

**TBL IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN MACAU: EFFECTS ON
CHINESE TERTIARY LEARNERS' BELIEFS AND MOTIVATIONS**

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Dedicated to

God,

my parents in heaven,

and my beloved husband Jerry

Abstract

Developing effectiveness in learning is the goal of teaching. In order to achieve this goal and to bridge the gap between teaching and learning in the EFL classroom, SLA researchers in the past decades have become increasingly interested in pedagogical conceptions, such as Learner-centredness, Communicative Language Teaching, and Task-Based Language Learning (TBL). In particular, research into TBL pedagogy has had an important influence on the field of English language teaching in recent years in the West. However, there have been few studies into TBL in the EFL classroom in Macau. Thus, this study explores whether or not task-based learning pedagogy could be beneficial to Chinese tertiary learners of English. Based on the philosophy of constructivism, the study aimed to investigate Chinese tertiary learners' beliefs about and motivations for English learning through research carried out before, during and after the implementation of a specially designed programme of task-based English teaching. Twenty-four undergraduate learners from different regions of China were investigated by quantitative instruments (i.e., BALLI, and Motivation Questionnaire) and qualitative instruments (i.e., field-notes, 'motivation' graphs and notes, learner diaries, and follow-up interviews) before, during and after the 15-week task-based EFL programme. Both quantitative and qualitative findings reflected that the learners' self-concept beliefs and intrinsic motivation for English learning were increasingly enhanced by the task-based EFL programme, thus convincingly demonstrating that task-based learning pedagogy was beneficial to Chinese tertiary learners of English. The thesis concludes with a consideration of the implications of such task-based learning pedagogy for further research.

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Abbreviations

BALLI	Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CET	College English Testing
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
L2/SL	Second Language
MQ	Motivation Questionnaire
SAR	Special Administrative Region
SEDC	The State Education Development Commission
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
T	Teacher
TBL	Task-based Learning
TBLT	Task-based Language Teaching
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Prologue

This thesis uses the unique setting of Macau as its context, specifically Macau University of Science and Technology – a tertiary institution with local students and students from different parts of China, all of whom have different prior learning experiences in English. A big gap between teaching and learning always exists in the EFL classroom. Teachers often comment on students' low motivation levels for learning English. The students, no matter whether they are local or non-local, often remain silent in class and seem very passive and sluggish while learning English. Even though I have been an English teacher for over ten years, I still feel disappointed when hearing that students have given up on learning English.

Traditionally, from a teacher's perspective, students' passive learning could be diagnosed as a symptom of low achievement, low competence and low confidence in English learning. However, rather than complaining, 'Why don't learners learn what teachers teach?' and subjectively assuming that students have poor motivation and low competence, I wonder if there are better ways for improving English teaching and learning. I believe that developing effectiveness in learning is the goal of teaching, so I wonder what a teacher can do to help students to learn English. Given that we already have evidence of ineffectiveness in traditional English teaching approaches in this context, then why don't English teachers adopt a different teaching method to motivate

students to learn English?

1.2 The objectives of the study

With respect to my experience as a teacher and student of the ineffectiveness of traditional English teaching methods, I intend to determine what teachers can do to help students increase their motivation for English learning. For this reason, I am particularly interested in research findings on learner-centeredness, communicative language teaching (CLT), task-based learning (TBL) pedagogy, learners' motivation and beliefs about language learning. I intend to combine theory with practice in an action research study investigating how a task-based learning approach enhances students' beliefs about and motivation for English learning. The objectives of the study are:

- to identify students' beliefs about English language learning;
- to identify students' motivation in English language learning;
- to identify *whether* students' beliefs about and motivation in English language learning can be affected by a task-based learning approach; and
- to identify *how* a task-based learning approach can enhance students' beliefs about and motivation in English language learning.

1.3 The significance of the study

With regard to English language teaching in Macau, the significance of the study can be generally outlined as follows:

1. This is the first study of Chinese learners' beliefs about and motivation for learning English through a task-based learning approach in Macau. Since TBL (or CLT) is a new concept in English language teaching in Macau, this study is significant for the development of English language teaching.
2. It provides evidence to teachers of English in Macau that TBL is a viable alternative to current practices for teaching English.
3. It provides evidence to English teachers in Macau that students' beliefs about and motivation for English learning can be affected by TBL.
4. As the Macau SAR government encourages the importance of learning English, this study contributes to the government's intention to consider curriculum reform and a long-term educational policy for English language teaching and learning in Macau.

1.4 The scope of the study

As mentioned previously, this study uses as its context, a tertiary institution in Macau where students are from different parts of China. The advantage of this study of Chinese tertiary learners' beliefs about and motivation for learning English through a task-based learning approach is that it involves students with different English learning backgrounds. However, it should be kept in mind that this study intends to identify the range of Chinese learners' beliefs about and motivation for English learning, and to discuss the factors leading to success in English learning, rather than to make sweeping or stereotypical conclusions about Chinese learners' beliefs and motivations. Although only 24 subjects participated in this small-scale study, both quantitative and qualitative research

provided rich and insightful data to illuminate their changes in beliefs and motivation for English learning through the programme.

In addition, due to time limitation (i.e., the duration of the research based on the teaching schedule within a semester of 15 weeks), this action research followed Kemmis and McTaggart's (1992) cyclical process (i.e., plan → act → observe → reflect) to explore students' beliefs about and motivation in English learning through the task-based EFL programme. However, further research cycles were not covered in the study.

1.5 The structure of the thesis

There are eight chapters in the thesis. Chapter 1 gives a general introduction to the study. A brief overview of the aims, the significance, and the scope of the study are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 2 presents the context of the study, providing an overview of the background of Macau, including the general educational system in Macau. Furthermore, with a focus on English learning contexts in non-tertiary and tertiary institutions in Macau, it explores the problems of English learning, the challenges that the students come across, and students' beliefs about English learning. Moreover, it explores the factors which affect success in English learning, suggesting a pedagogy which may produce more positive outcomes and changes in learners of English in Macau than the more traditional methods commonly in use.

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 are both literature review chapters in the thesis. Chapter 3 reviews the literature related to the personal constructs that affect English learning. Thus, this literature review chapter is presented in two distinct sections. Section 1 discusses the broad issue of learners' beliefs about themselves and about language learning. Section 2 focuses on relevant theories of motivation in language learning. A second literature review, Chapter 4, goes on to present and discuss a specific language teaching approach, namely, 'Task-based Learning', which is posited to enhance the effectiveness of English learning.

Chapter 5 presents the methodological considerations of the study. To investigate the research questions, the nature of the study and the philosophical background of the research must be examined. Hence, it discusses the characteristics of the quantitative and qualitative research paradigms used and justifies the use of the mixed research methods in the study. Moreover, it discusses in detail the research instruments for data collection and the use of the task-based learning programme as its context. Also, the pilot study, the research procedure, and a detailed description of the TBL programme are presented. In addition, this chapter reflects the limitations of the study, stating some issues that are of concern.

Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 are both data analysis chapters. Chapter 6 focuses on findings, results and discussions of the quantitative data on learners' beliefs and motivation in English language learning pre- and post- the task-based EFL

programme. It provides base-line data and a general understanding of the changes in the students' beliefs about and motivation for English learning before and after the TBL programme. Afterwards, the findings, results and discussions of the qualitative data about the learners' beliefs about and motivation in English language learning during and post- task-based learning programme are presented and discussed in Chapter 7. The chapter provides greater insights into the nature of the changes in the students' beliefs about and motivation for English learning. In addition, it explores the data from a different perspective in order to track when and how these changes occurred throughout the programme, and the extent to which positive changes may be attributed to the implementation of the TBL programme.

Chapter 8 presents a conclusion to the study. It discusses the summary of research and its contributions to the field of education. Also, it provides some recommendations for implications and further research. Limitations in this study and final thoughts are also reflected on at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 2 The context of the study

2.1 Macau SAR

Macau (spelling in Portuguese), Macao (spelling in English), or the Chinese name 澳門 (pronounced as 'Ou Mun' in Cantonese or 'Ao Men' in Mandarin) means 'the Gate of the Bay' (Cheng, 1999). According to historical records, the name 'Macau' first appeared in Portuguese in the year 1557, when the Portuguese settled in the area (Pires, 1991; Lao, 1999; Cheng, 1999). Thus, in this thesis, instead of using the word 'Macao' in English, I prefer the word 'Macau' in Portuguese because it carries its own social, cultural, and historical background.

In the 16th century, Macau was an important gateway through which western civilisation entered China while Chinese culture was exported to the western world. Missionaries from various religious orders such as the Jesuits, the Franciscans, the Augustinians and the Dominicans entered China through Macau (Lamas, 1998; Cheng, 1999; Sheng, 2004). Macau was the first diocese of the Roman Catholic Church in the Far East, given an official name by Pope Gregory XIII as '*Cidade do Nome de Deos de Macau na China*' (City of the Name of God of Macau in China) (Cheng, 1999). Macau was colonised by Portugal from the 16th century until the 20th century. However, unlike the decolonisation policy of other Portuguese colonies, in which the people were allowed independence and self-determination for their own future (Vong, 2002), Macau was given an innovative political principle of 'one country, two systems',

declared by both Chinese and Portuguese governments in the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration in 1987. On 20th December 1999, Mainland China resumed its sovereignty over Macau. Since then, Macau began to take on a new role as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China.

Geographically, Macau is barely even a dot on the world map, as shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: A map of China and South-east Asia



Figure 2.2: A map of Macau, Hong Kong and other cities in the Pearl River Delta



Figure 2.3: A map of Macau's territory



As seen in Figures 2.1 and 2.2, Macau is located on the Southeast coast of China, the western bank of the Pearl River Delta, 60km from Hong Kong and 145km from the city of Guangzhou, bordering Zhuhai Special Economic Zone of Guangdong Province. The territory, which is 29.2 km² in area, consists of the Macau Peninsula, Taipa Island and Coloane Island, as shown in Figure 2.3 (Macao SAR Government Portal, 2009).

With respect to the population, Macau is a typical immigrant society (Chan, 1992). The population is mainly comprised of native Macanese and immigrants from Mainland China, Europe, Portugal, the Philippines, and other countries. According to the results of a recent census conducted by The Statistics and Census Service in the 3rd quarter of 2008, the population of Macau is approximately 557,400. Of these, over 95% are ethnic Chinese from different provinces, 2% are Portuguese, and the rest of the population include Europeans, Filipino, and people of other regions. In addition, according to the recent results of a by-census conducted in 2006, more than 78% of the

population has lived in the territory for over 10 years. Of these, 42.5% of them were born in Macau; 47.1% were born in Mainland China, and less than 10.4% are from other regions. In other words, the mobile population who has lived in Macau for less than 10 years is approximately 22% of the total (ibid; The Statistics and Census Service¹, 2007).

With respect to the languages used in Macau, the official languages are Chinese and Portuguese. Nevertheless, due to its variety of populations, there are three written languages and four principal spoken languages (including Chinese dialects) used in Macau (Young, 2006). The three written languages are Modern Standard Chinese, Portuguese and English. With regards to spoken languages, about 97% the population speak Chinese in daily life. Of them, approximately 86.3% use Cantonese (i.e., a Chinese dialect mainly used in Guangdong Province); 1.2% use Mandarin; and 9.2% use other dialects. Even though Portuguese is one of the official languages in Macau, it is used by only about 1.8% of the residents. English is generally used in trade, tourism and commerce as an inter-ethnic lingua franca by around 0.05% of the population. Other languages are used by about 1.1% (Mann and Wong, 1999; Sheng, 2004).

2.2 Education in Macau: a brief overview

Due to its social and cultural diversity, the education system in Macau is complex. The educational institutions (including pre-primary, primary,

¹ The Statistics and Census Service – A government administrative institution responsible for guiding, coordinating, integrating, executing and supervising all local statistical activities.

secondary, vocational-technical and tertiary) are categorised into two groups: public and private (Education and Youth Affairs Bureau², 2008; Tertiary Education Services Office³, 2009).

No matter whether in the colonial period before 1999 or under the new Macau SAR government after 1999, private educational institutions, which are primarily organised by Catholic, Protestant or Communist organisations, are the mainstream education in Macau. According to a recent education survey conducted by the Statistics and Census Service in the academic year 2006-2007, a total of 87,115 students are studying in 122 non-tertiary educational institutions, including pre-primary, primary, secondary, and vocational-technical secondary education. Of these 122 non-tertiary educational institutions, 102 are private institutions and only 20 are public institutions. In general, over 95% of the population complete their education in private institutions; on the other hand, less than 5% of the population study in public educational institutions (The Statistics and Census Service, 2008).

2.2.1 Non-tertiary education in Macau

With regard to non-tertiary education, both private and public institutions are under the supervision of Education and Youth Affairs Bureau. The academic structure of the education system regulated by the Bureau includes four main stages: (1) pre-primary; (2) primary; (3) junior secondary; and (4) senior

² Education and Youth Affairs Bureau – A governmental department in charge of non-tertiary education affairs in Macau.

³ Tertiary Education Services Office – A government department in charge of higher education affairs in Macau.

secondary (Tertiary Education Services Office, 2006). Since 2008, the Macau SAR government has implemented an innovative educational policy of a 15-year compulsory education from pre-primary to secondary school education. The first stage is a 3-year pre-primary education. Children at the age of 3 are required to begin their initial study in pre-primary educational institutions. The second stage is a 6-year primary education, with students aged between 6 - 12. Students who successfully complete primary education will be awarded a primary certificate. After that, the third stage is a 3-year junior secondary education, with students aged between 12 - 15. Students with a primary certificate can apply for any secondary schools. After passing the entrance examinations individually held by the secondary schools, they can undertake their secondary education. Additionally, they will be awarded a junior certificate if they successfully complete their junior education. The last stage of non-tertiary education is a 3-year senior secondary education with students aged between 15 - 18. In general, students who succeed in junior education will continue their senior secondary education at the same secondary school; while those who do not succeed may apply to other secondary schools in order to continue their senior secondary education. After completing their secondary education, students will be awarded a senior secondary certificate (ibid).

However, the academic structures adopted by both groups of institutions may vary slightly from 'the model structure' regulated by the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau. In fact, according to the medium of instruction, institutions are divided into four schooling types: Portuguese (Public), Luso-Cantonese (Public), Cantonese (Private), and English (Private). Their academic structures can be

categorised as follows (Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, 2007):

Figure 2.4: Academic structures of different types of medium of instruction adopted in public and private educational institutions in Macau

	Medium of Instruction	Academic Structure
Public	Portuguese	3+4+2+3+3
	Luso-Cantonese	3+6+3+3
Private	Cantonese	3+6+3+3
	English	3+6+5+1

Portuguese institutions adopt an imported structure from Portugal, comprising the '3+4+2+3+3 structure', respectively a 3-year pre-primary course, 4-year primary course, 2-year pre-secondary, 3-year junior and 3-year senior secondary course. In contrast to the Portuguese academic structure, Luso-Cantonese and Cantonese institutions follow the model structure which is regulated by the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (i.e., the '3+6+3+3 structure'). They adopt a schooling structure consisting of a 3-year pre-primary course, 6-year primary course, 3-year junior and 3-year senior secondary course. On the other hand, English institutions have adopted another academic structure, which is different from the both above, comprised of a 3-year pre-primary course, 6-year primary course, 5-year secondary course and 1-year pre-university course (i.e., the '3+6+5+1 structure').

2.2.2 Tertiary education in Macau

Higher education in Macau can be dated back to 1594 when the Jesuits established the College of St. Paul as the first Western university in Far East (Lao, 1994; Lamas, 1998; Cheng, 1999; Lao, 1999; Hui and Poon, 1999). The college was a bilingual centre for missionaries and a cradle of cultural exchange

(Lao, 1994; 1999), as Hui and Poon (1999) state, 'Chinese culture was spread to the Europeans, while Western knowledge was spread to the Chinese' (Hui and Poon, 1999: 114). During the 16th and 17th century, as the College of St. Paul was at the height of its splendour, it was known as the 'Golden Age' of Macau. However, the college was soon closed after the Jesuits were expelled from Macau in 1762 and later it was destroyed by a fire in 1835 (Hui and Poon, 1999). Afterwards, tertiary education in Macau ceased for nearly two centuries until 1981 when the University of East Asia (the former name of University of Macau) was established.

Nowadays, there are 10 institutions of higher education in Macau, of which 4 are public and 6 are private. Some offer a wide variety of degree and non-degree programmes; while others specialise in specific areas. All of them are under the supervision of the Tertiary Education Services Office. According to a recent education survey, in the academic year 2007/2008, a total of 27,374 students were studying in these 10 institutions of higher education (Tertiary Education Services Office, 2009).

Based on the regulations of the Higher Education System of the Decree Law No.11/91/M in Macau, both degree programmes and non-degree programmes are offered by these institutions of higher education. Degree programmes include three main stages: (1) Bacharelato (3-year Bachelor) or Licenciatura (4-year Bachelor); (2) Mestrado (Master); and (3) Doutoramento (Doctorate). At the first stage of tertiary study, the minimum length of bacharelato study is three years; while the minimum length of licenciatura study is four years. In

general, after passing the entrance examinations held by the individual institutions, students with Form 5 or equivalent qualifications are able to take bacharelato (3-year bachelor) degree study; while students with Form 6, Senior 3 or equivalent qualifications, are able to take licenciatura (4-year bachelor) degree study. At the second stage, students with a licenciatura (4-year bachelor) are generally qualified to apply for a mestrado (master) study, which involves both course work and the writing (and defence) of a dissertation/thesis. The duration of mestrado (master) study is between one and two years. The third stage is doutoramento (doctorate) study, of which the minimum length of study is not regulated by the Decree Law. Generally, students with a mestrado (master) or equivalent qualification can apply for this doctorate (Tertiary Education Services Office, 2006). On the other hand, non-degree programmes include Diploma/Certificate; Associate Degree; and Post-graduate diploma/Certificate. They are offered individually by some of the institutions of higher education. The length of non-degree programmes is regulated not to be shorter than one year (ibid; Governo de Macau, 1991).

According to the recent data from the Tertiary Education Services Office (2008), the degree and non-degree programmes offered by the tertiary educational institutions are categorised into seven broad groups (i.e., Education; Humanities and Arts; Social Science, Business and Law; Science; Architecture and Engineering; Health and Social Welfare; and Tourism and Entertainment Services) in three modes of study (i.e., day programme, evening programme, and part-time programme) (Tertiary Education Services Office, 2008). Again, based on the Decree Law No.11/91/M, the media of instruction are not

restricted. Different institutions of higher education have the freedom to adopt different media of instruction for different courses for their students, but mainly, the media of instruction are English, Chinese (Cantonese and/or Mandarin), and Portuguese (ibid).

In conclusion, although all the non-tertiary and tertiary educational institutions have been overseen by the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau and the Tertiary Education Services Office, the support and guidance from the government, in my opinion, is insufficient. In the colonial period, based on the *laissez-faire* policy, the Macau-Portuguese government did not want to intervene in the running of private educational institutions. Consequently, without a centralised curriculum, public examinations or clear guidelines from the government, every school had its own objectives, missions and concerns relating to the values of education (Yee, 1990; Bray and Hui, 1991; Koo and Ma, 1994; Choi and Koo, 2001). Such non-unified educational systems caused many problems and they were not solved by the Macau SAR government after 1999 when the political status changed (Lao, 1999; Choi and Koo, 2001). As a result, students who graduate from different types of primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions greatly vary in their competence and knowledge. Their qualifications have always been questioned and criticised.

In the colonial period, the Macau-Portuguese government did not *want* to take control over these problems. In the present, it seems to me that the Macau SAR government does not know *how* to take control over them.

2.3 Learning English in Macau

Considering the history of the territory, Macau has been a place where East meets West (Sheng, 2004). According to historical records, the first contact with English speakers dates back to 1637 (Temple, 1919: 301, cited in Bolton, 2002: 183). The first English-medium schools in China were founded in Macau in the early 19th century (Bolton, 2002; Sheng, 2004). However, as mentioned previously, since English was never an official language in Macau, the Macau-Portuguese government in the colonial period did not emphasise English learning.

Since its political status changed in 1999, Macau no longer regards Portugal as the only window to the western world. Macau has begun to open itself to the wider western world and is likely to become more internationalised. At present, besides trading with more than 120 countries, Macau is also a member of several international economic organisations, including the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and Asian Pacific Economic Zone. Furthermore, in 2005, Macau was inscribed on the World Heritage List as 'The Historic Centre of Macau', making it the 31st designated World Heritage site in China (Macau Government Tourist Office, 2007). Trade, tourism and gambling are the primary economic industries, which have produced massive economic growth for Macau and tremendous working opportunities for its citizens. All these make the citizens and the Macau SAR government aware of the importance of English language, as it is an international language to communicate with the world. As Leong (2000) claims in her report prepared by Macau Development

Strategy Research Centre and Macau Association of Economic Sciences,

During the ruling of Portugal, Macau has failed to establish an English environment. However, ignoring English language today means losing tremendous business opportunities. Also, without an English environment, Macau is unlikely to become internationalised. Hence, we should put forward this issue for public discussion and encourage every household to place emphasis on learning English (leong, 2000: 97-8).

Yet, despite the fact that English is a required subject at almost all levels of educational establishment (Mann and Wong, 1999), it has never been the lingua franca in Macau (Young, 2006). In general, English is taught as a compulsory subject starting from pre-primary to secondary education. It is also the medium of instruction in several tertiary institutions. Students generally learn English for about 1.5 hours per day, 6 days a week, during three terms of each academic year in schools. However, as mentioned in section 2.2.2, without a centralised curriculum, public examinations or a clear guideline from the government, different institutions have established their own school curricula, materials and approaches for English language learning based on their various backgrounds. As a result, secondary students who have graduated from different schools acquire different levels of English competence. Even after up to fifteen years of learning English from kindergarten to secondary education in Macau schools, 'many students are unable to speak in sentences and are afraid to try' (Tang 2003: 209).

This problem remains when the students come to tertiary education. In a survey of English teaching and learning in Macau (N=130), Tang identified several primary problems. Some of them are highlighted as follows (Tang,

2003: 210):

- Students were not motivated to learn, indeed were demotivated to learn English;
- Students' experienced failure due to poor results in examinations;
- Teaching and learning styles were didactic, traditional and outdated, and emphasised memorisation of facts to the neglect of understanding;
- Over-emphasis on the grammar-translation method to the neglect of communicative competence;
- An emphasis on passive recitation rather than active learning and application;
- The overuse of testing;
- Large class sizes, inhibiting certain teaching styles and placing heavy demands on marking;
- The lack of an English-speaking environment outside classrooms in Macau;
- The limited number of native speakers of English;
- The medium of instruction in English lessons is usually in Chinese.

To sum up, the system of education described above provides for a uniquely challenging context for my own teaching and research. Having already been aware of the existing problems in English learning in Macau, it is important for teachers to consider an innovation in English teaching pedagogy.

2.4 The university

The university where this study was conducted was established in March 2000,

shortly after Macau returned to the sovereignty of Mainland China. It is one of the six private institutions of higher education in Macau. Initially, only four faculties (i.e., Information Technology, Management and Administration, Law, and Chinese Medicine) were set up in the university. Later, a School of Graduate Studies, School of Continuing Studies, programmes of Pre-university Studies and of General Studies were also added. Then, in the academic year of 2007-2008, three more faculties (i.e., International Tourism, Health Sciences, and Humanities and Arts) were established in the university. At present, a range of degree programmes of four-year bachelor, master and doctorate studies are offered by various schools and faculties.

2.5 The students

With respect to the entrance requirements, students who have successfully completed 3 years of senior secondary education are able to apply to the university. After passing the entrance examination, they are given an offer of undergraduate studies. Those who do not pass the entrance examination or without Senior 3 qualification are required to take a one-semester or two-semester pre-undergraduate study before receiving an offer of undergraduate studies.

With regard to the ethnic group, the students who are studying in the university are ethnic Chinese, mainly divided into two groups: local and non-local.

Figure 2.5: A comparison between the numbers of the local and non-local groups of registered students from the academic year 2000/2001 to 2007/2008

Academic Year	Local			Non-local			Total
	Male	Female	Subtotal	Male	Female	Subtotal	
2000/2001	303	221	524	435	186	621	1145
2001/2002	493	342	835	5933	1807	7740	8575
2002/2003	728	552	1280	9049	2838	11887	13167
2003/2004	1451	2462	3913	5644	1906	7550	11463
2004/2005	1002	975	1977	3902	1431	5333	7310
2005/2006	1161	1213	2374	4376	1890	6266	8640
2006/2007	1296	1492	2788	3411	2135	5546	8334
2007/2008	1454	1716	3170	2744	2120	4864	8034

(Tertiary Education Services Office, 2009)

According to the definition given by the Tertiary Education Services Office, ‘local students’ refer to those who are the holders of Macau resident identity cards; while ‘non-local students’ refer to those who are not. As shown in Figure 2.5, since the university’s establishment in the academic year 2000/2001, the numbers of non-local students have been higher than those of local students.

Non-local students are from different regions of mainland China. For them, it is the first time in their lives to leave their family and home town for study. With respect to learning, in my experience as an English teacher at this university, non-local students are likely to share similar learning experiences in traditional classrooms under the same cultural context. In general, they strongly rely on the teachers. They are highly examination-oriented. They believe that success in learning (or specifically in examinations) is largely synonymous with success in life. Also, they believe that ‘hard work brings success’. Hence, they think that rote-learning is the best way to learn because, from their learning

experience, the more they can memorise from books, the higher the grades they can achieve in the examinations. However, due to culture shock and possible challenges they come across in their daily lives, they encounter some difficulties in English learning. For example, when they have found that their English language knowledge from books cannot be used in practice or that they are unable to communicate with other people in English in real life, they easily get confused, discouraged and frustrated. As a result, their self-confidence and self-efficacy are gradually decreased. I have noticed that some of them adopt positive strategies and work harder than before in order to overcome their difficulties. However, others adopt negative strategies. Instead of working harder, they tend to give up on English learning.

Local students in the university, on the other hand, face different challenges. Due to the fact that there are more non-local students than local students in the university, Mandarin is the primary medium of instruction, even in most English classes. In general, local students cannot get used to this learning environment and regard themselves as the minority. Accordingly, local students who cannot communicate with the teacher or non-local students in either Mandarin or English always keep silent in the class. With respect to English learning, as mentioned in 2.3, local students that graduated from different secondary schools have had different English learning experiences and have acquired different levels of English competence. Therefore, for them, traditional teaching methods with the emphasis on grammar-translation and rote-learning skills, which have been mainly adopted by the teachers from mainland China, are not motivating. When examinations are set up mainly based on rote-learning from

books, their grades are generally lower than those of non-local students. Unfortunately, as a result, I have seen local students generally labelled as 'lazy' and 'poorly motivated' in the university since most teachers with a traditional perspective highly regard grades in examinations and see them as synonymous with success. Consequently, local students' self-esteem is generally damaged. They gradually lose their confidence in themselves and in English learning.

2.6 The English curriculum in the university

According to the English curriculum in the academic year 2006/2007 where the study was conducted, all the English programmes were divided into four main levels: Basic, Level One, Level Two and Level Three. The Basic Level English programmes were designed for the pre-undergraduate students; while the Level One, Level Two, and Level Three English programmes were designed for undergraduate students. All of the English learning programmes on different levels were designed to be completed within 15 weeks in a semester.

The students who did not pass the entrance examination with Senior 3 or equivalent qualifications were given an offer to take a two-semester pre-undergraduate study. In order to enter into undergraduate study, they needed to successfully complete a total of 20 credits in the programmes of grammar (4 credits), reading (8 credits), and speaking and listening (8 credits). All the 20 credits became invalid after they started their undergraduate studies. For Basic Level English, the grammar programme was taught for 100 minutes per week; while the reading and the speaking and listening programmes were

taught for 200 minutes per week. Students who succeeded in all the programmes of pre-undergraduate studies were qualified to take undergraduate studies in the university. However, those who did not, were required to retake the failed programme again.

On the other hand, the students who successfully passed the pre-undergraduate study programmes, or those who successfully passed the entrance examination with Senior 3 or equivalent qualifications, were given an offer to take undergraduate studies. They were required to successfully complete at least 20 credits within four years in various programmes:

Level One: Reading (4 credits); Speaking (2 credits); Listening (2 credits)

Level Two: Reading (4 credits); Speaking (2 credits); Listening (2 credits)

Level Three: Reading (2 credits); Speaking (2 credits)

In the Level-One English programmes, they were required to take 8 credits, in reading (4 credits), speaking (2 credits), and listening (2 credits). In the Level-Two English programmes, they were required to take another 8 credits, in reading (4 credits), speaking (4 credits), and listening (2 credits). In Level-Three English programmes, they were required to take 4 credits, in reading (2 credits) and speaking (2 credits). For Level One and Level Two, the reading programme was taught for 200 minutes per week; while the speaking and the listening programmes were respectively taught for only 100 minutes per week. For Level Three, the reading programme and the speaking programme were respectively taught for 100 minutes per week. In general, students initially started from Level-One English programmes before upgrading to Level-Two

English programmes. Students who succeeded in the Level-Two English programmes were qualified to take the Level-Three English programmes. However, those who did not pass any of the English programmes need to retake the same programme again within four years.

In addition, various elective English programmes (2 credits) designed by different teachers were provided. Each of the programmes was taught weekly for 100 minutes in relation to different fields of English learning, such as speech, translation, English literature, academic writing...etc. Students who wanted to continue learning English could take elective English programmes after they had completed the Level-Two English programmes.

In conclusion, all the English programmes in the English curriculum are intentionally set up for developing the students' English competence. However, in my view, the English curriculum is deficient in many areas in practice. First, no regular writing programme is provided in the curriculum. Writing competence, in this sense, does not seem to be a priority. Hence, the students are not given enough opportunity to improve their English writing skills in their undergraduate studies. Second, the reading programmes in Level One and Level Two are taught for more hours than other programmes, hence more emphasis is put on improving reading skills. Third, as the three skills of English (i.e., reading, speaking and listening) are divided into three programmes, students are rarely encouraged to integrate all the skills and put them into practice in real-life contexts. Last but not least, as mentioned previously, the length of each programme in the English curriculum only lasts one semester of

15 weeks. In other words, Level-One, Level-Two, and Level-Three English programmes can be completed in one and a half years. Unless the students continue their English learning by actively taking more credits on elective programmes; they are not given an opportunity to develop their English during the rest of their undergraduate studies. As a result, when their majors are taught in English, many problems come up due to the lack of English competence.

2.7 The programme under study

The programme under study was conducted in the 2nd semester of 2006/2007. It was set up as an elective programme, entitled Interactive English. It was a programme of 2 credits which was taught weekly for 100 minutes during a semester of 15 weeks. According to the English curriculum, any students who had completed the Level-Two English programmes could take this programme. It was a general English programme with a topic-based syllabus, which integrated reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. It departed from the usual English courses in that it was based on Willis's (1996) framework of task-based learning, the programme was designed with various tasks and authentic materials which related to the weekly topics – an innovative approach to language learning for this university. More details about the outline, the lesson plans, and the rationale of the programme will be discussed in the sections 5.7.4 to 5.7.6.

2.8 Factors affecting success in English learning

Having experienced the disadvantages of English learning in Macau, both as a learner and a teacher, I feel it is necessary for teachers of English to take action to change the situation. However, in order to help learners to improve their English learning, certain factors which affect their success in English learning need to be considered.

One of the factors that affects success in English learning is motivation. Learners with high motivation for English learning are more likely to succeed than those with low motivation. In addition, learners' motivations are dynamic and are affected by many motivational factors. For example, learners' beliefs can influence their motivations to learn. If they believe that they can succeed in learning or that the learning activity leads to valued outcomes, they are likely to carry out the activity with effort (Dörnyei, 2001a). In addition, learners with positive self-concept beliefs such as self-efficacy, self-confidence, and self-esteem seem to engage in a learning activity more effectively and therefore enjoy a better performance; while learners with negative self-concepts do not. Also, learners' motivation can be affected by the quality of the learning experience. If the process of English learning is fruitful and enjoyable, learners are more likely to actively participate in learning for its own sake so as to experience pleasure and to satisfy their curiosity. In other words, their motivation for English learning is intrinsic rather than extrinsic. With respect to success in English learning, Brown (1994, 2002) emphasises the importance of intrinsic motivation, arguing that learners with intrinsic motivation are more

successful in learning than those with extrinsic motivation. Motivation will be discussed in more detail in the section 3.2.

Another factor that affects success in English learning is pedagogy. At present, the English teaching pedagogy adopted in Macau is rather examination-oriented with an emphasis on the use of grammar-translation approach. As mentioned in the section 2.3, such a traditional method has caused many problems. One of the major problems is that learners are not motivated and are even demotivated to learn English in the traditional EFL classroom. Accordingly, an innovation in English teaching pedagogy is necessary. As Tang (2003) states, 'pedagogy is a major issue in improving quality, as it is the direct means by which students learn English' (Tang, 2003: 211). Hence, in order to help learners to succeed in English learning, a different approach which is learner-centred with an emphasis on developing communicative competence rather than rote-learning skills is needed. In this respect, Tang (2003) suggested that a task-based learning approach should be incorporated into the English teaching in Macau, as she believed that it could 'enhance the effectiveness of learning, students' learning motivation and attitudes' (Tang, 2003: 213).

There is no question that the learning context I have described leaves the university's English teachers with a number of challenges to face in terms of motivating and encouraging learning, and overcoming students' low self-esteem as language learners. Is Task Based Learning (TBL) an approach which can enhance students' English learning experience and motivations for English

learning? How does TBL affect their motivations for English learning? These questions are my major concerns in this study. Task-based language learning will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 Literature review

This thesis describes a research study to uncover the affective effects of using a Task Based Learning approach on learners of English in Macau. More specifically, it aims to investigate the extent to which TBL can change learners' beliefs about themselves and about language learning, and their motivation towards learning English. For this reason, the literature review chapter is presented in two main sections. Section 1 discusses the broad issue of learners' beliefs about themselves and about language learning. Section 2 focuses on relevant theories of motivation in language learning. A second literature review, Chapter 4, goes on to present and discuss a specific language teaching approach, namely, 'Task Based Learning' (TBL), which, it is posited, may produce more positive affective effects in learners of English in Macau than the more traditional methods commonly in use.

3.1 Beliefs about English language learning

Teaching and learning are complex processes which involve cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions. Our behaviour is strongly influenced by our own beliefs, which are our guiding principles and the inner maps we use to make sense of the world (O'Connor and Seymour, 1990). In the cognitive view of motivation, whether people decide to do something is determined first by their personal constructs, such as beliefs about the values of the action. As Dörnyei (2001a) indicates:

...whether people decide to do something is determined first by their

beliefs about the values of the action, and then about their evaluation of whether they are up to the challenge and whether the support they are likely to get from the people and institutes around them is sufficient...(Dörnyei, 2001a: 8).

Similarly, learners view information through their own interpretations and construct new information with various perspectives which derive from their personal constructs. They may have many preconceived ideas about English learning when they come to an EFL class. Some beliefs are probably shaped by their cultural background. Other beliefs are likely influenced by their previous learning experience.

In a cognitive dimension, many researchers (Abraham and Vann, 1987; Horwitz, 1985, 1987, 1988; Wenden, 1986a, 1987) argue that learners' beliefs can influence their motivation to learn, their expectations about language learning, their perceptions about what is easy or difficult about a language, and their selection of using learning strategies, which relate to their performance in tasks. As Riley (1996) claims,

Beliefs about language learning may directly influence on or even determine...(a learner's) attitude or motivation or behaviour when learning the language in question (Riley, 1996: 155).

In other words, learners' beliefs, covering a wide range of issues, are crucial factors in determining learning success or failure. Accordingly, it may be argued that it is necessary for teachers (and students) to be aware of students' beliefs about English language learning. The causes and effects of such beliefs are complex and interwoven, and can be difficult to pull apart. In an attempt to do this, this section is presented in three parts: self-concept beliefs in

a cognitive dimension, Confucian conceptions of learning in a cultural dimension, and research into beliefs about language learning.

3.1.1 Self-concept beliefs

Self-concept beliefs refer to the informational part of the conception of self (i.e., what we know or believe about ourselves) (McCarthy and Schmeck, 1988). Learners' self-concept beliefs are shaped by many factors, such as the people around them (e.g., parents, teachers, and peers), and their previous learning experiences. For example, an unsuccessful language learning experience can easily lead a learner to the conclusion that special abilities are required to learn a foreign language and that he or she does not possess these necessary abilities. Such a conclusion can have profound conclusions for future learning success. According to Victori and Lockhart (1995), successful learners seem to hold 'insightful beliefs'; while poorer learners, on the other hand, hold 'negative or limited beliefs'.

Overall, it would seem useful for teachers to understand students' learning conceptions in order to help them succeed in English learning. Accordingly, it is necessary for teachers to be aware of crucial factors underlying self-concept beliefs, such as self-esteem, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and attributions about success/failure because these factors influence learners' attitudes and behaviours towards their English learning. These factors are discussed in detail in the following sub-sections.

3.1.1.1 Self-esteem and self-confidence

According to McCarthy and Schmeck (1988), self-esteem is the emotional part of the conception of self (i.e., how we feel about ourselves). Some researchers consider that self-esteem is significantly related to a person's interpersonal behaviour patterns, attributions about success or failure, and academic achievement (Black, 1974; Dean, 1977; Strassberg-Rosenberg and Gaier, 1977; Winne et al., 1982). From a motivational perspective, self-confidence generally refers to the belief that a person has the ability to produce results, accomplish goals, or perform tasks competently (Dörnyei, 2005). According to Raffini (1993) and Dörnyei (2001a), self-esteem and self-confidence are social products, which mean that they are created and shaped by the people around us. As Raffini (1993) states,

Self-esteem grows from the beliefs of others. When teachers believe in students, students believe in themselves. When those you respect think you can, you think you can (Raffini, 1993: 147).

In other words, in education, when the teacher (and other significant people in a student's life) demonstrates belief in his/her students' ability to succeed and expects that they can reach high levels of achievement, there is a stronger possibility that they will believe in themselves and reach higher levels of achievement because their self-esteem and self-confidence will have grown.

3.1.1.2 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy belief refers to how people believe their capabilities contribute to

carrying out certain specific tasks. Praver (1974), and Sharp and Muller (1978) examine the correlations between efficacy as a foreign language learner and foreign language achievement. They conclude that learners with lower efficacy make more errors and have poorer achievement. In addition, many researchers (e.g., Meichenbaum, 1980; McCarthy and Schmeck, 1988; Dörnyei, 2001b) find that learners with a low sense of self-efficacy perceive difficult tasks as personal threats. They tend to be threatened and overwhelmed by the obstacles they encounter in the learning process, rather than concentrate on how to perform the task successfully. Consequently, they lose confidence in their capabilities and are likely to give up. In contrast, learners with a strong sense of self-efficacy view difficult tasks with confidence. They maintain a task- rather than self-diagnostic focus during task involvement and they are likely to persist and sustain effort in the face of failure (Dörnyei, 2001b).

According to Dörnyei (1998, 2001a, 2001b), self-efficacy beliefs are the product of a complex process of self-persuasion. They are indirectly influenced by diverse sources such as other people's opinions, feedback, evaluation, encouragement or reinforcement, past experiences and training, observing peers, information about appropriate task strategies...etc (Dörnyei, 1998, 2001a, 2001b). As is the case with self-esteem and self-confidence, learners' self-efficacy is not only affected by their own perceptions but also by teachers' expectations. In one of the most well-known experiments in educational psychology, Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) proved that teachers' positive expectations can increase learners' self-efficacy and hence they will perform better. Such expectations together with possible changes in teaching

techniques may have helped the students learn by changing their self-concept, their expectations of their own behaviour, their motivation as well as their cognitive styles (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). This type of phenomenon is called the Self-fulfilling Prophecy or Pygmalion Effect. This result provides reinforcement of the view, mentioned earlier, that if teachers believe their students can reach high levels of achievement, the students are more likely to be consciously or unconsciously motivated to fulfil their potential by achieving the levels that the teachers expect. However, if teachers have low expectations about how much their students can cope with, the students will probably 'live down' to these expectations. Clearly, this issue will need to be considered in this research study.

3.1.1.3 Attributions about success or failure

Attribution relates to how people apportion blame for success or failure in a task and how this interpretation will influence their future action. Weiner (1992) argues that the subjective reasons for the causal determinants of one's past successes and failures considerably shape one's motivation to initiate future action. It is argued that past failure that is ascribed to unstable and controllable factors such as effort increase the expectation of future achievement behaviour more than failure that is ascribed to stable and uncontrollable factors such as low ability (Weiner, 1979). For successful learning, it seems that simply blaming external factors (e.g., 'I don't have a good teacher!', 'I wasn't told that would be in the exam!', 'I couldn't revise because I had to do chores for my mom!') is not a useful strategy. Such attributions also lead to a lack of learner responsibility.

According to Victori and Lockhart (1995),

...if students develop or maintain misconceptions about their own learning, if they attribute undue importance to factors that are external to their own action... they are not likely to adopt a responsible and active attitude in their approach to learning and may never become autonomous (Victori and Lockhart, 1995: 225).

On the other hand, learners who believe they have the ability to learn successfully may have an advantage. Indeed, it seems that people do things better if they believe they have the abilities to succeed. We are unlikely to initiate a task if we expect to fail. In other words, learners learn best when they expect success. Their own expectations about themselves as learners and commitment to learning are crucial factors which influence their future performance.

Accordingly, success breeds success. If learners have been successful in the past, this will lead them to believe that future success is likely. However, if their experiences of failure are rooted in their hearts, then their negative self-efficacy and self-image are likely to cause 'learned helplessness' (Biggs and Moore, 1993). Henshaw (1978) and Meichenbaum (1980) found in their research that learners with poor performance express more detrimental ideas and negative attitudes towards the task, about their personality and abilities, and about other people around them, while learners who perform well are more likely to express facilitative ideas and positive attitudes.

3.1.1.4 Self concepts and learning achievement

To summarise from the above, it appears that people with positive self-concepts seem to encounter a task more effectively and therefore enjoy a better performance, while people with negative self-concepts do not. A person's consistent performance confirms their own feelings of efficacy and that becomes part of their self-concept (McCarthy and Schmeck, 1988). Thus, learners with poor self-concepts are likely to become habituated to poor performance and low achievement, leading to a vicious cycle of failure.

Researchers (Gur and Sackheim, 1979; Bryan and Pearl, 1981; McCarrey, Edwards and Rozario, 1982) find that when learners have poor self-concepts, their self-esteem will decrease and their bias will increase (e.g., they blame their failure on external causes but take full credit for success). Moreover, according to Philips (1999), learners' unrealistic beliefs and expectations can contribute to heightened anxiety in the language classroom. When they are anxious, their affective filter goes into effect and becomes a barrier to learning (Krashen, 1981). Their judgments about the difficulty of learning also affect their expectations for learning. If learners underestimate the difficulty of the task, they are likely to lose confidence and their ultimate achievement may be limited.

To conclude, it is clear that issues relating to the self, and resulting beliefs about learning, can have significant effects on a learner's performance and ultimate success. In addition, however, learner beliefs are also affected by their own cultural background. The next section discusses the influence of Confucian

conceptions of learning on Chinese learners, who are the subjects in this research study.

3.1.2 Confucian conceptions of learning

In a cognitive dimension, a person's value system (i.e., a collection of attitudes, beliefs and feelings...etc.) is naturally generated from a very young age and shaped by his/her own cultural background (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996; Horwitz, 1999; Dörnyei, 2001a). Since the impact of culture on beliefs about learning also act as an important role in the influence of learners' learning performance, this section discusses in depth Chinese learners' conceptions of learning in the cultural context.

Many studies indicate that the beliefs which are shaped by learners' cultural backgrounds can directly influence learning behaviours. According to Littlewood (1999) and Cotterall (1999), learners from Asia have more positive attitudes towards learning than western learners. Ho (1986) and Yang (1986) discovered that Asian learners were not only diligent, but they also had a high regard for education. They further point out that Asian learners' attitudes towards learning, derived from their beliefs, are mainly affected by the conceptions of learning in Confucianism.

No one will deny that Asian learners, specifically Chinese learners, are profoundly influenced by Confucianism in their conceptions of learning. However, 'Confucianism' has become an umbrella term that embraces

everything in education in the Chinese contexts. By 'Chinese contexts', I refer to not only Mainland China, but broadly the places which are profoundly influenced by a notion of Confucian-heritage culture, such as Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau. In order to provide a specific focus on the conceptions of learning in Confucianism which, even today, affect Chinese learners' attitudes and motivations towards education, this section discusses the basic conceptions of learning in Confucianism, from both micro and macro perspectives.

3.1.2.1 The significance of education: human perfectibility

From a micro perspective, the significance of education stands out in the Confucian tradition. Learning is perceived as a joyful process of personal development, as stated in the opening sentence of Confucius's *Analects* (I.1), 'Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application?' 【學而時習之，不亦說乎？】 (*Analects* I.1). Confucius (B.C. 551~479) and his well-known disciples, Mencius (B.C. 372~289) and Xunzi (B.C. 313~238), believe that 'everyone is educable and can become a sage'. Xunzi (B.C. 313~238) believes that the possibility of rectifying the evil of human nature comes from effort and learning in human development. In contrast to Xunzi (B.C. 313~238), Mencius (B.C. 372~289) believes that human nature is good and sagehood is inherent in the human. Even though Mencius (B.C. 372~289) and Xunzi (B.C. 313~238) have different views on human nature, they both believe in the significance of education in the process of personal development. In fact, Confucius himself saw learning as deep. He states, 'seeing knowledge without thinking is labour lost; thinking without seeking knowledge is perilous' (*Analects* II.15). His

conception of learning is a process of ‘studying extensively, enquiring carefully, pondering thoroughly, sifting clearly, and practising earnestly’ (*The Mean*, XX.19). The idea that everyone can become a sage reflects a belief in human perfectibility and this belief remains a characteristic of the Confucian tradition, and it is closely related to education (Lee, 1996).

However, the notion of becoming ‘a sage’ or the belief in human perfectibility through education seems ‘unrealistic’ in today’s society. Nowadays Chinese learners may not see learning as deep, as Confucius did, but they still seem to be affected by some of the Confucian beliefs. These beliefs are discussed in the following sections 3.1.2.2 to 3.1.2.5.

3.1.2.2 Effort, will power, determination, persistence and learning

Despite the positive view that everyone can become ‘a sage’ in Confucian philosophy, it is interesting to note that, in ancient China, only men could be educated. (Clearly, in modern Macau, the term ‘man’ needs to apply to both male and female learners.) To the Confucianist, every man can become a sage and sagehood can be attained through learning and effort. As Confucius (B.C. 551~479) states,

If another man succeeds by one effort, he will use a hundred efforts. If another man succeeds by ten efforts, he will use a thousand. Let a man proceed in this way, and, though dull, he will surely become intelligent; though weak, he will surely become strong (*The Mean*, XX. 20-21).

Also, Xunzi (B.C. 313~238) believes that ‘sagehood is a state that any man can

achieve by cumulative effort' (Collected in Chai, 1965). He even entitles a specific chapter as 'An Encouragement to Study' in his collected work, putting an emphasis on the significance of effort in the process of learning, as he states:

Sincerely put forth your efforts, and finally you will progress. Study until death and do not stop before. For the art of study occupies the whole of life; to arrive at its purpose, you cannot stop for an instant. To do that is to be a man; to stop is to be a bird or a beast (*An Encouragement to Study*, VII).

As stated in Mencius (B.C. 372~289), 'seek and you will get it; let go and you will lose it' (*Mencius*, VIIA.3).

In Confucianism it is believed that everyone is educable, the key issue is whether a person is determined to do so or not. Self-determination and will power, which are the driving forces of effort, are sometimes expressed in Confucianism as 'steadfastness of purpose' (專心致志). For Chinese, it is a core belief about learning, as reflected in the Chinese proverb, 'Long persistent practice makes perfect – even an iron pestle can be ground down to a needle' (只要有恆心，鐵棒磨成針). Nothing is impossible to a willing heart. By their will power, determination, great effort and persistence, all can achieve their goals one day.

This belief in success through hard work rather than 'talent' still persists in the Chinese context, no matter whether in Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong or Macau. Evidence can be found in a number of studies about Chinese learners (e.g., Ho, 1986; Yang, 1986; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996; Cotterall, 1999; Horwitz, 1999; Littlewood, 1999; Yang 1999), indicating that this belief is still deeply

rooted in Chinese learners' hearts.

3.1.2.3 The ideal type of Confucian tradition

In the Confucian tradition, the fundamental value of education not only lies in the development of human perfectibility, but also lies in the development of society. The notion of 'sage within and king without' (內聖外王) is an ideal in the Confucian tradition: Individuals should internally develop human perfection (sagehood) and externally practise their principles for the good of the people as government officials. Accordingly, to the Confucianist, individuals should 'cultivate themselves, then regulate the family, then govern the state, and finally lead the world into peace' 【修身、齊家、治國、平天下】 (*The Great Learning*, IV). This can be interpreted in two ways: If individuals want to govern the state and even lead the world into peace, they should first cultivate themselves; on the other hand, if there are individuals who have cultivated themselves well, they should seek to influence the world in order to maintain social harmony (Lee, 1996).

Also, Confucius (B.C. 551~479) encourages learned people to be officials in order to extend their good influence, as he states, 'The officer, having discharged all his duties, should devote his leisure to learning. The student, having completed his learning, should apply himself to be an officer' (*Analects*, XIX.13). Education, in this sense, is perceived not only as a significant process of personal development but also as an important means of leading to a government office and the creation of a harmonious society.

As discussed previously in 3.1.2.1, the notion of becoming a sage is rarely seen as relevant in today's Chinese contexts. This fundamental value of education, which emphasised the development of human and social perfectibility, seems to be forgotten. Perhaps, as these societies have become more economically successful and their people have become richer, a greater tendency towards individuality and an interest in individual success has begun to override the Confucian tenet of learning for the good of society.

3.1.2.4 The pursuit of success

From a macro perspective in Confucianism, education is perceived as important for societal development. Hence, since the Imperial Exam System (科舉制度) had been established in Sui dynasty (A.D. 605), people in ancient China believed that they were equally given an opportunity to obtain a government office (i.e., to become 'king without'). They believed that success in learning (or specifically in the Imperial Exam) was largely synonymous with success in life, which was associated with fame, wealth, family glory, and upward social mobility. As Chinese considered that 'developing one's fame and glorifying one's family' (光宗耀祖) was very significant in life, it was not surprising that they had a strong motivation in pursuing excellence in learning. This is reflected in the following sayings: 'There are golden houses in books and there are beautiful girls in books' (書中自有黃金屋, 書中自有顏如玉), 'To be a scholar is to be the top of society' (萬般皆下品, 唯有讀書高), and 'Although studying anonymously for ten years, once you succeed, you will become well-known in the world' (十年苦讀無人問, 一舉成名天下知). These beliefs have consistently been rooted in Chinese

hearts from generation to generation. Even to this day, the belief in the possibility of upward social mobility through educational success remains a significant driving force for Chinese learners to study hard for a better future (Lee, 1996).

3.1.2.5 Respect for authority

Another belief derived from the Confucianism which affects Chinese society is the notion of the respect for authority. To the Confucianist, human relations are regarded as the key to maintaining social harmony. Therefore, according to Mencius (B.C. 372~289), people should be held to simultaneously stand in different degrees of relationship with different people, namely, as a junior in relation to their parents and elders, and as a senior in relation to their younger siblings, students, and others. As Mencius (B.C. 372~289) states in his collected work:

How, between father and son, there should be affection; between sovereign and minister, righteousness; between husband and wife, attention to their separate functions; between old and young, a proper order; and between friends, fidelity (*Teng Wen Gong*, I.4).

This theme has consistently manifested itself in many aspects of Chinese cultures, and elements of it can still be seen to this day. In order to maintain social harmony – one of the great goals of Confucianism – the Chinese need to realise their place in the social order and try to play their parts well. For Chinese, parents should be the authority in the family. Children should respect and obey their parents in order to manifest their filial piety. Similarly, for Chinese learners, teachers should be regarded as the most authoritative ones to

provide the right answers in the classroom and they should be highly respected. Here, the role of teachers is as important as parents in the Confucian tradition. This is reflected in the old saying: 'Even if someone is your teacher for only a day, you should regard him like your father for the rest of your life' (一日為師, 終生為父). Any act of challenging the teachers' authority would be regarded as the worst offense of rebellion in the Confucian tradition.

Even to this day, this belief persists in Chinese learners' mind to some extent. In family, Chinese children still highly respect their parents and manifest their filial piety. In school, on the other hand, Chinese learners no longer regard their teachers as 'father' as in the old saying reflected, but they still seem to highly respect and rely on their teachers.

