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**TEACHER AND PUPIL BELIEFS ABOUT BEGINNING TO LEARN CHINESE LANGUAGE
IN ENGLISH SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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DECLARATION

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree. The work presented (including data generated and data analysis) was also carried out by myself.

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Date: 16th June, 2015

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the beliefs of beginner learners of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) and also their teachers' beliefs, about the difficulties presented by Chinese learning and teaching, and how learners overcame the difficulties they encountered. The study compared beliefs of teachers and pupils who had different levels of experience in the context of English secondary schools. The relationship between beliefs and an individual's background and experience was also explored. The study was situated in a pragmatic paradigm, using a mixed method, including both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. 443 pupils and 42 teachers in over a dozen schools responded to a Likert-scale questionnaire. 68 pupils (34 individuals and 13 groups) and 13 teachers in seven schools shared their views in interviews.

Many interesting findings were revealed in this study. Surprisingly, pupils thought tones and characters were “tricky” to learn, but not impossible, whereas teachers thought pupils did not pay attention to tones and underestimated the difficulty of learning characters. Teachers tended to support communicative language teaching (CLT) orientations but showed somewhat inconsistent patterns between their beliefs about CLT and their teaching approaches. The learning of writing rules were concerns of teachers and pupils, indicating they believed there was some value in non-communicative learning orientation. Pupils also showed their enthusiasm for learning character, and overwhelmingly believed that, in order to make good progress in Chinese learning, they should put effort into learning characters.

Some of these findings relate to particular aspects of Chinese learning such as tones and characters.

However, other findings are unrelated to the language demands of Chinese and suggest that the practices of learning Chinese have a particular impact on the views of learners about who can learn Chinese and

what it takes to be successful. In addition, with regard to language teaching, first language (L1) and second language (L2) Chinese teachers pointed out that the issue of students behaviour is a universal phenomenon regardless of culture or country. These findings challenge the stereotypical expectations of L1 Chinese teachers and pupils' performance in English schools. I suggest that these beliefs may be empowering for language learners in an English context.

Keywords: beliefs, difficulty of learning, beginner learners, teachers

ABBREVIATIONS

CFL: Chinese as a Foreign Language

FL: Foreign Language

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

BC: British Council

EC: European Commission

Hanban: the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

CILT: the National Centre for Languages

BALLI: the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory

CfBT: the Centre for British Teachers

GR: Gwoyeu Romatzyh

STM: Short Term Memory

MFL: Modern Foreign Languages

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

ELT: English language teaching

CLTQ: Chinese Learning and Teaching Questionnaire

SSAT: the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust

IOE: Institute of Education

TCSL: Teaching Chinese as a Second Language

CI: Confidential Interval

EBacc: English Baccalaureate

LTA: Language Teaching Assistant

CPD: Continuing Professional Development

PCR: Practical Chinese Reader

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

This study was rooted in my beliefs and experience as a student and tutor of teaching Chinese as a foreign language (CFL), and also stemmed from my interest in research into different beliefs, during my MA study. I believe that Mandarin is not a difficult language and people who are interested in this language can learn it well, no matter how different Mandarin is from their native tongue. When I talked with my friends or students from western countries, most of them complained that learning Chinese was a daunting task which required memorisation and enormous amount of practice, particularly at the beginning stage. This in turn made them feel exhausted and hence they became less enthusiastic about further learning. As a part-time language tutor in my university back in China, finding an effective way for foreigners, especially for novice learners with an alphabetic first language, to study Chinese became my key concern. This idea had been haunting my mind for a long time and yet did not become a research topic until I studied my MA degree in China. I chose the topic of beliefs about corrective feedback for my MA thesis. Furthermore, when I began to study in the UK, I observed Chinese lessons in a secondary school and chatted with pupils who were excited about learning Chinese and were keen to master this language. However, compared to adult learners, these children were more likely to become frustrated when facing language challenges in the early stages of learning Chinese. Consequently, I wanted to focus my research on ways to help those learners who are beginning to learn Chinese, so that they make progress and are successful. I was surprised to find that there was little expertise in England regarding teaching Chinese and that each teacher was, more or less, “making up” the best way to teach beginning learners in schools.

1.2 Background

A recent report conducted for the British Council (BC) highlighted the UK's need for learning of foreign languages (FL) in consideration of economic, cultural, social and international influence in the world. Mandarin Chinese is identified as the fourth of the top ten most crucial foreign languages behind Spanish, Arabic and French (BC, 2013). However, a survey of language skills undertaken by YouGov (2013) revealed three quarters of the UK population were unable to speak any of these languages well enough to hold a conversation, and less than 1% of the UK population could do this in Chinese (YouGov, 2013). In addition, according to the European Commission's (EC) survey in 2012, only 9 percent of English pupils at age 15 were able to speak a FL "beyond a basic level", which was 33% lower than their counterpart peers in all European countries (EC, 2012, cited in Broad and Tinsley, 2014, p.14). The conclusion of the British Council (2013) was that "the UK is suffering from a growing deficit in foreign language skills at a time when global demand for language skills is expanding", and thus "a strategic approach in planning for the effective development of its language capacity" was urgently needed (Broad and Tinsley, 2014, p.14).

Despite the language challenges recognised above, Chinese language learning and teaching has been growing rapidly across the world, including in the UK, with the support of policy, organizations, schools and also students. By the end of 2014, there were 475 Confucius Institutes and 851 Confucius Classrooms in 126 countries and regions in the world (Hanban, 2013). In the UK, 13 Confucius Institutes as well as a network of school-based Confucius Classrooms had been established. However, the picture of Chinese language teaching in English schools over the last decade has been complex.

The development of Chinese learning in English schools had increased since 2002 (Zhang and Li, 2010), and by 2007, more than 400 secondary schools in England were offering Mandarin and 79% of schools were keen to teach Mandarin in the near future (the National Center for Languages (CILT), 2007).

Between 2007 and 2013, there was a 2-3% annual increase in curriculum time for the provision of teaching Chinese in both state and independent secondary schools (Broad and Tinsley, 2014). Mandarin was being taught in 17% of state schools and 45% of independent schools (Broad and Tinsley, 2014). Entries for Chinese A-level exams (at 18) grew rapidly to 3,425 in 2012 (an increase of 25 percent), making Mandarin Chinese the fourth most popular language after French, German and Spanish. On the other hand, “there has been no breakthrough” between 2007 to 2010 (the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT), 2011, p.43) and most schools continued to offer Chinese as an enrichment activity outside the curriculum, rather than as a curriculum subject. Whilst some schools were considering teaching Chinese in the future, others had ceased to offer it as a subject following unsatisfactory taster lessons (CfBT, 2011).

In addition to the identified shortage of qualified teachers of Chinese as a foreign language (CILT, 2007; CfBT, 2011), other issues prevented the spread of Chinese teaching. Hanban teachers, British Chinese and Chinese diaspora members were keen to teach Chinese, yet their different backgrounds, mixed qualifications as well as cultural expectations placed challenges before them when teaching in English schools. The GCSE examination for Chinese was taken by 1287 pupils and still fewer took the AS and A level (CILT, 2007). These advanced exams were perceived as being much harder than their European language equivalents (Wang, 2009; Zhang and Li, 2010). The syllabus, curriculum framework and teaching approaches for Chinese, which were predicated on European languages, could not meet English students’ expectations of Chinese learning (Zhang and Li, 2010). Furthermore the lack of teaching resources and assessment material made the teaching of Chinese challenging in English secondary schools.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

To enable secondary pupils to learn Chinese successfully, it is vital to establish effective ways to teach Chinese. These need to build on the linguistic structures, Chinese learning strategies and ultimately, the most appropriate support for language learning through pedagogy and the curriculum. Moreover, I argue that teachers' and pupils' understanding of these issues may be the vital component in making them effective in teaching and learning. Thus the purpose of this study is to investigate learners' and teachers' beliefs about English beginners learning Chinese in secondary schools in the UK context, also to explore how these beliefs are related to their background and personal experience, in order to provide information for language learning and pedagogical development in a cross-cultural context.

1.4 Research Questions

The main research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What are CFL teachers' and beginner Mandarin learners' beliefs about learning and teaching Mandarin in English secondary schools?
 - 1) What are CFL teachers' and beginning-level Mandarin learners' beliefs about the difficulties in learning Mandarin?
 - 2) What are CFL teachers' and beginning-level Mandarin learners' beliefs about effective teaching and learning strategies?
2. Do the beliefs of beginner learners differ from those of CFL teachers regarding the learning and teaching of Mandarin in English secondary schools?
3. Do the beliefs of learners differ, depending on how long they have been learning Chinese?
4. To what extent are the beliefs about language learning of CFL learners and teachers related to their

own background and experience?

1.5 Conclusion and Outline of the Study

This thesis includes five chapters. This chapter initially introduces the rationale and background of the study. I argue that it is necessary to conduct a study about beliefs of teachers and pupils based on the opportunities and challenges encountered in current CFL in English schools. The purpose and research questions for the study have been briefly presented.

Chapter 2 reviews the background literature, which comes from a range of fields, including linguistic research about characteristics of Chinese language, cognitive studies about language processing and acquisition, and belief studies in sociocultural contexts. Chapter 3 presents the research design, theoretical assumptions, methods, processes of data collection and analysis of this study. Chapter 4 offers detailed analysis and findings of questionnaire and interviews with pupils and teachers. Chapter 5 discusses the main findings of the study, and the pedagogical and political implications of this study, followed by some limitations and cautions related to the study, as well as suggestions for further research in the future.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

My study focuses on teachers' and learners' beliefs about learning and teaching Chinese as a foreign Language (CFL). This is an important issue which underpins decisions as to how to teach and learn Chinese. Therefore, to develop this topic I will first review the background literature, which comes from a range of fields.

First of all, this chapter will explore the issues which make Chinese a challenge to learn, because these issues affect beginner learners' and teachers' experiences and beliefs about learning Chinese. The difficulties and challenges for foreigners learning Mandarin Chinese can be grouped into three main categories, which I will examine in turn.

The next section reviews research about the role of beliefs, the beliefs of students and teachers about language learning and teaching in general and, specifically about Chinese, although there is little research in this area.

The third section reviews studies about western cultural expectations of learning compared with Chinese expectations, in terms of the objectives of learning and the ability to learn, to further argue that CFL learning is a culturally-situated activity.

The review will conclude by drawing together these areas which underpin my specific research questions.

2.2 Challenges of Chinese Learning and Teaching

2.2.1 Characteristics of the Chinese Language

2.2.1.1 Mandarin Chinese

The definition of “Chinese language” is initially reviewed here, as understandings of what Mandarin Chinese is, plays a part of learners’ beliefs about CFL teaching and learning, which is the focus of this study. It is important to have a clear, shared view of what language issues there are and how they may challenge alphabetic learners. From the historical perspective, the term “Chinese” generally referred to “Modern Standard Chinese”. Two views about the Chinese language were formed based on the understandings of mutual intelligibility from perspectives of different linguists (Bloomfield, 1965; DeFrancis, 1984; Li, 2004; Xing, 2006). Western scholars had argued that Chinese was a “language family” of separate languages, written in a common script. Whilst Chinese linguists defined “Chinese” as a single language including seven regional dialects such as Northern Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka, Min and so forth. These having distinctive features in phonology, lexicon and grammar but share the same writing system. As oral communication between some dialects was difficult to achieve, “Putonghua” (common language) or Mandarin had evolved from one of the dialects, “Northern Mandarin”. Textbook *Modern Chinese Language* defined Mandarin as a Lingua franca in Han Chinese society based on the Beijing accent and the vocabulary of Northern Chinese, and following the grammatical rules in classical contemporary literature (Huang and Liao, 1991).

Although the official definition of Mandarin in Mainland China is clear in both a general and specific sense, when it comes to CFL, the situation becomes rather complicated. After the Chinese character reform and development of pinyin transliteration in the mid-1950s, teachers in the UK from mainland

China had usually followed PRC (People's Republic of China) standard Mandarin or Putonghua, using simplified Chinese characters and the pinyin system of transliteration. However, this was not the case in the British Chinese community or for Chinese-speakers from Taiwan, Hong Kong (HK), Macao or Singapore. As early Chinese immigrants were mainly from the southern coastal area of China, Cantonese, Hakka and Min were widely spoken in overseas Chinese communities. Thus these Chinese dialects, especially Cantonese (which is an official dialect in Hong Kong and Macau) were still taught in some places; even though they were not as popular as before (Li, 2004). In addition, for historical reasons, Mandarin in Taiwan, referred to as "Guoyu" (national language), was slightly different from the PRC standard Mandarin in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary. Taiwan also used traditional Chinese characters and a different transliteration system "zhuyin" (Liu, 2006). Nevertheless, Putonghua had spread widely and rapidly as a result of rapid economic development in Mainland China in recent decades. Putonghua was gradually being adopted in Hong Kong and Macao (Lai, 2001; Tong, 2004), and Taiwan adopted pinyin as an official standard phonetic system in 2009 (Chuan, 2008).

The brief explanation of Mandarin above is to clarify some confusions in teaching Mandarin as a foreign language from a historical view. Generally speaking, regardless of the variations of Chinese language in different regions, people who speak Mandarin, Cantonese or other dialects as their first or heritage language are all labelled as "first language (L1) Chinese speakers". Due to the prevalence of PRC Mandarin in the western world (Tsung and Cruickshank, 2011), many L1 speakers who did not originate from mainland China did not feel comfortable with Mandarin. As discussed above, the standardization of their Mandarin may be different in terms of characters and accent, as well as the transliteration system for historical and political reasons (Li, 2004; Wang, 2011). There may be a gap between a teacher's language background and the specific Mandarin knowledge they were supposed to have and teach. Taiwanese

teachers may not be familiar with pinyin or simplified characters. Wang (2011) noted that some teachers of Chinese from non-Mandarin backgrounds felt upset when their “non-standard” pronunciation was questioned by teachers from mainland China with Beijing accents. This also happened to teachers with Mandarin as their heritage language. One teacher from a Malaysian Chinese family expressed his lack of confidence in teaching because he thought he did not offer pure Mandarin (Wang, 2011). This issue is important because it does have implications for teacher views and expertise. Different knowledge constructions of Chinese from teachers’ own background and experience may reflect their different beliefs about Chinese learning and teaching practices, yet this issue has been neglected for a long time in the field of CFL teaching.

As for the linguistic aspects of Mandarin, what I am aiming for here, is not to give a full description of Chinese, but to point out some of the features which challenge beginner learners as well as some of the features which help them. These features are important for my study because most learners of Chinese in England are beginners (CILT, 2007) and it is likely that the teachers and students in my study will be working in this context.

2.2.1.2 Chinese Tones and Homophones

One of the core themes in this study is the difficulty of Chinese learning, so it is important to review the features of the Chinese language which are most likely to be challenging. In spoken Chinese, the nature of the language and the literature suggest tones and homophone are the two key aspects of Chinese which provide challenges. To understand the role of tones and homophones, it is necessary to illustrate Chinese syllables first. The single syllable was the basic meaningful component in spoken Chinese. Each syllable generally consisted of an initial consonant and a final vowel or a cluster of vowels ending with [n] or [ŋ]

(Huang and Hanley, 1994; Huang and Liao, 1991). Every individual syllable normally represented an independent morpheme in Chinese (except some translation words) and could be spoken individually from each other. Unlike the intonations and stress patterns in English which generally does not change the meaning of a specific word in oral speech, the Mandarin tone was a supra-segmental marker used to distinguish the meaning of the same syllable (Liu et al., 2011). For example, the syllable “[t‘iæn]” means “sky” or “sweet” if spoken in different tones. There were five tones in Mandarin labelled as Tone 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The first four tones were pronounced with different values as high level, rising, low-dipping-rising and falling, while tone 5 was a neutral one (Huang and Liao, 1991). Chinese tone was one of the significant components to form syllables in Chinese.

Lin (1985) found that most beginner learners thought they were “tone deaf” in that they were unable to perceive the subtle difference of five tones (p.34). The situation was even worse when they listen to a flow of speech, as some part of the contour of the tone (e.g. the third tone) would be omitted or changed to another due to the effect of its neighbour tone. Apart from the difficulty of tone perception, some studies analysed learners’ production challenges as well (Chen, 1974; Miracle, 1989; Wang et al, 2001). By using techniques of acoustic phonetics on the study of Mandarin tones, Howie (1976) found that pitch, amplitude and duration were the three acoustic properties that distinguish one tone from the other, and pitch was the most crucial factor among them. Chen (1974) revealed that the average pitch range was 1.5 times wider when speaking Mandarin than speaking English. Despite being aware of that, English speakers tried to use an increased pitch range when they were speaking Mandarin, yet they did not reach the same level as L1 Chinese speakers did (Chen, 1974). Most of the time, learners found it difficult to find an appropriate register level of the pitch and contour dimension (Miracle, 1989).

The prevalence of homophones is another characteristic of Chinese. Since the syllable was the basic

speech unit in Mandarin rather than phoneme as in English, the number of syllables was much fewer than that in oral English (Wang, Perfetti and Liu, 2005). According to Chao (1976), there were only about 1300 syllables with different tones in spoken Mandarin, whereas about 7000 morphemes were commonly used in daily life (Li et al., 2002). Nevertheless, the morpheme was the smallest unit in Mandarin and one morpheme corresponded to one syllable, therefore different morphemes shared the same syllable, resulting in a large amount of homophones in oral words. On average, each syllable had around 11 different meanings (Perfetti, Liu and Tan, 2005). For example, a Chinese tongue-twister talking about numbers is very tricky for learners trying to identify the different words from similar sounds, I show here in pinyin here for a better illustration: “sì shì sì, shí shì shí, shísì shì shísì, sìshí shì sìshí”, which literally means “four is four, ten is ten, fourteen is fourteen, forty is forty” in English. The “four” and “ten” sound similar and the pronunciations of “ten” and “is” are exactly the same pinyin but different tones in Mandarin.

Studies showed that learning and distinguishing the meanings of homophones was a daunting job for beginner learners both in listening and reading (Chiang, 2002; Hu, 2010; Liu and McBride-Chang, 2010; Shen, 2008). CFL students explained the reason for difficulty as being because of the characteristics of Chinese graphic-phoneme correspondence, which is discussed in the later section about Chinese characters. Some homophones could be distinguished with the help of written scripts, yet this was not the case in oral communication (Shen and Bear, 2000), and it was not uncommon for Chinese people to actually sketch characters in the air when discussing names, which often contained homophones (McBride-Chang et al., 2003). Furthermore, Everson (1998) revealed that English speakers tended to rely on pronunciation to identify the word’s meaning rather than its written form when reading Mandarin at the initial stage.

2.2.1.3 Transliteration Systems

Transliteration of Chinese is relevant to beliefs about appropriate strategies for learning Chinese, particularly for beginner learners, as a transliteration system might be a useful tool for them with which to start Chinese. Therefore, it is necessary to review transliteration systems in this section. Linguists designed several transliteration systems for teaching L1 Chinese people literacy in different eras in history, these were, Gwoyue Romatzyh (GR), zhuyin (phonetic symbols, also called Bopomofo) and pinyin. GR was based on the Latin alphabet and was regarded as a unique tonal representation system since it embedded Chinese tones of syllables in spellings. For example, the same sound [ai] with four tones spells as “**ai**, **air**, **ae** and **ay**” (the bold letters represent different tones). The symbols of zhuyin were created based on the forms of ancient Chinese characters and represent a consonant or vowel which is a component of a character’s sound. For instance, “ㄅ” is taken from the top of the character “包[pao]” and represents the initial consonant “[p]” in the syllable. Zhuyin is not a Romanization transliteration system. Both zhuyin and pinyin use tone marks “ˊ ˋ ˋˊ ˋˋ” to represent Tones 2, 3 and 4 respectively, but with differences in Tone 1 and the neutral tone. Among the three systems, GR was used by a very small number of people and appeared in only one textbook *Chinese Primer* in the US (Chen et al, 2000; McGinnis, 1997); zhuyin was widely used in Taiwan (Tse et al., 2007, Zhang and McBride-Chang, 2011), and pinyin was currently adopted throughout the PRC as well as in the overseas CFL field (Bassetti, 2007; Kupfer, 2003). Therefore a knowledge of pinyin seems to be essential for Mandarin teachers. Those teachers from Taiwan or Hong Kong might need to first learn pinyin in order to teach their CFL students. Since Chinese is a tonal language, the tones represented by either letters or marks are the crucial element in every transliteration system. However, for zhuyin and pinyin, as discussed above, tones appeared as additional marks of syllables and were likely to be omitted or neglected when they were typed in through

a computer. Indeed, the popular Chinese input method in China, using pinyin as a medium to type Chinese characters, only focused on the spellings of onsets and rimes of syllables rather than tone marks (Zheng, Li and Sun, 2011).

As pinyin became more and more popular with western learners (Kupfer, 2003), comparisons had been made between pinyin spellings and English phonology (Bassetti, 2007; Lee and Kalyuga, 2011; McGinnis, 1997; Zhang and McBride-Chang, 2011). Pinyin has its own sound symbol correspondence including 21 consonants and 36 vowels or semi-vowels (see Table 2-1), and it is believed not to be completely straightforward to literate alphabetic language users (Bassetti, 2007; McGinnis, 1997). McGinnis (1997) named this difficulty “the can effect”. Some pinyin spellings fit well with English spelling rules but have a completely different pronunciation. The letter “c” in word “can” was the typical example because an English speaker would pronounce “[k’an]” whereas the pronunciation was “[ts’an]” in Chinese (p.233). Lee and Kalyuga (2011) found that some letters such as “x[ɕ]” and “q [tɕ’]” in the pinyin system were the important onsets to form syllables, yet they were called “unpronounceable” by English learners because these sounds were not used in English. Additionally, Bassetti (2007) pointed out three rimes of pinyin spellings “iu [iou]”, “ui [uei]”, “un [uən]” that were likely to result in pronunciation errors for beginner learners, due to the omission of important vowels in the pinyin transcription. More discussion can be seen in the next section about pinyin processing.

Table 2-1 Onsets and Rimes of Pinyin and Its Counterpart of IPA

| Onsets | | Rimes | | | | | | | |
|--------|------|--------|-------|--------|------|--------|-------|---------|-------|
| Pinyin | IPA | Pinyin | IPA | Pinyin | IPA | Pinyin | IPA | Pinyin | IPA |
| b | [p] | q | [tɕʰ] | a | [a] | in | [in] | Ua | [ua] |
| p | [pʰ] | x | [ɕ] | o | [o] | ang | [ɑŋ] | Uo | [uo] |
| m | [m] | z | [ts] | e | [ɤ] | eng | [əŋ] | uai | [uai] |
| f | [fʰ] | c | [tɕʰ] | i | [i] | ong | [uŋ] | ui(uei) | [uei] |
| d | [t] | s | [s] | u | [u] | ing | [iŋ] | uan | [uan] |
| t | [tʰ] | zh | [tʂ] | ü | [y] | ia | [ia] | uang | [uaŋ] |
| n | [n] | ch | [tʂʰ] | ai | [ai] | iao | [iau] | un(uen) | [uən] |
| l | [l] | sh | [ʂʰ] | ei | [ei] | ian | [iæn] | ueng | [uəŋ] |
| g | [k] | r | [ʐ] | ao | [ɑu] | iang | [iaŋ] | Üe | [yɛ] |
| k | [kʰ] | y | [j] | ou | [ou] | ie | [iɛ] | üan | [yæn] |
| h | [x] | w | [w] | an | [an] | iong | [yŋ] | Ün | [yn] |
| j | [tɕ] | | | en | [ən] | iou | [iou] | | |

2.2.1.4 Chinese Characters

Learning Chinese may involve learning literacy, although this is contentious. When considering how to start teaching beginners Chinese, the use of and timing for the introduction of Chinese characters is an important area of review.

Unlike alphabetic languages in which the sound to some extent corresponds to the letter representation, the mapping of phoneme and grapheme is not always evident in Chinese written script. This is because, Chinese characters are highly graphic symbols with a composition of individual strokes. Based on the observation of nature, ancient Chinese people created the earlier Chinese characters by drawing pictures to resemble the shapes of the objects (Kuo and Hooper, 2004; Lam, 2011; Li, 1996; Xing, 2006).

Therefore, the sound of characters is less likely to be indicated from logographic shapes of characters. In that sense, learning Chinese characters might require memorising the forms of characters independently,

even where the pronunciation of characters is already known when speaking, or through transliteration tools (more discussions later). For L1 alphabetic students, this could be different from their previous experience where learning how to read and write words in an alphabetic language was a natural step once they know the pronunciation (Li, 1996).

However, Zhu (1987) found approximately 90% of modern characters were semantic-phonetic compounds with a semantic and a phonetic component, which could serve as cues to indicate the meaning or sound of Chinese characters. For example, the character “晴” has a semantic component “日” on the left meaning “sun” in English, and a phonetic component “青” pronounced [tɕʰiŋ] with the first tone on the right. The whole character “晴” means “sunny” and sounds [tɕʰiŋ] with the second tone. Nevertheless, studies found that the validity of phonetic components of characters was relatively low (Fan, Gao and Ao, 1984; Shen, 2005, 2010). Only 26% of phonetic components shared the same sound (including tone) as the character of which it was a constituent. The semantic component only provided a minor concept for the meaning of characters (Shen and Bear, 2000; Shen and Ke, 2007). For example, the semantic component “口” (mouth) in the character “喝”(drink) indicates the meaning of the word has some relevance to the action taken by mouth, but the exact meaning of “drink” cannot be illustrated from the semantic element.

Stroke, radical (i.e. sound and semantic component mentioned above), and character are three different levels of the orthographic structure of Chinese written script (Perfetti, Liu and Tan, 2005; Shen and Ke, 2007). Stroke is the smallest unit of a character. A cluster of strokes forms a component which is called a radical. For example, “亻” is a radical composed by two strokes “丿” and “丨”. A radical can be used as a stand-alone character in some cases, and also as a dependent element in a compound character. For instance, “足” can appear as a stand-alone character meaning “foot”, and serve as a semantic radical in

characters like “跑(run) and 跳(jump)”. Shen (2005) illustrated “one of the challenges for CFL learners was the complexity of the graphic configuration of Chinese characters” (p. 50). The stroke in terms of its number and type varied within different characters and placed difficulty on learners to remember. For example, a character could be as simple as “一” with only one stroke or as complex as “羸”.

The connection of each stroke in characters is complicated, in that some of them overlap, some of them are separated from each other, whilst others interweave together with mixed boundaries (Lin and Childs, 2010; Shen, 2010). Furthermore, studies revealed that, the arrangement of subcomponents of characters in the spatial sense might be another difficulty for English speaking learners (Lin and Childs, 2010; Wang, Perfetti and Liu, 2005). Radicals composed of characters can be placed in different positions with different structures. The extreme example of radicals “木, 口, and 十” illustrated here can consist of different characters with a vertical structure (“杏”, “古”), a horizontal structure (e.g. “叶”), and an enclosure structure (e.g. “困”, “田”). English readers who were used to the left-to-right or one-dimensional pattern of English letters probably had difficulty in processing the structures they were not familiar with (Lin and Childs, 2010).

In addition, there are two versions of modern Chinese characters: traditional characters and simplified characters. Traditional characters are used in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao, whilst simplified ones are widely used in the PRC. It is important to note, not all traditional characters have a counterpart in simplified form. In the character reform of the 1950s, linguists only simplified the characters that were complicated with many strokes and components (Fu, 2005). That is to say, some characters are still written the same in both versions. The overlapping and coexistence of two versions of characters probably raised issues of CFL character teaching (Miao, 2012). Nevertheless, simplified characters are prevalently taught in England, and thus teachers from Taiwan or Hong Kong might need to learn the

simplified versions independently in order to teach students.

2.2.2 Challenges for English Students

The difficulties of the language itself are, of course, not unconnected to the ways in which it is best learnt and taught and this is a major consideration for CFL learners and teachers. This section builds on a discussion of the challenges for English students of processing the Chinese language, and specifically the challenges for English secondary school pupils.

2.2.2.1 Perceiving Tones

Perception of tone in Chinese is different from processing stress or intonation patterns in non-tonal languages such as English, so perceiving the acoustic features of Chinese tone is a completely new experience for English-speaking learners. Thus when it comes to strategies for learning tones, English learners may have different views about it, which is one of the research questions addressed in this study.

According to neuropsychological research, regions in the left hemisphere of the brain are activated when tones are decoded by L1 Chinese listeners, whilst English listeners use the right hemisphere (Klein et al, 2001; Wang, Jongman and Sereno, 2001). Given that the function of the left hemisphere is to process verbal and logical information, this suggests that listeners from different language backgrounds treat tones as different types of information. L1 Chinese listeners regard tones as a linguistic stimulus, whereas tones are simply viewed the same as the pitch or stress with little lexical information for CFL listeners (Wang, Sereno and Jongman, 2006). It is also possible that learners perceive various features of Chinese tones as the same (Hu and Tian, 2012; Tsai, 2011), or put the same tone into different categories because tones do change, depending on the tones adjacent to them (Stagray and Downs, 1993). This means that as much exposure to a Chinese speaking environment as possible is desirable if second language (L2)

listeners want to develop sensitivity in processing Chinese tones. As Tsai (2011) noted, “some areas of the brain have to be trained to use tones in the correct way” (p. 48).

Wang, Perfetti and Liu (2005) examined the phonological processing skills of English beginner learners by using matching tasks. Learners outperformed when asked to match the same onset or rime in syllables. However they did not perform well when matching the same tone in syllables. This was probably because onset and rime were phonological components of syllables in both English and Chinese, whereas tone was a distinctive feature of Chinese. Research into L1 Chinese children’s phonological awareness also shed some insight on English speakers’ processing of Chinese speech, particularly of Chinese tones (Huang and Hanley, 1994; Tang and Wu, 2009; Ren, Xu and Zhang, 2006). Tang and Wu (2009) revealed that L1 Chinese children’s tonal awareness was developed more slowly than that of syllabic and rime awareness, even though they had been immersed in an oral Chinese environment. This indicated that, for those beginning listeners of Chinese, acquiring tonal awareness might be even harder than for L1 Chinese.

In addition, as tones are supra-segmental components associated with the syllable, when people speak Mandarin, tones always come with the syllables simultaneously. The integration of tones and syllables makes it more difficult for beginning learners to discriminate the tones (Liu et al., 2011). Some studies had found English-speaking learners were likely to take the tone as an isolated unit and paid much attention to the tones of the words when listening (Hu and Tian, 2012). Moreover, it had been argued that most instructions on Chinese pronunciation emphasised the significance of tones, to the extent that they diverted learners’ attention to the isolated tones rather than to the sound of words (Lin, 1985). When listening to authentic oral speech in Chinese, learners were required to perceive the tones and syllables immediately as the oral information was transient and more ongoing input was waiting for decoding.

Given the limited capacity of short term memory (STM) (Gathercole et al, 1999), automatic processing of oral input is required for listening to Chinese effectively. This goal can only be achieved by extensive practice of listening and repeating tones and syllables together. Some researchers suggested musical training is useful, as the same functional part of the brain was activated when processing music and some tonal features of Mandarin (Liu et. al, 2011; Wong and Perrachione, 2007).

2.2.2.2 The Processing of Transliteration Systems

There is little literature about how learners of Chinese process transliteration systems. A handful of studies though, showed that the use of a transliteration system facilitated English speaking learners in learning Chinese pronunciation and characters (Bassetti, 2007; Everson, 1988; McGinnis, 1997; Wang and Gao, 2011; Kupfer, 2003).

