motivational construct as the basis for their study. For this dissertation however, the motivational construct of Gao et al. (2004) has been broadened to allow for the inclusion of a *Career Goals* motive. This is because, in an ever more highly pressured, materialistic and financially driven social environment, the expectation must surely be that much greater emphasis will, through necessity, be placed on *Career Goal* motives being highly prevalent.

3.4 Summary

This chapter sought to achieve four things in addition to explaining what L2 motivation is and the complexity surrounding it. Firstly, the importance of the socio cultural environment's influence upon the nature, strength and longevity of L2 motivation has been discussed, due to the significant role that it plays. Secondly, the purpose has been to consider the way the apparently limitless number of potential L2 motives that exist, and explore ways in which to categorize them. Thirdly, the dynamic nature of motivation has been discussed, with explicit reference being made to the importance of temporality. This is important because motivational drives vary depending on when exactly in the motivational process they occur and the time period in question. Finally, L2 motivation research within China was discussed, so that this research can build on that which has gone before.

Chapter 4 Enquiry Design

4.1 Research Questions

Three research questions guide this dissertation. These are:

- How prominent are *Career Goals* as an L2 motivational drive for Chinese English major undergraduate students?
- To what extent does year group grading impact upon the prominence of *Career Goals* as an L2 motivational drive for Chinese English major undergraduate students?
- What are the implications for researchers, practitioners and students in light of the relative prominence of *Career Goals* as an L2 motivational drive?

4.2 Research Design

4.2.1 Paradigmatic Assumptions and Methodological Considerations

As a pragmatist my personal belief is that the paradigmatic debate is overstated (Cherryholmes, 1992; Dörnyei, 2007), and that in all actuality when conducting research, one should simply apply a best fit approach based on contextual influences so that research methods are selected on their merited ability to best answer the question(s) in hand. The justification for such a stance rests in the knowledge that questions can almost always be viewed from multiple complimentary angles (Rossman and Wilson, 1985; Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007). For this dissertation though, and in light of time and word constraints curtailing the possibility for a sequential, mixed methodological study to be conducted (Creswell et al., 2003), the adopted position is within a positivist's paradigm. This is because the aim is to examine as impartially as possible the suppositions of a relatively large target population, with the adoption of a worldview which assumes the existence of a single objective truth '*that can be researched empirically with standardized scientific equipment*' (Dörnyei, 2007: 9).

4.2.2 Site and Participant Selection

The subjects of this study are 143 Chinese college English major students who attend a university in Suzhou, China. This university was selected for four reasons. Firstly it is representative of most nationally acclaimed and well respected institutions, being one of the 106 key national universities and colleges as designated by the Ministry of Education. Secondly, the university enrolls students from across the country, randomly stratifying them by class meaning that the English major participants are potentially representative of the wider target population (Milroy and Gordon, 2003). Thirdly, numerically this institution provides access to enough participants that the sample size specifications of thirty required by the central limit theorem for normality to be assumed are met. It also ensures the same figure set by Hatch and Lazarson (1991) as the base minimum required for any degree of confidence to be conferred in the external validity of the results generalisability is exceeded (Bachman, 2004). Fourthly, being my former work place it was also convenient. The students in contrast have been selected on a non-probability, purposive premise (Gilbert, 2008) and are distributed between year groups (37 first years, 59 second years, 47 third years).

4.2.3 Instrument Selection and Design

To address the research questions, a cross sectional survey of Chinese university English majors was decided upon as being most appropriate approach to adopt given the research aims. In particular, this has meant the uptake of a motivation questionnaire. The benefits associated with this instrument are numerous. Firstly, it provides a time efficient means by which to gather and analyze significant amounts of information (Brown, 2001; McKay, 2006). Secondly, it allows responses to more easily be contrasted with one another allowing the relative prominence of *Career Goals* to be determined, relationships explored, and generalizations if appropriate drawn (Cohen et al., 2007). Thirdly, it enables the subsequent findings to be considered with a greater degree of extended merit (Burton et al., 2008). Fourthly, the adoption of the questionnaire is in keeping with traditional and still prominent L2 motivation data gathering techniques that have been in use since Gardner (1985) devised his much celebrated AMTB. This is despite the growing popularity of qualitative research and mixed methodologies (Punch, 2009).