Overall, no one will doubt that Confucianism has significantly influenced Chinese learners' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour through the ages. Even in today's Chinese society, some of the conceptions of learning in Confucianism are still rooted in Chinese learners' hearts. Although they may no longer believe that the significance of education is mainly for the pursuit of human perfectibility or for the notion 'sage within and king without', still they strongly believe that success in learning is synonymous with success in life which can be achieved through effort, rather than talent or natural ability. Also, they still show respect for authority, such as parents and teachers. Differing from ancient Chinese society that believed 'children should only listen, not talk', Chinese learners may no longer completely obey their parents and teachers, but they strongly rely on them as they are models for life. Hence, the expectations from parents or

teachers are influential in Chinese learners' learning. Their self-concepts (e.g., self-esteem, self-confidence and self-efficacy) are gradually shaped by these respected authorities.

To summarise, it is clear that Confucianism has had a great influence on beliefs about education in Chinese societies in general throughout the centuries. The questions that need to be answered now are, 'To what extent has Confucianism affected today's Chinese learners' beliefs about language learning?' and, in particular, 'How has it affected the beliefs of English learners in modern day Macau?'

The following section considers recent influential research into beliefs about foreign language learning, with a view of providing a basis for this research study.

3.1.3 Research on beliefs about language learning

As discussed above, learner beliefs are crucial to learning success or failure, and this, calls for greater understanding of such beliefs in relation to foreign language learning. Accordingly, a survey which, for example, focuses on learner beliefs about language learning could be important for providing teachers with information concerning their students' affective points of view on language learning. It could help teachers to be aware of the varied personal constructs which can facilitate language learning in their students more effectively and successfully.

3.1.3.1 Recent studies of learner beliefs

Horwitz (1985, 1987, 1988) famously developed a systematic assessment, 'Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory' (BALLI), to assess learner beliefs about language learning in five major areas: difficulty of language learning, foreign language aptitude, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, and motivations and expectations. Two versions of BALLI (1985, 1987) were developed; one in Standard English for use with American foreign language students, and the other in simplified language for use with ESL students.

Horwitz (1988) indicates that the learners' 'erroneous' (as she calls them) beliefs about language learning lead to less effective language learning strategies and that this could be one of the reasons which lead to learning failure. For example, if a student believes that 'I should not say anything in English until I can say it correctly', this belief may inhibit him/her from attempting to speak English most of the time. In this case, his/her performance in English speaking may be poorer than other students who prefer to take a risk in speaking English and who hold the belief that 'fluency is more important than accuracy'. Thus, according to Horwitz (1988), teachers should confront learners' negative beliefs with new information and help them clear up some misconceptions by making them aware of positive beliefs about language learning. As Horwitz (1988) states,

Knowledge of learner beliefs about language learning should also

increase teachers' understanding of how students approach the tasks required in language class and, ultimately, help teachers foster more effective learning strategies in their students (Horwitz, 1988: 293).

Other researchers investigate learners' beliefs in relation to different domains. For example, Wenden (1986a, 1986b) investigates and classifies learners' metacognitive knowledge about their language learning experiences. She claims that learners' metacognitive knowledge (i.e., beliefs and expectations) about language learning can influence their language learning strategies. In interviews with language learners, she finds numerous instances where students are not only able to enumerate their beliefs about language learning, but, more importantly, they describe learning strategies consistent with these beliefs. Cotterall (1995) uses a questionnaire to investigate how learners' beliefs about language learning reflect their readiness for autonomy. From the subjects' responses to the questionnaire items, she identified six factors (i.e., role of the teacher, role of feedback, learner independence, learner confidence in study ability, experience of language learning, and approach to studying). She argues that these factors in students' set of beliefs reflect their willingness and readiness to take on their responsibility in their language learning.

3.1.3.2 The research instrument on learner beliefs for this study

BALLI has become one of the most frequently referenced instruments in the literature on beliefs in language learning (e.g., Kern, 1995; Sakui and Gaies, 1999; Yang, 1999; Hsu, 2005) and so a discussion is relevant here. For this reason, I have adapted Horwitz's (1987) BALLI in this research for investigating Chinese undergraduate learners' beliefs about English learning of pre- and post-

the task-based EFL programme. I intend not only to understand my students' beliefs about English learning, but also to compare their similarities or differences in their beliefs before and after the programme. Five major aspects of BALLI are going to be assessed and compared in this study. The changes in their beliefs about English language learning collated from this questionnaire will be considered as significant evidence as to whether or not a task-based learning approach is perceived as beneficial to Chinese undergraduate learners. In this study, in addition to the baseline information from BALLI, qualitative research methods are used to further explore the learners' beliefs and motivation.

Another important factor contributing to success in language learning is, of course, motivation.

3.2 Motivation theories in L2

No one denies that learner behaviour is complex, and motivation is one of the key factors that lead to learning success. In the field of motivation psychology, different motivation theories offer different explanations for why learners behave and think as they do in their learning. However, it is not easy to fully explain the multifaceted nature of motivation. As Dörnyei (1998) states, 'motivation is indeed a multifaceted rather than a uniform factor and no available theory has yet managed to represent it in its total complexity' (Dörnyei, 1998: 131).

Nevertheless, in Dörnyei's (2001a) opinion, in spite of the wide conceptual differences, all the motivation theories reach a consensus that motivation

determines three aspects of human behaviour: the *choice* of a particular action, the *persistence* with it, and the *effort* expended on it. In other words, motivation explains *why* people decide to do something, *how hard* they are going to pursue it and *how long* they are willing to sustain the activity (Dörnyei, 2001a).

3.2.1 A brief overview of motivation theories in mainstream psychology

Since there is no single theory which can fully describe the multifaceted nature of motivation, it is essential to have an overview of motivation constructs which particularly influence the field of L2 motivation. The theories which have had most influence on L2 theories of motivation seem to be those which relate to personal constructs, such as expectancy-value theories and self-determination theory.

3.2.1.1 Expectancy-value theories

In the field of motivational psychology, expectancy-value theories (including attribution, self-efficacy, and self-worth theories) have been the most influential theories (Dörnyei, 2001b). Expectancy-value theories assume that motivation to perform various tasks is based on two key factors: the individual's expectancy of success in a given task; and the value the individual attaches to success on the task. The assumption underlying this cognitive conceptualisation of human behaviour is that, 'humans are innately active learners with an inborn curiosity and an urge to get to know their environment and meet challenges' (Dörnyei, 2001b: 20). Therefore, if people believe that they can succeed or that the task

leads to valued outcomes, they are likely to carry out a given task with effort, as Dörnyei (2001a) states,

The greater the perceived likelihood of success and the greater the incentive value of the goal, the higher the degree of the individual's positive motivation (Dörnyei, 2001a: 10).

3.2.1.2 Self-determination theory

Another influential theory in motivational psychology is self-determination theory. Self-determination theory assumes that human behaviour is caused by two motivation constructs: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1985). According to Deci (1992), people with strong self-determination engage in an activity 'with a full sense of wanting, choosing, and personal endorsement' (Deci, 1992: 44). People with intrinsic motivation engage in an activity for its own sake so as to experience pleasure and to satisfy their curiosity. In contrast, people with extrinsic motivation view behaviour as a means to an end. The reasons for being involved in an activity are merely for receiving some extrinsic reward or avoiding punishment. In relation to L2 learning, Brown (1994, 2002) emphasises the importance of intrinsic motivation, arguing that learners with intrinsic motivation are more successful in learning than those with extrinsic motivation.

In the next section 3.2.2, L2 motivation theories and models through three important periods are discussed in detail.

3.2.2 L2 motivation theories and models

As already mentioned, motivation is a complex and multifaceted construct which influences learners' learning behaviour and their learning achievement, and the above mentioned theories (i.e., expectancy-value theories and self-determination theory) have left their mark on discussions of motivation in second/foreign language learning over the years. This section discusses the mainstream L2 motivation theories and models through three periods: (1) the social psychological period; (2) the cognitive-situated period; and (3) the process-oriented period. It then goes on to consider which aspects of these models have been selected as most relevant for the design of this research study.

3.2.2.1 The social psychological period (1959-1990)

The social psychological period (1959-1990), which was mainly characterised by the work of Gardner and his associates, pioneered and influenced the research of L2 motivation for more than three decades. Most studies which examined the affective domain of second/foreign language learning before 1990s adopted this paradigm (Dörnyei, 2001b). Unlike other school subjects, Gardner and Lambert (1972) viewed with a macro perspective that a second/foreign language was strongly socially and culturally bound. The mastery of second/foreign language was not only an educational issue but also a deeply social event that required the incorporation of a wide range of elements of the second/foreign language culture (Dörnyei, 2001a). As Gardner (1985) claimed,

The words, sounds, grammatical principles and the like that the language teacher tries to present are more than aspects of some linguistic code, they are integral parts of another culture (Gardner, 1985: 6).

❖ **Gardner's motivation theory**

The main focus of Gardner's motivation theory was on two prominent facets: integrative and instrumental orientations. The former is associated with a positive disposition towards the L2 group. Learners with an integrative orientation have the desire to interact with and even have a willingness to become the member of the particular community. The latter is related to the potential pragmatic gains of L2 proficiency. Learners with an instrumental orientation are motivated by the concrete benefits that language proficiency might bring about, such as getting a better job or a higher salary (Dörnyei, 2001a).

Although the dichotomy of integrative and instrumental orientations became the most widely known concepts associated with Gardner's work in the L2 field, Gardner's motivation theory incorporated many other factors (Williams and Burden, 1997; Dörnyei, 2001a). According to Dörnyei (2001a), the most elaborate and researched aspect of Gardner's theory was the broader concept of the 'integrative motive', which subsumed three main components:

- *Integrativeness*, which subsumes integrative orientation, interest in foreign languages, and attitudes towards the L2 community, reflecting the 'individual's willingness and interest in social interaction with members of

other groups' (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993: 159).

- *Attitudes towards the learning situation*, which comprises attitudes towards the language teacher and the L2 course.
- *Motivation*, which is made up of motivational intensity (effort), desire to learn the L2 and attitudes towards L2 learning (Dörnyei, 2005).

In Gardner's socio-psychological model, attitudes towards the learning situation and integrativeness influenced learners' motivation (Williams and Burden, 1997). Language attitudes related to the language learners' perceptions of the L2, the L2 speakers and the L2 community, exerted a strong directive influence on their L2 learning behaviour. As Gardner (1985) claimed,

Students' attitudes towards the specific language group are bound to influence how successful they will be in incorporating aspects of that language (Gardner, 1985: 6).

In other words, success in language learning depends on learners' attitudes towards the linguistic cultural community of the target language (Dörnyei, 2001a).

❖ **Criticism of Gardner's motivation theory**

Nevertheless, Gardner's socio-psychological model, which was grounded in a social milieu rather than in a L2 learning classroom context, did not satisfy most contemporary L2 motivation researchers. For example, Ely (1986) argued that it was not always easy to distinguish between integrative and instrumental motivation in L2 learning. Depending on the social and psychological factors,

language study could be either for an integrative or instrumental purpose (Ely, 1986). Crookes and Schmidt (1991) argued that there were other important aspects of motivation in L2 apart from the dichotomy of integrative/instrumental conceptualisations. As Crookes and Schmidt (1991) stated,

Discussion of the topic of motivation in second-language (SL) learning contexts has been limited by the understanding of the field of applied linguistics has attached to it. In that view, primary emphasis is placed on attitudes and other social psychological aspects of SL learning. This does not do full justice to the way SL teachers have used the term motivation. Their use is more congruent with definitions common outside social psychology, specifically in education (Crookes and Schmidt, 1991: 469).

While no one questioned the significance of Gardner's socio-psychological model, contemporary L2 motivation researchers were also calling for a more pragmatic and education-centred approach to motivation research. Accordingly, influenced by Crookes and Schmidt's (1991) conception of L2 motivation, research in L2 motivation in the 1990s shifted from the traditional social psychological domain to educational domain.

3.2.2.2 The cognitive-situated period (during the 1990s)

Since the direction of L2 motivation research shifted the emphasis to situation-specific motives in order to understand learners' concrete behaviours and motivation within a classroom context, the 1990s, named as the 'cognitive-situated period', engendered a remarkable boom in L2 motivation research. As the term suggests, the 'cognitive-situated period' was characterised by the intertwining influence of two trends. First, it was characterised by work drawing on cognitive theories in educational psychology.

Second, it was characterised by the trend towards an education-centred approach which was firstly voiced by Crookes and Schmidt's (1991) influential article on 'reopening the motivation research agenda' and which focused on L2 motivation constructs from a perspective of actual learning situations (i.e., language classrooms) (Dörnyei, 2005).

❖ **Crookes and Schmidt's theory**

Crookes and Schmidt (1991) firstly voiced the need for an educational shift in L2 motivation research to focus with a micro perspective on examining how motivation constructs affected learning processes within a classroom context. They also addressed the necessarily eclectic and multifaceted nature of L2 motivation and distinguished various levels of motivation and motivated learning (i.e., micro, classroom, syllabus/curriculum, and extracurricular levels) (Dörnyei, 2001b).

In accordance with Crookes and Schmidt's (1991) conception of L2 motivation, a large number of studies in the 1990s (e.g., Julkunen, 1989; Brown, 1990; Crookes and Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford and Shearin, 1994; Schmidt et al., 1996; Williams and Burden, 1997) attempted to reopen the research agenda with a 'new wave' educational focus (Dörnyei, 1998). Consequently, L2 motivation research, which was in line with cognitive motivation theories, focused on examining how learners' conscious attitudes, thoughts, beliefs and interpretation of events influenced their behaviour within a classroom context (Dörnyei, 2001a, 2003). As McGroarty (2001) summarised,

Existing research on L2 motivation, like much research in educational psychology, has begun to rediscover the multiple and mutually influential connections between individuals and their many social contexts, contexts that can play a facilitative, neutral, or inhibitory role with respect to further learning, including L2 learning (McGroarty, 2001: 86).

In order to illustrate the significance of situation-specific factors in this period, some elaborate frameworks and aspects related to L2 motivation are going to be discussed as follows.

❖ Dörnyei's framework of L2 motivation

Dörnyei's (1994) framework of L2 motivation, which specifically focused on motivation from a classroom perspective, attempted to synthesise various lines of research. It categorised an extensive list of motivational components into three main dimensions as shown in Figure 3.1:

Figure 3.1: Dörnyei's (1994) framework for L2 motivation

LANGUAGE LEVEL	Integrative motivational subsystem Instrumental motivational subsystem
LEARNER LEVEL	Need for achievement Self-confidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language use anxiety • Perceived L2 competence • Causal attributions • Self-efficacy
LEARNING SITUATION LEVEL	
Course-specific motivational components	Interest (in the course) Relevance (of the course to one's needs) Expectancy (of success) Satisfaction (one has in the outcome)
Teacher-specific motivational components	Affiliative motive (to please the teacher) Authority type (controlling vs. autonomy-supporting) Direct socialisation of motivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modelling • Task presentation • Feedback
Group-specific motivational components	Goal-orientedness Norm and reward system Group cohesiveness Classroom goal structure (cooperative, competitive or individualistic)

The first level in Dörnyei's (1994) framework is the language level. It is in line with Gardner's theories, which concerns the integrativeness and the instrumentality of the L2. It encompasses various components related to aspects of the L2, such as cultural affective and pragmatic values. The second level is the learner level, which draws heavily on Clément et al.'s (1994) Linguistic Self-confidence Theory. It refers to individual characteristics that the learner brings to the learning process, with an emphasis on two components: need for achievement and self-confidence.

The most elaborate part of the framework is the third level – the learning situation level. This level is associated with situation-specific motives, such as intrinsic and extrinsic motives and motivational conditions of L2 learning within a classroom setting. *Course-specific motivational components*, which are well described within the framework of four motivational conditions proposed by Keller (1983) and subsequently by Crookes and Schmidt (1991), are related to the syllabus, the teaching materials, the teaching methods and the learning tasks. According to Keller's (1983) education-oriented theory of motivation, the four components of motivation framework are:

- *Interest* is related to intrinsic motivation and is centred around the learner's curiosity and desire to know more about himself/herself throughout the tasks, activity and the course.
- *Relevance* refers to the perception that personal needs, values or goals are being met by the L2 learning.

- *Expectancy* refers to locus of control, expectation of success/failure and is related to the learner's self-confidence and self-efficacy at a general level.
- *Satisfaction* concerns the outcomes of learning, referring to intrinsic rewards such as enjoyment and pride or to extrinsic rewards such as praise or good marks.

Teacher-specific motivational components concern the motivational impact of the teacher's personality, behaviour and teaching style. Finally, *group-specific motivational components* are related to the various characteristics of the learner group such as goal-orientedness, group norms, cohesiveness, and classroom goal structure (competitive, cooperative or individualistic) (Dörnyei, 1994, 1998, 2001a, 2001b, 2003).

❖ **Williams and Burden's social constructivist model**

Another elaborate framework of motivational components was presented by Williams and Burden (1997). According to them, motivation is defined as:

A state of cognitive and emotional arousal which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which give rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal (or goals) (Williams and Burden, 1997: 120).

Different from Dörnyei's (1994) framework in which motivational components are categorised into three levels (the language level, the learner level, and the learning situation level), Williams and Burden's (1997) framework mainly focuses on whether the motivational influence is *internal* or *external* (Dörnyei, 2001a). Within these two categories, Williams and Burden (1997) distinguished a

number of motivation subcomponents, as shown in Figure 3.2:

Figure 3.2: Williams and Burden's (1997) framework for L2 motivation

INTERNAL FACTORS	EXTERNAL FACTORS
<p>Intrinsic interest of activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arousal of curiosity • optimal degree of challenge <p>Perceived value of activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal relevance • anticipated value of outcomes • intrinsic value attributed to the activity <p>Sense of agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locus of causality • locus of control RE process and outcomes • ability to set appropriate goals <p>Mastery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feelings of competence • awareness of developing skills and mastery in a chosen area • self-efficacy <p>Self-concept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • realistic awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses in skills required • personal definitions and judgements of success and failure • self-worth concern • learned helplessness <p>Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to language learning in general • to the target language • to the target language community and culture <p>Other affective states</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confidence • anxiety, fear <p>Developmental age and stage</p> <p>Gender</p>	<p>Significant others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents • teachers • peers <p>The nature of interaction with significant others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mediated learning experiences • the nature and amount of feedback • rewards • the nature and amount of appropriate praise • punishments, sanctions <p>The learning environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comfort • resources • time of day, week, year • size of class and school • class and school ethos <p>The broader context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wider family networks • the local education system • conflicting interests • cultural norms • societal expectations and attitudes

Williams and Burden (1997) claim that why learners are motivated to learn L2 is because their cognitive and emotional arousal is triggered by two main influences: internal or external causes. Internal causes come from inside the learner, such as interest in L2 or a wish to succeed. On the other hand, external causes come from the influences of other people or social context, such as teachers, peers or societal expectations.

In addition, from within the perspective of social constructivism, Williams and Burden (1997) assert that L2 motivation is internally or externally affected through social interaction:

A constructivist view of motivation centres around the premise that each individual is motivated differently. People will make their own sense of the various external influences that surround them in ways that are personal to them, and they will act on their internal disposition and use the personal attributes in unique ways.... However, an individual's motivation is also subject to social and contextual influences. These will include the whole culture and context and the social situation, as well as significant other people and the individual's interactions with these people (Williams and Burden, 1997: 120).

3.2.2.3 The process-oriented period (after the 1990s)

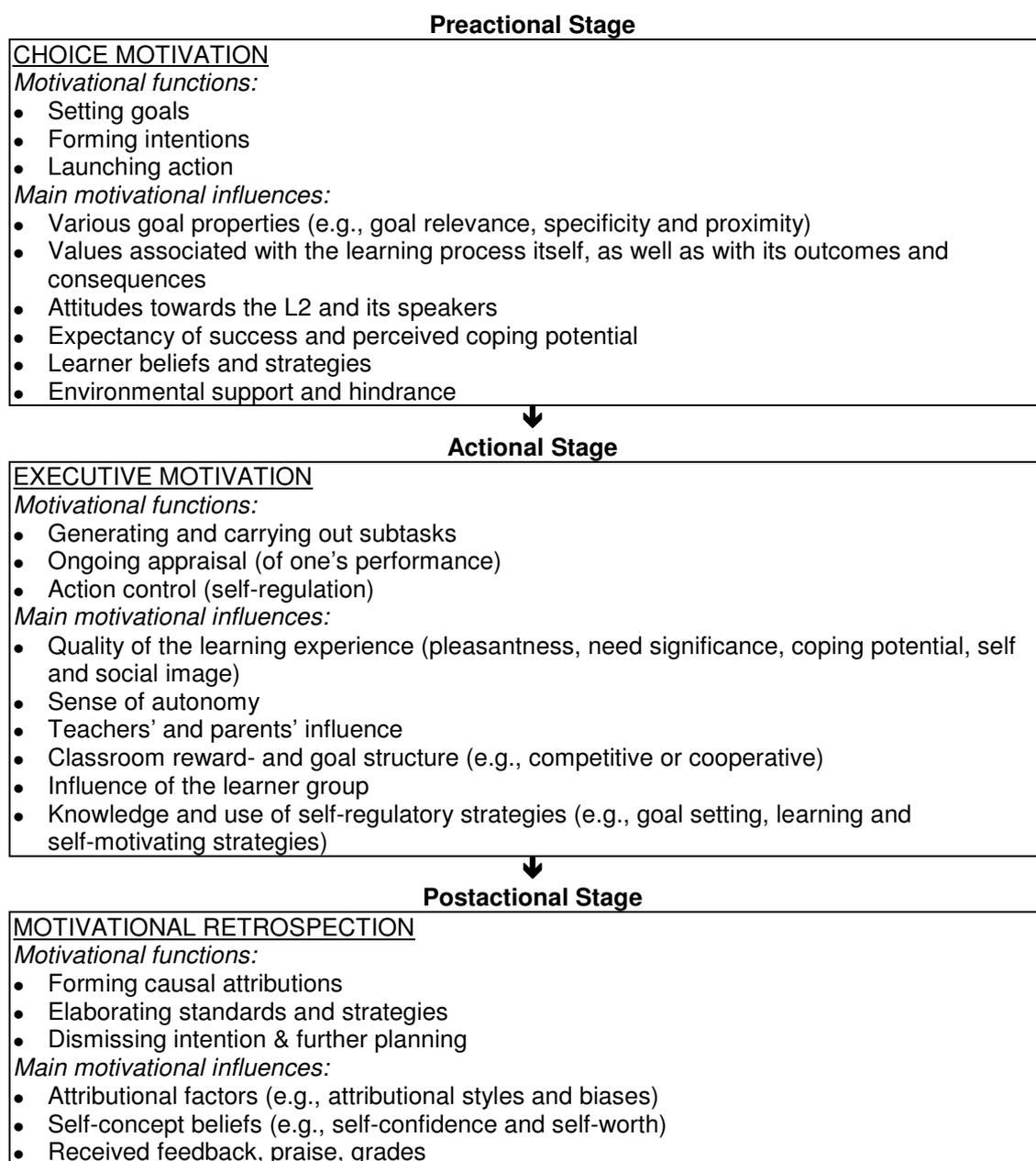
In recent decades, when motivation was examined in its relationship to specific learner behaviour and classroom process, L2 motivation researchers (e.g., Ushioda, 1994, 1996; Williams and Burden, 1997) found that learners' L2 motivation was not stable and constant but rather dynamic and with ongoing changes over time. Accordingly, the cognitive-situated approach to motivation research in the 1990s soon drew attention to another aspect of motivation: its dynamic character and temporal variation (Dörnyei, 2005). In the process-oriented period, the most elaborate L2 motivation model of the process-oriented conception was proposed by Dörnyei and Ottó (1998).

❖ Dörnyei and Ottó's process model of L2 motivation

With a dynamic view of L2 motivation, Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) tried to account for the changes of L2 motivation over time by breaking down several discrete

temporal segments in motivational process. Drawing on the work of Heckhausen and Kuhl's (1985) Action Control Theory, Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) claimed that motivation undergoes a cycle that has at least three main stages: *pre-actional stage* (choice motivation), *action stage* (executive motivation) and *post-actional stage* (motivational retrospection). The three stages are shown in Figure 3.3:

Figure 3.3: Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) process model of L2 motivation



In Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) process model of L2 motivation, the first stage is the *pre-actional stage*. It corresponds to 'choice motivation', where motivation is generated from the learners' initial wishes for action. In this stage, learners transform their wishes, hopes and desires into goals, then into intentions, and these eventually lead to action. Along with this process, their motivation is affected by many factors, such as values, expectancy of success, learner beliefs about L2 and their attitudes towards the L2...etc (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998).

Secondly, the *action stage* corresponds to 'executive motivation'. Once learners launch their actions, their generated motivation needs to be actively maintained and protected. In this stage, whether learners choose to carry on or terminate their particular action is dependent on their action control which, in turn, is affected by many motivational factors, such as quality of learning experience, peers' influence, and goal structure (e.g., competitive, individualistic, or cooperative) (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998). For example, in L2 learning classroom settings, influence from the learner group is one of the factors which can enhance or hinder the quality of learning experience. Accordingly, learners with high quality of learning experience are likely to maintain their motivation to the end in order to complete the particular learning activity. In contrast, those with low quality of learning experience may tend to give up on the activity.

The third stage in Dörnyei and Ottó's process model is the *post-actional stage*, which corresponds to motivational retrospection. After completing or terminating the task, learners critically evaluate the process and form causal attributions in their retrospection. Their causal attributions, which are

generated and affected by the quality of learning experience and self-concept beliefs (e.g., self-confidence and self-worth), determine their intentions for future actions (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998). For example, in retrospective evaluation, if learners consider that they were able to reach their goals and their learning process was enjoyable and satisfying, they will become more confident in themselves and are more likely to test their abilities in future learning activity. Accordingly, through such evaluation, learners can develop a stable identity as successful learners (Boekaerts, 1998). In this case, the post-actional motivation process evolves into a pre-actional stage and the cycle begins in a new way again (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998).

3.2.3 L2 motivational self system

Very recently, the study of the dynamic nature of the self-system has become gradually more salient in the field of L2 motivation. Dörnyei (2005) put forward the link between the self and action, and places 'the self right at the heart of motivation and action' (Dörnyei, 2005: 99). Accordingly, Dörnyei (2005) attempted to reframe L2 motivation as part of the self-system by proposing a new conceptualisation: An 'L2 Motivational Self System'. This newly conceived system, which is a broad construct of L2 motivation, is compatible with the major findings of past research in the field of L2 motivation (e.g., Higgins, 1998; Ushioda, 2001; Noel, 2003; Csizér and Dörnyei, 2005). It is made up of three dimensions: ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience (Dörnyei, 2005).

3.2.3.1 Ideal L2 self

Before considering the 'ideal self', it is useful to explain 'possible selves' because the ideal self is regarded as one of the most important types of possible selves. Possible selves represent people's ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Dörnyei (2005) believes that possible selves, which represent one's self in future states through imaginary vision, offer the most powerful motivational self-mechanism. The more vivid and elaborate the imagined possible self, the more motivationally effective it is expected to be. As Markus and Ruvolo (1989) claimed,

Imaging one's own actions through the construction of elaborated possible selves achieving the desired goal may thus directly facilitate the translation of goals into intentions and instrumental actions (Markus and Ruvolo, 1989: 213).

In relation to the field of L2 learning, Dörnyei (2005) found that the concept of one type of possible self, the ideal self, was particularly useful. The term 'ideal self', firstly introduced by Higgins (1987), refers to the representation of the attributes that people would ideally like to possess (i.e., representation of hopes, wishes or aspirations). For example, if the particular person who learners want to become speaks an L2, the learners will be motivated to learn the L2. Their L2 motivation can be explained by Higgins's (1987) self-discrepancy theory that individuals are motivated to reach a condition where their self-concept matches their personally relevant self-guides. In this case, the Ideal L2 Self is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the learners' desire to match their actual self and their ideal self (Dörnyei, 2005).

3.2.3.2 Ought-to L2 self

In contrast to the 'ideal self', Higgins (1987) referred to the 'ought self' as the attributes that one believes one ought to possess (i.e., a representation of someone's sense of duty, obligations, or responsibilities) in order to avoid possible negative outcomes (Dörnyei, 2005). In relation to L2 learning, learners with ought-to self regard learning as a responsibility or obligation with a prevention focus. Therefore, they learn English not for the sake of professional advancement, but in order not to fail the exam. In this case, their motivation in L2 is extrinsic rather than intrinsic (Dörnyei, 2005).

3.2.3.3 L2 learning experience

Dörnyei's (2005) L2 motivational self system is related to Ushioda's (2001) qualitative research into motivational change within a process-oriented paradigm. In her research, Ushioda (2001) claimed that all the factors in each language learner's motivational configuration are either causal (deriving from the continuum of L2-learning and L2-related experience to date) or teleological (directed towards short-term or long-term goals and future perspectives). By applying Ushioda's (2001) causal-teleological dichotomy to his L2 motivational self system, Dörnyei (2005) claimed that 'L2 learning experience' is in the causal dimension while 'ideal self' and 'ought-to self' are teleological because both selves concern future motivational perspectives (Dörnyei, 2005).

Dörnyei's (2005) L2 motivational self system is also compatible with the process-oriented conception of L2 motivation, such as Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) process model of L2 motivation (mentioned in 3.2.2.3). According to Dörnyei (2005), 'L2 learning experience' is undoubtedly related to executive motives in the actional stage because it strongly influences learners' choice to carry on or terminate their action; thus, 'ideal self' and 'ought-to self' are related to the pre-actional stage by definition.

3.2.4 The motivation model for the study

Dörnyei's latest Motivational Self System, with its focus on the self, is clearly relevant for this research study. However, being more recent in its conceptualisation, it still lacks detailed guidelines on how to develop in the learners the requisite imagined 'Ideal Self' and how this can be drawn on in the classroom. For these reasons, this model will be considered when exploring the outcomes of this research study, rather than as a basis for the research design.

Amongst all the above L2 motivation theories and models, Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) process model of L2 motivation, therefore, is the most relevant to this research, which looks at change in beliefs and motivation over a period of time. As discussed above, learners' L2 motivation is not stable and constant but rather dynamic and Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) model with its three main stages (i.e., *pre-actional stage*, *action stage* and *post-actional stage*) provides a useful basis to examine the subjects' ongoing changes in L2 motivation throughout the

task-based EFL programme.

In addition, as L2 motivation is a complex and multifaceted construct which is internally and externally affected through social interaction, Williams and Burden's (1997) social constructivist model, which focuses on intrinsic/extrinsic motivations, provides a model for the qualitative research processes.

This thesis so far has described the context, the reasons for and aims of the study, as well as the theoretical underpinning of the research areas. The following chapter focuses on a specific methodological approach to foreign language teaching (i.e., TBL) which may offer a positive alternative to the more traditional methods employed in Macau classrooms, and which, it is suggested, might enhance learners' self-concept beliefs and motivations.

Chapter 4 Task-based learning

One of teachers' greatest challenges is how to make the learning experience as fruitful, enjoyable and successful as possible for the learners. Poor pedagogy results in demotivated students with negative self-images and negative beliefs about learning. The language teaching profession has constantly sought to improve teaching and over the years numerous approaches and methodologies have been expounded, implemented and found wanting. Is a communicative language teaching approach more beneficial to tertiary learners than a traditional grammar-translation approach in Macau? Is Task Based Learning (TBL) an approach which can enhance the language learning experience? This research study aims to explore this question.

4.1 The background of Communicative Language Teaching

In the 1970's, linguists (e.g., Candlin, 1976; Widdowson, 1978) saw the need to focus language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on merely mastery of structure. At that time, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was being promoted as the way forward in language teaching. This approach starts from a theory of language as communication. The goal of language teaching is to develop learners' 'communicative competence', which, according to Canale and Swain (1980), refers to four dimensions: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence refers to the knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and

phonology. Sociolinguistic competence refers to the ability to use language in ways appropriate to contexts of use, role relationships, and communicative purpose. Discourse competence refers to the ability to interpret message elements in terms of how meaning is represented in relationship to the entire discourse or text. Strategic competence refers to the ability to use strategies to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence. CLT aimed to (1) make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and (2) develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language communication (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).

As teachers began to develop communicative activities in the EFL classroom, so researchers began to investigate and evaluate the effectiveness of those activities. Howatt (1984) distinguished between two major approaches to CLT: the weak version and the strong version:

The 'weak' version, which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years, stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider programme of language teaching.... The 'strong' version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former ('weak version') could be described as 'learning to use' English, the latter ('strong version') entails 'using English to learn it' (Howatt, 1984: 279).

The weak version of CLT, which means little more than an integration of grammatical and functional teaching, was advocated by some researchers, e.g., Littlewood (1981). He claims that one of the most characteristic features of

communicative language teaching is that 'it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language' (Littlewood, 1981: 1). Hence, he developed a methodological framework which intends to build learners' communicative knowledge in a staged manner from pre-communicative activities to communicative activities (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).

On the other hand, the strong version of CLT, which aims to stimulate the development of language through use (i.e., using English to learn it), involving the use of tasks to focus learners on meaning rather than form, became more prevalent in the eighties. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) which focuses on teaching through tasks was developed at that time.

These two versions of CLT, along with the framework of task-based learning are discussed in depth in the following sections.

4.1.1 Weak version: PPP

In an EFL classroom where there is a conscious focus on teaching form, it might be said that teachers rely too much on the assumption that 'What is taught is what is learnt' (Prabhu, 1984, 1987). Some approaches to language teaching, which are called 'form-based' approaches, are based on the belief that there is a direct relationship between 'input' and 'intake' – what is presented by the teacher can be mastered directly by the learners and will become a part of their usable repertoire. They focus on teaching elements of the linguistic system, such as

sounds, morphemes, grammar rules, words and collocations, notions, functions and so on. Different pre-digested and pre-selected parts of the language are taught separately and step by step in a predetermined order so that language acquisition is regarded as a process of gradual accumulation of small pieces until the whole structure of language has been built up (Wilkins, 1976). A well-known form-focused approach is known as PPP (Presentation → Practice → Production): The teacher begins by presenting one or two new forms and illustrating their meaning. Then learners go on to repeat and practise the target forms under careful teacher control. Finally, learners are expected to produce the target forms in a communicative activity (Willis, 1996; Willis and Willis, 2007). The PPP cycle, which is derived from the perspective of behaviourism, is based on the principle that 'repetition' helps to 'automate' responses and that 'practice makes perfect'.

Nevertheless, second language acquisition (SLA) research (e.g., Selinker, 1972; Nunan, 1988, 1999, 2004; Willis 1996; Willis and Willis, 2001; Ellis, 2003) has proven that learning should not be seen only as a process of habit formation – focusing on rules which are then automatized as a set of habits; there is no such direct relationship between 'input' and 'intake'; and 'what is taught' is not equal to 'what is learnt'. In fact, there always exists a big gap between teaching and learning in the classroom and, unfortunately, there are some problems with PPP. First, the language is pre-selected to be taught in class by the teacher. Since it restricts the learners' experience of language by focusing on target forms, it may actually discourage them from thinking about the language use and working things out for themselves for real communication. Second, it gives an illusion of

mastery as the learners can confidently produce the required forms in the classroom, but once outside the classroom, they may not use the forms at all or use them with acceptable level of accuracy (Willis, 1996). This illusion of mastery is one of the problems in English learning in Macau. As mentioned in 2.3, even though students have been taught English as a compulsory subject in schools for nearly fifteen years from kindergarten to secondary education, many of them are unable to speak in sentences.

Actually, from the perspective of constructivism, knowledge cannot be taught in this way but is actively constructed by the learner through interaction with the social environment (Vygotsky, 1978; Candy, 1991; Benson, 1997; Boudourides, 1998). By following a form-focused approach, such as the PPP cycle in English language learning, even though the learners might have a foundation of language knowledge, they may not know how to put the knowledge into practice in their real-life contexts. As Willis and Willis (2001: 173) state: 'What is consciously learnt is not necessarily incorporated into spontaneous language production'.

Consequently, a common phenomenon which exists in today's Chinese context is that learners may get high grades in their English classes, but are not able to communicate with others in English outside the school. They get frustrated when they encounter communicative difficulties in real-life contexts. As a result, we might say, this negatively affects their self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy to some extent.

4.1.2 Strong version: Task-Based Language Teaching

Having acknowledged the disadvantages of approaches which focus on form in English language learning, researchers in the eighties (e.g., Doughty and Pica, 1986; Breen, 1987; Candlin, 1987; Prabhu, 1987; Nunan, 1989) began to look at what kind of classroom interaction could promote language learning most efficiently. The so-called strong version of CLT led to a greater focus on teaching through tasks, and this was then more specifically developed as TBLT (Task-Based Language Teaching). This refers to an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching and where the focus is predominantly on meaning (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

In contrast to PPP, which is a teacher-centred and form-based approach focused on teaching elements of the linguistic system, TBLT is underpinned by the basic pedagogical principle that 'the aim of second/foreign language teaching is to enable students to use the target language for functional purposes (Van den Branden et al., 2009: 2). TBLT is a holistic approach in which students directly use the target language for communicative purposes through tasks in social interaction and construct various linguistic knowledge in task performance. From a task-based perspective, 'people not only learn language *in order to* make functional use of it, but also *by* making functional use of it' (Van den Branden, 2006: 6). Hence, if the teacher intends to stimulate students' language knowledge, the teacher should provide students with functional tasks in which students are encouraged to construct and internalise the knowledge

through use (Van den Branden et al., 2009).

However, this does not mean that TBLT excludes a focus on form. Despite having its roots in the 'strong version' of the CLT, with its use of tasks to organise learning, recent TBL methodology (Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1996, Norris and Ortega, 2000) has re-incorporated a focus on the study of form in a very particular way. Skehan (1996) argues that while communicative language use is the driving force for language acquisition, students' language system will be developed more efficiently if language form is focused within the task-based cycle. Norris and Ortega (2000) claim that the efficiency and effectiveness of language learning processes are increased when the focus on form is embedded in the meaningful activity that task performance elicits. With regard to form and meaning, Willis (1996) believes that both are important in language learning. As Willis (1996) states, 'task-based learning combines the best insights from communicative language teaching with an organised focus on language form' (Willis, 1996: 1). Therefore, not only the emphasis on meaning but also language focus on form is incorporated in Willis's framework of task-based learning.

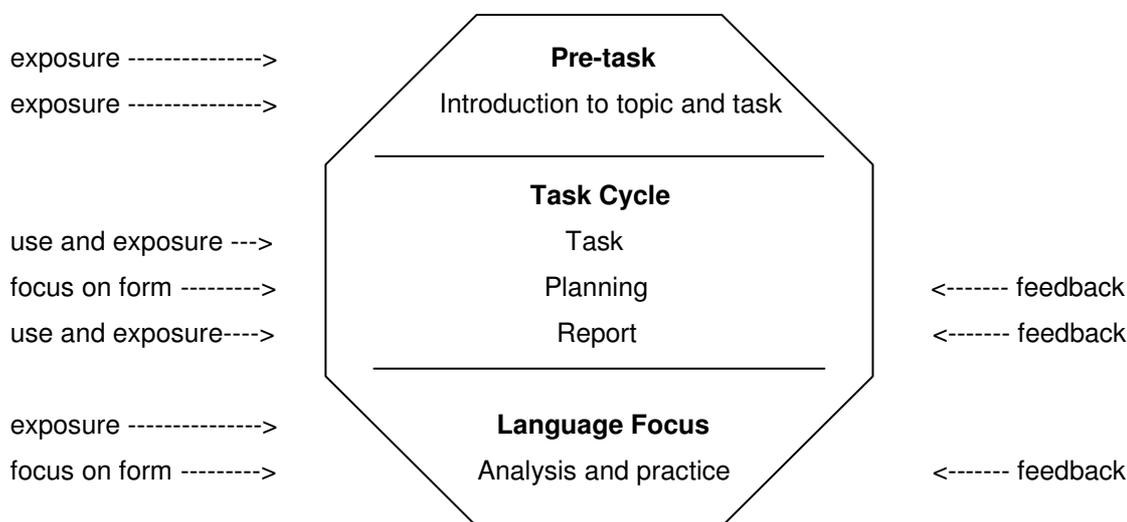
Since task-based language teaching (TBLT) can fulfil the teachers' concern for meaning-based activities and researchers' investigation of classroom interaction, and it aims to help learners to develop skills for expressing different communicative meanings through interactive tasks (Nunan, 1988, 1999), it seems to be a feasible alternative to current practice for English teaching in the context. Therefore, based on Willis's framework of TBL, this research

investigates how students who were taught English only in a traditional approach are affected by a task-based learning approach. We also have to ask whether it can affect their beliefs about and motivation in English language learning.

4.2 The framework of the task-based learning

In contrast to the cycle of PPP, which begins with the presentation and practice of a small sample of language with the focus on a particular form, TBL provides a holistic language experience where learners naturally integrate four skills through tasks (Willis, 1996). In a framework for task-based learning, Willis (1996) proposes, with a rationale, the basic procedures for three phases of TBL: Pre-task, Task Cycle and Language Focus, as shown below:

Figure 4.1: The framework for task-based learning



(Willis and Willis, 1996: 60)

At the Pre-task phase, the teacher introduces and defines the topic to the class, highlights useful topic-related words and phrases (but would not pre-teach new structures), and ensures the learners understand task instructions. The

learners may hear a recording of a similar task being done, note down useful words and phrases from the recording or other pre-task activities, and spend a few minutes preparing for the task. This initial stage gives useful exposure to help the learners to recall relevant words and phrases and to recognise new ones.

Then, the Task Cycle, which consists of three components: task, planning and report, is central to the framework. It offers learners the chance to use whatever language they already know in order to carry out the task, and then to improve that language, under teacher guidance, while planning their reports of the task. Firstly, at the task stage, the learners are encouraged to do the task in pairs or small groups in order to use whatever language they can recall to fulfil the task outcome. This may be in response to reading a text or hearing a recording. The teacher stands back and acts as monitor, but encourages the learners' attempts at communication in the target language, and comments briefly on context. Since the learners realise that they can achieve the goals without the teachers' direct support, their confidence and motivation will grow. Moreover, based on the principle that 'output' (i.e., use of language) is likely to help stimulate 'intake' (i.e., acquisition of new forms) (Willis 1996), this stage, which emphasises spontaneous, exploratory talk and confidence building, is vital to language acquisition for the learners.

Secondly, following the task stage, there is a planning stage, where the learners prepare to report to the whole class (orally or in writing) how they did the task, and what they decided or discovered. They draft and rehearse what they want

to report to the class. The teacher acts as a language adviser, giving feedback and helping the learners to polish and correct their language. He/she ensures the purpose of the report is clear and encourages the learners to rehearse oral reports or organise written reports for a public presentation in the next stage. Since the learners may have problems in using language forms and features, it is at the planning stage that a focus on form is natural and teacher advice and correction is likely to be of most use. It is also at the stage that emphasises clarity, organisation and accuracy (Willis and Willis, 1996).

Thirdly, at the report stage, the teacher selects some groups to present their oral or written reports to the task to the whole class. He/she simply acts as chairperson, briefly commenting on the content and form, and summing up at the end. He/she may play a recording of others doing the same task as post-task listening. The learners, at this report stage, listen to others doing the same task and compare the ways in which they did the task themselves. This stage gives a natural stimulus to improve their language. It encourages them to think about the form and meaning; accuracy and fluency when they present their reports in the target language. It also provides them with useful exposure in which they hear or read what other learners have done in the same task (Willis, 1996; Willis and Willis, 1996).

In addition, at the Task Cycle stage, exposure to language in use can be provided at different points, depending on the various types of tasks. It can be provided either before or during the task cycle where the learners may listen to recordings of other people doing the same/similar task, or read a text relevant to

the task topic, and relate this to their own experience of doing the task (Willis, 1996).

The last phase in the framework, Language Focus, encourages the learners to focus their attention to forms of the language which they have already processed for meaning during the task cycle. It consists of two components: analysis and practice. At the stage of analysis, the teacher picks up on language features from the report stage as consciousness-raising activities. Then, the learners do the activities to identify and process specific language features from the task text or transcript. Finally, the teacher reviews the analysis with the class. By the process of identification and generalisation, the learners' language knowledge is constructed and the specific language features become part of their internalised language system. Following the analysis stage, there is the final stage of the framework – the practice stage. At this final stage, the teacher conducts practice activities, based on the language analysis work, in order to build learners' confidence and help them to systematise their knowledge and broaden their understanding, so that they can carry on learning outside the classroom and after their language course (Willis, 1996; Willis and Willis, 1996).

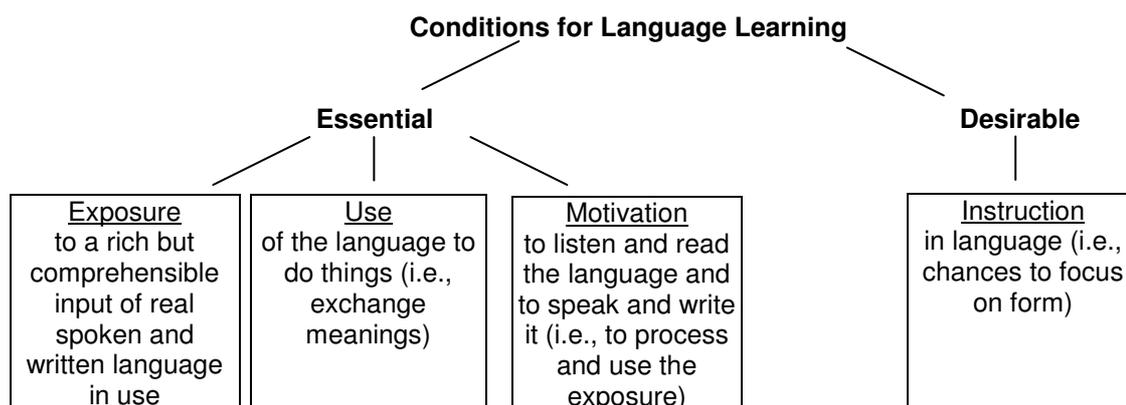
The TBL framework, which interweaves Willis's (1996) four key conditions for language learning – exposure, use, motivation and instruction, provides learners with a natural progression from the holistic to the specific in their language learning. Since the TBL framework is a novel conception in English language teaching in Macau, it is necessary to discuss in depth the rationale of TBL. In the next section, more details about the four conditions for language learning will

be explored.

4.3 The rationale for task-based learning

According to Willis (1996), there are certain principles which can help teachers select and devise useful classroom activities for stimulating learning. She also proposes that there are four conditions (three essential and one desirable) to be met in order for anyone to learn a language with reasonable efficiency, as summarised in Figure 4.2:

Figure 4.2: Four conditions for language learning



(Willis, 1996: 11)

In Willis's (1996) opinion, 'all good language learners take full advantage of their exposure to the target language in use' (Willis, 1996: 11). It may be a conscious, or largely a subconscious process. Exposure and input come from teacher talk (especially at the pre-task and the analysis stages), learners are involved in reading the texts or listening to each other or to recordings of others doing the task. This leads the learners to pay attention to useful language features in what they hear and read, and to process the input more analytically.

Opportunities are given to the learners to experiment to make use of the target language, to test hypotheses concerning what they want to say and express what they feel or think through interaction for a task outcome. The planning stage in a TBL framework gives the learners chances to recall the useful language features and the support they need before they perform in public. Then, the report stage in the framework offers them the challenge to refine their performance for a wider audience.

Success in achieving the goals of task stimulates the learners' motivation. When they are satisfied with what they have achieved, through their own individual effort, they are more likely to participate the next time. Satisfaction, undoubtedly, is the main key factor in sustaining motivation. This leads them to seek out opportunities for exposure to and use of the target language outside the classroom.

In order to prevent fossilisation and to improve language accuracy, the learners need chances to reflect on language and to try to systematise what they know. Hence, there is the fourth condition: instruction, which focuses on language form, and is highly desirable. In the TBL framework, there is a natural focus on form when the learners rehearse oral reports or organise written reports for a public presentation. The consciousness-raising activities at the analysis stage also provide them with chances to identify and systematise specific language features and strive for language accuracy (Willis, 1996; Willis and Willis, 1996).

I agree with Willis's principles that exposure, use, motivation and instruction are key conditions for language learning. Also, I believe that the goal of teaching is to develop effectiveness in learning. As these conditions for language learning are deliberately taken into account in Willis's TBL framework through the phases of pre-task, task cycle and language focus, Willis's TBL framework is practical, useful and may affect my students' beliefs about and their motivation for language learning. In turn, as mentioned in 2.8, pedagogy and students' personal constructs (such as beliefs about and motivation in language learning) are important factors that influence success in language learning. Therefore, this study focused on the investigation of students' beliefs about and their motivation in English learning through the action research carried out before, during and after the implementation of a special designed programme of task-based English teaching based on Willis's TBL framework.

4.3.1 What is a 'task'?

In the literature, various definitions of what is meant by a 'task' in TBL have been offered that differ quite widely in scope and formulation. In order to prevent the literature about tasks (and task-based language learning) becoming confusing, it is necessary to have clear definitions of what authors mean by the term 'task'. A summary of definitions of task outlined by SLA theorists in chronological order is shown Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: A summary of definition of task by SLA theorists

Author	Definition
Long (1985)	A piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Thus examples of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, taking a hotel reservation, writing a cheque, finding a street destination, and helping someone across a road. In other words, by 'task' is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between. 'Tasks' are the things people will tell you they do if you ask them and they are not applied linguists.
Richards et al. (1985)	An activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language, i.e., as a response. For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, and listening to an instruction and performing a command, may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the tasks. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make teaching more communicative... since it provides a purpose for classroom activity which goes beyond practice of language for its own sake.
Crookes (1986)	A piece of work or an activity, usually with a specified objective, undertaken as part of an educational course, at work, or used to elicit data for research.
Prabhu (1987)	An activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought and which allows teachers to control and regulate that process was regarded as a 'task'.
Breen (1987)	Any structured language learning endeavour which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task. 'Task' is therefore assumed to refer to a range of workplans which have the overall purpose of facilitating language learning – from the simple and brief exercise type, to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem-solving or simulations and decision-making.
Candlin (1987)	One of a set of differentiated, sequencable, problem-posing activities involving learners' cognitive and communicative procedures applied to existing and new knowledge in the collective exploration and pursuance of foreseen or emergent goals within a social milieu.
Nunan (1989)	A piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form.
Carroll (1993)	A task [is] any activity in which a person engages, given an appropriate setting, in order to achieve a specifiable class of objectives.
Bachman and Palmer (1996)	An activity that involves individuals in using language for the purpose of achieving a particular goal or objective in a particular situation.
Willis (1996)	Activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome.

Figure 4.3: A summary of definition of task by SLA theorists (Cont.)

Author	Definition
Skehan (1998)	A task is an activity in which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meaning is primary • learners are not given other people's meanings to regurgitate • there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities • task completion has some priority • the assessment of the task is in terms of outcome
Lee (2000)	A task is (1) a classroom activity or exercise that has: (a) an objective obtainable only by the interaction among participants, (b) a mechanism for structuring and sequencing interaction, and (c) a focus on meaning exchange; (2) a language learning endeavour that requires learners to comprehend, manipulate, and/or produce the target language as they perform some set of workplans.
Bygate et al. (2001)	A task is an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective.
Ellis (2003)	A workplan that require learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes.
Nunan (2004)	A piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilising their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form.
Van den Branden (2006)	A task is an activity in which a person engages in order to attain an objective, and which necessitates the use of language.

The definitions above range from a broad to a narrow perspective. The broadest definition, such as that provided by Long (1985), argues that tasks are the sorts of things that people do in everyday life, including tasks that can be performed without using language (e.g., painting a fence) and that require language (e.g., make an airline reservation). The other definitions, distinguishable from Long's (1985) perspective that almost everything related to daily activity can be called a 'task', primarily define the term 'task' as a

pedagogical activity which occurs in the classroom. Some definitions, such as those provided by Breen (1987), Lee (2000), and Ellis (2003), define a task as a 'workplan' that is intended to engage the learner in meaning-focused language use; while others such as that provided by Richards et al. (1985), Crookes (1986), and Prabhu (1987), emphasise the outcome-linked nature of an activity, but clearly indicate that there is a room for teacher intervention and possibly control. Some, such as Candlin (1987) and Ellis (2003) emphasise cognitive and communicative processes. More narrow definitions, such as those provided by Nunan (1989), Carroll (1993), Willis (1996), Bachman and Palmar (1996), Bygate et al. (2001), and Van den Branden (2006) define a task as an activity which requires learners to use target language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective. Others, such as Skehan (1998) and Lee (2000), try to offer an inclusive definition and embrace most of the characteristics of a task.