McGinnis (1997) compared the effectiveness of pinyin and GR, and found “GR did not lead to significantly greater accuracy in tonal production for English speaking learners” (p.232). McGinnis explained that, this was probably because lots of GR with tones spellings were so similar to English words that learners tended to read them as English words, for example in the case of “been”, the second “e” was a tone spelling here. Processing the tone representation in spellings might also draw learners’ attention away from the combination of consonant and vowel, resulting in a poor pronunciation of both the tone and the syllable. As for the effect of pinyin on pronunciation learning, as discussed above, although pinyin was a Romanized representation, the orthography of pinyin symbols were not quite as straightforward as English phonemes (Bassetti, 2007; McGinnis, 1997). English-speaking learners might pronounce incorrectly when making use of their English phonological skills to process pinyin spellings (Wang, Koda and Perfetti, 2003). Studies had revealed that there was a similar pattern of phonological

awareness development across languages, that is, from syllable to subsyllabic unit, such as onset and rime (Carroll et al, 2003; Tang and Wu, 2009; Ren, Xu and Zhang, 2006). However, phonological awareness is based on learners' experience of their L1 spoken languages. When it comes to the cross-language transfer of phonological skills, beginner English learners' lack of exposure to the Chinese language might lead to challenges for them in learning Chinese pronunciation via pinyin. Whether it is possible for English speakers to transfer their phonological awareness of English to analyse pinyin remains unknown. There is little literature about this and thus how early pinyin should be introduced and used in Chinese learning becomes a big issue and will be addressed in this study.

In terms of the effect of transliteration systems on processing characters, Everson (1988) examined reading speed and comprehension when reading Chinese in pinyin and characters. The result showed that reading in pinyin was faster and easier to understand than in characters for first-year university learners of Chinese in the US. Likewise, the role of pinyin in the phonology-character link was demonstrated in the studies of Guan et al (2011) and Wang and Gao (2011). The phonological representations of written scripts were explicitly presented through pinyin spellings. Chung (2002) summarised three reasons for providing pinyin in CFL: a) pinyin helped the pronunciation of characters as the phonological subcomponent of characters were not reliable in predicting the exact sound of characters; b) pinyin facilitated learners when pronouncing unknown characters, and c) knowledge of pinyin enabled learners to know the sound of new characters by themselves instead of relying on the teacher's help. Bassetti (2007) suggested that it was necessary to use pinyin to learn Chinese at the beginning stage, to get students ready for character learning later. However, she also noted the pinyin orthography had a negative impact on the pronunciation of both beginners and intermediate Mandarin learners.

Thus the findings about the role of transliteration systems, particular pinyin in pronunciation and

character learning are contentious. Moreover, the processing of Chinese characters brings out another potential challenge for English beginner learners.

2.2.2.3 The Processing of Chinese Characters

Although models of reading in Chinese are the subject of some debate (Perfetti and Wang, 2006; Wang, Perfetti and Liu, 2005), there is a difference between reading Chinese and reading English. Due to the logographic nature of Chinese written scripts, reading Chinese written characters requires the ability to recognise the internal structural characteristics of characters, in terms of the strokes, radicals and the spatial arrangement of sub-segments. Accordingly, much emphasis is put on visual-orthographic skills to crack the pictorial code rather than on phonological awareness (Huang and Hanley, 1994). Whereas when it comes to reading English, since a cluster of phonemes are used to represent the meaning of words, it might require more phonological information to decode the meanings of English words. This probably further explains the reason why pinyin was suggested to be introduced to English learners in the beginning by Bassetti (2007), as mentioned above. Although the ability to recognise the orthographic features of English letters also mattered in the processing of meanings, the task was less challenging than in the case of Chinese characters (Huang and Hanley, 1999).

Nevertheless, some studies argued that reading Chinese also involved phonological processing in that as many as 90% of Chinese characters were phonetic-semantic compounds (Zhu, 1987). The phonetic component could to some extent indicate the sound of characters, and in turn learners could gain access to the meanings of words via the phonological route from their oral language resources (Everson, 1998). This might be possible for the skilled readers who had gained rich experience of spoken Chinese, as the connection between sound and meaning was ready to be retrieved when reading (Ke, 1996; Lam, 2011;

Shen, 2008). In practice as discussed above, sound-meaning connection is less robust than that of the orthographic-meaning in Chinese reading. This is because of the validity of phonetic compound function, as well as the large amount of homophones in Chinese. Thus phonological processing is not sufficient to distinguish word meanings. Homophones only can be decoded through the written forms in Chinese, thus a stronger link between Chinese characters and meanings is demanded for Chinese reading. Furthermore, extra attention and deep processing are demanded to extract highly detailed distinctive features when reading. CFL learners need to re-orientate their attention to the salient features of Chinese characters so that they can access the meaning of the word. In that case, the learning of characters seems to be significant for English-speaking learners. This is an important area in learning and teaching Chinese, and thus in this study, when and how to learn characters will be examined from the perspectives of teachers and students.

As for the training of learners' orthographic processing skills, Tan et al (2005) concluded in their experimental study, "the ability to read Chinese is strongly related to writing skills" (p.8781). Through repetitive writing practice, it was easier for learners to be aware of the internal structural features of characters and accordingly established their analysing skills of subcomponents on character recognition (Tse et al., 2007). Guan et al. (2011) also noted that the sensor-motor memory helped learners to consolidate the connections between orthography and meanings, and such procedural memory could last for a long period of time since it was learnt and stabilised via intensive writing. This means writing characters is crucial to reading Chinese, in a way which is not true of English- possibly a very important issue in teaching Chinese.

In addition, as Chinese characters are formed by a finite number of basic strokes, minor differences of strokes could be the distinctive feature in distinguishing two different characters (for example, “未”and

“末”). Therefore every stroke should be properly written down according to the standard rules.

Furthermore, evidence from psychological research demonstrated that specific stroke orders were necessary in writing Chinese characters (Giovanni, 1994; Luo et al, 2010; Qiu and Zhou, 2010). Giovanni (1994) pointed out, the orders of strokes were stored as a motor schema in memory which provided cues in retrieving the whole shapes of characters in reading and writing. Luo et al. (2010) noted that stroke sequence revealed the processing of the spatial configuration of characters in a learner's memory.

However, this is not significant in writing English letters, as the strokes of letters are much simpler than Chinese strokes and automaticity occurs at a letter level.

The issue which is mentioned above, but which I have not yet discussed, explicitly is the characteristics of the CFL learner in English secondary schools. This is important, because it is the English speaking pupil in secondary school who needs to be able to use the strategies mentioned above, to benefit from appropriate teacher support and to master the linguistic difficulties.

2.2.2.4 CFL learners in English Secondary Schools

Some factors influence the effectiveness of language processing strategies in terms of the characteristics of English pupil learners, such as the L1 background (Yang, 2008), Age (Wang, 2011), language proficiency level (CILT, 2007), motivation (Coleman, Galaczi and Astruc, 2007; Dornyei, 2009), and attitudes and beliefs (Higgins and Sheldon, 2001; Hu, 2010; Wang and Higgins, 2008).

For English pupils with an alphabetic language background, learning Chinese is a completely different experience from that of L1 Chinese. As discussed above, the language skills they developed from English acquisition are not suitable for Chinese learning. Unlike adult learners, child learners are still in the process of developing their abstract thinking; they may not be good at analysing grammatical rules and

subcomponents of characters (Liu and Jiang, 2004). Teenagers at the time of puberty may be distracted, lack self-discipline and show less commitment to learning in Chinese lessons (Wang, 2011). This is an issue in making progress in Chinese learning.

With regards to proficiency levels, CILT (2007) reported that the large majority of pupils were at the entry level. Due to the lack of Mandarin provision and short learning time, most pupils were learning Mandarin in KS3, especially in Year7 (CILT, 2007). As for pupils' motivation for learning Chinese, Wang (2009) revealed that pupils' willingness to learn Mandarin came from their positive attitudes towards Chinese language (i.e. difficult but challenging), teacher support and classroom environment. Indeed, pupils' perceptions played a crucial role in their persistence in learning the language. Learners' attitudes towards effort, strategy and ability were influenced by the success of language learning (William et al, 2004). Learners' beliefs led them to adapt learning approaches which they think were effective for learning. If there was a mismatch between their expectations and their language performance, it could cause frustration and in turn hinder learners' progress at language learning (Cotterall, 1999; Horwitz, 1988; Kim, 2011). Most learners in English secondary schools dropped Chinese learning classes later at KS4 level, not only because of the difficulty of the language learning, but also because of their negative beliefs about their own learning and teaching approaches (Wang, 2009). Further evidence of the link between language beliefs and effective use of strategy was found in Hu and Tian's survey (2012). CFL college learners in England were likely to use the strategies which they perceive as highly effective. Although their study was focused on adult learners, it still shed some light on beliefs of young learners and their choices of learning strategies, which might be relevant to this study.

2.2.3 CLT and Pedagogy in England

Appropriate support for language learning through pedagogy and the curriculum is another challenge which is worth reviewing here in my study, because it is a key issue in teachers' views about teaching and learning strategies. For a number of years, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), has been regarded as a prevailing teaching and learning method in teaching foreign languages, particularly English as a foreign language (EFL) throughout the world (Cook, 2008). Indeed, the National Curriculum for England has been described as being "loosely based" on a CLT approach and certainly places communicative teaching at the fore (Oates, 2011). Given that Chinese teaching is still in its infancy in the UK, the pedagogy of Chinese in England is predicated on CLT in European languages (Zhang and Li, 2010). Thus it is necessary to briefly review the use of CLT in teaching European languages including EFL, to fully understand the pedagogical challenges of Chinese learning.

CLT is an approach to teaching languages that was initially devised by linguistics to emphasise the knowledge of language functions (i.e. using language to communicate) instead of knowledge of language forms alone (Halliday, 1973; Hymes, 1972; Wilkins, 1976). The purpose of CLT is to develop learners' ability to use second/foreign languages in a real context, not just to obtain knowledge of language structures. It suggests languages should be taught in a meaningful and communicative way, through group work and interactive activities. This approach strongly emphasised use of the target language for teaching, in order to give students meaningful experience of that language. Furthermore, teaching materials should be authentic and genuine, based on students' own communicative needs. As communicative competence is the core goal of CLT, students are encouraged to take risks in speaking or writing, and try to guess meanings of conversation by interacting with others. Thus making mistakes is viewed as inevitable in the process of learning (Li, 1998; Richard, 2006). The influence of CLT on the English curriculum and the

examination board syllabuses can be seen in the fact that assessment of language learning includes not only reading and writing but also speaking and listening, even though this is time consuming and expensive to assess. However, this assessment of speaking and listening has what has been termed a “washback effect” (Cheng and Watanabe, 2004) whereby the assessment of a subject shapes the curriculum that is taught. In the case of England, retaining speaking and listening in assessment ensures that it is given some priority in teaching.

However, the definition of CLT “has become blurred” after years of development (Spada, 2007, p. 282). Different interpretations and implementation of CLT have been demonstrated by scholars and language instructors (Bax, 2003; Hu, 2002; Lightbown and Spada, 1990; Littlewood, 2007). CLT, while concentrating on fluency, somewhat overlooks accuracy in language learning. In order to balance fluency and accuracy, form-focused instruction, and task-based teaching in CLT have been proposed (Lightbown and Spada, 1990; Williams, 1995; Littlewood, 2007), attempting to draw learner’s attention on both meaningful interaction and linguistic forms. Thus some non-communicative activities, such as grammar explanation, drill practices or error correction, which were commonly applied in previous teaching methods before CLT, it is now suggested should be included in teaching before or after the communication sessions. This is, as some scholars called, a “weak form” of CLT (Nunan, 1987; Hall and Graham, 2011), and is regarded as the mainstream version in ELT teaching throughout the world.

Furthermore, Spada (2007) reviewed several misunderstandings of CLT, which covered different aspects of FL teaching. She argued CLT includes both language meanings and forms in teaching, and accordingly explicit feedback on learners’ mistakes in communication is welcomed. The learner-centred teaching was not the only method in the language classroom. Activities and group work led by teachers were also beneficial for language learners. These two points echo the above discussions about language forms and

the role of the teacher in CLT. In addition, Spada (2007) clarified the misconceptions of the use of L1 in CLT classroom. She pointed out that the use of L1 was not necessarily prohibited, but to what extent and when L1 was used should be taken into account. Another point she brought up, to which less attention is paid in the implementation of CLT, is that CLT does not merely focus on listening and speaking practice, but also on reading and writing learning. This raised an issue in CFL teaching in terms of how to teach Chinese written script by applying CLT, since the connection between Chinese characters and sound phoneme is weak, as discussed above.

The over-emphasis on learning through communication of CLT can seem to challenge teachers' dominance in the language class (Cook, 2008). How to conduct language instruction by using CLT in the classroom becomes a practical problem for most teachers, especially to those who are used to highly controlled linguistic instruction. Some teachers have expressed concern about students' learning outcomes, saying that communicative competence is not as tangible as language structures that learners can recall and review later after class (Gatbonton and Segalowitz, 2005). Such concerns are relevant to teacher's beliefs about CLT and how to use CLT in practice, which will be further discussed below. Thus many studies revealed that CLT seemed to neglect the contexts in different cultural background, resulting in failure or reluctance to base teaching on a CLT approach in some countries (Bax, 2003; Harmer, 2003; Hu, 2002).

Beyond criticism of CLT as a premier solution to language teaching up till now, more and more researchers and teachers have shifted their attention from merely the exploration of "the best method" to a more realistic insight, that, as Hall and Graham (2011) argued, "the best method depends on context, and every method has some value" (p. 98). And some scholars had come to note that CLT was actually not a method but rather a concept of meaning-based methods in the field of FL teaching (Bell, 2003;

Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Littlewood, 2014). Thus in the EFL teaching world, it is suggested we have moved into a post-method era (Hall and Graham, 2011; Harmer, 2003). Indeed, as Bax (2003) emphasised, the priority of context should be put at the top of the list, in that it determined which teaching methodology suited learners and teachers best. Any application of methodology without an understanding of culture and contexts would end up in failure in language learning and teaching. For example, in Asian countries such as China, Japan and South Korea, where knowledge transmission, mental activities, the teacher's authentic role, and an evaluation system focused on written language were highly valued and deeply rooted in the Confucius tradition, the adoption of CLT might conflict with their traditional ways of learning, and accordingly would not lead to satisfactory results in English learning and teaching (Hu, 2002; Li, 1998). It is important to understand that the tradition of written exams in Asian culture might be the biggest barrier for implementing CLT in these countries (Hu, 2002). EFL assessment is conducted in written forms, aiming at testing learners' grammar knowledge rather than oral skills (Ganjabi, 2011). Thus CLT has not had such an early impact on curriculum and exams. For instance, until recently the national university entrance examination (i.e. "Gaokao" in Chinese) in China did not include English speaking in many places (Gaikwad, 2014). One important implication of this cultural background for teaching is that teachers of Chinese who have been educated themselves in China may well have experienced foreign language learning and teaching in a written exam-orientated way and would have no reason to question this approach. The effect of assessment which does not include speaking and listening, for instance, might be to the neglect of spoken communication, since it would not be a school or teacher priority to test learners' communicative competence. In this way, teachers' experience of learning and teaching in such a setting is, of course, shaped by the assessment demands, just as it is in England, which is discussed above. There are also other reasons why CLT has not been an unchallenged success in some settings. The

constraints of teaching contexts, such as large class size and L2 English speaking teachers, are also factors that should be taken into account when applying CLT in these countries. In effect, some traditional approaches probably work well in these cultural and teaching contexts, as they match expectations of student and teacher better than imported CLT from the western world (Bax, 2003).

This leads back to the central issue of language teaching and learning, that is, the beliefs and expectations of learners and teachers. As mentioned above, the understanding and interpretation of CLT varies for different teachers, and for their students, in different cultural contexts. As Harmer (2003) noted, “successful methodology arises when teachers and students reach an accommodation between their differing expectations and hunches about what is best for them” (p.292). Hence, with respect to teaching and learning Chinese, which is the focus of this study, it is not merely about how to develop communicative competence as CLT suggests, but also about understanding the beliefs of teachers and learners in specific contexts. The following part will review the beliefs in language learning and teaching.

2.3 Beliefs, Knowledge and Practice

2.3.1 The Nature of Beliefs

2.3.1.1 Definition

According to Pajares (1992), belief is a “messy construct” and to define it, is a rather daunting work (p. 307). This is partly because the belief system regarding people’s mental thoughts is complex itself.

Researches into beliefs in different fields used various terms to refer to beliefs from different perspectives, causing more confusion in understanding the concept (Pajares, 1992; Barcelos, 2000). Cognitive psychologists viewed beliefs as a type of “metacognitive knowledge” (Wenden, 1986). However, some scholars argued that the term “metacognitive knowledge” merely illustrated the cognitive component of

beliefs, rather than all the nature of beliefs (Pajares, 1992; Barcelos, 2003). As it is the person who sees this world from his/her own point of view, beliefs cannot always be true compared with scientific findings. Accordingly, for individuals, beliefs are held to be true in their mind. Just as Riley (1997) noted, beliefs were human's own "subjective reality". It was "their truth", not that of others, that counted in practical actions (p.127, cited in Barcelos, 2003). In addition to the nature of personal subjectivity, some studies noted that all the beliefs were derived from social and cultural settings, not simply from personal contemplation. In that sense, they highlighted the term beliefs as "beliefs of culture" (Jin and Cortazzi, 1996). Therefore, according to Dewey's (1933) definition, beliefs were described as "a third meaning of thought, something beyond itself by which its value is tested; it makes an assertion about some matter of fact or some principle or law" (p. 6, cited in Barcelos, 2003).

2.3.1.2 Beliefs and Knowledge

The distinction between knowledge and beliefs had been discussed by some researchers (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). Nespor (1987) identified four features of individual beliefs ("existential presumption", "alternativity", "affective and evaluative loading", and "episodic structure", p. 318) as well as two characteristics of beliefs systems ("non-consensuality" and "unboundedness", p.321). The "existential presumption", as discussed above, meant that beliefs were the personal subjective reality which they hold to be true. Such beliefs existed as "immutable entities" that were beyond knowledge or individual influence (Pajares, 1992, p. 309). Therefore, unlike knowledge that should be the truth and that changes rapidly depending on the development of science, there was no right or wrong about individual beliefs and to some extent they were hardly changed by external forces.

The second distinguishing feature of beliefs was the "alternativity". According to Nespor (1987),

“alternativity” referred to “conceptualizations of ideal situations differing significantly from present reality” (p. 319). That is to say, individual beliefs are not always in line with reality. There is the possibility that people might create an idea, or alternative situations of their own, if they are not satisfied with what the real world looks like. For instance, by learning lessons from unpleasant childhood classroom experience, a teacher may form an alternative way of teaching based on her fantasies of effective classroom activities, which might be the opposite of her previous learning experience. As Nespor noted, beliefs served as a tool to develop the ideal goal of a task, whilst knowledge was adapted afterwards when the goal was already well set-up.

As for “affective and evaluative loading”, beliefs were strongly connected to individual feelings whereas knowledge consisted of cognitive components which were less affected by personal affections. However, Pajares (1992) argued that both beliefs and knowledge actually had cognitive components as well as affective and evaluative aspects. The difference between beliefs and knowledge was a matter of degree of subjectivity in a continuum scale. Beliefs carried more affective elements, whilst knowledge was closer to the objective position.

The fourth distinction “episodic structure” referred to how knowledge and beliefs were stored in the individual mind. Nespor (1987) noted that beliefs were stored as episodic memory that derived from “personal experience or cultural or institutional sources of knowledge transmission” (p. 320). Episodic memory was like taking a photograph; the impressive images of the experience were captured and stored. Thus such kind of memory could not be well-organized and systematically stored in the mind. On the other hand, “the information in knowledge system is stored primarily in semantic networks” (Nespor, 1987, p. 320). This indicates that, although knowledge can be drawn from episodic events, the proportion of episodic memory in knowledge is much less than that in beliefs.

In addition to individual beliefs, Nespor (1987) pointed out the two features of beliefs systems, “non-consensuality” and “unboundedness” (p.321). “non-consensuality” meant that different beliefs could exist in the system harmoniously, even conflicting ones! This was because there was no right or wrong in beliefs. Since beliefs were episodically stored, the episodic memory about real events indicated different beliefs were likely to build up systematically in the individual’s mind. Some may show consistency with others whilst some could be quite discrepant. However, knowledge was generally connected to certain domains for the purpose of application. In this respect it should be an intensely-bounded system.

The difference between beliefs and knowledge reviewed above is important and useful for us to understand the nature of beliefs. Yet Pajares (1992) noted that understanding the effect of beliefs on actions was equally significant. This because, it was individuals’ beliefs rather than scientific knowledge, that guided individuals’ behaviours.

2.3.1.3 Beliefs and Actions

The relationship between beliefs and actions is rather complex. As this study is focusing on CFL learning and teaching, the connection of student and teacher beliefs with their behaviours is reviewed.

Barcelos (2003) categorized student learning behaviours into two aspects: the general approaches of language learning and the specific strategies student choose to use. This distinction is very important and my questionnaire is based on this category, which is further discussed later. As to the general approaches, Horwitz (1988) pointed out, that student beliefs “have obvious relevance to the understanding of student expectations of, commitment to, success in, and satisfaction with their language classes” (p.283).

Evidence showed that student commitment to learning a FL, to some extent, depended on how they thought about the nature of that language and language learning, regarding the amount of time needed, the

difficulties, their language aptitude etc. As Cotterall (1995) noted, students brought their own expectations to language learning and their beliefs were the important part, reflecting their “readiness” for learning (p. 196). Mori (1999) and Peacock (1999) found that learners’ beliefs were significantly related to their achievement. However, most of these studies made assumptions about the effect of beliefs based on the data from surveys, without actual observation of students’ behaviour. It is important, in considering self-report data, to remember it may not be objectively accurate.

On the other hand, apart from general approaches to language learning, the strategies that students choose to deal with specific learning are also affected by their beliefs. Some studies revealed that beliefs guided students to adapt the learning approaches which they thought were effective for learning (Cotterall, 1999; Horwitz, 1988; Wenden, 1986; Wang, Spenser and Xing, 2009). Horwitz (1988) noted that learners’ unrealistic beliefs about language learning were likely to restrict their learning strategies. Students who valued grammar learning or vocabulary memorisation were not likely to use holistic strategies to learn the language. Likewise, Wenden (1986) found that the student who believed language was best learnt in a natural environment tended to communicate with others and practise spoken language as much as possible.

Nevertheless, Yang (1999) revealed that students’ choices of learning strategies were not always consistent with their beliefs. Other factors such as motivation and knowledge of learning should be taken into account. An interesting finding in Yang (1999)’s study was that 90% of students agreed language learning requires lots of memorisation, yet none of them talked about using cognitive-memory strategies. One plausible explanation Yang gave was that students might merely regard repetition or learning by heart as memory strategies, which were actually a small part of items on the inventory list of cognitive-memory strategies. In that sense, students’ adoption of strategies depends on their knowledge of

learning strategies and what they know about those strategies. Similarly, Wang, Spenser and Xing (2009) found learners' sense of self-confidence in learning Chinese characters was not necessarily associated with the metacognitive strategies they used. Therefore, students' beliefs and learning strategies is not a simple cause and effect relationship. It further indicates, that learners' general beliefs about FL learning might be inconsistent with their preferred choices of specific strategies. This is important to this study, because both beliefs about the nature of FL learning and strategies for specific language aspects will be examined. As Cotterall (1999) concluded, learners' choice of language strategies was relevant to their beliefs about the effectiveness of the strategy in four dimensions: "their knowledge of that strategy"; "their confidence to adopt it"; "their willingness to use it" and "their acceptance of responsibility for adopting it" (p. 510).

When it came to the teachers' beliefs and practice, the same conclusion was drawn that beliefs of teachers can be associated with their instruction, and also could be incongruent with what they actually do in the language classroom. Many studies revealed varied degrees of consistency between teachers' reported beliefs and their observed teaching practice (Andrews, 2003; Breen et al, 2001; Basturkmen, Loewen and Ellis, 2004; Farrell and Lim, 2005). Andrews (2003) found that L1 English teachers' feelings of boredom about grammar teaching were relevant to their conservative pedagogical "presentation-practice-production" pattern in the classroom (p. 370). Nevertheless, they were likely to put some communicative values into their form of instruction due to the influence of CLT theories. A more complex relationship of beliefs and actions was reported in the study of Basturkmen, Loewen and Ellis (2004). Three teachers used the same communicative tasks based on their shared beliefs about "focus-on-form" (p.243), yet strikingly, inconsistency was found between their beliefs and instruction. Although teachers emphasised the importance of communicative flow and student self-correction, they

tended to provide elicitation responses towards students errors.

Moreover, Breen et al (2001) examined the relationship of pedagogical principles and practice and revealed a rather complex picture. Teachers might adopt different teaching approaches on the basis of the same shared pedagogical principle. Conversely, a similar practice could be the reflection of different beliefs held by teachers. In addition, some studies revealed that the educational context from the micro-cultural (classroom, school) to the macro-cultural context (different countries) was the essential mediator in the relationship of beliefs and practice (Andrews, 2003; Farrel and Lim, 2005; Jin and Cortazzi, 1996).

In my study, however, how teachers' beliefs affect their teaching practice is not a focus, yet the studies reviewed above provide insightful views about inconsistency of teachers' beliefs about the general nature of FL and their possible choices of teaching approaches. As the core theme in my study is about beliefs, the following two sections review both beliefs of students and of teachers in the FL and CFL field.

2.3.2 Students' Beliefs about Language Learning and Teaching

2.3.2.1 The Structure of Beliefs

Given the crucial role of students' beliefs in their learning behaviours, as discussed above, many scholars have tried to develop an instrument to assess learners' beliefs. The questionnaire for my study is based on the previously identified dimensions of beliefs, particularly in the study of Horwitz (1988). Therefore it is a significant aspect to review. Horwitz (1988) first categorised student beliefs into five dimensions:

- (1) difficulty of language learning;
- (2) foreign language aptitude;
- (3) the nature of language learning;

(4) learning and communication strategies; and

(5) motivation and expectations.

This original categorization was made based on the large number of findings from free-recall verbal reports of FL teachers and students in an American university. Yet Horwitz (1988) stated that she did not tend to develop “a complete inventory of idiosyncratic beliefs” as some beliefs which were normally taken for granted might be missed out in the catalogue (p. 293). In other words, the five themes of learner beliefs are merely the tip of the iceberg which primarily showed us a partial picture of learner beliefs. Indeed, some scholars have worked on the structures of beliefs after Horwitz and different themes have been identified in their studies (Cotterall, 1995, 1999; Sakui and Gaies, 1999; Yang, 1992; 1999). Cotterall (1995) developed six structures of beliefs based on the interviews and surveys with ESL students:

(1) role of the teacher;

(2) role of feedback;

(3) learner independence;

(4) learner confidence in study ability;

(5) experience of language learning; and

(6) approach to studying.

Unlike the descriptive analysis in Horwitz’s (1988) study, Cotterall used factor analysis to examine the underlying constructs of the survey items. In 1999, she reinvestigated the structure of student beliefs by adding two additional aspects of beliefs (i.e., beliefs about strategies, self-efficacy beliefs), which raised much attention at that time. Six sets of beliefs were identified by the factor analysis:

(1) role of the teacher;

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- (2) role of feedback;
 - (3) sense of self-efficacy;
 - (4) important strategies;
 - (5) dimensions of strategies-related behavior; and
 - (6) the nature of language learning.

However, Yang (1992) explored Taiwan students' beliefs about EFL and identified four aspects by using Horwitz's 34-item questionnaire:

- (1) self-efficacy and expectation;
- (2) value and nature of learning spoken English;
- (3) foreign language aptitude; and
- (4) formal, structured study.

Yang's participants were Taiwan college students, who might have different perceptions of language learning to the American students in Horwitz's study, due to cultural and ethical differences. There is no universal structure of learner beliefs about language learning. Yang (1992) suggested, "each sample may have a unique underlying structure of beliefs" (cited in Kuntz, 1996b, p13). Indeed, this conclusion is in line with the studies conducted by scholars on Japanese and Chinese language learning. Mori (1999) commented that student beliefs were relevant to the specific language features. On this basis, research should consider not only common general beliefs about language learning, self-efficacy etc, but also those beliefs about the characteristics of target languages which cannot be neglected, as they might broaden our understanding of learner beliefs. Thus Mori investigated college students' beliefs about learning Japanese as a FL by adding the beliefs about the Japanese writing system and six themes emerged:

- (1) Kanji is difficult;

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- (2) analytic approach;
 - (3) risk taking;
 - (4) avoid ambiguity;
 - (5) Japanese is easy; and
 - (6) reliance on L1.

Mori (1999) concluded that the six dimensions actually could be summarized into three aspects of FL learning:

- (1) perceptions of the difficulty;
- (2) the effectiveness of approaches to or strategies for language learning;
- (3) the source of linguistic knowledge.

The three aspects were the basic beliefs that language learners held in their mind. Instead of working out how many dimensions there are in learners' beliefs, what matters more is to understand what learners think about the important aspects of language learning and how these perceptions affect their learning (Mori, 1999). Moreover, as Horwitz (1988) noted, "student judgments about the difficulty of language learning are critical to the development of their expectations for and commitment to it" (p. 286). The investigation of learners' perceptions of difficulty is the initial and necessary step. Furthermore, as discussed above, learners' awareness of their approaches to learning language plays a crucial part in their learning behaviour (Yang, 1999). In that sense, this study chose the two fundamental aspects of beliefs to explore--beliefs about difficulty and beliefs about strategies for language learning, rather than trying to get the whole picture of learners' beliefs about language learning.

2.3.2.2 Beliefs about FL Learning

Beliefs about FL learning are a very broad area that many studies have investigated from different aspects of EFL and modern foreign languages (MFL). However, the research I have reviewed below aims not to give a full picture of FL beliefs, but to emphasise some of the findings which can shed light on the belief studies about the Chinese language. This includes perceptions of the difficulties of the target language, beliefs about effective learning strategies, as well as cultural beliefs about language learning.

Perceptions of the Difficulties of Language Learning

Results from some studies showed learners' assessment about the difficulty of FL learning depends on the specific target language that they choose to learn. Horwitz (1988) revealed that American beginner learners of Spanish, German and French as FL have different perceptions about their target languages. Spanish was rated as a relatively easy language to learn while German and French were labelled as medium difficulty. English was regarded as a medium difficult language by ESL learners in different studies. 41% of Korean learners in Truitt's (1995) study, 45% of Taiwanese learners in Yang's (1992) study and nearly 60% of Turkish heritage learners in Kunt's (1997) study thought English was medium difficult (Horwitz, 1999). Kuntz (1996a) found students learning the African language Swahili believed it was an easy language. However, compared with the alphabetic languages (i.e. German, Spanish and French), Oh (1996) found that almost 50% of American learners viewed Japanese as a difficult language. The result was supported by the findings of studies by Mori (1999) and Dewey (2004) with learners of Japanese.

With regard to the difficulty of specific language skills, three language groups in Horwitz's (1988) study shared the same opinion about speaking, reading and writing. Two thirds of them agreed that reading and

writing was easier than speaking and understanding. Yet half of them did not think that “it is easier to speak than understand a foreign language” (p. 285). Apart from the European languages, Kuntz (1996a) found that learners of Swahili believed the productive skills including writing and speaking were easier than the receptive skills of listening and reading. Mori (1999) revealed that a large majority of American learners of Japanese believed kanji was one of the most difficult parts of learning Japanese. Kanji is a kind of Japanese writing script which is adopted from Chinese characters. For most learners of Japanese, especially L1 English speakers, kanji was different from their mother language. American learners also responded that sometimes it was hard to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words even when knowing every other word in the sentence. In addition, compared with recognising the meaning of kanji, they viewed writing the characters as the hardest task. Mori’s study brings us a new insight into students’ beliefs by involving specific perceptions about the difficulty of certain language characteristics and skills.

Beliefs about Effective Learning Strategies

Belief about effective learning strategies, in terms of general and specific strategies for language learning, are reviewed here. As theoretical views about communicative pedagogy is discussed in the last section, this part highlights students’ own perspectives in this respect.

As to the language learning process, American learners of German and Spanish in Horwitz’s study (1988) agreed that “the most important part of learning a foreign language is to learn how to translate from their native language” (cited in Horwitz, 1999, p. 567). The opinion was supported by learners of Japanese in Oh’s (1996) study as well as more than half of EFL learners from Korea and Cyprus in other studies (Kunt, 1997; Truitt, 1995). Yet 72% of Taiwanese learners of English, 65% of learners of French and a large majority of American learners of Japanese disagreed with the statement (Horwitz, 1988; Yang, 1992;

Riley, 2009). Horwitz (1999) explained these differences might be due to the different instructional approaches and the distance between the target language and learners' L1. Beliefs about vocabulary learning also vary among groups in different studies. Most EFL learners and American learners of Japanese believed learning vocabulary words was the most important part of language learning, whilst half of learners of European languages did not think so (Horwitz, 1999).