On that note, a hybrid version of the questionnaire devised by Gao et al. (2004) for use with Chinese college students has been used in this dissertation (see Appendix 1). This questionnaire was adopted due to the fact that it was extensively researched and tested during its construction phase and, as it deliberately set out to assess the most prominent culturally relevant motivational drives for the target population. It was also selected so that comparisons could be drawn between the levels of prominence attributed to these motives. Some revisions have however been made. This is because the questionnaire drew upon both past and present motives when the focus here is solely on the present. It also did not have a *Career Goals* construct which is paramount for this study. To address these issues some revising, rephrasing, removing and repositioning of statements has taken place, and a *Career Goals* construct has been added (see Appendix 2). For a complete list of all of the motivational constructs featured in the questionnaire see Table I below:

Table 1: Represented Motivational Drives (see Appendix 3)

1. Intrinsic Interest (Items 1, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21)	5. Information Medium (Items 13, 15)
2. Immediate Achievement (Items 2, 3, 4, 9)	6. Social Responsibility (Items 10, 20, 22,23)
3. Learning Situation (Items 5, 6, 7, 8)	7. Going Abroad (Items 24,25, 26)
4. Individual Development (Items 11, 12, 27, 28)	8. Career Goals (Items 14, 29, 30, 31, 32)

N.B. For clarification purposes the general premise behind the following more abstract motivational terms are: *Intrinsic Interest* relates to an appreciation of the target language and certain associated cultural aspects. *Individual Development* is concerned with a desire to attain a sense of achievement (Atkinson and Raynor, 1974), and increase one's self worth (Covington, 1992), social standing and future prospects regardless of the precise manner by which to do so. *Information Medium* implies using the language as a medium for additional learning. *Social Responsibility* involves meeting parental expectations and fulfilling duty felt obligations to the country. *Career Goals* refer to an interest in promoting ones employment designs.

Revisions have however been kept to a minimum. This is in an attempt to minimise the disruption to the structural cohesion and internal consistency of the instrument, which appears to be reasonable based on Gao et al.'s (2004) reported Cronbach Alpha figure (0.77). The five point likert scale has also been retained. This is because not only does it follow the original designs of Gao et al. (2004), but it also allows participants to offer a genuine moderate midpoint response. To ensure that disruption to the questionnaires internal (content) validity would be minimised, an additional two tiered revision and addition validation process was also enacted. Firstly, follow up pre pilot thought interviews were run with recently graduated Chinese English majors to assess the clarity and appropriateness of the alterations. Secondly, expert opinion was sought from academics specialising in L2 motivation. This was achieved through face to face dialogue and through

electronic communication, and allowed a degree of confidence to be afforded to the amendments. As a scales reliability can also be affected however by changes to the socio cultural environment (Gardner, 1985), and with time having precipitated this, a Cronbach Alpha reliability test was also run on the edited scale, with a figure of 0.76 being obtained ensuring for all intents and purposes the instruments psychometric quality (Sudman and Bradburn, 1983; George and Mallery, 2003). See Table 2 below.

Table 2: Questionnaire Reliability

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.758	.784	32

4.2.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire's actual administration subsequently took place immediately before taught sessions began in order to avoid disrupting formal classes as much as possible. It was also overseen by the researcher in person. Prior to administration, the projects scope, opt-in nature, and the ethical commitments that would be adhered to were run through (see Appendix 4). It was felt that by attending in person the likelihood of higher response rates being achieved would be increased (Boekaerts, 2002), and more reliable and valid feedback garnered (Dörnyei, 2007). For evaluative purposes, the questionnaire scales have been regarded as producing interval level data due to the equal spacing which is apparent between response options. Justification for this rests on this being common practice in the social sciences (Abelson, 1995; Blaikie, 2003), and one which typifies in particular the L2 motivational domain (e.g. Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002; Taguchi et al., 2009).

To analyze the data both descriptive and inferential data analyses are to be conducted on SPSS 19.0. Firstly the information will be assessed for its base properties with the means and standard deviations of all motivational drives derived and contrasted so that the comparative prominence of *Career Goals* can be determined for the students in question (a) in their totality and (b) dependent upon year group grading. Secondly, parametric and non-parametric tests will be utilised. This is because with the data regarded as being interval level, as well as meeting the stipulations of a normal distribution (Leech et al., 2005) both are justifiable. The fact that the

parametric tests themselves are also fairly robust simply lends further credence to their uptake (Glass et al., 1972; Jaccard and Choi, 1996). As such, a Kruskal-Wallis Test is used followed by a Mann-Whitney Test to see if the relative rank order prominence of *Career Goals* is justified. In addition to this, a one way ANOVA Test is utilised in order to assess the significance in the differences between year groups regarding *Career Goals* as a motivational drive.

4.3 Ethical Issues

This dissertation has adhered to a rigorous set of principles that began when an internal ethical consent form was signed (see Appendix 5). These are in line with internationally accepted guidelines (AERA, 2002), and in this case focused on three distinct, yet essential features (Bell, 2005) which have been verbally conveyed and stipulated in writing (see Appendix 5). Firstly, informed consent was sought from participants. Secondly, confidentiality has been guaranteed, with no one privy to the completed questionnaires except the researcher. Thirdly, anonymity was ensured. This has been achievable because no names were asked for, and all of the participants are unknown to the researcher. Students were also requested not to supply e-mail addresses which contained distinguishing personal references if a willingness to partake in potential follow up research was indicated, or a desire for a report of the final paper was expressed (Brown, 2001).

