Motivators That Do Not Motivate: The Case of Chinese EFL Learners and the Influence of Culture on Motivation

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> It is a capital mistake to theorize in advance of the facts.
> Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Adventure of the Second Stain*
> (1930, p. 657)

Language learning motivation plays an important role in both research and teaching, yet language learners are still largely understood in terms of North American and European cultural values. This research explored language learning motivation constructs in a Chinese cultural setting, where large numbers of students are required to study English. In Taiwan, 567 language learners responded to a survey concerning motivation orientation, expectancy, and self-evaluated skill. Factor analysis and structural equation modeling were used to explore potential relationships within the framework of the process model. Expectancy was found to be an intervening construct between motivation orientations and self-evaluated skill. The strongest link to expectancy was the required motivation, with the integrative motivation playing no significant role. The context of these findings is discussed in relation to Chinese cultural and educational history and a proposed motivator—the *Chinese Imperative*. Implications for teaching practice are explained, including the need to reconsider motivation constructs within non-Western cultural settings.

Language learning theory has generally accepted the axiom that language learners with higher levels of motivation will be higher achievers. Finding what constitutes motivation for language learners in various cultural settings, however, remains an important task. Motivation research often centers on cultural contexts that are not very distant from North American and European values. When outside of this domain, researchers commonly employ sample frames that center on students learning English as a second language. Although such convenience samples may accurately describe motivations of the English language students under study, the vast majority of English teachers across the globe are teaching students with no intention of leaving home to enter an English-speaking environment. Concurrently, the perceived role of English in international economic success has led national governments to require English courses at all levels of education. The official Japanese government goal for English education (Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology, 2002) is indistinguishable from that of many other Asian governments:

> With the progress of globalization in the economy and in society, it is essential that our children acquire communication skills in English, which has become a common international language, in order for living in the 21st century. This has become an extremely important issue both in terms of the future of our children and the further development of Japan as a nation. (¶1)

Exacerbating this issue is the fact that settings where English is a foreign language (EFL) often present little or no opportunity to use English outside of the classroom. Even when the environment's broadcast and print media use English, people have very little incentive to access such input. This is certainly the case of native Chinese speakers in Taiwan, where children typically end the school day only to enter cram schools, returning home at night to complete hours of homework. As governments race to prepare children for their future roles in the global economy, subsidiaries of global firms efficiently supply global media in localized forms. Across the Greater China region, residents can read Harry Potter books or *Scientific American,* watch the Discovery or Disney channels, and follow NBA stars or Hollywood idols—all in Chinese. Outside of school, young people may participate in global culture without English.

Language teachers in Asia often face large numbers of students. In 2001, the average university freshman classes in Taiwan included 53 students with 3 hours of English class required per week (Republic of China Ministry of Education, 2002). Such a context is quite different from that typically found in language learning motivation research (Chen, 2002). Teachers in Asia may attempt to apply motivation research

results from the West, but they risk frustration if underlying assumptions do not align with local reality. A more productive approach is to understand specific motivations of students in their local environments (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). This study begins that understanding within the context of required English in the Chinese cultural setting by encouraging a localized exploration that can benefit millions of EFL students—the very population that government language requirements are designed to help.

This article reviews observations of integrative and instrumental EFL language learning motivation orientations and contextualizes the recently documented required motivation in the Chinese EFL setting, then it presents the research questions. It next presents the results of an exploratory study, using a wide area survey and structural equation modeling methodology. The article concludes with a discussion of how Chinese culture plays a role in EFL language learning motivation, and how this example may be relevant to other EFL instructional settings, research, and training.

MOTIVATION ORIENTATIONS IN EFL

Acquisition theories and teaching methodologies currently employed in EFL settings are derived mainly from second language research in North America, Britain, and Australia (Holliday, 1994a, 1994b; Kachru, 1994; Prabhu, 1987; Sridhar, 1994). Adapting and developing theory outside this domain, however, can benefit EFL efforts as well as enrich language motivation constructs (Dörnyei, 1990; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; Liu, 1998; Ramage, 1986). Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) process model of second language motivation synthesizes previous research findings concerning motivational influences. The process model consists of three phases: *preactional phase* (choice motivation that precedes any action), *actional phase* (executive motivation that influences the level of language effort), and *postactional phase* (critical retrospection after action is completed). Each phase is itself influenced by corresponding motivation orientations. We used this framework for the current exploratory research emphasizing three specific motivation orientations, which are discussed in the next two sections.

Integrative and Instrumental Orientations

Language learning motivation research results have tended to support the paramount importance of integrative motivation, first described by Gardner and Lambert (1972) and more recently by Shaaban and Ghaith

(2000). *Integrative motivation* is effective because language skills are perceived as integral to participation in the social groups that use the target language. Noels, Pelletier, Clément, and Vallerand (2000) recognize the preeminent importance previously granted to the integrative motivation orientation but specify that this may be the case only in specific sociocultural contexts. Integrative motivation is often contrasted with the more externally influenced instrumental motivation.