With respect to grammar learning, learners of different languages did not agree that learning grammar rules was the most important part of language learning (Horwitz, 1988, 1999; Kern, 1995; Park, 1995; Yang, 1992). However, beginner learners of Japanese had a neutral opinion about it, and 44% of intermediate learners of Japanese agreed with this statement to some extent (Oh, 1996). Over 80% of language learners agreed that "it is important to practice in the language laboratory" (Horwitz, 1988, p. 289). The same pattern of results was found in the studies of Kuntz (1996a), Mantle-Bromley (1995) and Davis (2003). Cotterall (1999) revealed nearly a third of ESL learners in New Zealand believed practice is the top factor affecting successful language learning, and half the students highly valued personal effort in their ESL learning. However, Sakui and Gaies (1999) found that Japanese EFL students thought both practice and communicative approaches were useful for English learning. Results from Mori's (1999) survey showed interesting findings about perspectives of learning Japanese kanji. Most American learners believed analysis of meanings or features of components was an effective way to master characters. On the other hand, they also thought a great deal of memorisation should be involved in learning kanji. This indicates that, students' beliefs about what is the best way to learn FL, are closely related to specific language features. In addition, as reviewed above, the contextual factor plays a crucial role in influencing students' beliefs, thus how students feel about different ways of learning in different cultural settings is discussed below.

Cultural Beliefs about Language Learning

Some studies revealed that students' beliefs were relevant to their cultural settings. In comparison to American learners of French and Spanish, Tumposky (1991) found that Soviet EFL students were more enthusiastic about practising English by communicating with L1 speakers or listening to tapes, an explanation for this is that, multilingualism is highly favoured in the Soviet Union. Similarly, the results of Yang's (1992) study showed a strong cultural influence on Taiwanese students' beliefs. Students valued the importance of mastering English skills and proficiency. They believed learning English would bring them many job opportunities. These attitudes were reflected in the Taiwan societal culture that places great emphasis on competent English skills. Yang's study explored the cultural impact on students' beliefs and first expanded the research sample to Asian students.

Apart from the motivational beliefs about language learning, some studies found students' beliefs were associated with their institutional education and social culture. Davis (2003) compared learner beliefs with the current theoretical view in a university in Macao. Results showed that students were likely to use behaviourist approaches to learning English and that grammatical rules and repetition were largely favoured in their learning. This indicated that these students' beliefs were not in line with the current second language acquisition (SLA) theoretical views, which valued interactive communication. Similar results were found in Shen et al's (2005) study with Taiwan university students. In addition to the three theories of learning approaches (i.e. behaviourism, innatism, and interactionism) that Davis discussed, Shen et al noted three teaching strategies, bottom-up, top-down and interactive. Students reported to prefer the bottom-up processing, as did their instructors. The high consistency of these two studies might be due to the similar language learning settings (Chinese society). Although current SLA theories emphasised the importance of interaction, most of the time students still received traditional instructions

at school. Students' previous learning experience in the specific cultural context might be the reason for their out-of-date thoughts.

Moreover, some studies revealed language assessment in different schools was an important factor effecting students' beliefs (Brown, 2009; Ganjabi, 2011). Brown (2009) asked US learners of 9 different languages to express their agreement on the effectiveness of concrete teaching practice. Similarly, students preferred traditional grammar instruction rather than communicative teaching. As grammar was most valued in students' tests, it was no surprise that students believed a traditional grammar-based approach was the most effective. Similar results were found in the study of Ganjabi (2011) in the context of EFL in Iran, where traditional exams focusing on grammar learning was more prevalent than in the American FL education environment.

2.3.2.3 Beliefs about CFL Learning and Teaching

There are currently very few studies of any type about CFL learning and teaching in the British context, but some initial findings have been revealed in recent years regarding the difficulty of the Chinese language (Higgins and Sheldon, 2001; Hu, 2010; Wang, 2009), strategies for tone learning (Hu and Tian, 2012) and characters (Wang and Leland, 2011). Studies about the perceptions of learners of Chinese in the US and China were reviewed here to shed some light on the understanding of CFL learners' beliefs.

As to the perceptions of difficulty faced in CFL, Samimy and Lee (1997) found that most American beginner learners believed writing was the most difficult aspect of learning, followed by speaking and listening. Even for learners at the intermediate to advanced level, writing (especially writing compositions) still ranked as the hardest for them (Huang, 2000). However, results from Chiang (2002)'s survey showed writing had fallen down to fourth place on the difficulty list. The top three difficulties that American

students reported were memorisation, tones, speaking and listening. Wang and Higgins (2008) revealed that speaking, listening and writing were viewed as equally difficult by beginner learners in the UK. Hu (2010) systematically investigated perceived difficulties of learning Chinese among British college students, and identified six major areas including grammar, aural reception, words, pronunciation, oral production and memorisation recall. Nevertheless, some interesting findings were revealed in Higgins and Sheldon's (2001) study on English pupils. Some pupils said the identifying different tones, guessing the meanings of new words as well as distinguishing the homophones was difficult, while some stated that "Mandarin is not difficult but challenging— remembering everything" (Higgins and Sheldon, 2001, p. 113).

Due to the perceived difficulty of Chinese language and learning, a few scholars started to investigate what students believe about effective learning and teaching approaches to Chinese learning and teaching (Hu and Tian, 2012; Wang and Higgins, 2008; Wang and Leland, 2011; Wang, Spencer and Xing, 2009). Hu and Tian (2012) initially examined students' beliefs about effective strategies for learning and teaching Chinese tones. 60 English university students completed a questionnaire which was developed based on Hu's earlier study in 2007. The results showed that students valued the importance of paying attention to tones when listening to and speaking Chinese. They also placed emphasis on teacher explanation and correction of their tone mistakes. In addition, the study found that students' beliefs were closely connected to their proficiency levels. Students at beginning level viewed "paying attention to tones when listening and speaking" more important than higher level learners.

Given that Chinese characters were another challenge for English-speaking learners, Wang, Spencer and Xing (2009) conducted a study with 54 beginning-level university learners in the UK. Students' metacognitive beliefs about strategies for learning Chinese characters were investigated. The

metacognitive beliefs were defined as “expectations that learners hold with regard to thinking and learning, and the information learners acquire about their learning” (p. 47.) They found students had a generally positive attitude about learning Chinese characters. As for specific character learning strategies, memorisation and rote rehearsal of handwriting were regarded as effective approaches. Similar results were found in Wang and Higgins’s (2008) study. Most learners believed they needed more writing practice on characters as well as listening practice at the beginning stage. They also suggested getting involved in cultural activities would facilitate Chinese learning and the understanding of Chinese culture.

Unlike the results of Wang, Spencer and Xing (2009), which merely focused on learning strategies, Wang and Leland (2011) focused on effective activities for Chinese character teaching. 13 English-speaking beginner students from an American university participated in the study. They were asked to write a reflective journal about their opinions of character classes and complete a questionnaire at the end of term. Students reported that copying individual characters facilitated their orthographic recognition, and listening to and pronouncing characters was effective for learning pronunciation. They also perceived learning characters in context helped with the understanding of meaning. Besides, practising characters by participating in interactive tasks with group members was viewed as being as good as learning characters on one’s own. This study systematically investigated the approaches to learning Chinese characters in the classroom context. Both individual practice and group interaction were perceived as effective strategies for character learning.

A growing interest in beliefs of Chinese learners had also been found in some papers written in Chinese. In line with the survey of Wang and Leland (2011), Ding’s (2006, 2007) series of studies showed that both novice English and Japanese-speaking learners valued communicative activities as effective for learning (Ding, 2006, 2007). With regard to teacher feedback and grammar learning, my MA thesis

revealed beginner learners, especially American and European students, had a strong preference for error correction. Most students thought rule explanation and explicit correction were better than other types of feedback in grammar learning (Yang, 2012).

It is apparent from the studies of students' beliefs about CFL learning reviewed above, that what is lacking is a deeper and larger scale investigation in the specific context of CFL teaching. This is the reason why my study addresses this issue, to fill the gap in the area of beliefs studies about CFL learning and teaching in the British context. To provide deeper insights into students' beliefs and into how students develop their own beliefs in a particular context, it is important to review studies about the source of student beliefs below.

2.3.2.4 The Source of Student Beliefs

Although few studies focused on examining the source of student beliefs, some findings were revealed from student interview responses or other qualitative data. Sakui and Gaies (1999) reported that a Japanese EFL student's beliefs were derived from her instructional experience. The student, who had no prior experience with a L1 English teacher, thought it would be helpful for her English learning if the L1 teacher only spoke English. However, her beliefs changed after four-weeks of instruction with a L1 speaker who could speak Japanese. In this case, student's instructional experience affected her beliefs about the medium of language use. The findings were demonstrated in two other studies about Japanese students (Sato, 2004; Riley, 2009).

A similar conclusion was drawn in Dewey's (2004) study about attitudes to script choice for learning Japanese. Students' positive beliefs about kanji learning came from their learning experience. Although kanji was introduced to students from different groups at different times (i.e. immediate and delayed

introduction), their beliefs tended to be associated with their affection for their own learning experience. That is, students who enjoyed the kanji learning were likely to support the idea of introducing kanji from the beginning.

Evidence about the effect of previous learning experience on the formation of beliefs, was found in Lauro's interview Barcelos (2000). A learner of English Lauro, said that his beliefs about repetition in learning English were derived from his previous experience of practice. He memorised vocabulary on his way home and found it of great help.

In addition, studies showed that language learning context played an important role in shaping students' beliefs. Karina in Barcelos's study (2000) doubted her English level and ability to communicate after moving from Brazil to the US. Barcelos explained Karina's confidence as a learner of English was "partly due to the differences between learning English in the US and in Brazil" (p. 144). Jin and Cortazzi (2006) argued that learners' beliefs were embedded in their own cultures of learning, which could not be easily changed in the new learning contexts. They further illustrated the contribution of the Confucian heritage of learning for Chinese EFL students in China and Britain. Chinese students faced challenges when studying in the UK, as they thought differently about English academic writing which was different from their own cultural background. This indicates that, a learner's own culture might be the significant source shaping their beliefs about language learning.

In sum, student beliefs come from different sources including their educational experiences, previous language learning experiences, language learning contexts, and most importantly, their own cultures. It is no doubt that, in my study, L1 English pupils' expectations of their Chinese learning and teaching are closely related to the sources mentioned above. Yet the extent to which students' cultural and educational background is associated with their beliefs is unknown and thus it is a key issue in the current study.

2.3.3 Language Teachers' Beliefs about Language Learning and Teaching

As with studies of students' beliefs, there is a great deal of research showing that teachers' beliefs about language learning affect how they teach (Kagan, 1992; Shulman, 1986; Pajares, 1992). The ability to teach language is based on a sophisticated network of knowledge types and understandings about language (Duff and Lester, 2008). Thus when considering the difficulty of and approaches to Chinese teaching, which is a key area in this study, teachers' beliefs regarding FL teaching, particularly Chinese learning, are a very important factor to review.

2.3.3.1 Teacher Beliefs and Knowledge

The general distinction between knowledge and beliefs has been discussed above. Reviewing teachers' beliefs and knowledge will help understand teachers' concepts of the structure of language learning and teaching; this is the basis on which the questionnaire in this study was developed. From the perspective of teacher development and education, Shulman (1986) raised an issue of the "missing paradigm" between teachers' knowledge and pedagogy, and shed some light on the understanding of teachers' beliefs (Shulman, 1986, p. 7). Most teachers may have some expertise knowledge about teaching, yet what they thought about this knowledge and how they applied it to the specific context had been underexplored (Shulman, 1986). Pajares (1992) concluded that beliefs underlie the knowledge dimensions in terms of declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge. Nevertheless, because of the episodic nature of beliefs, some studies revealed that teachers were inclined to use their beliefs rather than their knowledge to sort out teaching problems in specific circumstances (Connelly et al., 1997; Pajares, 1992). Clandinin and Connelly (1987) used the term "personal practical knowledge" to refer to the beliefs teachers held and emphasised their effect. Personal practical knowledge was the crucial aspect of teachers' content

knowledge for teaching (Connelly et al., 1997).

Despite the complex relationship between knowledge and beliefs, studies have shown that both constructs have huge impacts on teachers' instructions as well as students' learning (Diab, 2006; Ernest, 1989; Horwitz, 1985; Kern, 1995; Pajares, 1992; Peacock, 1999, 2001). Language teachers with misconceptions of language learning and teaching allowed these misconceptions to affect their approaches to teaching (Horwitz, 1985). For instance, teachers who believed "native like accent" was important in language learning may tend to correct students' pronunciation mistakes often (Diab, 2006). Prospective language teachers in studies of Horwitz (1985) and Peacock (2001) were found to hold naive beliefs. For example, learning language was a matter of learning lots of vocabulary and grammatical rules. Such beliefs may lead them to focus on words and grammar learning in practice. Mismatched beliefs between teachers and students might cause frustration in students' learning, and in turn affect their attitudes and motivation (Peacock, 1999). Therefore, it is necessary to explore teachers' beliefs about language teaching and learning. According to Calderhead (1996), teachers' beliefs consisted of five main aspects:

- (1) beliefs about learners and learning;
- (2) beliefs about teaching;
- (3) beliefs about subject matter;
- (4) about learning to teach;
- (5) about self and about the teaching role (cited in Zheng, 2009, p. 75)

Most studies also adopted BALLI to investigate teachers' beliefs about language learning regarding the five aspects as mentioned before:

- (1) difficulty of language learning;
- (2) foreign language aptitude;

-
- (3) the nature of language learning;
 - (4) learning and communication strategies;
 - (5) motivation and expectations.

In order to compare the beliefs of teachers and students, the general nature of FL learning and specific strategies for FL learning and teaching is considered as an underpinning set of categories for the beliefs of teachers in this study. The following review will discuss language teachers' beliefs regarding the difficulty of language learning, ways of learning, as well as the curriculum and teaching context that affects teachers' beliefs.

2.3.3.2 Beliefs about FL Learning and Teaching

Beliefs about the Difficulties of Language Learning

Most studies that focused on EFL teachers' beliefs about language learning revealed some discrepancies from the beliefs of their students. Teachers had more realistic perceptions than students of the estimated length of language learning. Half the teachers in Peacock's (1999) survey believed it would need 3-5 years or even longer for students to speak a language fluently, if only one hour a day was spent on study. However, Diab (2006) found, some teachers in interviews noted "the difficulty of a foreign language depends on what language the learner already knows" (p. 26.). A teacher stated that Spanish was an easy language for her because she had already known a little about the French language, which had some similar rules to Spanish. Shimizu and Green (2002) found that Japanese teachers in North America believed that their English speaking students might struggle much more with reading and writing Japanese kanji than those Chinese students with character background.

As for specific language skills, Diab (2006) revealed that 80% of teachers believed speaking was more

difficult than listening comprehension. They also agreed reading skills were much easier than speaking and writing skills. That is to say, teachers regarded productive skills (speaking and writing) as easier to master than the receptive skills of listening and reading. Likewise, Dewey's (2004) study about attitudes towards the Japanese script choice shed some light on teachers' beliefs about language skills. Dewey found some teachers were concerned about the difficulty of Japanese written script kanji for English-speaking learners. Instead of introducing Japanese kanji which was irrelevant to the Japanese sound, they believed learning romaji (an alternative Romanised script) might be helpful for beginners to read and write, as romaji directly represents the pronunciation of Japanese.

Beliefs about Ways of Language Learning and Teaching

Teachers' beliefs about ways of language learning and teaching, are closely relevant to how they choose appropriate pedagogical approaches to teaching. In the light of the previous review about theoretical views about CLT in the last section, it would be interesting to see whether teachers hold similar beliefs about teaching orientation in belief studies.

With regard to the importance of language learning, Peacock (2001) revealed that many third-year trainee teachers from a HK university believed "learning a second language meant learning a lot of vocabulary and grammar rules" (p. 186). On the contrary, Diab (2006) found a large majority of Lebanese EFL teachers did not think so. Most experienced teachers shared the beliefs that it was important to be exposed to the authentic language environment and communicate with others (Brown, 2009; Diab, 2006; Kim, 2011; Schulz, 1996, 2001). Israeli teachers from Brosh's (1996) study, however, believed in the importance of communicative-based teaching when responding to the questionnaire, yet in the interview, they thought that they "teach languages mainly as linguistic systems rather than as means of

communication” (p. 132.). That is to say, these teachers who claimed to be CLT-orientated did not actually show a similar pattern in their beliefs about teaching strategies.

Schulz (2001) found differences between US and Columbian teachers regarding grammar teaching. One third more Columbian teachers than US teachers agreed that learning and practising grammar rules were helpful for developing communicative skills. This indicated that teachers from different cultural contexts had discrepant views about the practice of language learning. Indeed, 97% of Lebanese EFL teachers in Diab’s (2006) study agreed with the importance of repetition and practice in FL learning. They also highlighted the role of speaking and reading as these were the essential skills students should acquire. Teachers further explained, speaking facilitated pronunciation and “reading is one of the best ways to learn” (p. 25). Interestingly, a teacher even suggested that reading in students’ L1 enabled them to be open-minded to learn different cultures and different FL languages.

Pre-service teachers in the study of Harrigton and Hertel (2000) showed their endorsement of extensive repetition and practice in listening and speaking. However, some teachers expressed their concerns about the negative effect of repetition. One teacher stated, “drill exercises tend to be too repetitive and the student may begin to despise the language because of the tedious task” (p.59). Kim (2011) found L1 English teachers in a Korean university did not like the mechanical repetition and memorisation activities in the English classroom. Although one teacher in the interview noted the necessity of memorising vocabulary in language learning, he believed rote memorisation was not the main strategy for learners, sometimes it was just “regurgitating” after writing things down over and over again (p. 137). All teachers highlighted “actively using and practicing English” in communication rather than meaningless repetition (p.137). Nevertheless, when it came to teaching Japanese kanji, practice and repetition were favoured by Japanese teachers. Shimizu and Green (2002) revealed that most teachers reported rote learning in terms

of repetitive writing and practice drills as the most common and useful strategies for students. This suggests teachers' beliefs about CLT approaches might be related to the specific target language. Furthermore, the different beliefs between L1 English teachers and Japanese teachers about non-communicative repetition, indicate the effect of the cultural background of teachers on their beliefs. The following section will review this aspect.

Cultural Beliefs about Learning and Teaching

Cultural beliefs refer to beliefs of L1 teachers who come from a different cultural background than that of their students. This is important as my study addresses the issues of CFL teachers, including L1 Chinese teachers, in an English school context. Kim (2011)'s study about 8 L1 English teachers in Korea shed some light on cross-cultural language teaching. L1 English teachers encountered conflicts of beliefs about learning and teaching, due to the different learning cultures between the East and the West. L1 English teachers believed in student-centeredness and active participation in class. They expected students to engage in learning with peers and teachers, and to enjoy the interaction. Yet Korean learners seemed to tend to rely much more on teachers' instructions. They were busy making notes and did not communicate much with others. Moreover, L1 English teachers found Korean students limited their learning strategies to repetition and rote memorisation, which might not always be effective or enjoyable.

Haley and Ferro (2011) showed L1 Chinese teachers who first came to US schools focused on grammar-based learning and "the written form of language" rather than communication (p. 297). This is primarily because of the language assessment in China, which overlooks communication skills in FL learning. The findings in the study of Hu and Smith (2011) revealed some interesting views about the responsibility of student learning. As a L1 Chinese teacher, Hu thought learning was the priority in a

student's life; therefore she did not understand why some students found excuses to miss class. From her Chinese cultural perspective, students should work hard and be highly motivated in learning, as learning was their own responsibility. This point of view was consistent with L1 English teachers in Kim's study. However, Hu's American colleague Judy did not think absence was a big deal and tried to be considerate of student absence. Furthermore, Judy believed "motivation is definitely a responsibility for teachers" (p.26). Just as Kim (2011) concluded, "teachers' beliefs should be adapted to accommodate the contextual factors" (p.143). Likewise, some L1 Chinese teachers in Wang's (2011) study showed their concerns about poor student discipline and their having less motivation for learning in the UK. Although they agreed that learning should be fun and interesting, they also believed learners needed to put much more effort in learning to make achievement (Wang, 2011).

2.3.3.3 Beliefs about CFL Learning and Teaching

Some studies compared teachers' beliefs with those of their CFL learners (Hu and Tian, 2012; Wang and Higgins, 2008; Yang, 2008; Yang, 2012). In this section, only the findings of teachers' beliefs will be reviewed. Wang (2011) explored L1 Chinese teachers' perceptions of their professional identity, standardization in Mandarin and CLT in schools. The results revealed that although CLT was commonly used in British FL classrooms, Mandarin teachers expressed that learning Chinese characters cannot merely depend on listening and speaking through interaction, the strategies such as rote-learning and repetition were still necessary and effective to master the complex orthography of Chinese characters. This finding was consistent with Yang's (2008) reflections as a teaching assistant in a US university. She realised that practice and rote learning was an important strategy for memorising Chinese characters. Yang also thought authentic input of Chinese should be provided to learners, as they had less opportunity for exposure to Chinese language in a FL setting. With regard to grammar learning, Yang supported the

idea of using some English to explain the grammar rules. Indeed, these suggestions of how to teach Chinese characters and grammar rules in Yang (2008)'s study, echo theoretical implications for CLT adaptation in FL. As Spada (2007) argued, CLT was not only implemented in speaking and listening, but also in reading and writing. Appropriated attention to language forms and use of student's L1 was also welcomed in CLT, as long as the core purpose was about meaningful communication.

Hu and Tian (2012) investigated teachers' beliefs about effective strategies for learning and teaching Chinese tones. 15 CFL teachers in UK universities were asked to rate their perceived level of effectiveness of a list of 18 tone strategies on the list. They were also asked to rate the effectiveness of tone approaches to three levels of students—beginners, intermediate and advanced learners. Results showed that for beginners, being aware of and mimicking the tones all the time when listening to oral Chinese was believed to be an effective approach, whilst for higher level students, teachers thought perception exercises (e.g. listening to Chinese words and deciding what the tones are) and error correction were useful. Teachers' corrective feedback preference was also found in Yang's (2012) study. Compared with their students, teachers had a strong preference for error correction, yet most of the time they were not aware that students actually did not take their feedback as an error correction.

Other studies had showed that teachers brought their own expectations of learners to the language classroom. This is partly reviewed in the previous section about cultural beliefs of CFL teachers. In the cross-cultural context, teachers' expectations were closely related to their own cultural background (Barcelos and Kalaja, 2003; Borg, 2003). To further examine teachers' beliefs about CFL in the British context, and the extent to which their beliefs relate to their cultural background, which is a focus in this study, the source of teachers' beliefs was a significant factor to review.

2.3.3.4 The Source of Teachers' beliefs

Borg (2003) developed a model about the relationship between teacher cognition, schooling, professional education, contextual factors and classroom practice (See Figure 2-1, cited in Borg, 2003, p. 82), which also illustrated that different resources shaped teachers' beliefs in terms of learning and teaching experience and cultural context.

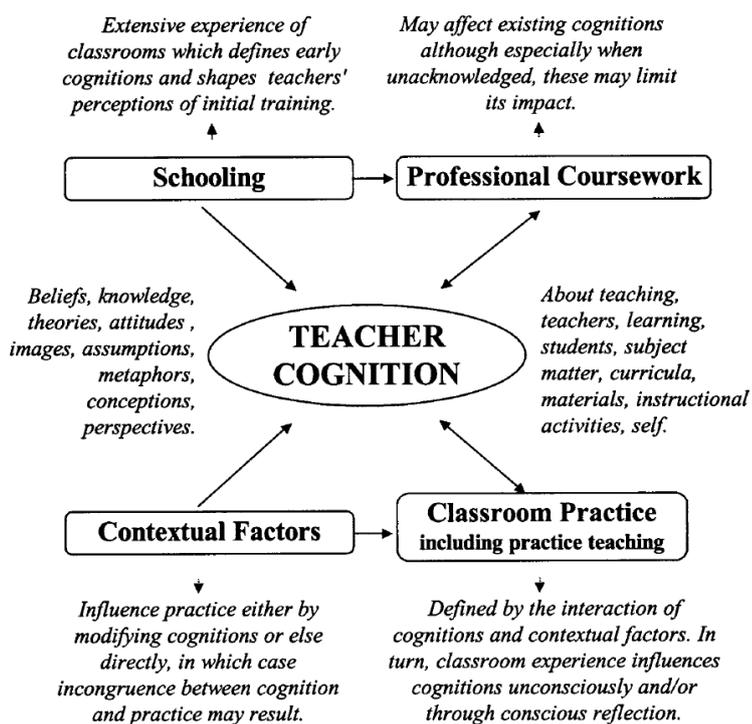


Figure 2-1 Relationship between Teacher Cognition, Schooling, Professional Education, Contextual Factors and Classroom Practice

Many studies revealed that teachers' beliefs derived from their own language learning experiences and the education they received in their home countries (Haley and Ferro, 2011; Kim, 2011). In the EFL context in Korea, Kim (2011) found the L1 English teachers' views about learner-centeredness were associated with their prior learning experiences. One New Zealand teacher felt most students in his country experienced the creative style of learning, "right from the kindergarten" (p. 130). Another American teacher had the same views about the source of beliefs. In practice, the impact of local education permeated into every aspect of teachers' beliefs and most of the time, they simply took them for granted

and were unaware of the differences from other cultures. Hu and Smith (2011) revealed a Chinese teacher Ran's confusion about American students' lack of motivation and diligence for their course study, as students were expected to be well-behaved and work hard in China. Ran also found American students were reluctant to be compared with peers whereas role models in Chinese education are always supported for encouraging students to learn. Only after communicating with colleagues did Ran finally realise the differences between Chinese and American culture about the expectations of students. In that sense, teachers' beliefs are underpinned in their cultural education experience, and their beliefs can only become explicit when conflicts emerged in their teaching practices.

Nevertheless, teachers' beliefs are not always in line with their previous learning experience (Borg, 2003; Kim, 2011; Nespor, 1987). L1 English teachers in Kim's (2011) study were found to be supporting CLT in grammar teaching, although form-based grammar teaching was popular when they were FL learners years ago. L1 English teachers thought learning grammar via drill activities was boring and ineffective in spite of being taught to teach in this way. In addition, their teacher's instruction when they were at school is an important source of beliefs, which Lortie (1975) referred to as "apprenticeship of observation" (p.86, cited in Borg, 2003). Teachers developed their beliefs about teaching from memory of their previous teachers' classroom practice. Such memories can also derive from significant events or people who had a big impact on one's life. A teacher in Kim's (2011) study stated her mother's influence on her beliefs about student-centred approach. Her mother always encouraged her to make her own decision, even when she asked for cookies. Thus she learnt to seek her own interests in learning and take full responsibility for her behaviour. Another teacher stated, when he wanted to explain something to his students, it always reminded him of how his old high school teacher or a university professor instructed him. As he said, like "summoning ghosts" (p. 132).

In terms of professional training, Kim (2011) revealed that professional training might help teachers figure out the underlying reasons behind a practice. However, in most cases teachers' beliefs remained the same after teacher training. Teachers thought the knowledge they obtained from training may not be useful in teaching practice. Instead, "the experience of what worked best in the classroom served as a primary source of information for lesson planning" (p. 134), and for the development of teacher beliefs.

With an understanding of students' and teachers' beliefs about FL and CFL respectively in the reviews above, the following section gathered findings of belief studies which compared beliefs of students and their teachers.

2.3.4 The Relationship between Students' Beliefs and Teachers' Beliefs

Relationship between beliefs of students and their teachers is one of the key focuses in my study and it is crucial to review here. Some studies have concluded that, as teaching activity involves both teacher and students, comparison of teachers and students beliefs is necessary to understand expectations of each group (Peacock, 1999; Schulz, 1996, 2001; Davis, 2003). Two key points are reviewed in this section--consistency of teacher and student beliefs, and the impact of teacher beliefs on that of their students.

2.3.4.1 Consistency and Inconsistency

Both consistency and inconsistency between students' beliefs and teachers' beliefs are found in previous studies. Brosh (1996) compared learners' and their teachers' opinions about effective English language teaching (ELT) in Israel. 406 grade nine students and 200 teachers were asked to rank the three most important characteristics of ELT. Results showed that teachers and students shared the views that understanding the subject matter (i.e, linguistic structures and skills) was crucial to ELT. However,

teachers thought students' knowledge of the subject matter should be associated with communicative ability, yet students were more concerned with their L2 English teachers' language competence for lesson delivery. Berry (1997) examined students' knowledge of grammar and asked about their teachers' expectations of how well students knew these grammatical rules in a HK university. Results revealed teachers overestimated their students' knowledge on 16 items out of 50. This indicates teachers might be optimistic about students' grammar learning. The performance of students' grammar learning probably closely relates to their strong beliefs about grammar instruction and error correction.

In Schulz's (1996) study, more than 80% of American adult FL learners believed in the significance of formal grammar instruction, and they required more error correction from teachers and preferred immediate feedback on their mistakes. However, only half the teachers thought formal grammar teaching and immediate error correction were important. Similar results were found in Schulz's following study with a Columbian sample in 2001. Students had a stronger preference than their teachers for error correction, as well as traditional grammar instruction, which mainly focused on forms learning, regardless of what cultural settings they were in (i.e. US and Columbia). EFL learners in Davis (2003) also showed a stronger belief than their teachers about correcting grammatical mistakes as soon as possible. This is in line with Brown's (2009) study on perceptions of effective teaching practice. American university FL students strongly supported teaching approaches that emphasised practising grammar points, whereas their teachers believed grammar is better learnt in interactive tasks by using the target language and doing information exchange activities. Ganjabi (2011) repeated Brown's study in Iran with EFL students and had similar findings. Compared with their students, teachers were likely to adopt new theoretical views (e.g. CLT) towards teaching practice.

Studies on beliefs about current SLA also found a similar pattern of students' preference for grammar

learning. Davis (2003) found EFL learners in Macao “sought a more structured, methodical and ‘safer’ approach than their teachers” (p.214). They wanted to learn grammar structures step by step, yet teachers believed students should take risks in learning English in a meaningful and communicative way, again indicating a CLT approach to teaching. However, Shen et al (2005) used the same questionnaire with Taiwanese EFL students and teachers, and found different results. Surprisingly, teachers and students believed in a traditional forms-focused approach of learning, and teachers tended to more strongly support this approach.

The two studies were conducted in a Chinese context but revealed the different beliefs of EFL teachers, suggesting that teachers’ beliefs might not always be consistent with theoretical views from the SLA research about adult learners. There are other factors affecting teachers’ beliefs, as reviewed in Section 2.3.3.4. Similarly, as Ganjabi (2011) explained in his study, students’ preference for grammar learning may have other underlying reasons. In his case, the EFL assessment in Iran is in written form and primarily aims at testing learners’ grammar knowledge rather than oral skills. Besides, Iranian students were taught in a way focused on grammar learning when they were in high school. Therefore, students’ beliefs are exam-orientated and in line with their previous learning.

2.3.4.2 Effect of Teachers’ Beliefs on Students’ Beliefs

Apart from different beliefs between teachers and students, studies have investigated whether teachers’ beliefs have an influence on that of their students. Kern (1995) found first-year students changed some beliefs during their second term, and the changes were more relevant to the learning context than to their teachers. Nevertheless, Riley (2009) commented that, instead of having a great impact on students’ beliefs as a group, the effects of teachers in Kern’s study were actually on the beliefs of individual students.

Some students tended to share similar beliefs with their teachers by the end of term. To further investigate whether students' beliefs "move towards or away from beliefs of their teachers" (p.104), Riley conducted a longitudinal study with Japanese EFL students and their teachers. Results demonstrated teachers' beliefs did have an effect on students' beliefs, "either in reflection of the teacher's status as an expert, or through the teachers' instructional methods, actions and assessments in the classroom" (p.115).