Overall, the definitions are somewhat similar and somewhat different. They all share some points in common that a pedagogical task is supposed to offer learners sufficient opportunity to expand their language repertoire, to internalise their language knowledge and to evoke a wide diversity of cognitive operations for communicative purposes or goals (Van den Branden, 2006). Amongst all the definitions of task, I agree with Willis's definition: 'activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome' (Willis, 1996: 23). If an activity is not used by learners for communicative purpose, it is against the fundamental principle of TBL and likely to be any of the activities used in a traditional teacher-centred EFL classroom

with the principle of 'what is taught is equal to what is learnt'.

4.3.2 Task focus

Even though the definitions above emphasise the primacy of meaning, this does not mean that form is not important and task-based language teaching should exclude a focus on form. According to some recent literature, form and meaning are highly interrelated. Widdowson (1998) points out that learners pay attention to both meaning and form when doing tasks. For example, when learners are involved in a task such as 'making an airline reservation', they need to find the linguistic forms to explain where they want to fly to, what day and time they want to fly, and what kind of tickets they want, etc. Also, when they are involved in an exercise such as 'filling blanks' to practice the use of past simple and present perfect tenses in the target language, they need to pay attention to the meanings of the sentences to determine which tense to use. Skehan (1992, 1996, 1998) and Long and Norris (2000) consider that the combination of meaning and form constitutes one of the key features of task-based language teaching. As Long and Norris (2000) argue,

Task-based language teaching... is an attempt to harness the benefits of a focus on meaning via adoption of an analytic syllabus, while simultaneously, through use of focus on form (not forms), to deal with its known shortcomings, particularly rate of development and incompleteness where grammatical accuracy is concerned (Long and Norris, 2000: 599).

In fact, as far as language proficiency is concerned, form and meaning are both equally important for accuracy and fluency. According to Skehan (1992), learning is prompted by the need to communicate and it will be more efficient

under these two circumstances: (1) when there is a need to focus on accuracy within a task-based methodology; (2) when there is a critical focus on language form within the task-based cycle (Willis and Willis, 2001). Nunan (2004) modifies his perspective on form in his recent literature, with the emphasis on mobilisation of grammatical knowledge for meaning expression, as he agrees that 'grammar exists to enable the language user to express different communicative meanings' (Nunan, 2004: 4). A version of TBL which takes this into account is Willis's model (1996). Even though she considers that an important feature of TBL is a focus on meaning at all stages, she does not completely exclude the focus of form in task-based language teaching. In fact, rather than being concerned with producing specific language forms, she is more concerned with a holistic language experience in which the learners carry out a communicative task, using the language they have learnt, identifying and generalising the specific language features by the learners themselves for communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome. Thus, in her TBL framework, Willis (1996) proposes consciousness-raising processes in order to encourage learners to naturally focus and reflect upon language features in two phases, the planning stage and the language focus.

4.3.3 Task vs. exercise

Various perspectives on the distinction between 'task' and 'exercise' can be found in the definitions above. Breen (1987) adopts a broad definition that incorporates any kind of language activities, including 'exercises'. However, most of the other definitions such as those provided by Long (1985), Richards et

al. (1985), Nunan (1989), Skehan (1998) and Bygate et al. (2001) share some points in common in that a pedagogical task facilitates meaningful interaction and involves communicative language use in which the learners' attention is primarily focused on meaning rather than form. Ellis (2003) clearly claims a main difference is that the activities in which learners primarily focus on form are defined as 'exercises', not defined as 'tasks'. He states,

'Tasks' are activities that call for primarily meaning-focused language use. In contrast, 'exercises' are activities that call for primarily form-focused language use (Ellis, 2003: 3).

The distinction between meaning-focused and form-focused is also intended to capture another key difference between 'tasks' and 'exercises' relating to the role the participants, as Ellis (2003) states,

A 'task' requires the participants to function primarily as 'language users' in the sense that they must employ the same kinds of communicative processes as those involved in real-world activities. Thus any learning that takes place is incidental. In contrast, an 'exercise' requires the participants to function primarily as 'learners'; here learning is intentional (Ellis, 2003: 3).

Moreover, according to Willis and Willis (2001), 'tasks' are not a label for various activities which involve language used for practice or display, such as grammar exercises, practice exercises and role plays (Willis, 1996). Instead, 'tasks' are activities in which learners are free to use a range of language to achieve a real outcome. It could be a survey, a resolved question, a challenge, and a comparison and so on. They are free to use whatever target language resources they have to convey what they mean in order to complete the tasks successfully. While doing tasks, learners are focusing on meanings for communicative purpose; the forms, on the other hand, are not prescribed in

advance (Willis, 1996; Willis and Willis, 2001).

4.3.4 Task types

As mentioned, the broad definitions of tasks, such as that provided by Long (1985), argue that pedagogic tasks should be systematically linked to real communicative tasks that learners will be likely to perform outside the classroom. Of course, it is certainly possible to provide advanced learners with the pedagogic tasks which are directly relevant to their real world tasks. Learners may regard these tasks as a challenge, stimulating their involvement and learning motivation. As Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura (1989) state, the challenge of an activity (or a task) and the level of skill brought by the person to the activity are the crucial determinants of psychological states. When challenge and skill are both perceived to be high, motivation, affect, arousal, and concentration will all be highest (Schmidt et al, 1996).

However, for most learners who are at a lower level of skill, these tasks are possibly regarded as threats, hindering them from learning. Therefore, it is necessary to devise tasks which will gradually build up to some level which reflects more directly the complexities of the real world. For this reason, a number of researchers offer general typologies of tasks as a starting point of task design. For example, Prabhu (1987) identified three broad task types: information gap, reasoning gap and problem-solving. Pattison (1987) sets out seven task and activity types: questions and answers, dialogues and role plays, matching activities, communication strategies, pictures and picture stories,

puzzles and problems, and discussions and decisions. Willis (1996) identifies another six task types: listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem-solving, sharing personal experiences, and creative tasks. Richards (2001) proposes five pedagogical task types: jigsaw tasks, information-gap tasks, problem-solving tasks, decision-making tasks, and opinion exchange tasks (Nunan, 2004).

Amongst all these various task types, Willis's (1996) classification of tasks was adopted in my research for two reasons. First, these task types could be implemented in a series of topics which were suited to my learners and then carried out in the target language. Second, these task types could be combined in a number of ways in operation. For instance, the tasks which consisted of one type only, such as listing tasks, could be used as simple tasks, while the tasks which incorporated two or more types, such as comparing then sharing personal experiences, could be introduced as complex tasks for the programme.

More discussion about the implications of the task-based learning approach will be presented in the next section.

4.3.5 The role of the teacher in the TBL framework

Of all the differences between traditional approach and the TBL approach to foreign language instruction, the restructuring of teacher and learner roles is the most salient. In the TBL framework, most of the emphasis is on learners using

the target language through interaction in pairs or in groups in order to achieve task outcomes.

In contrast to the traditional EFL classroom, which is teacher-oriented, the teacher's role in the TBL framework, in my opinion, is flexible and changes with each phase. At the pre-task phase, the teacher is involved in setting tasks up, activating topic-related words and phrases, and ensuring that learners understand task instructions and prepare. He/she acts as a facilitator, who always keeps the key conditions for learning (i.e., exposure, use, motivation and instruction) in mind. At the task cycle phase, while emphasising on learners using language in pairs or groups in order to achieve the task outcomes, the teacher acts as monitor, encouraging learners to work independently. By giving language support at the planning stage, the teacher acts as linguistic adviser, helping learners organise their conclusions into a form suitable for presentation in public. Then at the report stage, the teacher acts as chairperson, introducing the presentations, selecting who will present their reports next, giving positive feedback on the report contents. At the end of the framework, where the focus turns to language form, the teacher acts as language guide, facilitating public use of language. He/she reviews each analysis activity with the class and brings other useful words, phrases and patterns to the learners' attention at the analysis stage. Finally, at the practice stage, the teacher conducts practice activities and sums up of what the learners have achieved during a lesson, or after a series of lessons.

On the whole, the teacher is the course guide, explaining to learners the overall

objectives of the course and how the components of the task framework can achieve these (Willis, 1996).

4.3.6 Teacher intention and learner interpretation

Due to the fact that the teacher and the learners have a remarkable degree of flexibility to develop skills for expressing different communicative meanings through interactive tasks rather than repeating and practising a list of specific linguistic forms, recent research in SLA pedagogy (Breen, 1987; Kumaravadivelu, 1991; Seedhouse, 1999; Murphy, 2003) has been concerned with two issues. First, such flexibility can lead to potential misunderstanding and miscommunication between the teacher and the learners. As Breen (1987) argues, learners' interpretation of a task is shaped by 'their assumptions about what they themselves should contribute; their view of the nature and demands of the task itself; and their personal definitions of the task situation' (Breen, 1987: 24). In other words, the tasks within the TBL framework may be reinterpreted by the learners in their own terms. What the learners perform in the task may not be the same as what the teacher intends them to do. The teacher may design a task to encourage extended discussion, but the learners appear to be so concentrated on completing the task that they may use the simplest strategy to perform it.

In fact, given the nature of task-based pedagogy, it is almost inevitable that there will be a mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation. Thus Breen (1987) distinguishes between the original 'task-as-workplan' and the

actual 'task in process', and suggests that 'learners are capable of playing havoc with even the most carefully designed task' (Breen, 1987: 23). He elaborates on this by stating the learner purposes can be viewed on a continuum between 'achievement orientation' and 'survival orientation' (Breen 1987: 26). If learners perceive that a task relates closely to their own learning needs, they will adopt an achievement orientation. On the other hand, if they are unable to see the relevance of the task to their perceived needs, they are likely to adopt a survival orientation, and perform the task with minimal effort, thereby possibly mismatching with the objectives of the teacher (Murphy, 2003).

Although this gap is a crucial factor in task-based pedagogy, it should not be regarded as totally negative. According to Kumaravadivelu (1991), if a particular mismatch is identified and properly handled, it can give learners a good opportunity to negotiate further in order to figure out a problem in their own way. In fact, as Candlin (1987) points out, 'it would be ironic if a task-based syllabus merely made learners expert at following pre-set paths and did not promote their own capacities to draw their own maps' (Candlin, 1987: 17). Thus, what is needed most is an understanding of the learners' capacity to draw their own maps. The more the teacher knows about the learners' personal concepts and perspectives on tasks, the narrower the gap between teacher intention and learner interpretation. The narrower the gap, the greater the chance of achieving desired learning outcomes (Kumaravadivelu, 1991).

4.3.7 The interaction between tasks and learners

As mentioned above, the tasks within the TBL framework may be reinterpreted

by the learners in their own terms, learners may also have different interpretations on contributions to tasks with their own perspectives. Thus, the second aspect to be considered is the interaction between tasks and learners because groups of learners may reinterpret tasks by reacting to each other's contributions in a way that pushes the task to unforeseen directions.

However, it could be argued that this increases the authenticity of the task by reflecting the personalities and interests of the learners. If we are to cater for individual differences, a task should allow for different procedural routes to the same goal. Groups of learners can adopt different but complementary roles to achieve the task through interaction (Murphy, 2003). In fact, from the perspective of constructivism, social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Learners construct knowledge through the process of social interaction, such as pair work and group work, and in collaborative learning in tasks (Vygotsky, 1978). Machado de Almeida Mattos (2000) agrees with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of learning, arguing that scaffolding can enable learners to extend their language competence by collaborating with more capable peers. Also, more research asserts the advantages of task-based approach in terms of task interaction. For example, Long et al. (1976) claim that learners produce a greater quantity of talk than in a teacher-fronted classroom when working in pairs and small groups. More surprisingly, Porter (1983) found that learners do not learn each other's errors when working with one another. Lim (1992) argues that learners who actively participate in tasks and activities outperform in their language proficiency than those who passively receive knowledge from teachers.

Yet with regard to learners' possibly negative contributions to tasks (i.e., adopting a survival orientation and performing in the task with minimal effort), some other aspects should be taken into consideration. First, the pedagogical objectives of the task must be made clear to the learners. Second, learners need to be given more chances to reflect on language and to try to systematise what they know. Third, tasks should involve learners in reflecting on the way in which they carried them out, as well as on the language they used, thereby helping to develop greater learner autonomy (Murphy, 2003).

Overall, the use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching can be helpful to make language teaching and learning more communicative. Nunan (1999) further asserts the effects of using tasks in language learning, as indicated:

Tasks allow learners to practice identifying the key grammar and vocabulary in real-world texts and to develop the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening in an integrated way, just as in authentic communicative situations. Tasks also give learners practice in cooperating with other learners and with their teachers, making creative use of the language they have learnt (Nunan, 1999: 76-77).

In short, we might conclude that task-based language learning, which emphasises practice of the target language with a piece of authentic-like work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, and interacting, is beneficial to learners' motivation and enhances their language proficiency.

4.3.8 Task motivation

An earlier perspective on learner performance in tasks is proposed by Breen (1987). As already mentioned, he offered a view of a continuum between *achievement orientation* and *survival orientation* (Breen, 1987: 26) in order to explain why some learners adopt the simplest strategies in tasks. In accordance to Breen's (1987) perspective, Keller (1994) further asserted four determinants that could affect learners' motivation in tasks: *interest, relevance, expectancy, and satisfaction*, which were mentioned in 3.2.2.2.

With regard to the determinants of motivation that affect learner involvement in tasks, Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura (1989) examined the ebb and flow of psychological states (motivation, concentration, and involvement) and proposed that the challenge of a task and the level of skill brought by the learner to the task are the crucial determinants of psychological states. In Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura's (1989) opinion, learner's motivation, affect, arousal, and concentration will all be highest when challenge and skill are perceived to be about equal and when both are high. When the challenge of a task is high and skills brought by the learner to it are low, then the resulting psychological state is anxiety. When the challenge of a task is low and skills brought by the learner to it are high, then the outcome is boredom. When both challenge and skill are low, the outcome is a negative state of apathy. In other words, it is reasonable to conclude that a challenging task which is just beyond learners' current level of skill can intrinsically arouse their learning motivation (Schmidt et al, 1996).

In a recent theoretical discussion of task motivation, Dörnyei and Kormos (2000) found that the learner's overall disposition towards task performance has at least three distinct layers: (a) generalised motives (e.g., integrativeness), (b) course-specific motives (e.g., the appraisal of the L2 course), and (c) task-specific motives (e.g., attitudes towards the particular task) (Dörnyei, 2001c). Similarly, Julkunen (2001) declared that when learners are confronted with a particular task, they are motivated both by generalised factors (e.g., overall interest in the task) and situation-specific factors (e.g., the challenging nature of the task). In addition, in a study of L2 motivation in communicative tasks, within the perspective of social constructivism, Dörnyei (2001c) claimed that task motivation is co-constructed by the participants.

Also, in recent L2 motivation research, Dörnyei (2002) asserted that task motivation can be seen as the culmination of the situated approach in L2 motivation research, as stated,

...tasks constitute the basic building blocks of classroom learning, and accordingly, L2 motivation can hardly be examined in a more situated manner than within a task-based framework (Dörnyei, 2002: 138).

Accordingly, based on situation-specific motives, this study focuses on the investigation into learners' L2 motivation in tasks within a temporal framework.

4.4 TBL in this research study

Adopting Willis's (1996) framework, this study investigates what learners perceive to be their beliefs and motivation in English learning and whether or not

their beliefs and motivation are affected by a task-based learning approach. A programme of TBL was devised to provide the context for the research. It was a 15-week general English programme with a topic-based syllabus, based on Willis's (1996) pedagogical framework of TBL (The outline of programme will be mentioned in the section 5.7.4). It was designed for young adult students at college age in Macau with an intermediate level of English. The programme intended to integrate the four skills. Tasks and authentic materials which were related to the weekly topic were used. The topics chosen were those which related to the students' interests, e.g., Jobs, Travel, Food and Health and Love and Marriage...etc. The syllabus encouraged collaborative work and enhanced learners' interpersonal skills by being involved in different kinds of groupings: individuals, pairs, small groups and a whole class.

The rationale, design and methods used in this research are presented in detail in Chapter 5.

4.5 Overall aims of the programme

The task-based EFL programme was designed for two main purposes: a pedagogical purpose and a research purpose. As to the pedagogical purpose, it aimed to develop learners' communicative competence through tasks. The aims of these tasks included:

- Having fun in learning English
- Acquiring the target language through interactions
- Extending vocabulary in various topics

- Developing presentation skills with confidence
- Cultivating problem-solving ability
- Enhancing interpersonal skills in communication
- Improving the four skills in using correct English in real-life situations

As to the research purpose, it was designed to investigate whether or not learners' personal constructs, such as learning beliefs and motivation, were affected by the task-based learning approach. The changes in learners' personal constructs were considered as significant evidence as to whether or not a task-based learning approach was beneficial to the learners who were from traditional grammar-oriented backgrounds. The research further aimed to help teachers to become more aware of these constructs and to identify and solve possible problems in English teaching to facilitate language learning more effectively and successfully, and for further professional improvement.

The following chapter describes the research study which used the task-based learning programme as its context. It presents the pilot study and includes a detailed description of the programme used.

Chapter 5 The research

5.1 Introduction to chapter

This action research study is constructivist in nature with elements of social-constructivism. It is concerned with knowledge and learning based on Kelly's (1955) philosophy of constructivism alongside Vygotsky's (1978) social learning theory. Under this theoretical framework, it uses mixed methods; mostly qualitative but with quantitative methods to provide baseline data.

5.2 Research questions

This study investigates what learners perceive to be their beliefs about and motivation in English learning and whether or not their beliefs and motivation are affected by a task-based learning approach. The overarching research question is:

Is a task-based learning approach beneficial to Chinese undergraduate learners who had been taught English only in a traditional approach?

In order to seek the answers to the question, I focused on the students' beliefs about and their motivation in English language learning by investigating into these questions:

- a. How does a task-based learning approach affect Chinese undergraduate learners' beliefs about English language learning?
- b. How does a task-based learning approach affect Chinese undergraduate learners' motivation in English language learning?

In order to further explore in depth these questions, I focused the investigation on the students' beliefs about and their motivation in English language learning both before and after the intervention of a task-based EFL learning programme by exploring the following sub-questions:

- (1) What are Chinese undergraduate learners' beliefs about English language learning pre- and post- a task-based learning programme?
- (2) What changes in beliefs are apparent and why?
- (3) What is their motivation in learning English pre- and post- a task-based learning programme?
- (4) What changes in motivation are apparent and why?

5.3 Philosophical background to research

5.3.1 What is constructivism?

In contrast to the perspective of positivism, which holds that 'truth and knowledge are real and finite, awaiting discovery through scientific means' (Sinclair, 2000: 67), constructivists (Glaserfeld, 1984, 1987; Kilpatrick, 1987) view 'knowledge as relative and actively constructed and modified by the

individual through interaction with the social environment' (Sinclair, *ibid*). Constructivism, therefore, is a term which has been used to describe theoretical approaches to the psychology of learning that share the underlying stance that knowledge is constructed by the learner and not transmitted by the teacher, i.e., 'knowledge cannot be taught but must be constructed by the learner' (Candy, 1991: 52). Kelly's (1955) personal construct theory even insists that 'people look at their world through transparent templates (*sic.*) which they create and then attempt to fit over the realities of which the world is composed' (Kelly, 1955: 8).

As mentioned above, constructivism differs from positivism in its stance on the status of 'knowledge' or 'truth'. As this research is mostly concerned with the subjects' own varied perceptions, the action research largely adopts qualitative methods. Quantitative methods, which complement the qualitative methods, provide this study with a holistic view so as to interpret the research from different perspectives.

5.3.2 What is social-constructivism?

Also relevant to my study is the related philosophy of social-constructivism. Social-constructivism is a term derived from the social learning theory by Vygotsky (1978), who emphasises the importance of 'social interaction' within the constructivist tradition (Benson, 2001). In his work with respect to children's learning, he stresses that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition (Sinclair, 2000). He states,

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first,

on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals (Vygotsky, 1978: 57).

In addition, his idea of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is an important part of the theory of social learning, which he defines as:

... the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978: 86).

In other words, knowledge is constructed within the individual through the process of social interaction. According to Vygotsky (1978), if the children/learners are guided by more capable peers or adults/teachers, they internalise meanings better and their learning is more effective.

5.3.3 Why is it relevant for my study?

Applying Vygotsky's theory to the EFL classroom, learners can construct knowledge through the process of social interaction, such as pair work and group work, and in collaborative learning in tasks. Learners learn effectively under guidance from the teacher and more capable peers. They construct and integrate new knowledge into their views of the world and it becomes their own knowledge. Therefore, Vygotsky's (1978) theory is relevant to my study in that I provide learners with collaborative learning and various types of tasks.

Learners have different views towards the tasks, the learning process, and the

interactions with peers due to their own interpretations, with various perspectives which derive from their own systems of values, beliefs and experiences. They construct knowledge through socially conditioned processes of interpretations (Benson, 2001). Therefore, it is important and necessary for teachers and for this study to use mainly qualitative methods to gather a deeper understanding of learner personal constructs, such as their beliefs about and their motivation in English language learning. Consequently, applying a purely positivist-quantitative method to my study does not make sense. Instead, qualitative methods such as learner diaries, field-notes, and follow-up interviews are used for data collection in my study. (For research methodology and methods, please refer to the sections 5.4 and 5.5).

5.4 Research methodology

5.4.1 Quantitative vs. Qualitative

As previously stated, this study makes use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. The differences between and relative merits of quantitative and qualitative research approaches have been debated for a long time in a tradition of contrastive dichotomy. Cohen et al. (2000) provides a comparison between quantitative and qualitative paradigms, as shown in Figure 5.1:

Figure 5.1: A comparison of quantitative and qualitative paradigms (sic.)

Quantitative approach	Qualitative approach
Numbers predetermined, given measuring short-term, intermittent comparing correlating frequencies formality looking at regularities description objective facts describing looking in from the outside structured statistical	Words open-ended, responsive capturing uniqueness long-term, continuous capturing particularity valuing quality individuality informality looking for uniqueness explanation subjective facts interpreting looking from the inside unstructured ethnographic, illuminative

From Cohen et al. (2000: 272)

More evidence of the difference between quantitative and qualitative paradigms can be found in Bryman (2001). He claims that quantitative and qualitative research paradigms represent different research strategies, which are general orientations to the conduct of social research in three areas: (1) the role of theory, (2) epistemological issues, and (3) ontological concerns (Bryman, 2001), as shown in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2: Fundamental differences between quantitative and qualitative research strategies

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Principle orientation to the role of theory in relation to research	Deductive; testing of theory	Inductive; generation of theory
Epistemological orientation	Natural science model, in particular positivism	Interpretivism
Ontological orientation	Objectivism	Constructivism

From Bryman (2001: 20)

In general, the fundamental difference between the two research traditions is that quantitative research emphasises numerical quantification in the collection

and analysis of data, based on the philosophy of positivism; whereas qualitative research emphasises words rather than numerical data in the collection and analysis of data, based on the philosophy of constructivism (Bryman, 2001). This will be discussed further in the next section 5.4.2 and 5.4.3.

However, the distinction between qualitative and quantitative may be regarded as simplistic and impractical. In analysing actual research studies, Grotjahn (1987) argues that it is important to take into consideration the method of data collection (experimentally or non-experimentally); the type of data yielded by the investigation (qualitative or quantitative); and the type of analysis conducted on the data (statistical or interpretive). By mixing and matching the three variables in different ways, there are two 'pure' and six 'mixed' forms as in Grotjahn's (1987) paradigms of research design, as shown in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3: Grotjahn's research paradigms

<p>Pure forms:</p> <p>Paradigm 1: exploratory-interpretive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. non-experimental design 2. qualitative data 3. interpretive analysis <p>Paradigm 2: analytical-nomological:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. experimental or quasi-experimental design 2. quantitative data 3. statistical analysis
<p>Mixed forms:</p> <p>Paradigm 3: experimental-qualitative-interpretive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. experimental or quasi-experimental design 2. qualitative data 3. interpretive analysis <p>Paradigm 4: experimental-qualitative-statistical:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. experimental or quasi-experimental design 2. qualitative data 3. statistical analysis

Figure 5.3: Grotjahn's research paradigms (Cont.)

<p>Mixed forms:</p> <p>Paradigm 5: exploratory-qualitative-statistical:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. non-experimental design2. qualitative data3. statistical analysis <p>Paradigm 6: exploratory-quantitative-statistical:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. non-experimental design2. quantitative data3. statistical analysis <p>Paradigm 7: exploratory-quantitative-interpretative:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. non-experimental design2. quantitative data3. interpretive analysis <p>Paradigm 8: experimental-quantitative-interpretive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. experimental or quasi-experimental design2. quantitative data3. interpretive analysis

Grotjahn (1987: 59-60)

However, few research studies fall neatly into the pure research paradigms, such as 'pure constructivist-exploratory-interpretive' or 'pure positivist-analytical-nomological'. Some 'mixed' paradigms also are of extremely unlikely occurrence, even though they all are theoretically possible. For instance, it would be highly impossible that the data, as shown in the eighth paradigm, which are collected in an experimental way and yielded by a quantitative investigation would be analysed interpretively (Nunan, 1992).

It has been argued that quantitative and qualitative research methods are indistinguishable in many respects. As Reichardt and Cook (1979) state, 'researchers in no way follow the principles of a supposed paradigm without simultaneously assuming methods and values of the alternative paradigms' (Reichardt and Cook, 1979: 232).

5.4.2 Quantitative research

Positivists look for the discovery of the 'fact', the testing of theories, and the existence of a constant relationship between two variables. Therefore, strict rules, procedures and statistical approaches derived from quantitative research are largely used for data collection and analysis (Cohen et al., 2000; Bryman, 2001; Robson, 2002). In contrast to qualitative research, quantitative research is concerned with numbers, analysis, specific focus, researcher detachment, and predetermined design (Denscombe 1998). The nature of quantitative research is stated by Nunan (1992) as follows:

Quantitative research is obtrusive and controlled, objective, generalisable, outcome oriented, and assumes the existence of 'facts' which are somehow external to and independent of the observer or researcher (Nunan, 1992: 3).

With specific reference to the research into beliefs and motivation in the past decades, researchers have largely used quantitative approaches to collect and analyse data with standardised instruments (Dörnyei, 2001b). One of the advantages is that it is relatively easy to categorise the data into a set of findings. However, we should bear in mind that the outcomes derived from this method are too general. As Dörnyei (2001b) argues, 'it is impossible to do justice to the subjective variety of an individual life' (Dörnyei, 2001b: 193).

5.4.3 Qualitative research

Qualitative research, on the other hand, embraces a constructivist view that

knowledge is relative and actively constructed. Therefore, according to Tesch (1990), it is concerned with at least two elements:

- A concern with meanings and the way people understanding things.
- A concern with patterns of behaviour. (Denscombe, 2003)

In contrast to quantitative research, it tends to be associated with these six major characteristics: words, description, small-scale, being holistic, researcher involvement, and emergent design (Denscombe, 1998). Also, the nature of qualitative research is different from that of quantitative research, as Nunan (1992) indicates,

Qualitative research assumes that all knowledge is relative, that there is a subjective element to all knowledge and research, and that holistic, ungeneralisable studies are justifiable (Nunan, 1992: 3).

With specific reference to the research into beliefs and motivation, one of the advantages which Dörnyei asserts is that qualitative research is more sensitive than quantitative research in covering the motivational dynamics involved in the L2 learning process (Dörnyei, 2001a). Besides, Ushioda (2001) also indicates that qualitative approach should be used more in the future because it can explore the complex underpinnings in the dynamic nature of motivation which cannot be easily probed with quantitative approach (Ushioda, 2001).

5.4.4 Mixed methods

Many researchers (McCracken, 1988; Morse, 1994; Mertens, 1998; Bell, 1999;

Patton, 2002) suggest that integrating quantitative and qualitative methods is more holistic, practical, and beneficial because mixed methods can help us to construct meaning and inspect the world. Amongst these researchers, I am particularly fond of McCracken's (1988) view. He states,

The qualitative data can illuminate what is happening in the quantitative finding, and the quantitative data can demonstrate the scope and distribution of qualitative finding (McCracken, 1988: 61).

Another advantage is that mixed methods can help us to examine any overlapping, convergent or contradictory facets in respect of triangulation (Creswell, 1994). Patton (2002) states,

Methods triangulation often involves comparing and integrating data collected through some kind of qualitative methods with data collected through some kind of quantitative methods. It is common that quantitative methods and qualitative methods are used in a complementary fashion to answer different questions (Patton, 2002: 556).

Consequently, although Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) state that 'classroom action research typically involves the use of qualitative, interpretive modes of inquiry' (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2000: 569), I have adopted mixed methods for this action research. Quantitative methods provide a general understanding of learner personal constructs; whereas qualitative methods provide detail and in-depth insights into the constructs. Following Grotjahn's (1987) research paradigms and Nunan's (1992) distinctions among pre-experiments, quasi-experiments, and true experiments (Figure 5.4), this research is pre-experimental-qualitative-interpretive. It utilises a pre-experiment approach but yields qualitative data which are analysed interpretively.

Figure 5.4: Contrasting pre-experiments, quasi-experiments, and true experiments

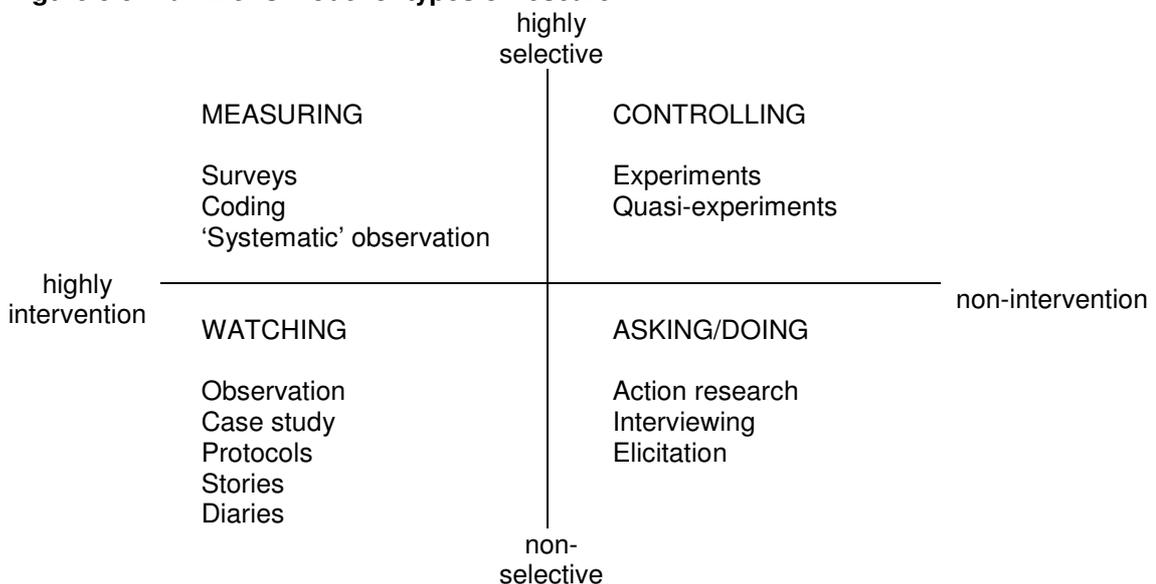
Type	Characteristics
Pre-experiment	May have pre- and post-treatment tests, but lacks a control group.
Quasi-experiment	Has both pre- and post-tests and experimental and control groups, but no random assignment of subjects.
True experiment	Has both pre- and post-tests, experimental and control groups, and random assignment of subjects.

Nunan (1992: 41)

With regards to Van Lier's (1988) parameters of intervention (of the researcher) and selectivity (of the phenomena to be investigated) (Figure 5.5), this research falls into four 'semantic spaces' at different stages of research process rather than neatly into one of the four quadrants, as Van Lier (1990) states,

... the researcher combines different features according to a particular *research design* or just in response to problems and possibilities, constraints, and resources, since research is in practice 'messy' rather than 'neat' (Van Lier, 1990: 35).

Figure 5.5: Van Lier's model of types of research



From: Van Lier (1988: 57)

Since this research is pre-experimental, it is not like a traditional experimental research which sets up a control group and an experimental group and

generalises the data with statistics. It focuses on controlling dependent variables (i.e., learner personal constructs such as beliefs and motivation) pre- and post- an independent variable (i.e., a task-based EFL programme) in order to study the causality of the dependent variables and the independent variable. Therefore, it measures the dependent variables with quantitative methods, such as questionnaires, in order to survey the differences in the dependent variables before and after the programme. In addition, it investigates these dependent variables during the programme with qualitative methods, such as weekly records of the change of the dependent variables (i.e., 'motivation' graph and notes), field-notes from observation, and learner diaries, without the researcher attempting to interfere. It also focuses on investigation by probing, asking for learners' views and concerns, and trying out minor changes. If/When a possible issue is pinpointed after the investigation, this research will follow the 'action research spiral' (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988), in which I reflect on, return to and extend the issue for improving professional action.

5.4.5 Action research

Lewin (1946) firstly used the term 'action research', which he viewed as a way of learning about organisations through trying to change them. Since then, many researchers have used it to promote organisational change and development, especially in educational settings (Robson, 2002).

5.4.5.1 The definition of action research

The term 'action research' has been defined in a number of different ways.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) regard it as 'a form of "self-reflective inquiry" by participants, undertaken in order to improve understanding of their practice in context with a view to maximising social justice' (Cohen et al., 2000: 227). Cohen and Manion (1994) define it as 'a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention' (Cohen and Manion, 1994:186). Wallace (1998) defines it as an approach in which the systematic collection and analysis of data relating to the improvement of some aspect of professional practice (Wallace, 1998). The several strands of action research are drawn together by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) in their all-encompassing definition:

Action research is a form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988: 5).

In other words, action research involves the collection and analysis of data related to some aspects of our context. Kemmis and McTaggart (1992) argue that 'to do action research is to plan, act, observe and reflect more carefully, more systematically, and more rigorously than one usually does in everyday life' (Kemmis and McTaggart 1992: 10). In contrast to traditional scientific research, which is concerned with the universal 'truth', action research is concerned with reflecting on what we have discovered and then applying it to our professional action. The aim of action research is to help practitioners (classroom teachers) to continue to develop in their professions (Wallace, 1998). This research, therefore, uses action research as a tool in this process. It studies learner personal constructs in a particular context, largely with qualitative

methods, and is concerned with the identification and solution of possible problems for further professional improvement. In other words, its overarching goal is to improve learners' motivation through employing specific teaching methods.

5.4.5.2 The nature of action research

Although researchers in the last two decades hold different views on the nature of action research, they share a similar consensus. For example, Elliott (1978, 1991) argues that action research is practical, problem-solving and intends to change things. She states,

Action research combines diagnosis with reflection, focusing on practical issues that have been identified by participants and which are somehow both problematic yet capable of being changed (Elliott, 1978: 355-6; 1991: 49).

Cohen and Manion (1985) assert that action research is situational and concerned with the identification and solution of problems in a specific context. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) agree with them that the essential impetus for carrying out action research is to change the system. Further, they indicate three defining characteristics of action research, which are that firstly, it is carried out by the practitioners (classroom teachers) rather than outside researchers; secondly, that it is collaborative; and thirdly, that it is aimed at changing things (Nunan, 1992). Wallace (1998) asserts that action research is very problem-focused in its approach and very practical in its intended outcomes. Denscombe (1998) has a similar opinion, as he states, 'action research is essentially practical and applied. It is driven by the need to solve practical,

real-world problems' (Denscombe, 1998: 74). Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998) view action research as spiral or cyclical. It involves planning a change, acting and then observing what happens following the change, reflecting on these processes and consequences, and then planning further action and repeating the cycle (Robson, 2002).

In summary, perhaps we may conclude the nature of action research with Denscombe's (1998: 73-74) view that action research is:

(1) Practical

It is aimed at dealing with real-world problems and issues, typically at work and in organisational settings.

(2) Change

Both as a way of dealing with practical problems and as a means of discovering more about phenomena, change is regarded as an integral part of research.

(3) Cyclical process

Research involves a feedback loop in which initial findings generate possibilities for change which are then implemented and evaluated as a prelude to further investigation.

(4) Participation

Practitioners are the crucial people in the research process. Their

participation is active, not passive.

As far as this research is concerned, I agree with the first three points of Denscombe's (1998) but I do not necessarily agree with the participatory nature of action research that 'practitioners are the crucial *people* in the research process' (Denscombe, 1998: 74). In other words, whether or not action research should be undertaken collaboratively is arguable. For example, Kemmis and McTaggart (1992) assert that one of the main defining characteristics of action research is that it is carried out collaboratively, collecting evidence on which to base rigorous group reflection. Holly and Whitehead (1986) hold a flexible view that it can be undertaken by an individual teacher, a group of teachers working co-operatively in a school, or a teacher/teachers working alongside a researcher/researchers in a sustained relationship. Nunan (1992) agrees with Holly and Whitehead's (1986) viewpoint, as he states:

While collaboration is highly desirable, I do not believe that it should be seen as a defining characteristic of action research. Many teachers who are interested in exploring processes of teaching and learning in their own context are either unable, for practical reasons, or unwilling, for personal reasons, to do collaborative research (Nunan, 1992: 18).

Cohen et al. (2000) confirms this by stating that,

The view of action research solely as a group activity, however, might be too restricting. It is possible for action research to be an individualistic matter as well, relating action research to the 'teacher-as-researcher' movement (Cohen et al., 2000: 230).

This action research followed Kemmis and McTaggart's (1992) cyclical process, i.e., plan → act → observe → reflect. However, due to the time limitation, further research cycles were not covered in the study. As to the researcher

participatory role in action research, it will be discussed further in the next section.

5.4.5.3 The role of the researcher: insider vs. outsider

In contrast to 'traditional' research which is carried out by researchers in the first stage and then the knowledge generated from the research is applied by practitioners in the second stage, Somekh (1995: 34) asserts that 'the two processes of research and action are integrated' in action research (Somekh, 1995). In this case, practitioners must be participants in action research, as Denscombe (1998) states, 'action research insists that practitioners must be participants, not just in the sense of taking part in the research but in the sense of being a partner in the research' (Denscombe, 1998: 77). Besides, no matter whether the action research is undertaken individually or collaboratively, Grundy and Kemmis (1988) argue that 'in action research, all actors involved in the research process are equal participants, and must be involved in every stage of the research' (Grundy and Kemmis, 1988: 7). Therefore, in terms of the concepts of 'practitioner as researcher' from a micro view, I consider myself as an 'insider' in the research, bridging the gap between theory and practice, since I have participated in three stages of the research process in Van Lier's (1988) paradigm: controlling → measuring → watching (as mentioned above in 5.4.4). I am also an 'insider' in that I share the culture and have taught in this particular context for 5 years, and combine the roles of teacher and researcher in this study.

On the other hand, the nature of action research can be considered from a macro view, as Kemmis and McTaggart (1992) suggest that:

Action research is concerned equally with changing *individuals*, on the one hand, and, on the other, the *culture* of the groups, institutions and societies to which they belong. The culture of a group can be defined in terms of the characteristic substance and forms of the language and discourses, activities and practices, and social relationships and organisation which constitute the interactions of the group (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1992: 16).

As I have taken a role to investigate by probing, asking for others' views and concerns, trying out minor changes, as stated in Van Lier's (1988) paradigm: asking/doing (noted in 5.4.4), my role may also be considered partially as an 'outsider' for some aspects of this study. Consequently, I may instigate the change of the particular context or system by disseminating research outcomes, running a workshop for colleagues or presenting a paper at a language conference. When another new issue comes up in this stage, I will shift to be an 'insider' to plan further action and repeat the process of research cycle again.

5.5 Research methods

There are many theories of motivation in language learning, such as: Gardner's motivation theory, Gardner and Lambert's L2 motivation theory, and Clément et al's linguistic self-confidence theory...etc. After considering these carefully, I selected three models or theories which seemed to me to be most relevant to my study: (1) Dörnyei's framework of L2 motivation, (2) Williams and Burden's social constructivist model, and (3) Dörnyei and Ottó's process model of L2 motivation.

Unlike other motivation theories in this field, these models and theories focused

on learners' dynamic nature of L2 motivation through social interaction from a classroom perspective. Dörnyei's framework of L2 motivation focused on learners' motivation from a classroom perspective. The third level of Dörnyei's framework (i.e., Learning situation level) was especially relevant to the study because it was associated with situation-specific motives of L2 learning in a classroom setting (i.e., the task-based EFL programme). Moreover, Williams and Burden's model offered an overview of educational psychology from a perspective of social constructivism that L2 motivation is influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors through social interaction. As the research focused on L2 motivation through social interaction in the task-based programme, Williams and Burden's model was appropriate for it. In addition, since the investigation was undertaken before, during, and after the task-based EFL programme, Dörnyei and Ottó's process model of L2 motivation was appropriate for the research because their model emphasised the dynamic nature of L2 motivation over a period of time.

Overall, the changes in learners' personal constructs, such as beliefs about and motivation in English language learning, are considered as significant evidence as to whether or not a task-based learning approach is beneficial to Chinese undergraduate learners who had been taught English only in a traditional approach. The study can help teachers to be aware of the constructs that can enhance learners' positive beliefs and motivations and, thus, contribute to more effective teaching and learning. It investigated what, how and why the changes of beliefs and motivations in English learning occurred over a semester of 15 week in an EFL classroom with the research instruments described below:

5.5.1 Questionnaires

In the past decades, many researchers (Horwitz, 1985; Cotterall, 1995; Victori and Lockhart, 1995) have investigated learners' beliefs by using questionnaires. Horwitz (1985) developed a systematic assessment, 'Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory' (BALLI), to assess student opinions on a variety of issues and controversies related to language learning. Cotterall (1995) used questionnaires to argue that learners' beliefs reflect their readiness for autonomy. Victori and Lockhart (1995) used questionnaires for investigating learners' beliefs about strategy effectiveness. Similarly, in my research, the similarities and differences in the students' attitudes pre- and post- the programme provided significant evidence as to whether they were motivated or demotivated by the task-based learning approach.

5.5.1.1 Beliefs about language learning inventory (BALLI)

As already discussed, the 'Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory' (BALLI), which was developed by Horwitz (1987), assesses the beliefs of students and teachers about language learning in five major areas: 1) difficulty of language learning; 2) foreign language aptitude; 3) the nature of language learning; 4) learning and communication strategies; and 5) motivations and expectations. The ESL Student Version of BALLI (1987) was adopted in my study (Appendix 1). 34 original items were slightly changed in wording, e.g., from 'American' to 'native-speaker of English'. Moreover, for the purpose of exploring the area of

learner motivation, another 6 items (i.e., Items 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, and 40) related to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and based on hypotheses of Confucianism influence on learning attitudes, were designed and added into section (5) on motivation and expectations (Appendix 2). All 40 items were designed to be responded to on a 5-point Likert scale, viz.: (1) strongly agree; (2) agree; (3) neither agree nor disagree; (4) disagree; and (5) strongly disagree. This 40-item adapted questionnaire of BALLI was used before and after the task-based EFL programme.

There are three main reasons why BALLI was used in my study. First of all, Horwitz's (1985, 1987) BALLI is a popular and reliable tool to survey learner beliefs about language learning. Recent researchers (e.g., Yang, 1999; Hsu, 2005) in the Chinese cultural context used it as a major instrument in their research and yielded significant contributions to knowledge. Second, since I am studying learner personal constructs, rather than learner's metacognitive knowledge or the connections between metacognitive knowledge and the choice of learning strategy use, Horwitz's (1987) BALLI is more appropriate for this study than Wenden's (1987), which focuses on the relationship between learners' metacognitive knowledge and the use of their learning strategy. Last but not least, as my study focuses on learner fundamental beliefs about language learning as one of the dependent variables, the five major areas in BALLI match my purpose. The quantitative data from BALLI can be analysed accordingly with other qualitative data from learner diaries and follow-up interviews to provide triangulation.

5.5.1.2 Motivation questionnaire

Due to the reason that many EFL teachers at my university have commented on their students' low motivation in learning English, a survey which focused on learner motivation could help teachers understand students' attitudes towards English learning. From literature review, there are many significant motivation questionnaires that have been constructed by researchers (e.g., Gardner, 1985; Schmidt et al., 1996; Cohen and Dörnyei, 2001; Brown, 2002) in the past decades, but the aspects which they are concerned with in their motivation questionnaires are different from the aspects which I am concerned with in my study.

Since I am specifically studying learner intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, I adopted Brown's (2002) motivation questionnaire (Appendix 3). Also, in Schmidt et al.'s (1996) motivation questionnaire, I partly adapted the aspects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations into this research (Appendix 4). Brown (2002) claims that motivation is one of the most important factors that leads to successful learning. Students who are motivated by their own wants and needs (intrinsic motivation) perform more effectively and successfully in their learning than those who are motivated by rewards or punishments (extrinsic motivation) (Brown, 2002). The 20-item motivation questionnaire mainly focused on two main areas: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. 10 of the items were originally adapted from Brown (2002: 18); namely, items 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Another 4 items were adapted from Schmidt et al. (1996: 65-66): Items 2, 9, 14 and 20. The other 6 items (1, 3, 4, 5, 18, and 19) were designed partly

based on hypotheses of Confucianism influence on learning attitudes. Some of the items (Items 3, 7, 8, 10, 14, 16, 18, 19 and 20) were also applied into the adapted BALLI, the section of (5) motivations and expectations.

As with the BALLI questionnaire, all the 20 items in Motivation Questionnaire were designed to be responded to on a 5-point Likert scale, viz.: (1) strongly agree; (2) agree; (3) neither agree nor disagree; (4) disagree; and (5) strongly disagree (Appendix 5). It was also used before and after the task-based EFL learning programme.

As mentioned above, quantitative methods such as BALLI and the Motivation Questionnaire were used for providing base-line data for later comparison in this research. Qualitative methods such as learner diaries and follow-up interviews were used for gathering rich data. In order to make my research valid and reliable, I am particularly concerned with the consistency between the quantitative and qualitative instruments. Therefore, for probing learner motivation in depth, some questions partly derived from Cohen and Dörnyei's (2001) questionnaire related to task motivation were used for learner diaries and the follow-up interviews.

5.5.2 A 'motivation' graph and notes

A weekly record of students' high or low points of 'motivation' (i.e., how they generally felt about their English learning at specific time and their reflections on why they felt this way) towards the tasks and their reflective comments on TBL

can provide significant evidence as to whether and how the students' motivation was affected during the task-based EFL programme. This 'motivation' graph was adapted from Ellis and Sinclair (1989). Students were required to mark their points of 'motivation' on a graph in the booklet from the range of -5 to +5 and explain the reasons either in Chinese or in English during the programme (Appendix 6).

Using this 'motivation' graph is the quickest and easiest visual way to investigate students' feelings and opinions towards tasks and the programme. They are required to weekly mark down their high/low point of motivation on the graph and explain with reasons. The data derived from the graph at this stage of research is non-selective according to Van Lier's (1988) research model. Besides, since the 'motivation' graph notes were completed by students without any prompts, the data provide further interesting insights into how and when the students changed their beliefs and motivations throughout the programme. Accordingly, the data collected from the 'motivation' graph notes can be analysed and triangulated with the data derived from their weekly diaries and follow-up interviews. That makes the research more valid and reliable. Therefore, it is a helpful tool to reflect on their learning motivation in tasks.

5.5.3 Diaries

Another qualitative instrument used in my research is learner diaries. Diary entries are beneficial to this research because they are reflectively recorded learning experiences over a period of time from learners' first-person

observations. Nunan (1992) considers diaries, logs and journals as 'important introspective tools in language research' (Nunan, 1992: 118). However, some shortcomings of keeping diary entries may come up if the students are not given enough guidelines for this unfamiliar task. If they are forced to keep diary entries without any prompts or use a language that is not their native language to express their thoughts and feelings about the subjects they are not familiar with, they may not fully express their thoughts and feelings from their perspectives, or even lose their focus and the data will probably be too loose to be further analysed.

For this reason, giving the students guidelines, such as structured diary prompts, is necessary. In this research, they were encouraged on a weekly basis to record their thoughts and feelings about the task-based EFL programme in line with the structured diary prompts in a special booklet which was given to them for this purpose. Also, they were encouraged to respond to the prompts freely in either their native language or target language nine times over the period of the programme. They had the opportunity to respond both positively and negatively to these prompts, which were provided in both English and Chinese.

The prompts in the booklet were repeated in normal teaching weeks and specific questions were added for the review weeks (For all the prompt questions in English, please refer to Appendix 7; for an example of regular questions, refer to Appendix 8; and for an example of specific questions, refer to Appendix 9). After every two ordinary teaching weeks there was one review week. The specific questions in the first review week were used for looking back generally

and specifically at what the students had thought about the tasks and the programme. The specific questions in the second review week were used for looking ahead to what the students wanted to do in class. The specific questions in the third review week were used for looking back at general issues. Some of the specific questions in the first and the second review weeks referred to task motivation, and were adapted from Cohen & Dörnyei (2001). Other specific questions about students' opinions on using tasks in English learning were asked again in the follow-up interviews.

Diary-keeping is a personal activity, therefore the researcher at this stage is 'watching' rather than 'controlling' with reference to Van Lier's research model. Since students can explore their thoughts and feelings in their diaries, it is a suitable tool to explore affective data (Wallace 1998). Keeping a diary not only helps the students reflect on their English learning in the programme but also provides the researcher with a rich source of students' inner voices on the TBL approach. The responses to these questions provided interesting insights into motivational features in task content.

5.5.4 Field-notes

Another significant source of data collected for later qualitative analysis during the task-based EFL programme was the field-notes from my observation. As Bryman (1988) notes about the typical observational study:

Field-notes or extended transcripts are rarely available; these would be very helpful in order to allow the reader to formulate his or her own hunches about the perspective of the people who have been studied

(Bryman, 1988: 77).

Besides, with regards to improving reliability, Spradley (1979) suggests that the observers should keep four separate sets of notes:

- (1) short notes made at the time;
- (2) expanded notes made as soon as possible after each field session;
- (3) a fieldwork journal to record problems and ideas that arise during each stage of field work; and
- (4) a provisional running record of analysis and interpretation

(cited in Kirk and Miller, 1986: 53).

Therefore, the field-notes were immediately written up after class. They mainly focused on general comments, the students' beliefs and motivation as made evident in the class, their interaction in tasks, the performance of an individual student, ideas or problems, and things that worked or did not work well from the class. The data collected from field-notes were analysed and triangulated with the data derived from the students' weekly diaries and follow-up interviews. That makes the research more valid and reliable. This kind of information recorded from the researcher's observation and reflection on professional practice is helpful for professional development and for the study. (For an example of field-notes, please refer to Appendix 10)

5.5.5 Follow-up interviews

At the end of the task-based EFL programme, each of the students was individually given a semi-structured interview. It is different from an unstructured interview, which is guided by the responses of the interviewee, who has a degree of control over the interview so that the direction of the interview is

unpredictable. It is also different from a structured interview, which is determined by the researcher, who works through a list of set questions and exerts what he/she wishes to. Instead, in a semi-structured interview, the researcher/interviewer has a general idea of where he/she wishes the interview to go without following a list of predetermined questions. As Dowsett (1986) indicates,

The semi-structured interview is quite extraordinary – the interactions are incredibly rich and the data indicate that you can produce extraordinary evidence about life that you don't get in structured interviews or questionnaire methodology – no matter how open ended and qualitative you think your questionnaires are attempting to be. It's not the only qualitative research technique that will produce rich information about social relationships but it does give you access to social relationships in a quite profound way (Dowsett, 1986: 53).

In other words, the main advantage of semi-structured interview is that it is more flexible than other kinds of interviews. Due to its flexibility, it has been popularly used in an interpretive research tradition (Nunan, 1992). As Nunan (1992) states,

In the first instance, that it gives the interviewee a degree of control over the interview. Secondly, it gives the interviewers a great deal of flexibility. Finally, and most profoundly, this form of interview gives one privileged access to other people's lives (Nunan, 1992: 150).

Some researchers (e.g., Johnston, 1985; Van Lier, 1989; Nunan, 1992) indicate that the validity of the interview may be questioned in some circumstances. For example, the interviewer may verbally signpost the important questions to the interviewees in the interaction or the interviewer may interpret with his/her own perspectives what he/she wishes to include in the interview.