4.4 Limitations of the Design

Subject Selection: Due to the fact that all of the participants herald from a single institution, and comprise only a fractional percentage of the wider target population, it is fair to say that the generalisability of the subsequent findings by nature has been inhibited (Dörnyei, 2007). As such, any broader claims have to be appropriately measured (Wilkinson and TFSI, 1999).

Instrument Selection: With attitudes shaping but not necessarily promoting action I would preferentially like to further revise the adapted questionnaire to ensure that all of the items deal explicitly with actual motives. Accepting however that this course of action would require a substantial validation period, and detract from the advantages associated with aligning my research to that of Gao et al. (2004), this course of action in this

instance has been disregarded. In a similar vein, time also curtails my wish to add semi structured interviews to this dissertation in an immediate follow-up capacity. A decision which means that elaborating upon that the subsequent findings (Rossman and Wilson, 1985) and further exploring motivational drives will have to be undertaken in a later study.

Chapter 5 Results and Analysis

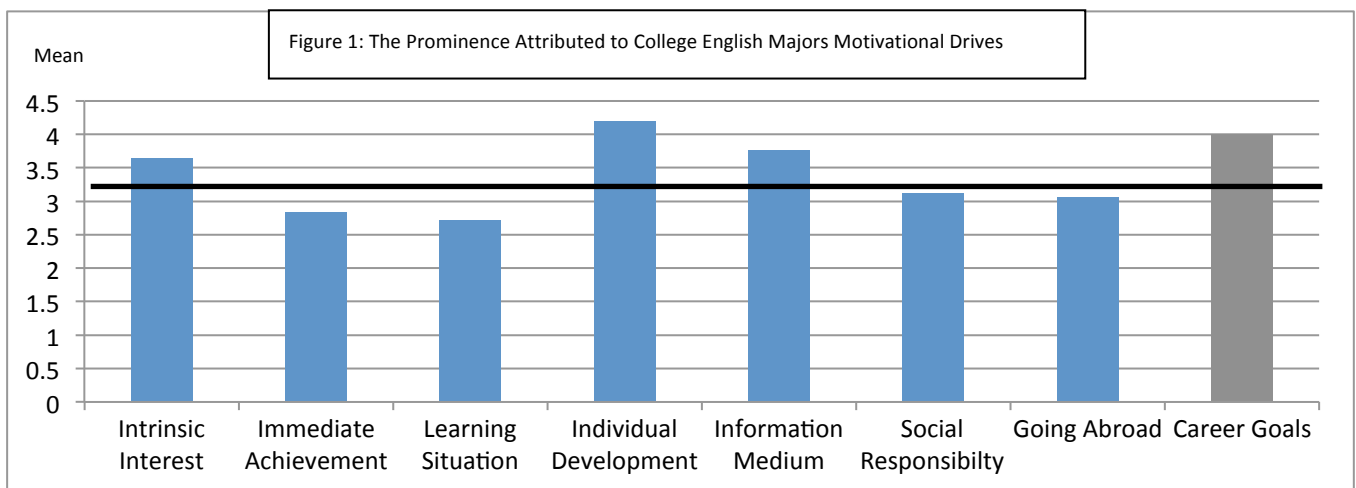
5.1 The Prominence of Career Goals

To answer the first question which this dissertation sought to address; namely, how prominent are *Career Goals* as an L2 motivational drive for college English majors, the mean response weighting assigned to each featured motive, along with its standard deviation, has been calculated. These figures are presented in Table 3 and Figure 1 respectively.

Table 3: The Prominence Attributed to College English Majors Motivational Drives

Motive	Intrinsic Interest	Immediate Achievement	Learning Situation	Individual Development	Information Medium	Social Responsibility	Going Abroad	Career Goals
Mean	3.64	2.83	2.72	4.20	3.76	3.12	3.06	4.00
Std Deviation	0.98	1.22	1.19	0.84	0.91	1.05	1.20	0.83
N	858	572	572	572	286	572	429	715

N.B. Motivational construct sizes varied, which is why the N values differ. For example, the Information Medium construct consisted of two items multiplied by 143 participants.



To comprehend fully what these figures imply, it is important firstly to recall how responses were scored on the questionnaire (see Appendix 3). Having utilised a likert scale, the scores that could be attributed to statements ranged from 1.0 to 5.0. The scores 1.0 and 2.0 were used to indicate when the respondent did not feel that the motive in question was a language learning force for action, with the differences between the weighting indicating the strength of conviction that the participant felt. A score of 3.0 was used to indicate that a motive might or might not have some effect, but that the strength of intensity either way was not particularly strong. By contrast, a score of 4.0 was an acknowledgment that a motive did definitely act as a driving force regarding an individual’s language learning endeavours, with a figure of 5.0 suggesting that it did so significantly. As such, what the mean scores in Table 3 and Figure 1 illustrate is that when a score is lower than 3.0 then the proposed motive is not acting as a mainstream motivational force for the student population. Above 3.0 and it is, with a higher mean score equating to a greater attributed extent.