Instrumental motivation (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991) means studying a language to gain something, such as money or a better job, both of which can be powerful instrumental motivators (Dörnyei, 1990; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; Grosse, Tuman, & Critz, 1998). Dörnyei (1998) also found instrumental or pragmatic dimensions to be important constituents of motivation, which he classified as extrinsic. Noels et al. (2000) replaced the generalized label *extrinsic* with a scale from the least self-determined form (*external regulation*) to the most advanced self-determined form (*integrated regulation*), showing that external influences can be internalized to some degree. Instrumental motivation can effectively motivate language learners, especially when they value the return on investment. Wen (1997) found that for learners of Chinese as a foreign language, intrinsic- as well as extrinsic-oriented motivations could lead to success. Elaborating the constituents of extrinsic motivation, as in the research of Deci and Ryan (1985), Warden and Lin (2000) described what they labeled *required motivation*. In that study, EFL students in Taiwan appeared to be motivated by requirements rather than either an interest in integration or any clear instrumental yield. In the same Chinese cultural setting, Warden (2000) found EFL writing students responded better to objective error correction than to more process-oriented instructional approaches. Social expectations emphasizing standardized requirements and de-emphasizing the individual, the norm in Chinese culture, raise the likelihood that requirements are potentially motivating in some circumstances.

The Case for a Required Orientation in Taiwan

Obtaining requirements for the sake of group expectations may be just as motivating as autonomous achievement for the sake of an individual (Markus & Kitayama, 1994). The dichotomy *individualism versus collectivism* (Bond & Smith, 1996; Kağıtçıbaşı & Berry, 1989) suggests that motivators may have dissimilar, even contradictory, effects in disparate cultural settings. Triandis (1995) has pointed out that individualist cultures focus on achieving personal goals for self-realization, whereas collectivist cultures focus on achieving goals that have some collective benefit. Such a contrast was exhibited between Chinese

and U.S. cultures when Triandis, Chen, and Chan (1998) found that Hong Kong respondents (Chinese culture) showed higher collectivism than respondents from all other nationalities measured, including the United States, Australia, The Netherlands, Germany, Japan, Greece, and Korea. One must be cautious, however, not to apply these labels too broadly.

Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier (2002) raised questions concerning generalizations yet did find a strong contrast between Chinese and U.S. levels of collectivism (COL) and individualism (IND): "Americans are higher in IND and lower in COL than are Chinese people in PR China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, and effects for these comparisons with Chinese are large" (p. 23). Examining historical trends in Chinese education reveals how heavily requirements have weighed on motivation.

The Confucian meritocracy of Ming-Ch'ing period China (1368–1911 AD) implemented social mobility through success on the civil service examinations (Woodside & Elman, 1994). Individual success in the exams reflected positively not on individuals, but on families and clans. Families used their resources to prepare children for the exams, who were expected to show interest and enthusiasm in mastering classics and ancient texts (the topics of the exams), all the while being reminded that they "should work hard in school in order one day to glorify the clan" (Leung, 1994, p. 390). Thus, the Confucian relationship was upheld in such a way that studying for the exams was part and parcel of family success. This emphasis has not diminished over time, as witnessed by the fact that the modern Republic of China government has five branches, of which one is solely responsible for civil service exams: the Examination Yuan. These historical and cultural trends support the potential for a required motivation that is examined in this article.

Actional Phase Moderating Variable

Motivation orientations in the preactional phase set the stage for action. If the motivations are not strong enough, action may never take place, whereas increased levels of motivation will increase the probability of action. This action is also related to feelings about previous and future successes, often labeled *expectancy*. Shaaban and Ghaith (2000), for example, found that expectancy plays a positive role among EFL students by building confidence. Dörnyei (2001, p. 96) characterizes actual language effort as crossing over the Rubicon of action, followed by the resulting postactional phase in which self-evaluation results in judgment of progress and achievement. Although actual language use clearly has implications for resulting skill attainment, whether this use in the EFL setting is a moderating or mediating variable is not well

established. This issue is important because the typical Asian EFL setting lacks environmental opportunities for actual target language use. If preactional motivations can directly influence skill attainment (as a co-moderating variable), then teachers may value those motivations without much concern over negative environmental factors. Conversely, if motivation is mediated by actually using the target language, then EFL skill may be difficult to attain through any localized classroom emphasis on motivators. This study attempted to quantify these relationships.

Research Questions

Two research questions were proposed. The first question examined the relative strength and the direction (positive or negative) of the motivation orientations' effect on self-evaluated skill, and the second tested the mediating or moderating position of actual language use and success, here labeled *expectancy*.

1. Which motivation orientation will have the strongest relationship to self-evaluated skill for Taiwan respondents?
2. Do perceived levels of past and future expectancy mediate the relationship between motivation orientations and self-evaluated skill for Taiwan respondents?