Therefore, it was important to keep this in mind and try to reduce the number of variables as much as possible by following procedures recommended by Spradley (1979), Cohen and Manion (1985) and Nunan (1992):

(1) Preparing the interview schedule

Once I established the objectives of the study, I started to consider the question format, response mode and the type of questions to be used. Thus, an interview schedule was designed with prompts to investigate students' motivation towards tasks in the programme (Appendix 11). The interview mainly focused on these areas: (1) their attitudes towards English learning after the task-based EFL programme; (2) their comments on task-based language learning; (3) whether and how their motivation in English learning was affected by the programme; (4) the reasons why or why not the programme affected their English learning motivation; (5) what factors affected their motivation most over the period of the programme; (6) whether the programme improved their English learning proficiency; (7) what skills had or had not been improved and the reasons; (8) their task preferences and the reasons; and (9) whether or not the programme satisfied their initial expectations of English learning.

(2) Piloting

Since potential problems may come up in the use of interview, it is important that interview questions are piloted with a small sample of subjects before being used. Five students in the previous semester of the EFL programme participated in the pilot interview. Their responses and comments on the interview questions gave me a good opportunity to eliminate ambiguous

questions and refine the structure of the interview.

(3) Briefing and explanation

Before the interview began, the nature of the research and the purpose of the interview were explained to all the participants. They understood that they would be tape-recorded in the interview, all the data would be confidential and it would only be used for the purpose of the research.

Besides, for overcoming problems, such as the interviewer verbally signposting the important questions to the interviewees in the interaction or may subjectively interpreting with his/her own perspectives what s/he wishes to conclude in the interview, as mentioned above, the interviewees were given an interview schedule with a list of prompt questions before the interview. They had enough time to prepare their responses to questions before they were asked. During the interview, tape-recording and note-taking were necessary because this could objectively help me to recall the central issues and reanalyse the data after the event. In other words, at this stage of research, I stood as an 'outsider' to objectively ask for learners' views and concerns with respect to Van Lier's (1988) research model.

The data from the interview were plentiful and they mainly focused on the students' comments on task-based language learning, whether or not, and how and why their motivation in English learning was affected by the programme. They could be analysed and triangulated with the data derived from the students' pre- and post- questionnaires, weekly 'motivation' graph and notes, learners'

diaries and from the researcher's field-notes for data analysis. This will be discussed in the next sections (Chapter 6 and 7).

5.6 Subjects

The 24 participants in the research were Chinese undergraduate students who attended an elective course, entitled Interactive English. The first 24 students who registered onto the course were chosen for this research, subject to their agreement. All of them were of college age, ranging from 18 to 21, from different faculties, and at an intermediate level of English. Only one of them was local and the others were from different regions of mainland China. Although they were regionally different, they probably shared similar learning experiences in a traditional EFL classroom under the same cultural context.

For ethical reasons, at the very beginning, all of them were given participant information (Appendix 12) and a consent form (Appendix 13), explaining about the aims of the research, what and how they were required to do at the beginning of, during and at the end of the research. They understood the purpose of the research and their involvement in it. Also, they understood that all the information would be confidential and anonymously used in this research and it would only be used for the research purposes and be kept until the research had been completed. Also, they understood their rights to withdraw from the research at any stage and they may contact the research ethics coordinator if they wanted to make a complaint relating to their involvement in the research. These ethical considerations are in line with current BERA guidelines.

5.7 Procedure

The research procedure, based on a 15-week teaching schedule of the task-based EFL programme, contains a pilot study in the first semester and the main study in the second semester in the academic year 2006/2007. They will be discussed in the sections below.

5.7.1 Pilot study

The pilot study was undertaken during 15 weeks, from September to December 2006. At the beginning, 30 students who were interested in the programme came to the class. I gave them a brief introduction to the task-based learning, the aims of the programme, and the purpose of the research. They were given an 'ice-breaking' task. Those who liked speaking English in task interaction would be chosen for the programme and became the subjects of the pilot study. For the sake of being easily arranged into different types of groupings, only 24 students were chosen to the programme. In the second week, they were given a pre-treatment (BALLI and Motivation Questionnaire) and a booklet which contained open-ended questions, a 'motivation' graph and diary prompts. I also kept weekly field-notes after class. During the programme, they were required to record the 'motivation' graph with reasons and keep their diaries in the booklet in 10 minutes at the end of class. At the end of the programme, they were given the post-treatment – the same BALLI and Motivation Questionnaire again. Furthermore, each of the students was given a participant consent form before individually having a semi-structured interview in

the final week. The procedure of the pilot study which was based on the teaching schedule was shown in Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6: The procedure for the pilot study in the period of the task-based EFL programme, based on the teaching schedule in the 1st semester, (05/09/06 ~ 12/12/06), 2006/2007

Week	Date	Events and research instruments
<i>Pre- programme</i>		
1	05/09	<p>Course Introduction</p> <p>All the 30 students were given an introduction of the task-based EFL programme, explaining about the aims of the research, how and what they were required to do at the beginning of, during and at the end of the research.</p> <p>They were gauged by giving an ice-breaking task as an assessment to see whether they were comfortable in peer interaction and qualified for the course. The qualified 24 students would be allowed to enrol on the course.</p>
2	12/09	<p>Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) and Motivation Questionnaire were issued to the 24 students participating in the programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ BALLI: It used to investigate the students' beliefs about English language learning with reference to: (1) the difficulty of EFL; (2) EFL aptitude; (3) the nature of EFL; (4) learning and communicative strategies; and (5) motivations and expectations. ✧ Motivation Questionnaire: It used to investigate their motivation in English language learning with reference to two main areas: (1) intrinsic motivation; and (2) extrinsic motivation. <p>Then, they were given a booklet to record their responses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Open-ended questions: They used for investigating the students' attitudes toward tasks and English language learning and their initial expectations for the programme. ✧ A 'motivation' graph: It used to record their motivation toward the class and the reasons. It also recorded the students' weekly changes of motivation toward the programme. <p>After class, I reflected on the class from my observation and recorded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Field-notes: The field-notes from the researcher were used to record general comments, the students' beliefs and motivation as made evident in the class, their interaction in tasks, the performance of an individual student, ideas or problems, and things that worked or did not work well from the class.

Figure 5.6: The procedure for the pilot study in the period of the task-based EFL programme, based on the teaching schedule in the 1st semester, (05/09/06 ~ 12/12/06), 2006/2007 (Cont.)

Week	Date	Events and research instruments
<i>During the programme</i>		
3	19/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ◇ Diaries (regular questions) The data collected from diaries show in depth the students' reaction to different tasks, attitudes towards teaching materials, feelings about their fellow students, their overall progress, ability and general motivation for the course. It also shows the trace of the students' changes of beliefs and motivation during the period of the programme. It is helpful for a further follow-up interview. ◇ Field-notes: (as before)
4	26/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ◇ Diaries (regular questions): (as before) ◇ Field-notes: (as before)
5	03/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ◇ Diaries (specific questions) -- 1st review week: (as before) ◇ Field-notes: (as before)
6	10/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ◇ Diaries (regular questions): (as before) ◇ Field-notes: (as before)
7	17/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ◇ Diaries (regular questions): (as before) ◇ Field-notes: (as before)
8	24/10	Mid-term Exam
9	31/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ◇ Diaries (specific questions) -- 2nd review week: (as before) ◇ Field-notes: (as before)
10	07/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ◇ Diaries (regular questions): (as before) ◇ Field-notes: (as before)
11	14/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ◇ Diaries (regular questions): (as before) ◇ Field-notes: (as before)
12	21/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ◇ Diaries (specific questions) -- 3rd review week: (as before) ◇ Field-notes: (as before)
13	28/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ◇ Field-notes: (as before)
<i>Post- programme</i>		
14	05/12	<p>The same questionnaires were used again for comparing the students' attitudes towards task-based English language learning after the programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ BALLI: (as before) ◇ Motivation Questionnaire: (as before)
15	12/12	<p>Final Exam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Follow-up interviews The 24 students were individually given a semi-structured interview which focused on the students' comments on task-based language learning, whether or not their motivation in English learning was affected by the programme, and how and why their motivation was affected.

5.7.2 The significance of the pilot study

5.7.2.1 The problems which emerged from the pilot study

When I was undertaking the pilot study, I thought that the programme and the research instruments were so well-prepared that the data would be rich enough for data analysis. However, after running through the whole programme and objectively reviewing the data from my weekly field-notes and the students' 'motivation' graphs, diaries and interviews, I found that some problems, derived from tiny mistakes, had emerged in the pilot study and they had negatively affected the validity and reliability. These issues are going to be discussed from 'an outsider's perspective' below:

(1) The assessment of the participants in the research

As mentioned above, in the first week of the programme, 30 students came to the programme with the intention of taking the programme but only 24, who seemed more fond of communicating with peers in the 'ice-breaking' task, were chosen to be the subjects of the study. The choice by the teacher of who was allowed to come to the programme would be questioned. The criterion is not clear enough because the definition of 'who were more likely fond of communicating with peers' was vague. The teacher's choice would subjectively come from her personal favourites. Besides, in general, those who were 'fond of' communicating with peers in English would be likely to be 'motivated' in learning English. Since they had already been a group of students who were motivated above average, it would not be surprising to see

that their motivation was still high at the end of the programme and the research outcome satisfied the teacher/researcher's expectations. Therefore, the researcher should be aware of this problem, otherwise, the validity of the research would be questioned.

(2) The instructions for data collection

During the programme, the students were required to record the 'motivation' graph with reasons and keep their diaries in the booklets in the 10 minutes before the class was dismissed. Since the instructions for the 'motivation' graph and prompt questions of the semi-structured diaries were written in both English and Chinese, the researcher assumed that the students could complete their responses in a short period of time. However, the fact was that, they made mistakes in the data collection. The first problem was that some of them misunderstood the meanings of the instructions of the 'motivation' graph. They thought they were required to mark both high and low points of learning motivation in the class or simply mark a high point of learning motivation in other English classes during the particular week. Another problem was that, due to the time limitation, most of the students could not fully express their feelings and opinions in the diaries even though they could answer in either Chinese or English. They often wrote a few words or sometimes forgot to respond to some questions in their diaries. Therefore, the data from the research instruments were not 'rich and thick' enough for further data analysis. Learning from the lessons, for the reliability and validity of the research, the students should be given clear instructions by the researcher in the process of data collection. It should be verbally explained in their native language how to record the data in

the booklet, even after the students have read the instructions written in both target and native languages. Also, the students should be given plenty of time for the diaries. It would be better if they were allowed to have a few days for keeping the diaries.

(3) Ethical issues

At the beginning, each student was given a booklet with the information about the programme and their requirements for the research. I also verbally explained to them the purpose of the research, how and what they were required to do at the beginning of, during and at the end of the research. In this case, I assumed that they all agreed to participate in the research and therefore a participant consent form was given to them just before the interview at the end of the programme. However, to my surprise, in the interview, one of the students frankly told me that he did not like taking part in the research. He only wanted to be 'a learner' in the programme, not 'a subject' in the research. He told me that he did not like to keep recording the diary and the 'motivation' graph, so that he only gave short answers to the questions and wrote a few words in his booklet every week. His response made me realise that I should have carefully paid attention to this ethical issue. The students should be respectfully informed and understand, at the very beginning of the research, that they had the rights to participate in the research and to withdraw from it at any time without suffering from any negative consequences.

(4) The syllabus of the task-based EFL programme

The plentiful comments on the syllabus and suggestions for the programme

provided by the students in their interviews were significant for the research. In general, most of them said that they liked studying English in tasks. They said that they were particularly fond of the tasks which were challenging, relevant to their interests and daily lives. The first thing that they suggested for improving the programme was the topics. For them, the topics were one of the key factors to determine their involvement in the tasks. Therefore, they suggested to remove the least interesting topics but to develop in depth their favourite topics such as 'Love and Marriage', 'Jobs' and 'Travel'. The second thing that they suggested was about offering a list of vocabulary – 'Word Bank' with the tasks. Because of the lack of English vocabulary, they could not fully express their ideas and opinions in discussion. They said that sometimes they would secretly use Chinese in the discussion for convenience and to save time. If they had been offered a list of vocabulary and background knowledge about the topics in advance, they would have previewed them and done better in task discussion in English. The third thing was about the grouping arrangements. Since they were allowed to freely choose their partners for team work, the partners were often their friends or ones they knew. In this case, they would not dare to speak English with their partners, especially when facing some difficulties in communication, because they were afraid of 'losing face' in front of their friends. Hence, they suggested that the groupings could be arranged by the teacher in different ways, such as by colour cards or numbers.

5.7.2.2 Lessons learnt from the pilot study

The pilot study provided me with good lessons that these issues had to be

changed in the main study; otherwise, they could have influenced the reliability and validity of the research. In order to avoid making the same mistakes as with the main study, changes were made in these areas:

First, for the programme enrolment for the main study, the first 24 students who registered on line were directly accepted to enrol on the course. They were not given any proficiency test or any form of assessment for the evaluation of their English competence or learning motivation. As a result, the validity could not be questioned by saying that the subjects had been motivated before the programme, and the research outcome undoubtedly matched with the researcher's expectation because she intentionally interfered with the research from the beginning.

Second, regarding ethical issues, in the first week I verbally explained to the students in their native language the aims of the research, their rights and their requirements at the beginning of, during and at the end of the research. They understood that all the information they provided would be confidential and anonymously used in the research. They also understood that they would not be treated with prejudice or suffer from any negative consequences if they wanted to withdraw from the research at any stage. After they understood the research procedure and agreed to take part in it, they were given a research consent form to fill in before the research began.

Third, the students were given one week for data recording in their booklets. Before data collection, the purpose of keeping diaries and 'motivation' graphs

were explained in their native language. They were encouraged to fully express their feelings and opinions toward tasks and the programme. The teacher would remind those who forgot to record the 'motivation' graph and keep diaries in their booklets. As a result, the reliability would not be undermined by ethical issues and by data inadequacy.

Fourth, some changes had been made to the syllabus of the programme. For the topics, the less favourite topics such as 'Time', 'Family' and 'Friends' were removed; whereas, the ones the students were fond of, such as 'Jobs', 'Travel' and 'Food and Health' were developed in depth. Before tasks, they were given a 'Word Bank' and relevant knowledge of the topics. When doing tasks, they were usually arranged in different types of groupings by the teacher. Since they were not familiar with each other, they felt less embarrassed about speaking English in tasks, especially when making mistakes in grammar and pronunciation. Moreover, they felt more secure and confident in doing tasks with others rather than working alone. In order to achieve the outcome of the task, they worked together and shared the responsibility in the team work. The team spirit developed by peer support and encouragement had a positive effect on English learning. On this occasion, the quality of the task-based programme was better in the main study than in the pilot study because the main study not only followed Willis's (1996) framework of Task-based learning but also considered the course-specific motivational components of Dörnyei's (1994) framework of L2 motivation – interest, relevance, expectancy and satisfaction (as mentioned in 3.2.2.2) in programme design. As a result, the validity and the reliability of the research would not be compromised by the quality of the

task-based programme.

Learning from the lessons of the pilot study, I reframed the procedure of the research again and carefully paid attention to the process of the research. This will be discussed in the next section.

5.7.3 The procedure of the research

The main study was undertaken over 15 weeks, from 23rd January to 15th May 2006. At the beginning, a task-based EFL programme, inspired by Willis's (1996) pedagogical framework of task-based learning, was designed for this study. The first 24 students who had registered on line were directly given an offer to enrol in the programme. In the first week, they were given an introduction to the programme and an explanation about the aims of the research and their requirements in the research. After they understood their rights and involvements, they were given a research consent form to fill in before the research began. Since all the 24 students were interested and they agreed to participate in the research, they naturally became the participants of the research. They were given a booklet for data recording after the teacher's explanation in their native language. After that, each of them was given the BALLI and Motivation Questionnaires as the pre-treatment investigation. From the second week, they were required to keep weekly diaries and record their high or low points on the 'motivation' graph, with reasons, in the booklet given. At the end of the programme, the same BALLI and Motivation Questionnaires were used again as part of the post-treatment investigation. Then, each of the

students had a semi-structured interview in the final week. In addition, the teacher reflected on their interaction in tasks and kept records in field-notes from the beginning to the end of the programme. The procedures for the main study, which was based on the teaching schedule, are shown in Figure 5.7.

Figure 5.7: The procedure for the main study in the period of the task-based EFL programme, based on the teaching schedule in the 2nd semester, (23/01/07 ~ 15/05/07), 2006/2007

Week	Date	Events and research instruments
<i>Pre- programme</i>		
1	23/01	<p>Course Introduction All the 24 students were given an introduction of the task-based EFL programme. After explaining in their native language about the aims of the research, how and what they were required to do at the beginning, during and at the end of the research, they were given a research consent form. They understood their rights and requirements in the research. Those who agreed to participate in the research were given a booklet for data recording.</p> <p>All of them agreed to take part in the research. Then, the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) and Motivation Questionnaires were issued to the participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ BALLI This was used to investigate the students' beliefs about English language learning with reference to: (1) the difficulty of EFL; (2) EFL aptitude; (3) the nature of EFL; (4) learning and communicative strategies; and (5) motivations and expectations. ✧ Motivation Questionnaire This was used to investigate students' motivation in English language learning with reference to two main areas: (1) intrinsic motivation; and (2) extrinsic motivation.
<i>During the programme</i>		
2	30/01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ A 'motivation' graph This was used to record students' motivation toward the class and the reasons. It was also recorded the students' weekly changes of motivation toward the programme. <p>After class, I reflected on the class from my observations and recorded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Field-notes: The field-notes from the researcher were used to record general comments, the students' beliefs and motivation as made evident in the class, their interaction in tasks, the performance of an individual student, ideas or problems, and things that worked or did not work well from the class.

Figure 5.7: The procedure for the main study in the period of the task-based EFL programme, based on the teaching schedule in the 2nd semester, (23/01/07 ~ 15/05/07), 2006/2007 (Cont.)

Week	Date	Events and research instruments
3	06/02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ✧ Diaries (regular questions) The data collected from diaries showed in depth the students' reaction to different tasks, attitudes towards teaching materials, feelings about their fellow students, their overall progress, ability and general motivation for the course. It also tracked the students' changes of beliefs and motivation during the period of the programme. It was helpful for orientating the follow-up interview. ✧ Field-notes: (as before)
12/02 ~24/02		Holiday (Chinese New Year)
4	27/02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ✧ Diaries (regular questions): (as before) ✧ Field-notes: (as before)
5	06/03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ✧ Diaries (specific questions) – 1st review week: (as before) ✧ Field-notes: (as before)
6	13/03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ✧ Diaries (regular questions): (as before) ✧ Field-notes: (as before)
7	20/03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ✧ Diaries (regular questions): (as before) ✧ Field-notes: (as before)
8	27/03	<p>Mid-term Exam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Diaries (specific questions) – 2nd review week: (as before)
9	03/04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ✧ Diaries (regular questions) : (as before) ✧ Field-notes: (as before)
10	10/04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ✧ Diaries (regular questions) : (as before) ✧ Field-notes: (as before)
11	17/04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ✧ Diaries (specific questions): 3rd review week: (as before) ✧ Field-notes: (as before)
<i>Post- programme</i>		
12	24/04	<p>The same questionnaires were used again for comparing the students' attitudes towards task-based English language learning after the programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ BALLI: (as before) ✧ Motivation Questionnaire: (as before) ✧ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ✧ Field-notes: (as before)
13	01/05	Holiday (Labour Day)
14	08/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ A 'motivation' graph: (as before) ✧ Field-notes: (as before)
15	15/05	<p>Final Exam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Follow-up interviews The 24 participants were individually given a semi-structured interview which focused on the students' comments on task-based language learning, whether or not, how and why their motivation in English learning was affected by the programme.

5.7.4 Course outline

The EFL programme that I designed for the research is based on Willis's (1996) framework of task-based learning, consisting of three phases: pre-task, task-cycle and language focus. It was designed for a term of 15 weeks, one lesson a week of 100 minutes, and for young adult students at college age with an intermediate level of English. It was a general English programme with a topic-based syllabus, which integrated the four skills. Various tasks and authentic materials which related to the weekly topics were used.

This task-based syllabus encouraged collaborative work and enhanced learners' interpersonal skills by involving them in the process of the tasks in different kinds of groupings: individuals, pairs, small groups and a whole class. The topics of the tasks chosen were those deemed relevant to my students' experience, such as 'Jobs', 'Travel', 'Food and Health' and 'Love and Marriage'...etc. The tasks which were adopted for the EFL programme were concerned with the students' needs and interests, and aimed to help them develop their language proficiency, interpersonal competence, and problem-solving ability. They were required to cooperate with each other, ask and give information, exchange suggestions, and discuss ideas and opinions in various task types: listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem-solving, sharing personal experiences, and creative tasks. The materials adopted in the programme were multiple: handouts, charts and diagrams, quiz, questionnaires, Internet resources, role-play cards, résumés, menus, brochures, maps, itineraries...etc. An overview of the task-based EFL programme outline is shown in Appendix 14.

Through the process of doing various tasks in different groupings, I hoped my students could have the benefit of practising language skills and developing sociolinguistic competence in task interactions. They can have opportunities to practise using English in different real-life situations, and therefore develop their communicative competence.

5.7.5 Lesson plan

The lesson plans which I designed for the EFL programme are based on Willis's (1996) TBL framework consisted of three phases: pre-task, task cycle and language focus. Here, one of the lesson plans is presented in detail as an example to illustrate the procedure of the TBL framework in practice:

An example of a lesson plan:

<i>Topic:</i>	Travel
<i>Aims:</i>	Encourage the student to rehearse the target language on the familiar topic and then experiment with the use of language outside the classroom
<i>Materials:</i>	Some authentic maps of Macau, a recording of travelling and tapescripts
<i>Types of groupings:</i>	Small groups of three
<i>Duration:</i>	100 minutes

Class and course background:

Intermediate, mixed ability, Chinese-speaking learners were of college age, ranging from 18 to 21, from different faculties in the same university. An elective course, entitled Interactive English, one lesson a week of 100 minutes during a 15-week semester. The students have completed 2/3 of the programme, with experience of doing different types of tasks and the procedure

of the TBL framework.

Pre-task

1. Introduce the topic and the purpose of the task by asking the students what travel features (e.g., architecture, cuisine, shopping, scenery...etc.) they are fond of.
2. Listen to a conversation about travelling in Bangkok two or three times. Ask the students to jot down the features mentioned in the conversation. They may have the tapescript afterwards.

A: Hi, Ellen. How was your vacation?

B: Great! I went to Bangkok.

A: Really? Why did you decide to go there?

B: Well, I have a cousin who lives there. She's been trying to get me to take a vacation down there for a long time, and so, finally, she talked me into it.

A: I've seen some pictures of Bangkok – the architecture there is really interesting, isn't it?

B: Yes, it's incredible, especially the Grand Palace. The Buddhist temples, too, are very impressive. And I love the spicy Thai food and tropical fruits there.

A: That's about the only thing I didn't enjoy. It was really hot and sticky. In fact, April is its hottest month. The best time to go is during the cool season, which lasts from November to February. Did you go to some other places beside Bangkok?

B: Sure, I went to Pattaya. It's a famous resort, only two hours' drive from Bangkok. There's plenty to enjoy: fine sand, blue sky, clear water, colourful night life...

A: Well, it sure sounds like you had a great time.

B: Oh, I sure did. And I plan to go back there next year. I'd like to visit Phuket, the biggest island of Thailand. It's world-famous as a seaside resort.

(From Yu and Li, 2001)

3. Brainstorm with the class on travel features, write down on the board, and ask the students to rank the priority from the most favourite to the least. Give the student two minutes to think about the reasons for their ranking priority.
4. Organise the groups of three. Each of them shares his/her ideas to

one another in groups.

Task Cycle

Task

Each group is required to plan an itinerary for one-day travel in Macau. They need to compromise on their favourite features and discuss where to go and what to do, with a map of Macau.

Planning (20 min)

Each pair is given a template of an itinerary. The teacher goes round the class, gives help if needed, and nominates spokespersons. The teacher also notes down language points for highlighting later, such as any useful phrases that the students use.

Report

Pick four or five groups to tell their itineraries.

Class listen – their purpose is to note down the features and find what they have in common.

The teacher gives feedback on content. Review similarities and differences in their itineraries.

Language Focus

Analysis

The teacher reviews the language points that the students used in the task cycle, for instance, the use of transitional adverbs and the expressions for opinions and suggestion.

Practice

Each student in group reviews their ranking priority of travel features, orally practising the use of the transitional adverbs and the expressions for opinions and suggestions.

For homework, each group is required to experiment with the use of the target language out of class. Pick two or three specific points in their itinerary and travel together in Macau. At the end of the programme, they are required to show the class their real journeys with photos and two or three conversation recordings in the target language, using PowerPoint.

5.7.6 The rationale for the task-based EFL programme

Developing learners' communicative competence is the essential goal in English teaching. In my opinion, the approach to the syllabus should be communicative and the materials should be close to real-life communications with various functions in which learners learn to express their own ideas, opinions, perspectives and attitudes for their own purposes. For these reasons, different from a traditional English learning syllabus in which the teacher is likely to 'spoon-feed' knowledge to the learners in class, this task-based syllabus underlies a fundamental principle of communicative approach with the

perspective of constructivism in that learners should not only focus on learning a list of grammatical patterns and vocabulary, but should also construct and internalise the knowledge to develop the ability to use language to get things done in their real-life contexts. Thus, the materials for the course are multi-media. Handouts, charts and diagrams, quiz, questionnaires and so on are adopted in the programme which encourage my students to have a rehearsal of using English in different real-life situations, to develop their competence through a variety of tasks and therefore developing their communicative competence.

For stimulating learning efficiency, four conditions for language learning – exposure, use, motivation, instruction – suggested by Willis (1996) are applied into the framework of the task-based EFL programme. By being given the chances to experiment, to make use of the target language through the three phases of the framework (i.e., pre-task, task cycle and language focus), my students subconsciously construct the language knowledge in task interactions and build up their confidence in using the target language with a natural progression from the holistic to the specific in language learning.

In addition, as we know that motivation is a crucial factor of learning success, the course-specific motivational components: interest, relevance, expectancy and satisfaction, which are proposed by Keller (1983) as well as suggested by Dörnyei's (1994) framework of L2 Motivation, are applied into the programme. Due to what we have learnt from the pilot study that the topics are regarded as one of the key factors to determine the students' involvement in doing tasks, the

first thing for the task design is to devise the topics which are interesting and relevant to their experience. The second thing to be concerned with is the nature of the tasks, as Willis (1996) suggests that 'success and satisfaction are key factors in sustaining motivation' (Willis, 1996:14).

Thus, some considerations needed to be taken into account in order to sustain task motivation. First, the tasks, which are based on Willis's (1996) six types of tasks, i.e., listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem-solving, sharing personal experiences, and creative tasks, are devised as closed tasks with highly structured and specific goals. For example, *work in small groups to classify the list of food into Food Pyramid. Time limit: ten minutes.* The instructions are precise and there is only one way to achieve the outcome. Since the goals in the closed tasks are specific, it is easier for the students to evaluate their success and obtain satisfaction from the tasks and therefore build up their learning motivation (Willis, 1996). Second, in consideration of learner differences, the tasks are designed to be collaborative, requiring the students to work together in pairs or in groups. In this case, the students can have the benefit of practising language skills and develop sociolinguistic competence in their interactions. Within the perspective of social-constructivism, they can construct their language knowledge in collaborative learning in tasks. They are able to extend their language competence by collaborating with more capable peers in the interactions (Vygotsky, 1976). Also, they can adopt different but complementary roles to achieve the task outcome through the interactions (Murphy, 2003). Since they gain more support and encouragement from collaborative learning in a friendly atmosphere rather than learning alone, their

anxiety may be reduced and they are likely to have more satisfaction in the learning process. Third, with regards to the complexity, the task types can be combined in a number of ways in operation. For example, simple tasks which consist of one type only, such as a listing task, can be used as starting points at the beginning of the programme, while more complex tasks which incorporate two or more types, such as comparing then sharing personal experiences, can be adopted later in the programme. As the saying goes, 'Success breeds success'. When the students have already had satisfaction from the simple tasks at the beginning, gradually they become more and more confident in their efficacy and then try to test out their limitations with more complicated tasks afterwards. Such expectancy of success and satisfaction from the tasks intrinsically keep their motivation growing during the programme.

The following chapter focuses on findings, results and discussions of the quantitative data on learners' beliefs and motivation in English language learning pre- and post- the task-based learning programme. The findings, results and discussions of the qualitative data about the learners' beliefs and motivation in English language learning during and post- the task-based learning programme will be presented in Chapter 7.

Chapter 6 Quantitative data relating to beliefs and motivation: presentation and discussion

The quantitative data, collected from the BALLI and the Motivation Questionnaires, were analysed with the statistical package SPSS for Windows. The qualitative data were collected during and after the task-based learning programme using instruments such as the 'motivation' graphs, learners' diaries, follow-up interviews and field-notes, and were analysed with NVIVO. The quantitative data provide the base-line data for a general understanding of the differences in the students' beliefs about English learning from before to after the task-based EFL programme, whereas the qualitative data provide greater in-depth insights into the nature of the changes, as well as how and why they occurred. In order to respond to each of the research questions, this chapter focuses on the findings, results and discussions of the quantitative data on learners' beliefs and motivation in English language learning pre- and post- the task-based learning programme. Chapter 7 will focus on findings, results and discussions of the qualitative data about the learners' beliefs and motivation in English language learning during and post- the task-based learning programme.

6.1 Quantitative data relating to learners' beliefs about English learning

RQ1: What are Chinese undergraduate learners' beliefs about English language learning pre- and post- a task-based learning programme?

RQ2: What changes in beliefs are apparent and why?

The quantitative data on learners' beliefs were collected both before and after the task-based learning programme through the BALLI questionnaire, as described in 5.5.1.1. The questionnaire results from before the programme were compared with those from after the programme in order to ascertain any apparent changes in the learners' beliefs during the period of the programme.

6.1.1 Pre- task-based EFL programme

The quantitative data relating to learners' beliefs about English language learning were analysed in order to respond to the first question. For identifying which items the students agreed with more than others, the means of each of the 40 items in pre-BALLI were calculated with standard deviation and were ranked in ascending order.

6.1.1.1 The means and standard deviation

With regard to each of the 40 items in the pre-BALLI questionnaire, the students on average strongly agreed with 15 items (mean ≤ 2.00); agreed with another 15 items (mean > 2.01 and ≤ 3.00); disagreed with 9 items (mean > 3.01 and ≤ 4.00); and strongly disagreed with 1 item (mean > 4.01 and ≤ 5.00) in pre-BALLI, as follows:

Figure 6.1: Individual items of pre-BALLI put in order of strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) for the whole sample (N = 24)

Item	Pre- BALLI	Mean	SD	Rank
31	I want to learn to speak English well.	1.17	.381	1
29	If I learn English very well, I will have better opportunities for a good job.	1.46	.588	2
7	It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation.	1.58	.504	3=
2	Some people have a special ability for learning a foreign language.	1.58	.776	3=
18	It is important to repeat and practise a lot.	1.63	.576	5
32	I would like to have native speakers of English as friends.	1.67	.637	6=
38	If I learn English very well, I will be able to understand the western world more.	1.67	.637	6=
5	I will learn to speak English very well.	1.71	.806	8
35	If I learn English very well, I will have a better self-image.	1.75	.737	9=
1	It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.	1.75	.847	9=
39	If I learn English very well, I will be able to maintain and improve my language proficiency on my own.	1.79	.833	11
33	Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.	1.88	.947	12
8	It is necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English.	1.96	.690	13
3	Some languages are easier to learn than others.	2.00	.933	14=
37	If I learn English very well, my family and friends will be proud of me.	2.00	.933	14=
20	People in my country feel that it is important to speak English.	2.08	.881	16=
12	It is best to learn English in an English-speaking country.	2.08	.974	16=
14	It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in English.	2.17	.702	18=
13	I enjoy practising English with native speakers of English I meet.	2.17	.963	18=
40	If I learn English very well, I will get good exam results.	2.21	.658	20
26	It is important to practise with cassettes or tapes.	2.25	.847	21
27	Learning a foreign language is different than learning other academic subjects.	2.29	1.083	22
10	It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	2.38	.824	23=

Figure 6.1: Individual items of pre-BALLI put in order of strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) for the whole sample (N = 24) (Cont.)

Item	Pre- BALLI	Mean	SD	Rank
36	If I learn English very well, I will have a higher social status.	2.38	1.013	23=
30	People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.	2.54	.884	25
17	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning vocabulary.	2.63	1.245	26
15	If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take them to speak the language very well: (1) less than a year to (5) you can't learn a language in 1 hour a day.	2.75	1.260	27
6	People from my country are good at learning foreign languages.	2.79	.977	28
16	I have a special ability for learning foreign languages.	2.88	1.035	29
24	I would like to learn English so that I can get to know native speakers of English better.	2.92	1.060	30
23	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning the grammar.	3.04	1.122	31
34	It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.	3.21	1.103	32
19	Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.	3.29	1.233	33
25	It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.	3.33	1.129	34=
21	I feel timid speaking English with other people.	3.33	1.204	34=
28	The most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from my native language.	3.38	.970	36
4	English is: (1) a very difficult language to (5) a very easy language	3.50	.590	37
22	If beginning students are permitted to make errors in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.	3.92	1.176	38
11	People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages.	3.96	1.197	39
9	You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.	4.17	.637	40

Figure 6.2: The overall mean and standard deviation of pre-BALLI

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pre- BALLI	2.3454	.30168	24

As shown above, the 15 beliefs with which the students strongly agreed (mean ≤ 2.00) derived from five main areas in BALLI: (a) motivations and expectations

(Items 31, 29, 32, 38, 35, 39 and 37); (b) language communicative strategies (Items 7 and 18); (c) foreign language aptitude (Items 2, 1 and 33); (d) difficulty of language learning (Items 5 and 3); and (e) the nature of language learning (Item 8). Amongst all the 15 beliefs with which the students strongly agreed (mean ≤ 2.00), the ones ranked as the top five mostly reflect the students' conceptions about English learning.

From the results, the first finding is that the first two beliefs with which they strongly agreed in pre-BALLI are both from the area of motivations and expectations. The first belief that the students strongly agreed with is 'I want to learn to speak English well' (item 31) and the second is, 'if I learn English well, I will have better opportunities for a good job' (item 29), respectively. As the means of these two items are respectively 1.17 and 1.46, this indicates significant evidence that the students, as a group, very strongly agreed with these beliefs. They had a positive attitude, a motive, and even a goal in English learning before coming to the programme. Furthermore, the second belief with which they strongly agreed provides us with the answer to the question of why they wanted learn to speak English well, i.e., to get a good job. This indicates that the students' motivation in English learning was quite 'instrumental', in Gardner and Lambert's (1972) terms.

The second finding is that the beliefs: 'It is important to speak English with excellent pronunciation' (item 7) and 'Some people have a special ability for learning a foreign language' (item 2) were both ranked as equal third as a statement with which the students strongly agreed (mean: 1.58). The former

belief, 'It is important to speak English with excellent pronunciation' (item 7), probably reflects the emphases within their actual English learning experience before the task-based EFL programme. The latter belief (item 2) reflects the students' beliefs in foreign language aptitude, i.e., that some people are more predisposed to be successful language learners than others. As the mean of both items is 1.58, this shows a relatively strong agreement within the group of students.

Third, it is interesting to find that the students' beliefs about learning strategies seemed to be deeply influenced by Confucianism, as the belief 'it is important to repeat and practise a lot' (item 18) was ranked as the fifth with the mean 1.63 in pre-BALLI. The students believed that 'practice makes perfect'. As a Chinese proverb says, 'long persistent practice makes perfect – even an iron pestle can be ground down to a needle' (只要有恆心·鐵棒磨成針). By their will power, great effort and determination, they believed that they could achieve their goals one day.

6.1.2 Post- task-based EFL programme

For identifying the students' beliefs about English language learning after the task-based EFL programme, the same BALLI questionnaire was used again. The quantitative data were analysed in the same aspect: the items the students agreed with more than others. The means of each of the 40 items were calculated with means and standard deviation in ascending order.

6.1.2.1 The means and standard deviation

With reference to the students' agreement in post-BALLI, of all the 40 items, the students on average strongly agreed with 19 items (mean ≤ 2.00); agreed with 13 items (mean > 2.01 and ≤ 3.00); disagreed with 6 items (mean > 3.01 and ≤ 4.00); and strongly disagreed with 2 items (mean > 4.01 and ≤ 5.00) in post-BALLI, as follows:

Figure 6.3: Individual items of post-BALLI put in order of strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) for the whole sample (N = 24)

Item	Post- BALLI	Mean	SD	Rank
31	I want to learn to speak English well.	1.13	.338	1
29	If I learn English very well, I will have better opportunities for a good job.	1.42	.504	2
33	Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.	1.46	.588	3
18	It is important to repeat and practise a lot.	1.50	.511	4
32	I would like to have native speakers of English as friends.	1.58	.654	5=
5	I will learn to speak English very well.	1.58	.830	5=
2	Some people have a special ability for learning a foreign language.	1.63	.647	7=
7	It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation.	1.63	.770	7=
39	If I learn English very well, I will be able to maintain and improve my language proficiency on my own.	1.67	.565	9=
38	If I learn English very well, I will be able to understand the western world more.	1.67	.702	9=
1	It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.	1.67	.761	9=
35	If I learn English very well, I will have a better self-image.	1.71	.806	12
26	It is important to practise with cassettes or tapes.	1.79	.779	13
20	People in my country feel that it is important to speak English.	1.88	.900	14=
36	If I learn English very well, I will have a higher social status.	1.88	.900	14=
40	If I learn English very well, I will get good exam results.	1.88	.947	14=

Figure 6.3: Individual items of post-BALLI put in order of strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) for the whole sample (N = 24) (Cont.)

Item	Post- BALLI	Mean	SD	Rank
37	If I learn English very well, my family and friends will be proud of me.	1.92	.830	17=
3	Some languages are easier to learn than others.	1.92	.881	17=
13	I enjoy practising English with native speakers of English I meet.	2.00	.885	19
12	It is best to learn English in an English-speaking country.	2.04	1.042	20
27	Learning a foreign language is different than learning other academic subjects.	2.08	.974	21
8	It is necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English.	2.13	.612	22
14	It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in English.	2.17	.778	23=
17	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning vocabulary.	2.17	.917	23=
6	People from my country are good at learning foreign languages.	2.29	.859	25
30	People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.	2.38	.770	26=
15	If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take them to speak the language very well: (1) less than a year to (5) you can't learn a language in 1 hour a day.	2.38	1.013	26=
10	It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	2.54	.884	28
16	I have a special ability for learning foreign languages.	2.63	.770	29
34	It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.	2.83	1.129	30
24	I would like to learn English so that I can get to know native speakers of English better.	2.88	.992	31
23	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning the grammar.	3.00	.978	32
4	English is: (1) a very difficult language to (5) a very easy language	3.08	.776	33
19	Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.	3.08	.881	34
28	The most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from my native language.	3.13	1.035	35
25	It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.	3.27	.827	36
21	I feel timid speaking English with other people.	3.35	1.027	37
11	People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages.	3.96	1.160	38

Figure 6.3: Individual items of post-BALLI put in order of strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) for the whole sample (N = 24) (Cont.)

Item	Post- BALLI	Mean	SD	Rank
22	If beginning students are permitted to make errors in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.	4.13	.680	39=
9	You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.	4.13	.741	39=

Figure 6.4: The overall mean and standard deviation of post-BALLI

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Post- BALLI	2.1876	.30387	24

As shown above, the 19 beliefs with which the students strongly agreed (mean ≤ 2.00) derived from four main areas in BALLI: (a) motivations and expectations (Item 31, 29, 32, 38, 39, 35, 20, 36, 40 and 37); (b) language communicative strategies (Item 18, 7, 26 and 13); (c) foreign language aptitude (Item 33, 2, and 1); and (d) difficulty of language learning (Item 5). Amongst all the 19 beliefs with which the students strongly agreed (mean ≤ 2.00), the ones ranked as the top five mostly reflect the students' conceptions about English learning.

With reference to the six beliefs ranked as the top five in post-BALLI, two of them were both equally ranked as the fifth. The quantitative data indicate that half of them belonged to the area of motivations and expectations (Item 31, 29, and 32) ranked as the 1st, the 2nd, and the 5th, respectively. The others belonged to the areas of foreign language aptitude (Item 33), language communicative strategies (Item 18), and difficulty of language learning (Item 5), ranked as the 3rd, the 4th and the 5th, respectively.

The beliefs 'I want to learn to speak English well' (Item 31) and 'If I learn English

very well, I will have better opportunities for a good job' (Item 29) were still ranked as the first two beliefs in post-BALLI. As the means of these two items are respectively 1.13 and 1.42, the quantitative data in post-BALLI provide significant evidence that the group of students very strongly agreed with these beliefs. They still had positive attitudes towards English learning and their motivations were instrumental after the task-based EFL programme.

The third belief with which the group of students strongly agreed in post-BALLI is 'Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language' (Item 33). As the mean of this item is 1.46 for post-BALLI, the students, as a group, quite strongly believed that everyone (including themselves) was capable of learning English well after the programme.

In addition, as the belief 'It is important to repeat and practise a lot' (Item 18) was ranked as the fourth belief with the mean shown as 1.50 in post-BALLI, the group of students strongly believed that 'practice makes perfect' and 'great efforts bring success'. By great effort and will power, they believed that they could succeed.

Finally, it is interesting to find that the group of students tended to believe that they would learn to speak English well and they would like to make friends with native speakers of English, as they ranked both of these beliefs 'I will learn to speak English very well' (Item 5) and 'I would like to have native speakers of English as friends' (Item 32) as equal fifth, with the mean of these two items the same, shown as 1.58. The quantitative data reveal that the students had a goal

in English learning. They believed they were confident to communicate with native speakers of English, and their intrinsic and integrative motivations were increased after the task-based EFL programme.

6.1.3 What are the differences in beliefs about English learning between pre- and post- quantitative data?

In order to explore whether there are any significant differences in beliefs about English learning between pre- and post- the task-based programme, the quantitative data in pre- and post- BALLI were analysed with the following aspects:

- (I) Correlation test: the relationship between pre- and post- BALLI is measured with *Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient*.
- (II) Parametric test: the means and standard deviations between pre-BALLI and post-BALLI whole scale scores are compared with *paired-samples t-tests*.
- (III) Non-parametric test: the rank scores of each individual item of pre-BALLI and post-BALLI questionnaires are compared with *Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test*.

6.1.3.1 Reliability statistics (Cronbach's Alpha)

In order to measure the internal consistency of BALLI, the 40 items were measured with reliability statistics (Cronbach's Alpha). The Cronbach's Alpha

test measures how well correlated the individual items are within the scale. Since the samples are small (N = 24) in this study, anything approximately equal to or over 0.7 for Alpha is considered to be acceptable. As shown below, the result of the reliability statistics shows that Cronbach's Alpha of the scale are 0.779 in pre-BALLI and 0.870 in post-BALLI, respectively. It means that the items used to construct the scale in pre-BALLI and post-BALLI were sufficiently correlated to form a scale that is internally consistent.

Figure 6.5: Reliability statistics: pre-BALLI and post-BALLI

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Pre-BALLI	.779	40
Post-BALLI	.807	40

6.1.3.2 Correlation test (Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient)

When looking for the relationship between pre- and post- BALLI with *Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient*, the correlation between pre- and post-BALLI is significant. As presented in Figure 6.6, significant relationships [Sig. (2-tailed) approximately $p < 0.05$] were found, it indicates that the correlation between pre- and post- BALLI is strong significant.

Figure 6.6: Correlation between pre-BALLI and post-BALLI

		Pre-BALLI
Post-BALLI	Pearson Correlation	.662(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	24

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results indicate that the group of students changed in their responses to the

questions from pre- to post- BALLI generally to the same degree. In other words, the items which were mostly agreed in pre-BALLI were also mostly agreed in post-BALLI, and those which were most disagreed in pre-BALLI were also disagreed in post-BALLI. Overall, the group of students agreed more with post-BALLI than with pre-BALLI, but in a similar way.

6.1.3.3 Parametric test (paired-samples t-tests)

A parametric test was used as the whole scale score is a pseudo interval variable. When the whole scale scores of means and standard deviations in pre-BALLI were compared with those in post-BALLI with paired-samples t-tests, significant differences of means [pre-BALLI = 2.3454 and post-BALLI = 2.1876, $t = 2.386$, Sig.(2-tailed) = 0.026] were found, as presented below:

Figure 6.7: Paired samples statistics: pre- and post- BALLI

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pair 1 Pre-BALLI	2.3454	.30168	24
Post-BALLI	2.1876	.30387	24

Figure 6.8: Paired samples test: pre- and post- BALLI

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1 Pre-BALLI – Post-BALLI	2.386	23	.026

The data analysed by paired-samples t-test could be interpreted to mean that the students' beliefs about English learning show a significant change after the task-based EFL programme. It is interesting to find that the students tended to agree more with the statements in post-BALLI than in pre-BALLI.

6.1.3.4 Non-parametric test (Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test)

A non-parametric test was used in this case as the individual questions were ordinal variables, not interval variables. The comparison of the rank scores of each item of pre-BALLI and post-BALLI questionnaires with *Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test* is shown below in Figure 6.9. When the rank scores of each individual item of both pre- and post- BALLI questionnaires were compared, significant differences are found to exist between both of them in 7 items, as follows:

Figure 6.9: Individual items that are significantly different between pre- and post- BALLI using a non-parametric test

Items		Test Statistics			
		Mean (Pre)	Mean (Post)	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
6	People from my country are good at learning foreign languages.	2.79	2.29	-2.814	0.005
33	Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.	1.88	1.46	-2.714	0.007
26	It is important to practise with cassettes or tapes.	2.25	1.79	-2.495	0.013
36	If I learn English very well, I will have a higher social status.	2.38	1.88	-2.166	0.030
4	English is: (1) a very difficult language to (5) a very easy language	3.50	3.08	-2.066	0.039
28	The most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from my native language.	3.38	3.13	-1.897	0.058
17	The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning vocabulary words.	2.63	2.17	-1.895	0.058

The data provide significant evidence that the overall means in post-BALLI are less than those in pre-BALLI. This indicates that the students in this study tended to agree with these seven beliefs in post-BALLI more than in pre-BALLI. In comparison between pre-BALLI and post-BALLI with the *Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test*, the most significant differences between

them [Sig. (2-tailed) approximately $p < 0.05$] were found in all the five areas of BALLI, in an ascending order: (1) foreign language aptitude (Item 6 and 33); (2) learning and communicative strategies (Item 26); (3) motivations and expectations (Item 36); (4) the difficulty of language learning (Item 4); and (5) the nature of language learning (Item 28 and 17). All of these statements with significant differences are discussed below.

(1) Foreign language aptitude

The concept of foreign language aptitude can be considered as the source of an outlook on language learning (Horwitz, 1988). The statements of foreign language aptitude in BALLI are generally concerned with the existence of specialised abilities for language learning and beliefs about the characteristics of successful language learners. Therefore, the differences in the students' beliefs between pre-BALLI and post-BALLI can be interpreted as meaning that the group of students tended to believe more that they possessed a potential for achievement in English learning. Amongst all the data in post-BALLI, the statements that are most significantly different are 'People from my country are good at learning foreign languages' (Item 6) [Sig. (2-tailed) $p < 0.005$], and 'Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language' (Item 33) [Sig. (2-tailed) $p < 0.007$]. The apparent differences of these two beliefs between pre-BALLI and post-BALLI can be interpreted as evidence that the students had a positive expectation about their own capability, which was probably built up by the task-based programme. In other words, their responses to these beliefs reflected their Ideal L2 Self – they wanted to belong to the particular group of people who were good at English.

(2) Learning and communicative strategies

The statements on learning and communication strategies in BALLI are directly related to the students' actual language learning practice. As shown above in Figure 6.9, the statement 'It is important to practise with cassettes or tapes' (Item 26) is significantly different between pre- and post- BALLI [Sig. (2-tailed) $p < 0.013$]. The difference can be interpreted to mean that the students highly regarded the importance of practice, which probably comes from their deep-rooted Confucian beliefs that 'lengthy persistent practice makes perfect'. Additionally, it implies that the students tended to believe that speaking and listening were both important skills in English learning, which was probably as a result of their learning experience in the task-based EFL programme.

(3) Motivations and expectations

Beliefs about motivations and expectations are related to the students' desire for learning English and the opportunities associated with their English learning (Horwitz, 1988). The statement 'If I learn English very well, I will have a higher social status' (Item 36), which was particularly based on hypotheses of Confucian influence on their learning attitudes, was designed and added into BALLI (as mentioned in 5.5.1.1). As the difference in this belief between pre- and post-BALLI is significant [Sig. (2-tailed) $p < 0.030$], it indicates that the students tended to expect success more after the programme than before the programme. Also, the difference reflects that Confucianism has a profound effect on the students' motivational beliefs. They seemed to believe that success in English learning was synonymous with success in life, which was

associated with fame and upward social mobility.

(4) The difficulty of language learning

The statements 'English is: (1) a very difficult language, (2) a difficult language, (3) a language of medium difficulty, (4) an easy language, (5) a very easy language' (Item 4) in BALLI were concerned about the general difficulty of English learning. There is a significant difference in the belief between pre- and post- BALLI [Sig. (2-tailed) $p < 0.039$], which indicates that the students tended to believe that English learning was more difficult after the task-based EFL programme than before the programme. The difference in the belief can also be interpreted to mean that the students' beliefs about the difficulty of English learning was probably affected by the fact that the task-based programme encouraged them to experience different ways of learning that they found more challenging.

(5) The nature of language learning

The statements, 'The most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from my native language' (Item 28) and 'The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning vocabulary words' (Item 17) are generally concerned with the students' conception of the focus of the language learning. As these two beliefs are significantly different [Sig. (2-tailed) $p < 0.058$] between pre- and post- BALLI, it indicates that the students tended to believe more that both vocabulary and translation from their native language should be the focus of English learning after the programme. From another perspective, the differences in their beliefs pre- and post- BALLI can be interpreted to mean that

their L2 awareness was developed. The students became more aware of their language proficiency in relation to vocabulary and translation after the programme than before the programme.

6.1.3.5 An overall trend in beliefs about English learning between pre- and post- BALLI

In addition, when comparing the quantitative data between pre- and post- BALLI, more findings were found. From a statistical perspective, these findings were not regarded to be significant. However, they provided a general understanding of the students' overall trend in beliefs about English learning between pre- and post- the programme; therefore they were worthwhile to be discussed.

The first finding emerges when comparing the top five ranking items with which students strongly agreed in pre-BALLI and post-BALLI. Amongst all the beliefs with which the students strongly agreed, the beliefs which ranked as the top five in post-BALLI were slightly different from those in pre-BALLI, as shown in Figure 6.10:

Figure 6.10: The means, standard deviations and rank orders of the statements with which the students strongly agree in the pre- and post- BALLI

Item	Pre- BALLI	Mean	SD	Rank
31	I want to learn to speak English well.	1.17	.381	1
29	If I learn English very well, I will have better opportunities for a good job.	1.46	.588	2
7	It is important to speak English with excellent pronunciation.	1.58	.504	3=
2	Some people have a special ability for learning a foreign language.	1.58	.776	3=
18	It is important to repeat and practise a lot.	1.63	.576	5

Item	Post- BALLI	Mean	SD	Rank
31	I want to learn to speak English well.	1.13	.338	1
29	If I learn English very well, I will have better opportunities for a good job.	1.42	.504	2
33	Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.	1.46	.588	3
18	It is important to repeat and practise a lot.	1.50	.511	4
32	I would like to have native speakers of English as friends.	1.58	.654	5=
5	I will learn to speak English very well.	1.58	.830	5=

As can be seen in the tables above, there are similarities and differences in the top five positions between pre-BALLI and post-BALLI. The two beliefs (i.e., Item 31 and 29), which were ranked as the first and the second positions in both pre- and post- BALLI, means that they were strongly agreed with by the students. When comparing the beliefs ranked from the third to the fifth positions in pre-BALLI and post-BALLI, it is interesting to find that the task-based EFL programme has had an apparent effect on students' learning beliefs, and their self concepts had developed in many aspects:

(1) With reference to the beliefs ranked third with which the students strongly agreed in pre-BALLI and in post-BALLI, it is interesting to find that they were not

the same. Instead of believing 'Some people have a special ability of learning a foreign language (Item 2)' or 'It is important to speak English with excellent pronunciation' (Item 7) (means 1.58) in pre-BALLI, they changed their belief to 'Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language' (Item 33) (means 1.46) in post-BALLI. Strong agreement with this belief in post-BALLI can tentatively be interpreted as evidence that the group of students' beliefs about foreign language aptitude were affected by the task-based EFL programme and their self confidence was built up. It may be that from their successful learning experience through the task-based approach, they became more confident in themselves in English learning and their self-esteem and self-efficacy were gradually established. They no longer believed that an ability to learn English well was a gifted talent for 'some people'; rather, after the programme, they changed their belief that 'everyone' (including themselves) could achieve this goal to learn English well.