Therefore, what Table 3 and Figure 1 illustrate is that the *Learning Situation* (2.72) and *Immediate Achievement* (2.83) are not mainstream motivational forces for the participants who took part in the research, and *Going Abroad* (3.06) and *Social Responsibility* (3.12) are but negligible language learning motives. By contrast, the *Intrinsic Interest* (3.64) and *Information Medium* (3.76) motives do however play a role in language learners’ academic endeavours, but not to the assured extent that *Career Goals* (4.00) and *Individual Development* (4.20) do. To answer the first research question, it is therefore clear that based on the descriptive statistics, *Career Goals* appear to be a prominent motivational force for language learning. This is because they are scored relatively highly, and rank second only to *Individual Development*. See Table 4 below.

Table 4: The Rank Order of College English Majors L2 Motivational Drives

Rank Order of	1. Individual	2. Career	3. Information	4. Intrinsic	5. Social	6. Going	7. Immediate	8. Learning
Prominence	Development	Goals	Medium	Interest	Responsibility	Abroad	Achievement	Situation



In addition to this, the fact that *Career Goals* standard deviation figure (.83) is relatively low also suggests that, as a motive, *Career Goals* are a language learning force around which a high degree of agreement exists in terms of the typical responses offered. This implies that, comparatively speaking, a reasonable amount of trust can be placed in the *Career Goals* motive mean (average) statistic being indicative of the vast majority of

students' actual responses. This would suggest that *Career Goals* are a motivational force that influences the vast majority of students rather than being a motive that drive some learners strongly and others not at all. However, to ensure that the observed rank order differences within descriptive statistics are indicative of reality, it is important to assess if the apparent motivational placements illustrated in Table 4 actually garner any statistical significance. If they do, this will allow greater trust to be placed in the rank order results which have been generated. To achieve this end a Kruskal-Wallis Test has been run. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: The Rank Order Significance of College English Majors L2 Motivational Drives

Kruskal-Wallis Test

Ranks			
	Motive	N	Mean Rank
Score	II	858	2476.55
	IA	572	1656.61
	LS	572	1541.39
	ID	572	3157.08
	IM	286	2599.62
	SR	572	1895.01
	GA	429	1881.48
	CG	715	2905.73
	Total		4576

Test Statistics ^{a,b}	
	Score
Chi-Square	916.209
df	7
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Motive

II (Intrinsic Interest), IA (Immediate Achievement)

LS (Learning Situation), ID (Individual Development)

IM (Information Medium), SR (Social Responsibility)

GA (Going Abroad), CG (Career Goals)

Tellingly, the Kruskal-Wallis Test reveals a statistically significant difference in the motivational force attributed to the different motives in evidence, as the following figures detail: (II, n = 858, IA, n = 572, LS, n = 572, ID, n = 572, IM, n = 286, SR, n = 572, GA, n = 429, CG, n = 715), $\chi^2 (2, n = 4576) = 916.21, p = .000$. This is illustrated in particular by the fact that highlighted within the Test Statistics, and just noted $p < .05$, which means that, at the very least, certain placements within the rank order which has been laid out in Table 4 are not attributable to chance. However, as the Kruskal-Wallis Test does not reveal which rank placements may be the result of chance, Mann-Whitney U-Tests have also been conducted. This is because Mann-Whitney U-Tests allow one to pinpoint exactly where the rank order is and is not the result of chance by focusing on pairs of motives as opposed to the whole construct in its entirety. The reason for this test being conducted is that on the assumption that *Career Goals* relative rank position is not found to be attributed to chance, then greater

weight can be afforded to the claim that *Career Goals* are a prominent language learning motive for Chinese college English majors. The results from the Mann-Whitney Test are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6: The Rank Order Significance of L2 Motive Adjacent Pairs

Mann-Whitney Test

Ranks				
	M1	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
ID CG	1	572	696.20	398228.50
	2	715	602.24	430599.50
	Total	1287		

ID (Individual Development), CG (Career Goals)

Test Statistics ^a	
	ID CG
Mann-Whitney U	174629.500
Wilcoxon W	430599.500
Z	-4.979
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

a. Grouping Variable: M1

Ranks				
	M2	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
CG IM	1	715	523.30	374160.00
	2	286	445.25	127341.00
	Total	1001		

CG (Career Goals), IM (Information Medium)

Test Statistics ^a	
	CG IM
Mann-Whitney U	86300.000
Wilcoxon W	127341.000
Z	-4.246
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

a. Grouping Variable: M2

Ranks				
	M3	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
IM II	1	286	597.36	170846.00
	2	858	564.21	484094.00
	Total	1144		

IM (Information Medium), II (Intrinsic Interest)