Overall, the research questions can be expressed in a conceptual model based on the process model, with the three motivation orientations combining in a relationship with expectancy and then with self-evaluation of skill (see Figure 1). Temporal aspects of the model, implied by the phases, were not tested directly. Time was taken into consideration by framing all the motivation questions in relation to the past, and the

FIGURE 1.
Research Framework
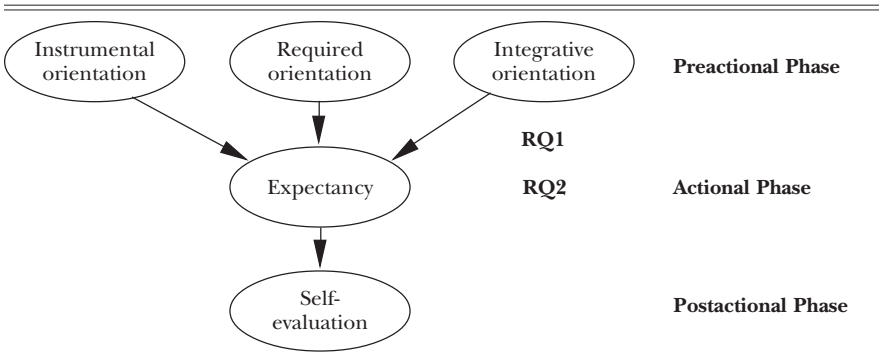
language use and success of expectancy were questioned relevant to past, present, and future. Direct relationships between preactional and postactional phases were also examined to test the moderating versus mediating status of the actional phase.

METHOD

Dörnyei (2001) pointed out the importance, and difficulty, of designing motivation surveys that have psychometric properties aligned with the population under study. Thus, the Warden and Lin (2000) survey instrument was adapted for the current study because it included motivation orientation, language use, and skill, and because it had been tested in a Chinese cultural setting (see Appendix A). Each survey question comprised five specific language skill dimensions, including writing, reading, listening, speaking, and grammar, each of which was rated 1–7 on a Likert scale. Semantic anchors differed relevant to the model phase being questioned: Preactional phase questions were anchored by *Not at all important* (1) to *Very important* (7); actional phase questions were anchored by *None at all* (1) to *Very much effort* (7); and postactional phase questions were anchored by *Far below average* (1) to *Far above average* (7). An interactive computer-assisted survey instrument, deployed over the Web, asked respondents to answer the survey questions that appeared one at a time in a randomized order.

Preactional Phase Variables

Instrumental questions centered on language benefits accruing to the respondent's employment, including finding a better job, receiving a raise, changing jobs, and obtaining higher job security, all highly similar to instrumental questions in the Dörnyei (1990) study. Survey questions surrounding integration have often centered on making friends with native speakers (Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994), which is a highly unlikely condition in Taiwan because of the low concentration of native English speakers. With this in mind, questions allowed respondents to indicate the importance of English when interacting with others, as in the case of social connections and gaining social prestige (drawn directly from Warden & Lin, 2000), which could include native or nonnative English speakers. Other questions included overseas travel and understanding foreign media in the form of movies, books, and magazines (Clément et al., 1994), all of which exhibit an interest in the target culture and also require some language skill. Questions concerning requirements were mostly modeled directly on Warden and Lin's (2000)

items and included passing entrance exams and passing job exams, both of which are similar to passing standardized language exams in Dörnyei's (1990) study. Passing a required and an elective class deal directly with school requirements, which any junior high school graduate has faced, but also apply to requirements in training-oriented classes outside of school education (a common phenomenon in Taiwan).

Actional Phase Variables

Language use was measured by two questions drawn from Dörnyei (2001), Dörnyei, Nyilasi, and Clément (1996), and Warden and Lin (2000), asking about effort made in language study and the level of success in that effort. These two questions were asked within three temporal frames—past, present, and future—to capture a fuller range of action, perceived progress, and success. Warden and Lin found that respondents in Taiwan differentiated their past and present efforts from those expected in the future, but Ushioda (1998) found that motivational perspectives can change over time; thus, the temporal element deserves further consideration.

Postactional Phase Variables

Self-evaluation was measured with four questions, the first one asking the respondent to rate his or her own ability, similar to Clément et al.'s (1994) questions on satisfaction with English proficiency. In an attempt to capture all the possible contexts of English use, three questions asked respondents to rate their skill relative to classmates (in Taiwan the word *classmates* has relevant meaning long after graduation), friends, and colleagues.

Face validity of all questions was confirmed through a pretest with 50 university students and 50 nonstudents. Based on the interview data, we adjusted and adapted the survey for online use to obtain the widest possible sample. Using a commercial e-mail database, we solicited 100 more respondents to enter the Web site and complete the survey. We conducted follow-up interviews by phone and adjusted the instrument based on feedback. Internal reliability was checked through split-half and coefficient α tests, with reliability consistently over .90. The final survey was posted on a university research server, and respondents were drawn to the Web site through advertisements placed on popular Web portal sites in Taiwan during July 2002.