(2) The belief about learning strategies 'It is important to repeat and practise a lot' (Item 18) (mean 1.63 in pre-BALLI and mean 1.50 in post-BALLI) was strongly held by the students, as it was stably ranked as one of the top five beliefs both in pre-BALLI and post-BALLI. As discussed in 6.1.3.4, the learning attitude 'lengthy persistent practice makes perfect – even an iron pestle can be ground down to a needle', was deeply rooted in Chinese belief, so it was not surprising to see that the students did not seem to show much change in this belief (Item 18) from before to after the programme. This seems to show that their belief about learning strategies was still strongly influenced by Confucianism.

(3) The students tended to believe more that they would learn to speak English well and they would like to make friends with native speakers of English, as they ranked both of these beliefs 'I will learn to speak English very well' (Item 5), and 'I would like to have native speakers of English as friends' (Item 32), equal fifth with having the same means of 1.58 in the post-BALLI. Strong agreement with these two beliefs can be tentatively interpreted as evidence that the students had gained a stronger sense of self-efficacy and expectancy of success after the programme than they had before the programme. In other words, their self concepts had been enhanced by their learning experience in the programme, and they became more confident in their ability to speak English. Instead of being timid as they used to be when speaking English with native speakers of English, after the programme they 'would like to have native speakers of English as friends' (Item 32). They tried to use their English and they even 'enjoyed practising English with native speakers' (Item 13), as already mentioned. The belief 'I will learn to speak English very well' (Item 5), which the students strongly hold in post-BALLI, is obviously a result of their motivational beliefs having experienced a major change. Instead of believing 'some people have a special ability of learning a foreign language (Item 2)' as they did in pre-BALLI, after the programme, they changed not only to believe that 'everyone could learn to speak a foreign language' (Item 33), but also even that 'I will learn to speak English very well' (Item 5). It echoes the findings, as noted in 6.1.3.4, that these beliefs in post-BALLI were incorporated into the learners' 'ideal self' as a result of their successful learning experience in the task-based EFL programme. Their Ideal L2 Self, enhanced by the programme, then became a

powerful motivating force to keep their learning moving forward.

Second, in order to find out their overall trend of beliefs about English learning between pre- and post- the programme, the numbers of items which in the categories of ‘strongly agreed’; ‘agree’; ‘disagree’; and ‘strongly disagree’ were individually compared between pre- and post-BALLI, as shown below:

Figure 6.11: The numbers of items in the pre- and post- BALLI questionnaires: strongly agree; agree; disagree; or strongly disagree

	Strongly agree (mean \leq 2.00)	Agree (mean $>2.01\leq$ 3.00)	Disagree (mean $>3.01\leq$ 4.00)	Strongly disagree (mean $>4.01\leq$ 5.00)
Pre- BALLI	15	15	9	1
Post- BALLI	19	13	6	2

As can be seen in the table above, the number of items with which the students strongly agreed and agreed was higher than that of the items with which they strongly disagreed and disagreed in both pre- and post- BALLI. When the 15 beliefs with which the students strongly agreed (mean \leq 2.00) in pre-BALLI were compared with the 19 beliefs with which they strongly agreed in post-BALLI, three findings appeared. At first glance, it seems there was remarkable consistency in 14 beliefs in both pre- and post- BALLI, as follows:

- Item 1 It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.
- Item 2 Some people have a special ability for learning a foreign language.
- Item 3 Some languages are easier to learn than others.
- Item 5 I will learn to speak English very well.
- Item 7 It is important to speak English with excellent pronunciation.
- Item 18 It is important to repeat and practise a lot.

Item 29 If I learn English very well, I will have better opportunities for a good job.

Item 31 I want to learn to speak English well.

Item 32 I would like to have native-speaker of English friends.

Item 33 Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.

Item 35 If I learn English very well, I will have a better self-image.

Item 37 If I learn English very well, my family and friends will be proud of me.

Item 38 If I learn English very well, I will be able to understand the western world more.

Item 39 If I learn English very well, I will be able to maintain and improve my language proficiency on my own.

Interestingly, of all the 14 beliefs above, half of them (Items 29, 31, 32, 35, 37, 38 and 39) are related to motivations and expectations. This evidence generally indicates that the group of students have strong motives and expectations in English learning in their belief system.

However, when comparing the means and rank orders of the 7 motivational beliefs between pre-BALLI and post-BALLI listed above, the data show that the students' beliefs about English learning did change after the task-based EFL programme, as shown below in Figure 6.12. The students tended to agree more with the motivational beliefs in post-BALLI than in pre-BALLI. These apparent changes may provide tentative evidence that the programme had a positive affect on their motivational beliefs about English learning.

Figure 6.12: The means, standard deviations and rank orders of the statements with which the students strongly agree relating to motivations and expectations pre- and post-BALLI, (N = 24)

Items		Pre- BALLI			Post- BALLI		
		Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank
29	If I learn English very well, I will have better opportunities for a good job.	1.46	.588	2	1.42	.504	2
31	I want to learn to speak English well.	1.17	.381	1	1.13	.338	1
32	I would like to have native speakers of English friends.	1.67	.637	6	1.58	.654	5
35	If I learn English very well, I will have a better self-image.	1.75	.737	9	1.71	.806	12
37	If I learn English very well, my family and friends will be proud of me.	2.00	.933	14	1.92	.830	17
38	If I learn English very well, I will be able to understand the western world more.	1.67	.637	6	1.67	.702	9
39	If I learn English very well, I will be able to maintain and improve my language proficiency on my own.	1.79	.833	11	1.67	.565	9

The third finding is that, as can be seen from the data below, there are some beliefs with which the students strongly agreed in pre-BALLI but not in post-BALLI, and vice versa. Differences in the means are found to exist in these 6 statements, as shown below in Figure 6.13:

Figure 6.13: The means, standard deviations and rank orders of the statements with which the students strongly agreed in pre-BALLI but not in post-BALLI and vice versa, (N = 24)

Items		Pre- BALLI			Post- BALLI		
		Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank
8	It is necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English.	1.96	.690	13	2.13	.612	22
13	I enjoy practising English with native speakers of English I meet.	2.17	.963	18	2.00	.885	19
20	People in my country feel that it is important to speak English.	2.08	.881	16	1.88	.900	14
26	It is important to practise with cassettes or tapes.	2.25	.847	21	1.79	.779	13
36	If I learn English very well, I will have a higher social status.	2.38	1.013	23	1.88	.900	14
40	If I learn English very well, I will get good exam results.	2.21	.658	20	1.88	.947	14

The belief 'It is necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English' (Item 8) that had been strongly agreed with (mean ≤ 2.00) by the students in pre-BALLI was no longer agreed with strongly by them in post-BALLI. This can be interpreted to mean that the students' belief about the nature of English language was changed after the programme. In order to speak English, knowing about English-speaking cultures was no longer 'necessary' for them because they found that they could also achieve their goal through the tasks in the task-based EFL programme.

From the six items listed in the table above, it is reasonable to say that their beliefs about learning and communicative strategies were also changed from pre- to post- BALLI. After their learning experience in the task-based EFL programme, they tended to believe more that 'It is important to practise with cassettes or tapes' (Item 26) and 'I enjoy practising English with native speakers of English I meet' (Item 13). This change firstly indicates that the students had reflected on their strategies for learning English. It echoes 'the value of effort in Confucianism', as mentioned in 6.1.3.4, i.e., that Chinese people have a deep-rooted belief about learning strategies – lengthy persistent practice makes perfect. These items indicated that they believed that through practice, one day they could learn English well. Secondly, this change indicates that their self-confidence was also developed by the programme. Thus, instead of being timid as they used to be when they spoke English with native speakers of English, they became confident enough to practise English with them and to even 'enjoy practising English with them'. In other words, it seems their motivation for learning English was higher after the programme than before the

programme. Another three beliefs with which they strongly agreed in post-BALLI give us more evidence for this: 'People in my country feel that it is important to speak English' (Item 20), 'If I learn English very well, I will have a higher social status' (Item 36), and 'If I learn English well, I will get good exam results' (Item 40). These three beliefs also relate to their motivation in English learning. Strong agreement with these beliefs in post-BALLI can be interpreted as indicating that the students became more motivated in learning English after the programme than before the programme. Also, the change of motivational beliefs can be interpreted as evidence that the students' 'ideal self' was more strongly developed after the programme. As they believed that 'People in my country feel that it is important to speak English' (Item 20), one of the motives to drive them to learn English was because they perceived its importance in their own society. From a macro perspective, going along with society's expectations was a way to establish their 'ideal self' for them because they could build up a better self image in others' eyes. On the other hand, from a micro perspective, learning English well was another way to be successful in school and to get a higher position on the social ladder. For them, it was a way to establish their self-value and self-esteem. Similar to those who succeeded in the Chinese Imperial Exam System (科舉制度) in the past, they believed that nowadays those who are good at English in school are generally considered as successful learners and they will have a higher social status in the future.

In summary, all the findings from the quantitative data provide a general understanding of the students' trends of beliefs from pre- to post- BALLI. In the next section, the data is going to discuss the students' motivation in English

learning pre and post- the programme and the differences in between.

6.2 Quantitative data relating to learners' motivation in English learning

RQ3: What are Chinese undergraduate learners' motivations in English language learning pre- and post- a task-based learning programme?

RQ4: What changes in motivations are apparent and why?

6.2.1 Pre- task-based EFL programme

Quantitative data were analysed for responding to the third research question. In order to identify which items the students agreed more than others, the means of each of the 20 items in pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires were respectively calculated with standard deviation and were ranked in ascending order.

6.2.1.1 The means and standard deviation

With regard to each of the 20 items in the pre- Motivation Questionnaire, all students on average strongly agreed with 8 items (mean ≤ 2.00); agreed with another 8 items (mean > 2.01 and ≤ 3.00); disagreed with 4 items (mean > 3.01 and ≤ 4.00); and strongly disagreed with none of any items (mean > 4.01 and ≤ 5.00) in pre- Motivation Questionnaire, as follows:

Figure 6.14: Individual items of pre- Motivation Questionnaire put in order of strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) for the whole sample (N = 24)

Item	Pre- Motivation Questionnaire	Mean	SD	Rank
10	English will help me to get a good job someday.	1.38	.495	1
4	I would learn English even if it were not a compulsory subject in university.	1.54	.509	2
11	English will help me to be successful in my studies.	1.58	.584	3=
12	I need to pass an English proficiency test (like the TOEFL or IELTS).	1.58	.776	3=
5	I will continue learning English out of the class.	1.63	.647	5=
2	English is important to me because it will expand my horizon.	1.63	.770	5=
19	I am studying English in order to have a better self-image.	1.88	.741	7
9	I want to learn English well because I want to study/work in an English-speaking country someday.	1.92	.929	8
8	I hope to meet (or have already met) a special friend who speaks English.	2.04	.908	9
1	The process of learning English is fun and interesting.	2.25	.737	10
20	I am studying English in order to add my social status.	2.33	1.090	11
6	I have set my own goals for learning English.	2.38	.824	12
7	I want to learn English well so that I can get to know native speakers of English better.	2.46	1.062	13
3	I want to learn English because I am interested in the western world.	2.54	1.062	14
18	I am studying English in order to make my family and friends proud of me.	2.67	1.167	15
16	I am studying English because I want to get good grades.	3.00	.978	16
13	I learn English because most of my friends are good at English.	3.38	.924	17=
17	I am studying English because my parents want me to.	3.38	1.135	17=
14	I learn English in order to pass examinations.	3.58	.830	19=
15	I am studying English because it is a compulsory course in my university.	3.58	.776	19=

Figure 6.15: The overall means and standard deviations of pre-Motivation Questionnaire

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pre- intrinsic motivation	2.1190	.53563	24
Pre- extrinsic motivation	2.4519	.43886	24

As shown above, the 8 items with which the group of students strongly agreed (mean ≤ 2.00) derived from the main areas in the Motivation Questionnaire: (a) extrinsic motivation (Items 10, 11, 12, 2, 19, and 9) and (b) intrinsic motivation (Items 4, and 5). Amongst all the 8 items with which the students strongly agreed (mean ≤ 2.00), the ones ranked as the top five mostly reflect their conceptions about motivation in English learning.

With reference to the six items ranked as the top five in pre- Motivation Questionnaire, two of them were ranked equally as third and another two were ranked equally as fifth. The first finding is that the group of students' motivation for learning English seemed to be extrinsic. Furthermore, their motivation was strongly related to their personal values on the opportunities associated with English learning (i.e., getting a good job, helping their studies, passing exams, and expand their horizon...etc.). For example, the first and the third items with which they strongly agreed, i.e., 'English will help me to get a good job someday' (Item 10), 'English will help me to be successful in my studies' (Item 11), and 'I need to pass an English proficiency test (like the TOEFL or IELTS)' (Item 12), with the means of 1.38 and 1.58, respectively, reflecting that the students' motivation was extrinsic and instrumental. They were motivated because of external rewards.

The second finding is that the students' motivation in English learning seemed to be intrinsic as well. As they strongly agreed with the items 'I would learn English even if it were not a compulsory subject in university' (Item 4) and 'I will

continue learning English out of the class' (Item 5) with the means 1.54 and 1.63, respectively. This indicates that, instead of being forced to learn English by others, they had made their own choice to do it.

6.2.2 Post- task-based EFL programme

For identifying the students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in English language learning after the task-based EFL programme, the same Motivation Questionnaire was used again. Quantitative data were analysed in the same aspect, i.e., the items the students agreed with more than others. Therefore, the means of each of the 20 items were calculated with means and standard deviation in ascending order.

6.2.2.1 The means and standard deviation

With reference to the students' agreement in post- Motivation Questionnaire, of all the 20 items, the group of students strongly agreed with 12 items (mean \leq 2.00); agreed with 3 items (mean $>$ 2.01 and \leq 3.00); disagreed with 5 items (mean $>$ 3.01 and \leq 4.00); and strongly disagreed with none of any items (mean $>$ 4.01 and \leq 5.00) in post- Motivation Questionnaire, as follows:

Figure 6.16: Individual items of post- Motivation Questionnaire put in order of strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) for the whole sample (N = 24)

Item	Post- Motivation Questionnaire	Mean	SD	Rank
10	English will help me to get a good job someday.	1.33	.482	1
11	English will help me to be successful in my studies.	1.46	.509	2=

Figure 6.16: Individual items of post- Motivation Questionnaire put in order of strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) for the whole sample (N = 24) (Cont.)

Item	Post- Motivation Questionnaire	Mean	SD	Rank
4	I would learn English even if it were not a compulsory subject in university.	1.46	.588	2=
12	I need to pass an English proficiency test (like the TOEFL or IELTS).	1.46	.658	2=
2	English is important to me because it will expand my horizon.	1.67	.565	5
8	I hope to meet (or have already met) a special friend who speaks English.	1.71	.624	6
5	I will continue learning English out of the class.	1.75	.737	7
9	I want to learn English well because I want to study/work in an English-speaking country someday.	1.83	1.167	8
19	I am studying English in order to have a better self-image.	1.92	.881	9
1	The process of learning English is fun and interesting.	2.00	.780	10=
6	I have set my own goals for learning English.	2.00	.834	10=
20	I am studying English in order to add my social status.	2.00	.885	10=
7	I want to learn English well so that I can get to know English native speakers better.	2.21	.977	13
3	I want to learn English because I am interested in the western world.	2.33	.963	14
18	I am studying English in order to make my family and friends proud of me.	2.75	1.189	15
16	I am studying English because I want to get good grades.	3.13	1.227	16
13	I learn English because most of my friends are good in English.	3.17	.834	17
17	I am studying English because my parents want me to.	3.25	1.073	18
14	I learn English in order to pass examinations.	3.50	.885	19
15	I am studying English because it is a compulsory course in my university.	3.63	.875	20

Figure 6.17: The overall means and standard deviations of post-Motivation Questionnaire

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Post- intrinsic motivation	1.9226	.50196	24
Post- extrinsic motivation	2.3905	.41576	24

As shown above, the 12 items with which the group of students strongly agreed (mean ≤ 2.00) derived from the main areas in the Motivation Questionnaire: (a) extrinsic motivation (Items 10, 11, 12, 2, 9, 19, and 20) and (b) intrinsic motivation (Items 4, 8, 5, 1 and 6). Amongst all the 12 items with which the students strongly agreed (mean ≤ 2.00), the ones ranked as the top five mostly reflect their conceptions about motivation in English learning.

With reference to the five items ranked as the top five in post- Motivation Questionnaire, three of them were ranked as the second position. The first finding from the post- quantitative results is that, amongst the 5 items which ranked as the top five, 4 of them related to extrinsic motivation and only 1 of them related to intrinsic motivation. The results indicate that the group of students' motivation for English learning seemed to be strongly related to their personal values on the opportunities associated with English learning (i.e., getting a good job, helping their studies, passing exams, and expand their horizon...etc.). For example, the items with which they strongly agreed, i.e., 'English will help me to get a good job someday' (Item 10), 'English will help me to be successful in my studies' (Item 11), and 'I need to pass an English proficiency test (like the TOEFL or IELTS)' (Item12) with the means 1.33 and 1.46, respectively, indicating that the students' motivation was extrinsic and instrumental.

6.2.3 What are differences in motivation in English learning between pre- and post- quantitative data?

In order to explore whether there are any significant differences in learners'

intrinsic and extrinsic motivations before and after the task-based EFL programme, the quantitative data in pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires were analysed in comparison with these aspects:

- (I) Correlation test: the relationship between learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires measured with *Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient*.
- (II) Parametric test: the means and standard deviations between pre-Motivation and post-Motivation Questionnaires whole scale scores are compared with *paired-samples t-tests*.
- (III) Non-parametric test: the rank scores of each individual item of pre-Motivation and post-Motivation questionnaires are compared with *Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test*.

6.2.3.1 Reliability statistics (Cronbach's Alpha)

The Cronbach's Alpha test measures how well correlated the individual items are within the scale. In order to measure the internal consistency of the Motivation Questionnaire, 7 of the items, which were categorised as intrinsic motivation, were measured with reliability statistics (Cronbach's Alpha) and so were the other 13 items, which are categorised as extrinsic motivation. As shown in Figure 6.18, in the measurements of pre- intrinsic and pre- extrinsic motivation items, the results of the reliability statistics show that Cronbach's Alpha of the scales are 0.753 and 0.746, respectively. As to the measurements of post- intrinsic and post- extrinsic motivation items presented in Figure 6.19,

the results of the reliability statistics show that Cronbach's Alpha of the scales are 0.745 and 0.698, respectively. Since the samples are small (N = 24) in this study, anything approximately close to the border line 0.7 for Alpha is considered to be acceptable. It means that the items used to construct the scale in intrinsic and extrinsic motivations were sufficiently correlated to form a scale that is internally consistent.

Figure 6.18: Reliability statistics: pre-intrinsic and pre-extrinsic motivations

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Pre- intrinsic motivation	.753	7
Pre- extrinsic motivation	.746	13

Figure 6.19: Reliability statistics: post-intrinsic and post-extrinsic motivations

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Post- intrinsic motivation	.745	7
Post- extrinsic motivation	.698	13

6.2.3.2 Correlation test (Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient)

When looking for the relationship between the pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires with *Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient*, significant relationships [Sig. (2-tailed) approximately $p < 0.05$] were found to exist in four pairs of correlations: (1) the correlation between pre- intrinsic motivation and post- intrinsic motivation; (2) the correlation between pre- intrinsic motivation and pre- extrinsic motivation; (3) the correlation between pre- intrinsic motivation and post- extrinsic motivation, and (4) the correlation between post- intrinsic motivation and post- extrinsic motivation, as presented in Figure 6.20:

Figure 6.20: Correlation between pre- Motivation Questionnaire and post- Motivation Questionnaire

		Pre- intrinsic	Post- intrinsic	Pre- extrinsic	Post- extrinsic
Pre- intrinsic	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	24			
Post- intrinsic	Pearson Correlation	.818(**)	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	24	24		
Pre- extrinsic	Pearson Correlation	.623(**)	.350	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.094		
	N	24	24	24	
Post- extrinsic	Pearson Correlation	.439(*)	.508(*)	.376	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.032	.011	.070	
	N	24	24	24	24

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Since the correlation between pre- and post- intrinsic motivation is strong and significant, the group of students changed in response to the items in the category of intrinsic motivation from pre- to post- Motivation Questionnaire generally to the same degree. In other words, the items relating to intrinsic motivation, which were mostly agreed with in the pre- Motivation Questionnaire, were also mostly agreed with in the post- Motivation Questionnaire. The items relating to intrinsic motivation, which were mostly disagreed with in the pre- Motivation Questionnaire, were also mostly disagreed with in the post- Motivation Questionnaire. Overall, they tended to agree more with the items relating to intrinsic motivation from pre- Motivation Questionnaire to post- Motivation Questionnaire in a similar way.

Similarly there is a strong significant correlation between pre- intrinsic and pre- extrinsic motivation. The group of students agreed more with the items relating to intrinsic motivation than extrinsic motivation in pre- Motivation Questionnaire.

In addition, there is a significant correlation between pre- intrinsic and post- extrinsic motivation, and post- intrinsic and post- extrinsic motivation.

However there is no significant correlation between pre- and post- extrinsic motivation, and post- intrinsic and pre- extrinsic.

6.2.3.3 Parametric test (paired-samples t-tests)

A parametric test was used as the whole scale score is a pseudo interval variable. When the whole scale scores of means and standard deviations in pre- Motivation Questionnaire compared with those in post- Motivation Questionnaire with paired-samples t-tests, significant differences of means and standard deviations were respectively found in these three pairs: (1) the pair between pre- intrinsic motivation and pre- extrinsic motivation [$t = -3.775$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.001]; (2) the pair between post- intrinsic motivation and post- extrinsic motivation [$t = -4.970$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000]; and (3) the pair between pre- intrinsic motivation and post- intrinsic motivation [$t = 3.058$, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.006], as presented in below in Figures 6.21 and 6.22:

Figure 6.21: Paired samples statistics: pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pair 1 Pre- intrinsic motivation -	2.1190	.53563	24
Pre- extrinsic motivation	2.4519	.43886	24
Pair 2 Post- intrinsic motivation -	1.9226	.50196	24
Post- extrinsic motivation	2.3905	.41576	24
Pair 3 Pre- intrinsic motivation -	2.1190	.53563	24
Post- intrinsic motivation	1.9226	.50196	24
Pair 4 Pre- extrinsic motivation -	2.4519	.43886	24
Post- extrinsic motivation	2.3905	.41576	24

Figure 6.22: Paired samples test: pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires

		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pre- intrinsic motivation - Pre- extrinsic motivation	-3.775	23	.001
Pair 2	Post- intrinsic motivation - Post- extrinsic motivation	-4.970	23	.000
Pair 3	Pre- intrinsic motivation - Post- intrinsic motivation	3.058	23	.006
Pair 4	Pre- extrinsic motivation - Post- extrinsic motivation	.630	23	.535

The data analysed by paired-samples t-test could be interpreted to mean that the students' motivations in English learning show a change between pre- and post- the task-based EFL programme. One of the interesting findings here is that, the students tended to more agree with the items in the category of intrinsic motivation than in the category of extrinsic motivation, in both pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires (refer to Pair 1 and 2). From the evidence shown in Pair 3, they seemed to more agree with the items in the category of intrinsic motivation in post- Motivation Questionnaire than in pre- Motivation Questionnaire.

6.2.3.4 Non-parametric test (Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test)

A non-parametric test was used in this case as the individual questions were ordinal variables, not interval variables. The comparison of the rank scores of each item of pre- Motivation Questionnaire and post- Motivation Questionnaire with *Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test* is shown in Figure 6.23. Since the samples are small (N = 24) in this study, anything approximately close to the border line [Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed), $p < 0.05$] is considered to be acceptable.

When the rank scores of each individual item of both pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires were compared, approximately significant differences are found to exist between both of them in 3 items, as follows:

Figure 6.23: Individual items that are somewhat significantly different between pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires using a non-parametric test

Items		Mean (Pre)	Mean (Post)	Test Statistics	
				Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
1	The process of learning English is fun and interesting.	2.25	2.00	-1.897	0.058
6	I have set my own goals for learning English.	2.38	2.00	-1.830	0.067
8	I hope to meet (or have already met) a special friend who speaks English.	2.04	1.71	-1.886	0.059

As can be seen from the data above, the overall mean in post- Motivation Questionnaire were less than those in pre- Motivation Questionnaire. This indicates that the group of students tended to agree more with these three conceptions about intrinsic motivation in English learning after the programme than before the programme. In other words, this supports and strengthens evidence that the task-based learning programme had a positive affect on the students' intrinsic motivation.

6.2.3.5 An overall trend in motivation in English learning between pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires

In addition, when comparing the quantitative data between pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires, more findings were found. From a statistical perspective, these findings were not likely seen to be significant. However, they provided a general understanding of the students' overall trend in

motivation in English learning between pre- and post- the programme; therefore they were worthwhile to be discussed.

The first finding becomes apparent when comparing the top five ranking items with which strongly agreed in the pre- Motivation Questionnaire and in the post- Motivation Questionnaire. Amongst all the statements with which the students strongly agreed in the Motivation Questionnaire, the ones which ranked as the top five in the post- Motivation Questionnaire were very similar to those in the pre- Motivation Questionnaire, as show below in Figure 6.24:

Figure 6.24: The means, standard deviations and rank orders of the statements with which the students strongly agree in the pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires (N = 24)

Item	Pre- Motivation Questionnaire	Mean	SD	Rank
10	English will help me to get a good job someday.	1.38	.495	1
4	I would learn English even if it were not a compulsory subject in university.	1.54	.509	2
11	English will help me to be successful in my studies.	1.58	.584	3=
12	I need to pass an English proficiency test (like the TOEFL or IELTS).	1.58	.776	3=
5	I will continue learning English out of the class.	1.63	.647	5=
2	English is important to me because it will expand my horizon.	1.63	.770	5=

Item	Post- Motivation Questionnaire	Mean	SD	Rank
10	English will help me to get a good job someday.	1.33	.482	1
11	English will help me to be successful in my studies.	1.46	.509	2=
4	I would learn English even if it were not a compulsory subject in university.	1.46	.588	2=
12	I need to pass an English proficiency test (like the TOEFL or IELTS).	1.46	.658	2=
2	English is important to me because it will expand my horizon.	1.67	.565	5

As can be seen above, the students tended to more agree with the items in the category of extrinsic motivation than in the category of intrinsic motivation, in both pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires.

Interesting, the item 5 (i.e., I will continue learning English out of the class) with which they strongly agreed and ranked as one of the top five in pre- Motivation Questionnaire was no longer ranked as the top five in post- Motivation Questionnaire. The results after the programme seem to indicate that the students tended to agree less that they would continue learning English out of the class. At first glance, this seems to indicate that the task-based learning programme has a negative affect on their intrinsic motivation. However, when taking a further look at the same item in post-quantitative data, it was still strongly agreed with the students with the mean of 1.75 and ranked the seventh position. This will be further explored and discussed with the qualitative data in the next chapter.

Second, in order to find out their overall trend of motivation in English learning between pre- and post- the programme, the numbers of items in the categories of 'strongly agreed'; 'agree'; 'disagree'; and 'strongly disagree' were individually compared between pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires, as shown below:

Figure 6.25: The numbers of items in the pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires: strongly agree; agree; disagree; or strongly disagree

	Strongly agree (mean≤2.00)	Agree (mean>2.01≤3.00)	Disagree (mean>3.01≤4.00)	Strongly disagree (mean>4.01≤5.00)
Pre- MQ	8	8	4	0
Post- MQ	12	3	5	0

As can be seen from the table above, the numbers of items with which the students strongly agreed and agreed are more than those of items they strongly disagree and disagree in both pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires. When comparing the 8 statements with which the students strongly agreed in the pre-Motivation Questionnaire with the 12 statements with which they strongly agreed in the post- Motivation Questionnaire, three findings appeared. First, there was remarkable consistency in 8 conceptions in both pre- and post- Motivation Questionnaires, as follows:

Item 2 English is important to me because it will expand my horizon.

Item 4 I would learn English even if it were not a compulsory subject in university.

Item 5 I will continue learning English out of the class.

Item 9 I want to learn English well because I want to study/work in an English-speaking country someday.

Item 10 English will help me to get a good job someday.

Item 11 English will help me to be successful in my studies.

Item 12 I need to pass an English proficiency test (like the TOEFL or IELTS).

Item 19 I am studying English in order to have a better self-image.

Interestingly, of all the 8 items above, 2 items (Item 4 and 5) are related to the category of intrinsic motivation and 6 items (Item 2, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 19) are related to the category of extrinsic motivation. Again, the evidence generally indicates that the students' motivation for English learning was complex and multifaceted, including intrinsic, extrinsic and instrumental motives.

The third finding is that, as can be seen from the data below, there are some conceptions with which the students strongly agreed in post- Motivation Questionnaire but not in pre- Motivation Questionnaire, and vice versa. The differences of the means are found to exist in these 4 statements as shown below in Figure 6.26:

Figure 6.26: The means, standard deviations and rank orders of the statements with which the students strongly agreed in pre- Motivation Questionnaire but not in post- Motivation Questionnaire and vice versa, (N = 24)

Items		Pre- MQ			Post- MQ		
		Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank
1	The process of learning English is fun and interesting.	2.25	.737	10	2.00	.780	10
6	I have set my own goals for learning English.	2.38	.824	12	2.00	.834	11
8	I hope to meet (or have already met) a special friend who speaks English.	2.04	.908	9	1.71	.624	6
20	I am studying English in order to add my social status.	2.33	1.090	11	2.00	.885	12

From the four items listed in the table above, three of them (i.e., Item 1, 6 and 8) related to the category of intrinsic motivation in Motivation Questionnaire. This indicates that the students' intrinsic motivation seemed to have an increasing trend after the programme than before the programme even though in some items this was not significant. The group of students tended to agree more that 'the process of learning English is fun and interesting' (Item 1) in post- Motivation Questionnaire than in pre- Motivation Questionnaire. This provides evidence that there is a trend that the students agreed more with the intrinsic motivation, which was as a result of their positive experience in the task-based programme.

Besides, as can be seen from the data, the group of students tended to agree more with the importance of goal setting for English learning (i.e., Item 6) and the

communication with native-speakers of English (i.e., Item 8) after the programme than before the programme. This provides more evidence that the task-based learning programme has a positive affect on their intrinsic motivation in English learning.

In addition, the results also indicate that the students' extrinsic motivation was slightly increased after the programme, especially in relation to their social status (i.e., Item 20). Interestingly, this is in line with the findings noted in 6.1.3.4 (i.e., the students tended to believe more in post-BALLI that 'if they learn English very well, they will have a higher social status'). This will be further explored and discussed with the qualitative data in Chapter 7.

6.3 Summary of changes

In summary, all these findings, which came out of the quantitative data analysis using a correlation test (i.e., 6.1.3.2 and 6.2.3.2), a parametric test (i.e., 6.1.3.3 and 6.2.3.3) and a non-parametric test (i.e., 6.1.3.4 and 6.2.3.4), provide base-line data and a general understanding of the changes of the students' beliefs and motivation in English learning between pre- and post- the task-based EFL programme. These changes can be categorised, as follows:

Self-concept beliefs:

- (1) They became more confident in themselves in English learning.
- (2) They tended to believe more that they possessed a potential for achievement in English learning.

(3) They became more confident in communicating with others in English.

Motivation in English learning:

(4) Motivation for learning English was generally increased.

(5) They tended to agree more that the process of learning English was fun and interesting.

(6) They tended to set their own goals for English learning.

(7) They tended to agree more that they learnt English in order to add to their social status.

(8) They seemed to agree less that they would continue learning English out of the class.

Foreign language awareness:

(9) Speaking and listening were both believed more to be important skills to achieve in English learning.

(10) Expressing themselves clearly by translating from their native language (i.e., Chinese) to the target language (i.e., English) was more important than before.

(11) Vocabulary was regarded as more important in English learning than before.

(12) Pronunciation was considered to be less important for speaking English than before.

The difficulty of English learning:

(13) They believed more that English was a difficult language.

The nature of English learning:

(14) They believed less that it was necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English.

In Chapter 7, more findings and discussions about the changes of the students' beliefs and motivation in English learning between pre- and post- the task-based programme will be presented in depth with qualitative data. The section 7.1 will explore the qualitative data in order to reveal more about how and why these changes of beliefs and motivation occurred during the programme. Section 7.2 will then consider further evidence from the post-programme interviews.

Chapter 7 Supporting evidence of changes and further insights: qualitative data: presentation and discussion

Since the quantitative data provided evidence of the apparent changes in the students' beliefs and motivation between pre- and post- the programme as base-line data, it is necessary to turn to the qualitative data to explore the nature of these changes with different perspectives through triangulation. Hence, this chapter will focus on findings, results and discussions of the qualitative data about the learners' beliefs and motivation in English language learning during and post- the task-based learning programme. It presents deeper insights into the nature of the changes in the students' beliefs about and motivation for English learning.

All the qualitative data, which were collected during and after the task-based learning programme using instruments such as the 'motivation' graphs, learners' diaries, follow-up interviews and field-notes, were analysed with NVIVO with the following steps. First, all the data from the qualitative data were scrutinised one by one and then carefully coded into three main themes: (1) beliefs about English learning; (2) motivation in English learning; and (3) task-based learning. Second, within these themes, related entries were categorised and developed as sub-themes. Third, after re-examining all the sub-themes, a trace related to changes in beliefs and motivation emerged as findings. In order to safeguard the validity and reliability, that the changes emerging from the qualitative data were significant findings, and that all the findings came from the students' responses, the numbers of mentions and the numbers of respondents for each

change were counted and stated in the chapter.

In section 7.1, the qualitative data are explored to provide further evidence as to how and why the changes noted in the quantitative findings occurred during the programme. In section 7.2, the post- qualitative data explore more in depth how and why these changes occurred.

7.1 Evidence of changes from while-programme qualitative data

The qualitative data on the changes of the student's beliefs and motivation were collected during the programme through the 'motivation' graph notes, weekly learners' diaries, and researcher's field-notes, as described in 5.5.2 to 5.5.4. In order to explore how and why these changes occurred during the programme, the qualitative data were scrutinised for relevant evidence.

7.1.1 Changes in self-concept:

7.1.1.1 Change 1: They became more confident in themselves in English learning.

The results from the qualitative data indicate that, during the programme, the group of students became generally more confident in themselves in English learning. A total of 91 items (mentioned by 23 students) relating to increased self-confidence were found to exist in the qualitative data. Of these, 86 items were found in the subjects' weekly learning diaries, 3 in their weekly 'motivation' graph notes and 2 in the researcher's field-notes. The results provide strong

evidence that the students' self-concept beliefs were affected by the task-based EFL programme. Four of their responses are extracted below:

Learner Diaries\Week 06-Q4\Case 08

Q4: Were you confident of using English in the tasks? Why? / Why not?

Yes, I was. I think my confidence came from my true love of English. From these tasks, I felt I was in love with English. So I willingly learnt it and I was confident that I could learn it well. (translated)

Learner Diaries\Week 11-Q2\Case 15

Q2: What have you got from the course?

Yes, I admit that I have changed much. For that we have many tasks during the classes, I had to finish them with different people. I was introvert formerly, I preferred doing things alone most the time, but from the course, and I understand that I should finish many things with people. I'm more confident of myself now. (original)

Motivation Graph Notes\Week 02\Case 19

I become more confident. I like the class of Interactive English! Every time I come to the class, I feel very happy and excited. In the class, I became very active in learning. I think perhaps it was the first time I felt happy in class when I came to this university. I liked the interaction amongst the classmates. I liked the harmonic atmosphere in the class. In other English classes, I felt inferior to other students because of my poor English. Other students were good at English and they could always speak English very fluently. So I preferred to be silent in other English classes. Now, I don't know why, after this class, I felt very relaxed – a special feeling that I have never had before. Now I begin to realise that, even if my English is not good, I still can open my mouth to speak English. Every time after the class, my confidence is increased. (translated)

Field-notes\Week 10

In summary, the whole class seemed very happy, confident and enjoyable. They were highly involved in the presentations. (original)

We can see that, as noted in the first extracts, the increase of students' self-confidence came from their love for English, which was affected by the tasks in the task-based EFL programme. Also, we can see that their increased self-confidence came from the changes in themselves, such as introversion (as noted in the second extract) and from the enjoyment through social interaction

with peers in tasks (as noted in the third extract). In addition, the fourth extract from my observation notes shows that the students' self-confidence was likely affected by a positive class ethos. All these issues, which were allied to the nature of task-based learning, provide significant evidence that the students' self-confidence was positively affected through the task-based programme.

7.1.1.2 Change 2: They tended to believe more that they possessed a potential for achievement in English learning.

Again, more evidence indicating that the students' self-concept beliefs were affected during the programme was found in the qualitative data. A total of 49 items (mentioned by 19 students) relating to increased potential for achievement were found in the data. Of these, 39 items were found in the diaries, 6 items in 'motivation' graph notes, and 4 items in field-notes. The results indicate that the group of students tended to believe that they possessed a potential for achievement in English learning. Four of their mentions are shown as examples:

Learner Diaries\Week 03-Q4\Case 07

Q4: Were you confident of using English in the tasks? Why? / Why not?

I have this confidence to use English during the task, because I trust my ability of English and if I make mistakes, there is nothing to be shame of. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 05-Q5\Case 22

Q5: How confident are you about your ability to do well on the tasks?

Yes, I am confident to do well on them because I feel my English is being improved every time in the class. If I try my best, I believe I can do well on the tasks. (translated)

Motivation Graph Notes\Week 06\Case 13

I'm very calm today, even though I don't clearly know the reason. Maybe I've already adjusted my life. I probably become mature and am able to adapt to surroundings. I can do better, I am confident. (original)

Field-notes\Week 07

Some of the students impressed me a lot because they performed very well in group discussion. They were Case 15, Case 22, Case 24, Case 17, Case 01, Case 05, Case 02, and Case 12. They even had a confident look on their faces when they were giving the correct answers! (original)

We can see that the students' self-efficacy was also enhanced through the task-based programme. They believed that they were able to use English and do well on the tasks. In Extracts 1 and 2, we can see that their beliefs came from their positive English learning experience and sense of satisfaction through the task-based programme. Moreover, Extract 3 is in line with the previous discussion in Change 1 that students' self-efficacy also came from the changes in themselves. I was aware of the changes in confidence, as noted in my field-notes in Extract 4. All these extracts provide evidence that the students' self-efficacy was positively affected by the task-based EFL programme.

7.1.1.3 Change 3: They became more confident in communicating with others in English.

Instead of being timid as the students used to be when they spoke English with people in the past, the data reveal that they became more confident about speaking English during the programme. A total of 76 items (mentioned by 22 students) were found in the qualitative data. Of these, 73 items were found in the diaries, 2 items in the field-notes and 1 item in the 'motivation' graph notes, indicating the changes. Five examples are shown as follows:

Learner Diaries\Week 05-Q2\Case 10

Q2: What's your opinion of using tasks in English learning?

I think using tasks is a good way for me in English learning. After joining in these tasks I become more confident in using English and now I'm not very shy as I used to be in the past. What's more, I like to communicate with other people in English. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 07-Q4\Case 15

Q4: Were you confident of using English in the tasks? Why? / Why not?

Perhaps I was. I regarded the tasks as my opportunities. In past time, I was afraid to speak English with strangers. But I don't know why exactly I can express myself in English nowadays. Anyway, I'm very happy that I'm changing now. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 09-Q4\Case 09

Q4: Were you confident of using English in the tasks? Why? / Why not?

Yes, I have confidence to use English. I am not afraid of saying English in public any more after these weeks' training. We became friends in this class and everyone wouldn't laugh at another's mistake. So I think I have confidence to use English in the tasks now. (original)

Field-notes\Week 02

To my surprise, the two students, Case 10 and Case 19 were very confident in speaking English. They both even spoke more, longer and better than I had expected. (original)

Motivation Graph Notes\Week 02\Case 17

I've learnt a lot from today's class. From Ms Lau's class, I learnt how to be active to speak English with other people. I learnt how to express my ideas in English. As I become more active, my learning motivation is getting up. (translated)

We can see that the students became more willing to speak English with other people than before because their self-confidence and self-efficacy had built up. As noted in the extracts above, they were confident in communicating with others in English and they were not afraid of making mistakes in communication. Extract 5 even clearly points that the change was derived from the positive learning experience in the task-based programme.

In summary, with regard to the students' self-concept beliefs in English learning, 216 positive mentions in total and 23 negative mentions in total were found in the qualitative data. The results clearly indicate that their self-concept beliefs in English learning were positively affected during the programme.

7.1.2 Changes in English learning motivation:

7.1.2.1 Change 4: Motivation for learning English was generally increased.

With regard to motivation in English learning, the results from the qualitative data indicate that, during the programme, the group of students became generally more motivated in English learning. A total of 163 items (mentioned by all the 24 students) relating positively to motivation were found to exist in the qualitative data. Of these, 122 items were found in their weekly diaries, 31 in their 'motivation' graph notes and 10 in the researcher's field-notes, as categorised below:

- Intrinsic motivation (A total of 136 items: 101 in diaries; 26 in 'motivation' graph notes; and 9 in field-notes)
- Extrinsic motivation (A total of 16 items: 13 in diaries; and 3 in 'motivation' graph notes)
- Instrumental motivation (A total of 11 items: 8 in diaries; 2 in 'motivation' graph notes; and 1 in field-notes)

The results provide strong evidence that the students' overall motivation was increasingly developed by the task-based EFL programme. The qualitative data findings provide in-depth insights that the students' motivation was complex and multi-faceted. More findings and discussion about the specific changes in motivation are discussed in sections 7.1.2.2 to 7.1.2.5

7.1.2.2 Change 5: They tended to agree more that the process of learning English was fun and interesting.

The results from the qualitative data show that, during the programme, the group of students felt that learning English through tasks was a fun and interesting experience. A total of 418 items (mentioned by all the 24 students) relating to the pleasantness of English learning experience in the programme. Of these, 309 items were found to exist in the diaries, 96 items were found in 'motivation' graph notes and 13 items in field-notes. The high frequency of mentions provides strong evidence that the task-based programme positively affected the students' intrinsic motivation in English learning. For example:

Learner Diaries\Week 08-Q4\Case 10

Q4: How much did the set-up of the task add to your motivation?

It helped to add to my motivation a lot. We were motivated by the interesting and useful topics. Besides, we gained a lot of knowledge from various materials. We could practise what we learnt in task cooperation. We experienced the interest of learning English through these various tasks in this class. (translated)

Learner Diaries\Week 11-Q3\Case 07

Q3: Did the tasks motivate you in your English learning? Why?

Yes, the tasks did motivate me in my English learning and the reason was quite simple, because those tasks were really useful and I had fun with it. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 11-Q3\Case 13

Q3: Did the tasks motivate you in your English learning? Why?

As a matter of fact, the tasks motivated me in English learning in most time. When I learnt with some partners who preferred to speak in English, I would seize the chances to practise my oral English and learnt some advantages from them. At the same time, the enjoyment of chatting with them would make me happy in the class, which was useful in the source of learning. (original)

Motivation Graph Notes\Week 14\Case 09

This task was so interesting and we wanted to finish it very well. And it also built up my motivation in English because we could learn English while having a lot of fun. Actually, I have gained a lot from the Interactive English class during this term. I have learnt a lot of useful methods to learn English and to master some skills. But the most important thing is that it lets me understand the meaningful of studying! (original)

Motivation Graph Notes\Week 14\Case 05

I really enjoyed the task! Even though I always go out with my friends, it was my first time to speak English with strangers outside the classroom. So it was challenging. And I was eager to test my English ability. In the task, my friends and I pretended to be tourists and we talked English with strangers. That was a new experience and we had fun with it! Actually, I've found that speaking English in real life was not as difficult as I thought. I just spoke it naturally. This experience was very helpful for my English learning. I hope that I can continue to use English in daily life, to make friends with others and to expand my world. Learning English through tasks, I feel great! (translated)

In my field-notes, I noted that the students were increasingly motivated in learning English through tasks, as follows:

Field-notes\Week 06

After the oral reports, I showed them the correct CV template on board. Some of them actively asked me why the aspects should be arranged in this order. I was very happy to see that they became fully involved and motivated in learning. When I was explaining to them, they naturally and autonomously wrote down the notes. I think their motivation came from their interests in the topic and in the task, their curiosity, and their desire for knowledge. Besides, I think it was also because of the joyful classroom atmosphere and supportive group cooperation. (original)

From the extracts above, we can see that the students enjoyed learning English

through tasks because it was a pleasant experience for them. The high quality of the learning experience, as Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) and Dörnyei (2005) claim, was one of the key factors of L2 motivation. Also, the high quality of the learning experience was one of the causal attributions ascribed for future learning activity. Students with high quality of learning experience would maintain their intrinsic motivation to the end and were more likely to test their abilities in future learning activity.

7.1.2.3 Change 6: They tended to set their own goals for English learning.

Again, the qualitative data support the finding that the students tended more to set their own goals for English learning. A total of 46 items (mentioned by 19 students) relating to goal setting were found to exist in the data. Of these, 41 were found in the diaries, 3 items in 'motivation' graph notes and 1 item in field-notes. Three of their mentions are extracted as examples:

Learner Diaries\Week 11-Q3\Case 20

Q3: Did the tasks motivate you in your English learning? Why?

Yep! I was eager to enlarge my vocabulary. Then, speaking English like a native speaker is also my goal. (original)

Motivation Graph Notes\Week 03\Case 14

The atmosphere of the class was lively and active. It was hard not to get involved in learning in the class. So, for this semester, to actively get involved in every class of Interactive English is my goal. I hope I can keep this active attitude in learning English during this semester. (translated)

Field-notes\Week 06

I found that they loved and enjoyed this task a lot! They dedicated themselves to the group collaboration. They worked and helped one another in order to complete the task. I found that they spoke a lot in English in discussion than before. Their ambitions were obvious. They wanted to reach this goal. (original)

From the extracts above, we can see that students wanted to take on more responsibility for their own learning because their motivation was enhanced. They were confident in themselves and would set their own goals for English learning.

7.1.2.4 Change 7: They tended to agree more that they learnt English in order to add to their social status.

With regard to their instrumental motivation in English learning, even though the quantitative results generally indicate that the group of students tended to agree more that they learnt English in order to add to their social status, no items (mentions) relating to social status enhancement were found in the qualitative data. In other words, the qualitative finding was not in line with the quantitative finding in this aspect.

In fact, as mentioned in 7.1.2.1 above, only 11 items (mentioned by 9 students) relating to instrumental motivation were found to exist in the qualitative data. Of these, 8 items were found in their diaries, 2 items in 'motivation' graph notes, and 1 item in field-notes. They were mostly related to opportunities associated with English learning, e.g., passing exams or finding a good job in the future.

Two examples are shown as follows:

Learner Diaries\Week 11-Q4\Case 18

Q4: What else motivated you?

Of course, the bigger motivation is for my future needs. In this modern world, English plays an important role in our daily life. And perhaps one day in my job, English will become necessary. So I study English, and I will never stop learning it. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 11-Q7\Case 01

Q7: How motivated do you feel to carry on learning English?

The score of the class will be greatly affect learning motivation. (original)

7.1.2.5 Change 8: They seemed to agree less that they would continue learning English out of the class.

Again, the qualitative finding was not in line with the quantitative data in this aspect. Even though the quantitative data generally indicate that the students seemed to agree less that they would continue learning English out of the class, no mentions relating to this were found in the qualitative data.

In contrast, a total of the 29 items (mentioned by all the 24 students) relating positively to continuing to learn English out of the class were found in their diaries in the qualitative data. The results reflect that they would take on responsibility for their own learning and continue to learn English out of the class. For example:

Learner Diaries\Week 05-Q3\Case 14

Q3: Did the tasks motivate you in your English learning? Why?

Yes. Sometimes when I could not express my ideas and opinions well in English in class, I would eager to know how to say it properly afterwards. So, when I faced something which I did not understand in class, I would try to learn it after class. (translated)

Learner Diaries\Week 11-Q7\Case 07

Q7: How motivated do you feel to carry on learning English?

I think the motivation that keeps me carry on learning English is also strong. Because I still have a lot of things to learn and there is no limitation of knowledge. So I will still keep my edge to be better after the class. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 11-Q7\Case 15

Q7: How motivated do you feel to carry on learning English?

I'm sure I will carry on learning English. English is very important in these days. From this class, I understand that I have a lot of things to learn in the "English world". That is what I feel now. So I suppose myself keep on learning English. (original)

In summary, the qualitative data insightfully reveal that the students' increased motivation in English learning was internal more than external. The results provide strong evidence that the students' desire to learn English was related to feeling good, e.g., the process of learning English was fun and interesting. In addition, most of them had been motivated to set goals for their English learning and would autonomously continue learning English out of the class.

The external factors related to opportunities associated with English learning, e.g., finding a job in the future or passing exams, although not mentioned much in the qualitative data, these goals also influenced their motivation in English learning to some extent.

7.1.3 Changes in foreign language awareness:

7.1.3.1 Change 9: Speaking and listening were both believed more to be important skills to achieve in English learning.

Interestingly, the results from the qualitative data support this in that they indicate that the group of students became more aware of issues related to communication (speaking and listening) through the task-based learning programme. A total of 392 items (mentioned by all the 24 students) about the increased desirability of practising speaking and listening were found in the data.

Of these, 341 items were found in diaries, 34 items in 'motivation' graph notes, and 17 items in field-notes. The results provide evidence that the task-based EFL programme, which was based on communicative pedagogy, had a positive effect on the group of students. When they communicated with peer students in English during the programme, they became more aware of their communicative competence. Therefore, they increasingly came to believe that the practice of speaking and listening skills was important for English learning.

The first quote shows, for example, a student who has become aware of his/her problems in listening and the effects these have.

Learner Diaries\Week 03-Q5\Case 09

Q5: What difficulties, if any, did you have in the tasks?

I didn't do very well in listening. I also felt embarrassed when I always didn't understand some meanings of the words. (original)

The following quotes show that the students had set speaking and listening as the goals they achieved in English learning and that they had developed these skills through tasks.

Learner Diaries\Week 05-Q4\Case 10

Q4: How beneficial do the tasks seem to be in terms of your goals for learning English?

I think they seem to be in terms of my goals for learning English, especially for my oral English. Before I attended this class, I used to be very shy when I spoke to others in English. But now, I become braver and I'm happy to talk to other people. Through the practices my oral English is better. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 05-Q4\Case 11

Q4: How beneficial do the tasks seem to be in terms of your goals for learning English?

I think the tasks help me to improve my oral English and, of course, my listening ability, too. We have to listen to other students' opinions and tell them ours in English, so surely these two skills will be developed a lot. (original)

Motivation Graph Notes\Week 14\Case 01

I didn't have many experiences of using English in real life in the past, and this task gave me the chance to practise my oral English. I think the task is quite challenging but not very difficult to me. All the classmates presented their tasks in different ways. It's interesting. This can strengthen my ability. (original)

In my field-notes, I noted that the tasks encouraged the students to communicate more actively and, in doing so, they gained confidence and skill in speaking and listening. Indeed, through the tasks, speaking and listening became a very prominent part of their learning, as revealed by the many mentions in the students' diaries and 'motivation' graph notes.

Field-notes\Week 05

We started a pre-task – listening practice. They frowned at first because of the poor condition of the recording. Besides, the third part of the recording was very unclear and spoken quickly with a strong Spanish accent. But, most of them could still correctly respond after listening to the recording for three times. They looked content and confident when checking answers. (original)

Field-notes\Week 07

After the task, we moved to the stage of post-task. The students were required to listen to a recording of seven interviews with an interviewer's perspective. They had to assess which interviewee(s) they would employ by their performance in the interviews. They all burst into laughter when they were listening to the fourth interviewee. They told me that the performance of the fourth interviewee was just like what they had done in their own role plays. Then I asked them to tell me the reasons concerning which interviewee they would like to employ. Most of them replied very naturally. Some students even got very excited when they knew that their answers were correct. Some students impressed me a lot today! They were Case 23, Case 21, Case 14, Case 20, Case 08, Case 10, Case 19, Case 15, and Case 22. Today's class was very exciting and motivating. I loved this active atmosphere. (original)

7.1.3.2 Change 10: Expressing themselves clearly by translating from their native language (i.e., Chinese) to the target language (i.e., English) was more important than before.