Test Statistics ^a	
	IM II
Mann-Whitney U	115583.000
Wilcoxon W	484094.000
Z	-1.554
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.120

a. Grouping Variable: M3

Ranks				
	M4	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
II SR	1	858	793.81	681093.00
	2	572	598.03	342072.00
	Total	1430		

II (Intrinsic Interest), SR (Social Responsibility)

Test Statistics ^a	
	II SR
Mann-Whitney U	178194.000
Wilcoxon W	342072.000
Z	-9.183
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

a. Grouping Variable: M4

Ranks			
M5	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
SR GA	1	572	506.08
	2	429	494.22
Total	1001		

SR (Social Responsibility), GA (Going Abroad)

Test Statistics ^a	
	SR GA
Mann-Whitney U	119786.500
Wilcoxon W	212021.500
Z	-.665
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.506

a. Grouping Variable: M5

Ranks			
M6	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
GA IA	1	429	532.11
	2	572	477.67
Total	1001		

GA (Going Abroad), IA (Immediate Achievement)

Test Statistics ^a	
	GA IA
Mann-Whitney U	109349.000
Wilcoxon W	273227.000
Z	-3.051
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.002

a. Grouping Variable: M6

Ranks			
M7	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
IA LS	1	572	585.80
	2	572	559.20
Total	1144		

IA (Immediate Achievement), LS (Learning Situation)

Test Statistics ^a	
	IA LS
Mann-Whitney U	155986.000
Wilcoxon W	319864.000
Z	-1.416
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.157

a. Grouping Variable: M7

By assessing the significance values listed in the Test Statistics it is apparent that at the $p < .05$ level, the rankings between the following adjacent rank order pairs are statistically significant:

Individual Development (n = 572) and *Career Goals* (n = 715) U = 174629.5, z = -4.979, p = .000, r = .01;

Career Goals (n = 715) and *Information Medium* (n = 286), U = 86300, z = -4.246, p = .000, r = .01;

Intrinsic Interest (n = 858) and *Social Responsibility* (n = 572), U = 178194, z = -9.183, p = .000, r = .005; and

Going Abroad (n = 429) and *Immediate Achievement* (n = 572), U = 109349, z = -3.051, p = .002, r = .01.

They are not therefore the product of chance. This implies that confidence can be placed in the majority of the derived rank order, and more importantly, the finding that *Career Goals* are a prominent motivational drive for College English Majors. It is worth noting however that with the relative effect sizes (r) being small (Cohen, 1988) this may actually mean that *Career Goals* are actually even more prominent in relative terms, as the

magnitude of the differences between adjacently ranked motives is not that great.

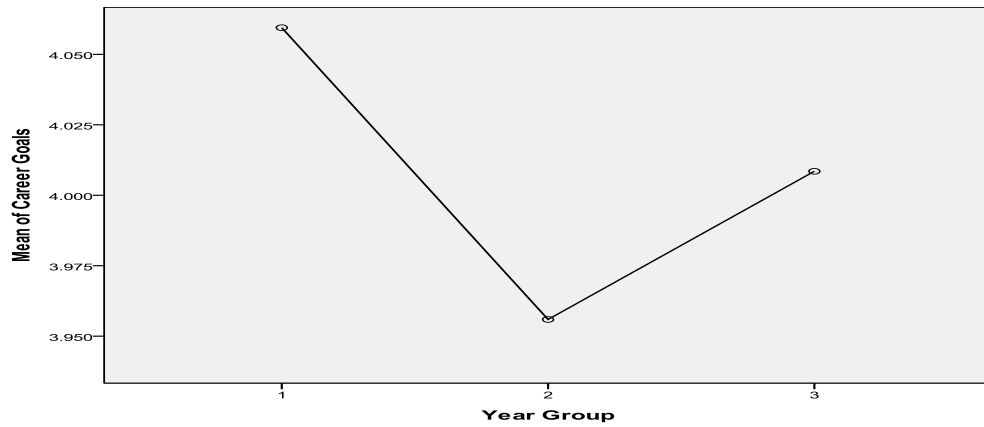
5.2 Career Goals Year Group Effect

The final consideration, before a literature based discussion ensues, is whether one's year group grading has a notable role to play. Consulting Table 7, which highlights each motives mean and standard deviation by year group, and Figure 2, which illustrates visually how *Career Goal* prominence varies between year groups, one might assume that it does. For example, by looking at both Table 7 and Figure 2 one can see that for first and third year students *Career Goals* average above 4.0 in terms of the weighted importance attributed to them as a situated executive motive. During the second year however this has dipped, with the gap between *Career Goals* and *Individual Development* growing in the process. The actual numbers involved may not seem all that large, but quite clearly a trend appears to be apparent.