Participants

Portal space was rented from two local Internet service providers to increase demographic diversity among respondents. (According to FIND, 2001, Internet home penetration at the time was 35%, with high-speed DSL connections common.) A banner advertising the survey was placed on each portal Web page that users could click through and open a browser window to the survey Web site. The banner drew 648 respondents who entered the survey Web site. Of those who entered, 567 completed the survey with valid data, a completion rate of 88% (a response rate is not reportable because respondents were self-selected). Before respondents could view any questions, they encountered a pop-up window with instructions and had to respond positively, which acted as informed consent for participation (Fischman, 2000). Only one person per household was invited to participate, and no repeats were allowed (any computer entering the survey more than once would receive a pop-up window informing the user of this limitation). After completion, demographic information was collected and a choice of restaurant gift certificates was presented from which the respondent could choose one (valued at approximately US$1.50).

Respondents' average age was 25 (SD = 6.10). The most common occupation was student (42%), with office work being the next largest job category (25%). Most respondents had a college degree (64%), with 7% indicating a graduate degree. Only 5% of the sample had majored in English specifically and another 1.80% had majored in another language; the remaining respondents had majored in management (26%), engineering and other science areas (48%), and humanities (16%). The sample compared well with government statistics on Internet usage in Taiwan at the time (FIND, 2001) as well as generally matching government reported demographics of 15–40 year olds (the age range of respondents). Comparison of education levels, gender, marital status, and income all showed a minimum of self-selection bias in the sample (Republic of China Ministry of the Interior, 2004; Research Information Service, 2004). Survey responses and demographic variables were analyzed through an unbalanced general-linear-model multivariate analysis (correcting for the unequal cell size) with no significant relationships found in any of the constructs under study, including whether currently a student or not, gender, education, age, or income. This finding supported the stability of the data and the absence of any biasing across this demographically wide sample.

Analyses

To test direct and indirect relationships of the proposed constructs, the approach of structural equation modeling (SEM) was adopted. Simple correlation analysis results, often used in motivation studies, can be distorted by numerous intervening variables because only two variables are measured at a time (Hatch & Lazaraton, 1991). SEM examines any number of relationships simultaneously, thus allowing a variable to be dependent in relation to some variables and independent in relation to others (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998; Maruyama, 1998). Before model estimation, survey results were examined for alignment with the basic assumptions of the proposed model through reliability analysis followed by exploratory factor analysis. Covariance matrices and correlation coefficients were used next to examine possible model constructs for testing. Relationships among the three phases of the model were then estimated using Amos 5.0's (Assessment Systems, 2004) specification search, where numerous candidate models are compared, resulting in a model best representing the data. Results from this approach can be used in future research designs to confirm relationships among the model's variables and to point to areas of further research. Candidate models included actional phase variables in moderating and mediating roles to test the second research question. The model best fitting the data was then chosen, and the first research question was answered by quantifying the role of each variable.

RESULTS

Examination of subscales exhibited good internal reliability, with the preactional phase scale $\alpha = .97$, the actional phase scale $\alpha = .93$, and the postactional phase scale $\alpha = .93$. Individual survey question results are shown in Appendix B, including means, standard deviations, and item-to-total correlations. Factor analysis was employed next to test the nomological validity of the survey responses in fitting the theorized process model.

All statistical analyses were completed using SPSS (2002). Overall, factor analysis, employing orthogonal VARIMAX rotation, resulted in 75.38% of variance explained. Three factors had eigenvalues of at least 1 (see Table 1), confirming that the survey responses fell into the predicted three model phases.

Each of the theorized phases was further analyzed for convergent validity with factor analysis to confirm which questions loaded on the theorized constructs (latent variables). The preactional phase subscale

TABLE 1

Overall Factor Analysis Results

	Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Preactional phase	Pass job exam	.90		
	Change jobs easily	.88		
	Pass entrance exam	.87		
	Understand movies, books, magazines	.87		
	Travel overseas	.87		
	Higher job security	.89		
	Obtain raise	.84		
	Pass required class	.84		
	Gain social prestige	.83		
	Pass elective class	.81		
	Make social connections	.78		
	Get higher paying job	.67		
Actional phase	Future effort		.82	
	Present effort		.81	
	Future success		.76	
	Present success		.65	
	Previous effort		.59	
	Previous success		.48	
Post-actional phase	Compare skill to friends			.91
	Compare skill to colleagues			.91
	Compare skill to classmates			.88
	Rate present skill			.82

resulted in three factors, accounting for 82.63% of variance among that set of items (see Table 2). Factor loadings confirmed the survey instrument's accurate assessment of the three types of motivation: integrative, instrumental, and required.