Moreover, Dewey (2004) focused on the sequence of Japanese script learning to explore the connections between beliefs of teachers and their students. Results were somewhat complex in that some aspects of students' beliefs moved towards their teachers' beliefs while some remained the same. In this case, no matter which kind of instruction students received (i.e. introduce kanji first or learn romaji first), students' beliefs tended to change along with their teachers. Similarly, as teachers in both instruction conditions expressed their preference for learning kanji first, students reported they believed introducing kanji at first was helpful for their Japanese script learning. However, with regard to the difficulty of writing, students' perceptions remained unchanged even when being exposed to teachers' positive attitudes about writing. This indicated that the relationship between beliefs of teachers and students was a complicated and active process. In practice evidence showed that, whether students' beliefs move towards or away from the beliefs of their teachers depends on student and teacher interaction and communication. As a language tutor, Yang (2008) expressed her shifts of beliefs about US university students of Chinese. She thought rote learning was not a good way to learn Chinese, even though great value was placed on it in Chinese society. However, it turned out that US students liked using rote memorisation to learn Chinese characters, and thus changed her previous assumptions about western students.

Belief studies about students and teachers reviewed above used different methods to explore their views about language learning and teaching. As in my study, questionnaires and interviews were adopted to

understand the beliefs of teachers and students in the UK context, it is important to review different research methods used in previous studies, particularly the BALLI model and contextual enquiries, which are the basis of developing approaches to beliefs in this study.

2.3.5 Approaches into Investigation of Language Learning Beliefs

2.3.5.1 The BALLI Model Approach

Since Horwitz (1988) highlighted the importance of learners' beliefs in language learning and developed an instrument called "The Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory" (BALLI), extensive studies began to explore learners' and teachers' beliefs about language learning by using different kinds of methods. Some adopted BALLI or modified versions of BALLI, others used qualitative methods to design their own questionnaires or added follow-up interviews to get in-depth views.

The BALLI uses the Likert scale to collect beliefs on the basis of the participants' degree of agreement on the given statements. BALLI are widely used in many studies on MFL and EFL students (e.g. Mantle-Bromley, 1995; Kern, 1995; Kunt, 1997; Peacock, 1999; Yang, 1992) and a Likert-type instrument is predominantly adapted in belief studies. However, some researchers criticized this because the question items mentioned in BALLI did not cover all the issues of language learning (Kuntz, 1996b; Yang, 1992). In practice, according to Horwitz (1988), the aim of BALLI was not to provide a whole picture but to get a general understanding of students' beliefs about language learning. Nevertheless, most BALLI studies used descriptive analysis. The discrepancies represented by percentages might not be significant in the way of inferential statistics. Based on the dimensions of BALLI discussed above, more detailed beliefs regarding the specific target language and the cultural contexts need to be explored to get a deeper understanding of students' beliefs.

In that sense, some scholars designed their own instruments to measure students' and teachers' beliefs from different perspectives. Based on interviews with EFL learners in New Zealand, Cotterall (1995) developed a 34-item questionnaire and compared the learners' beliefs about language learning with the previous study about autonomous learners. In 1999, Cotterall expanded the former questionnaire to 90 items and re-examined students' beliefs about English learning. Students were also asked to rank the four most important variables in their success of language learning. For the purpose of "tapping beliefs most relevant to the learning of English in Japan" (p. 477), Sakui and Gaies (1999) generated their questionnaire items based on existing instruments and views of some English teachers. The study demonstrated the high reliability of using a questionnaire to collect students' beliefs. Moreover, follow-up interviews were carried out to provide additional information about students' beliefs. Sakui and Gaies suggested using the qualitative method such as interview to "provide necessary data triangulation" (p.486).

In addition to the general aspects of beliefs about language, some beliefs concerning the specific features of FL were identified. Mori (1999) initially brought new insights into students' beliefs by involving specific perceptions about difficulties of certain language characteristics as well as effective learning strategies. Likewise, Dewey (2004) focused on beliefs about Japanese written script choice in the language classroom. The issue of whether and when to introduce kanji and romaji (Romanized Japanese) is a disputed topic in Japanese instruction as a FL. Unlike Mori's study that merely collected students' responses from a survey, Dewey first allocated students to receive different instructions on their Japanese courses and then compared beliefs of the two groups of students after training. In order to identify the possible questionnaire items of learning belief about specific areas, such as kanji learning, difficulties of Chinese learning, processing of tones and Chinese characters, some studies designed their instruments on

the basis of the qualitative findings from teachers or students interviews (Hu and Tian, 2012; Hu, 2010; Shen, 2005; Shimizu and Green, 2002). Doing this, addresses the limitations of BALLI, especially the limitation that it failed to examine the language-specific learning beliefs.

In a nutshell, most studies in this area used questionnaires as the main measurement to understand students' and teachers' beliefs. All these studies expanded Horwitz's BALLI model and demonstrated the complexity of beliefs about language learning. Therefore, the questionnaire in my study is also developed based on the BALLI, with some additional items about the features of the Chinese languages. This is further discussed later in Chapter 3.

A questionnaire is a useful instrument to collect a large amount of data to provide a wider inquiry into a person's beliefs. It is also "less threatening" compared with observation, especially regarding sensitive topics about beliefs (Coolican, 2004, p.146). Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that there are several disadvantages of questionnaire studies that cannot be neglected. Barcelos (2003) argued that one of the biggest challenges of questionnaire design is that individual respondents might have different interpretations of question items. Pre-established questionnaire items might restrict students' and teachers' responses so that some of their own voices cannot be heard in the survey (Barcelos, 2003; Sakui and Gaies, 1999). Additionally, studies revealed that beliefs are embedded and developed in an individual's cultural environment (Jin and Cortazzi, 2006). In that sense, the questionnaire which is isolated from the context might not explore the cultural aspects in students' and teachers' beliefs (Alanen, 2003; Barcelos, 2003). Therefore, some scholars suggested additional methods to explore students' and teachers' beliefs, and indeed they tried to adapt additional methods such as interviews or writing reports in their studies (Cotterall, 1995; Dewey, 2004; Riley, 2009).

2.3.5.2 The Social-contextual Approach

From a social-cultural perspective, a few researchers have adopted qualitative methods to understand students' and teachers' beliefs (Alanen, 2003; Barcelos and Kalaja, 2003; Harley and Ferro, 2011; Wang, 2011; Yang, 2008). Guided by Dewey's framework about the concept of experience, Barcelos (2000) used classroom observation, interviews, stimulated-recall, and writing journals to collect learners' beliefs about language learning. Alanen (2003) turned her attention to the younger learners of English in Finland by adapting the Neo-Vygotskian sociocultural approach. Alanen noted that individual's beliefs can only be figured out in the context of activities or interactive communication. Grade 2 students were asked to take semi-structured interviews about their feelings and thoughts when carrying out the activities. Discourse and conversational analysis were used to explore their beliefs. These two studies provided rich information about students' beliefs which are connected with the specific social and cultural context of their language learning.

As for teachers' beliefs, some studies used the narrative inquiry approach to explore teachers' personal experience and their underlying perspectives in the cross-cultural context (Wang, 2011; Yang, 2008). As Yang (2008) noted, "the autographical quality of the narrative approach offers an opportunity for greater insight into the author's experience with different culture and language teaching" (p. 1567). Thus he kept notes about his reflections in his journal after each Chinese class and reviewed them to seek out some pedagogical and cultural implications (Yang, 2008). Likewise, Hu and Smith (2011) used collaborative self-study to explore their cultural beliefs about language teaching. Their experiences were written in journals, and monthly meetings were held to discuss pedagogical issues emerging in their journals. Additionally, they sought opinions about their instruction from students as well as peers, in order to thoroughly understand their beliefs about language learning and teaching.

In that sense, the contextual approach was not only limited in the qualitative methods, but also can combine different types of methods together to provide insightful information about beliefs. In doing this, it helps to enhance the reliability and validity of the study from the triangulation of data. However, as a contextual approach is closely associated with the socio-cultural context, it can only be adapted for the same case studies rather than the wider language context. Moreover, the data selection and degree of interpretative subjectivity are tricky issues in these context-based studies (Bernat and Gvozdenko, 2005). Nevertheless, as Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005) noted, “the choice of research methodology in language learner beliefs studies will depend on the investigator’s purpose and questions of enquiry” (p. 7). In my study, apart from exploring beliefs in a wider enquiry, the other important purpose is to get deeper insights from teachers and students in specific contexts. Thus methods mentioned in contextual approaches were also adopted, in terms of interviews and class observations in schools as case studies.

2.4 Learning Chinese as a Culturally Situated Activity

The issue which is mentioned above, but I have not yet discussed explicitly, is the characteristics of cross-cultural CFL learning. This includes general views towards native and non-native teachers, and beliefs about learning in the East and West. As Ghanem (2015) noted, “multiculturalism, multilingualism, and globalization are the terms” that play an essential role in FL education, particularly in the identity and expertise of FL teachers (p.169). Indeed, CFL learning is not simply a linguistics transmission but rather a cultural activity that deals with issues between L1 Chinese teachers and their non-native students. I will argue below that, it is important to be aware of characteristics of CFL in an intercultural context. This is because, it is the cultural perspectives and expectations that fundamentally influence teacher and student beliefs, as well as which approaches they tend to adapt in learning and teaching CFL.

2.4.1 L1 and L2 Teachers of Foreign Languages

The label of native and non-native teachers of FL based on their L1 is rather contentious (Árva and Medgyes, 2000; Ghanem, 2015; Medgyes, 2001). In my study, in the case of Chinese language teaching, teachers who speak Chinese as L1, regardless of their background of heritage Chinese, or bilingualism, are regarded as L1 Chinese teachers. Teachers whose L1 is any other language rather than Chinese are referred as L2 Chinese teachers.

As far as I am concerned, there is little literature about how teacher identity in terms of language background affects their teaching practice in the CFL field. The advantages and disadvantages of L1 and L2 teachers of English in teaching behaviours, however, were revealed in the findings of Medgyes (2001). 325 teachers of English from 11 countries participated in the survey about perceived differences of L1 and L2 teachers. A large majority of participants (86%) were L2 teachers of English, and 14% of them were L1 teachers. Four main aspects of discrepancies between L1 and L2 teachers, and their influence on language teaching were identified:

- 1) the use of English;
- 2) general attitude towards teaching approaches;
- 3) attitude to teaching the language; and
- 4) attitude to teaching culture.

Participants in the study of Medgyes (2001) believed that, compared with L1 teachers of English, L2 teachers had lower language proficiency which limited their use of English in class, in turn they probably “place an emphasis on those aspects of the language that they have a better grasp of”(p.434), such as grammatical rules, language accuracy, reading and writing skills. Thus when it comes to teaching approaches, they may tend to use controlled activities for practice, be rather strict about students’

mistakes, and rely a great deal on textbooks. On the other hand, according to participants' responses, L1 English teachers were more confident in speaking English naturally, thus they were likely to "adapt a more flexible approach" to teaching, in terms of focusing on fluency, meanings and oral communication (p.435). In addition, they tended to be tolerant to language errors and were keen to provide cultural information for students.

Nevertheless Medgyes (2001) argued, there are also some advantages of being L2 teachers of English. As learners of English, L2 teachers were more aware of the difficulty of and strategies for learning English as a FL/L2. As most L2 teachers were from the same language background as their students, they could "benefit from their ability to use the students' mother tongue" in instruction. Moreover, since L2 teachers and their students shared the same cultural background, they had somewhat realistic expectations of their students, in the sense of language learning and class discipline. Ghanem (2015) showed a similar pattern for L1 and L2 teachers of German teaching cultures. Teachers of German tended to teach culture in the sense that they viewed the culture as an indispensable knowledge of either the high culture of history and arts, or "low" culture about daily life and customs of their students. This indicated that teachers' cultural beliefs do have an impact on what they teach and how they teach that particular language.

As for CFL teaching focused on in my study, no matter whether the teacher of Chinese was L1 or L2, the underlying cultural beliefs about learning played a significant role in their teaching CFL in an English school setting. This is crucial to my study and necessary to review below.

2.4.2 Beliefs about Learning in the East and West

2.4.2.1 Ultimate Purpose of Learning

Prior to reviewing cultural ways of learning, it is necessary to mention that most studies focused on the

core themes of learning that a large majority of people shared in the respective cultural settings, despite the fact that various views about learning may exist in western and Chinese culture (Jin and Cottazzi, 1996). Nevertheless, as most people are exposed to the native cultural environment, their ways of thinking and behaving are inevitably influenced by the native culture to some extent.

As for the Chinese culture of learning, many studies noted this can be traced back to ancient Confucianism. From the perspectives of Confucius, knowledge is essential in personal lives, in that “knowledge is not only the externally existing body but also social and moral knowing” (Li, 2003, p. 265). In that sense, unlike western views that consider knowledge as a neutral construct in learning, the Chinese put emotional value on knowledge seeking. For Chinese, how to reach “self-perfection” in the spiritual sense is the ultimate purpose of learning rather than exploring the unknown of the world (Jin and Cortazzi, 1996, 2006; Li, 2002, 2003). Therefore, the process of seeking knowledge is like a journey of training on the way to become ‘a perfect man’ with both knowledge and virtue. This learning activity cannot be fun all the time and challenges and difficulties are inevitable. However, as “Chinese beliefs of learning seem to display a person orientation”, seeking knowledge is a demand that is directly connected with their character development (Li, 2003, p.265). In that way, long-lasting commitment to learning, such as diligence, perseverance and endurance of hardship are required, no matter how challenging the task might be. Moreover, all the difficulties encountered are viewed as good practice for the purpose of “self-perfection”. Indeed, this view of learning reflects in methods of Chinese literacy learning, as Chinese characters are regarded as their identity by Chinese people (Allen, 2008; Jin and Corttazi, 2006). Learning Chinese characters required intensive writing practice from strokes and radicals to the whole character. In addition, the fixed order of strokes, position of radicals and variations of the same radicals in characters are needed to be memorised through repetitive copying and writing. In this way, children will

ultimately reach automatism of writing with deeply orthographic and aesthetic awareness, and most importantly, their virtues of perseverance and endurance of hardship are developed during the practice. In that sense, native Chinese students, even at a very young age, realise that learning is not only hard work but also an essential process for personal character development.

In contrast to the Confucian emphasis on the virtue aspect of orientation on learning, western philosophies value the importance of personal thinking and inquiry to understand the world, which is called “mind orientation” (Li, 2005, p.191). As mentioned above, seeking knowledge of the unknown world is the ultimate purpose of learning. In that sense, how to explore the world, how the mind processes the unknown and how to keep passionate about knowledge seeking are the focus of learning in the western model. Thus personal curiosity and interests are given much more attention than in Chinese culture. When students successfully solve a problem or figure out a question, they feel happy and a sense of achievement, which motivates them to learn more. However, such intrinsic enjoyment can be fragile so that students feel frustrated or even give up when they experience failure after several times of trying (Li, 2005). Unlike Chinese students, students in western cultures are not seen as having perseverance for learning when the task appears boring or too demanding and beyond their ability. Therefore when it comes to learning Chinese, particularly the Chinese characters, their western ways of learning sometimes do not match the requirement of Chinese learning, which needs intensive practice and repetition. As a result, it is possible that, learning Chinese turns out somewhat an unpleasant experience from their perspective.

2.4.2.2 Ability, Effort and Achievement

Ability and effort is another issue that is discussed most in cross-culture studies. According to Li’s (2003)

examination of Chinese and US conceptions of learning, Chinese participants categorized innate ability as a subgroup of achievement whilst American participants placed it under the learners' characteristics. That is to say, the Chinese did note that inherent ability was one of the factors that affect success, yet they did not think the inherent ability was the dominant cause for achievement. Furthermore, the Chinese thought that the difference between high intelligence and less intelligence was only a "quantitative advantage" rather than a "qualitative trait" (Li, 2003, p.259). As Li (2002) noted, "eventually, all people, adroit or clumsy, fast or slow, would reach the same finish line, developing a significant level of intellectual competence and mastering a considerable amount of knowledge" (p.259). Therefore, for those "not so intelligent students", with diligence and perseverance it was possible to make up their disadvantages and develop their ability. For "smart" people, on the other hand, high intelligence merely enables them to spend less time or effort on study, yet it does not mean they do not need to make an effort at all. Furthermore, many old Chinese sayings vividly illustrated the role of diligence in learning, such as "an iron bar could eventually become a needle, so long as a person persevered in working at it", in order to encourage students to work hard and make achievement in the end.

However, the same is not true in western culture. Personal inherent ability is a kind of quality that "enables him or her to learn, rather than something which increased through learning" (Li, 2003, p. 265). Given the different levels of achievement, the purpose of learning and teaching is not to compare with others but to develop personal ability to a large extent on the basis of one's innate ability. In that way, everyone is regarded as a unique individual and can have different levels of achievement, as long as their potentiality and ability are fully utilized during the learning process (Li, 2003, 2005). Unlike the high value placed on the significance of hard work in Chinese culture, western culture viewed it as an ineffective method of learning that wastes time and effort. Therefore, when encountering difficulties

which seem beyond their ability, they are more likely to withdraw from it or shift their interests to something else. With respect to Chinese language learning, western learners used to think that only highly intelligent people dared to learn one of the most difficult languages in the world. As for beginner learners, once they face the challenges of Chinese characters or tones, they are likely to attribute it to personal ability after experiencing some failures (Li, 2003, 2005).

However, perceptions of ability to, and effort of learning, is not a clear-cut concept in Eastern and Western societies. The notion of “mindset” developed by Dweck (2006) in US recently, shed some light that bridges the traditional Chinese perspectives of learning and western beliefs about ability and effort. The “mindset” is a psychological construct that “describes a world from two perspectives” (Mercer and Ryan, 2009, p. 1). According to Dweck (2010), individuals have their own mindsets about different domains of learning. The one who strongly believes in the role of talent in learning tends to have a “fixed mindset”, whereas others who think an individual’s ability to learn can be developed by effort and hard work, are likely to have a “growth mindset”. The two assumptions of “mindset”, seem to be in line with the western and Chinese views about ways of learning respectively, as reviewed above. Moreover, as Mercer and Ryan (2009) argued, a fixed mindset and a growth mindset are more likely to be two extreme instances in a continuum scale. Therefore, it “may be more appropriate to think of learners as having a tendency towards a particular mindset to varying degrees” (p.3).

The literature reviewed above indicates that, people’s beliefs are closely related to their cultural background. As to the specific Chinese learning and teaching, which is the focus in this study, beliefs of students and teachers about CFL are inevitably embedded in their own backgrounds as well. Most importantly, individuals might not be well aware of cultural beliefs when they encounter challenges in CFL learning and teaching. This is also why this study attempts to make explicit individual’s intercultural

beliefs about CFL.

2.5 Conclusion and Research Questions

To sum up, the underlying factors which challenge current CFL learning and teaching in the UK are the messy patchwork of knowledge and beliefs from both teacher and student perspectives. Overlaying these are aspects specific to Chinese: the standard of Chinese language, the linguistic features of Chinese, processing strategies and pedagogical support. Furthermore, as teaching Chinese as a foreign language in the UK is a cross-cultural activity, it is necessary to examine the contextual factors which affect teacher and student thoughts of language learning.

Although aspects of learners' and teachers' beliefs have been widely explored in EFL and MFL areas, to the best of my knowledge, there is no research about the beliefs of learners and teachers of CFL in English. There is, of course, a considerable body of work about CFL written in Chinese, but this not only adheres to different constructs of what counts as evidence (from a Chinese perspective) but also focuses on pedagogic strategies rather than the beliefs of participants. This topic itself has not been investigated in depth as a focus of study, which is the aim of my study:

1. What are CFL teachers' and beginner Mandarin learners' beliefs about learning and teaching Mandarin in English secondary schools?
 - 1) What are CFL teachers' and beginning-level Mandarin learners' beliefs about the difficulties in learning Mandarin?
 - 2) What are CFL teachers' and beginning-level Mandarin learners' beliefs about effective teaching and learning strategies?
2. Do beliefs of beginner learners differ from those of CFL teachers regarding the learning and teaching

of Mandarin in English secondary schools?

3. Do the beliefs of learners differ, depending on how long they have been learning Chinese?

4. To what extent are the beliefs about language learning of CFL learners and teachers related to their own background and experience?

CHAPTER 3 METHOD AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the research design, theoretical assumptions, methods, processes of data collection and analysis of this study. Following a brief summary of the methods used, I will discuss the epistemological assumptions underpinning the research approaches. The next section will describe the research methods and design of the instruments for the study, followed by participant information and data collection procedures and analysis. The reliability and validity of the study will be carefully explored in the pilot study section. The ethical issues associated with this work with teachers and pupils and any ethical issues which might emerge during the process of research will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

The literature review in the previous chapter included a review of research about teacher beliefs which noted that “the choice of research methodology in language learner beliefs studies will depend on the investigator’s purpose and questions of enquiry” (Bernat and Gvozdenko, 2005, p. 7).

My research could be investigated using both quantitative and qualitative methods. As CFL is such a new field it is desirable to have as large a sample of teachers and pupils as possible and to use a survey method to collect a range of views as this offers a background picture in an unexplored field. However, to investigate relationships between beliefs and pedagogies, the limited resources of a lone researcher suggest that an in-depth treatment of a small number of cases would offer important insights. Therefore, I have chosen to carry out a survey, with interviews to investigate key issues in depth. Teachers and pupils who are teaching and learning Mandarin lessons, either towards the GCSE exam or not, in secondary schools all over the England, as well as their teachers of Mandarin, are the target participants for this

study. The aim was to sample around 400 pupils and 100 Mandarin teachers. The interview sample of approximately 30 pupils and 15 teachers, was chosen from the survey respondents. As will be explained, the teacher survey was conducted online via Mandarin teacher forum. This was an open survey targeting Mandarin teachers in the UK. 42 teachers completed the survey. The pupil survey was paper-based and 443 pupils responded the survey. The next section will discuss the theoretical assumptions underpinning this approach.

3.2 Theoretical Assumptions

In this study, the key concept is “beliefs”, which is a complex concept (see review of literature). Beliefs are, by definition, mental thoughts, which are subjective and constructed in particular social and cultural settings. Moreover, people’s beliefs are shaped by what they know and how they interpret the world (Nespor, 1987). In that sense, the research must be underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm. According to interpretivists, inquiry about reality is closely linked to our own knowledge, as it is we who try to understand ourselves, others and the world (Hartas, 2010). Therefore, in undertaking research, researchers’ values are unavoidably present in the process of inquiry. Moreover, all interpretations are related to the particular context or situation, which enhances the complexity of inquiry when doing research.

Despite the theoretical discussion of an interpretivist paradigm, above, this research is predicated on a cross-paradigm approach which might be termed “pragmatism”, in a methodological sense. Somewhat like interpretivists, pragmatists note that truth is not absolute and the knowledge we obtain is shaped by our own values. However, on the other hand, pragmatists also note the theory-laden nature of the knowledge and most importantly, they emphasise that “the truth is relative to the purpose of an inquiry” (Hartas, 2010, p.41). In that sense, “a research approach should be determined by the research question

(fitness of purpose) alone” (p.41). This is the key reason for taking the epistemological stance I have taken. A pragmatist stance answers the questions I have set and, in doing so, employs more than one paradigm, or epistemological approach. I would argue that this is an extreme form of triangulation. It is certainly an approach used in many disciplines and an analogy might be the use of carbon dating and cave painting in dating an archaeological site! These two techniques come from different paradigms, or views of what counts as reality, but both contribute to answering key research questions in that field.

Nevertheless, it is still extremely important to recognise the theoretical assumptions underpinning each type of research because it is in recognising these that the reader is able to be critical and understand the limitations and strengths of any research findings. Therefore, I will deal with these separately, recognising them as different to but not exclusive of each other.

The quantitative part of this research (with questionnaires as the instrument) is underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm which deals with beliefs as a suitable object for study, but treated in ways which might be seem to be somewhat positivist in methodological approach, in that the beliefs are treated as “real” and amenable to quantitative treatment. This is rather complicated and I would argue that, in this study, the key concept “beliefs” (human mental views and thoughts) that I am collecting is interpretivist, as they are not observable or not easily captured in empirical investigations. Moreover, people’s views, attitudes and thoughts are so complex that many factors are intertwined with each other; it is not easy to measure them and make some interpretations of the phenomena. Therefore, in order to understand people’s views and thoughts, some numerical analysis is applied. This could be a somewhat simplified way of measurement, yet a questionnaire does help to gain an understanding of people’s beliefs. A positivist approach strives for objective data in highly controlled situations, but to analyse the complexity of knowledge (in this case beliefs about Chinese) the range of beliefs is simplified to some extent

(Barcelos, 2003).

Pajares (1992) noted that “beliefs are a subject of legitimate inquiry in fields as diverse as medicine, law...”, so it is feasible for a researcher to operationalize the concept and design the constructs to conduct a wide enquiry in a large context (Pajares, 1992, p.308). Thus a quantitative approach is necessary to build a fundamental understanding of the nature of beliefs and belief systems in a particular field, like teaching Chinese. Because, as Pajares notes “beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured but can be inferred from what people say, intend, and do” (Pajares, 1999, p. 314). Therefore in my study beliefs will be operationalized as people’s responses to a series of statements. The beliefs of the teachers and pupils will be measured using an attitude scale which offers a number of statements about language and uses a four point scale to measure the strength of the respondents’ agreement and disagreement (1 representing the least positive and 4 indicating the most supportive attitudes). By using a similar range of statements, the comparison of the beliefs of different cohorts of respondents (teachers or pupils) becomes possible. Researchers who may be interested in the beliefs in this study could replicate the study to test the findings by using the same tools. This positivist approach to measuring attitudes has some strengths in terms of validity and reliability (i.e. attitudes are measured with a large range of characteristics with several items, and the scores can be tested repeatedly across time), but this means there are also limitations which must be acknowledged if the reader is to have a full picture (Coolican, 2004) and these are discussed at the end of this section.

To get the full picture of the complexity of people’s beliefs, the settings and context of those beliefs need to be considered, as they are involved in complex ways with the beliefs (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996; Pajares, 1992). Therefore I shall address my research questions with a small number of teachers and pupils through qualitative approaches, underpinned by a constructivist paradigm, to explore the connections

between personal background, experience and beliefs (Hartas, 2010). I argue that doing this will illustrate and illuminate my findings in ways that quantitative results alone could not do (Allen, 1996; Barcelos, 2000). Constructivists emphasise the role of cultural and social context in understanding knowledge. They argue that “knowledge should be grounded on human experience and bounded by people’s social interactions, and the language used during these interaction” (Harding and Hintikka, 1983 cited in Hartas, 2010, p.44). Research that draws upon this paradigm aims to provide rich and insightful interpretations of people’s perceptions and experiences based on the explorations of the contexts. To achieve the goal, various interpretive approaches are required such as “unstructured interviews, case studies, narratives, and action research” (Hartas, 2010, p.44). In the present study, the interpretive approach taken is the use of interviews.

3.3 Methods

Both quantitative and qualitative data were used to address the research questions. In this study, a Likert-scale questionnaire was designed to examine the beliefs in the context of a wider enquiry and semi-structured interviews were designed to explore the in-depth beliefs of pupils and teachers.

3.3.1 Questionnaire

3.3.1.1 Design of the Questionnaire

The aim of the questionnaire design process was to build on existing instruments to design a Chinese Learning and Teaching Questionnaire (CLTQ). Horwitz’s (1988) BALLI (Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory) is a well-established instrument that has been widely used in many studies and doctoral dissertations on EFL (Diab, 2006; Hong, 2006; Kern, 1995; Peacock, 1999, 2001; Truitt, 1995; Wu, 2010; Wang, Sereno and Jongman, 2006; Yang, 1992) and other foreign languages, such as Spanish,

German and French (Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995; Kuntz, 1996a; Mantle-Bromley, 1995). BALLI was initially designed to evaluate students' beliefs about various aspects of language learning. Both FL teachers and EFL teachers from different cultural backgrounds shared their views during the process of development of this instrument. Thirty-five question items were generated about five major aspects of language learning:

- 1) The difficulty of language learning (6 items);
- 2) Foreign language aptitude (9 items);
- 3) The nature of language learning (8 items);
- 4) Learning and communication strategies (8 items);
- 5) Motivation and expectations (4 items).

Horwitz (1999) pointed out that although the original aim of BALLI was to identify “the individuality in beliefs about language learning” (p.558) in the general sense, the inventory has also been used to investigate whether the common beliefs were shared among different language learner groups, as well as learner groups and their teacher groups. However, nearly all the BALLI studies have focused on alphabetic languages (including the Swahili in Kuntz’s study) and non-alphabetic languages (such as Chinese, Korean and Japanese) seem to be neglected somehow. Thus it is necessary to adapt the BALLI to the CFL context, to provide new insights into beliefs, by making comparisons with previous findings from other language learner groups, as well as teacher groups.

The review of the literature about the characteristics of Chinese illustrates that the characteristics of Chinese languages, such as the tonal pronunciation and logographic written scripts, are very distinctive and different from alphabetic languages. It is, therefore, likely that these might arouse different beliefs or understandings. Therefore, question items which address the features of the Chinese language should be

added to the BALLI inventory. Studies with self-designed questionnaires about perceptions of linguistic difficulties in Chinese learning, and learning strategies for Chinese tones and characters (Hu, 2010; Hu and Tian, 2012; Shen, 2005, 2010) are valuable sources for developing question items and have been studied with this goal in mind. The similarity between Japanese kanji and Chinese characters is so great that studies into the beliefs about Japanese kanji learning (Dewey, 2004; Mori and Shimizu, 2007; Sakui and Gakui, 1999) also underpin some parts of the questionnaire design in this study.

I generated a CLTQ with 88 items for this study. The categorization of the BALLI inventory was applied to the questionnaire, but additional questions specifically on Chinese learning were added to the five aspects of BALLI. The comparison of the current questionnaire and BALLI is presented below (See Table 3-1 and see Appendix 1 for details).

Table 3-1 Comparison between BALLI and Additional items in CLTQ

| BALLI (34 items) | CLTQ (88 items) |
|---|---|
| <i>None</i> | <i>Background information (12 items)</i> |
| <i>The difficulty of language learning (6 items)</i> | <i>The difficulty of Chinese learning (10 items):</i> |
| The difficulty of FL in general is asked | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The difficulty of language is expanded to several aspects—pinyin, pronunciation, word, grammar etc. b) 4 questions are added regarding the difficulty between Chinese and western languages (1 item); Chinese characters (2 items), and Chinese homophones (1 item); c) 6 items from BALLI remain unchanged. |
| <i>Foreign language aptitude (9 items)</i> | <i>Good language learners (18 items)</i> |
| Only asking about aptitude and self-esteem in the general sense (5 items) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Questions about both FL and CFL aptitude and self-esteem were asked (doubles the item number to 10) b) 4 additional questions in terms of |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>hard-working (2 items), teacher's influence (1), and people who speak Chinese as intelligent (1 item).</p> <p>c) 4 items from BALLI remain unchanged.</p> |
| <i>The nature of language learning (8 items)</i> | <i>Importance in Chinese learning (14 items)</i> |
| | <p>No existing items are changed but 6 more questions are added: Good start to learn Chinese-pinyin, oral word or Chinese characters (3 items), Communication ability is important (1 item), and Chinese character learning (2 items).</p> |
| <i>Learning and communication strategies (8 items)</i> | <i>Language learning strategies (20 items)</i> |
| | <p>Largely expanded the questions in this aspect. 12 extra questions are added: Combination rules of words (2 items) and Chinese character subcomponents (4 items), Chinese tones learning (2 item), Mechanical practices of characters and grammar (2 items), Mistake-making and communication (2 items)</p> |
| <i>Motivations and expectations (4 items)</i> | <i>Motivations and expectations (9 items)</i> |
| | <p>5 items are added in terms of internal motivations about China (1 item), further reflections on own language and other people (2 items), and Chinese characters(2 items)</p> |
| <i>None</i> | <i>Open-ended questions for each category (5 items)</i> |

Both pupil and teacher questionnaires include items about the five aspects of language learning but the questions in the background section and the wordings in the next four parts are slightly different. Due to limitations of space, I will primarily illustrate the pupil questionnaire and discuss some considerations during the process of designing question items. The full version of the pupil questionnaire and the teacher

questionnaire can be seen in Appendix 1 and 2. The Cronbach's alpha of the pupil and the teacher questionnaire is 0.922 and 0.864 respectively, indicating a high reliability of the CLTQ.