Table 7: The Year Group Effect upon the Prominence of Career Goals

Rank (based on Total Sample Means) Motive	Total (N 143) Mean (Std Dev)	Year 1 (N 37) Mean (Std Dev)	Year 2 (N 59) Mean (Std Dev)	Year 3 (N 47) Mean (Std Dev)
1. Individual Development (ID)	4.20 (0.84) ID	4.18 (0.93) ID	4.26 (0.74) ID	4.12 (0.88) ID
2. Career Goals (CG)	4.00 (0.83) CG	4.06 (0.80) CG	3.96 (0.84) CG	4.01 (0.83) CG
3. Information Medium (IM)	3.76 (0.91) IM	3.73 (0.95) IM	3.80 (0.86) IM	3.72 (0.94) IM
4. Intrinsic Interest (II)	3.64 (0.98) II	3.71 (1.05) II	3.65 (0.90) II	3.58 (1.01) II
5. Social Responsibility (SR)	3.12 (1.05) SR	3.19 (0.97) SR	3.05 (1.24) GA	3.20 (1.06) SR
6. Going Abroad (GA)	3.06 (1.19) GA	3.14 (1.14) GA	3.00 (1.07) SR	3.05 (1.30) IA
7. Immediate Achievement (IA)	2.83 (1.21) IA	2.86 (1.11) IA	2.65 (1.16) LS	3.03 (1.18) GA
8. Learning Situation (LS)	2.72 (1.19) LS	2.69 (1.18) LS	2.62 (1.17) IA	2.84 (1.21) LS

Figure 2: The Year Group Effect upon the Prominence of Career Goals



However, to determine if these findings are indicative of a genuine underlying trend or simply the result of chance, their statistical significance has also been tested. To do so, a one way ANOVA was run with the corresponding results being presented in Table 8 below. Based on the derived significance figure of .402 it is quite clear that the results are not representative of a genuine trend. This is because they bear no statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level. The implication is therefore that relative prominence attributed to *Career Goals* as an L2 motivational drive for college English majors dependent upon year group is simply the product of chance. As such, the only assumption to draw is that although *Career Goals* do seem to be universally prominent to the sample population, it is impossible to read anything meaningful into the fluctuations which appear to occur between the actual weighting attributed to this motive by different year groups. The differences that have therefore been observed between the scores attributed to the prominence of *Career Goals* as a L2 motivational force dependent upon one's year group are therefore not representative of an underlying indicative trend.

Table 8: The Significance of One's Year Group upon the Prominence of Career Goals

ANOVA					
Career Goals					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.244	2	.622	.914	.402
Within Groups	484.756	712	.681		
Total	486.000	714			

Chapter 6 Discussion

Having illustrated that *Career Goals* are indeed a highly prominent academic driving force for college English majors, the question that this dissertation will now seek to address is why this proved to be the case. To do so, the prominence of *Career Goals* will be considered from two perspectives. The first assesses the importance of the construct as it stands on its own merit. The second considers how the same forces that have elevated *Career Goals* to a position of prominence may have lessened the potential attractiveness of some of the traditionally recognised alternative academic driving forces afforded inclusive scope within this paper. These include the *Intrinsic Interest*, *Social Responsibility*, *Going Abroad*, *Immediate Achievement* and the *Learning Situation* motivational constructs. In addition to this, consideration is also afforded to why there was no significant year group effect in terms of the relative prominence of the *Career Goals* motive. This is so that more measured recommendations can be put forward to both practitioners and students.

6.1 Understanding the Prominence of Career Goals

The reason for *Career Goals* emerging as a prominent language learning motive for college English majors is due to the inter relationship between the nature of the students and the situational context within which they operate (Bandura, 1977; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011; Hickey, 2003; Hickey and Granade, 2004; McCaslin, 2004; Turner, 2001; Ushioda, 2007). Undergraduates within China today have grown up in an environment which is epitomized by cultural fusion as the country is increasingly influenced by Western culture and values (Gu et al., 2005), due to information becoming more widely available and travel more easily accessible. They have also been indirectly affected by the macro anthropological one child policy (Parker et al., 2010; Shao and Herbig, 1994). This has led to the emergence of a generation which is increasingly individualistic in orientation, materialistic in outlook (Eastman et al., 1997) and capitalist at heart (Belk and Zhou, 1987), but, tellingly, still bound by traditional social mores, although not to the same extent as previous generations (Rosen, 2009). For an increasingly aspirational and informed student population it is therefore not unduly surprising that college English majors are motivated to a greater extent by *Career Goals* than Gao et al., (2004) found their predecessors to be. This is because the accumulation of wealth and position, which help to ensure that desired

end states can be realized, are inextricably tied to one's long term employment prospects. When the educationally conditioned psyches of this generation of students (Vygotsky, 1978) are also considered alongside the influential present day socio cultural backdrop (Gardner, 1985), the prominence of Career Goals as a key language learning motive becomes even more understandable. The reason for this is that undergraduate students are constantly reminded by the media of the fact that China is in the midst of significant social and cultural changes, and that these are affecting and being affected by ever greater employment uncertainty (Partridge and Keng, 2008; Eismar, 2009). With students aware of the work related difficulties likely to face them in the future and conscious of how soon they will undertake fourth year stipulated work experience, it is to be expected therefore that *Career Goals* should have emerged as a prominent academic driving force.