The actional phase subscale resulted in two factors, explaining 85.68% of the variance among that set of items (see Table 3). As in Warden and Lin's (2000) study, results split clearly between the past and future. In the current study, attitudes toward current use and success did not load clearly and were dropped from further analysis. Rather than a simple single attitude toward success and use, respondents clearly had different perspectives about their past and future English use. This result was incorporated into the model by splitting the actional phase construct into past and future variables and hints at the possibility of a split between past school training and future use in the job market, although no difference was found between the students and nonstudents in the sample. The postactional phase subscale resulted in only one factor, including all four survey questions concerning self-evaluated skill, explaining 83.8% of the variance among that set of items.

Preliminary analysis of the covariance matrix showed high covariances

TABLE 2

Preactional Phase Scale Factor Analysis Results

	Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Integration orientation	Gain social prestige	.76		
	Make social connections	.75		
	Travel overseas	.75		
	Understand movies, books, magazines	.74		
Instrumental orientation	Higher job security		.60	
	Get higher paying job		.83	
	Obtain raise		.74	
	Change jobs easily		.71	
Required orientation	Pass elective class			.82
	Pass required class			.80
	Pass entrance exam			.61
	Pass job exam			.56

among the measured variables, with the exception of the covariance between the preactional phase and postactional phase variables. Examination of Pearson correlation coefficients (see Appendix C) confirmed that the preactional phase did not correlate highly with postactional phase variables, but that actional phase variables did correlate highly with postactional phase variables (see Appendix D). This result supports the possible mediating effect of the actional phase and confirms that high levels of motivation may not translate directly to skill achievement. A more detailed understanding of exactly which motivation orientations relate to the actional phase required the use of SEM analysis, undertaken next.

Examination of competing models revealed that integrative motivation had no significant relationship with either actional or postactional variables. In fact, any relationship between the remaining preactional and postactional phases was significant only when mediated by actional phase variables. The best-fitting model did not include the integrative construct, and the instrumental motivation orientation was related only

TABLE 3

Actional Phase Scale Factor Analysis Results

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
Previous success	.92	
Previous effort	.82	
Present success	.75	.52
Future effort		.92
Future success		.82
Present effort	.55	.72

to expectancy (see Figure 2). Analysis of the maximal SEM model resulted in a Bentler-Bonett normed fit index value of .95, a comparative fit index (CFI) value of .96, and a root mean square of approximation (RMSEA) value of .07 (criteria suggested by Hu & Bentler, 1999, specify an excellent model fit when CFI $\geq$ .95 and RMSEA $\leq$ .06 and an adequate model fit when CFI $\geq$ .90 and RMSEA $\leq$ .08). The goodness-of-fit index (GFI) value was .92, with a relatively high chi-square value ($\chi^2 =$ 372.59, 98 *df, p* < .001), which was inflated by the sample size, thereby making a statistically significant departure from the model more likely. In Figure 2, the numbers on straight lines represent standardized estimates (similar to regression coefficients) and the relationship between the constructs, and the numbers on curved lines represent covariances. Statistically significant estimates ($p < .05$) are indicated with an asterisk, and constructs not included in the final model are shown with dashed lines.

The resulting model exhibits the mediating role of actional phase variables. Motivation orientations displayed quite different relationships with the actional constructs. As mentioned, integrative motivation orientation showed no significant relationship with either past or future

FIGURE 2
Structural Equation Model With Parameter Estimates
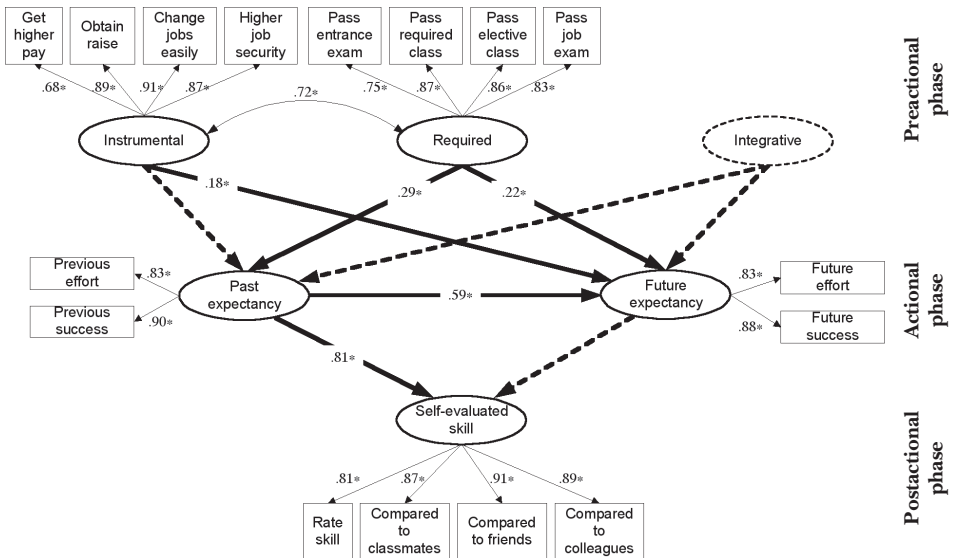
Note. * $p < .01$. Numbers are standardized estimates. Dotted lines indicate insignificant constructs and relationships eliminated from final model. Fit statistics: $\chi^2 = 372.59$, df = 98, $p < .01$; GFI = .92, AGFI = .89, NFI = .95, RFI = .94, IFI = .96, CFI = .96, PRATIO = .82, PNFI = .77, PCFI = .79, RMSEA = .07. Coefficients of Determination: Past expectancy = .09, Future expectancy = .61, Skill = .65.