3.3.1.2 Questionnaire Items

The first part of the pupil questionnaire consists of 12 questions about the respondents' L1 language background, age, gender, education, duration of learning Chinese, other FL experience, self-assessed Chinese proficiency level and the Chinese class they are studying. Questions about pupils' motivations and expectations of learning Chinese, as well as their experience of exposure to a Chinese environment are asked in this section. According to Coolican's (2004) review of basic principles of survey design, the minimum of background information questions should be asked to address the research purposes. These twelve questions are chosen because they are the factors related to beliefs and attitudes towards language learning, which as Wesely (2012) pointed out, can be grouped into three dimensions: individual's characteristics; learning environment; and the interaction between the learner and the contexts. These background characteristics will be used for sample checking and analysis.

Learners' characteristics consisted of their mother tongue, age, gender, education, language level, and motivations and expectations. Learners' proficiency level is a major concern in this dimension.

Theoretically, a standardized assessment of proficiency level is the most accurate way to know learners' language levels. However, the questionnaire aims to survey a large sample of pupils around the UK, who are unlikely to have taken standardized exams such as GCSE or A levels (CILT, 2007) and the administration of such a test is not feasible for a study of this scope. Thus, to get a rough idea about the learners' level, apart from asking about the duration of their Chinese learning, self-assessment of the respondent's general level and skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing are also required. Pupils

are asked to rate their level on a 4 point-scale, with 1 representing elementary and 4 indicating advanced level. This means that the answers to this question are likely to be somewhat variable, based on the pupils' estimation. Regarding the learning environment, questions about whether learners have ever been to China and their foreign language learning history are included. In addition, questions about learners' feelings about their Chinese class and Chinese learning progress are also asked. As pupils are learning Chinese as a FL in the UK context, there are some cultural interactions between their native Chinese teachers, target language and themselves from a western background (Ping, 2009; Wu, 2006), which are worth examining through one or two questions in the background section.

In the teachers' questionnaire, slightly different questions about the teachers' backgrounds, are asked. Teachers' characteristics such as native language, gender, education degree, questions regarding their identity as a Chinese language teacher, teachers' own experience of learning Chinese, as well as the challenges they encountered when teaching Chinese in the UK context are sought. According to the report from CILT (2007), Chinese is offered in the UK from primary schools to the university level, aiming at pupils from different backgrounds (e.g. Chinese-heritage or local English) with various needs and purposes (e.g. exam-oriented or studying just out of interest). The variations between Chinese language teachers is so huge that a very wide range of background details were taken into account in the question development. Furthermore, the Chinese language itself raised some issues regarding its variations in pronunciations and written scripts (i.e. traditional and simplified characters) (Liu et al, 2006; Wang, 2011). In that sense, even the teachers who are native Chinese speakers may come from different regions of China (e.g. the Mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan) or other Chinese-speaking countries (i.e. Singapore) with a Chinese heritage background. Moreover, given the shortage of Chinese teachers in the UK and the fact that most learners are basically at the beginning level (CILT, 2007; Zhang and Li, 2010), some local

teachers who have learnt Chinese themselves, but who may not be fluent in Chinese, become teachers of Chinese as well (Medwell, et al. 2013). All of these socio-cultural background factors could influence teachers' attitudes and beliefs about their Chinese teaching. Therefore, two questions regarding how the teacher learnt Chinese are asked here.

The main part of the questionnaire is composed of Likert scale question items. Although the original BALLI in Horwitz (1988) used a 5-point scale, a 4-point Likert scale was used in this study, to measure respondents' views about the statements about Chinese language learning, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 4 being "strongly agree". The middle point "undecided" option is not provided for two reasons. First of all, it is ambiguous whether such a position "implies a neutral position (no opinion)" or "an on-the-fence position with the respondent torn between feelings in both direction" (Coolican, 2004, p.175). That is to say, respondents who choose the middle score may have two different views. In some cases they may express a neutral view while in other cases they may have the tendency to avoid the extreme answers on the two ends of the scale. On the other hand, overall scores that are close to the central scores may have two implications as well. In this study I chose a 4-point scale rather than the 5-point to avoid such ambiguity of interpretation of answers. This is, of course, a debatable decision and the only way to address the effects of this decision, either way, is to be clear about having made the decision and the implications. In this way, the reader is aware of this limitation when interpreting the findings and considering the validity of the conclusions. Organization of items was arranged to avoid "the response acquiescence set" in which respondents tend to agree or disagree with all the items in the questionnaire if only one direction of questions is provided. Both negative and positive statements about beliefs were included and presented randomly on the list. In this way, respondents have to read each item carefully, also the "inveterate yeah or no sayers" can be identified and their answers can be ruled out to

ensure the validity of the results (Coolican, 2004, p.179).

Open-ended questions are also used to seek additional opinions that are not covered in the pre-established statements. Both teachers and pupils are encouraged to put their own views in the end of each focused section, in terms of difficulties of language learning; what good language learners are like; the importance of Chinese learning; effective learning strategies; as well as the purpose of Chinese learning. Teachers' views about the challenges of teaching Chinese in the UK were also asked in the teacher survey to address the pedagogical issues in an intercultural context.

In addition to the paper CLTQ, the online CLTQ was also created using "adobeformscentral" software.

One of the reasons for using an online survey was to get access to large samples located in different regions all over the country in an efficient way, within the resources of an individual researcher.

According to CfBT (2011) language trend report, 14% of maintained schools and 36% of independent secondary schools are offering Mandarin Chinese either on their main curriculum or as extracurricular activities. Moreover, these schools are spread out everywhere in England, Scotland and Wales. Thus it is impossible, for the researcher alone, to go and visit the large number of schools to administer the paper survey. To address issues of time and expense the online survey was also used as a supplementary instrument for the paper survey. Evidence from recent studies showed that no methodological difference, in terms of reliability and validity of instrument formats, is normally found between the online survey and the paper-and-pencil questionnaire (Bates and Cox, 2008; Campos et al, 2011). Furthermore, an online survey turned out to be a highly efficient and secure approach to gathering data with "complete anonymity" (Campos et al, 2011, p.1875). Thus an online survey link was automatically generated by the software, and then the link was sent to personal email addresses or posted on e-forum for participants who would like to complete. The detailed procedures for administering paper and online questionnaires are

discussed below.

3.3.1.3 Considerations and Limitations

The wording of the pupil questionnaire was carefully chosen, with consideration for the possible difficulties of linguistic terms as well as the vocabulary of secondary school pupils. Some linguistic terminology, especially relating to the unique features of Chinese language, might be too complex or unknown for respondents to understand (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Therefore, I tried not to use the terms that learners' were not familiar with (something which was examined carefully through piloting) to reduce the complexity. In the teacher survey, the items were not in the first person but in the third person, referring to "pupils" instead of "I". Barcelos (2003) argued that one of biggest challenges of questionnaire design is that individual respondents might have different interpretations of question items, so care has been taken to ensure each statement addresses only one aspect of Chinese learning, to reduce ambiguity. In respect of the items in the second and the last parts of the questionnaire, in particular, which seek respondents' attitudes about the given statements, respondents' interpretation is an important factor that should be taken account. First of all, I tried to avoid the leading questions that implied respondents should choose particular answers or answers sought by the researchers (Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle, 2010). In addition, as mentioned before, both positive and negative statements appeared in the survey to minimise response bias. Moreover, there are other reasons for including mixed statements, as Coolican noted, which are relevant to the respondents' understanding of the researcher's aims for the survey. If all the statements are presented in the same direction, respondents are likely to believe that the researcher is making the statements that himself or herself believes, which may affect respondents' own attitudes (Coolican, 2004). Apart from the wording, the layout of the questionnaire was also considered in terms of the order of items and the font size. Given that respondents may well try to guess the researcher's purpose

when answering the questions, as I discussed previously, respondents' impressions of the initial questions in the questionnaire might affect their later answers, if first a few statements were in the same direction or some extreme opinions were expressed (Coolican, 2004). Therefore the questionnaire started with the less strong statements and both strength and direction of items were balanced in the list. Besides, to ensure clarity and readability for pupils reading, a larger font (12 point) was used (Verma and Mallick, 1999).

Generally speaking, a questionnaire is an easy method to use in a natural setting and is an efficient way to collect a large amount of self-report data such as opinions (Gorard, 2004). The limitation of all questionnaire data is that it is difficult for a questionnaire survey to get rich and in-depth information. Respondents' answers are likely to be restricted by the pre-established question items (Barcelos, 2003). Furthermore, studies have revealed that teacher and pupil beliefs are embedded and developed in their cultural environment. In that sense, a questionnaire isolated from the context might not explore the cultural aspects in pupils' beliefs (Alanen, 2003; Barcelos, 2003). From a social-cultural perspective, a few researchers have successfully adapted qualitative methods to understand pupils' beliefs (Alanen, 2003; Barcelos, 2003). Therefore, semi-structured interviews are used to provide insightful interpretations of pupil and teacher beliefs.

3.3.2 Semi-structured Interview

The interview questions in this study were mainly designed on the basis of two sources. One was follow-up questions based on participants' answers to the questionnaire statements; the other was general inquiry directly from the focused aspects discussed previously in the review. Furthermore, the two sources of interview questions were not asked in a specific order but brought up naturally, according to the interaction between the researcher and interviewees. Given that the interview questions were crucial

to stimulate a participant's responses in the interview, the kind of questions which were asked and the way of asking should be taken into account. Patton (2002) identified six types of questions:

- 1) Experience and behaviour questions;
- 2) Opinion and value questions;
- 3) Feeling questions;
- 4) Knowledge questions;
- 5) Sensory questions;
- 6) Background/demographic questions

Each type of question seeks different information from interviewees. Some focus on the things a person did (i.e, type 1 and 5), some are about a person's opinions or feelings (i.e, type 2, 3 and 4), the others are related to personal characteristics in terms of age, educational background, language proficiency level, etc. Merriam (2009) noted that the choice of questions depends on the purpose of the study, which is what the researcher wants to know from participants. In this case, first of all, why CFL teachers and pupils chose to agree or disagree with certain statements in the questionnaire is the initial concern. The questionnaire items revealed different views of individuals so accordingly the interview questions to be raised, based on the individual's responses to the questionnaire, varied as well. As questionnaire items already set up certain content to discuss, it was convenient and straightforward for the interviewer to point out topics that she would like to discuss in-depth with respondents. The main focused topics generated from the questionnaire items were as follows:

- a) The difficulty associated with different Chinese linguistic items, i.e. tones, pinyin, words, grammar and characters;
- b) Comparison of the relative difficulty of four skills in Chinese learning: speaking, listening,

reading and writing;

- c) What beginner Chinese learners should start with: pinyin, characters or oral words;
- d) The relationship of practice, memorisation and fun in learning;
- e) How to learn pronunciation, including tones;
- f) How to learn Chinese characters and words;
- g) The role of Chinese culture in learning Chinese language;
- h) The advantages and disadvantages as a native Chinese teacher/English Mandarin teacher;
- i) The relationship between the teacher's feedback and communication goals.

To address the general research questions, based on a review of previous studies and the question categories of Patton (2002), I felt it was important to explore the personal experience of language learning and teaching of both pupils and teachers, from the past to the present. These personal experiences can serve as a mirror which reflects teacher and pupil beliefs about Chinese learning and teaching. Moreover, teacher and pupil feelings about their experiences are an important aspect to explore, as their subjective comments are context-based so that some underlying cultural beliefs may be revealed as well. In addition, in order to get a rich and holistic picture of beliefs, the teachers' and pupils' backgrounds of learning and teaching Chinese are discussed. Therefore, in this study, the four major types of questions were: experience and behaviour questions; opinion and value questions; feeling questions; and background/demographic questions.

With respect to the specific questions, CFL teachers and pupils had some different questions due to their different identities and perspectives. Questions for Chinese speaker teachers and L1 English-speaking teachers were slightly different. Given English CFL teachers used to be Chinese learners, their experience of Chinese learning was one of the focal points in the interview questions.

For L1 English pupils from England, their experience of learning Chinese compared to other European languages is a big concern. Experience and behaviour questions were asked regarding the following aspects:

- a) Previous foreign language learning experience;
- b) The different experience of learning Chinese compared with other foreign language learning if they had any;
- c) Challenges or interesting things encountered when learning Chinese;
- d) Good ways used to learn Chinese;

On the other hand, pupils' opinions and feelings about their experience were asked in terms of

- e) Aspects that they liked or disliked about Chinese learning;
- f) Effective ways that they found in learning Chinese;
- g) Opinions about their Mandarin teachers and class activities.

In addition, as discussed above, background questions about pupil's age and grade, Chinese proficiency level as well as the amount of Chinese learning time, were asked.

For the CFL teachers who were L1 Chinese speakers, their experience of teaching Chinese in China and in the UK was the focus in the interview. In a way which was similar to the pupil questions, the following experience and opinion questions were asked:

- a) Previous foreign language teaching experience in China or somewhere else;
- b) Current experience of teaching Chinese in the UK: difficulties and easiest aspects;
- c) Different aspects of teaching in China and teaching in the UK;
- d) Aspects that they liked or disliked about teaching Chinese in English schools;
- e) Effective ways of teaching and learning they found for L1 English pupils from England;

f) Opinions about their L1 English pupils from England and class activities.

Teachers' educational background such as their original study major, their years of teaching and whether they have undergone teacher training were asked. With regard to the English CFL teachers, the focus shifted to the differences between teaching Chinese and teaching other European language in schools.

It should be pointed out that interview questions, both from questionnaire answers and the general aspects that should be covered in the research questions, were planned questions that might be raised in the real interview context. The actual interview was conducted on the basis of participants' responses to the questionnaire as well as the interactions between the researcher and the interviewee. Warren (2012) noted that, "the point is to grasp the relationship between the interview as social interaction and as vessel of topics" (p. 130). Thus, the interview was not only a question-and-answer process but also a dynamic information and feeling communication exchange.

Apart from the content of the interview questions, the wording of these questions was another issue that needed to be considered, as only good questions asked in proper ways would elicit good responses from the interviewees (Merriam, 2009). Strauss et al (1981) suggested four categories of questions: hypothetical, devil's advocate, ideal position, and interpretive questions. Hypothetical questions provide respondents with an assumption in a particular situation. They normally start with 'suppose' or 'what if' but still ask about their actual personal experience. Devil's advocate questions refer to the ways of asking contradictory topics which might challenge respondent's views. This type of question often begins with "some people would say" to keep distance from both researcher and respondents and avoid unpleasant feelings if respondents "happen to be sensitive about the issue" (cited in Merriam, 2009, p.97). Ideal position questions are suitable when seeking participants' ideal views about something, such as the effective ways of Chinese learning and teaching. Interpretive questions are good to use when the

researcher wants to know more details or to check the understanding of the responses provided. These questions start with “Give me an example of...”, “Tell me more about...” In this case, interview questions and probes were developed with different ways of asking based on the principles above.

Merriam (2009) identifies some types of questions that should be avoided: leading questions; yes/no questions; and multiple questions. Merriam argued that yes/no questions yield almost no information for research except merely yes/no answers. Nevertheless, some yes/no questions were used in this study as a probe first, and then the interpretive questions were followed to elicit the participant’s further responses. Overall, with the guidance of the considerations discussed above and the interview questions used in the study of Barcelos (2000) about English teachers and pupils, questions for CFL teachers and pupils were developed in the present study (see Appendix 3 of pupil interview guides and Appendix 4 of teacher interview guides for details).

The interview guide is a rough schedule when conducting the interview and some follow-up questions were asked based on respondents’ answers to the lead question. This is one reason why a pilot interview was needed: to practise my probing skills and make sure the interview was carried out at an appropriate pace. The formal interview was supposed to be conducted with pupils and teachers individually. Yet in actual practice, pupil interviews were conducted with individuals as well as in groups. All interviews were recorded with the permission of participants. Pupils’ interviews were carried out in their native language-English. The duration of interview with pupils varied from 10 minutes to 30 minutes, which was mainly effected by pupils’ available time in class hours. As CFL teachers might be either L1 Chinese speakers or L2 Chinese speakers, the interviews with teachers were conducted in either Chinese or English according to teachers’ own choice. Teachers’ interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

3.4 Participants

The aim of the study was to examine the beliefs of Mandarin teachers and beginner English learners of Mandarin in secondary schools in the UK, therefore the population for the large scale survey was all the Mandarin teachers (including L1 and L2 Chinese teachers) and their secondary pupils who were learning Chinese at the beginning stage. This would have been unfeasible for a lone researcher, and necessitated a sampling strategy.

Locating a sample for the study turned out to be an extremely challenging task, for various reasons. One reason was that the reports in CfBT (2011), saying that above of up to 50% schools offer some Chinese teaching, proved to be very misleading. The most recent report from Broad and Tinsley (2015) indicated that, in the year of 2014, Mandarin Chinese was taught in 4% of state secondary schools and 17% of independent schools as a KS3 (Year 7 to Year 9) curriculum subject. At KS4 from Y10 to Y11, 5% of state schools and 21% of independent schools were offering Chinese. Moreover, Chinese was regarded as “an additional option outside the curriculum” (p.124), offered by 35% of independent schools and 17% of state schools in all secondary levels. Nevertheless, it is important to point out, the percentage of provision of Chinese teaching in secondary schools does not mean a great number of pupils were learning Mandarin, particularly when Chinese was offered as an extra-curricular subject. Indeed, as Broad and Tinsley (2015) noted, “in some cases, a very few number of pupils” were involved in Mandarin learning in extra-curricular activities (p.126). This may be one reason the figures are misleading.

Many schools contacted (and far more than 50%) did not offer Chinese. Those which did usually had only one Chinese teacher, reducing the opportunity multiple teachers would offer. Some schools only offered Mandarin as an enrichment course for a short period of time, and gave up afterwards because of pupils’ poor performance or lack of enthusiasm. Thus, fewer school than anticipated were available. Furthermore,

a number of schools which were offering Chinese, had received support from overseas teachers, who were sent by the Confucius Institute/classroom (i.e the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, Hanban) in Mainland China. However, these teachers' annual working contracts with Hanban increased the mobility of Mandarin teachers in schools. Moreover, this range of teachers of Chinese included teachers who were untrained, and/or recently arrived from overseas and it is possible that they felt vulnerable to scrutiny in their teaching, making them less willing to participate than teachers in other circumstances (Francis, Archer and Mau, 2009). The limited resources of a lone Ph.D student hampered sample selection of both school teachers and pupils.

3.4.1 Sample Size

Due to the sampling difficulties encountered, a non-probabilistic convenience sample was chosen for the study. Theoretically, the population size of pupils consisted of all CFL beginner learners in English secondary schools all over the UK. According to a survey by CILT (2007), approximately 8585 pupils were reported to have been learning Chinese in 2007 in 130 responding secondary schools. A larger proportion of pupils were learning Chinese at Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4 level, with 3427 pupils in Year 7, 1927 in Year 8, and 2198 in Year 9. Again, as discussed above, from Year 9 to Year 11, there were more native speakers learning Chinese, rising from 2% of native speakers in Year 9, to 12% in Year 10 and 13% in Year 11. The present study focused only on the CFL learner sample. Up to 2014, there was a 3-5% increase in the rate of Chinese provision in both state and independent secondary schools being taught in curriculum time since 2007 (Broad and Tinsley, 2015). Although it was still hard to estimate the exact number of pupils in secondary schools who were learning Chinese as both a curriculum and extra-curriculum subject, to some extent the above analysis could provide a rough idea.

Although the exact population size was unknown, the sample size of pupils for this study could be estimated by applying inferential statistical techniques. Three key elements needed to be considered when determining a sample, 1) “the variance of the population”; 2) “an acceptable range of error”, that is, “how precise the estimation of the sample could be”; and 3) “the researcher’s confidence level of the probability of population parameter is correctly estimated”, and the confidence interval of the possible sampling error (Zikmund, 2010, p. 386). When the sample reaches a certain amount of cases, it can represent the population well without adding more random cases. In that sense, as long as the researcher has determined the confidence level (normally with three options of 90%, 95% and 99%) and confidence interval (3%, 4% and 5%), there are statistical tables available (See Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011 p. 147), indicating the possible random sample sizes that the researcher needs, for all ranges of population size. In this study, I chose the 95% confidence level wherein a confidence interval lies between plus and minus 5%, to determine pupil sample. By looking up the pre-calculated table (See Appendix 5, cited from Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 147), the desirable pupil sample size was 384, representing the total population as large as 1 million, which is far more than the current CFL learners in English secondary schools.

Given the complex situation of Mandarin teachers in the UK, in terms of language backgrounds, mixed qualifications, as well as various support organizations, such as the British Council, HSBC, Confucius Institutes and Hanban, etc, the size of a good teacher sample was extremely difficult to estimate. As far as I was concerned, the only figure relevant to the population of Mandarin teachers in English was in a report by the Department of Education (2013) that there were 3300 MFL teachers (excluding Spanish, German and Spanish) with teacher qualifications. However, this did not separately identify the number of qualified Mandarin Chinese teachers from other lesser taught Modern languages, such as Arabic, Italian,

Japanese, Russian and Urdu. The proportion of Mandarin teaching among other FLs, according to Broad and Tinsley (2014), rises to the second largest in 17% of state schools and 45% of independent schools. Additionally, Zhang and Li (2010) indicated that, “less than a tenth of the 200 or so teachers of Chinese in schools have qualified teacher status” (p.94). With all the information above, the population of Mandarin teachers might still be hard to estimate, yet it shows how difficult it is to calculate the number of Mandarin teachers with such limited information. Thus the teacher sample was set at around 100 teachers, which could represent a 150 population size at 95% confidence level, with plus and minus 5% confidence interval and also include as many types of teacher as possible.

Therefore, approximately 400 CFL learners and 100 Mandarin teachers (including first language Chinese teachers and second language Chinese teachers) were targeted to be approached to complete the survey. All the participants would take part in the study voluntarily and anonymity and confidentiality were assured.

3.4.2 Sample Approaching

Despite the media interest in Chinese during the period of this study, gaining access to a sample of teachers and pupils of Chinese in England was very problematic and frustrating. My planned approach to recruiting a sample was to make contact electronically with teachers through the Chinese staffroom on the website of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT). This was an organization that supported and developed a network of Chinese throughout many secondary schools as well as some primary schools in England (<http://english.hanban.org>). I also wanted to develop a further network through the Hanban teachers in the local Confucius classroom in the West Midlands. However, the planned sampling strategy was not effective because the SSAT collapsed in 2011, and alternative means were sought. Sample

selection took much longer than planned. Other research has noted the difficulty in finding a sample in studies of Chinese complimentary schools (Francis, Archer and Mau, 2009) and this raises interesting questions about whether there are cultural issues about participation in such studies.

The initial approach to sampling was to seek the assistance from Confucius classrooms at local schools, to build further relationships with other schools nationwide. There was one of the few Confucius classrooms in the West Midlands, and it was an outstanding secondary school (Ofsted, 2012) offering Mandarin. The Head teacher and Head of MFL were keen for the school to participate in the study and granted access. However, the difficulty in carrying out the study at this school was the mobility of Mandarin teachers. The core Mandarin teacher, sent by Hanban for two-years' service in the UK, terminated her teaching just at the time when the study was about to begin, thus resulting in a pause for the school to recruit new Mandarin teachers and rearrange their Mandarin course provision. Accordingly contacts with new Mandarin teachers had to be remade as well as the pupil sample reselected.

The second approach was to locate more schools offering Mandarin courses through the Chinese Staffroom on the SSAT. According to the map on the website (see figure 3-1 below), Chinese was taught in the UK in various regions all over the country, largely with support from the Hanban Confucius Institute. In England, schools offering Chinese were spread out up to Darlington in the northeast and down to Plymouth in the southwest. A list of schools was also shown on the website.



Figure 3-1 Distribution of Confucius Classrooms in the UK

(cited from

<http://www.thechinesestaffroom.com/articles/09-11-18/confucius-classrooms-what-where-and-why>)

However, the SSAT collapsed in 2011 (with reduced funding resulting from a change in government priorities) and the previous Chinese networks were transferred to other organizations. This meant the vehicle for contact (the Chinese Staffroom and emails) no longer functioned.

To replace this strategy, a direct contact was made with the former Director of SSAT. I was also allowed access to a teacher e-Forum run by the Institute of Education (IOE), where the former Chinese network with Confucius classrooms had been moved, and could spread out my questionnaire to Mandarin teachers through the forum. Therefore, a new round of snowball sampling started again, asking schools to get involved in my research. Subsequent personal contact with staff from Confucius Institute UK branch and IOE yielded a list of 37 likely schools teaching Mandarin in England.

All together 630 pupils who were learning Chinese as a foreign language in more than a dozen secondary schools were approached to participate in the pupil survey. And then I arranged school visits and classroom observation with each Mandarin teacher. Some schools were visited more than once, given the availability of Mandarin lessons and school pupils. On average, over 50 paper questionnaires instead of the online format were handed out in each school for pupils to complete during class time. Most of pupils completed the questionnaire within 20-30 minutes. A total of 443 valid questionnaires were collected and the return rate was 70.3%. 40 teachers were approached online via the e-forum and 20 teachers were contacted individually offline. 42 valid questionnaires were gathered, with a 70% return rate.

3.4.3 Interview Participants

Interview participants were mainly volunteers who had already completed the questionnaire survey. Some of the pupil interviewees were chosen from volunteers by their Mandarin teachers, where too many pupils were willing to take part and there was not enough time for the researcher to interview them all. When selecting the interviewees, Mandarin teachers and the researcher tried to cover a full range of pupils with both girls and boys. Interviews with pupils were conducted during the class or break time in a pre-booked quiet office, lasting about 10-30 minutes.

At the beginning stage, group interviews with 3-4 pupils instead of individual ones were administered in the first two schools because of time restrictions. However in the later schools, given relatively less time pressure, interviews with individual pupils were conducted. According to Gaskell (2000), group interviewing is a more natural and authentic way of interaction, and it helps stimulate and produce new insight into interviewees' beliefs by group discussion. Yet in that sense, participants' original views could also be affected by others' responses. On the other hand, an individual depth interview, which is

one-to-one interaction and idea exchanging, is perhaps less natural but an easier situation in which to capture an interviewee's personal thoughts. I would argue that both group and individual interviewing are effective methods to seek the participants' insights, as long as the interviewer manages to establish a rapport with well-prepared interview questions or guidelines. In the end, a total of 33 individual pupils and 13 groups were interviewed for the study.

Teacher interviewees were all volunteers. The individual interviews were arranged in advance with teachers, and carried out face to face either at teachers' homes or their offices, depending on their convenience and availability. It has to be mentioned that, there are two exceptions where interviews were conducted online via skype, because these two teachers preferred online video chatting on the computer, which suited their schedule better. Straus et al (2001) suggest that interviewees may feel less comfortable with computer-assisted video interviewing than face-to-face interviewing if they are not used to the medium or the online communication quality is poor (Straus et al, 2001). In this case, both researcher and teachers had used online video chatting software, i.e. skype for many years, and the internet bandwidth was satisfactory to maintain clear speaking voices. Thus I would argue that both face-to-face interviewing and online chatting were equally effective in the study. The interview time was longer with teachers than with pupils, from half an hour to two hours. A total of 13 teachers from various backgrounds were interviewed for the study.

3.4.4 Classroom Observation in Schools

I undertook some class observations to inform the development of the research tools. 13 schools were approached (10 state schools and 3 independent schools). Detailed information about the schools visited is reported in the results chapter.

3.5 Pilot Study

Finding the samples for the pilot study was also challenging. The goal of the pilot study was to pilot the questionnaire for students in school and for teachers. However, the letter sent to recruit the pilot sample was not successful.

For this reason, adult learners were used to pilot the questionnaire survey. The pilot was conducted via online survey software by 40 adult students in a university in England.

The teacher survey pilot was administered twice with different versions of the questionnaires. The first pilot was conducted with two first language Chinese teachers. Having modified the questionnaire based on their feedback, the revised electronic survey was sent to eight teachers by email. Six of them answered the questionnaire.

The pilot interviews were conducted with a purposive convenience sample--an adult English learner and two L1 Chinese teachers. The following section reports the participant feedback and results of the pilot survey and interview, and most importantly the implications from the pilot are discussed.

3.5.1 Questionnaire Pilot

Participants

For the student pilot questionnaire, 40 adult learners from a language centre of a university in the West Midlands of England completed the questionnaire electronically. All of the participants reported themselves as adult learners over 18. There were slightly more male students than female students (24 and 16 respectively). A large majority of students (N=35) were from an alphabetic language background, 23 of whom were English native speakers. 12 spoke Spanish, German or French as their first languages. The

length of time the respondents had been learning Chinese varied. 11 students began to learn Chinese that year, 16 had 1-2 years' learning experience and 13 had learnt for more than 3 years.

To pilot the teacher questionnaire, 6 Chinese teachers completed the questionnaire. All of them were first language Chinese teachers from Mainland China who were part of the Hanban programme. There was one male teacher and five female teachers, all of whom had different academic backgrounds. Two of them majored in English Education, two had studied Primary Education, and the other two were from a teaching Chinese as a second language background. 4 out of 6 teachers did not have previous experience of teaching foreigners Chinese before in China. Since this group of teachers were sent to England around November 2012, and some of them finished their one-year contract in July, the length of teaching in the UK for these teachers, on the average, was no more than one year. Moreover, a large majority of teachers (5) had never taught foreigners Chinese language before. Instead, two teachers were EFL teachers and one teacher had nearly 10 years' experience of teaching Chinese to native Chinese primary pupils.

Data Collection and Analysis

The student questionnaire was conducted online via a website (www.adobeformscentral.com) in June 2013 and the return rate was 95% (N=38). Relevant ethical issues were carefully taken into account and ethical approval granted through the University processes (see Appendix 6). All participants were given a brief introduction to the study and an assurance of confidentiality. They were also assured that their participation was completely voluntary. The teachers' questionnaire was directly sent to teachers' email addresses in September and the return rate was 75% (N=6). SPSS 21 was used to analyse the quantitative data of responses. A descriptive analysis of percentage and mean scores was calculated and this is presented in tables. Responses to the open-ended questions were also collected and categorised.

3.5.2 Interview Pilot

Participants

The interview pilot was conducted with two first language Chinese teachers from School F and an adult English learner. By the time the author contacted the teachers, they had only been in England for three months. The two teachers were working with a Confucius Classroom based in the West Midlands region together. They were sent by Hanban from Mainland China to support the local Mandarin teacher and also to teach some lunch clubs or after-school courses in outreach primary and secondary schools. Teacher L used to teach university students English back in China, while Teacher Y was majoring in teaching Chinese as a second language, with one-year overseas teaching experience in an Asian country before coming to England. The adult learner had been learning Chinese for almost 10 years by herself without much formal instruction in school. She was able to speak some complex Chinese sentences but still encountered difficulties in pronouncing the correct tones, as well as recognising some Chinese characters when reading.

Data Collection and Analysis

The interviews with learners and two Chinese teachers were conducted individually in early March, 2013. I conducted the interview with the English adult learner in a quiet room next to a university for approximately half an hour, while interviews with two Chinese teachers were conducted in their homes in Coventry with nearly an hour for each person. All interviews were audio recorded, with the participants' permission. The learner's interview was conducted in English and the teachers' interviews were in their L1 language-Mandarin Chinese. All processes were carried out with ethical approval. Both learner and teachers were assured that their information would be kept confidential and would not be used other than for current research. The recorded audios were transcribed in the week following the interviews. Nvivo10

was used to analyse and categorize the transcription.