However, the emergence of *Career Goals* as a prominent language learning motive for college English majors does not rest solely on the attractiveness of this driving force alone. It is also to do with how the present day situational conditions have rendered the traditionally prominent alternative driving forces ineffective or unattractive to today's cohort of students. For example, *Intrinsic Interest*, as already mentioned, has witnessed a significant decline in relative prominence as an academic driving force from when Gao et al. (2004) conducted their L2 motivation study. This is because it has been superseded as a motive by more pressing, necessity driven pragmatic concerns. These concerns are likely to have been accentuated by China's increased international exposure to global events, such as the financial crisis of 2008 which would have resulted in lower levels of graduate recruitment and greater subsequent unemployment. This, in turn, would have led to a more informed student population giving even greater forethought to their undergraduate degree choice in order improve the likelihood of benefiting advantageously from it. This movement away from students being motivated by an intrinsic interest in the subject towards an extrinsic desired end state also reinforces the suppositions of Lepper and Greene (1978). They stipulated that, an increase in extrinsic motivation (such as for *Career Goal* designs) tends to be mirrored by a decrease in the prominence attached to learning for the intrinsic sense of enjoyment it provides. This is exactly what appears to have transpired. By contrast, the reason why *Social Responsibility* was not found to bear the same degree of prominence as a language learning motive as *Career Goals* do is attributable to how this motive relies on educational conditioning to garner strength. With children's upbringings now purporting the importance of the individual, it is understandable

why family responsibility and state obligation are waning forces. The reason why *Going Abroad* is not a prominent motivational force in comparison to *Career Goals* is simply because this opportunity derived motive is not a pressing realistic concern for many in the immediate term. This is despite its near universal appeal (Clement and Kruidenier, 1983). To explain why *Immediate Achievement* and the *Learning Situation* (Dörnyei, 1994) are fairly ineffectual drives, it is important to consider the temporal dynamic in particular (Dörnyei and Otto, 1998). *Immediate Achievement* as the term implies is a short term force, likely to exhibit greater action sustaining prominence when examinations, coursework, or feedback is pressing. The *Learning Situation* however is curtailed by limited class time, minimal teacher student interaction and dated resources.

6.2 Explaining the lack of a Year Group Effect

Interestingly, the same factors which account for why *Career Goals* are a prominent language learning motivational force in their own right also help to explain why so little difference exists regarding the importance attributed to this motive between year groups. These factors include the similarities between participants, which are accounted for by near similar ages and educational experiences, and the situational context within which the participants find themselves operating. For example, all college English majors, irrespective of their year group, are well into what has been a long language learning experience, and are, relatively speaking, at the same stage of their L2 motivational journeys (Dörnyei and Otto, 1998). With most of these students also having experienced near similar educational experiences, and been subject to active hands on parental influences, it is understandable that in many respects therefore college English majors will display some similarities in terms of their professed outlooks. In this case, this is evidenced through the near universal appeal of *Career Goals* as a L2 motive. It is also significant that all the participants entered university between 2008 and 2010, the time when graduate employment prospects were really beginning to take a significant turn for the worse. This situation explains why, even if students were not driven initially by *Career Goals*, then they would have been by the time that this research was undertaken. With the economy experiencing difficulties they would have had an increased awareness of the necessity to be so driven. Therefore, with all of the students subject to similar formal educations, the same present day employment situation, and facing the same future difficulties, it makes sense that *Career Goals* have been found to display a near universal appeal. It is equally understandable how the differences in attributed importance of the relative prominence of *Career Goals* as a L2 motive between year groups which emerged from the descriptive statistics would be due to

idiosyncratic rather than significantly telling reasons.

6.3 Implications

6.3.1 Recommendations for Practitioners

One of the complaints that are often levelled at Chinese students is that they are overly passive and reliant on simply being told what it is they need to know (Jandt, 2001). Although this is not universally true, it is for many as a result of educational conditioning (Samuelowicz: 1987, Phillips: 1990). Unfortunately, many practitioners simply extenuate a problematic cycle by regarding classes as little more than a time in which to transfer knowledge by lecturing from start to finish, albeit with some token question and answer periods thrown in for good measure. This teacher centred approach may help learners with the examinations, it may also aid classroom management, and live up to student expectations, but it almost certainly fails to deliver what students really need. Being apt and able linguists who have enrolled on a language course, clearly it is important that they continue to master the language but, in light of dwindling English major employment prospects, which is ultimately what a degree should help to enhance, a change of tack is almost certainly required. The suggestion therefore is that more course coverage should be given over to bridging the academic-employment divide English majors face, so that learners are enrolled on courses which prepare them appropriately for the world of work. This means, in light of how prominent *Career Goals* are as a language learning motive, talking to learners, finding out what it is they wish to learn about (Keller, 1983; Oxford and Shearin, 1996), and allowing them to initiate projects that combine mastering specific English language skills through self directed personalized projects (Todd et al., 2004). These projects would cater not only to students' actual interests (Dörnyei and Csizér, 1998) but their future needs as well (Bruner, 1960; McCombs and Whisler, 1997). This would effectively provide English majors with a platform that not only enhances their linguistic capabilities but allows them to guide the manner in which this is done. It might result in more work for the practitioner in the short term, but would provide learners with invaluable practice in using their language skills in a more meaningful capacity. It is also probable that the practitioner would benefit more from the experience as well, promoting their associated pedagogic motivation in the process (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). This is a proposal which is also likely to have the added advantage of offsetting the