actional constructs. Instrumental orientation did exhibit a significant positive relationship with the future actional variable (.18), and required motivation was significantly related to both past and future constructs (.29 and .22). Only the previous effort variable showed a strong relationship with current self-evaluated skill levels (.81) because future effort and success are still just predictions, with no current effect. However, anticipated effort and success are strongly related to past effort and success, as indicated by a significant relationship between the two temporal constructs (.59).

DISCUSSION

Results show that within the EFL context in the current Chinese cultural environment, integration may not be a significant factor in motivating language learning effort. As respondents differentiate past and future efforts and successes, requirements apparently have an important role to play. Norton's (Norton Peirce, 1997; Norton, 2000) concept of *investment* in language learning is particularly relevant to both of these findings. Language learners need to be understood within complex and inequitable social structures (Norton & Toohey, 2001) because learners perceive their efforts within the context of symbolic and material resources that can be obtained in return for their investment. A dearth of English input in this EFL environment makes past effort and success difficult, but it does not reduce environmental messages about the importance of English. As in the case of a day trader in stocks, an optimistic bias leads to high future expectations, regardless of past results. In this way, the future is perceived separately from the past and is assumed to yield an eventual payoff from investments. These returns on investments are expected to accrue cultural capital. The required motivation plays a strong role in the return on investment within the context of Chinese culture, both previously and in an expected future, making this motivation a potential educational tool. As Norton (1997) points out, rather than asking what motivates a learner, it may be more relevant to ask what is the learner's investment in the target language. In the case we are investigating, that means we need to contextualize English requirements within the Chinese social and educational structures, examined next, to confirm external validity and gauge the relevancy of these findings.

By scoring high on an exam, a person in China will immediately be lauded for his or her capabilities much as a sports icon is in the United States. Chinese bookstore shelves are crowded with bestsellers on test taking, often written by authors who have made their mark by setting some kind of record on one exam or another. A typical example is Ja-

Shin Pao (also known as English Wizard Girl), who scored 660 on the TOEFL exam and 780 on the GMAT (perfect scores are 677 and 800, respectively).

With the highest 1995 TOEFL score in Taiwan, English Wizard Girl promptly wrote four books (all in Chinese) advising students of her magic, including an autobiography (*English Wizard Girl*) and a book about her mother (*English Wizard Girl's Mother's Teaching*). Building on her pop figure status, the English Wizard Girl hosted her own television program (*Magic ABC*) and produced an ever-growing series of colorful English study books with titles such as *All About Fate, All About Proverbs,* and *All About Family.* Ms. Pao's popularity is just the latest in a long line of such pop figures who convey the message to young people that if they excel in the traditional structures of Chinese society such as filial piety, respect for teachers, and excellence in examinations, they can obtain their dreams. Those dreams often include having a family with children who respect their parents, are good students, and score high on their exams. Such examples, easily found throughout Taiwan and China, raise the possibility that commonly used definitions of *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* actually reify Western cultural values.

Informed by individualism and collectivism pressures, the required motivation more specifically fits into the process model's preactional phase. However, its exact label is unclear; Dörnyei's (2001, p. 93) label of "expectations of family members and teachers" is not robust in describing the cultural centrality of this concept for Chinese learners. The required motivation within the Chinese setting is all this and more. Like Bond's *Confucian Dynamism* (The Chinese Culture Connection, 1987), we seek to describe a motivator that is valued by individuals in this culturally specific study and therefore would prefer to move away from the general labels of *collectivism* and even *requirement.* For this reason, we propose to label this motivator the *Chinese Imperative,* reflecting the emphasis on requirements that are internalized within the culturally specific context. Before examining this construct further, we explore some limitations of the current research.

Limitations of Current Research

The current research has tested the two main motivation orientations previously explored in the West and a motivation orientation examined by researchers in Taiwan. Our attempt to contextualize EFL learning within Chinese culture has led us to postulate a culturally specific motivator, yet we are far from having a complete picture. Our inclusion of Chinese historical trends in education must be balanced with an awareness that Chinese educational institutions have emerged from

elements including Buddhism, Taoism, Neo-Confucianism, and many others, ebbing, flowing, and mixing with sociopolitical conditions (Elman, 2000; Wilson, 1970). We can no more uncover actionable motivation orientations through studying Neo-Confucian curricula than we can by examining Harvard's curriculum during the 18th century. Describing behaviors that activate a motivator requires local observation. In this study, we employed the existing measure of requirement, but found it inadequate to fully capture the mechanisms at work.