3.5.3 Implications of the Pilot

It is hard to draw any conclusions relevant to the research questions from the pilot as the sample is small. However, the pilot study showed that it is possible to investigate how students and teachers perceived the challenges and difficulties of teaching and learning Chinese by questionnaire and in-depth interview. This is important information to supplement the literature basis for the design of the instruments of this study.

After conducting the pilot, some adjustments were made to the original CLTQ:

- 1) An item about self-evaluated language levels was added to the student survey, as a focus factor when dealing with learners' perceived difficulties in learning Chinese;
- 2) A question item "Learning how to carry on a conversation in Chinese is more important than learning to read and write" was added to the questionnaire, to balance questions that only asked about the importance of linguistic forms but missed out the communication orientation;
- 3) An item about the importance of putting effort into Chinese learning was added. Another item was changed aiming at Chinese character learning in particular, that is "Learning Chinese characters involves a lot of handwriting practice and memorisation".
- 4) Two items about the teachers' role were added to the questionnaire: "I would like to learn Chinese from a teacher who is a native speaker of Chinese", and "How much students learn from a Chinese course mostly depends on the quality of the teacher."

The interview question guides were also modified according to my own reflections and feedback from interviewees (the final version of interview guides can be seen in appendix 3 and 4). Recordings were transcribed and preliminary categorization was carried out via Nvivo. By practising these, I became more

familiar with the transcribing rules and functions of the Nvivo program. Moreover, the whole framework of what I should focus on in the research became clearer, from the preliminary findings obtained in the pilot.

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

3.6.1 Data Analysis

As for the data analysis of formal study, mean scores and standard deviations of both teachers' and students' responses on each item were calculated to address the first three research questions. As both positive and negative questions were included in the Likert questionnaire, the raw scores obtained from the respondents were reversed to the same direction for further analysis. Coolican (2004) pointed out that it was always sensible to label the higher scores as the positive views while the lower scores were the negative views, as it would follow the regular cognitive pattern without putting extra cognitive burden on interpreting the scores. Thus in this case all the scores from the negative items were reversed to the opposite one, with 1 reversing to 4, 2 to 3, 3 to 2 and 4 to 1. When all the scores were reversed to the same direction by using SPSS, the descriptive analysis could be calculated and results could be presented in crosstabs.

In order to know whether there was any significant difference of beliefs between the teacher group and pupil group, as well as pupil groups at different levels, an independent t test, and one-way ANOVA were used respectively. Strictly speaking, a non-parametric analysis (Chi-square) rather than a t test is supposed to be applied for data analysis, as the score measured by the Likert scale is interpreted as ordinal to some extent (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Jamieson, 2004). However, there are some contradictory views about whether the Likert scale data should be treated as an ordinal-categorical level, or as an

interval-level of measurement, given the Likert scale seems to provide extra information rather than just simply implying the order or rank value of the variables (Jamieson, 2004; Norman, 2010). As the four-Likert item is used in this study, respondents were required to rate the difficulty of Chinese learning at four levels, “1 very easy”, “2 easy”, “3 difficult”, “4 very difficult”. The distance between category 1 and 2 was actually equivalent to that of between category 3 and 4, based on the well-defined wordings by the researcher. Moreover, there is a symmetry of category with a midpoint of degree of difficulty. In that sense, a normal distribution of rated mean scores of difficulty was more likely to be observed or inferred (Norman, 2010). Thus Likert-scale data can be somewhat considered as a more interval-like level of measurement, if the description of Likert item categories are clearly presented. In addition, means of Likert scales are normally distributed as well. Therefore, if the Likert data is analysed by using non-parametric methods, some valuable information could be lost as the distance between Likert items is not taken into consideration (Norman, 2010). That is to say, for Likert scale data, which analysis methods should be used depends on how the Likert items are presented in each study.

For the qualitative data analysis, Merriam (2009) noted that it is “the process of making sense out of data which involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the research has seen and read” (p. 175-176). As analysing massive qualitative data is a daunting work and the interpretations are likely to raise validity and reliability issues, teachers’ and pupils’ responses to interviews were carefully transcribed, coded and categorized by using Nvivo 10. The data of a single school was first analysed through “nodes” in Nvivo 10. And then different schools’ transcriptions with similar aspects were exported together via “report” in Nvivo 10, to examine the discrepancies and shared beliefs across cases. A series of principles and procedure was followed in order to promote the validity and reliability of the data:

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- 1) Keep the research questions in the mind during the process at all times;
 - 2) Transcribe the record of interview responses and recall comments by the researcher herself via Nvivo 10 (including the data and venue), keep track of the thoughts emerging during transcriptions in the margins of the main texts.
 - 3) Keep the researcher's own reflective thoughts and decision making during the whole process of data collection and interpretation.
 - 4) Another researcher who has not taken part in the study is supposed to be invited as a second rater to categorize part of the data independently, to avoid the subjectivity of the first rater who gets involved in the whole procedure (Gass and Mackey, 2000). However, this is not realistic in the process of actual data coding, and thus the researcher alone checked the consistency of category on her own, trying to be objective in coding and categorization.
 - 5) Triangulate qualitative findings from interviews and researcher's notes by exporting the original transcription data and notes via Nvivo report.

3.6.2 Generalizability

When it comes to the generalizability of the qualitative data, which is the major limitation of qualitative study, scholars may have different interpretations of this issue. Although qualitative findings from a random sample are not likely to be applied to other settings or to the whole population, there are some other ways that readers can still learn from the descriptions of the qualitative findings (Merriam, 2009). Some argue that actually “the general lies in the particular” in real life, thus it is possible for people to apply qualitative findings in the specific situation to their own settings. In that sense, the generalization of qualitative data depends much more on the readers themselves than the researcher in the statistical sense (Merriam, 2009, p.225). Nevertheless, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that the researcher “needs to

provide sufficient descriptive data” to help appliers transfer the results to their own situations (p. 298).

Moreover, purposive participants with maximum variations of sample need to be selected for “the possibility of a greater range of application by readers of the research” (Merriam, 2009, p.227).

3.6.3 Limitations

Limitations about methods are discussed here. Planned procedures were modified during data collection, so that not all schools were involved in both questionnaire and interview survey. I have explained the reason and the considerations for the reliability and validity of this issue. However, perhaps this still, to some extent, affects the generalizability of questionnaire findings. It would be better if a further study could get both quantitative and qualitative data from the same schools to make the comparison.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

3.7.1 Ethical Issues Relating to Pupils

As pupils were participants in the study, sensitive ethical issues needed to be considered. Written permission to conduct the study was sought from the line managers as well as headteachers from secondary schools. A cover letter about the research was sent to both teachers and pupils in advance to provide a brief introduction of the aims and conduct of the research as well as an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011) (See Appendix 7). The pupils’ parents were also informed so that they had the opportunity to enquire further or withdraw their children if they had concerns. All participants were informed that participation in the study was entirely voluntary and they were assured that they may opt out at any time. In addition, any findings that might be traced back to a particular person were avoided and pseudonyms were used in the report.

3.7.2 Researcher's Involvement

The researcher's involvement in the research process, particularly in the qualitative research, cannot be ignored or excluded. In the quantitative part of this study, although the Likert scale instrument was used to collect views and attitudes, when administering the survey in a paper-and-pencil format in the classroom, the presence of the researcher and Mandarin teacher might, to some extent, affect respondents' interpretation of survey statements (Webster, 1997). Under classroom circumstances, some pupils may have felt obligated to complete the survey, and probably tended to choose the answers that the researcher expected. Some pupils may have had concerns about the understanding of the survey statements, and turned to their teacher or the researcher for help. The researcher or teachers' explanation or interpretation might have had some impacts on pupils' responses as well. Nevertheless, I would argue that such sensibility in the process of survey administration cannot be eliminated completely, the only thing that can be done, for the researcher and the research assistant (i.e. the Mandarin teacher in this case), is to be fully aware of the classroom situation to create a relatively stress-free environment for pupils. Furthermore, when answering questions about survey items, both the researcher and the teacher need to provide similar meanings without adding personal views.

When it comes to the qualitative part of the study, the researcher's role is even more essential. Lichtman (2013) indicates that "the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis" in qualitative research, as "all the information is filtered through the researcher's eyes and ears and is influenced by his or her experience, knowledge, skill and background" (p.21). In that sense, the subjectivity of the researcher can be seen throughout all the qualitative research process, from the data collection, which is the semi-structured interview in this case, to the audio transcription, and data analysis. Although the bias of the lone researcher can be reduced to a certain degree, by a range of approaches,

such as well-established interview guidelines and the triangulation of other sources, such as classroom observation, all of which have been done in this study, the nature of the subjectivity and flexibility of qualitative study cannot not be denied. After all, based on the interpretivist paradigm, the understanding and interpretation of the world is closely linked to our personal knowledge, as it is we who try to understand ourselves, others and the world (Hartas, 2010). As Lichtman (2013) emphasises, “The researcher shapes the research and, in fact, is shaped by the research” (p. 164). Hence, the researcher’s involvement in the qualitative part should be appreciated, as it is the researcher, who makes the research data more meaningful, based on their own ways of organizing and integrating the data.

3.7.3 Issues of Transcription

The audio clips recorded during the interviews were transcribed by the researcher via Nvivo 10. McLellan et al. (2003) stresses that “a researcher must make choices regarding whether a textual document should include nonlinguistic observations (facial expressions, body language, setting descriptions, etc.); be transcribed verbatim; and identify specific speech patterns, vernacular expressions, intonations, or emotions” (p.66). In this study, given the sensitivity of personal views and attitudes, it was decided that the focus of transcribing would be only the linguistic aspects of the dialogues, to avoid any additional interpretation by the researcher herself. In terms of transcribing the verbal sound into written words, it was attempted to leave the features of individual speeches as they were, such as the pause, overlapping words and incomplete sentences. In that sense, the naturalness of the conversation in the interview would be preserved to some extent (McLellan et al, 2003).

Another issue is about the languages used in the transcripts. The principle applied was to transcribe in the corresponding languages according to which language was used in interviews. As English is the

researcher's second language, transcribing the English interview recordings turned out to be more challenging and time-consuming for English non-native speakers, especially with some background noises in the recordings. Audio recordings were played backward and forward many times, in order to get a word or sentence transcribed correctly. Nevertheless, there might still have been some errors during the transcribing, and I turned to an English native speaker for help with the proofreading. Confidentiality was assumed for the process of transcribing and proofreading, all the transcripts were labelled, pseudonyms were used, and any information that could be traced to the respondents and schools was avoided.

3.8 Conclusion

In summary, this study aimed to investigate the beliefs of CFL teachers and pupils and compare the two groups' views about Chinese learning and teaching. The study also sought to explore the relationship between teachers' and pupils' beliefs and their own background and experience. A cross-paradigm approach of "Pragmatism" was chosen as the theoretical assumption of the study and a mix-method of both quantitative and qualitative was used to address the questions. The quantitative part of this research was underpinned by a positivist paradigm while the qualitative part was underpinned by the theory of constructionists. A Likert-scale CLTQ based on the previous studies of beliefs was developed to examine teachers' and pupils' beliefs for a wider context of inquiry. An interview was conducted to seek in-depth insights of both teachers and learners.

A random sample with 630 CFL pupils and 60 Mandarin teachers was approached for survey. Interview respondents are chosen from the participants who have completed the survey. Additionally, notes from classroom observations were taken as a reference for understanding the contexts of CFL in specific schools. The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire was analysed through SPSS, descriptive

statistics and t-test was adapted to examine the discrepancy of beliefs between teacher and pupil group. Participants' comments from interviews were transcribed, categorized and coded, with the categories generated from the data. Ethical issues, reliability and validity were carefully considered and discussed in this section.

CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the questionnaire and interviews with pupils and teachers. The data upon which this analysis was conducted includes:

- questionnaire responses from 443 pupils and 42 teachers;
- interviews with 67 pupils (33 individuals and 13 groups) and 13 teachers.

The next section reports the analysis and findings from the questionnaire, including Likert-scale data and answers to open-ended questions. Pupils' responses to the Chinese Learning and Teaching Questionnaire (CLTQ) are presented, in terms of the difficulties of Chinese learning, beliefs about what good language learners are like, beliefs about the importance in learning a language, beliefs about effective Chinese learning strategies, as well as motivations for learning Chinese, as categorized in the questionnaire. This presentation is followed by teachers' beliefs about the same five aspects. The comparison of beliefs held by pupils and teachers are briefly reported. In the end of this section, the relationship between pupils' beliefs and the lengths of time they have spent on Chinese learning is examined. Although this is not a longitudinal study, such an analysis can give insights into whether pupils' beliefs shift or remain the same as they progress as learners.

The third section presents the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, firstly case by case and then an analysis across cases, to provide a full picture. The notes taken from classroom observation are also discussed.

The final section gathers the findings from quantitative and qualitative study together and a triangulation of results towards each research question is summarized.

4.2 The Sample

443 pupils and 42 teachers in a dozen schools were involved in the study and, although not a quota sample of schools, the study took in a broad range of contexts, as there were a wide range of schools involved in the study. The schools involved are spread across different regions in England: Northeast (1), Northwest (1), Southeast (including London, 3), Southwest (4), and West Midlands (4) (Table 4-1). The national Chinese learning survey conducted by CILT (2007) notes that a relatively large proportion of schools in the South East and West Midlands are offering Chinese. Although the situation may have changed after seven years, the current sample suggests that more schools in the South East (3) and West Midlands (4) engaged with the current study, although we cannot tell whether this is because there are more schools doing Chinese there.

A number of types of school were involved: 3 were private schools and 10 were state-maintained schools. The 3 private schools and one grammar school were selective. The comprehensive schools were all over subscribed. All these schools were teaching Chinese as a curriculum subject.

The following part illustrated the group and individual characteristics of pupil and teacher participants in questionnaire and interviews.

Table 4-1 The Sample of Questionnaire and Interview

| Case | School Location | School Type | Pupils | Pupil interviewees | Teacher interviewees |
|----------|-----------------|-------------|--------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| A | Southwest | state | 123 | 6 Y7 | 1 L1 Chinese, |
| B | Southwest | state | 56 | 8 Y7 | PGCE |
| C | West Midlands | state | 73 | n/a | 1 L1 Chinese, 1 PGCE English |
| D | London | state | 43 | Y7 9*2 group | L1 French |
| E | Southwest | state | 5 | 1 Y10 | 1 L1 English |
| F | Southwest | state | 20 | 4*4 group Y8-Y11 | n/a |
| G | West Midlands | state | 20 | 12 Y9, 1 Y10, 2 Y11 | n/a |
| H | Northeast | state | 70 | n/a | Hanban teacher |
| | London | state | n/a | n/a | L1 teacher |
| | Northwest | state | 31 | n/a | n/a |
| | Southeast | private | n/a | n/a | 2 L1 Chinese |
| | West Midlands | private | 2 | n/a | 1 L1 Chinese |
| | West Midlands | private | n/a | n/a | 1 L1 English |
| | | n/a | n/a | n/a | American L1 |
| | | n/a | n/a | n/a | L1 Chinese Taiwanese |

4.2.1 Survey sample

4.2.1.1 Pupils

443 pupils from 10 English secondary schools participated in the questionnaire (see Table 4-1 for detail). The number of pupils across the ten schools was not equally distributed, ranging from 2 to 123. In terms of language background, 92% of pupils (408) were English speakers, and only 8% of pupils (35) reported that they came from other language backgrounds. The biggest minority language group was Polish (8), followed by pupils speaking Indian-related languages (12).

The pupils ranged from Year 7 to Year 11, with a large majority of pupils in Year 7. This was related to the length of time they had studied Chinese. 369 pupils (83.3%) reported that they had been learning Chinese for less than a year, 53 pupils (12%) had learnt for 1-2 years, and 21 pupils (4.7%) were in their third to fifth year of learning. Such distribution in terms of year group and length of learning, echoes the findings in CILT's (2007) survey that "the majority of schools teach Mandarin at Entry level (86%)" (p.9).

Experience was reflected in pupil age. 39.5% of pupils (175) were aged 7-11, 58.7% of pupils (260) were in the age 12-15 group, and 1.8% of pupils (8) were aged 15-18. 54.6% of pupils (242) were boys and 45.1% of them (200) were girls, with only one case where the pupil's information was not provided.

Figure 4-1 presents pupils' self-rated Chinese language level as well as their perceived levels at the four basic language skills. Only half the pupils responded to these questions. Of these respondents (242), nearly one third of the pupils perceived themselves as total beginners, and 20% thought that they were experienced beginners. In terms of four languages skills, around a quarter of pupils believed their speaking and listening were at a complete beginner level, whereas about 23% of pupils thought they were at advanced beginner level. As for reading and writing, 30% or more pupils thought they were total beginners and about 17% thought they were experienced beginners. Approximately fewer than 5% of pupils reported that they had already reached intermediate level. Fewer than 1% of pupils thought they were at the advanced level.

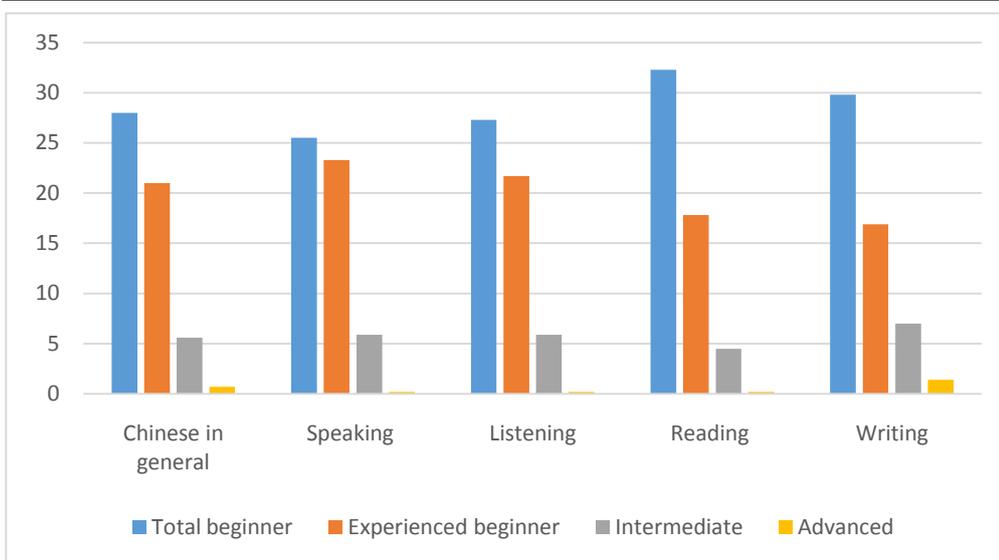


Figure 4-1 Percentages of Pupils' Self-rated Language Level

As to the consideration of pupils' year group, length of Chinese learning and their self-perceived language level, the pupil sample in this study was heavily weighted towards beginners, with levels ranging from total beginner to more advanced beginner (i.e self-perceived intermediate). Given that the data about pupils' self-perceived language level was somewhat subjective and incomplete, and some pupils may have learnt Chinese in their primary schools (and such information is not shown in the current secondary grade) the category of pupil's language level was mainly operationalized by their length of Chinese learning, that is:

- 1) Level 1, total beginners, who have been learning Chinese for less than a year;
- 2) Level 2, experienced beginners, with 1-2 years of learning experience; and
- 3) Level 3, advanced beginners to intermediate learners, with about 3-5 years of Chinese learning experience.

When it came to pupils' foreign language experience, 89.8% of pupils (398) had learnt or currently were learning another FL at school. French, Spanish and German were the top three most popular languages among pupils. Some pupils were learning their mother tongue, such as Punjabi, Tamil and Russian, which

they regarded as a foreign language.

A very small number of pupils (36.4%) had been to China for the purpose of tourism with family or for a school visit organized by schools. Most had stayed in China for less than 3 weeks. Only three pupils had been in China for more than 3 years. One used to stay with parents, who ran a business in China. One reported that he was born in Hong Kong and had lived there for 7 years. Another one said he regularly went to visit his relatives.

4.2.1.2 Teachers

A total of 42 teachers responded to the questionnaire. 83.3% of them (35) were L1 Chinese speakers, only 16.7% of teachers (7) were non-native Chinese, of whom six were English L1 and one was French L1. The large majority were women - 88.1% were female (37), with 5 male teachers.

Among all the teachers, seven taught both primary and secondary. Eight were teachers of Chinese in secondary schools who were not teaching pupils towards exams, nineteen were GCSE Chinese teachers, two were GCSE teachers for heritage Chinese pupils. There were also university teachers of Chinese, two of them for non-Chinese major learners, and only one for learners who were majoring in Chinese. One teacher was a PGCE student, and one was a tutor of an online Mandarin course.

The teachers' academic backgrounds (as shown in Table 4-2) largely fitted into four academic groups in the following fields:

- 1) Language education. Eleven teachers majored in English language education, i.e. TESOL, and six teachers were specifically from a teaching Chinese as a second language (TCSL) background. One teacher had studied for a PGCE Mandarin, and the other one had studied PGCE for MFL;

- 2) Linguistics and literature-related area. Five teachers were from linguistic and applied linguistic

backgrounds, four teachers were from Chinese studies area, particularly focusing on Chinese language, history and politics, etc. Five teachers majored in Chinese literature or literature of other FL, such as English or Japanese.

3) Other education-related areas apart from language teaching, such as Drama Education, Primary Education and Higher education.

4) Others. Teachers from Social Science, Law, Medicine, Aeronautics Engineering, and Museum Science were also included.

Experience of teaching the Chinese language varied. Most of teachers had been teaching Chinese for about 3-5 years in England (11) and somewhere else in total (15) (See Figure 4-2 and 4-3 for detail).

Interestingly, some teachers had taught Chinese, as a literacy subject to native Chinese students, for more than 10 years in China, and had just started to teach Chinese in the UK less than a year ago.

Table 4-2 Teachers' Academic Background

| Academic Background | Number | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Aeronautics engineering | 1 | 2.4 |
| Applied linguistics | 5 | 11.9 |
| Chinese literature | 3 | 7.1 |
| Chinese studies | 4 | 9.5 |
| Drama education | 1 | 2.4 |
| English literature | 1 | 2.4 |
| French and German joint honours | 1 | 2.4 |
| Higher education | 1 | 2.4 |
| Japanese literature | 1 | 2.4 |
| Law | 1 | 2.4 |
| Medicine | 1 | 2.4 |
| Museum studies | 1 | 2.4 |
| PGCE Mandarin | 1 | 2.4 |
| PGCE MFL | 1 | 2.4 |
| Primary education | 1 | 2.4 |

| | | |
|----------------|----|------|
| Social science | 1 | 2.4 |
| TCSL | 6 | 14.3 |
| TESOL | 11 | 26 |
| Total | 42 | 100 |

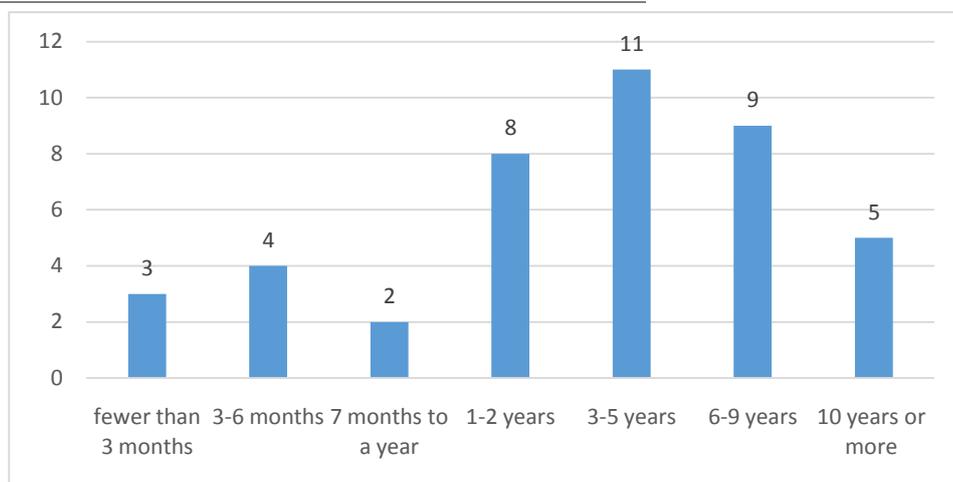


Figure 4-2 Teachers' Length of Time Teaching Chinese in the UK

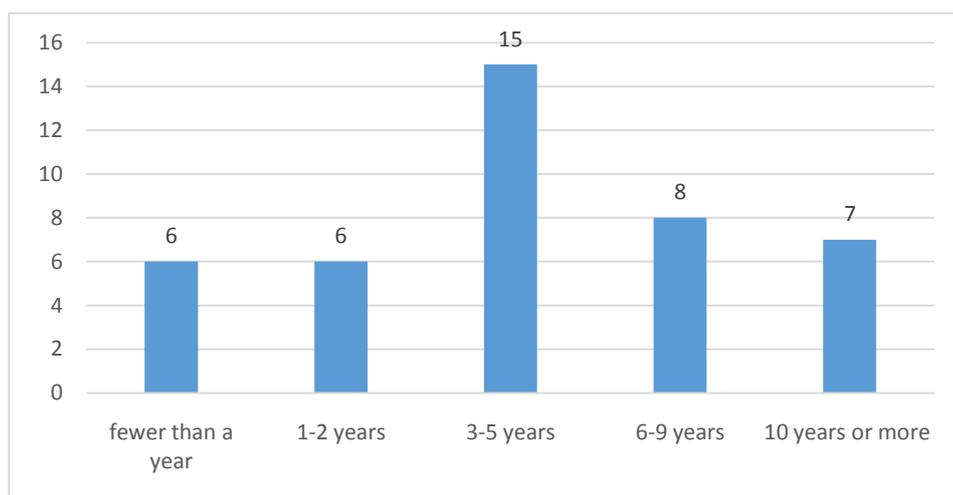


Figure 4-3 Teachers' Length of Time Teaching Chinese in Total

4.2.2 Interview Participants

67 pupils (33 individuals and 13 groups) and 13 teachers participated in the interviews. Pupil interviewees were from seven schools visited by the researcher (see Table 4-1 above).

Pupil interviewees were from a wide range of year groups. A large proportion of interviewees were in Year 7 (35) and Year 9 (16). There were 4 pupils in Year 8, 6 in Year 10 and Year 11 respectively. 33

pupils were interviewed one by one, and another 34 pupils were interviewed in groups, with each group of 2 or 4 pupils.

Chinese language teachers in the interviews, like those who answered the questionnaire (above), were from a range of language backgrounds (i.e. first language is English, Chinese or French) and educational or professional backgrounds. There were 8 L1 Chinese speakers, 4 L1 English speakers (3 English and 1 American), and 1 L1 French speaker. Of the eight L1 Chinese speakers, one teacher was sent by Hanban from Mainland China, one was a Hanban teacher before and then became a local teacher, one came from Taiwan, one had obtained a GCSE in Mandarin, and the remaining four had been in England for over five years.

The next section will present the questionnaire results detailing the beliefs of pupils and teachers about learning Chinese.

4.3 Analysis and Findings of the Questionnaire

4.3.1 Pupils' Beliefs

4.3.1.1 Difficulties of Learning Chinese

As shown in Table 4-3, pupils agreed Chinese language was more difficult than European languages. Chinese in general (item 9f) was perceived as difficult with a lower mean of 2.69. Nevertheless, as for item 2 comparing the difficulty of some languages with the other FLs, pupils thought some languages were actually easier, and they were ambivalent about item 3 “ultimately I will speak Chinese well” (2.50), indicating lack of confidence or difficulty in speaking Chinese.

Concerning the language skills in item 4-6, pupils believed that recognising Chinese was harder than

writing, and they rated speaking as less difficult than understanding. By comparing the reading and writing with speaking and understanding in item 6, the pupils indicated they thought reading and writing were harder than speaking and understanding.

In terms of specific aspects of learning Chinese (item 7-9e), the aspect pupils rated as most difficult in this sample was homophones (2.86), followed by grammar (2.83), and then matching sound with characters (2.73), words (2.70), characters (2.68), and Chinese tones (2.62). Pupils did not think pinyin was difficult to learn at all (2.31).

The estimated time to learn Chinese well was believed to be short (2.13). They thought around 3-5 years was needed to speak Chinese fluently if someone only learnt for one hour a day.

| Table 4-3 Pupils' Beliefs about the Difficulty of Chinese Learning | |
|--|----------------------|
| <i>Items</i> | <i>M^a</i> |
| Some languages are easier to learn than others. | 3.47 |
| I find it confusing that Chinese words have same pronunciations but different characters and meanings | 2.86 |
| The difficulty of learning grammar rules | 2.83 |
| It is easier to speak than understand Chinese. | 2.79 |
| Matching pronunciation of words with characters is very difficult. | 2.73 |
| The difficulty of learning vocabulary | 2.70 |
| It is easier to read and write Chinese than to speak and understand it. | 2.69 |
| The difficulty of learning Chinese language in general | 2.69 |
| The difficulty of learning Chinese characters | 2.68 |
| The difficulty of learning tones | 2.62 |
| I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak Chinese very well. | 2.50 |
| Recognising the Chinese character is easier than writing the character. | 2.39 |
| The difficulty of learning pinyin (e.g. nǐ hǎo) | 2.31 |
| If some spent one hour a day learning Chinese, how long do you think it will take him/her to become fluent? (1-2 years, 3-5 years, 5-10 years, over 10 years) | 2.13 |
| Learning Chinese is not as difficult as learning European languages. | 2.11 |

Note: M^o means the adjusted mean scores based on questionnaire responses, not the original ones.

4.3.1.2 What Makes a Good Language Learner?

Means scores of items about what good language learners are like are presented in Table 4-4. Pupils believed that children were better at learning languages (item 1 and 14) and they thought such advantage worked better in learning Chinese (2.62) than in other foreign languages (2.54, FL). However, the partial overlap in the mean range of item 1 (2.54-2.70) and item 14 (2.46-2.62) indicates in the whole population of CFL learners, pupils were likely to believe there was no difference between children's advantages in learning Chinese and in learning other FLs.

However, gender was not viewed as a factor that affected language learning by pupils at all. They disagreed that girls were better than boys at learning Chinese (1.96) on item 5, or at learning other FLs (1.92) on item 15. This is interesting, given the recent survey indicating the predominance of girls taking

Pupils did not agree with the statement 2 that “learners have a special ability to learn Chinese” (2.25), nor with item 16 about learners’ special ability to learn FL (2.23). On the other hand, when asked about their own language learning abilities, interestingly, pupils positively believed they had the ability to learn Chinese (2.69, item 4) but were not sure about their ability to learn FL (2.45, item 8). This was probably because of different wordings used in the two statements. More explanations can be seen in the discussion section.

In terms of general confidence about language learning, pupils showed their strong agreement with items 10 and 9, that everyone could learn to speak Chinese and FL. However, they revealed a stronger confidence in learning to communicate in FL (3.10) than in Chinese (2.84). Pupils endorsed the statement that English people were not good at Chinese learning (2.22, item 6), whereas the experience of learning an Asian language was helpful (2.64, item 3).

Nevertheless, they overwhelmingly believed that, people who were good at learning Maths could also be good at learning Chinese (3.32, item 12), and that intelligence had nothing to do with being able to speak Chinese (2.37, item 13). Instead, pupils largely valued effort and hard work in learning (2.94, item 17), and there was no exception for smart pupils (3.23, item 18). Yet pupils believed working hard was not the only requirement for learning well (2.12, item 11), teacher’s teaching quality also counted (2.82, item 7).