With regard to communicative competence, the group of students mentioned in the qualitative data that they were aware that they could not fully convey their ideas from their native language (i.e., Chinese) to the target language (i.e., English) in communication and that this frustrated them. 71 items (mentioned by 20 students) in total were found in the data. Of these, 68 items were found in the diaries, 2 items in field-notes and 1 item in 'motivation' graph notes. The results indicate that, during the programme, especially in the face of the difficulty in communication with peer students, the group of students' foreign language awareness was enhanced. For this reason, it is no wonder that they tended to believe from pre-BALLI to post-BALLI that 'learning how to translate from my native language is the most important part of learning English'. For example:

Learner Diaries\Week 03-Q5\Case 16

Q5: What difficulties, if any, did you have in the tasks?

When I talked in English, I just knew how to speak in Chinese, but I didn't know how to explain my feeling into English. I think it was the most difficult thing. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 08-Q3\Case 20

Q3: What factors motivated you most in the tasks?

Perhaps, language skills motivated me most. When I was so excited in talking with someone in English, the worst thing was that I couldn't totally explain about my feelings with the topic. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 10-Q5\Case 08

Q5: What difficulties, if any, did you have in the tasks?

The main problem I had was that I could not totally translate my meanings from Chinese to English. Perhaps it was caused by the cultural differences. Sometimes when I wanted to express the value of Chinese culture in English,

I could not convey my meanings properly. (translated)

Motivation Graph Notes\Week 09\Case 22

Today's topic was related to our daily life. It was 'Food and Health'. I found that I could not clearly express the names of the food in English. (translated)

In my field-notes, I noted the apparent frustration the students felt about not being able to express all of their meanings adequately in English now that they were being more active in communication.

Field-notes\Week 09

At the second pre-task, the students were in groups of four. They got troubles in categorising food into four levels in Food Pyramid. Then they looked a little bored and upset, especially when they could not come to consensus in the group. I thought it was because they were not familiar with the vocabulary of food and they might not have common knowledge of Food Pyramid. When I was monitoring them, I heard that they tried to express their ideas in Chinese more than in English. Although the topic was very relevant to their daily life, they found the pre-task difficult to accomplish because they might not have the background knowledge or common sense of food to support them to do the task. (original)

From the extracts above, we can see that one of the difficulties that the students confronted with was that they could not clearly convey their ideas from their native language to the target language in communication. Interestingly, the difficulty in communication did not hinder the students' motivation for learning English. Instead, they became more aware of this issue and their motivation was stimulated, as noted in Extract 2.

7.1.3.3 Change 11: Vocabulary was regarded as more important in English learning than before.

As is indicated by the above discussion, the students became more aware of the

issues related to communicative competence, especially of the importance of vocabulary during the task-based programme. The data indicate that, the group of students were strongly aware of their lack of vocabulary in communication. A total of 197 items (mentioned by 24 students) were found in the data. Of these, 178 items were found to exist in diaries, 13 items in 'motivation' graph notes, and 6 items in field-notes. The results provide evidence not only of the difficulty related to vocabulary that the students encountered in communication, but, through this, also the priority that vocabulary acquisition came to have in their English learning.

Since their foreign language awareness had become enhanced during the programme, it is not surprising they tended to agree more from pre-BALLI to post-BALLI that 'the most important part of learning a foreign language is learning vocabulary'. Four of their mentions are illustrated below:

Learner Diaries\Week 09-Q5\Case 01

Q5: What difficulties, if any, did you have in the tasks?

The words in this task were quite different from what we usually used. I never used these words frequently and also I did not know some of the words. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 03-Q6\Case 08

Q6: What did you do when you faced these difficulties?

The most important thing I think I have to do is to accumulate my vocabulary. Vocabulary is like a foundation of English learning. Like building a house on a stable foundation, your English can be developed when you have a good foundation of vocabulary. (translated)

Motivation Graph Notes\Week 11\Case 11

Today I learnt many words about the travelling. And before the class I hardly can tell the English names of the famous places in Macau. I'm very happy to learn all the things about the travel. (original)

Field-notes\Week 09

At the pre-task, the students listened to a recording about a couple eating out in a restaurant. They were required to categorise food that the couple ordered. I found that they were frowning when they were listening to the recording. They might think it was difficult. I thought it was because they did not know the vocabulary of food. (original)

7.1.3.4 Change 12: Pronunciation was considered to be less important for speaking English than before.

With regard to pronunciation in speaking English, a total of 13 items (mentioned by 8 students) were found to exist relating to pronunciation in the qualitative data. Of these, 12 items were found in diaries and 1 item in the 'motivation' graph notes. The low frequency of mentions supports the quantitative findings in that the group of students seem not as much concerned with this issue as they were before the programme, when they believed strongly that 'it was important to speak English with excellent pronunciation'.

More specifically, in response to the question concerning what difficulties they had in the tasks, only 2 out of the 24 students mentioned that pronunciation was their problem in communication, as follows:

Learner Diaries\Week 07-Q5\Case 23

Q5: What difficulties, if any, did you have in the tasks?

The pronunciation of some words troubled me. That caused a little problem when I communicated with my partners in task collaboration. (translated)

Learner Diaries\Week 10-Q5\Case 01

Q5: What difficulties, if any, did you have in the tasks?

I think some of the words were quite difficult to pronounce. These stopped my presentation sometimes. (original)

As noted above, the very sparse mentions from the while-programme qualitative

data indicate that the students were not much concerned with the importance of the excellence of pronunciation. The reason behind this change could be because they could still understand each other in communication even though their pronunciation in English was not 'perfect'.

In summary, we can see that the students' foreign language awareness was developed through interactions with peers in tasks. They became more aware of the issues involved in communication such as speaking, listening, vocabulary and pronunciation. The results above provide strong evidence that the task-based EFL programme, which was based on communicative pedagogy, had a positive effect on the students' foreign language awareness.

7.1.4 Changes in the difficulty of English learning:

7.1.4.1 Change 13: They believed more that English was a difficult language.

With regard to the difficulty of language learning, the results from the qualitative data support those from the quantitative data in that they indicate that the group of students came to believe more that English was a difficult language than they did before. A total of 110 items (mentioned by 23 students) about the challenge of using English for the tasks were found in the data. Of these, 103 items were found in diaries, 6 items in 'motivation' graph notes, and 1 item in field-notes. One of the reasons behind this change comes from the difficulties that they encountered in communication during the programme, as mentioned above in

7.1.3.2 and 7.1.3.3. Another reason comes from their learning experience that the task-based programme encouraged them to confront different ways of learning that they found more challenging. Therefore, they believed more from pre-BALLI to post-BALLI that 'English was a difficult language'. Three examples are shown as follows:

Learner Diaries\Week 06-Q1\Case 08

Q1: Did you like / dislike this week's tasks? Why?

Yes, I liked it, because the way of learning English was different from the past. I found it challenging when I expressed myself in different ways in English. (translated)

Learner Diaries\Week 06-Q3\Case 05

Q3: Were the tasks easy / difficult / interesting / boring / challenging / threatening? Why?

Very interesting and challenging. No matter communicating with others or delivering a presentation on the stage, I found that it was difficult to speak English. However, in the same time, I felt that it was challenging and I had lots of fun in it. (translated)

Motivation Graph with reason\Week 14\Case 22

Today's task was very interesting. We could practise what we had learnt in our real life. After the task, I realised my weaknesses. When I was communicating with native-speakers in English, I couldn't fluently express my meanings with proper words in correct grammar. So, this task really gave me a chance to practise my English. After this task, I became more confident and I realised that I should use English more in daily life. (translated)

Interestingly, although the students clearly found the tasks and using English a challenging proposition, I noted that, with increased confidence, they were ready to take on these challenges.

Field-notes\Week 07

When I had prepared for this task, I thought that the students would not like to be 'exposed' openly on the stage to the class. But the evidence showed that it was not true! When the students were confident enough in themselves, they liked to test out their abilities. (original)

In other words, although they seemed to think that English was more difficult than they had realised before, this was not a factor which hindered their motivation. The very sparse evidence from the 'motivation' graph notes concerning the difficulty of English again seems to indicate that this was not a factor that affected their enthusiasm for learning. Therefore, the qualitative data indicate that the change that was noted in the quantitative results is not particularly significant. It could be argued that the task-based programme seems to have raised their awareness of the challenges in learning English and triggered their motivation to confront these issues in a positive manner.

Moreover, after overcoming the difficulties, the students' self-confidence and self-efficacy were increased. Since they were more confident in themselves, they more willingly took on the next challenge. Accordingly, this came to be a virtuous circle that positively affected their English learning. The following quotes show that the students' motivation in English learning was enhanced because of the increase of their self-efficacy after overcoming the difficulty in speaking English. This relates to and strengthens the evidence for Change 2, discussed in 7.1.1.2.

Motivation Graph Notes\Week 12\Case 02

I did the presentation only myself. Although I was so afraid, I did it. The feel was so great. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 07-Q3\Case 13

Q3: Were the tasks easy / difficult / interesting / boring / challenging / threatening? Why?

They were challenging for me. This was my first time to have a presentation in front of all of my classmates. I felt a little nervous at first. However, when I said the first word, I knew I had this ability to do it well and showed my best skill to everyone. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 11-Q3\Case 16

Q3: Did the tasks motivate you in your English learning? Why?

Yes. I became more confidence to speak English. I felt more willing to learn English. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 05-Q3\Case 22

Q3: Did the tasks motivate you in your English learning? Why?

Yes, especially when I did well on the tasks, I felt great. Since I realise I am able to express my ideas in English, I want to try to speak in another way next time. (translated)

7.1.5 Changes in the nature of English learning:

7.1.5.1 Change 14: They believed less that it was necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English.

The results from the qualitative data also indicate that, during the programme, the group of students tended to believe less that it was necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English. Only 9 items (mentioned by 5 students) in total were found to exist relating to English speaking cultures in the qualitative data. Of these, 7 items were found in diaries and 2 items in the 'motivation' graph notes. Again, the low frequency of mentions reflects the results from the quantitative data in that the group of students seem not as much concerned with this issue as they were before the programme.

More specifically, in relation to the development of the knowledge about English-speaking cultures through the task-based programme, only 3 students mentioned that they had learnt something about English-speaking cultures through tasks, as follows:

Learner Diaries\Week 05-Q2\Case 18

Q2: What's your opinion about using tasks in English learning?

This is the way in which I become active in learning. Through tasks, I have learnt knowledge of English. I understood more English and American cultures and increased vocabulary. (translated)

Learner Diaries\Week 11-Q1\Case 08

Q1: What do you think you've learnt?

Since the first day I came to this class, I've found that my vocabulary has been increased a lot. Also, the ability of expression in English has been improved. I've learnt the culture differences between the east and the west. And I've known better how to express my opinions in different cultures. (translated)

Motivation Graph Notes\Week 11\Case 21

I'm very fond of this week's topic. I feel excited when come to this topic – travelling. I really keen on it, for I can broaden my horizon and learn more different customs, cultures, art, economics and life styles. So nice! (original)

In summary, the findings in the qualitative data mostly support those in quantitative data. 12 of the 14 changes which were found in the qualitative data were in line with the quantitative data. Only two changes, which were related to motivation for English learning, were found in the quantitative data but not consistently found in the qualitative data (i.e., Change 7: They tended to agree more that they learnt English in order to add to their social status and Change 8: They seemed to agree less that they would continue learning English out of the class). In other words, the qualitative data indicate that the students' motivation for English learning was not because of adding to their social status and that their learning autonomy was increased in that they indicated that they would continue learning English out of the class.

In addition, the qualitative data provided greater insights into the nature of the changes in the students' beliefs about English learning. For example, with

regard to the beliefs about foreign language aptitude, the quantitative findings simply reveal the differences between pre- and post- BALLI and imply that the changes in their beliefs are because of the enhancement of the students' positive expectations about their own capability in English learning, which was probably built up by the task-based programme. More insightfully, the qualitative data provide evidence that the students' self-confidence and self-efficacy were increasingly developed through their positive learning experience when communicating with peer students in tasks during the programme.

Another example is that, with regard to the beliefs about the difficulty of English learning, the findings from the quantitative data simply reveal that, after the programme, the students tended to believe more that English was a difficult language. At first glance, this could be easily interpreted in a negative manner, i.e., that the task-based learning programme had hindered the students' motivation for English learning. However, the qualitative findings provide the reasons behind their beliefs were that, when communicating with peer students in tasks, the students' confronted difficulties in vocabulary, in speaking and listening skills, and in communicative conveyance from their native language (i.e., Chinese) to the target language (i.e., English), which they considered as challenges they wished to take on and to overcome. Therefore, through these difficulties, their foreign language awareness was enhanced and their motivation for English learning was increasing because they wished to achieve their goals by overcoming these difficulties.

In the next section, further evidence from the post-programme interviews will be presented in order to reveal more about how and why these changes of beliefs and motivation occurred. After that, more findings emerging from both while- and post-programme qualitative data will be discussed in section 7.3.

7.2 Evidence of changes from post-programme interview data

Since the qualitative data on the changes of the student's beliefs and motivation during the programme have already been discussed above, it is necessary to turn to the post-qualitative data for exploring more in depth how and why these changes occurred. The qualitative data were collected after the programme through follow-up interviews, as described in 5.5.5, when students had the opportunity to reflect back on the whole experience of learning through the task-based programme.

7.2.1 Changes in self-concept:

7.2.1.1 Change 1: They became more confident in themselves in English learning.

The results from the post-programme interviews indicate that through the task-based EFL programme, the group of students became generally more confident in themselves in English learning. A total of 18 items (mentioned by 13 students) relating to increased self-confidence were found to exist in the interviews. The results provide evidence that the students' self-concept beliefs

were affected by the task-based EFL programme. The following transcripts show that the students' confidence in English learning was increased through learning in this way.

Interview\Q19\Case 12

The teacher: Did the TBL programme satisfy your initial expectation for English learning?

The student: Yes.

The teacher: Yes. In which aspect?

The student: I think especially for communicative competence. The class especially encouraged us to speak English. So I found that my communicative skills were improved. I gained a lot of knowledge relating to the tasks. Moreover, I found that my vocabulary developed more than before.

The teacher: You found that your vocabulary developed?

The student: Yes, I spoke English with my classmates more often than before and I found that I became more confident in learning English. (translated)

Interview\Q17\Case16

The teacher: Which was the most favourite task in the TBL programme? Why?

The student: I would choose the last task.

The teacher: The last one? You are saying 'the outdoor task'?

The student: Yes, at first I felt a little shy to speak English with strangers. My partner and I discussed who should speak first at the door of the tourism centre. But then, after we communicated with the staff of the centre in English, took the recording and came out of the centre, I felt great!

The teacher: You felt great?

The student: Yes, and after I listened to my recording, I found my English improved. So my confidence increased a lot. (translated)

We can see that the results from post-programme interview data were in line with those from the while-programme data noted in 7.1.1.1. As shown in the extracts above, the students' self-confidence was enhanced. Through the task-based programme, they found that their English competence was developed. Therefore, they were satisfied with their improvement and became more confident in themselves.

7.2.1.2 Change 2: They tended to believe more that they possessed a potential for achievement in English learning.

Again, more evidence in the interviews indicating that the group of students' confidence was increased through the task-based EFL programme. A total of 30 items (mentioned by 21 students) relating to increased potential for achievement were found in the data. The results provide evidence that the students' self-concept beliefs were affected by the programme. They tended to believe more that they possessed a potential for achievement in English learning. For example:

Interview\Q14\Case 10

The teacher: How confident were you about your ability to do well on these tasks?

The student: I was quite confident about my ability.

The teacher: Why?

The student: Because the difficulty of the tasks was within my ability. Some of them were a little challenging. Then, I thought since they were challenging, why couldn't I try to take them on? I might also do them well, I believed.

The teacher: I see. So, no matter whether the difficulty of the tasks was within or beyond your ability, you were confident?

The student: Yes, I was. (translated)

An outdoor task, 'One Day Trip in Macau', was particularly cited by the students to have had a positive influence on their beliefs about their ability to cope with real-life communication tasks:

Interview\Q14\Case 22

The teacher: How confident were you about your ability to do well on these tasks?

The student: Very much.

The teacher: Very much. Why?

The student: Because we had learnt a lot in the class and we had had some storage of vocabulary, so I thought I could do them well. Especially in the final task – One-day trip in Macau. The only thing that we needed was to prepare well, then we could do

best and we could confidently deliver our presentation in front of the class. (translated)

Interview\Q14\Case 24

The teacher: How confident were you about your ability to do well on these tasks?

The student: Very much.

The teacher: Very much. Why?

The student: The main reason was that I was confident in my ability. Objectively speaking, we were capable to do the tasks like these. So we did not need to worry. I could use English to ask directions from the Macau International Airport or to order meals in restaurants. There was nothing to be afraid of. (translated)

7.2.1.3 Change 3: They became more confident in communicating with others in English.

Interestingly, the results from the post-programme interviews support the findings from the qualitative data during the programme noted in 7.1.1.3, providing strong evidence that, through the task-based learning programme, the group of students became more confident in communicating with others in English. 37 items (mentioned by 21 students) in total were found in the interviews, indicating the change of the beliefs. Four examples are shown as follows:

Interview\Q19\Case 05

The teacher: Did the TBL programme satisfy your initial expectation for English learning?

The student: Yes, it did.

The teacher: Yes. In which aspect?

The student: First, I thought I gained lots of opportunities to communicate with others in English, no matter with classmates, with the teacher, or with native-speakers of English out of the class. In the past, even if I was given a million dollars I would not dare to speak English with any stranger, especially a native-speaker stranger. But now, especially on the day when we were doing the outdoor task in the Wine Museum, I was chatting with some

native-speakers of English all day. I felt that the class gave us opportunities to practise what we had learnt and it developed my interests in learning English. My confidence in English learning was increased. (translated)

Interview\Q13\Case 11

The teacher: How did you feel when you were using English in tasks with your partners?

The student: Well, at the beginning, I felt a little shy.

The teacher: Oh, you felt shy?

The student: Yes, but on that day when we finished doing the outdoor task, my classmate and I still kept talking in English on the way from the Macau Cultural Centre to the city centre.

The teacher: That was good! What did you feel when you both spoke in English?

The student: We were very happy, indeed. We realised that we could express ourselves in English. We spoke it naturally, without any awkward feelings.

The teacher: Very good. Were you confident when you both spoke in English?

The student: Yes, we had quite strong confidence. (translated)

Interview\Q13\Case 03

The teacher: How did you feel when you were using English in tasks with your partners?

The student: I felt it was interesting to speak English with others because I could have a chance to practise my English. It was fun.

The teacher: It was fun. When you were speaking English with others, were you confident? Or were you shy or timid?

The student: I felt quite confident. I quite enjoyed speaking English! (translated)

Interview\Q14\Case 20

The teacher: How confident were you about your ability to do well on these tasks?

The student: I felt somewhat.

The teacher: OK, somewhat. Why?

The student: Actually I felt my confidence gradually increased through a process. I thought that the learning environment was important for developing my confidence in English. In the past, especially in secondary school, we never talked in English because our speaking competence was not evaluated in the exams. We were not encouraged to speak English, so we did not dare to speak. But now, in your class, even though I met my classmates once a week, we completely talked in English for one semester. Sometimes, even when we met on the campus, we chatted in English. (translated)

In summary, the results from post-qualitative interview data were in accordance with those from the while-programme qualitative data. We can see that the students' self-concept beliefs (especially their self-confidence and self-efficacy) were increased through the task-based programme. The transcripts above reveal in depth the reasons behind these changes. Their self-concept beliefs were enhanced mainly because of the positive class ethos, the support from peer students, the relevance of the tasks, the pleasantness of the learning experience and the sense of satisfaction after completing tasks. All these issues provide strong evidence that the task-based programme positively affected the students' self-concept beliefs about English learning.

7.2.2 Changes in English learning motivation:

7.2.2.1 Change 4: Motivation for learning English was generally increased.

Again, the post-programme interview data indicate that the students' overall motivation for learning English was increased. A total of 353 items (mentioned by all the 24 students) relating positively to motivation in English learning were found to exist in the interview transcriptions. This provides evidence that the students' motivation in English learning was increasingly developed through the task-based EFL programme, as categorised below:

- Intrinsic motivation (A total of 194 items)
 - They were motivated because of the tasks (128 items)
 - They were motivated because of the pleasant learning atmosphere (24

- items)
- They were motivated because of their own reasons (24 items)
- They were motivated because of their own goals (18 items)
- Extrinsic motivation (A total of 114 items)
 - They were motivated because of peer students (78 items)
 - They were motivated because of the teacher (30 items)
 - They were motivated because of their parents (6 items)
- Instrumental motivation (A total of 45 items)
 - They were motivated because they wanted to pass an English proficiency test (like TOEFL and IELTS) (17 items)
 - They were motivated because they wanted to study abroad (13 items)
 - They were motivated because learning English would help them to have good jobs (12 items)
 - They were motivated because learning English would help them to be successful in their studies (3 items)

The post-programme interview data findings provide in-depth insights that the students' overall motivation was increasingly developed by the task-based EFL programme. Indeed, the number of positive mentions for the tasks themselves is by far the greatest (128 of 188 mentions) of the factors listed above. The next highest number of mentions relates to the students' peers, again reflecting the collaborative nature of task-based learning. Clearly, then, the students enjoyed the classes mainly because of the methodology and tasks, rather than for any other reason, such as the teacher's personality. More findings and

discussion about the changes in motivation is provided in the following sections.

7.2.2.2 Change 5: They tended to agree more that the process of learning English was fun and interesting.

The results from the post-programme interviews also provide strong evidence that the students found the process of learning English through tasks was fun and interesting. A total of 127 items (mentioned by all the 24 students) relating to the pleasantness of English learning in the programme were found to exist in the interviews. This supports the finding noted in 7.1.2.2, indicating that the task-based programme positively affected the students' intrinsic motivation in English learning. Four transcripts are extracted as examples:

Interview\Q9\Case 04

The teacher: Did you enjoy your English classes more or less when you did tasks?

The student: Yes. More.

The teacher: Why?

The student: First, the way of learning English in the class was different from other English classes I had experienced. In Mainland China, it was impossible for us to explore English by tasks and to have fun in the learning process. Second, I found that the learning atmosphere in the class was lively and enthusiastic. When I learnt something from the class, I would write it down. I felt relaxed in English learning in this way. Moreover, I have learnt a lot from the class during this semester indeed! (translated)

Interview\Q11\Case 09

The teacher: Did the tasks motivate you in your English learning?

The student: Of course.

The teacher: Why?

The student: I found the tasks were very interesting and relevant to my daily life. I felt them good to learn. Besides, through the tasks, I felt very happy in learning. I could say that the tasks motivated me a lot in my English learning. (translated)

Interview\Q6\Case 10

The teacher: So, through the programme, have your opinions about learning English changed?

The student: To be honest, this is the first time I knew that English could be learnt in this way by various tasks. You know, I come from He-Nan which is typically and traditionally exam-oriented in learning. When I was a child, I was taught to do exercises for the examinations. Then when I came to Macau, even though I had more chances to practise my oral ability than before, I was required to have oral presentation alone in other classes, not cooperate in groups like this in the TBL programme. I have found that tasks can arouse my passion for learning more than other methods.

The teacher: Arouse your passion for learning more than other methods?

The student: Yes. Passion, enthusiasm...

The teacher: Oh, passion and enthusiasm [laughing]. Good, so you are saying that your opinions about English learning are changed and different from the past?

The student: [Laughing] Yes! (translated)

Interview\Q11\Case 19

The teacher: Did the tasks motivate you in your English learning?

The student: Yes, very much.

The teacher: Why?

The student: Because the classes were very interesting and practical. I particularly like learning something practical. So every time after class, I felt entirely happy and I thought I had not wasted my time.

The teacher: Oh, that was good.

The student: Yes. Frankly speaking, in the past, I had not had such a learning experience in English classes. Because, you know, learning English was merely for examinations in Mainland China. We had not been given any chance to use our imagination and unlock our potentials. But now, in this programme, I was so happy that we were given opportunities to exert our various abilities. (translated)

The transcripts above show us in depth the reasons why the students' motivation (especially intrinsic motivation) for English learning was enhanced through the task-based programme. For example, Transcript 1 indicates that the student enjoyed learning because of the lively and enthusiastic atmosphere in class. In Transcript 2 and 4, the students indicated that they were motivated because of the relevance of tasks and the opportunities to exert their various abilities

through tasks. Transcript 3 clearly points that the collaborative nature of TBL aroused the passion for English learning. All of these transcripts show as evidence that the students had fun in English learning in the task-based programme and that the high quality of learning experience through the programme was the key motivational factor in their English learning.

7.2.2.3 Change 6: They tended to set their own goals for English learning.

Again, in relation to goal-setting for English learning, the results from the post-programme interview data were in line with the qualitative finding during the programme, noted in 7.1.2.3. The post-programme interview results indicate that most of the students had set goals for English learning through the task-based programme. A total of 22 items (mentioned by 17 students) relating to goal-setting for English learning were found to exist in the interviews. For example:

Interview\Q3\Case 15

The teacher: How would you describe your desire to study English (i.e., motivation) at this time?

The student: Quite high.

The teacher: Quite high. Why?

The student: It could be because...first, when I saw other students performed well in this class, in comparison to my performance, I realised my own weaknesses in English. So that motivated me to learn harder. Second, when we used English in real-life situation in the outdoor task, I really realised that English was very important in communication. So I decided to keep learning English and I wanted to learn it well.

The teacher: Oh, you decided to keep learning English and you wanted to learn it well. Is this your goal?

The student: Yes, I hope I can use it as well as my native language. (translated)

Interview\Q12\Case 10

The teacher: What factors motivated you most in the tasks? Why?

The student: I think they were first, the topics of the tasks. Second, whether the tasks were of benefit to my goal. Third, whether they were relevant to my life.

The teacher: Anything else?

The student: Perhaps, whether they were challenging and whether the tasks could help me to improve my abilities.

The teacher: So these factors would motivate you in your English learning?

The student: Yes.

The teacher: OK. What was your goal?

The student: I wanted to improve my abilities, especially English speaking competence. In the past, I had not had much confidence in speaking English with people. So, I wanted to improve my English speaking through the tasks. When I found the tasks could be beneficial to my goal, I was motivated to learn.
(translated)

From the transcripts above, we can see that the students tended to take on more responsibility for their English learning. The change came from their foreign language awareness. When they collaborated with peers in tasks, they realised their own weaknesses in English competence. Therefore, their desire for English learning was stimulated because they wanted to be as capable as their peer students were. Also, the change came from their increased self-confidence. They believed that they could do well on tasks in English, therefore they became more motivated in English learning and they wanted to set their own goals for English learning.

7.2.2.4 Change 7: They tended to agree more that they learnt English in order to add to their social status.

As mentioned above in 7.2.2.1, in relation to a specific instrumental factor, i.e., adding to their social status, no items (mentions) was found in the post-programme interview data. The students' motivation in English learning was affected, however, by other instrumental factors. A total of 45 items

(mentioned by 18 students) relating to instrumental motivation was found to exist in the interview. In this aspect, the post-programme interview results are in line with those in the qualitative data from during the programme (i.e., learners' diaries, 'motivation' graph notes, and field-notes). In other words, the students' instrumental motivation in English learning did not include a need for enhanced social status.

Indeed, the results from the post-programme interview data mostly indicate that the students' instrumental motivation was related to opportunities associated with English learning, e.g., passing exams or studying abroad in the future. For example:

Interview\Q5\Case 24

The teacher: You said that the tasks and the CET-4⁴ were the most motivational factors during these 15 weeks. How did they affect you?

The student: When I found the tasks were interesting, I surfed the Internet, especially English websites, to look for more information about them. And when I realised the exam was approaching, I worked harder to prepare for it. (translated)

Interview\Q3\Case 16

The teacher: How would you describe your desire to study English at this time?

The student: Quite high.

The teacher: Quite high. Why?

The student: First of all, I want to study abroad in the future. Second, English will be very important for my future life and career. (translated)

In summary, as discussed in 7.2.2.1, L2 motivation was complex and multifaceted in nature and the students' motivation for English learning was generally enhanced by the task-based programme. From the qualitative data,

⁴ College English Test (Band 4) – A national English language proficiency examination for college students in China.

we can see that the task-based programme mostly affected the students' intrinsic motivation for English learning rather than their instrumental motivation.

7.2.2.5 Change 8: They seemed to agree less that they would continue learning English out of the class.

Again, the post-programme interview findings were in line with those in qualitative data during the programme (i.e., learners' diaries, 'motivation' graph notes, and field-notes). Even though the quantitative data generally indicate that the students seemed to agree less that they would continue learning English out of the class, no mentions relating to this were found to exist in the post-programme interview data. On the contrary, a total of 38 items (mentioned by 20 students) positively relating to continuing to learn English out of the class were found in the post-programme interview data. Two examples are shown as follows:

Interview\Q5\Case 08

The teacher: You are saying that the tasks motivated you in your English learning? How?

The student: Yes, especially in the outdoor task, I found that English was really close to our daily life. Because, you know, we only had learnt English in the classroom. But when we were given a chance to use English outside the classroom, I found that my horizon was expanded. There were lots of things we could learn in English. So, through the outdoor task, I realised that I had problems in vocabulary in communication. Then, this motivated me to keep learning because I wanted to improve my English. For me, I won't regard learning English as only a school subject. I will keep learning it not only in class but also out of the class.

The teacher: So you will autonomously keep learning English?

The student: Yes, because I wanted to improve my English! (translated)

Interview\Q8\Case 22

The teacher: What's your opinion about using tasks in English learning?

The student: I think they were good. They were relevant to our real life.

The teacher: They were relevant to our real life. Anything else?

The student: I found that the tasks could enhance our motivation to learn English. And through the tasks, we found our own strengths and weaknesses in English. Because when we talked English with each other in group, we found that there were problems in communication.

The teacher: Then, what would you do after you found your problems in communication?

The student: I wrote them down and then I would look for some information in a dictionary or on the Internet after class.

The teacher: That's good! You became active in your learning!
(translated)

In summary, the results from post-qualitative were in line with those from qualitative data during the programme, insightfully revealing that the group of students' increased motivation in English learning was internal more than external. The pleasantness of the English learning experience through the task-based programme was the main internal factor of motivation for English learning. On the other hand, the external motivating factors, rather than being about adding to their social status, were related to opportunities associated with English learning, such as finding a job in the future or passing exams. In addition, most of them had been motivated to set goals for their English learning and their learning autonomy was increased as cited that they would continue learning English out of the class.

7.2.3 Changes in foreign language awareness:

7.2.3.1 Change 9: Speaking and listening were both believed more to be important skills to achieve in English learning.

With regard to foreign language awareness, the post-programme interview data

were in line with the findings in 7.1.3.1, indicating that the group of students became more aware of issues involved in communication (i.e., speaking and listening) through tasks. A total of 156 items (mentioned by all the 24 students) relating to speaking and listening skills were found to exist in the interviews. The results provide evidence that the task-based programme, which was based on communicative pedagogy, had a positive effect on the group of students. When they communicated with peer students in English in tasks, they became more aware of their communicative competence and they had a strong desire for achieving these skills in English learning. Three of their mentions are extracted as examples:

Interview\Q2\Case 15

The teacher: What skills do you think are the most important in communication?

The student: In fact, I think speaking and listening are more important.

The teacher: Hmm... You are saying that listening is more important? Or speaking is more important?

The student: I think probably both. But first of all, you have to understand what people say. So you have to listen and then express your own ideas to people. So I think speaking is also important.

The teacher: So you are saying that 'listening' is the first?

The student: Yes,

The teacher: And then 'speaking', right?

The student: Right.

The teacher: Are there any other things that you think also important in communication?

The student: Actually, 'writing' and 'reading' are also important, I think. But in the past, we were mainly taught from 'writing' and 'reading' in Mainland China. We ignored 'listening' and 'speaking'.

The teacher: So now, you think 'listening' and 'speaking' are more important?

The student: Yes. (translated)

Interview\Q6\Case 15

The teacher: Through the programme, have your opinions about learning English changed? How?

The student: Yes. For example, in the past, I knew that speaking was very important. But it was only a fact that I knew, it didn't influence me much.

The teacher: Yes.

The student: Then, after I came to this class, when we were required to speak English all the time during the class... Well, tell you the truth, at first, I was not willing to speak because I was shy and afraid to lose face. But later, after I got familiar with the classmates and the framework of the course, I felt better. Then, I was willing to open my mouth to speak English.
(translated)

Interview\Q6\Case 20

The teacher: Because of the programme, have your opinions about learning English changed? How?

The student: Yes, my opinions are different from the past. I used to think that learning English was a personal thing.

The teacher: A personal thing?

The student: Yes, I thought that when you were good at English, you could communicate with others without any problem. But now I don't think so, because both of the speakers may still misunderstand each other in communication. So the first thing is that you have to carefully listen to what people say, even if they have lots of mistakes in their speech, you have to try to understand their meanings. Then the second thing is that you have to convey your meanings carefully in your speech in order to let people understand you. So, I think, through this class, I became keen on communication with others in English.
(translated)

7.2.3.2 Change 10: Expressing themselves clearly by translating from their native language (i.e., Chinese) to the target language (i.e., English) was more important than before.

With regard to foreign language awareness of communicative competence, the post-programme interview data indicate that the group of students were aware that they could not fully convey their ideas from their native language (i.e., Chinese) to the target language (i.e., English) in communication and that this frustrated them. A total of 24 items (mentioned by 16 students) were found in the interviews. The results were in line with the finding noted in 7.1.3.2, indicating that their foreign language awareness was increased by the

task-based programme. Three transcripts are shown as examples:

Interview\Q13\Case 18

The teacher: How did you feel when you were using English in tasks with your partners?

The student: At the beginning, I felt a little awkward.

The teacher: Oh, why?

The student: Because our first language is Chinese, not English. So in the first time when I spoke English with my classmates, I felt a little awkward. Besides, when I was speaking English, I began to be aware of my poor speaking competence.

The teacher: Oh, I see.

The student: When listening to other people's English, I had thought that I could also speak as fluently as they did. However, when I spoke out, my tongue seemed to be tied and I could not express my meanings from my mind. Then, I thought, I really needed to practise English speaking more often. (translated)

Interview\Q13\Case 12

The teacher: How did you feel when you were using English in tasks with your partners?

The student: I felt that I could not express myself fluently in English.

The teacher: Oh, you could not express yourself fluently in English?

The student: No, and when I couldn't express my ideas from my mind, frankly speaking, I really wanted to use Chinese.

The teacher: You really wanted to use Chinese. [Laughing] OK, so when you spoke English with your partners, were you nervous or worried or confident or what?

The student: Well, I felt quite confident because we all were the same.

The teacher: You all were the same? You mean your partners had the same feeling as you did?

The student: Yes, we all wished that we could speak Chinese. But since we tried our best to express our meanings in English, I found that everyone had the same problem in speaking. I knew that even though I might make mistakes in speaking, no one would laugh at me. Then, I was released from worry and became confident. (translated)

Interview\Q15\Case 14

The teacher: What problems, if any, did you have during the programme?

The student: Yes, my biggest problem was that I could not easily express my meaning to others in English.

The teacher: Why? Was this problem caused by vocabulary, grammar, or any other things?

The student: I felt that it was because I did not speak English much in daily life. So when I opened my mouth to speak English in the class, I could not immediately express my ideas in English. I

knew exactly how to say them in Chinese, but I didn't know how to say them in English. (translated)

From the extracts above, we can see that the students were aware of the problems they confronted in communication. They were aware of their inability to convey meanings from the native language to the target language. As noted in the first transcript, instead of giving up on speaking English with others, the students wanted to practise English speaking more often. Moreover, even though they could not fully express their meanings from their native language to the target language, they were not afraid of losing face in front of other people. As seen in the second transcript, their confidence was derived from the support of peer students and the positive ethos in class so that they became more willing to use English in communication.

7.2.3.3 Change 11: Vocabulary was regarded as more important in English learning than before.

Again, the results from the post-programme interview data provide evidence that the group of students became more aware of the importance of vocabulary through the task-based programme. The data indicate that they were strongly aware of their lack of vocabulary in communication. A total of 64 items (mentioned by 21 students) were found to exist in the interviews, indicating this awareness. The results support and strengthen the finding noted in 7.1.3.3 concerning not only the difficulty of the vocabulary that the students encountered in communication, but also, because of this, their enhanced desire for vocabulary acquisition in their English learning. Three of their mentions are

extracted as examples:

Interview\Q15\Case 08

The teacher: What problems, if any, did you have during the programme?

The student: Sometimes, I didn't know how to express my meanings with proper English words. So when I talked to my classmates in English, they sometimes didn't understand me.

The teacher: Then, what did you do?

The student: Then, I would let them talk about their ideas first. In the same time, I kept searching for the proper words in my mind. If I really couldn't know the words, I would look up with dictionary after class. (translated)

Interview\Q6\Case 06

The teacher: Through the programme, in these 15 weeks, have your opinions about learning English changed? How?

The student: I realised that speaking was more important. In the past, I thought grammar, sometimes, was not that important. But now, I realised that communication problems would come up if my grammar and vocabulary were not good enough.

The teacher: Oh, so, you are saying...you realised that grammar and vocabulary were more important than before... [the student interrupts]

The student: I knew they were important, but after the class I realised that they were more important than I had thought.

The teacher: I see. Why?

The student: Because in the past, when I came across something I couldn't express in English, I would speak Chinese. But since we could only use English in the class, sometimes when I couldn't come up with proper vocabulary, I couldn't express my ideas clearly. So, I thought that vocabulary was very important. (translated)

Interview\Q13\Case 17

The teacher: How did you feel when you were using English in tasks with your partners?

The student: I found I had a problem in vocabulary. Sometimes, I suddenly could not remember the proper words for communication. In this case, I would ask my partners how to say the words in English. If they didn't know either, then I would immediately look up with dictionary or ask the teacher. I found this was helpful to memorise vocabulary. (translated)

7.2.3.4 Change 12: Pronunciation was considered to be less important for speaking English than before.

With regard to pronunciation in speaking English, only 7 items (mentioned 7 students) in total were found in the interviews. The low frequency of mentions supports and strengthens the qualitative data findings during the programme noted in 7.1.3.4 in that the group of students seemed not as much concerned with this issue as they were before the programme, when they believed strongly that 'it was important to speak English with excellent pronunciation'. The reasons behind this may have been because, in real communication, the students came to be more aware of the importance of vocabulary. Therefore, the acquisition of vocabulary became the top priority in their learning. In other words, pronunciation became relatively less of a priority for them. Besides, they had experienced that even though they did not speak English with 'perfect' pronunciation in communication, they could be understood by others. The more experience of speaking English they had, the more their foreign language awareness increased. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that they became less concerned with this issue than they were before.

Also, the post-programme interview findings were in line with those from the qualitative data from during the programme in that, in response to the question concerning what difficulties they encountered in the tasks, only 2 out of the 24 students mentioned that pronunciation was their problem in communication, as follows:

Interview\Q15\Case 07

The teacher: What problems, if any, did you have during the programme?

The student: I remember when we talked about food, I found the vocabulary was difficult to memorise and to pronounce. So when my partners and I talked in English in task cooperation, I didn't know how to pronounce the vocabulary of food. I found that might influence me to do the task well.

The teacher: So, what did you do to solve this problem?

The student: Well, I looked for the phonetic scripts of the words in a dictionary and sometimes I would ask my classmates how to pronounce them. (translated)

Interview\Q8\Case 16

The teacher: What's your opinion about using tasks in English learning?

The student: Generally, I think using tasks for learning English is good. But sometimes, as you have found, when we got stuck, we would 'secretly' use Chinese words to express our ideas [laughing].

The teacher: [Laughing] Sometimes 'secretly' used Chinese words. OK. Which aspect did you have difficulty with when you were doing the tasks?

The student: Mostly pronunciation, I think. I knew how to express my ideas in Chinese, however, in English, I got stuck. I didn't know how to pronounce some words in my mind. So I found I could not fluently express myself in English because of this problem. (translated)

In summary, as mentioned previously in 7.1.3, we can see that the students' foreign language awareness was developed through interaction with peers in tasks. Interestingly, even though they were aware of their weaknesses in communication, such as in speaking and listening, in translation from their native language to the target language, in vocabulary, or in pronunciation, they did not give up learning English. Instead, as shown in the transcripts above, their desire for learning English was stimulated more than before.

7.2.4 Changes in the difficulty of English learning:

7.2.4.1 Change 13: They believed more that English was a difficult language.

With regard to the difficulty of English learning, the results from the post-programme interview support the findings noted in 7.1.4.1. A total of 42 items (mentioned by 21 students) about the challenge of using English for the tasks were found in the interviews. As is indicated by the discussion noted in 7.2.3.2 and 7.2.3.3, the main reason behind this change comes from the difficulties that they encountered in communication through tasks (i.e., their vocabulary was limited and they could not fully express their meanings from Chinese to English). Three of their transcripts are extracted as examples:

Interview\Q6\Case 01

The teacher: Through the programme, have your opinions about learning English changed?

The student: Yes.

The teacher: How?

The student: In the past, I thought using English in real-life situation was easy. However, in fact, it is not as easy as I thought.

The teacher: Oh, you thought that using English was easy in the past?

The student: Yes, but after the programme, I realised that I had neglected many things in English. I should pay more attention to some details in English. (translated)

Interview\Q15\Case 04

The teacher: What problems, if any, did you have during the programme?

The student: Sometimes when I discussed with my classmates, I could not express myself clearly in English. In other words, I found that I had not worked hard enough in English learning.

The teacher: So, you are saying that you did not know how to express yourself with proper words?

The student: Sometimes words, sometimes grammar and expressions. Tell you the truth, when I could not clearly express my meanings to other people, I felt that it was very 'painful' indeed! (translated)

Interview\Q13\Case 20

The teacher: How did you feel when you were using English in tasks with your partners?

The student: I felt that it was more difficult than I had thought.

The teacher: Difficult? Why?

The student: I felt that everyone tried their best to express themselves in English. When we were speaking English to each other, we thought what came out from our mouths was correct English. We tried to keep speaking fluently. We were not aware of the grammatical mistakes we made in our speech. But, when listening to others, our ears 'rose up'. We became aware of their grammatical mistakes in their speech. In other words, I became realised that what I spoke in English might not be as correctly as I had thought.

The teacher: So, is that what you meant 'you felt English was difficult than you had thought'?

The student: Yes. So, afterwards, we all made a deal to help each other. If we found that anyone was not speaking correct English, we would frankly correct him/her. As a result, we all became more aware of our own mistakes in English and then I found that our English speaking was improved by this way.
(translated)

We can see that, through these difficulties, their awareness of the challenges in learning English was enhanced and their motivation was internally triggered because they wished to achieve their goals by overcoming these difficulties.

7.2.5 Changes in the nature of English learning:

7.2.5.1 Change 14: They believed less that it was necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English.

With regard to the nature of English learning, the post-programme interview data indicate that, after the programme, the group of students tended to believe less that it was necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak

English. Only 9 items (mentioned 6 students) in total were found to exist relating to English-speaking cultures in the interviews. Again, the low frequency of mentions supports and strengthens the findings noted in 7.1.5.1 in that the group of students seem not as much concerned with this issue as they were before the programme. One of the reasons behind this may have been because, as previously mentioned in 7.2.3.3, vocabulary acquisition became to be the first priority in their English learning. Accordingly, they relatively became concerned with this issue less than they were before. Second, this may have been because the peer students whom they communicated with were of the same ethnic culture. As a result, they did not have much experience of difficulties relating to the cultural issue.

Interestingly, in relation to the development of the knowledge about English-speaking cultures through the task-based programme, only 4 students mentioned that they had learnt something about English-speaking cultures through tasks. 2 of them further mentioned that, through tasks, they became more aware that the knowledge about English-speaking cultures was important for speaking English, as follows:

Interview\Q2\Case 18

The teacher: What skills do you think are the most important in communication?

The student: I think they should be speaking the first, and listening the second.

The teacher: Why?

The student: Because when we communicate with other people, we need to understand each other. So, speaking and listening are definitely the most important skills. Moreover, when I communicated with native-speakers of English in the outdoor task, I found that the way of thinking in English was different from that in Chinese. So I think it is better for us to know some knowledge about the western cultures. (translated)

Interview\Q8\Case 08

The teacher: What's your opinion about using tasks in English learning?

The student: I found I could learn more than before. As I said, when we were going to do the tasks, we needed to independently collect some information by ourselves for discussion; otherwise, we might get embarrassed if we could not fluently express our ideas. In other words, we became more responsible for our learning.

The teacher: You needed to collect some information for the tasks? Could you give me an example what kind of information you needed?

The student: Yes. For example, before we were going to do the outdoor task – visiting the Wine Museum, we needed to know some vocabulary, cultural background and knowledge about wine. We needed to know how the wine produced originally and the knowledge about wine in western cultures and something like that before we did the task.

The teacher: I see. So you meant you would collect some information relating to the tasks. Did you like using tasks for English learning?

The student: Yes, I did. Because learning English in this way was different from the traditional method. You were not required to learn only from the books but to learn English in daily life. So I liked it better. (translated)

In summary, the results from the post-programme interview data were in line with those from the data during the programme. Through the students' reflection back on the whole experience of English learning in the task-based programme, the post-programme interview data explored in depth how and why these changes occurred.

Apparently, the students' confidence in English learning was increasingly developed through the task-based programme. They had a stronger belief that they possessed a potential for achievement in English learning. They became more confident to communicate with others in English. Their motivation in English learning was generally enhanced. The purpose of English learning was not for adding to their social status. Instead, they regarded the process of English learning as fun and interesting. They tended to set goals for English

learning and even their learning autonomy was developed as they indicated they would continue learning English out of the class. In addition, through tasks, their foreign language awareness was increased. They became more aware of issues involved in communication (i.e., speaking and listening). In the face of the difficulty of communication through tasks, they became more aware of the importance of vocabulary and of conveyance from their native language (i.e., Chinese) to the target language (i.e., English). Accordingly, they found English was more difficult than they had realised before. Besides, they seemed to be not as much concerned with the importance of pronunciation and English-speaking cultures for speaking English as they were before.

7.3 Other findings

As might be expected, the qualitative data provided more insights into the students' beliefs and motivations in English learning through the task-based EFL programme than the data from the baseline quantitative studies indicated. In the following sub-sections, these additional findings are presented in order to reveal the students' perceptions of English learning in greater depth.

7.3.1 Changes in beliefs about the nature of English learning:

7.3.1.1 Change 15: They tended to have a stronger belief that learning English was for the purpose of communication.

The results from the qualitative data indicate that, through the programme, the

group of students regarded English learning as communication-oriented rather than exam-oriented. A total of 242 items (mentioned by all the 24 students) were found to exist in the while-programme qualitative data. Of these, 208 items were found in their weekly diaries and 34 items in their 'motivation' graph notes. Three of their mentions are shown as examples:

Learner Diaries\Week 04-Q4\Case 05

Q4: Were you confident of using English in the tasks? Why?

Yes, I was. We were all learning English through communication. Although I was not good at expressing myself in English, I didn't feel ashamed. Let's talk in English boldly! As a wise man says, 'learning from mistakes'. Enjoying the learning process with my heart is important. For me, English is just a tool for communication. (translated)

Learner Diaries\Week 11-Q1\Case 15

Q1: What do you think you have learnt?

I have learnt many things. For example, I have known some new English words, some phrases, and some sentences which can be applied to different situations. The most important thing I have learnt is how to use English in our daily life. We cannot merely read or write English or keep it in our mind. Instead, we should practise speaking English because, as a language, its function is for communication. (original)

Motivation Graph Notes\Week 14\Case 08

I enjoyed learning in today's class very much. Through tasks, we were involved in English learning relating to a real-life situation. I've found that English was used for communication purpose and it was not as difficult as I had thought. (translated)

Also, the results from the post-programme interview data support and strengthen this finding. A total of 130 items (mentioned by all the 24 students) were found in the interviews, indicating the change in their beliefs. For example:

Interview\Q6\Case 12

The teacher: Through the task-based programme, have your opinions about learning English changed?

The student: In the past, I thought that learning English was based on our textbooks; listening to the teacher and repeated afterwards. Sometimes we listened to tapes, watched media, read books

and so on. However, in this programme, I think that learning English is for communicative purpose and we need to speak English more with people.

The teacher: OK, so, has your opinion about learning English changed after the programme?

The student: Yes. I think that I should communicate and share something I learnt in English with others. (translated)

Interview\Q19\Case 08

The teacher: Generally, do you think the programme matched your initial expectations? How many percentages did it match your expectations?

The student: I think at least 90%.

The teacher: Wow! That's high! [Laughing] Thank you.

The student: Because it at least changed my opinion about learning English. In the past, I thought learning English was a bit boring. But, through tasks in the class, I found my interests in learning English. I felt that learning English was not complicated and I could learn it in my daily life. Moreover, I regard English, just like Chinese language, as a tool for communication. (translated)

We can see that the change in their belief was very obvious. Due to the fact that they learnt English through the task-based programme which was based on communicative pedagogy, their beliefs about English learning were affected by the programme.

7.3.2 Changes in motivation for English learning:

As mentioned in 7.1.2.1 and 7.2.2.1, the results from both the while-programme qualitative data and post-programme interview data indicate that the group of students' motivation was enhanced by the task-based EFL programme (i.e., a total of 163 items positively relating to motivation were found to exist in while-programme qualitative data, and a total of 341 items, in post-programme interview data, respectively). Interestingly, when exploring their motivation, 'the process of learning English was fun and interesting' (as mentioned in 7.1.2.2 and

7.2.2.2) was not the only factor that increased their English learning motivation. Other motivational factors derived from the task-based learning programme were also found in the qualitative data, as follows:

7.3.2.1 Change 16: They were motivated because the tasks were relevant to them.

Importantly, the results from the qualitative data indicate that the group of students' motivation was affected by the tasks. When the students found that the tasks were relevant to their needs, interests, and life experience, they became motivated in their English learning. A total of 346 items (mentioned by 24 students) positively relating to the relevance of tasks were found to exist in the while-programme data. Of these, 255 items were found in the diaries, 85 items were found in 'motivation' graph notes, and 6 items in field-notes. Five of their mentions are shown as examples:

Learner Diaries\Week 05-Q2\Case 21

Q2: What is your opinion about using tasks in English learning?

I think our class is made up of these tasks. So, how vital it is! These tasks can make us more positive and active when we try to speak English. What's more, tasks are so important for our future. The topics of the tasks, such as love, jobs, and food are close to our life. They are practical and beneficial to us. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 05-Q6\Case 10

Q6: Are the tasks you have completed so far relevant to your interests / needs / life experience? In what ways?

I think they are relevant to my needs and life experience. For example, the tasks on the topic of love and jobs are very useful in everyone's life. And through the tasks, I've learnt a lot of useful things. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 08-Q3\Case 09

Q3: What factors motivated you most in the tasks?

When the topics were practical and relevant to my life, my motivation became strong. When I realised that the topics were important and helpful for my life, I was eager to learn and I willingly learnt harder. And then, after mastering them, I felt happy and satisfied. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 11-Q3\Case 14

Q3: Did the tasks motivate you in your English learning? Why?

Yes, they did. All the tasks had a connection with the world. No matter in the present or in the future, we can put what we have learnt from the tasks into practice. So, I think they are meaningful for us. For this reason, I have been motivated by tasks in my English learning. (original)

Motivation Graph Notes\Week 14\Case 07

The outdoor task is just what I want because we can finally put our English skills into a real-life practice. This is why I chose this class, because I want to interact with people in English in a real-life situation. Although this outdoor task may be a big challenge for some of us, I still think it is worthwhile, no matter how challenging it is. (original)

Also, in my field-notes, I noted that the group of students was very excited when they knew that they were going to do an outdoor task in a real-life situation. They seemed very happy to have a chance to practise their English outside the classroom:

Field-notes\Week 12

At the end of the class, I had prepared 10 different outdoor tasks for the students. I explained to them that they were required to work together in pairs, ask for directions to a particular place in a particular tourist centre and do a particular thing by following some instructions. Besides, when they had to do the task, they could only speak English. They needed to take pictures and recordings as well. Then, they had to prepare everything well with PowerPoint for the oral presentation the following week. After the explanation, each pair came to the front to draw a task. I can still remember their laughs and screams when they were drawing the tasks. Some pairs especially burst into laughter when the task that they drew required them to find a particular restaurant from a particular tourist centre and then order a meal there. I think the reason why they love the outdoor tasks was that, in the past, they had not been given such a chance to speak English outside the classroom; but now, that they were given a chance to practise their English in tasks which are relevant to their life. Therefore, they are eager to put their knowledge into practice in a real-life situation and to have fun in speaking English! (original)

Also, the results from the post-programme interview data were in line with this finding. A total of 104 items (mentioned by all the 24 students) positively relating to the relevance of tasks were found to exist in the interviews. Three transcripts are extracted as examples:

Interviews\Q12\Case 14

The teacher: What factors motivated you most in the tasks?