Not examined here is the influence of government policy. This potential motivator could be related to levels of patriotism, but it is more likely played out as the government sets the direction of the nation, acting as a booster in public forums, increasing the general awareness and acceptance of English. Another interesting possible motivator is what we came to see as a reverse integrative motivation related to feelings of nationalism. Taiwan's movement toward political independence includes a growing emphasis on local languages—mostly the Chinese dialect of Taiwanese. Although Taiwanese is widely used at home, Mandarin Chinese is still the basis for most education and all government exams, leading to accusations of elitism. In this context, young people may be interested in avoiding English because it decreases their credentials as localized citizens or at least distracts from time used to master local languages. More study is required to understand how current trends combine with existing motivators, especially within the context of the Chinese Imperative.

Implications for Teaching in Chinese Cultural Contexts

With more than three million college freshmen studying required English courses in China, nearly twice the number of freshman students in the United States,[1] it is important to understand their motivations. University TESL/TEFL departments in the West interested in attracting graduate students from Asia may need to examine the context in which their students will actually work when they return to Asia. An assumption that EFL students have the same motivations as teachers in training who are studying in the United States or the United Kingdom, as this study has shown, is apt to be off the mark, as is any assumption that the components of motivation are universal. On returning to Asia, these newly minted English teachers face classes of students awaiting assign-

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[1] In the year 2000, 3,254,851 freshmen in the People's Republic of China (China Education and Research Network, 2000) compared to 1,745,000 freshmen in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001).

ments that can fit within the context of the Chinese Imperative, surrounded by the institutional structure expecting product and a society emphasizing and even praising exam results.

From this practical perspective, we can now explore issues raised when emphasizing the Chinese Imperative motivator. The first issue is that teaching centers on exam preparation because it is the exams (high school, university, and civil) on which parents hope their children will excel. This emphasis on exams is an often heard criticism in Taiwan, yet the complaint heard by school administrators, from parents, more often concerns the lack of exam orientation and achievement. Private cram schools widely attended throughout Greater China, by young and old students alike, are strongly exam oriented. Even within the context of so-called educational reforms (de-emphasizing exams and student rankings), parents seek out schools where test results are good and the attending students enter believing that the school will enable them to accomplish what is socially expected of them—meeting their filial obligations.

The exam emphasis naturally leads to a reliance on memorization. Throughout Greater China, we observe numerous accepted language learning strategies based entirely on memorization. By sixth grade, students in Taiwan are expected to have mastered more than 2,000 Chinese characters and by ninth grade, more than 4,000. Four-word Chinese idioms (*cheng yu*) are commonly used to help students memorize characters, while also teaching numerous ancient proverbs and cultural values. This strategy is happily embraced by English learners. Books of English idioms are always big sellers, and many well-known and successful figures promote the ever popular memorize-a-dictionary strategy. An up-to-date approach to memorizing English phrases and idioms is a-phrase-a-day cellular phone text messaging service, increasingly popular in Taiwan. With memorization working so well for Chinese language acquisition, it is difficult for students, parents, or administrators to even question why the same strategy cannot work equally well for English. In fact, as English Wizard Girl showed, memorization approaches can lead to success on the very language measurement instruments created and employed in English speaking countries (i.e., TOEFL).

Placing learning strategies within the relevant cultural context does not answer the most fundamental question EFL teachers face: Does it work? Specifically, does tapping into the Chinese Imperative motivator result in students being able to produce meaningful English? If this question inquires into the ability of a person to interact socially with a native English speaker, then we must return to the central finding, and the beginning of this discussion, where respondents did not value such behavior highly. With very few native English speakers to interact with, this result may actually meet current local needs. Previous research into writing instruction in Taiwan has shown the effectiveness of a product

orientation and the mismatch when false assumptions are made about motivations (Chen, 1997; Warden, 2000; Yao & Warden, 1996).

In Taiwan, a number of universities have recently implemented all-English curricula, and the Ministry of Education has mandated English classes to begin at the elementary school level rather than junior high. It is interesting that TOEFL or other standardized exam scores are used as a basis for admission to such universities, while elementary school classes emphasize translation and memorization. If and when exams in Taiwan measure spoken communication and social interaction, we have confidence that the training required will develop quickly, based on the Chinese Imperative motivator, where success on such an exam will bring socially valued positive results.

Considering a researcher's own subjective perspective and internalized cultural values, we may wonder how the unique motivators in different cultures are to be uncovered. The answer lies in a localized, scientific, research-based approach that is open to new potential motivators while eliminating those without measurable validity—no matter how valid in other cultural settings. As Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's fictional character, Sherlock Holmes, was fond of saying when solving a mystery: "Eliminate all other factors, and the one which remains must be the truth" (Doyle, 1930, p. 315).

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Appendix A

Survey Form Example (Translated From Chinese)

Each question of the survey followed by the following sub topics:

• English writing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• English reading	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• English listening	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• English speaking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• English grammar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(Note. Semantic anchors differed by section: Motivation Section *Not at all important* to *Very important* Expectancy Section *None at all* to *Very much effort* Skill Section *Far below average* to *Far above average*)

I Preactional Phase

Instrumental

One part of this study is your opportunity to gain monetary benefit from your English skill. These questions concern only your own opinion about yourself.