Table 4-4 Pupils' Beliefs about What Makes a Good Language Learner

| <i>Items</i> | <i>Mean</i> |
|---|-------------|
| People who are good at Maths and Science are also good at learning Chinese. | 3.32 |
| The smart pupils also have to work hard to be able to speak Chinese well. | 3.23 |
| Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language. | 3.10 |
| How much you can improve your proficiency in Chinese depends on your effort. | 2.94 |
| Everyone can learn to speak Chinese. | 2.84 |
| How much pupils learn from the Chinese course mostly depends on the quality of the teacher. | 2.82 |
| I have the ability to learn Chinese. | 2.69 |
| It is easier for someone who already speaks an Asian language to learn Chinese. | 2.64 |
| It is easier for children than adults to learn Chinese. | 2.62 |
| It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language. | 2.54 |
| I have the ability to learn foreign language. | 2.45 |
| People who speak Chinese are very intelligent. | 2.37 |
| Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn Chinese. | 2.25 |
| Some people are just born smart to learn a foreign language. | 2.23 |
| English pupils are very good at learning Chinese. | 2.22 |
| Pupils who do not do well in the Chinese class simply do not work hard enough. | 2.12 |
| Girls are better than boys at learning Chinese. | 1.96 |
| Girls are better than boys at learning a foreign language. | 1.92 |

4.3.1.3 Importance in Learning a FL

As shown in Table 4-5, pupils had mixed beliefs about the importance of learning Chinese. In general, they agreed with item 9 (2.95), that “learning Chinese is different from learning other subjects”. They were most positive (3.17) about the necessity of learning to write characters (item 12), and of knowing some basic writing rules (2.92) as well as radicals (2.72) on item 14 and 7.

Pupils expressed a preference for having a L1 Chinese teacher (2.88, item 13), yet were generally ambivalent about the role of culture (2.48, item 1) and of an immersion learning context in China (2.52,

item 8). As for the nature of Chinese learning, they disagreed that learning Chinese was a matter of translation (2.31, item 10), or “carrying on conversation is more important than learning to read and write” (2.34, item 6). On the other hand, they tended to be unsure (2.48) about the prominence of grammar learning (item 4), yet believed vocabulary learning was essential (2.65, item 3).

Items 2, 5 and 11 inquired about what to start with in Chinese learning, pinyin (2.70) and characters (2.70) were both favoured choices among pupils, yet with a less positive view about starting with oral words (2.55).

Table 4-5 Pupils’ Beliefs about the Importance in Learning a FL

| <i>Items</i> | <i>M</i> |
|--|----------|
| Learning to write Chinese characters is not a waste of time. | 3.17 |
| Learning Chinese is different from learning other school subjects. | 2.95 |
| It is important to know some basic writing rules (i.e. types of strokes, stroke order) of Chinese characters before learning to write. | 2.92 |
| I would like to learn Chinese from a teacher who is a native speaker of Chinese. | 2.88 |
| It is important to learn character components (radicals) when learning characters. | 2.72 |
| It is better to start Chinese learning with pinyin. | 2.70 |
| It is better to begin Chinese learning with individual characters. | 2.70 |
| Learning vocabulary is the most important part of Chinese learning. | 2.65 |
| It is better to begin Chinese learning with oral words. | 2.55 |
| It is better to learn Chinese in China. | 2.52 |
| It is necessary to know the Chinese culture in order to learn Chinese. | 2.48 |
| Learning grammar rules is the most important part of Chinese learning. | 2.48 |
| Learning how to carry on conversation in Chinese is more important than learning to read and write. | 2.34 |
| Learning Chinese is mostly a matter of translating from English. | 2.31 |

4.3.1.4 Effective Strategies for Learning Chinese

As previously discussed in the literature review, three subcategories of strategies for Chinese learning were involved in this section: memorisation and practice; mistake making; and guessing and analysing.

Table 4-6, 4-7, 4-8 displayed mean scores for each item in subsections respectively.

4.3.1.4.1 Beliefs about memorisation and practice

From Table 4-6, it can be seen that pupils placed much value on practice and repetition in general (3.13, item 1), as well as learning pronunciation (3.00, item 7) and handwriting (2.99, item 9). However, their preference for practice in a language laboratory (2.58, item 20), and grammar drills (2.56, item 16) was somewhat less strong. They did not think (2.34) approaching L1 Chinese strangers to practise speaking was a good idea (item 2).

Table 4-6 Pupils' Beliefs about Practice

| | <i>It is important to</i> | <i>M</i> |
|----|---|----------|
| 1 | repeat and practise a lot | 3.13 |
| 7 | repeat the sound of words several times | 3.00 |
| 9 | handwriting practice and memorisation | 2.99 |
| 20 | practice in language laboratory | 2.58 |
| 16 | have some mechanical grammar drills exercises | 2.56 |
| 2 | practise speaking Chinese if I heard someone speaking Chinese | 2.34 |

4.3.1.4.2 Beliefs about mistakes making and communication

Generally pupils held positive beliefs (2.95) about speaking Chinese from the beginning of their learning (item 11), and they were not afraid of making mistakes in order to communicate (2.85, item 13). They also did not think they were nervous when speaking Chinese in public (item 4) (2.44). Nevertheless, pupils also showed their concerns that mistakes could not be corrected in the future. They were ambivalent (2.51) about item 5, that “mistakes can be corrected in the future”. They had stronger demands for correct pronunciation (3.03, item 10), and claimed that they were aware of their tones (2.73, item 14) and grammar (2.74, item 19) when speaking Chinese.

Table 4-7 Pupils' Beliefs about Making Mistakes

| | <i>Items</i> | <i>M</i> |
|----|--|----------|
| 10 | It is important to speak Chinese with correct pronunciation | 3.03 |
| 11 | You should have a go in speaking Chinese in the beginning | 2.95 |
| 13 | it is ok to make mistakes for communication | 2.85 |
| 19 | I pay attention to my grammar when speaking Chinese | 2.74 |
| 14 | I am aware of my tones when speaking Chinese | 2.73 |
| 5 | It is not hard to get rid of mistakes in the future | 2.51 |
| 4 | I feel self-conscious when speaking Chinese in front of others | 2.44 |

4.1.1.4.3 Beliefs about guessing and analysing

Pupils were most positive about strategies for guessing and analysing in general (see Table 4-8). They thought it was ok to guess words (2.62, item 3) and contexts helped with guessing (2.76, item 12). In terms of character learning, they believed guessing the meanings or sounds of characters was feasible, yet their preference for meaning guessing (2.80, item 8) was stronger than working out the sounds (2.65, item 18). This could be related to the characteristics of Chinese characters, which will be considered in the discussion section.

As for analysing skills, pupils agreed that words could be learnt either inductively (item 6), by analysing subcomponents of the word first (2.66), or deductively (item 17), by remembering the meaning as a whole unit initially (2.69). In addition, pupils believed the inductive way of recognising parts of characters worked better on character learning (2.87, item 15) than on words (item 6, 2.66).

Table 4-8 Pupils' Beliefs about Guessing and Analysing

| | <i>Items</i> | <i>M</i> |
|----|--|----------|
| 15 | When I study a new character, I try to recognise its parts | 2.87 |
| 8 | It is ok to guess meaning the meaning of the character if you only know part of it | 2.80 |
| 12 | When you came across a word you do not know, the context gives you a good idea of what it means | 2.76 |
| 17 | Sometimes you just have to learn a new word as a whole even if the meanings of component character seem to be unrelated to the whole meaning | 2.69 |
| 6 | When studying Chinese words, I try to think of link between components and word | 2.66 |
| 18 | It is ok to guess the sound of character if you only know part of it | 2.65 |
| 3 | It is ok to guess if you do not know a word in Chinese | 2.62 |

4.3.1.5 Motivations for Learning Chinese

Pupils' motivations for Chinese learning, as shown in Table 4-9, included both integrative and instrumental motivations. The pupils endorsed the beliefs that the purpose of learning Chinese was to use it (2.78, item 1), to get to know Chinese people better (2.71, item 3), to know more about how other people think (2.71, item 4), and to get a good job (2.90, item 9). However, they disagreed (2.38) with the item 2 "English people think it is important to speak Chinese", and did not think (2.25) learning Chinese would help with their understanding of their own first language (item 6).

In terms of character learning, pupils strongly agreed that writing characters was not boring (3.09, item 7) and believed character learning was of importance to Chinese people (3.03, item 8). In addition, they would like to learn characters in order to understand Chinese materials (2.76, item 5).

Table 4-9 Pupil Beliefs about the Motivation for Learning Chinese

| <i>Items</i> | <i>M</i> |
|---|----------|
| Learning how to write Chinese characters is not boring | 3.09 |
| Chinese people think that it is important to learn characters | 3.03 |
| If I learn to speak Chinese very well it will help me get a good job | 2.90 |
| If I am able to speak Chinese very well, I will have many opportunities to use it | 2.78 |
| I would like to learn Chinese characters so that I can understand Chinese materials | 2.76 |
| I would like to learn Chinese so that I can get to know Chinese people better | 2.71 |
| If I learn Chinese I will know more about how other people think | 2.71 |
| I believe English people think that it is important to speak Chinese | 2.38 |
| If I learn Chinese I will learn more about my own language | 2.25 |

4.3.1.6 Findings of Open-ended Questions

Individual pupils had different beliefs about difficulties in Chinese learning. Some said that Chinese accents were hard to understand, and it was not easy to pronounce tones properly. Yet others thought “*the tones and saying them with pinyin are easy.*” They all said that, however, making a connection with pinyin and characters was difficult. One pupil stated, “*I find recognising characters is much easier than saying them.*” Most pupils believed remembering all the characters and writing them down were hard, as “*it is new to them*”. However, some pupils pointed out, that “*reading and writing are fine*” and “*it is not that difficult if you practise regularly*”. As for the listening and understanding, one pupil expressed his/her “*struggling with listening to people asking questions in Chinese*”; another said “*understanding what the teacher says is difficult*”. One particular difficulty in understanding was about the multiple meanings of a character. As a pupil pointed out, “*Some characters are difficult because when it is put next to something else, it has a different meaning.*” In addition, vocabulary/grammar such as measure words and word order were also thought difficult. Some pupils felt the difficulty was a gradual process, by saying that, “*I found it easy but I can tell it will get a lot harder because it is a bit already.*”

As for what the good language learner is like, pupils overwhelmingly emphasised hard work and practice. They did not believe intelligence affected language learning. As several pupils stated, “*no one is born smart, it is to do with doing your best to build up your knowledge*”, and “*trying hard and having a good attitude is what matters*.” On the other hand, pupils said that “*some people who can remember things well will learn languages better and quicker*”. In addition, “*people who have a photographic memory find it easier to learn Chinese*.” One pupil talked about people with learning disabilities, and stating “*it can prevent them learning FL well*.” As for gender, a boy thought “*girls and boys are equally able to learn Chinese*”, whilst another pupil said girls were viewed as better learners at languages than boys, simply because “*girls listen more and pay attention*.” Pupils also realised the role of teachers, as one suggested, “*you need a good teacher, particularly important when learning a FL without a phonetic alphabet*.” Some believed teachers should be patient and make learning fun, such as by playing games.

Pupils provided various answers to the importance of learning languages. Communication was viewed as important, because of the need for mutual understanding. As one pupil said, “*it is important to learn other languages just in case other people who do not speak English do not understand you*.” Another one explained, “*because then you can go to other countries*.” Pupils talked about Chinese teachers in terms of their L1 languages. Most of them preferred a multilingual person, with proper pronunciation of Chinese, and teaching lessons in an appropriate pace. One pupil, however, revealed that, “*A non L1 Chinese teacher is good when you are a beginner because they have had to learn it the same way as you do, but later on when you become more confident, a L1 Chinese speaker is better*.” Another pupil echoed that, “*It does not matter where you learn Chinese and whom you learn from*.” The point was, on the other hand, to “*work on individuals’ weaknesses in language learning*”, as another pupil emphasised.

With regard to the strategies for Chinese learning, pupils shared similar beliefs about word and character

learning, as well as about taking risks in communication. A pupil referred to his experience of reading a Spanish dictionary at night, when suggesting revising Chinese vocabulary daily. Another one responded, *“Repeat words as many times as you can so that you will begin to know them better and understand them”*. In terms of character learning, a pupil advised having *“more handwriting and writing paragraphs in class”*. Some suggested practising Chinese by using it in conversation, as they said, *“you should try”* and *“practise a lot”*. As for mistakes, one pupil pointed out, *“at the start you would put people off if you constantly went on about mistakes, but if you leave it too late, bad habits start to develop.”* Pupils preferred interesting way of learning, by watching films, singing songs or using online website called “Quizlet”. One pupil explained that, *“ideally, fun sticks in the brain better.”*

Motivations for learning Chinese, according to pupils’ responses, included career, cultural and communication interests. Several pupils stated *“job opportunities”* in their answers. Interestingly, two pupils said *“they can also teach others Chinese to increase their opportunities in careers.”* Some pupils would like to go and travel in China and communicate with Chinese people, and found it fun to know Chinese characters as well as a new culture.

4.3.1.7 Summary of Pupils’ beliefs in Likert-scale Questionnaire

Overall, pupils’ beliefs based on responses to the statements in the questionnaire were as follows:

1. Pupils regarded Chinese as a difficult language to learn, harder than European languages. The greatest difficulty was listening, that is, understanding Chinese speaking. The open-ended questions suggested that this was likely to be related to discerning units, homophones and characters with multiple meanings. Pupils felt learning grammar was the second most difficult aspect of Chinese learning because of the word order and measure words. Questionnaire responses suggested pinyin

was viewed as the easiest aspect of Chinese learning; yet matching pinyin with characters was perceived as hard. Remembering words and characters were also thought difficult. Interestingly, some pupils believed that, with the help of pinyin, tones were not hard to distinguish and pronounce. Some thought writing and reading could be mastered if practised regularly. Pupils were realistic about Chinese learning, in that they estimated three to five years was required to speak Chinese fluently, and they seemed unsure whether or not they could achieve that goal in the end.

2. A number of factors, in terms of age, FL learning experience, hard work and teacher quality, were viewed by pupils as affecting the learning of any foreign language, including Chinese. The good language learner, according to pupils, could be either a boy or girl, but they should be hard-working, eager to pay attention and stay focused in class. Young pupils were believed to have an advantage in learning FL and Chinese, when compared with adults. Respondents suggested that people who had a photographic memory or were good at memorising may find learning Chinese easier, but this did not mean they had been born with a language learning ability or had to be particularly intelligent. In fact, everyone could learn to speak Chinese or other FL. Nevertheless, pupils in this study showed a relatively low level of confidence with their own ability to learn Chinese.
3. Pupils valued the importance of communication in learning Chinese, to understand speaking and written materials. However, not to the exclusion of writing. They emphasised character writing in terms of knowing basic rules and radicals. Vocabulary learning was viewed as more important than learning grammar and translation. Pupils indicated that a L1 Chinese teacher was preferable, especially for the later stages of Chinese learning. They also suggested an ideal teacher should be a multilingual person, with proper pronunciation, and teaching at an appropriate pace. However, they felt learning Chinese culture or learning in China was unnecessary. They endorsed starting Chinese

learning with pinyin or characters, yet tended to be less positive about starting with oral words.

4. Concerning learning strategies, respondents indicated that practice, repetition, as well as using Chinese in communication were perceived by pupils to be important strategies. They preferred high risk-taking strategies in speaking Chinese and were happy to “have a go”, and felt ambivalent about that mistakes could be fossilised in the future if they were not corrected in the beginning. Correct pronunciation was emphasised, and pupils believed they were aware of tones and grammar when speaking. They were happy to guess the meanings of words and characters, and eager to guess them by analysing subcomponents and contexts. The open-ended questions showed that they were motivated to learn Chinese for fun by applying various online resources.
5. The motivation of the respondents for learning Chinese was both integrative and instrumental, including future career, cultural and communication interests. However, pupils said that the status of Chinese learning in society was not high. They did not think learning Chinese facilitated the understanding of their own language. Nevertheless, pupils showed interest in learning characters and believed that Chinese people thought learning characters was important.

4.3.2 Teachers' Beliefs

The findings of the questionnaire concerning teachers' beliefs include more aspects than the pupils' beliefs reported above. Apart from the beliefs about the five main categories in terms of the difficulties of Chinese learning, expectations of the good language learner and strategies for learning, importance of FL learning, and motivations for FL learning, the challenges in teaching Chinese in an English secondary school context and teaching approach orientations are also presented in this section.

4.3.2.1 The Challenges in Teaching Chinese

The same analysis of teachers' beliefs was used as for pupils' beliefs (above). Items with mean scores lower than 2.50 indicate less challenging aspects, and those higher than 2.50 mean score indicate greater challenges from the teachers' point of view. From Table 4-10, it can be seen that limited opportunities for pupils to use Chinese outside class (3.36) was believed to be the biggest challenge in teaching (item 13), and other issues, such as lack of homework (item 8), memorisation (item 9) and limited lessons in the week (item 10) were also concerns. They endorsed that pupils did not do enough homework (2.78) and did not memorise work (2.72) in Chinese learning. Besides, there were not enough Chinese lessons per week at schools (2.69). On the other hand, surprisingly, the teacher's knowledge of the syllabus (item 1), lesson planning and assessment (item 5 and 6), and textbook resources (item 2) were not regarded as challenges at all. Teachers also seemed quite confident about knowing pupils' expectations (item 4), motivations for learning (item 12), as well as their behaviours in class (item 3), and thought they obtained support from colleagues and parents (item 7 and 11).

Table 4-10 Beliefs about the Challenges of Teaching Chinese

| Items | M |
|---|------|
| Less opportunity for students to use Chinese outside of class | 3.36 |
| Students do not do enough homework | 2.78 |
| Students do not memorise work | 2.72 |
| There are not enough lessons in the week | 2.69 |
| Lack of textbooks | 2.39 |
| Students do not behave as I expect | 2.36 |
| It is hard to get support from colleagues | 2.36 |
| Planning lessons is difficult | 2.33 |
| Students are lack of motivation of learning | 2.28 |
| Assessing progress is difficult | 2.22 |
| Lack of parental support and encouragement | 2.22 |
| I am unsure of students' expectations of lessons | 2.00 |
| I do not know the syllabus well | 1.92 |

4.3.2.2 The Difficulties of Learning Chinese

The mean scores indicating teachers' beliefs about the difficulty of Chinese learning are presented in Table 4-11. It is necessary to note that, teachers' responses here are the estimations of their students' difficulty of learning Chinese, rather than their own beliefs about difficulty of learning as L1 or CFL learners.

From Figure 4-10, it can be seen that teachers generally rated Chinese as a difficult language to learn (2.95, item 9f), yet they were unsure (2.50) about item 1, that "Chinese is easier to learn than European languages". Moreover, they showed no preference for the learning difficulty among all FL languages (item 2).

In terms of specific aspects, Chinese tones (3.21, item 9a) were rated as the hardest to learn, followed by homophones (3.05, item 7), characters (3.00, item 9e), and then matching sounds with characters (2.90, item 8), and words (2.76, item 9c). Pinyin (1.98, item 9b) was regarded as the easiest item to learn, and grammar (2.38, item 9d) ranked in the second. Additionally, teachers endorsed that reading and writing was harder than speaking and understanding (2.21, item 6). They believed character recognition was easier than production (3.12, item 4), and they were likely to think speaking was harder than understanding (2.36).

Teachers also thought it was not hard for pupils to speak Chinese well ultimately (item 3), and it probably took them 3-5 years (1.95) to achieve the goal if they only learn an hour per day.

Table 4-11 Beliefs about the Difficulty of Chinese Learning

| <i>Items</i> | <i>M^a</i> |
|--|----------------------|
| The difficulty of learning tones | 3.21 |
| Recognising the Chinese character is easier than writing the character | 3.12 |
| My pupils find it confusing that Chinese words have same pronunciations but different characters and meanings | 3.05 |
| The difficulty of learning Chinese characters | 3.00 |
| The difficulty of learning Chinese language in general | 2.95 |
| Matching pronunciation of words with characters is very difficult | 2.90 |
| The difficulty of learning vocabulary | 2.76 |
| My pupils believe that they will ultimately learn to speak Chinese very well | 2.71 |
| Learning Chinese is not as difficult as learning European languages | 2.50 |
| The difficulty of learning grammar rules | 2.38 |
| It is easier to speak than understand Chinese | 2.36 |
| It is easier to read and write Chinese than to speak and understand it | 2.21 |
| Some languages are easier to learn than others | 2.07 |
| The difficulty of learning pinyin (e.g. nǐ hǎo) | 1.98 |
| If some spent one hour a day learning Chinese, how long do you think it will take him/her to become fluent? (1-2 years, 3-5 years, 5-10 years, over 10 years) | 1.95 |

Note: M^o means the adjusted mean scores based on questionnaire responses, not the original ones.

4.3.2.3 What Makes a Good Language Learner?

As shown in Table 4-12, teachers believed young learners had an advantage in both FL (3.14, item 1) and Chinese learning (3.14, item 14). They also believed that people who had an innate ability for FL (3.12, item 16) or Chinese (3.05, item 2), or who had previous Asian language learning experience (2.88, item 3) may learn Chinese better. They did not think girls were better than boys at learning FL (2.24, item 15) or Chinese (2.07, item 5). Speaking Chinese was not regarded as the province of intelligent people by teachers (2.33, item 13)

On the other hand, teachers agreed that their pupils had both Chinese and FL aptitude, and interestingly,

they thought their pupils' ability to learn Chinese (3.12, item 4) was higher than that of FL (2.67, item 8). Teachers also thought everyone could learn FL or Chinese well, yet conversely, their confidence was higher in FL learning (3.12, item 9) than in Chinese (3.00, item 10).

In terms of what makes Chinese learning successful, teachers valued personal effort and hard work (3.07) in learning Chinese (item 17) as well as high quality teaching (3.02, item 7). They also believed that even smart pupils had to work hard (3.12, item 18), yet they did not simply think (2.26) pupils' progress depends only on how much effort they put in (item 11). English people were viewed as not being good at learning Chinese (2.33, item 6). And teachers strongly endorsed item 12 that people who were good at Maths and Science, could also learn Chinese well (3.29).

Table 4-12 Beliefs about What Makes a Good Language Learner

| <i>Items</i> | <i>M</i> |
|---|----------|
| People who are good at Maths and Science are also good at learning Chinese. | 3.29 |
| It is easier for children than adults to learn Chinese. | 3.14 |
| It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language. | 3.14 |
| The smart pupils also have to work hard to be able to speak Chinese well. | 3.12 |
| Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language. | 3.12 |
| My pupils have the ability to learn Chinese. | 3.12 |
| How much you can improve your proficiency in Chinese depends on your effort. | 3.07 |
| Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn Chinese. | 3.05 |
| How much pupils learn from the Chinese course mostly depends on the quality of the teacher. | 3.02 |
| Everyone can learn to speak Chinese. | 3.00 |
| It is easier for someone who already speaks an Asian language to learn Chinese. | 2.88 |
| My pupils have the ability to learn foreign language. | 2.67 |
| Some people are just born smart to learn a foreign language. | 2.33 |
| People who speak Chinese are very intelligent. | 2.33 |
| English pupils are very good at learning Chinese. | 2.33 |
| Pupils who do not do well in the Chinese class simply do not work hard enough. | 2.26 |
| Girls are better than boys at learning a foreign language. | 2.24 |
| Girls are better than boys at learning Chinese. | 2.07 |

4.3.2.4 Teaching Approach Orientations: The Importance and Strategies for CFL

Beliefs of teachers as a group

In order to draw together a pattern of teachers' views and their orientations towards communicative language learning, the statements in Section 4 and 5 about importance and strategies were selected and categorised into three categories. Each of these categories includes statements which might be judged to be broadly representing different approaches, or orientation towards teaching and learning languages. The criteria for selecting and categorizing statements in Part 4 and 5 was based on the requirements of

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which was reviewed in Chapter 2 above. CLT emphasises languages should be learnt through meaningful communication and interaction, and pupils' communicative competency is the core issue needed to be addressed in teaching. Thus the priority is fluency in speaking and understanding in a conversation (Cook, 2008). In that sense, Item 5 and 6 in Section 4 suggesting the importance of learning oral words and carrying out conversations, which are consistent with CLT principles, were put into the communicative category. Similarly, items 3, 8 and 18 about guessing meanings, and items 11 and 13 about fluency in speaking in Section 5 were identified as communicative choices. The statements emphasising learning grammar rules (item 4 and 14 in Section 4) and language accuracy (item 5 in Section 5) were categories within a non-communicative orientation.

Thus the three categories were: communicative orientations towards language learning, non-communicative orientations towards language learning, and neutral choices, which include statements that can be reasonably included in either orientation. The aim was to identify whether teachers were consistent in their beliefs about the importance of certain aspects of language learning and their choices of strategies for learning Chinese, and to examine whether different individuals and groups showed different patterns.

In addition to the communicative, non-communicative and neutral categories, some statements did not seem relevant to any category. The approach I used with these was to exclude the statements irrelevant to language skills or structures. In that way, item 1 about the role of Chinese culture and item 13 about Chinese teachers in Section 4, as well as item 2 in Section 5 about approaching L1 Chinese were excluded. The categories of communicative, non-communicative and neutral in two sections are displayed in Table 4-13 below.

Table 4-13 Beliefs of Teachers about the Importance in and Strategies for CFL

| | Category of choices | Statement | Mean | SD |
|--|---------------------|---------------------------------------|------|-----|
| Section 4: Beliefs about importance of CFL | communicative | 5,6 | 2.80 | .49 |
| | non- communicative | 4,14 | 2.61 | .51 |
| | neutral | 2,7,8,9,10,11,12 | 2.71 | .33 |
| Section 5: Beliefs about strategies for CFL | communicative | 3,8,11,13,18 | 3.13 | .37 |
| | non-communicative | 5 | 2.69 | .75 |
| | neutral | 1,4,6,7,9,10,12,14 ,15,16,17,19,20 | 2.96 | .19 |

To examine whether teachers beliefs about the importance of and strategies for CFL were consistent with their orientations towards teaching expressed in choice of statement (i.e. communicative, non-communicative and neutral), a correlation analysis was conducted. A Pearson-product-moment correlation calculation revealed that no significant consistency was found between aspects of beliefs at three levels of indicators. This suggested no consistency of teachers' tendency on indicator choices between beliefs about importance and beliefs about strategies. In other words, teachers who believed that communicative indicators were important in CFL were not likely to believe that communicative strategies were important, and vice versa.

However, the correlation analysis cannot tell which category of teaching orientations (i.e. communicative, non-communicative and neutral ways of teaching) teachers tended to believe about the importance of CFL and their strategies for CFL, thus within-subjects ANOVAs were applied. The factor was the category of teaching orientations, with three levels, operationalized as communicative choices, non-communicative choices, or neutral choices. The dependent variable was teachers' views about importance of and strategies for CFL, respectively. Two hypothesis were tested: 1) views of the teachers would be randomly

distributed across the three categories of responses (communicative, neutral and non-communicative) about the importance of CFL; and similarly 2) teachers would not show views particularly related to one category of responses about strategies for CFL.

In terms of views about the importance of CFL, no significance was found for the main factor of category of teaching orientations, $p=.302>.05$. In terms of beliefs about strategies for CFL, ANOVA found the main factor that category of teaching orientation was significant, $F(1, 41) = 13.38, p=.001<.05$, two-tailed. Pairwise comparisons showed that mean differences between each category (i.e. communicative, non-communicative and neutral) were significant, $p<.05$. Mean scores (see Figure 4-4) showed that teachers tended to believe in a communicative teaching orientation.

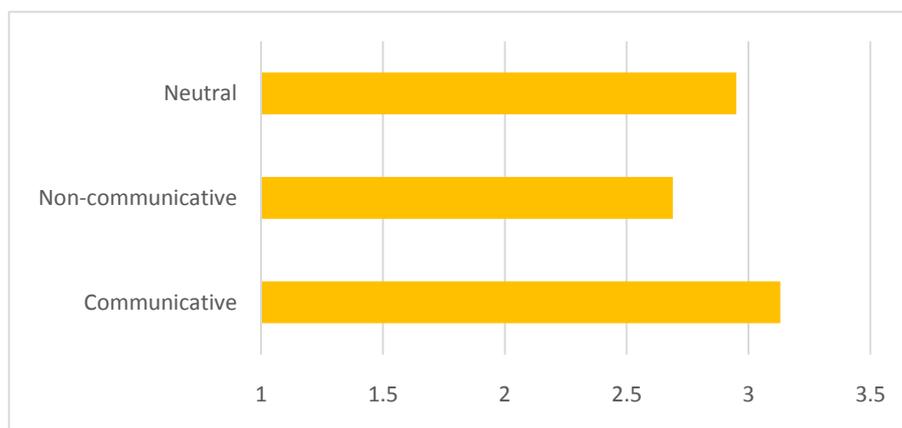


Figure 4-4 Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching Orientations of Strategies for CFL

To sum up, CFL teachers in this study were likely to believe that both communicative and non-communicative aspects of CFL learning were important, yet they tended to place more value on communicative approaches than neutral and non-communicative ones in teaching Chinese. In that sense, teachers of Chinese showed an inconsistent pattern in the nature of CFL and strategies for CFL.

Beliefs of teachers on individual statements

In order to know which specific statements that teachers showed beliefs about orientation across the

category, in terms of importance and strategies for CFL, mean scores of individual items were examined and displayed in Table 4-14 below.

It can be seen from Table 4-14 that teachers strongly agreed with communicative strategies for item 11, about taking risks in speaking at the initial stage of learning (3.69); and for item 13, about tolerance of mistake-making in communication. They showed positive views towards taking guesses in communication (item 3, 8, 18).

On the other hand, in the levels of agreement with statements about beliefs about the importance of language learning, teachers revealed a general agreement with communicative statements and, particularly, with statements proposing beginning Chinese learning with oral words (2.93, item 5), and that carrying on a conversation was more important than reading and writing (2.67, item 6).

Items 4, 5 and 14, are non-communicative indicators, so agreement with these indicators would suggest a non-communicative view of language teaching and learning. In fact, the teachers disagreed with some of these statements, showing, again, a communicative orientation towards language learning. Teachers did not think grammar rules were the most important thing in learning CFL (2.21). They also believed it was ok to make mistakes in the beginning as these could be got rid of later (2.69). However, they valued the knowledge of basic writing rules (3.00).

The indicator of neutral choices consists of a large number of statements, most of which teachers agreed with, with only three exceptions on item 10, 11, and 19. Teachers strongly disagreed that CFL was a matter of translating (1.74), and they did not think that starting learning with characters was a good approach (2.33). In addition, they did not believe that pupils paid attention to grammar when they speaking (2.33). They had a neutral view about pupils' awareness of tones (2.50, mean range was 2.34 to

2.66, item 14). However, on the other hand, teachers held strong beliefs about the importance of learning radicals (3.24, item 7) and character writing (3.43, item 12). They believed it was preferable to start CFL with pinyin (2.74, item 2), learn Chinese in China (2.83, item 8), and that CFL differs from learning of other subjects (2.64, item 9). When it came to language strategies, teachers valued repetition and practice in general (3.38), and specifically, in terms of sound and characters learning (3.24). They thought correct pronunciation was important in speaking Chinese (3.00), and contextual clues helped with guessing words (3.21). They also believed words could either be learnt as a whole (3.05), or learnt separately (2.98), and that grammar drills (2.88) as well as e-learning with audio-visual resources (3.14) were useful. In addition, teachers thought pupils were nervous when speaking Chinese (2.69, item 4).

Table 4-14 Mean Scores of Teachers' Beliefs about Individual Statements

| <i>Indicator</i> | | <i>Statement</i> | <i>M</i> |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---|----------|
| <i>Communicative</i> | <i>Importance</i> | 5 begin Chinese learning with oral words | 2.93 |
| | | 6 carry on conversation is more important than read and write | 2.67 |
| | <i>Strategies</i> | 11 can say anything in beginning | 3.69 |
| | | 13 communicate do not mind mistakes | 3.21 |
| | | 3 ok to guess words | 3.00 |
| | | 8 ok to guess meaning | 2.98 |
| | 18 ok to guess sound | 2.79 | |
| <i>Non-communicative</i> | <i>Importance</i> | 4 grammar rules are the most important | 2.21 |
| | | 14 important to know basic writing rules before | 3.00 |
| | <i>Strategies</i> | 5 mistakes can be corrected in future (Rotated) | 2.69 |
| <i>Neutral</i> | <i>Importance</i> | 12 writing characters is not a waste of time | 3.43 |
| | | 7 important to learn radicals | 3.24 |
| | | 8 learn Chinese in China. | 2.83 |
| | | 2 start with pinyin | 2.74 |
| | | 9 different from learning other school subjects | 2.64 |
| | | 11 begin with individual characters. | 2.33 |
| | | 10 a matter of translating | 1.74 |
| | <i>Strategies</i> | 1 repeat and practice | 3.38 |
| | | 7 repeat the sound | 3.24 |
| | | 9 handwriting practice and memorisation. | 3.24 |
| | | 12 context helps guessing | 3.21 |
| | | 20 e-learning | 3.14 |
| | | 17 learn words as whole | 3.05 |
| | | 10 correct pronunciation | 3.00 |
| | | 15 recognise character parts | 2.98 |
| | | 16 grammar drills | 2.88 |
| | | 6 think of link between components and word | 2.81 |
| | | 4 self-conscious | 2.69 |
| | | 14 aware of tones | 2.50 |
| | | 19 pay attention to grammar | 2.33 |

Apart from the selected items of different indicators above, teachers' beliefs about items 1, 3 and 13 concerning culture, vocabulary learning and an L1 teacher, as well as item 2 regarding strategies about

approaching L1 people had not been reported. Findings showed that teachers valued Chinese learning in terms of the role of culture (3.26), and L1 Chinese teacher (2.85), and vocabulary learning (2.81).