The student: I think, first of all, whether the tasks were relevant to my life. Second, the topics of the tasks. Third, whether what I learnt benefited to my goals.

The teacher: OK. Why?

The student: Because I was interested in the tasks which were relevant to my life. When I found that what I learnt in the class could be used in real life, I felt very excited!

The teacher: Oh, you felt very excited?

The student: Yes. Because, most of the time in my studies, I did not find kind of connections between what I had learnt and my real life. But, in this class, I found that there were some connections between them. Moreover, I felt great and excited because I found that I could put my knowledge into practice. So, I had a feeling to give it a try and to learn it well.

The teacher: So, when you knew that what you learnt in the class related to your life, were you motivated in your learning?

The student: Yes. My motivation was increased. (translated)

Interviews\Q12\Case 12

The teacher: Through the programme, what factors motivated you most in the tasks?

The student: I think there were two factors which motivated me most. One, task collaboration; the other, whether the tasks were relevant to my life.

The teacher: You just said that the relevance of the tasks was one of the motivational factors in your learning. How did it motivate you?

The student: When the tasks were relevant to my life, it means that they would likely be used in practice in the future. Then I had a desire to learn them well because I wanted to know whether I could apply what I had learnt in the class to my real life in practice. So, I became motivated to learn.

The teacher: That motivated you to learn?

The student: Yes! (translated)

Interviews\Q12\Case 11

The teacher: What factors motivated you most in the tasks?

The student: First, whether what I learnt was relevant to my life. Second,

whether the topics were interesting. Third, whether the partners in groups were interesting.

The teacher: These three factors? Why?

The student: I think the topics of the tasks motivated me most. For example, when I saw the topic about 'food and health', I became very motivated.

The teacher: Oh, really? You became very motivated when you saw this topic? Why?

The student: Because since I came to Macau, I seldom ate fruit and vegetables. Once when I went back home, my mom said that my skin was worse than before. Then, in the class, we learnt about food pyramid and something about food and health. And then I realised that I should not have eaten too much meat!

The teacher: [Laughing] I see. No wonder you were motivated when you saw the topic!

The student: [Laughing] Yes. Because it was definitely relevant to my life! (translated)

From the extracts above, we can see that the students were motivated because they felt that the tasks were relevant to their interests, needs, goals and values. This finding not only reflects Keller's (1983) education-oriented theory of motivation that relevance is one of the key motivational components in L2 learning, but also shows as strong evidence that the task-based EFL programme had a positive affect on the students' L2 motivation.

7.3.2.2 Change 17: They were motivated because of the collaborative nature of task-based learning.

Apart from the relevance of the tasks, the other motivational factor found in the qualitative data was the collaborative nature of task-based learning. As noted by the discussion in 7.2.2.1, the group of students were motivated because of their peers, and the results from the qualitative data provide in-depth insights into the relationship between their increased motivation and collaborative learning. A total of 200 items (mentioned by 24 students) positively relating to

collaborative learning were found to exist in the while-programme data. Of these, 181 items were found to exist in the diaries, 17 items were found in 'motivation' graph notes, and 2 items in field-notes. Five of their mentions are extracted below:

Learner Diaries\Week 08-Q2\Case 14

Q2: How much do you like learning / working together with your peer students in the tasks? Why?

I like team work very much. We not only have fun with each other, but also learn from each other. Besides, working together can cultivate our morale. We feel like we are in the same boat so that we would achieve the goals efficiently and effectively. (original)

Learner Diaries\Week 08-Q3\Case 24

Q3: What factors motivated you most in the tasks?

I think the active communication in groups motivated me most. When communicating in group, the learning atmosphere became high. This high activeness which came from group communication increased my learning motivation. (translated)

Learner Diaries\Week 05-Q3\Case 18

Q3: Did the tasks motivate you in your English learning? Why? / Why not?

Yes, they did. In doing the tasks, when I was communicating with my team members, my mind was opened up. I became aware of my shortcomings in English learning and in my own character. Then I realised that I should make more efforts on my English learning and make plans for it. (translated)

Learner Diaries\Week 06-Q2\Case 10

Q2: What tasks did you like/dislike most? Why?

I liked the tasks which required group collaboration. For example, I was very happy to work out a CV with my partners. During the process of discussion, we could learn a lot from each other and I found myself more active in learning. Moreover, when the tasks were completed by our efforts, the feeling was so good! (translated)

Motivation Graph Notes\Week 10\Case 05

I am so happy to do the task with my partners! When we were doing the PowerPoint together for the presentation, all of us were very happy to see our beautiful outcome after our endeavour. The feeling was great! Furthermore, in today's class, I am happy that I could also learn a lot from other groups' presentations. That's great! (translated)

Also, in my field-notes, I noted that the group of students were motivated by task collaboration and became actively involved in their learning, as follows:

Field-notes\Week 12

Today we continued the topic 'travel'. At the pre-task – Holiday Maze, they were organised into seven groups of three. They needed to discuss in English which of the three options they compromised to choose for moving to the next step. I noticed that they all were highly involved in their discussion. Sometimes when their partners did not agree with them, they would try their best to convince them with reasons. They had a lot of fun doing it! (original)

In addition, the results from the post-programme interview data support this finding, indicating that the group of students were motivated by task collaboration. A total of 78 items (mentioned by all the 24 students) positively relating to task collaboration were found to exist in the interviews. Four transcripts are extracted as examples:

Interview\Q9\Case 01

The teacher: Did you enjoy your English classes more or less when you did tasks? Why?

The student: Yes, I enjoyed more. I think that when we were doing the tasks in group, we were given a chance not only to share our ideas, but also to learn from others' experience and their different ways of expressing themselves in English.

The teacher: Oh, you mean, in group, watching different students used different ways of expressions was also a kind of learning?

The student: Yes.

The teacher: Interesting. What else?

The student: And I've found that some classmates are good at English in this class. Their pronunciation and oral ability are very good, so it is very pleasant to listen to what they say. And their good English stimulates me to improve my English too. I hope I can be as capable as they are one day. (translated)

Interviews\Q9\Case 24

The teacher: Did you enjoy your English classes more or less when you did tasks?

The student: Yes, more.

The teacher: Why?

The student: As I said, I liked the interactive way to learn English. I liked

the way of working with partners for the tasks. For example, when we were doing the task about résumé, we had to discuss and negotiate with one another until we reached a consensus. Then we decided who would be a representative to show our 'outcome' to the class in presentation. I loved this way of learning English. I felt that the main reason why I loved this class was because of task collaboration. (translated)

Interviews\Q5\Case 14

The teacher: You just said that you were motivated by fellow students. How?

The student: You know, in the past, learning English focused on reading and writing rather than speaking and listening. When I came to Macau, especially in this class, I found that my classmates were very interested in learning English and their speaking ability was really good. Compared to them, I found there was something wrong with me. Then I came to realise that learning English was so important that I should learn harder.

The teacher: Oh, I see. So you are saying that you became more aware of your English ability when you compared to them?

The student: Yes, I found my shortcomings.

The teacher: Then, you became motivated?

The student: Yes. That's right.

The teacher: Oh, I don't understand. You meant that, when you compared your English ability with your classmates', you became motivated? How?

The student: Yes, because you got to understand your own strengths and weaknesses better in comparison.

The teacher: Oh, I see. (translated)

Interviews\Q5\Case 20

The teacher: You are saying that you were motivated by fellow students in your English learning? How?

The student: Yes. For example, in group discussion, when we tried to express our ideas in English with some certain words, we found that different people expressed their ideas in different ways. Since we came from different places, the words that we had learnt to express the same thing might not be the same. Then I came to realise that communication is not a "one-man's thing". In order to let other people understand my meaning, I should learn different words to express my ideas clearly in communication.

The teacher: So, in group discussion, you became more aware of your English learning?

The student: Yes, especially when I found my partners used different words to express their ideas, I would be eager to learn them too. (translated)

Again, we can see that the task-based programme had a positive affect on the students' motivation for English learning. The qualitative data reveal in depth that the students felt happy and supported by peers in the learning process through task collaboration. In addition, they were more aware of their own language competence and wanted to be as capable as their peer students. All these issues derived from the task-based programme were generated as motivational factors in their English learning.

7.4 Logging the changes during the period of study: 'motivation' graphs and notes

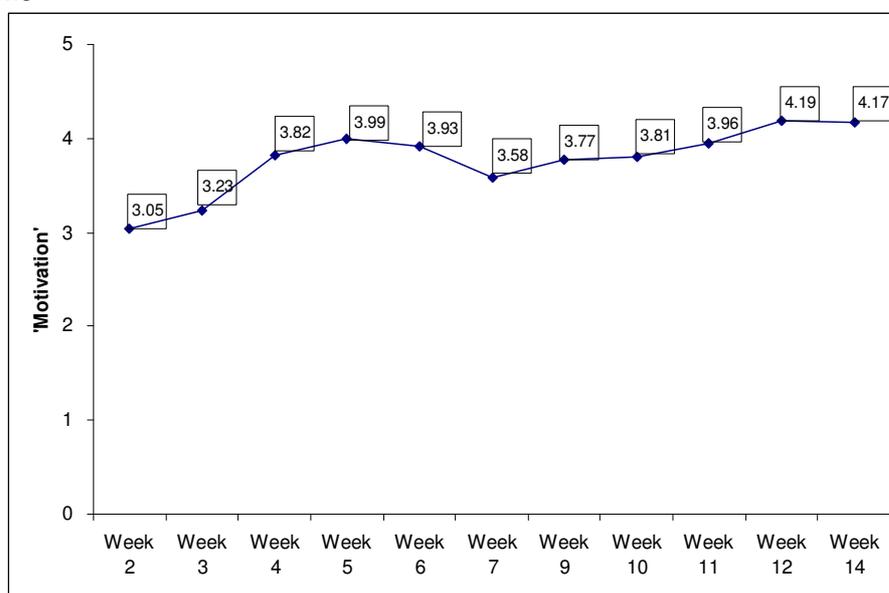
The previous sections have discussed in detail the changes that were made evident in the combined data from the learning diaries, 'motivation' graph notes and interviews. This section explores the data from a different perspective in order to track when and how these changes occurred through the task-based EFL programme, and the extent to which positive changes may be attributed to the implementation of the programme. The 'motivation' graphs may provide useful insights since the subjects were asked to fill these in weekly before they made entries in their learning diaries. The aim of the graphs was to encourage the subjects to reflect on their learning experiences and feelings about these in a spontaneous and unprompted way before they were asked to consider specific issues in their learning diary prompts.

7.4.1 Overview of trends in 'motivation' graphs

As mentioned earlier in 5.5.2, it is important to remember that by 'motivation'

here, I am referring to how the students generally felt about their learning at any specific time, rather than the closely specified aspects of motivation discussed in the literature review and used in the quantitative data collection. When looking at each of the students' weekly 'motivation' graphs, it is interesting to find that their overall 'motivations' in English learning through the programme were not 'static' but 'dynamic' with ongoing changes week by week as shown below.

Figure 7.1: The trend of the group of students' average 'motivation' through the programme



Although the subjects selected their own numerical representations, the result shows that their average 'motivation' changed by just over one level. As illustrated above, the group of students' 'motivation' marked 3.05 on average at the beginning of the programme. As time went by, their 'motivation' appears to increase in Weeks 3 and 4, and then in Week 5, their 'motivation' reached its first peak, as marked 3.99 on average. After that, their 'motivation' slightly dropped down in Week 6, and then came to its lowest point in Week 7, with the average mark of 3.58. Afterwards, however, their 'motivation' increased again in Weeks 9, 10, and 11 until it reached a climax in Week 12, as marked 4.19 on average.

Finally, their 'motivation' seemed to be consistently high at the end of the programme, as the average mark was 4.17 in Week 14, which was the second highest point.

Obviously, the trend of their overall 'motivation' in English learning was moving up instead of dropping down from the beginning to the end of the programme. This evidence supports and strengthens the findings that the task-based learning approach enhanced the group of students' positive feelings about their English learning. Also, it provides another finding, that their 'motivation' dynamically changed at particular times (i.e., Week 5, Week 7, and Week 12), which was probably influenced by the set-up and the arrangement of the tasks.

7.4.2 Logging changes: 'motivation' graph notes

As mentioned above, since the data concerning changes reported in the previous chapter were collected partly from learning diaries which had prompts, it seems useful to look in more detail at the data from the 'motivation' graph notes as these were completed by students without any prompts and thus provide some further interesting insights into how and when the students changed their beliefs and motivation throughout the programme. On looking at this data, it was noted that some of the changes listed were not mentioned at all spontaneously in the 'motivation' graph notes. However, some notes do provide an indication of what was happening to the students during their journey through the programme.

Figure 7.2: Number of mentions related to each change in 'motivation' graph notes

Change	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W9	W10	W11	W12	W14	Total of mentions per each change
1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
2	1	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	6
3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
4	4	2	2	5	2	1	1	1	4	3	6	31
5	9	5	11	9	9	6	7	5	10	10	15	96
6	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	6	3	0	3	0	2	2	8	0	2	8	34
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
11	1	0	2	1	0	0	4	0	3	1	1	13
12	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
13	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	6
14	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
15	5	0	6	3	1	3	1	2	2	1	10	34
16	1	2	8	13	12	15	9	3	5	6	11	85
17	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	7	3	1	1	17

As shown in Figure 7.2, the results indicate that the changes which were noted with the highest frequency of mentions in descending order in 'motivation' graph notes through the programme are Change 5 (i.e., They tended to agree more that the process of learning English was fun and interesting), Change 16 (i.e., They were motivated because the tasks were relevant to them), Change 9 (i.e., Speaking and listening were both believed more to be important skills to achieve in English learning), Change 15 (i.e., They tended to have a stronger belief that learning English was for the purpose of communication) and Change 4 (i.e., Motivation for learning English was generally increased). Clearly, the group of students enjoyed learning English through the task-based learning approach. Their motivation for learning English was increased by the programme because they found that the tasks were relevant to them. Their belief about the nature of English learning changed to be communication-oriented. They tended to have

a stronger belief that learning English was for communication purpose rather than any other purposes. For this reason, their foreign language awareness was increased. They became more aware of issues involved in communication (i.e., speaking and listening) and thus they had a stronger belief that speaking and listening were both important skills to achieve in English learning.

In addition, the results here support the findings in the 'motivation' graphs that these positive changes were attributed to the implementation of the TBL programme. As indicated above, the students were motivated because the tasks were relevant to them, and I found that their 'motivation' dynamically increased at two particular times (i.e., Week 5 and Week 12), related to the set-up of the tasks which were seen as most relevant to their needs and interests. For example, in Week 5, with the topic of Jobs, the students were individually required to rank their values on jobs and then share their thoughts and opinions about their values on jobs in pairs. In Week 10, with the topic of Travel, the students worked in a small group of three, planning an itinerary for one-day trip around Macau. They needed to compromise on their favourite features and discuss where to go and what to do with their partners in the group and then present their itinerary in front of the class. These tasks were novel and relevant to their interests; therefore, no wonder their overall 'motivation' was high on the 'motivation' graphs.

To summarise, the results from the students' 'motivation' graphs and notes provide a different perspective as triangulation that the group of students' beliefs and motivations were positively affected by the task-based EFL programme.

7.5 Summary of changes

Overall, in comparison to the quantitative data, the qualitative data provide richer insights into the changes in the students' beliefs and motivations in English learning. More findings, namely Changes 15, 16 and 17, emerged from the qualitative data than in quantitative data. In addition, two of the changes which were found in quantitative data do not reflect the findings in the qualitative data (i.e., Change 7 and Change 8), as shown in Appendix 15.

With regard to the changes which emerged from the while-programme qualitative data, the results indicate that the change mentioned with the highest frequency by the greatest number of students was Change 5 (i.e., They tended to agree more that the process of learning English was fun and interesting). Change 9 (i.e., Speaking and listening were both believed more to be important skills to achieve in English learning) and Change 16 (i.e., They were motivated because the tasks were relevant to them) were the changes mentioned with the second and the third highest frequency by the greatest number of students, as shown in Figure 7.3 below:

Figure 7.3: The frequency of mentions of each change in the while-programme data

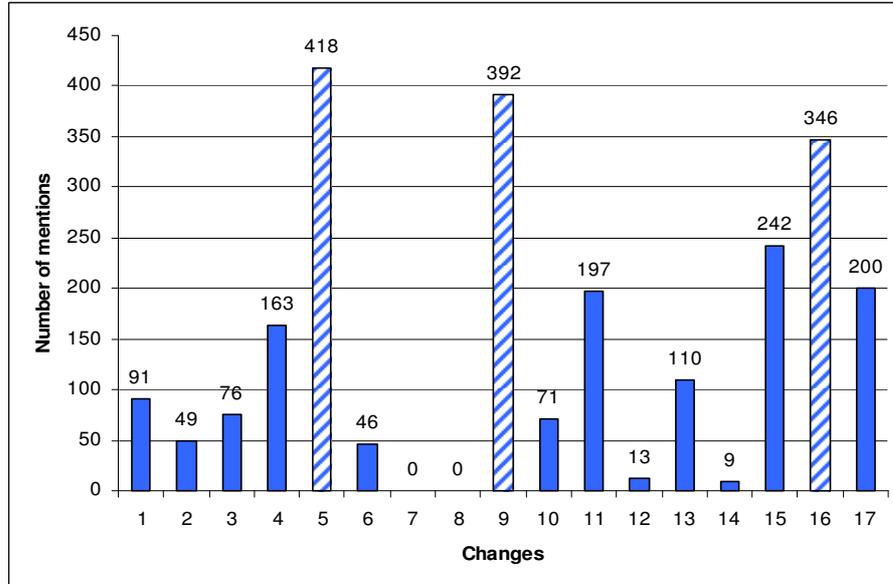
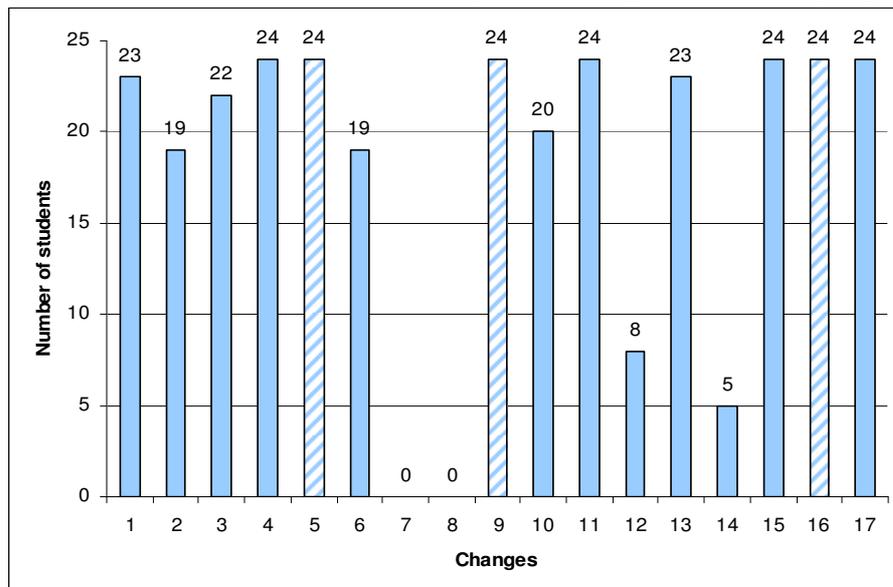


Figure 7.4: The number of students mentioning each change in the while-programme data



As shown in Figures 7.3 and 7.4, a total of 418, 392, and 346 mentions (by all the 24 students) relating positively to Change 5, Change 9 and Change 16 were respectively found to exist in the while-programme qualitative data. This provides strong evidence that the students found the process of learning English through tasks was fun and interesting and that their positive learning experience strongly affected the students' intrinsic motivation in English learning.

Moreover, the results indicate that the task-based approach had a positive effect on the changes in the students' foreign language awareness. Also, the results reveal another important finding that the main reason why the students were motivated was because of task relevance.

On the other hand, with regard to the changes that emerged from the post-programme interview data, the results indicate that the change mentioned with the highest frequency by the greatest number of students was Change 4 (i.e., Motivation for learning English was generally increased). Again, similar to the results from while-programme qualitative data, Change 9 (i.e., Speaking and listening were both believed more to be important skills to achieve in English learning) was the change mentioned with the second highest frequency by the greatest number of students. The change mentioned with the third highest frequency by the greatest number of students was Change 15 (i.e., They tended to have a stronger belief that learning English was for the purpose of communication), as shown in Figure 7.5 below:

Figure 7.5: The frequency of mentions of each change in the post-programme data

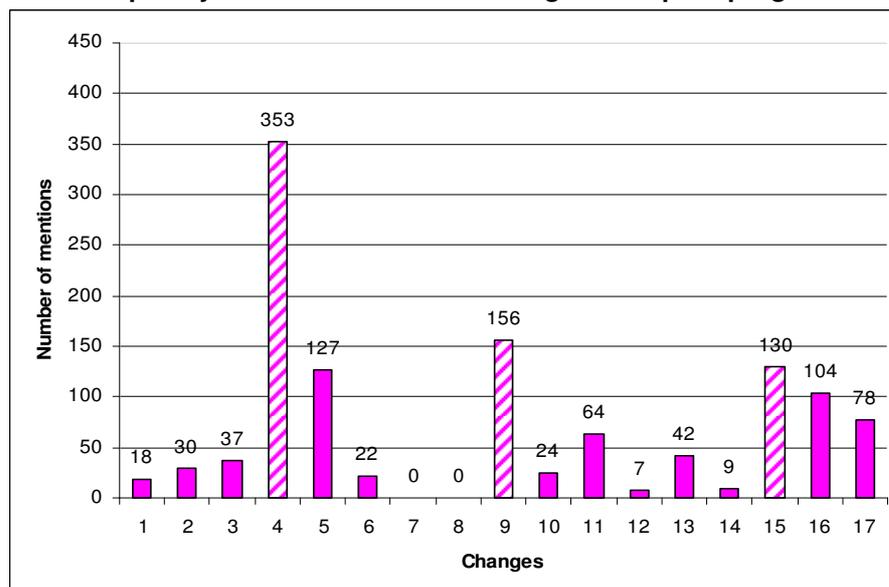
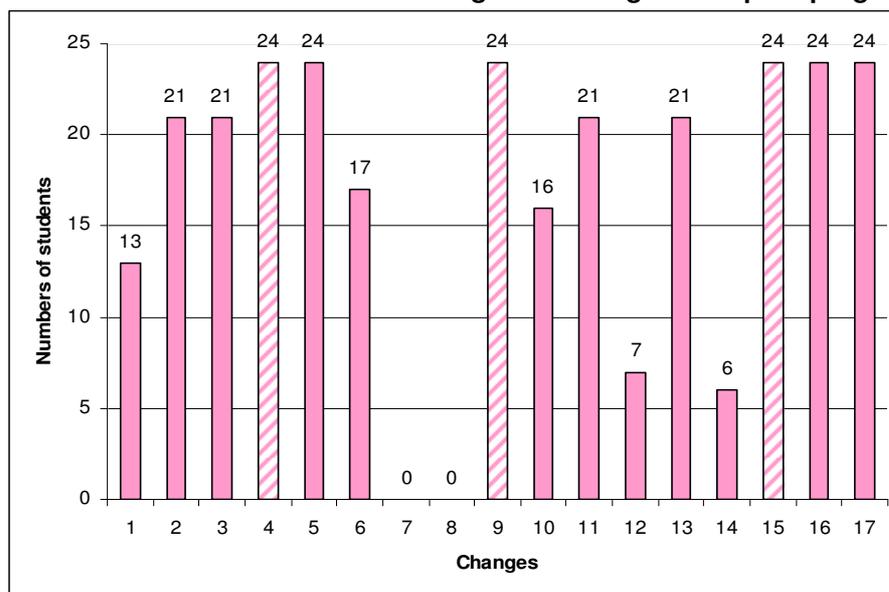


Figure 7.6: The number of students mentioning each change in the post-programme data



As shown in Figures 7.5 and 7.6, a total of 353, 156, and 130 mentions (by all the 24 students) relating positively to Change 4, Change 9, and Change 15 were respectively found to exist in the post-programme interviews data. Nevertheless, since the numbers of mentions of Change 9 and Change 15 were far fewer than the numbers of mentions of Change 4, the results strongly indicate that the students' motivation in English learning was increasingly developed through the task-based EFL programme.

In summary, all these findings, which came out of the while-programme qualitative data analysis of diaries, 'motivation' graph notes and field-notes and of the post-programme qualitative data analysis of interviews, provide richer insights into the changes of the group of students' beliefs and motivations in English learning through the programme. The biggest changes in their beliefs, in their motivation, and other additional findings that emerged through the task-based programme are discussed in section 7.6.

7.6 Discussion of findings

Overall, significant findings emerged from the qualitative data, indicating that the group of students' beliefs and motivations for English learning were positively affected by the task-based EFL programme. These findings are discussed in depth in the section 7.6.1 (i.e., amalgamated findings) and the sub-sections 7.6.1.1 to 7.6.1.3. Afterwards, a final list of changes and additional findings is presented in 7.6.2.

7.6.1 Amalgamated findings:

In combination of all the findings from the while- and the post- programme qualitative data, interesting amalgamated findings emerged. They provide a holistic perspective on the changes which emerged as a result of the task-based EFL programme. The amalgamated results indicate that the changes mentioned with the highest frequency by the greatest number of students were slightly different from the results mentioned in section 7.5.

Figure 7.7: The frequency of mentions of each change in the combination of while-programme and post-programme qualitative data

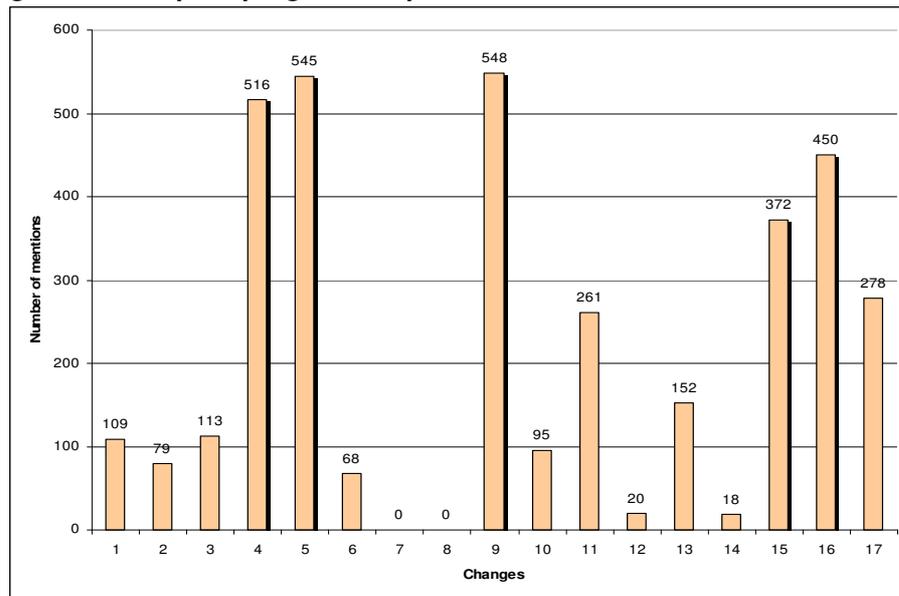
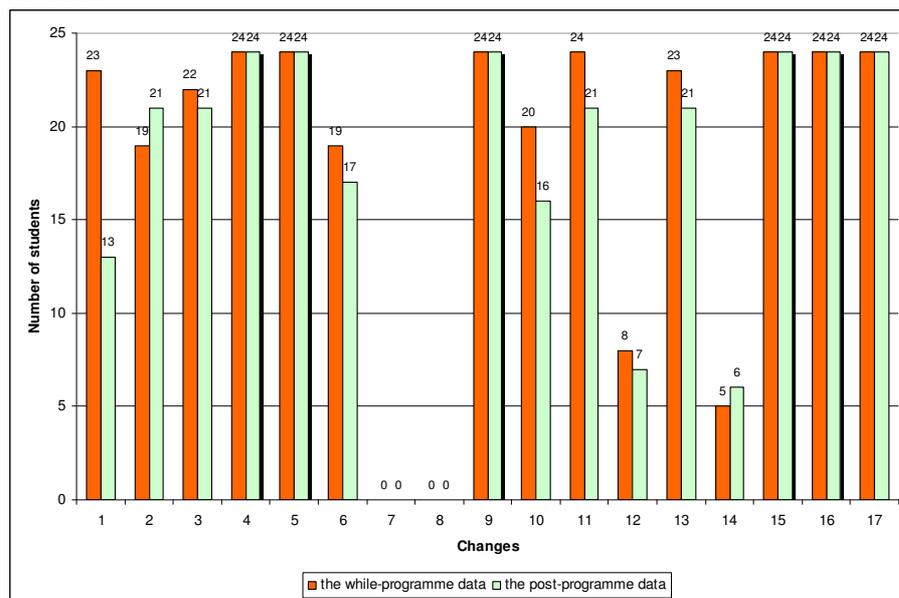


Figure 7.8: The number of students mentioning each change in the while- and the post-programme data



As already noted in 7.5, the changes which are mentioned with the highest frequency by the greatest number of students are Change 5 and Change 4, in the while- and the post- programme data, respectively. However, as shown in Figures 7.7 and 7.8, the results from the amalgamated qualitative data indicate that the change which is mentioned by the greatest number of students in total is

Change 9 (i.e., Speaking and listening were both believed more to be important skills to achieve in English learning).

Interestingly, the results from the amalgamated findings match the findings in the 'motivation' graph notes (as mentioned previously in 7.4.2). From both these sources, the data indicate that the top five changes (i.e., which had the highest frequency of mentions by the greatest number of students) are the same (i.e., Changes 4, 5, 9, 15, and 16), even though the ranks of order according to the frequency of mentions vary slightly different in both results.

More findings are found and they are divided into two major categories: (1) changes in beliefs about English learning; and (2) changes in motivations for English learning. These two categories are discussed in 7.6.1.1 and 7.6.1.2, respectively.

7.6.1.1 Changes in beliefs about English learning

With regard to changes in beliefs about English learning, the amalgamated findings are divided into three categories. The first category focuses on foreign language awareness. The second category is based on those used by Horwitz in BALLI, which are:

- The nature of English learning
- The difficulty of English learning

The third category focuses on self-concept beliefs. All of these findings are

discussed in detail below:

❖ **Foreign language awareness**

From the results of the amalgamated qualitative data, the first significant change in beliefs about English learning is that the group of students' foreign language awareness was enhanced by the task-based EFL programme. As noted previously in 7.6.1 and shown in Figures 7.7 and 7.8, Change 9 (i.e., Speaking and listening were both believed more to be important skills to achieve in English learning) was the change which was mentioned with the highest frequency by the greatest number of students. A total of 548 mentions (by all the 24 students) relating to their change of foreign language awareness were found to exist. This first evidence indicates that the students were strongly aware of issues involved in communication (i.e., speaking and listening) through the programme.

Another change also related to the aspect of foreign language awareness which was mentioned with high frequency by the group of students is Change 11 (i.e., Vocabulary was regarded as more important in English learning than before). A total of 261 mentions (respectively by 24 students in the while-programme data and by 21 students in the post-programme data) were found to exist. This evidence indicates that, through tasks, the students were aware of their lack of vocabulary in communication and therefore they regarded vocabulary as an important skill to achieve in English learning.

Overall, this provides strong evidence that through the task-based EFL programme, the students' beliefs about English learning, especially in the aspect of foreign language awareness (i.e., the awareness of vocabulary, speaking and listening skills) were enhanced. Accordingly, they demonstrated that they had a strong desire for achieving these skills in their English learning. In other words, their increased foreign language awareness acted as an internal motivating force in their English learning.

❖ **The nature of English learning**

The second significant change is their beliefs about the nature of English learning. As noted in 7.3.1.1 and shown in Figures 7.7 and 7.8, a very high frequency of mentions in total (i.e., 372 mentions by all the 24 students) tended to show a stronger belief that learning English was for the purpose of communication (i.e., Change 15). This provides strong evidence that the students' beliefs about the nature of English learning changed to be communication-oriented through the programme.

❖ **The difficulty of English learning**

The third significant change is that the students tended to have a stronger belief that English was a difficult language (i.e., Change 13). As shown in Figures 7.7 and 7.8, a total of 152 mentions (respectively by 23 students in the while-programme data and by 21 students in the post-programme data) were found to exist. As discussed in 7.1.4.1 and 7.2.4.1, at first glance, this could be easily interpreted in a negative manner, i.e., that the task-based EFL programme

hindered the students' motivation for English learning. However, the qualitative findings provide the main reasons behind this change were that, when the students communicated with each other in tasks, they encountered difficulties in vocabulary, in speaking and listening skills, and in communicative conveyance from their native language (i.e., Chinese) to the target language (i.e., English), which they regarded as challenges they wished to overcome. Consequently, it could be argued that through these difficulties, their awareness of the challenges in learning English was enhanced and their motivation was internally triggered because they wished to achieve their goals by overcoming these difficulties.

In addition, other findings of changes were also found in the amalgamated qualitative data. These findings, namely self-concept beliefs, are discussed below:

❖ **Self-concept beliefs**

Other changes related to the aspect of beliefs about English learning were also found to exist in the research. The results indicate that the group of students' self-concept beliefs (especially self-confidence and self-efficacy) were built up through the programme (i.e., Change 3: They became more confident in communicating with others in English; Change 1: They became more confident in themselves in English learning; and Change 2: They tended to believe more that they possessed a potential for achievement in English learning). As shown in Figures 7.7 and 7.8, a total of 113 mentions (respectively, by 22 students in the while-programme data and by 21 students in the post-programme data),

relating to their confidence in communication with others, were found to exist. In relation to self-confidence in English learning, a total of 109 items (respectively responded by 23 students in the while-programme data and by 13 students in the post-programme data) were respectively found to exist. In relation to self-efficacy beliefs, a total of 79 items (respectively responded by 19 students in the while-programme data and by 21 students in the post-programme data) were found to exist.

Although, in comparison to the other above changes in Figures 7.7 and 7.8, the frequency of mentions and the number of students mentioning the changes related to self-concept beliefs seem less noticeable, the results were still valuable in the research because they provide evidence that the students' self-concept beliefs were developed by the programme. As a matter of fact, it could be argued that the students would be more likely to maintain and continue their ongoing motivation to the end because their self-concept beliefs (especially self-confidence and self-efficacy) were increased by the programme.

7.6.1.2 Changes in motivation for English learning

With regard to motivation in English learning, a significant change emerged in the qualitative data was that the group of students' motivations for English learning were apparently enhanced by the programme (i.e., Change 4). As shown in Figures 7.7 and 7.8, a total of 516 mentions (by all the 24 students) were found to exist in the amalgamated qualitative data. Of these, a total of 330 mentions (i.e., 136 mentions and 194 mentions respectively in the

while-programme and the post-programme qualitative data by all the 24 students) relating to intrinsic motivation were found to exist, as noted in 7.1.2.1 and 7.2.2.1. In other words, the results reveal that the students' motivation, particularly, intrinsic motivation was strongly affected by the programme.

When further probing into the causes of their enhanced intrinsic motivation, some motivational factors which were derived from the task-based learning approach emerged from the qualitative data. One of the three main internal motivational factors came from their pleasant English learning experience through the task-based programme (e.g., Change 5: They tended to agree more that the process of learning English was fun and interesting). A high frequency of mentions (a total of 545 mentions responded by all the 24 students) was found to exist, referring to the relationship between their increased motivation and the pleasantness of English learning experience. The second main internal motivational factor was due to task relevance (e.g., Change 16: They were motivated because the tasks were relevant to them). A total of 450 mentions (346 mentions in the while-programme data and 104 mentions in the post-programme interview data) by all the 24 students were found to exist (as noted in 7.3.2.1). The third main internal motivational factor was caused by collaborative learning in tasks (e.g., Change 17: They were motivated because of the collaborative nature of task-based learning). A total of 200 mentions (by all the 24 students), referring to the relationship between their increased motivation and collaborative learning, were found to exist (as noted in 7.3.2.2). Clearly, the results provide strong evidence that the group of students were motivated through the task-based programme.

In addition, a number of other significant findings from the research are also presented and discussed in next section.

7.6.1.3 Additional findings

Qualitative data analysis requires an open mind. Surprisingly, other categories emerged during the analysis of the data using NVIVO which provided evidence of the students' own developing learner autonomy.

In the applied linguistics literature, autonomy is seen as the capacity for independent learning (Dickinson, 1995). In Holec's (1981) definition,

Autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own learning....to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e., determining the objectives; defining the contents and progressions; selecting methods and techniques to be used; monitoring the procedure of acquisition; evaluating what has been acquired (Holec, 1981: 3).

Little (1991) defines autonomy as 'a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action' (Little, 1991: 4).

The recent and well-known definition of autonomy is the 'Bergen Definition':

Learner autonomy is characterised by a readiness to take charge of one's own learning in the service of one's needs and purposes. This entails a capacity and willingness to act independently and in co-operation with others, as a socially responsible person (Dam, 1995: 1).

Starting from such definitions, Sinclair (2000) claims that the capacity for making

informed decisions about one's own learning requires conscious awareness of metacognitive knowledge about oneself as a learner; one's learning context; the subject matter to be learnt (i.e., the target language); and the processes of learning.

The following subsections consider the additional findings related to learner autonomy, specifically to the willingness to take on more responsibility for their own learning, and to the development of metacognitive strategies, such as planning and goal setting. Further evidence was clearly provided of the students' developing metacognitive knowledge about themselves as learners, their learning environment and strategies for learning.

❖ **Willingness to be more autonomous:**

• **Willingness to continue learning out of class**

The first evidence related to learner autonomy was found to exist in their mentions relating to Change 8 (i.e., They seemed to agree less that they would continue learning English out of the class). In contrast with the results from the quantitative data, no mentions relating to this were found in the qualitative data. In fact, in the while-programme and the post-programme qualitative data, the results respectively reveal that a total of 29 items (mentioned by 24 students) and 38 items (mentioned by 20 students) stated that they would continue learning English out of the class. The results clearly indicate that the group of students would take on greater responsibility for their progress and keep on

learning English out of the class.

- **Goal-setting intentions**

In addition, their mentions relating to goal-setting for English learning in Change 6 (i.e., They tended to set goals for English learning) also support the motivation to take greater control of their learning. The results reveal that a total of 68 mentions (respectively, by 19 students in the while-programme data and by 17 students in the post-programme qualitative data) stated that they would set their own goals for English learning.

- **Critical reflection**

An important aspect of developing learner autonomy is the ability to reflect critically on one's self as a learner and one's learning (Little, 1991). By the end of the programme, the group of students was clearly able to reflect more meaningfully on their learning, their progress and their own motivations etc, as evidenced by the learning diary and interview data. Although this was not a research aim, it is obvious from the quotes presented in this chapter that the students became more aware of their learning and more articulate about expressing themselves.

7.6.2 The final list of changes

All these changes which discussed above in the previous sections are rearranged in a descending order according to the total frequency of mentions,

as follows:

(1) Change 9:

Speaking and listening were both believed more to be important skills to achieve in English learning. (A total of 548 mentions)

(2) Change 5:

They tended to agree more that the process of learning English was fun and interesting. (A total of 545 mentions)

(3) Change 4:

Motivation for learning English was generally increased. (A total of 516 mentions)

(4) Change 16:

They were motivated because the tasks were relevant to them. (A total of 450 mentions)

(5) Change 15:

They tended to have a stronger belief that learning English was for the purpose of communication. (A total of 372 mentions)

(6) Change 17:

They were motivated because of the collaborative nature of task-based learning. (A total of 278 mentions)

(7) Change 11:

Vocabulary was regarded as more important in English learning than before. (A total of 261 mentions)

(8) Change 13:

They believed more that English was a difficult language. (A total of 152 mentions)

(9) Change 3:

They became more confident in communicating with others in English. (A total of 113 mentions)

(10) Change 1:

They became more confident in themselves in English learning. (A total of 109 mentions)

(11) Change 10:

Expressing themselves clearly by translating from their native language (i.e., Chinese) to the target language (i.e., English) was more important than before. (A total of 95 mentions)

(12) Change 2:

They tended to believe more that they possessed a potential for achievement in English learning. (A total of 79 mentions)

(13) Change 6:

They tended to set their own goals for English learning. (A total of 68 mentions)

(14) Change 8:

They tended to agree that they would continue learning English out of the class. (A total of 67 mentions)

(15) Change 7:

They seemed to agree that learning English can help them in their studies and in their future career. (A total of 56 mentions)

(16) Change 12:

Pronunciation was considered to be less important for speaking English than before. (A total of 20 mentions)

(17) Change 14:

They believed less that it was necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English. (A total of 18 mentions)

NB: as mentioned previously in 7.5, of the above changes, it is important to note that two of these, namely Change 7 and Change 8, do NOT reflect the findings in the quantitative data (i.e., Motivation and BALLI questionnaires).

Plus additional findings:

(18) Willingness to continue learning out of class

(19) Goal-setting intentions

(20) Critical reflection

7.7 Conclusions to chapter

Overall, quantitative data are useful as a baseline for finding significant changes, and provide a general understanding of the changes of the students' beliefs and motivation in English learning between pre- and post- the task-based EFL programme. However, qualitative data are richer, more insightful and more reliable because of being collected during an ongoing period of time for reflection, and thus, providing better insights into the changes of the subjects' beliefs and motivations in English learning throughout the programme.

The changes which have emerged through the task-based programme can be interpreted as strong evidence that the task-based learning approach is beneficial to students in English learning. In the process model of motivation, Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) claimed that L2 motivation is dynamic with ongoing changes over time. It undergoes a cycle with at least three main stages: *pre-actional stage* (i.e., choice motivation), *action stage* (i.e., executive motivation), and *post-actional stage* (i.e., motivational retrospection) (as mentioned in 3.2.2.3). From the results in the quantitative and qualitative data, a trace of the group of students' increased L2 motivation was also found

within Dörnyei and Ottó's process model of L2 motivation.

As discussed above in the qualitative data, one of the biggest changes was that the group of students' self-concept beliefs (especially self-confidence and self-efficacy) were increased. Since they were more confident in themselves and in their capabilities in English learning, they were more likely to adopt an active and responsible attitude towards their learning. In other words, they had high expectancy of success. They would more likely to persist and sustain efforts with high sense of self-determination even when they were faced with difficulty in the process of learning. In this case, they would be more likely to visualise their success in English learning, i.e., their ideal L2 self developed. These strong self-concept beliefs, along with their enhanced ideal L2 self, triggered actions at the pre-actional stage and became a powerful motivating force to keep their learning moving.

However, with a dynamic view of L2 motivation, strong self-concept beliefs were not the only motivational factors for them to carry on actions and maintain their generated motivation through the learning process. According to Dörnyei and Ottó (1998), whether learners choose to carry on or terminate their particular action in this actional stage depends on their action control which is affected by many motivational factors, such as quality of learning experience, peers influence, and goal structure (e.g., competitive, individualistic, or cooperative) (as mentioned in 3.2.2.3). Interestingly, the qualitative data provided evidence that the positive quality of the learning experience in the task-based EFL programme was the main factor in increasing their internal motivation in English

learning. No matter whether in their diaries, 'motivation' graph notes, in the teacher's field-notes or in the interviews, the results indicated that the group of students strongly regarded the process of learning English through a task-based programme as fun and interesting. They considered the tasks which they participated in were relevant to their needs. They enjoyed learning with peers and they appreciated task collaboration. This positive quality of learning experience, along with their strengthened sense of autonomy through the use of self-regulatory strategies (i.e., goal-setting, learning and self-motivating strategies), generated a motivating force to maintain and carry on their efforts to the end.

After completing the tasks, the learners critically evaluated the process and formed causal attributions in their retrospection. At this post-actional stage, causal attributions which are generated and affected by the quality of learning experience and self-concept beliefs are the determinants of their intentions for future actions (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998). The qualitative data reflected with evidence that the internal factors, which caused the group of students to enjoy learning English in the programme, such as positive attitudes towards English learning, interest in the tasks, relevance of the tasks to the students' needs, expectation for success in English proficiency, self confidence and self-efficacy in doing tasks, satisfaction of gaining knowledge and self-development, were the factors which generated the students' motivational beliefs about English learning and internally formed as attribution factors to influence their future English learning. Their enjoyment of English learning in the task-based EFL programme had consequences on their motivation to initiate future actions in

English learning.

As a result, this came to be a virtuous circle. Since they had had a positive experience of English learning, their self-concept beliefs (i.e., self-confidence and self-efficacy) became stronger. The stronger self-confidence and greater self-efficacy they developed, the more intrinsic motivation they had for their English learning, and, hence the higher they perceived likelihood of success.

In addition, apart from Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) process model of L2 motivation, further evidence was also found to support that the task-based learning approach had a positive effect on the group of students' motivation in English learning. According to Keller (1983), Crookes and Schmidt (1991), and Dörnyei, (2001b), four components related to syllabus, materials, learning tasks, and teaching methods are determinants of motivation that affect learners' values on the learning tasks and the degree of effort they will exert in learning. These four components are: interest, relevance, expectancy of success, and satisfaction (as mentioned in 3.2.2.2). Interestingly, the qualitative data showed with evidence that all these four motivational components were also found to exist in the task-based programme. Hence, this explains why the group of students indicated that they were motivated and preferred the task-based learning approach to traditional learning methods.

All in all, the qualitative data provide strong evidence that the group of students' beliefs about English learning were positively changed and their intrinsic motivation and sense of learner autonomy were apparently enhanced by the

task-based EFL programme. Thus, it is reasonable to claim that the task-based learning approach was beneficial to the group of students in English learning.

After presenting and discussing all the evidence of changes in beliefs and motivations from both the quantitative and qualitative data, the next chapter presents conclusions to the study and contributions to knowledge.

Chapter 8 Conclusion and claims to knowledge

8.1 Summary of the research

This study investigates whether or not a task-based learning approach can be beneficial to Chinese tertiary learners with a focus on the changes in their beliefs about and motivations in English learning affected by a task-based learning approach. The overarching research questions were:

- a. How does a task-based learning approach affect Chinese undergraduate learners' beliefs about English language learning?
- b. How does a task-based learning approach affect Chinese undergraduate learners' motivation in English language learning?

In order to seek the answers to the questions, this study used action research as a tool in the process, underpinned by Vygotsky's (1978) philosophy of social-constructivism. The investigation focused on the learners' personal constructs, i.e., their beliefs about and motivation in English language learning through the process of social interaction (i.e., pair work, group work, and in collaborative learning) in a task-based learning programme. The programme was based on Willis' (1996) framework for task-based learning, consisting of three phases: pre-task, task cycle and language focus. It was designed for a term of 15 weeks for young adult students at college age in Macau with an intermediate level of English. It was a general English programme with a topic-based syllabus which integrated the four skills. Various tasks and

authentic materials which related to the weekly topics were used. It encouraged collaborative work and enhanced learners' interpersonal skills by involving them in the process of task-based learning in different kinds of groupings: individuals, pairs, small groups and a whole class.

This study used mixed methods for data collection. Quantitative methods were used before and after the intervention of the programme. Qualitative methods were used during and after the programme. The quantitative data, collected from the BALLI and the Motivation Questionnaires were analysed with the statistical package SPSS for Windows. The qualitative data, collected during and after the programme using field-notes, 'motivation' graph notes, learners' diaries, and follow-up interviews, were analysed with NVIVO.

The findings which came out of the quantitative data analysis using both a parametric test and a non-parametric test, provided base-line data and a general understanding of the changes of the students' beliefs about and motivations in English learning from before to after the task-based EFL programme. The findings which came out of the qualitative data analysis provided greater in-depth insights into the nature of the changes, how, why and when they occurred. The results from both quantitative and qualitative data provided strong evidence that the task-based EFL programme positively affected the group of students' motivations for and beliefs about English learning. After the programme, the students tended to have a stronger belief that the process of learning English was fun and interesting. They believed more that learning English was for communication purpose, and thus they considered speaking and

listening as important skills to achieve in English learning. Their motivation for learning English was generally increased. They were motivated mainly because the tasks were relevant to them and because of the collaborative task work in the programme. In addition, the qualitative data provided evidence of the students' own developing learner autonomy. Their metacognitive knowledge about themselves as learners, their learning environment and strategies for learning were developed. They were willing to continue learning English out of class. They tended to set goals for English learning. They tended to have a capability for articulating their learning through critical reflection. All these changes and findings of this study reasonably lead to a conclusion that the task-based learning approach was beneficial to the students.

8.2 Contributions to knowledge

There are two main contributions in the study. First, it supports Dörnyei and Ottó's process model of L2 motivation that motivation was not stable but dynamic over a period of time. As mentioned in 7.7, from both quantitative and qualitative data, the results indicate that the students' motivation in English learning was ongoing with changes over a semester of 15 week in the task-based EFL programme. Their motivation for English learning was initiated mainly by their interests in tasks, then they carried on (or terminated) their motivation because of their learning experience, and finally evaluated the process in their retrospection and formed causal attributions for their future learning.

Second, the results provide strong evidence that Chinese tertiary learners' beliefs about and motivations for English learning were enhanced by a task-based learning approach. Thus, the contributions to the field of this study can be outlined as follows:

- (1) This study is unique in that it is the first which investigates Chinese learners' beliefs about and motivation for learning English in a university in Macau in relation to the use of task-based learning.
- (2) In a period of fast-paced change and the rethinking of the English language teaching curriculum currently taking place in Macau, it is particularly important that studies such as this one are available to inform those concerned with policy and curriculum change. Since TBL (or, indeed, CLT) is a new concept in English language teaching in Macau, this study is significant for the development of English language teaching in Macau in the following ways:
 - It provides evidence to policy makers and teachers in Macau that TBL is a viable alternative to current practices for teaching English in such institutions in Macau which is worth pursuing.
 - It provides evidence to policy makers and teachers in Macau that TBL enhances Chinese learners' feelings of self-confidence and self-efficacy with regard to English language learning, which can improve the quality of the learning experience.
 - It provides evidence to policy makers and teachers in Macau that TBL enhances Chinese learners' intrinsic motivation for English language

learning, which is important for sustaining effort in learning.

- It provides evidence to policy makers and teachers in Macau of the efficacy of TBL as a way of enhancing learners' beliefs about learning English at tertiary level in Macau, which are important for maintaining motivation for learning.

In addition, I believe that these contributions are applicable and relevant to the wider context of mainland China. Even though the concept of communicative language teaching was introduced in 1992 and the pedagogy of task-based learning has been encouraged since 1992 by the State Education Development Commission (SEDC)⁵ (Liao, 2004), CLT and TBL are still generally questioned by teachers in China (Hu, 2005). Therefore, this study provides policy makers and teachers in Mainland China with significant evidence that TBL is beneficial to the development of tertiary learners' beliefs about and motivation for English learning. It offers them another perspective from which to consider TBL, which is different from traditional approaches still used in many places, and which could be a viable alternative for English teaching in Mainland China at tertiary level.

Consequently, I am going to disseminate the research outcomes by running a workshop for my colleagues in the university in Macau and presenting papers more widely at national and international language conferences.

⁵ State Education Development Commission (SEDC) – The former name of Minister of Education, the official authority for setting educational policy in China.

8.3 Implications and recommendations

Having acknowledged the advantages of TBL, in order to smoothly carry out TBL in EFL classroom, I suggest the following recommendations for implementation:

(1) Language teaching pedagogy at tertiary level in Macau

As mentioned in Chapter 2, one of the English teaching problems occurring in Macau is that no national curriculum is provided by the Tertiary Education Services Office for teachers. Even though each college and university has its own curriculum, different teachers use their own ways to teach their students with little supervision from the authority. As a result, in general, teachers who have grown up with traditional approaches will naturally apply them in their teaching. In order to improve this situation, teacher development workshops and seminars related to the notion of learner-centeredness and to various English teaching pedagogies are necessary. When teachers have a certain degree of understanding about learner-centeredness, they can stand back from the traditional authoritative role and apply CLT and TBL in their teaching contexts.

(2) Curriculum design

Different from traditional approaches in ELT which mainly focus on form, TBL aims to help learners to naturally construct their language knowledge and to develop skills for expressing different communicative meanings through interactive tasks. Therefore, in order to achieve this aim, when designing a curriculum, it is necessary for teachers to adopt a learner-centered curriculum by

designing a topic-based syllabus with various task types within the task-based learning framework (i.e., pre-task, task cycle, and language focus) in various collaborative groupings. Another concern is the size of class. It is better if the number of learners is around 20 in class. Otherwise, collaborative tasks cannot be easily carried out and teachers might easily return to the old traditional approach which focuses on merely mastery of forms and structures.