pitfalls which tend to arise if one's practice becomes merely routine (Pennington, 1995).

6.3.2 Recommendations for Students

With the employment market having taken a turn for the worse, and students tending to be driven by their employment ambitions, it is apparent that the next step which requires addressing is how to channel these academic motives to the best effect. The reason for this recommendation is that, although being motivated by future employment considerations is a sound justifying reason for course enrolment and sustained effort, such action in itself is unlikely to result in the realisation of desired outcomes. As such, a four pronged approach is recommended. Firstly, it is important to tailor one's learning appropriately so that module selection and extra-curricular activities reflect the fact that university is a time when an employment marker of intent is laid down. Secondly, it goes without saying that it is essential that all examinations are passed, and as well as possible. Thirdly, work experience is a means by which to set one's self apart when it comes to job hunting. It is also a way to garner relevant industry experience and, through speculatively volunteering for work placements and placing the employment percentages game, it is probable that more enviable work experience may be secured. Finally, English majors motivated by *Career Goals*, should have the foresight to have a backup plan. This may mean widening one's potential employment horizons, or undertaking postgraduate studies to provide additional qualifications. Put simply, it means taking a measured approach to planning for a career, because the previous four years of university should have provided the springboard from which to launch one's self if the time has been well spent. The important overriding implication is that *Career Goal* motivation should, by design, become a systematic, calculated driving force, one which not only initiates and sustains actions, but directs and mediates them.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

With this dissertation's findings clearly illustrating that *Career Goals* are indeed a prominent language learning motive for the students in question and that the degree to which this was found to be the case is for all intents and purposes unaffected by one's year group, recommendations have been proposed for both practitioners and students. To conclude, attention now turns to the contributions that this dissertation has ultimately made for both pedagogic practice and associated research.

7.1 Knowledge Contributions

Firstly, in terms of pedagogy this dissertation should have raised awareness of the need for courses to not only prepare students for key examinations, but also for life beyond the confines of the course, as it is this consideration which is one of the key motivational forces that engage students in their academic endeavours. A time of change has arrived and, for advanced undergraduate linguists; this means that the material which they are taught must not only ensure coverage of the micro linguistic base necessities, but also the topical overtones for which these skills are ultimately being acquired. The implication has therefore been that more should be done to help students channel their effort to the best effect for maximum results. Secondly, the findings from this dissertation suggest that a second round of inductive L2 motivational research should be conducted by those seeking to evaluate college students L2 motivational drives. In a time of uncertainty the motives which drive learners have been proven to be as liable to change as socio cultural conditions are. This has led to a move away from students being predominantly motivated by an inherent *Intrinsic Interest* in the English language towards more instrumental concerns. Not only has this dissertation discovered this, but so too has the research of Gao and Xu (2011) in Beijing. Although their research was devoid of a *Career Goals* focus, the findings have nonetheless been telling; the reason being that the apparent rank order which was derived is similar to that which was uncovered in this dissertation. With the near similar demographic profiles of the learners considered, the implication therefore is that the motivational drives of college English majors may be fairly standardised across large parts of the country, with exact differences in the prominence of motives attributable to unique situational considerations. If this were proved to be the case then it would be clear that the motivational construct of Gao et al. (2004) requires a re-evaluation, with, at the very least, a

Career Goals feature deserving of inclusive consideration. This is because the employment pressures which affect all English majors are the result of national rather than regional concerns.

7.2 Future Research Areas

Because of time and word constraints, this dissertation deliberately set out to narrow its design so that due justice could be afforded to the research approach which was utilised. For this reason, enlightening qualitative research was not utilised and, although this has allowed for more focused research depth to result, it is clearly at the expense of finding enlightening scope. It is therefore clear that, for the discussion to move beyond speculation; additional qualitative research should be initiated. It is also clear that the participants involved represent but a very small percentage of the target population. Therefore for this research's findings to garner greater weight, ideally replication is required with a larger number of students being involved. Alternatively, it might be of interest to investigate how the motives college English majors display within China actually compare with those of students of the same major in different countries. To this end, the author hopes that future researchers will take up the challenge in the years ahead.

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