1. To what extent do you think you need these skills to help you obtain a higher paying job?

2. To what extent do you think you need these skills to help you obtain a raise?

3. To what extent do you think you need these skills to help you change jobs more easily?

4. To what extent do you think you need these skills to help you have higher job security?

Requirement/Qualification

One part of this study is your opportunity to satisfy requirements that require your English skill. These questions concern only your own opinion about yourself.

5. To what extent do you think you need these skills to help you pass an exam for further study at a university?

6. To what extent do you think you need these skills to help you pass a required class?

7. To what extent do you think you need these skills to help you pass an elective class?

8. To what extent do you think you need these skills to help you pass an exam for a job position?

Integration

One part of this study is your opportunity to gain cultural integration from your English skill. These questions concern only your own opinion about yourself.

9. To what extent do you think you need these skills to help you travel overseas?

10. To what extent do you think you need these skills to help you make social contacts?

11. To what extent do you think you need these skills to help you gain social prestige?

12. To what extent do you think you need these skills to help you understand foreign movies, books and magazines?

II Actional Phase

One part of this study is your expectation and experience of studying English. These questions concern only your own opinion about yourself.

13. How much effort did you previously make to improve these skills (in the past)?

14. How much effort do you presently make to improve these skills (present)?

15. How much effort do you need to make to improve these skills in the future (future)?

16. How successful were you previously at improving these skills (in the past)?

17. How successful are you now at improving these skills (present)?

18. How successful will you be at improving these skills in the future (future)?

III Postactional Phase

One part of this study is your actual English skill levels. These questions concern only your own opinion about yourself.

19. How do you rate your present ability in these skills?

20. How do you rate your present ability in these skills compared to your classmates?

21. How do you rate your present ability in these skills compared to your friends?

22. How do you rate your present ability in these skills compared to your colleagues?

23. How do you rate your level of liking to use English compared to others you know?

Appendix B

TABLE B1

Descriptive Measures of Survey Items

	Item	Mean	SD	Item-total correlation
Preactional phase	Get higher paying job	4.42	1.79	.62
	Obtain raise	4.76	1.76	.79
	Change jobs easily	4.83	1.76	.80
	Higher job security	4.78	1.81	.79
	Pass entrance exam	6.08	1.52	.64
	Pass required class	5.39	1.74	.71
	Pass elective class	5.20	1.73	.72
	Pass job exam	5.42	1.73	.80
	Travel overseas	4.71	1.86	.75
	Make social connections	4.47	1.78	.75
	Gain social prestige	5.12	1.80	.76
	Understand movies, books, magazines	5.39	1.74	.77
Actional phase	Previous effort	3.88	1.81	.72
	Present effort	3.65	1.80	.80
	Future effort	4.31	1.85	.65
	Previous success	3.55	1.76	.70
	Present success	3.56	1.70	.80
	Future success	4.18	1.73	.75
Postactional phase	Rate present skill	3.17	1.64	.76
	Compare skill to classmates	3.64	1.64	.83
	Compare skill to friends	3.75	1.65	.86
	Compare skill to colleagues	3.64	1.68	.85

Note. Semantic anchors differed relevant to the model phase being questioned: Preactional phase questions were anchored by *Not at all important* (1) to *Very important* (7); actional phase questions were anchored by *None at all* (1) to *Very much effort* (7); postactional phase questions were anchored by *Far below average* (1) to *Far above average* (7).

Appendix C

TABLE C1
Correlations Between Preactional Phase and Postactional Phase Variables

	Get higher pay	Obtain raise	Change jobs easily	Higher job security	Pass entrance exam	Pass required class	Pass elective class	Pass job exam	Travel over-seas	Social connec-tions	Gain social prestige	Movies, books, magazines
Rate skill	>.13	.09	.08 (NS)	.14	.12	.16	.20	.12	.10	.21	.10	.12
Compared to classmates	.14	.14	.12	.15	.20	.19	.23	.17	.08	.18	.10	.20
Compared to friends	.17	.12	.09	.14	.17	.19	.23	.17	.07 (NS)	.18	.11	.17
Compared to colleagues	.14	.13	.10	.13	.13	.17	.20	.14	.03 (NS)	.16	.11	.12

Note. All Pearson correlation coefficients are significant ($p < .05$) except where noted by NS (nonsignificant).

Appendix D

TABLE D1

Correlations Between Actional Phase and Postactional Phase Variables

	Previously improve	Future improve	Previously successful	Future successful
Rate skill	.63	.72	.38	.47
Compared to classmates	.59	.64	.37	.45
Compared to friends	.55	.61	.37	.49
Compared to colleagues	.58	.64	.35	.46

Note. All Pearson correlation coefficients are significant ($p < .05$).