(3) Materials

Similarly, authentic materials in a task-based syllabus are important. By using authentic materials in English learning, learners can generally construct their language knowledge for 'real' purposes. As a result, they are more likely to be actively involved in their learning and, thus, their motivations for English learning will increase.

(4) Assessment

Assessments of language proficiency before and after a task-based EFL programme can be carried out. Thus, in comparison between the pre- and post- assessments, teachers can diagnose and track their learners' English learning achievement in TBL and therefore modify the syllabus to be more appropriate for future classes.

(5) Teacher training

Since TBL is a new pedagogical concept for Macau and this is the first study relating TBL and Chinese learners' beliefs about and motivation for learning English in this context, it is necessary to organise workshops, seminars or

conferences related to CLT and TBL for teachers. Thus, teachers (especially those who only know traditional approaches in ELT) can have an opportunity to open up their minds and move from form-based to meaning-based teaching, and adopt TBL as a viable alternative for English teaching in their contexts and be encouraged to undertake further research into this field.

(6) Policy

As mentioned previously, even though the government in Macau realises that the role of English is becoming more important nowadays, in my view, the support for English language teaching development is insufficient. As a result of a *laissez-faire* policy, the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau or the Tertiary Education Services Office does not engage in developing educational policy in an active manner. No institution, whether primary, secondary or tertiary level, is given any guidelines and instructions by the government. Each institution has its own school curriculum. However, teachers use their own individual ways of teaching, hence there is a lack of consistency. Thus, in order to improve English teaching, policy makers in Macau can do more for teachers by holding ELT conferences and seminars to be a platform for teachers to share their ideas, thoughts and experiences in teaching.

(7) Recommendations to the university management:

- More support for English teaching development in the form of setting up an EFL committee. Teachers can share different ideas about English teaching, schedule classes, design teaching materials, discuss assessment procedures and express their opinions to the committee.

- Encourage collaborative research in English teaching by reducing workload and providing assistance. Doing research is important for teachers to develop their professions. However, due to the overload of work (i.e., generally teaching more than 16 hours per week in at least 3 different subjects), teachers always complain that they are not given sufficient assistance from the university. In this case, the committee can gather the teachers' ideas and opinions and then report to the authority for improvement. In order to encourage teachers to develop their English teaching, the committee can also organise EFL workshops, seminars and conferences for the teachers.

8.4 Limitations of the research

Even though this study successfully provides strong evidence that the task-based EFL programme had a positive affect on the Chinese tertiary learners' beliefs about and motivations for English learning, still here are some limitations in this research:

(1) Length of study

The programme for the study was undertaken only once a week during a 15-week semester. If the study could have been undertaken twice or three times a week for a year or two, the data from both quantitative and qualitative methods would be richer and hence the results would be more valid and reliable.

(2) Lack of follow-up opportunities

Similarly to the first point, it would be more interesting if we could have opportunities to track the students' beliefs about and motivations for English learning after they had finished the programme for a period of time. If the opportunity had existed, follow-up research into their further changes of beliefs about and motivations for English learning would have been carried out. This would have provided more evidence to justify whether or not the task-based learning approach is beneficial to Chinese tertiary learners.

(3) Research instruments

There are at least two limitations in relation to research instruments in this study. The first limitation is the learners' 'motivation' graphs. In using the 'motivation' graphs, the students' evaluations of their state of 'motivation', towards tasks by marking the high or low points of their 'motivation' did not relate to the theoretical description of the concept of motivation, as provided in the literature review. They simply and directly marked the points in the graphs relating to their general feelings about their English learning at those specific times. This lack of detailed understanding of what was meant by 'motivation' was anticipated and redressed by the device of the 'motivation' graph notes. The data from their 'motivation' graph notes provided deeper insights into the factors which influenced their motivation throughout the programme.

The second limitation relates to the prompts in learners' diaries. It might be argued that the validity of the data in their weekly diaries was compromised since the students were prompted to express their thoughts and opinions about specific aspects of TBL. However, as discussed in 5.5.3, if they had kept diary

entries without any prompts, the data would probably have been too broadly focused for this study. In this respect, other research instruments, i.e., 'motivation' graph notes, follow-up interviews and field-notes for qualitative data collection were devised as triangulation for the study.

(4) Possible influence of teacher

It might be argued that the positive results of the study could have been caused by factors other than the TBL programme itself, such as the influence of teacher on the students. It might be suggested that such positive outcomes are partially related to the teacher's enthusiasm, personality and rapport with the learners. However, as indicated in 7.2.2.1, there were only 30 mentions (from 13 students) relating to the positive effects of the teacher. As a teacher of English in Taiwan for ten years and in Macau for five years, I believe that Chinese students nowadays are far more likely to say what they really think, and I have always encouraged them to do so. Consequently, even though such an influence can never be ruled out, I believe it impacted minimally on the study.

(5) Teacher as researcher

The roles of teacher (practitioner) and researcher (participant) are integrated in an action research (Somekh, 1995; Denscombe, 1998). However, such an integration of roles might lead to the research outcomes being questioned because of a possible research bias on the part of the teacher. If I were to undertake this study again, I would prefer to keep my role to that of researcher. Then the knowledge generated from the research could be applied by the other practitioner(s) at a later stage.

Hence, in order to solve these limitations of the research, there are some recommendations for further research.

8.5 Recommendations for further research

(1) Longer duration of studies

As mentioned as the first limitation in 8.4, it is better for a researcher to undertake the research for longer than one semester. If the research can be carried out through a year or two, more changes and additional findings may be revealed from both richer quantitative and qualitative data. As a result, the study might then provide more insights into the dynamic changes, and their sustainability, of the students' beliefs about and motivations for English learning.

(2) Similar studies in different contexts

Further research in different contexts can be carried out in order to reveal various insights into learners' beliefs about and motivations for English learning through TBL. For example:

- What will the result be if the study is collaboratively undertaken as an action research by teachers in the same institution in Macau?
- What will the result be if the researcher adopts quasi-experiment-qualitative-interpretive method (i.e., it has both pre- and post-tests and control groups, yielding qualitative data, which are analysed interpretively) in this action research?

As mentioned previously, TBL is a new pedagogical concept in Macau. Therefore, if similar studies are undertaken in different ways, various perspectives of TBL will be provided for policy makers to make informed decisions and for teachers of English to reflect on their own teaching for improvement.

(3) Does TBL improve language proficiency?

Since this study investigates TBL by focusing on its effects on learners' beliefs about and motivations for English learning, the effects on language proficiency improvement is not explored here. However, TBL researchers (e.g., Skehan, 1998; Ellis, 2003) indicate that TBL can affect learners' language production in the terms of fluency, accuracy and complexity. They assume that there is a relationship between use and acquisition and hence language proficiency can be developed through the use of the target language (Ellis, 2003). Thus, this question is interesting and worthy for further study.

(4) What kinds of assessment procedures are best for TBL?

As TBL is a new pedagogy different from traditional approaches, traditional assessment methods such as form-focused tests and exams are not appropriate for it. Moreover, since this issue has not been mentioned much in current TBL literature, it is worth studying in future research, particularly since the contexts in which many Asian teachers work are highly examination oriented.

(5) Group dynamics and collaborative learning in TBL

In this study, the results indicate that one of the factors which strongly positively

affected the group of students' motivations for English learning was the collaborative nature of task-based learning (i.e., Change 17, as mentioned in 7.3.2.2). Therefore, it would be interesting to explore the group dynamics of Chinese learners in TBL with a focus on what factors influence the success, or otherwise, of group work in language learning.

Overall, I contend that TBL is worth advocating in Macau and further research into TBL in different contexts needs exploring.

8.6 Final thoughts

I thank God for giving me the strength to complete this research and this long journey.

The story of my research journey does not begin in 2004, but at the early age of eight when I was firstly aware of the gap between English teaching and learning in my childhood. I remember it was very painful for me when I was forced to memorise vocabulary and grammatical rules in English class. For me, English was a nightmare. Like most learners, I felt bored and frustrated about English learning. Then when I grew up, I wanted to find out whether there could be any other better (and happier) ways to learn English. Therefore, I resolved to become a teacher of English and I studied at a teaching training university abroad (i.e., National Taiwan Normal University), with a major in English. After several years, I finally became a teacher of English in Taiwan. However, I found that my students were passive and sluggish in English class. I was upset about their learning performance and murmured 'Why don't learners learn what

teachers teach?’ Again, English became a nightmare for me, but this time, the subject changed from ‘learner’ to ‘teacher’. I began to reflect on my teaching and I wanted to help my students to enjoy learning English. With this belief, I began my research career in my MA and PhD studies in ELT, focusing on the field of language teaching approaches, course and material design, learners’ beliefs, motivations, learning styles...etc. With a hope of bringing changes to ELT for Chinese learners, I carried out this study into learners’ beliefs about and motivations for English learning through a task-based learning programme.

As the results from the study indicate that my students’ intrinsic motivation and their self-concept beliefs (especially self-confidence and self-efficacy) about English learning were enhanced through the task-based learning programme, I am very happy to see that this approach benefited them and that they enjoyed this approach to learn English. Their laughter, their involvement in collaborative work, and their determination to learn are still in my memory. Also, I have learnt a lot from the study. In retrospect, in comparison to my early teaching years, I found myself more considerate of students’ needs and interests. Instead of complaining ‘Why don’t learners learn what teachers teach?’, now I would ask myself ‘What can I do to help learners improve their learning?’. I believe the motto which is written in the first line of my thesis, ‘Developing effectiveness in learning is the goal of teaching’. I still believe it.

I love teaching. I regard my teaching career as a vocation and I devote my life to it. This PhD is not the end of my professional development as I intend to continue to find ways to improve what I can do to help my students.

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Appendix 1

Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI): ESL Student Version

Below are beliefs that some people have about learning foreign languages.

Read each statement and then decide if you:

(1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree, (5) strongly disagree.

There are no right or wrong answers. We are simply interested in your opinions. Mark each answer on the special answer sheet. Questions 4 and 15 are slightly different and you should mark them as indicated.

Items:	
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Some people have a special ability for learning a foreign language.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Some languages are easier to learn than others.	1 2 3 4 5
4. English is: 1) a very difficult language 2) a difficult language 3) a language of medium difficulty 4) an easy language 5) a very easy language	1 2 3 4 5
5. I believe that I will learn to speak English very well.	1 2 3 4 5
6. People from my country are good at learning foreign languages.	1 2 3 4 5
7. It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation.	1 2 3 4 5
8. It is necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English.	1 2 3 4 5
9. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.	1 2 3 4 5
10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	1 2 3 4 5
11. People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages.	1 2 3 4 5
12. It is best to learn English in an English-speaking country.	1 2 3 4 5
13. I enjoy practicing English with the Americans I meet.	1 2 3 4 5
14. It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in English.	1 2 3 4 5
15. If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take them to speak the language very well: 1) less than a year 2) 1-2 years 3) 3-5 years 4) 5-10 years 5) You can't learn a language in 1 hour a day.	1 2 3 4 5

16. I have a special ability for learning foreign languages.	1	2	3	4	5
17. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning vocabulary words.	1	2	3	4	5
18. It is important to repeat and practice a lot.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.	1	2	3	4	5
20. People in my country feel that it is important to speak English.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I feel timid speaking English with other people.	1	2	3	4	5
22. If beginning students are permitted to make errors in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.	1	2	3	4	5
23. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning the grammar.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I would like to learn English so that I can get to know Americans better.	1	2	3	4	5
25. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.	1	2	3	4	5
26. It is important to practice with cassettes or tapes.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Learning a foreign language is different than learning other academic subjects.	1	2	3	4	5
28. The most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from my native language.	1	2	3	4	5
29. If I learn English very well, I will have better opportunities for a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
30. People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I want to learn to speak English well.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I would like to have American friends.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.	1	2	3	4	5
34. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.	1	2	3	4	5

From Horwitz (1987: 127-128)

Appendix 2

Beliefs about English Language Learning 英語學習信念

Please read each statement and then decide if you:

請閱讀每一句子，並給予意見：

(1) strongly agree 非常同意；

(2) agree 同意；

(3) neither agree nor disagree 不同意也不反對；

(4) disagree 不同意；

(5) strongly disagree 非常不同意

Please circle the one that indicates your attitude to the statement the best.

請圈出最能表達你看法的答案。

I believe: 我相信：	
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language. 兒童比成人更容易學會外語。	1 2 3 4 5
2. Some people have a special ability for learning a foreign language. 有些人學習外語特別有天分。	1 2 3 4 5
3. Some languages are easier to learn than others. 有些語言是比較易學習的。	1 2 3 4 5
4. English is: 英語是： 1) a very difficult language; 非常難學的語言； 2) a difficult language; 難學的語言； 3) a language of medium difficulty; 中等難度的語言； 4) an easy language; 易學的語言； 5) a very easy language. 非常易學的語言。	1 2 3 4 5
5. I will learn to speak English very well. 我將會說一口流利的英語。	1 2 3 4 5
6. People from my country are good at learning foreign languages. 我國人民都善於學習外語。	1 2 3 4 5
7. It is important to speak English with excellent pronunciation. 說英語就要發音準確。	1 2 3 4 5
8. It is necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English. 說英語必須知道英語系國家的文化。	1 2 3 4 5
9. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly. 在你不能正確地表達英語之前，你不應該說英語。	1 2 3 4 5

10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one. 會一種外語的人學習另一種語言時比較輕鬆。	1 2 3 4 5
11. People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages. 數學和理科好的人不擅長學習語言。	1 2 3 4 5
12. It is best to learn English in an English-speaking country. 在英語系國家學習英語最好。	1 2 3 4 5
13. I enjoy practicing English with native-speakers of English I meet. 我喜歡跟英語為母語的人談話來練習英語。	1 2 3 4 5
14. It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in English. 如果遇到不懂的生字就猜其意思。	1 2 3 4 5
15. If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take them to speak the language very well: 如果每日花一小時學習一種語言，要多久才能說得流利？ 1) less than a year; 少於一年; 2) 1 – 2 years; 1 – 2 年; 3) 3 – 5 years; 3 – 5 年; 4) 5 – 10 years; 5 – 10 年; 5) You can't learn a language in 1 hour a day. 每日花一小時是學不懂外語的。	1 2 3 4 5
16. I have a special ability for learning foreign languages. 我有學習外語的特殊能力。	1 2 3 4 5
17. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning vocabulary. 學習外語最重要是掌握詞彙。	1 2 3 4 5
18. It is important to repeat and practice a lot. 重覆和多練習是重要的。	1 2 3 4 5
19. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages. 女性學習外語比男性有優勢。	1 2 3 4 5
20. People in my country feel that it is important to speak English. 我國人民認為說英語是重要的。	1 2 3 4 5
21. I feel timid speaking English with other people. 我跟人說英語時感到害羞。	1 2 3 4 5
22. If beginning students are permitted to make errors in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on. 如果允許初學者犯錯，將來他們就難說得正確。	1 2 3 4 5
23. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning the grammar. 文法是學習外語最重要的一環。	1 2 3 4 5

24. I would like to learn English so that I can get to know native-speakers of English better. 我學習英語是因為我能認識英語為母語的朋友。	1	2	3	4	5
25. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language. 說外語比明白外語容易。	1	2	3	4	5
26. It is important to practice with cassettes or tapes. 利用錄音帶或錄影帶練習是重要的。	1	2	3	4	5
27. Learning a foreign language is different than learning other academic subjects. 學習外語有別於學習其他學術科目。	1	2	3	4	5
28. The most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from my native language. 學習英語最重要的一環是學習如何把母語翻譯成英語。	1	2	3	4	5
29. If I learn English very well, I will have better opportunities for a good job. 如果我英語非常好，我更有機會得到好工作。	1	2	3	4	5
30. People who speak more than one language are very intelligent. 能說超過一種語言的人是很聰明的。	1	2	3	4	5
31. I want to learn to speak English well. 我想學好英語。	1	2	3	4	5
32. I would like to have native-speakers of English as friends. 我想有英語為母語的朋友。	1	2	3	4	5
33. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language. 每一個人都能學外語。	1	2	3	4	5
34. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it. 閱讀和寫英語比說和聽懂英語來得容易。	1	2	3	4	5
35. If I learn English very well, I will have a better self-image. 如果我學好英語，我會有一個更好的自己形象。	1	2	3	4	5
36. If I learn English very well, I will have a higher social status. 如果我學好英語，我會有更高社會地位。	1	2	3	4	5
37. If I learn English very well, my family and friends will be proud of me. 如果我學好英語，我的家人和朋友會感到自豪。	1	2	3	4	5
38. If I learn English very well, I will be able to understand the western world more. 如果我學好英語，我將會更了解西方社會。	1	2	3	4	5
39. If I learn English very well, I will be able to maintain and improve my language proficiency on my own. 如果我學好英語，我能夠自己保持和提高語言水平。	1	2	3	4	5
40. If I learn English very well, I will get good exam results. 如果我學好英語，我會有優秀的考試成績。	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 3

Brown's (2002) Motivation Questionnaire

Two Kinds of Motivation:

Circle the number that best describes how you feel about learning English. Circle only one number for each item. Use the following scale. Be honest!

- 4 I strongly agree. This statement describes me very well.
- 3 I somewhat agree. This statement probably describes me.
- 2 I somewhat disagree. This statement probably does not describe me.
- 1 I strongly disagree. This statement definitely does not describe me.

Example:

I want to learn English well so that I can marry a Canadian and live in Canada. 4 ③ 2 1

Number 3 has been circled. This means that this statement somewhat describes this person.

Part I

- 1. I want to learn English well so that I can talk with native speakers of English. 4 3 2 1
- 2. I have set my own goals for learning English and want to be successful in reaching those goals. 4 3 2 1
- 3. English will help me to get a good job someday. 4 3 2 1
- 4. English will help me to be successful in my studies. 4 3 2 1
- 5. I hope to meet (or have already met) a special friend who speaks English. 4 3 2 1

Part II

- 6. I am studying English because it is a required course in my university. 4 3 2 1
- 7. I need to pass an English proficiency test (like the TOFEL or IELTS). 4 3 2 1
- 8. My parents want me to learn English, so I'm here to please them. 4 3 2 1
- 9. I am studying English because I want to please my teacher and get good grades. 4 3 2 1
- 10. I am studying English because most of my friends are good in English. 4 3 2 1

Add up the numbers you circled in each part. You should get a total score between 5 and 20 for each part.

Scores: Part I _____ Part II _____

From Brown (2002: 18)

Appendix 4

Schmidt et al.'s (1996) Motivation Questionnaire

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2 disagree
- 3 slightly disagree
- 4 slightly agree
- 5 agree
- 6 strongly agree

Intrinsic motivation:

- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I enjoy learning English very much. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Learning English is a hobby for me. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. Learning English is a challenge that I enjoy. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. I don't enjoy learning English, but I know that learning English is important for me. (reverse-coded) | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. I wish I could learn English in an easier way, without going to class. (reverse-coded) | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Extrinsic motivation:

- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. English is important to me because it will broaden my view. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. The main reason I am taking this class is that my parents/my spouse/my supervisors want me to improve my English. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. I want to do well in this class because it is important to show my ability to my family/friends/supervisors/others. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. Everybody in Egypt should be able to speak English. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. Being able to speak English will add to my social status. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 11. I am learning English because I want to spend a period of time in an English-speaking country. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 12. I want to learn English because it is useful when traveling in many countries. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 13. I want to learn English because I would like to emigrate. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 14. One reason I learn English is that I can meet new people and make friends in my English class. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 15. I am learning English to become more educated. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 16. I need to be able to read textbooks in English. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 17. The main reason I need to learn English is to pass examinations. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 18. If I learn English better, I will be able to get a better job. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 19. Increasing my English proficiency will have financial benefits for me. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 20. If I can speak English, I will have a marvelous life. | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

From Schmidt et al. (1996: 65-66)

Appendix 5

Motivations in English Language Learning 英語學習動機

Please read each statement and then decide if you:

請閱讀每一句子，並給予意見：

(1) strongly agree 非常同意；

(2) agree 同意；

(3) neither agree nor disagree 不同意也不反對；

(4) disagree 不同意；

(5) strongly disagree 非常不同意

Please circle the one that indicates your attitude to the statement the best.

請圈出最能表達你看法的答案。

Items: 項目:					
1. The process of learning English is fun and interesting. 學習英語的過程好玩又有趣。	1	2	3	4	5
2. English is important to me because it will expand my horizon. 我覺得英語重要，因為可以擴闊我的視野。	1	2	3	4	5
3. I want to learn English because I am interested in the western world. 我想學英語因為我對西方世界有興趣。	1	2	3	4	5
4. I would learn English even if it were not a compulsory subject in university. 即使英語不是大學必修科，我都會學習。	1	2	3	4	5
5. I will continue learning English out of the class. 我完成學業後還會進修英語。	1	2	3	4	5
6. I have set my own goals for learning English. 我會為學習英語定下目標。	1	2	3	4	5
7. I want to learn English well so that I can get to know native speakers of English better. 我想學好英語去結識英語系國家的人。	1	2	3	4	5
8. I hope to meet (or have already met) a special friend who speaks English. 我希望認識(或已經認識)一位說英語的朋友。	1	2	3	4	5
9. I want to learn English well because I want to study/work in an English-speaking country someday. 我想學好英語因為我希望有機會到英語國家系學習或工作。	1	2	3	4	5
10. English will help me to get a good job someday. 英語有助我得到好工作。	1	2	3	4	5
11. English will help me to be successful in my studies. 英語有助我在學業上成功。	1	2	3	4	5

12. I need to pass an English proficiency test (like the TOEFL or IELTS). 我需要通過英語水平考試(例如,TOEFL 或 IELTS)。	1	2	3	4	5
13. I learn English because most of my friends are good at English. 我學英語因為我大部份朋友的英語都很好。	1	2	3	4	5
14. I learn English in order to pass examinations. 我是為考試而學習英語。	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am studying English because it is a compulsory course in my university. 我學習英語因為這是必修科目。	1	2	3	4	5
16. I am studying English because I want to get good grades. 我學習英語因為我想有高分數。	1	2	3	4	5
17. I am studying English because my parents want me to. 我學習英語因為父母想我學好英語。	1	2	3	4	5
18. I am studying English in order to make my family and friends proud of me. 我想家人和朋友為我感到自豪而學習英語。	1	2	3	4	5
19. I am studying English in order to have a better self-image. 我學習英語為了建立一個更好的自己。	1	2	3	4	5
20. I am studying English in order to add my social status. 我學習英語為了提高我的社會地位。	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 6

'Motivation' graph and notes 學習動機記錄表

How motivated do you feel each week? Why?

你覺得你每週的學習動機如何？為什麼？

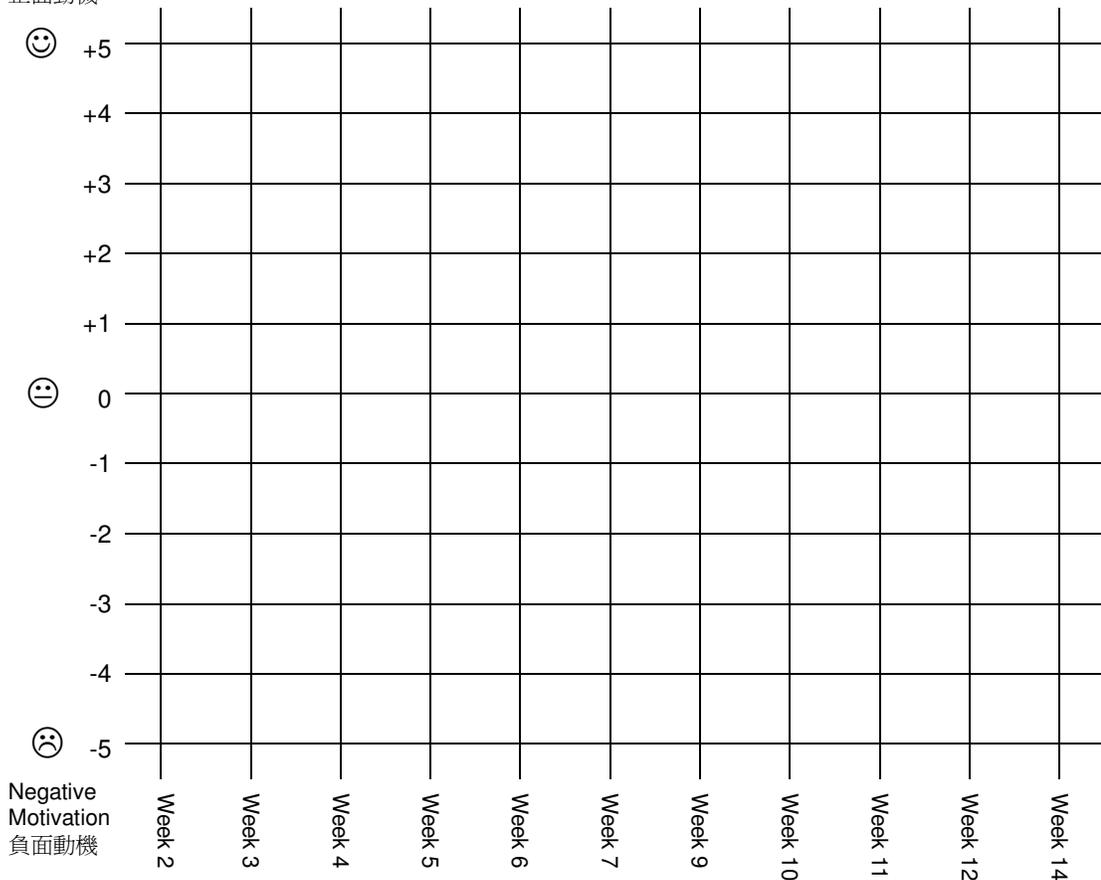
Motivation is one of the most important factors in your English learning. It is helpful to keep a record of your high and low points of motivation during the course and then to analyse why you felt like that at the time.

學習動機是學習英語過程中一個非常重要的因素，把你在課程中的學習動機的高點及低點記錄下來，能幫助你事後分析你為什麼當時有這樣的想法。

Please keep a record of your high or low points of motivation on the graph and explain the reasons on the table on the next page.

請把你的學習動機的高點及低點記錄下來，並在下一頁的表格中解釋你的原因。

Positive
Motivation
正面動機



Negative
Motivation
負面動機

Week 週	Reasons 原因
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Week 週	Reasons 原因
9	
10	
11	
12	
14	

Appendix 7

All of the prompt questions in learners' diaries

Regular questions:

1. Did you like / dislike this week's tasks? Why?
2. What tasks did you like / dislike most? Why?
3. Were they easy / difficult / interesting / boring / challenging / threatening? Why?
4. Were you confident of using English in the tasks? Why? / Why not?
5. What difficulties, if any, did you have in the tasks?
6. What did you do when you faced these difficulties?
7. Do you have any comments on this week's tasks?

Specific questions:

1st review week

The specific questions in the first review week are used for looking back generally and specifically at what the students have thought about the tasks and the programme.

1. Have you enjoyed the tasks so far? Why? / Why not?
2. What's your opinion about using tasks in English learning?
3. Did the tasks motivate you in your English learning? Why? / Why not?
4. How beneficial do the tasks seem to be in terms of your goals for learning English?
5. How self-confident are you about your ability to do well on the tasks?
6. Are the tasks you have completed so far relevant to your interests / needs/ life experience? In what ways?

2nd review week

The specific questions in the second review week are used for looking forward towards what the students want to do in class.

1. What kinds of groupings do you like in tasks? (individual / pair work / small groups / the whole class) Why?
2. How much do you like learning/working together with your peer students in the tasks? Why?
3. What factors motivated you most in the tasks?
4. How much did the set-up of the task (e.g. the topics, the materials, groupings, etc.) add to your motivation?
5. How sufficient is the guidance (from the teacher, the peer students, the materials, etc.) for enabling you to complete the tasks?
6. How much does the prospect of feedback (praise or grade) contribute to your performance on the tasks?

3rd review week

The specific questions in the third review week are used for looking back at general things. Something reflective, like:

1. What do you think you've learnt?
2. What have you got from the course?

3. Did the tasks motivate you in your English learning? Why?
4. What else motivated you?
5. Did the tasks improve your English proficiency?
6. What skills of English proficiency have been improved by the tasks? Why?
7. How motivated do you feel to carry on learning English?
8. What will you do to maintain or improve your English after this course?
9. What is your suggestion for making this course more motivating?

Appendix 8

An example of regular questions in learners' diaries

Case 19

Week 3 (2007/02/06)

Please reflect what you have done in the course this week. You may answer the questions in Chinese or in English.

請回顧本星期課堂裡的情況，你可以用中文或英文作答。

Did you like / dislike this week's tasks? Why?

你喜歡 / 不喜歡本星期的課業活動呢？為什麼？

Yes, I did. I liked this week's tasks. Because they ~~are~~^{were} very interesting. We could learn what kind of learning styles we were. Then we know ~~ourselves~~^{myself} better and found the best way to study English. We also got some good informations about how to learn English from our group members when we ~~at~~ were solving the problem together. The idioms also let ~~us~~ me get more knowledge. ~~Listening or make ourselves~~

What tasks did you like / dislike most? Why?

什麼課業活動是你最喜歡 / 最不喜歡的？為什麼？

I liked psychology tests the best. Because they can let me know myself and find a good way to solve the problems I have. The psychology tests ~~at~~ were very funny. They make me have more ~~in the~~ interests in study English.

Were they easy / difficulty / interesting / boring / challenging / threatening? Why?

這些課業活動對你來說是容易的 / 困難的 / 有趣的 / 無聊的 / 富挑戰性的 / 令人生畏的？為什麼？

I thought that they were interesting. I liked to do the tasks. Because they make me happy and relaxed. I didn't think they ~~at~~ were boring because they were easy to finish and we can get more information from them to improve ~~our~~ my English.

Were you confident of using English in the tasks? Why? / Why not?

你有信心在進行這些課業活動時使用英文嗎？什麼原因有信心？什麼原因沒有信心？

Yes, I were. Just do it. Although my English is not very good. I just want to try my best to improve my English. I'm not a fool. So I can learn it ~~were~~ well. If I never try, I will not do a good job in mastering a language. For this kind of attitude, I howe confident in myself.

What difficulties, if any, did you have in the tasks?

假如在進行這些課業活動時你遇過困難的話，你遇過的困難是什麼？

- ① When ~~was~~ I was talking with my groups, I found that I ge'got less information from the listening tasks.
- ② When I wanted to speak with my partners, I haved difficulty in my poor words. I can't describe my meaning well.

What did you do when you faced these difficulties?

面對這些困難時，你當時怎麼做呢？

- ① Try to listening again and listen more carefully. Get some correct answers from my partners and ~~talk~~ ^{discuss} with them together.
- ② Practise more, speak more, try more. To ask them how to say something in English. How to describe ~~it~~.

Please write down your comments on this week's tasks.

請寫下你對本星期課業活動的意見。

- Group working - I like this way to study English. we can learn from our partners. We can discuss together.
- Psychology test - make ~~us~~ ^{me} know ~~ourselves~~ ^{myself} better to find a good way of studying.
- As Many Activity - make ~~us~~ me happy and relaxed.

Appendix 9

Three examples of specific questions in learners' diaries

Case 10

Week 5 (2007/03/06)

Review week (1)

Please reflect what you have done in the course so far. You may answer the questions in Chinese or in English.

請回顧本課程從開始直到目前的情況，你可以用中文或英文作答。

Have you enjoyed the tasks so far? Why? / Why not?

到目前為止，你喜歡這些課業活動嗎？為什麼喜歡？為什麼不喜歡？

I've enjoyed the tasks so far. Firstly, the contents of the topic is useful and interesting. Secondly, the way of tasks can motivate our passion. In addition, through the tasks I've improved my oral English and writing skills.

What's your opinion about using tasks in English learning?

你對於學習英語過程中參與課業活動有什麼樣的看法呢？

I think using tasks is a good way for me in English learning. After joining in these tasks, I become more confident in using English and now I'm not very shy like before. What's more, I like to communicate with other people in English.

Do the tasks motivate you in your English learning? Why? / Why not?

課業活動會不會引發你學習英語的動機？為什麼會？為什麼不會？

I think the tasks do motivate me in my English learning. Because they're very interesting, so I become more interested in using English.

How beneficial do the tasks seem to be in terms of your goals for learning English?
這些課業活動有沒有幫助你達成你的英語學習目標？如果有，表現在哪些方面？

I think they seem to be in terms of my goals for learning English. Especially my oral English.
~~As~~ Before I attending this class, I used to be very shy when I speak to others in English, but now I become braver and I'm happy to talk to other people. Through the practices My oral English is better.

How self-confident are you about your ability to do well on the tasks?
對於自己把這些課業活動做好，你對你的能力有多大的自信？

I have the confidence to do these tasks well. Though sometimes I may make a lot of mistakes when I do these tasks, but failure is the mother of success. I don't worry about making mistakes. No pains, no gains. I believe so long as I do these tasks well, I'll be successful in English in the future.

Are the tasks you have completed so far relevant to your interests / needs / life experience?
In what ways?

目前你所做過的課業活動都與你的興趣 / 需要 / 生活經驗相關嗎？哪方面相關？請說明。

I think they are relevant to my needs and life experience. For example, the tasks on the topic of love and job, I think they are all very useful in everyone's life. And through the tasks I've learned a lot of ^{useful} things.

Case 14

Week 8 (2007/03/27)

Review week (2)

Please express your opinions of what you want to do in class. You may answer the questions in Chinese or in English.

請對本課程中你所想做的事表達你的意見，你可以用中文或英文作答。

What kinds of groupings do you like in tasks (individual / pair work / small groups / the whole class)? Why?

在課業活動中，你喜歡什麼類型的分組方式（個人 / 兩人一組 / 小組 / 全班）？為什麼？

I like all different kinds of groupings in tasks. Because different people have different ideas, we can share our feelings and ideas through all different kinds of groupings. Moreover, we can communicate with each other in pair work and small groups. In individual, this is a chance for us know ourselves more. So, different kinds of groupings are vital, fresh and useful for us.

How much do you like learning / working together with your peer students in the tasks?

Why?

在課業活動中，你對於同學之間互相學習 / 合作有多喜歡呢？為什麼？

I like team work very much. We not only have fun with each other, but also learn from each other. On the other hand, it can culture our emotions. We feel like that we are in the same organization. We achieve the goals efficiently and effectively.

What factors motivate you most in the tasks?

什麼因素最能使你在課業活動中引發你的學習動機？

Maybe, my poor performance will motivates me most in the tasks. Everyone can speak, write and listen so well except me. What a pity! I don't want to fall behind. Moreover, all of us know, English is of importance today. Given me a chance to practice, how can we waste this chance to improve ourselves.

How much does the set-up of the task (e.g. the topics, the materials, groupings, etc.) add to your motivation?

課業活動整個的組織方案(例如：主題、教材設計、分組安排...等等)對加強你的學習動機有多少幫助？

The set-up of the task can add to my motivation a lot. I am amazed that our teacher can do all things perfectly. It must be that our teacher paid a lot for those lessons. All things are so fresh and useful for us. Beside, I want to learn more things about English.

How sufficient is the guidance (from the teacher, the peer students, the materials, etc.) for enabling you to complete the tasks?

使你有能力完成這些課業活動的指導(例如從老師、同學、教材...等所得到的指導)有多充分呢？

Before we have the lesson, our teacher has already prepared everything for me. And, we communicate with others. All things can guide us finish the tasks. It seems that it will encourage us to think, listen and talk a lot.

How much does the prospect of feedback (praise or grade) contribute to your performance on the tasks?

對於別人的回應(例如：讚美或分數)的渴望在你的課業活動中的表現有多少影響？

I can't determine how much things I learn about English and how well I use English. Beside, if someone gives me feedback, I will be so excited. It can make me know more about myself. In my opinion, it is so wonderful for me to receive feedback of others.

Case 15

Week 11 (2007/04/17) Review week (3)

Please reflect what you have done in the course so far. You may answer the questions in Chinese or in English.

請回顧本課程從開始直到目前的情況，你可以用中文或英文作答。

What do you think you have learnt?

你認為你從開始到現在學習了些什麼？

I have learnt many things. For example, I have known some new English words, some phrases, some sentences which we can use in different situations. Now I also study many kinds of life lives. The most important thing is that how to use the "English" in our daily life. We can not only write or keep them in our mind, we should practice speaking English because as a language its function is communication.

What have you got from the course?

你從本課程的學習中得到了什麼？

At first time, I thought this question was the same as the former one. But on second thoughts, I found out the question was "course". Yes, I admit that I have changed much. For that we have many tasks during the classes, I had to finish them with different people. I was introversion formerly, I preferred doing things alone most the time, but from the course, I understand that I should finish many things with people. I'm more confident of myself now.

Do the tasks motivate you in your English learning? Why?/Why not?

這些課業活動有沒有引發你學習英語的動機呢？為什麼有？/為什麼沒有？

Yes. I've answered this question many times. Most of the answers are "Yes". I actually feel that I should ~~to~~ improve my English with improving myself. "How to communicate with them?" "Why I can not explain my opinion well?" "Why his/her oral English is so good?" "Oh, my god, I haven't heard about this things, I'm stupid!" This thoughts always in my mind, they motivated me in my English learning.

What else motivates you?

還有沒有其他什麼東西引發你的學習動機?

Yes. They're other things. Such as the lessons' progress. If it is interesting or exciting, I must had a good time and enjoyed my self. If learning English can be so good, why I ~~don't~~ have to refuse it? Yes, that's the answers. It's challenge for us young people to prove ourselves to show ourselves.

Do the tasks improve your English proficiency?

這些課業活動有沒有提升你的英語能力?

Of course yes. We will have 11 lessons. Every lesson we can practice our oral English and learn many new things, such as words or phrases. What's more, how to express myself with English is also our topic! In addition, after every class, we are asked to do the survey with English or Chinese, so on the other hand we not only improve the oral English, but

also improve the writing. What skills of English proficiency have been improved by the tasks? Why?

這些課業活動所提升你哪方面的英語能力呢? 為什麼?

Maybe my oral English and writing.

On account of each lesson's task, I got an opportunity to speak more English than my daily life. Due to different topic of our lessons, I have learnt how to use the English, such as in different occasion we should speak different things.

otherwise I studied more new words and sentences. After the class, I also have the chance to write my feeling in English, so I should look into the dictionary for more words.

In this way, my writing may be improved.

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How motivated do you feel to carry on learning English?

你覺得你會繼續學習英文的動機如何？

I'm sure I will carry on learning English.

English is very important in these days. From the course, I understand that I have a lot of things to learn in the "English world". That is what I feel now. So I suppose myself keep on learning English.

What will you do to maintain or improve your English after this course?

在這個課程結束之後，你將會做什麼好使你仍然維持或提高你的英文水平呢？

After this course, I have applied for the English training plan in Australia. I hope I can improve my oral English to English-speaking country. Now I'm preparing for the CET-4 in June 23th, I ~~was~~ expect myself to pass the CET-4, CET-6 and get a high score in IELTS.

After the courses, I will keep on ~~选一些~~ 选一些与英语学习有关的 course.

At last, Thank you for your lessons. I like it!

What is your suggestion for making this course more motivating?

爲了令這個課程以後更能引發學生的學習動機，你有什麼提議呢？

我认为可以适当再增加一些主题，可以在第一节课的时候咨讯关于同学感兴趣的话题，课堂内容尽量不要是相同的套路。

其它的我觉得如原^先课程一样，保持课堂气氛的生动与活跃，老师的开朗与幽默，内容的丰富与实践性，我相信学生们都将会有很好的学习动机。并且将在这门课上学到很多东西并且我认为我们学得很快。That's all, thank you.

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Appendix 10

An example of field-notes\Week 07

I found that the students were quite interested in today's task – interview. Few of them had real experience of job interviews. Therefore, in order to arouse their interests, last week they were given a handout of interview questions for the preview of today's class.

At the beginning of the class, at the stage of pre-task, I showed them a committee of interviewees using PowerPoint. When asking questions such as 'Which is the chairperson in the committee?'; 'Who looks sympathetic or unsympathetic?'; 'Who has just asked a question?'...etc., they knew the answers in Chinese but they could not correctly reply in English. However, they did not give up. After a few attempts, they could eventually give correct answers in English.

After that, they listened to a recording and then classified five types of interview questions. At first, some of the students looked confused about the classification of the interview questions. They answered incorrectly even in the first part. However, instead of giving up, they got more involved in group discussions for the correct answers. I was glad to see that they were familiar with the TBL learning procedure. They loved group collaboration. They actively worked with their group members in order to complete the task. Some of the students impressed me a lot because they performed very well in group discussion. They were Case 15, Case 22, Case 24, Case 17, Case 01, Case 05, Case 02 and Case 12. They even had a confident look on their faces when they were giving the correct answers! I found that the pre-task was successful to motivate the students in learning. They became involved in learning and ready for the next task.

At task stage, the students respectively acted as interviewers and interviewees in a role play. They had to follow the instructions which required them to spontaneously ask or reply to questions within the five types of interview questions in their own words in English. It was an exciting and motivating task! They had a really good time and laughed a lot when they were acting! One student, Case 15, whom I used to think was a little shy in speaking English, even actively came to remind me to tell the students to take their own CV with them for the role play! In the interview, the interviewers read the interviewees' CV and asked them interview questions within the five types in their own words in English. Meanwhile, the interviewees had to listen to the interviewers very carefully. They had to organise their thoughts and answer them properly. I found that they all enjoyed the task and they were highly motivated. When I walked over to listen to the pairs, I observed that all of them were talking a lot in English naturally and spontaneously. Only one pair finished their interview faster than others. They were Case 04 and Case 07. Other pairs even forgot the time when they were talking in English. Regarding to their enjoyment and involvement in the role-play, I decided to give them more time for another turn of the interview. The one who had acted as an interviewer switched to be an interviewee, and vice versa. Consequently, every student had an opportunity to

practise their English and to experience the different roles of interviewer and interviewee in the task.

Then, after a short five-minute break, I intended to call one or two pairs to come to the stage for oral presentation. To my surprise, two pairs raised their hands to be volunteers. They were Case 12, Case 13, Case 17 and Case 18. They confidently acted with gesture, shaking hands, giving their partner (the interviewee) a seat, and keeping eye contact to each other during the conversation. While they were playing, other students were listening and classifying the interview questions in the conversations. I was so impressed to see that their English competence was improving. The four students confidently performed what they had learnt. They enjoyed the moments on the stage when they were role-playing in English. At the same time, others who were sitting in class were also involved in the task. They listened to them carefully, wrote down the interview questions and classified them into five categories. After the presentation, I praised the two pairs with applause. They were highly delighted.

After the task, we moved to the stage of post-task. The students were required to listen to a recording of seven interviews from an interviewer's perspective. They had to assess which interviewee(s) they would employ by their performance in the interviews. They all burst into laughter when they were listening to the fourth interviewee. They told me that the performance of the fourth interviewee were just like what they had done in their own role plays. Then I asked them to tell me the reasons concerning which interviewee they would like to employ. Most of them replied very naturally. Some students even got very excited when they knew that their answers were correct. Some students impressed me a lot today! They were Case 23, Case 21, Case 14, Case 20, Case 08, Case 10, Case 19, Case 15 and Case 22. Today's class was very exciting and motivating. I loved this active atmosphere.

One more thing, just after the class, one student, Case 22, came to me and submitted her diary. She told me that she loved today's task very much. She thought that the interview was not difficult to accomplish because she had already prepared for the interview questions which she had received last week.

Some reflections:

- ❖ When I had prepared for this task, I thought that the students would not like to be 'exposed' openly on the stage to the class. But the evidence showed that it was not true! When the students were confident enough in themselves, they would like to test out their abilities. Besides, praise and encouragement from the teacher was very important in learning. When they were expected to do well by the teacher, they would maintain their motivation at a high level. When they knew that the teacher believed they could do it, they really tried their best to do it! I think the feeling of 'satisfaction' and teacher's expectations motivated them to learn!
- ❖ The students might need more time for classifying and practising the interview questions.

Good points:

- ❖ I monitored the students' performance without giving intervention.
- ❖ The procedure of the task was expressed clearly.
- ❖ We had fun in class.
- ❖ The students were given another turn to play different roles in the interview role-play.
- ❖ The students were encouraged to act openly on the stage.
- ❖ I praised them a lot.
- ❖ The grouping arrangement was good. They spoke more in tasks using pairs than using groups.

Appendix 11

Interview schedule

Interviewee: _____ Intended duration: _____ minutes
Date: _____ Interview began: _____
Location: _____ Interview finished: _____
Actual duration: _____ minutes

Topic: Motivation towards tasks in the EFL programme

1. How much do you like studying English? Why?
(Prompts: Very much / somewhat much / not very much / not at all)
2. What skills do you think are the most important in communication?
(Prompts: Listening / speaking / reading / writing / others: _____)
3. How would you describe your desire to study English (i.e. motivation) at this time? Why?
(Prompts: High / average / low?)
4. What has affected your motivation over your period of study?
(Prompts: Teachers / fellow students / tasks and activities / classroom atmosphere / something in you [say, pleasing your parents / intending to pass an English proficiency test or exam / looking for a job...etc.]?)
5. How did this affect you?
6. Through the programme, have your opinions about learning English changed? How?
7. Can you suggest anything that could have happened or could have been done at this time to improve your motivation in English learning?
(Prompts: Better syllabus / tasks / groupings / teacher / praise from the teacher or fellow students / classroom atmosphere? Or something in you?)
8. What's your opinion about using tasks in English learning?
(T should firstly define 'tasks' and then give some examples.)
9. Did you enjoy your English classes more or less when you did tasks? Why?
10. What do you think about the tasks? Why?
(Prompts: easy / difficult / challenging / interesting / beneficial / boring...)
(T may need to give examples of tasks.)
11. Did the tasks motivate you in your English learning? Why?
12. What factors motivated you most in the tasks? Why?
(Prompts: The topics / groupings / challenging / ability to do well / benefit to your goals / relevant to your life?)

13. How did you feel when you were using English in tasks with your partner(s)?
(Prompt: Are you timid / confident ...etc? Why?)
14. How confident were you about your ability to do well on these tasks?
(Prompts: Very confident / somewhat confident / not very confident / not at all confident)
15. What problems, if any, did you have and what did you do?
(Prompts: Get involved actively / passively? Withdraw from the tasks?)
16. If you stopped working on a task, what was the main reason? (Prompts: time / ability / confidence / comprehension? The assistance / praise / criticism from fellow students / the teacher...)
17. Which was your most favourite task in the TBL programme? Why?
18. Which was your least favourite task in the TBL programme? Why?
19. Did the TBL programme satisfy your initial expectation of English learning?

Appendix 12

Participant Information Sheet

The aims of the project:

The primary aim of the study is to inquire into the relationship of beliefs about English learning, motivation and task-based learning. It intends to provide evidence that, through tasks (or task-based approach), learners' beliefs and attitudes towards English learning may be changed and therefore their motivation in English learning will be affected. This study focuses on these questions:

1. What are Chinese undergraduate learners' beliefs about English language learning pre- and post- a task-based learning programme?
2. How is the significance of the changes of their beliefs relevant to learners' motivation in learning English?

What the participants are required to do:

I would like to ask you to help me by participating in the research. Your opinions will help me understand better about learners' beliefs about and motivation in English learning. These findings will provide a clue whether or not a task-based learning approach affects learners' beliefs and their motivation in English language learning.

❖ At the beginning of the programme

You are given two questionnaires on EFL motivation and on learner beliefs about English learning. Please spend about 15 minutes finishing them by following the instructions.

❖ During the programme

Each week, you are required to keep a record of your high and low points of motivation on a motivation graph and write down your opinions about each week's tasks in a diary. Keeping the record on a motivation graph only takes you 2 minutes. As for writing the weekly diary, please spend about 20 minutes reflecting on what you have done in the class and then write down your opinions by following the prompts.

❖ At the end of the programme

You are given the same questionnaires on EFL motivation and on learner beliefs about English learning and a follow-up interview. Please spend about 15 minutes answering all the items in the questionnaires. The interview will be arranged one week after the questionnaires. It will be audiotaped and will take you about 30 minutes. Please feel free to express your opinions about the programme and the tasks you have completed.

Your participation in the research is very important. On one hand, knowing the change of your learning motivation during the programme and your opinions on tasks is significant. It will be very helpful for me to improve the programme and my English teaching. On the other hand, this research will be helpful for you. Your awareness of your beliefs about English learning and your learning motivation may be raised by the questionnaires, the motivation graph and diaries

during the process. It will be helpful for you to recognise your learning preferences and therefore find the best way to develop your English learning.

All the information will be confidential and anonymously used in my research. Although you are required to write down your name on the questionnaires, the motivation graph and the diaries, you will not be identified and your personal results will remain confidential when the research is published. The reason why you are required to write down your name is to help with the organisation of information and kept in a folder with your name on it. Your folder will be kept in a locked cabinet in my office. It will only be used for the research and be kept until the research has been completed.

You may voluntarily decide whether or not to participate in the research. If you want to withdraw at any time, you will not be treated with prejudice or suffer from any negative consequences. If you want to participate in the research, I sincerely appreciate your cooperation and consideration.

For further information, please contact the researcher:

Ines Lau
(853) 88972158
mllau@must.edu.mo

For any complaint, please contact the research ethics coordinator:

Dr. Andrew Hobson
School of Education
University of Nottingham
(44) 01159514417
Andrew.hobson@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 13

Participant Consent Form

Project title: TBL in English Language Learning in Macau: Effects on Chinese Tertiary Learners' Beliefs and Motivations

Researcher's name: Ines Lau

Supervisor's name: Barbara Sinclair

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and the purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or any time in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I will be audiotaped during the interview.
- I understand that the data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office and it will only be used for the research purpose and be kept until the research has been completed.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed: _____

Print name: _____ **Date:** _____

Contact details

Researcher: mllau@must.edu.mo

Supervisor: barbara.sinclair@nottingham.ac.uk

School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator:
andrew.hobson@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 14

An overview of the task-based EFL programme outline

Week	Date	Topic	Task types
1	23/01/2007	Introduction to the programme	
2	30/01/2007	Education & Learning (I)	Listing; ordering and sorting; comparing
3	06/02/2007	Education & Learning (II)	Listing; problem-solving
4	27/02/2007	Love & Marriage	Ordering and sorting; comparing; sharing personal experiences
5	06/03/2007	Jobs (I)	Ordering and sorting; comparing
6	13/03/2007	Jobs (II)	Ordering and sorting; sharing personal experiences
7	20/03/2007	Jobs (III)	Creative task
8	27/03/2007	<i>Mid-term Exam</i>	
9	03/04/2007	Food and Health (I)	Ordering and sorting; problem-solving
10	10/04/2007	Food and Health (II)	Creative task
11	17/04/2007	Travel (I)	Ordering and ranking; sharing personal experiences
12	24/04/2007	Travel (II)	Creative task
13	01/05/2007	<i>Labour Day Holiday</i>	
14	08/05/2007	Travel (III)	Creative task
15	15/05/2007	<i>Final Exam</i>	

Appendix 15

The comparison of changes between quantitative data and qualitative data (including while- programme and post- programme data)

	Quan.	Qual.	
		While-programme	Post-programme
Self-concept beliefs:			
(1) They became more confident in themselves in English learning.	✓	✓	✓
(2) They tended to believe more that they possessed a potential for achievement in English learning.	✓	✓	✓
(3) They became more confident in communicating with others in English.	✓	✓	✓
Motivation in English learning:			
(4) Motivation for learning English was generally increased.	✓	✓	✓
(5) They tended to agree more that the process of learning English was fun and interesting.	✓	✓	✓
(6) They tended to set their own goals for English learning.	✓	✓	✓
(7) They tended to agree more that they learnt English in order to add to their social status.	✓	x	x
(8) They seemed to agree less that they would continue learning English out of the class.	✓	x	x
Foreign language awareness:			
(9) Speaking and listening were both believed more to be important skills to achieve in English learning.	✓	✓	✓
(10) Expressing themselves clearly by translating from their native language (i.e., Chinese) to the target language (i.e., English) was more important than before.	✓	✓	✓
(11) Vocabulary was regarded as more important in English learning than before.	✓	✓	✓
(12) Pronunciation was considered to be less important for speaking English than before.	✓	✓	✓
The difficulty of English learning:			
(13) They believed more that English was a difficult language.	✓	✓	✓

The nature of English learning: (14) They believed less that it was necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English.	✓	✓	✓
Other changes (emerged from qualitative data): (15) They tended to have a stronger belief that learning English was for the purpose of communication.	-	✓	✓
(16) They were motivated because the tasks were relevant to them.	-	✓	✓
(17) They were motivated because of the collaborative nature of task-based learning.	-	✓	✓