However, they were somewhat neutral about item 2, that L1 English pupils from England would approach L1 Chinese people initially for speaking practice (2.57).

4.3.2.5 Motivations for Learning Chinese

Teachers generally expressed their agreement on most items in this respect (See Table 4-15). They thought pupils' motivations for learning Chinese were both integrative and instrumental, in terms of knowing Chinese people (3.00, item 3), better understanding of other people's thoughts (3.02, item 4) and the pupils' own languages (2.74, item 6), as well as finding a good job (2.98, item 9). As for motivation for character learning, teachers believed pupils did not feel writing characters was boring (2.81, item 7), and they could understand Chinese materials if they knew the characters (3.02, item 5). Besides, teachers placed much value on the role of character learning for L1 Chinese people (3.31, item 8), whereas they did not think that English people regarded Chinese learning as equally important as L1 Chinese do (2.48).

Table 4-15 Beliefs about the Motivation for Learning Chinese

| <i>Items</i> | <i>M</i> |
|--|----------|
| Chinese people think that it is important to learn characters | 3.31 |
| My pupils would like to learn Chinese characters so that they can understand Chinese materials | 3.02 |
| If pupils learn Chinese they will know more about how other people think | 3.02 |
| My pupils would like to learn Chinese so that they can get to know Chinese people better | 3.00 |
| If pupils learn to speak Chinese very well it will help them get a good job | 2.98 |
| Learning how to write Chinese characters is not boring | 2.81 |
| If pupils are able to speak Chinese very well, they will have many opportunities to use it | 2.74 |
| If pupils learn Chinese they will learn more about their own language | 2.74 |
| My pupils believe English people think that it is important to speak Chinese | 2.48 |

4.3.2.6 Findings of Open-ended Questions

As for the challenges of teaching Chinese, some teachers said that, “*there is no workbook for practising simple grammar (such as measure words, how to form tenses in Chinese, the structure of fuyu (i.e. a complex sentence), sentences orders, etc)*”. Some showed their concerns on the mismatch of Chinese provision and the “*enormous workload*” required by examinations. A teacher stated, “*Not all schools offer Chinese to pupils at the beginning of Year 7. It means that teachers have to teach against GCSE and higher level of exams and the learning for pupils becomes very intense.*” Similarly, another pointed out, “*there is no true progression between GCSE and A-level for non-native speakers...Pupils who take the A level often suffer a two grade drop, even though they are outstanding pupils*”. Therefore, some teachers said, “*it is not fair to these hard working pupils.*” Regarding pupil behaviour issues, teachers revealed it depended on the school- some schools they found to have poor discipline but most they found fine. These teachers did not seem to find discipline a major problem.

In terms of the difficulty of Chinese learning, some teachers pointed out that, to western learners, a difficulty of CFL lay in the differences from their L1 alphabetic languages. One English teacher illustrated this: “*Chinese is difficult because it is not like other European languages which learners can use cognates to guess the meaning. This means that in order to manipulate good Chinese, you need to build up from scratch and there is no short cut.*” Some teachers expressed their concern about pupils’ overreliance on reading and writing pinyin instead of working on characters, due to the similarity of pinyin letters and their own languages. Thus they believed character writing was hard for them to learn. In addition, lack of opportunities to use Chinese, and limited time to explain the connections between linguistic points, such as words and phrases, and culture, were reported as another difficulty for CFL learners. However, although presenting these difficulties in learning Chinese, some teachers believed

Chinese could be easy to learn through pupils' own efforts, such as "*pupils spend an hour a day in learning*", or with teachers' help, such as "*to play with characters and grammar points to give pupils a sense of achievement*". One L1 Chinese teacher quoted an old saying in her answer, that "*if you work at it hard enough, you can grind an iron rod into a needle*", to emphasise the importance of hard work.

In terms of what the good language learner is like, one teacher discussed the advantages that both children and adult learners had. She pointed out, "*the way children learn Mandarin is very different from adults. They have advantages in developing good pronunciation and can possibly skip pinyin and directly build up connections between sound and characters. While for adults, they can pass the foundation stage quickly and move on to complex structures and higher levels of the language.*" Another teacher focused on practising and using Chinese, by saying that "*the only way to learn CFL well is to use it regularly*".

As for learning strategies, teachers said that listening to xiangsheng (a Chinese folklore performance by two stand-up comedians) and saying tongue twisters was a good way to learn. In addition, one suggested using brushes to write down characters, in order to practise handwriting.

As for the purpose of learning Chinese, some thought pupils were interested in Chinese culture, and would like to go China for tourism. One teacher stated that, "*It is helpful for learners to develop their graphic thinking abilities by learning Chinese*".

4.3.2.7 Summary of Teachers' Beliefs in Likert-scale Questionnaire

1. Teachers thought pupils had little chance to use Chinese outside class and that this was the biggest challenge in teaching Chinese. Pupils did not do enough homework and memorisation. They were also concerned about limited lesson time, which made teaching Chinese and making progress even harder. Some teachers pointed out the examination pressure for pupils. They also felt the lack of a

workbook for practising simple grammar was an issue. However, they tended to believe pupils' behaviour was not a general issue as school situations varied.

2. The difficulty of learning Chinese, according to teachers' beliefs, was rooted in its difference from learners' L1 languages, rather than Chinese linguistic items themselves. As there were no cognates to refer to and no alphabets in Chinese, teachers thought pupils found pinyin with similar letters easy. They thought anything related to characters, such as matching sounds with characters, character recognition and production, and reading and writing, were harder than oral processing in terms of understanding and speaking. Receptive skills were also perceived by teachers as easier than productive skills. The special features in terms of Chinese tones and homophones, were viewed as the most difficult aspects to learn. Chinese grammar, on the other hand, was thought by the teachers to be easy. Teachers were confident that their pupils could eventually learn Chinese well.
3. In terms of what a good language learner is like, teachers showed preferences for young learners, as they may have the advantage of learning pronunciations without the aid of pinyin. Learners with an innate ability for language learning, or who had have the experience of learning Asian languages, or who put effort into practising Chinese were viewed as having good characteristics of learners. There was no difference in terms of gender, intelligence, or subject-specific skills in learning FL and Chinese. Teachers' quality of teaching also mattered for good performance in language learning. However, overall, they did not think English people were good at learning Chinese.
4. As for beliefs about the importance of language learning, teachers in this study were likely to believe that both communicative and non-communicative aspects of CFL learning were important. They thought making conversation was more important than learning to read and write, whereas they also realised the significance of learning writing rules.

-
5. In terms of beliefs about learning and teaching strategies, teachers tended to have a rather communicative-based orientation. They thought pupils should have a go at speaking. Mistakes were unavoidable and could be corrected in the future. Guessing meanings or sounds was also encouraged for mutual understanding. They emphasised correct pronunciation and did not think pupils paid enough attention to their tones and grammar when speaking. Listening to audio or videos, folklore performance and other such cultural activities, were largely encouraged.
 6. Teachers thought pupils held mixed motivations for learning Chinese. Pupils were interested in Chinese and eager to learn how to speak and how to write, to get a deeper understanding of the country, people and their thoughts. Teachers believed this helped pupils reflect on their own languages as well. The role of character learning for L1 Chinese was strongly believed in by teachers, but they were not sure that learning Chinese was viewed as important in the UK.

4.3.3 Comparison of Pupils' and Teachers' Beliefs

Given that going through each questionnaire item again would be tedious for the reader, I have presented the differences between pupils' and teachers' beliefs as it is in the discrepancies that most interest lies. The shared beliefs of pupils and teachers can be referred to in the two sections above.

4.3.3.1 The Difficulties of Learning Chinese

An independent-samples t test showed that pupils' and teachers' mean scores for items 1, 2 and 9f regarding the general difficulty of languages, for items 4 and 5 about specific language skills, and for items 9a, 9b, 9d, 9e concerning linguistic items, were significantly different (See Figure 4-5 and Appendix 8 for detail). The significance level was set at .05.

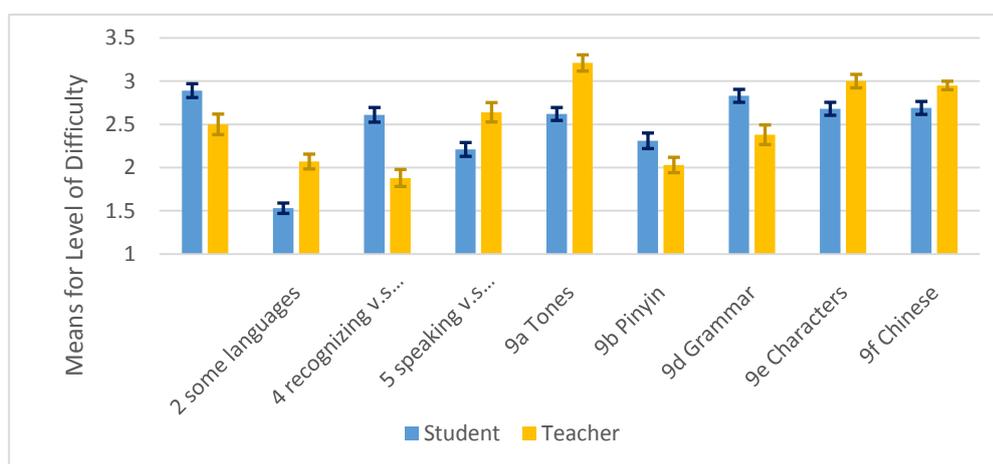


Figure 4-5 Discrepancies of Beliefs about the Difficulty of Chinese Learning

It can be seen from Figure 4-5, that pupils and teachers held the opposite beliefs about difficulty in receptive and productive skills on item 4 and 5, grammar learning on item 9d, as well as FL in general. Teachers thought recognising Chinese was easier than writing (1.88), whilst pupils did not think so (2.61). Again teachers tended to agree that speaking was more difficult than understanding (2.64), whereas pupils did not endorse this (2.21). Pupils (2.83) thought grammar was difficult whereas teachers (2.38) believed that grammar was actually easy. They also had noticed Chinese was more difficult (2.89) than European languages, yet teachers thought the level of difficulties were equal.

Apart from that, the two groups shared similar views about the rest of the items, and only differed in the degree of agreement. Teachers thought pupils' difficulty in learning tones (3.21>2.62) was more than pupils believed by themselves, so as for characters (3.00>2.68), and Chinese in general (2.95>2.69). Nevertheless, pupils held stronger beliefs than teachers about item 2 that "some languages are easier than others to learn". As for pinyin (item 9b), both groups thought pinyin was quite easy, but teachers (1.98) underestimated the difficulties that pupils (2.31) may encounter when learning it.

Item 3 was found to have a marginal significant difference between groups, $p=.054$, which indicated that teachers were more likely to believe their pupils had high levels of confidence in learning to speak well

than the pupils themselves did.

4.3.3.2 What Makes a Good Language Learner?

An independent-sample t-test revealed that the beliefs of pupils and teachers varied in terms of age (item 1, 14), gender (item 5, 15), special ability of language learning (item 2, 16), language aptitude (item 4, 8), and Asian language learning experience (item 3).

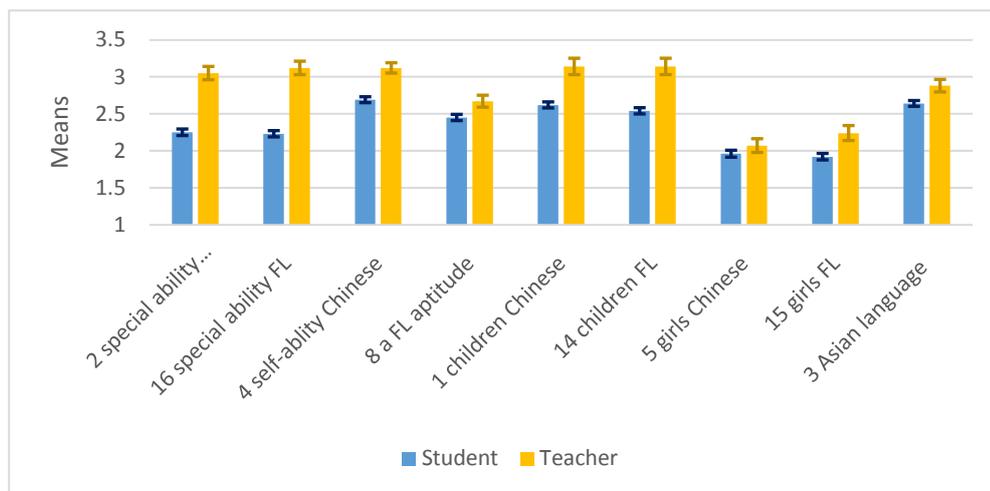


Figure 4-6 Discrepancies of Beliefs about What Makes a Good Language Learner

As shown in Figure 4-6, teachers held positive views on item 2 and 16, that someone was born with a special ability to learn FL in general and Chinese, with mean scores far beyond 2.50. On the contrary, pupils did not think a special language ability existed neither in learning Chinese (2.25) nor FL (2.23).

To test whether teachers' belief about innate ability differed on different target languages, a Paired Sample t-test was conducted within the teacher group (see Table 4-16). The result revealed that there was no statistical significance between beliefs about innate ability for learning Chinese and FL, $t = -.903$, $df = 41$, $p = .372 > .05$. This means that innate ability to learn a foreign language (including Chinese) was perceived as universal by teachers.

Table 4-16 T-test of Innate Ability of Language Learning

| Innate ability of learning Chinese vs innate ability of learning FL | T | df | Sig.(2-tailed) |
|---|-------|----|----------------|
| Teacher | -.903 | 41 | .372 |

Analysis of Item 4, “I/my pupils have the ability to learn Chinese”, revealed that teachers (3.12) had more faith than their pupils’ (2.69) in the pupils’ ability to learn Chinese (3.12). This indicated that teachers had higher expectations of pupils’ ability to learn Chinese than pupils themselves did. Regarding item 8 about FL ability, teachers tended to believe pupils had a FL aptitude (2.67), yet pupils had a rather negative idea about this point (2.45). Again teachers overestimated their pupils’ confidence about their ability to learn FL.

Table 4-17 T-test of Language Aptitude and Language Learning

| I/my pupils have ability of learning Chinese vs FL aptitude (ability of learning FL) | T | df | Sig.(2-tailed) |
|--|-------|-----|----------------|
| Pupil | 5.369 | 383 | .000* |
| Teacher | 5.820 | 41 | .000* |

A paired sample t-test (See Table 4-17) showed that the choice of language was a significant factor in pupils’ beliefs about language learning ability, $t=5.369$, $df=383$, $p=.000<.05$. This indicated that pupils had a higher estimation of their ability to learn Chinese (2.69) than learning FL (2.45). The same result was also found in the teacher group, $t=5.820$, $df=41$, $p=.000<.05$. That is to say, personal ability for language learning was different depending on what the specific language was.

Teachers’ attitudes towards children’s advantages in learning Chinese and FL (both are 3.14) were more positive than those of pupils (2.62, 2.54 respectively). A significant effect of the chosen language was found in the pupil group, as shown in Table 4-19, $t=2.055$, $df=413$, $p=.041<.05$, which meant that pupils thought that Chinese (2.62) was easier than other foreign languages (2.54) to learn for children. Yet teachers believed there was no difference in children’s learning Chinese and other languages.

Table 4-18 T-test of Children and Language Learning

| Easier for children to learn Chinese vs easier for children to learn FL | T | df | Sig.(2-tailed) |
|---|-------|-----|----------------|
| Pupil | 2.055 | 413 | .041* |
| Teacher | .000 | 41 | 1.000 |

Pupils believed much more strongly than teachers that both girls and boys could be good at learning foreign languages, yet the two groups shared the same views on the gender effect in learning Chinese. A t-test within the pupil group showed they shared the same view on the gender effect in learning Chinese. A t-test within the pupil group found no significant effect on the choice of languages that girls or boys were good at learning, $t=1.214$, $df=402$, $p=.225 > .05$, whilst teachers showed more preference for Chinese learning ($p=.033 < .05$), emphasising no gender influences in learning Chinese (Table 4-19).

Table 4-19 T-test of Girls and Language Learning

| Girls are better at learning Chinese vs girls are better at learning FL | T | df | p |
|---|--------|-----|-------|
| Pupil | 1.214 | 402 | .225 |
| Teacher | -2.206 | 41 | .033* |

As for item 3 about FL learning experience, it can be seen from Figure 4-6 that, teachers (2.88) valued Asian language experience much more than pupils (2.64) in learning Chinese.

4.3.3.3 The Importance of learning a foreign language (FL)

An independent-sample t test revealed that pupils' and teachers' beliefs differed concerning the role of culture in language learning (item 1), learning context (item 8), linguistics (items 4, 6, 5, 11, 7), translation (item 10), as well as subject matter (item 9), as displayed in Figure 4-7 below.

Teachers strongly agreed with item 1 concerning the necessity of knowing Chinese culture. They believed such knowledge was necessary in learning Chinese (3.26), whereas pupils' attitudes were rather neutral

(2.48). Similarly, as for item 8, “it is better to learn Chinese in China”, teachers valued the advantages of the real environment of Chinese learning in China (2.83), whilst again only half of pupils had such an opinion (2.52).

With regard to what to start with first when learning Chinese, pupils (2.70) tended to agree with item 11, “it is good to begin with individual characters”, yet teachers (2.33) did not think so. Nevertheless, teachers were more likely to support oral words (2.93) as the starting point of Chinese learning (item 5).

Regarding what is important in learning Chinese, teachers were rather communication-oriented, believing that learning how to carry on a conversation in Chinese was more important than learning to read and write (2.67). In contrast, pupils thought reading and writing was more important than oral communication in Chinese (2.34).

Pupils were ambivalent about the importance of grammar (2.48), and teachers did not think grammar was important at all (2.21). This indicated that pupils focused somewhat more on the linguistic forms as well as on the written script of Chinese, not just on spoken Chinese.

Both pupils and teachers agreed that Chinese learning was not merely a matter of translation from English. However, teachers held a much stronger belief about this point (1.74) than pupils (2.31). Two groups thought learning Chinese was different from learning other school subjects, and pupils’ attitudes about the special features of Chinese learning (2.95) were stronger than teachers (2.64). As for the specifics of Chinese learning, teachers strongly believed in the significance of radicals when learning characters (3.24), and their belief was much stronger than that of pupils (2.72).

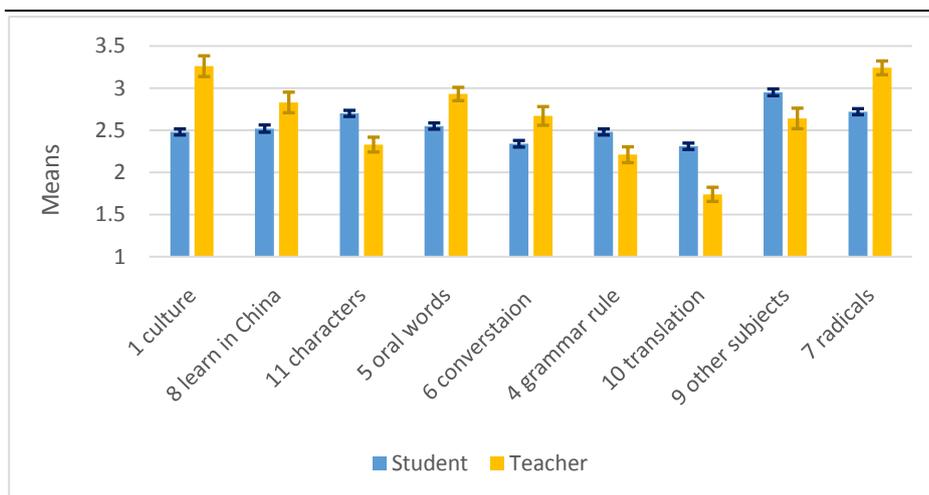


Figure 4-7 Discrepancies of Beliefs about the Importance in Learning a FL

4.3.3.4 Effective Strategies for Learning Chinese

It can be seen from Figure 4-8, that teachers generally held stronger positive beliefs than pupils about most strategies for learning Chinese, in terms of the importance of repetition and practice in general (3.38>3.13, item 1), sound repetition (3.24>3.00, item 7), handwriting of characters (3.24>2.99, item 9), e-learning (3.14>2.58, item 20) and grammar drills (2.88>2.56, item 16). Teachers also showed stronger preferences than pupils for mistake-making and communication strategies, in terms of having a go in the beginning (3.69>2.95, item 11), tolerance of mistake-making (3.21>2.85, item 13), guessing word meanings (item 3), learning the word as a whole unit if analysing does not make sense (item 17), and the role of context in guessing (item 12).

Only item 19 and 4 showed opposite beliefs from teachers and pupils. Pupils expressed their agreement with Item 19 (2.74), “I am paying attention to my grammar when speaking”, whilst teachers did not think (2.33) pupils do that. This indicated that teachers did not think pupils were form-aware when they spoke, whereas pupils did think they were. Pupils also reported they did not feel nervous when speaking in front of people (2.44), yet teachers did not agree with that (2.69). Instead they overestimated pupils’ anxiety in

this sense.

It is necessary to note that a marginal significance was found in item 14 regarding tone awareness. Pupil tended to believe that they were quite tone-aware when speaking (2.73), yet teachers held a rather neutral opinion (2.50). However, such difference only reached a marginal significance between the two groups in this sample, $p=.055$.

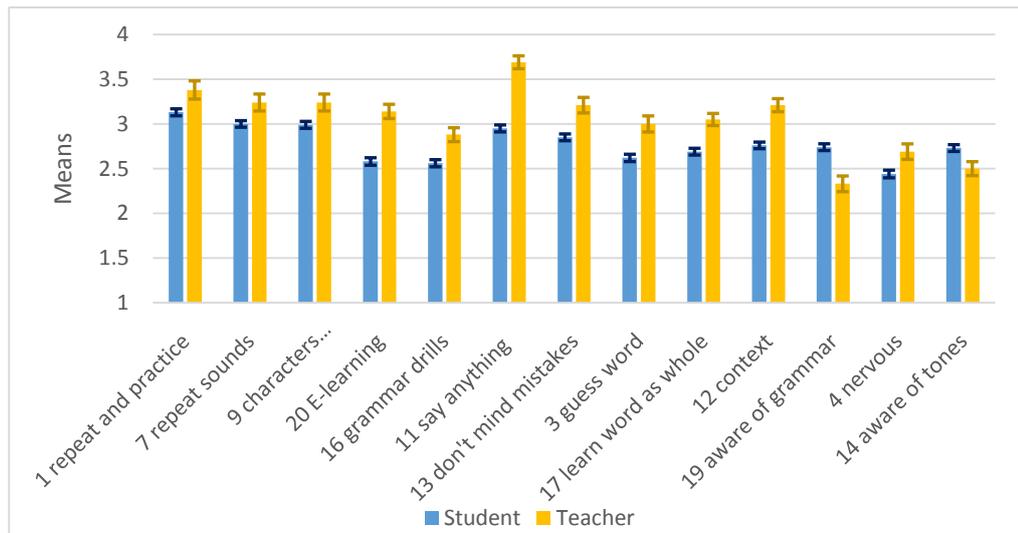


Figure 4-8 Discrepancies of Beliefs about Effective Strategies for Learning Chinese

In order to examine whether beliefs about making mistakes and communication were related to each other, correlation analyses were conducted between item 11, 13 and 5 respectively. The results in Table 4-20 and 4-21 showed a very low correlation relationship (r is ranging from 0.2 to -0.1) between each item in pupil and teacher groups. A significant correlation was only found between item 11 and item 5, $p=.014<.05$.

This meant the beliefs about these three items were nearly not related to each other at all. In other words, pupils and teachers seemed to view mistake making and communication separately.

Table 4-20 Correlations of Pupils' Beliefs about Making Mistakes

| | | <i>11 have a go</i> | <i>13 Communication is the purpose</i> | <i>5 Mistakes can be corrected later</i> |
|--|---------|---------------------|--|--|
| <i>11 have a go</i> | Pearson | 1 | -.030 | .123 |
| | Sig | | .551 | .014* |
| | N | 404 | 400 | 401 |
| <i>13 Communication is the purpose</i> | Pearson | -.030 | 1 | -.065 |
| | Sig | .551 | | .193 |
| | N | 400 | 403 | 400 |
| <i>5 Mistakes can be corrected later</i> | Pearson | .123 | -.065 | 1 |
| | Sig | .014 | .193 | |
| | N | 401 | 400 | 407 |

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

Table 4-21 Correlations of Teachers' Beliefs about Making Mistakes

| | | <i>11 have a go</i> | <i>3 Communication is the purpose</i> | <i>5 Mistakes can be corrected later</i> |
|--|---------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>11 have a go</i> | Pearson | 1 | .165 | -.071 |
| | Sig | | .297 | .654 |
| | N | 42 | 42 | 42 |
| <i>3 Communication is the purpose</i> | Pearson | .165 | 1 | .045 |
| | Sig | .297 | | .776 |
| | N | 42 | 42 | 42 |
| <i>5 Mistakes can be corrected later</i> | Pearson | -.071 | .045 | 1 |
| | Sig | .654 | .776 | |
| | N | 42 | 42 | 42 |

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

Considering the characteristics of Chinese characters in terms of sound and meaning components, as discussed in the previous chapter, that some parts of characters can indicate the sound or the meaning of the character to some extent, and the sound cue is not always as reliable as the meaning cue, it is interesting to examine people's attitudes towards risk-taking and guessing in this respect. Paired-sample t tests were conducted on pupil groups and teacher groups. Table 4-22 displayed the t value, df and p value

of two groups.

Table 4-22 T-test of Guessing Meaning and Sound

| Ok to guess the meaning V.S. ok to guess the sound | T | df | p |
|---|-------|-----|-------|
| Pupil | 1.759 | 386 | .079 |
| Teacher | 1.598 | 41 | 0.118 |

A paired sample t-test showed no significant difference between pupils' beliefs about whether it was ok to guess the meaning and guess the sound. Although from the mean scores on items 8 and 18, it seems that pupils tended to be more likely to guess the meaning (2.80) than the sound (2.65), such difference did not reach the significance level. In line with pupils' attitudes, teachers also showed no preferences for guessing the meaning or the sound.

Table 4-23 Correlations between Beliefs about Guessing Meaning and Sound

| | Group | Pearson correlation | Sig (2-tails) | N |
|-------------------------|---------|-----------------------|---------------|-----|
| | | ok to guess the sound | | |
| Ok to guess the meaning | Pupil | 0.208 | .000* | 387 |
| | Teacher | 0.301 | .053 | 42 |

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

Correlation analyses were also conducted to see if an individual's beliefs remained consistent between guessing the sound and the meaning (Table 4-23). It revealed that beliefs of pupils on two items were significantly related, but with a low correlation relationship ($r=0.2$), $p=.000<.05$. On the other hand, teachers showed a slightly higher correlation, $r=0.3$, yet it only reached a marginal significance in the statistical sense, $p=.053$.

4.3.3.5 The Motivations for Learning Chinese

Items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, regarding the integrative motivations for learning Chinese, showed significant differences between pupils and teachers indicated through the results of independent-sample t tests.

As shown in Figure 4-9, the beliefs of the two groups on item 6 were the opposite of each other. Pupils were unlikely (2.25) to notice the impact of learning Chinese on the understanding of their own language (i.e. English in this case). Whereas teachers did have positive expectations of pupils in this respect (2.74).

Regarding the purpose of communication with people, teachers tended to hold stronger beliefs than pupils, in terms of getting to know Chinese people better (3.00>2.71, item 3), as well as understanding how other people think (3.02>2.71, item 4).

Interestingly, beliefs of pupils and teachers about the aims of character learning were somewhat complicated. Although teachers thought Chinese people took the learning of characters more seriously than non-L1 speakers, with regard to the fun of characters learning, they were (2.81) not as optimistic as pupils (3.09). In other words, teachers tended to believe that learning characters was a necessary but a rather daunting job. Pupils, on the other hand, underestimated teachers' views of importance of characters learning but still enjoyed writing characters.

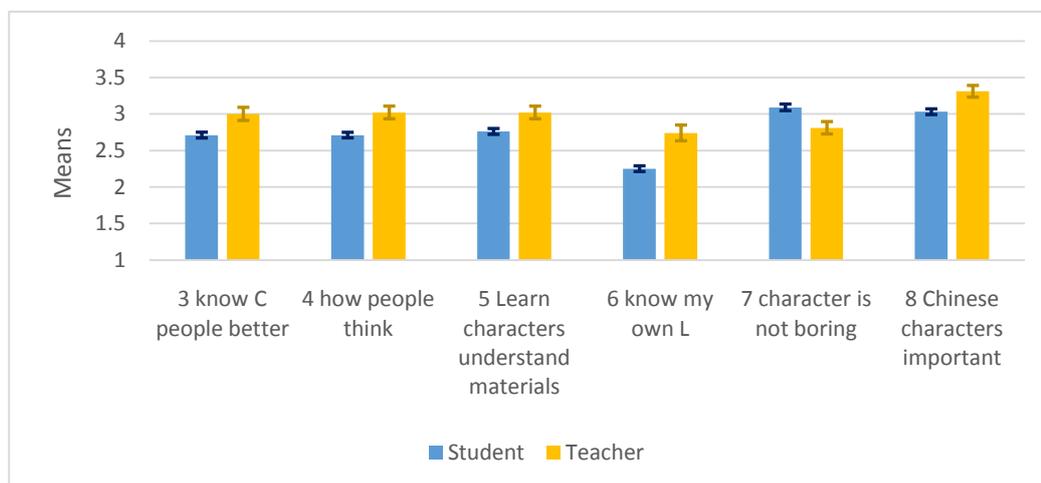


Figure 4-9 Discrepancies of Beliefs about the Motivations for Learning Chinese

4.3.3.6 Summary of Comparison

In summary, the beliefs of teachers and pupils differed in the following five ways:

-
1. Perceptions of the main difficulties in learning Chinese were different for teachers and pupils.

Teachers believed productive skills (i.e. speaking and writing) were harder than receptive skills (i.e. understanding and reading), yet pupils held the opposite views. Chinese grammar was perceived as relatively easy by teachers, whereas it was not the case for pupils. Although both groups agreed tones were hard to learn and pinyin was easy, teachers thought that tones were difficult and pupils were not aware of tones, whereas the pupils thought they were aware of tones and tones were easy. Despite this teachers were more optimistic than pupils about pinyin learning. Generally, teachers regarded all languages as of similar learning difficulty, whereas pupils believed Chinese was harder than a European language.

2. As for what the good language learner is like, teachers believed an innate ability for learning foreign languages existed and such ability worked the same for other FL and Chinese, yet pupils did not even think people were born with a special ability for languages. Teachers thought pupils had their own ability to learn Chinese and other FL, whereas pupils only perceived they had the ability to learn Chinese, but not other FL. Furthermore, teachers thought personal ability varied according to different languages, and showed more confidence than pupils themselves, in pupils' ability to learn Chinese. Both groups agreed gender had no effect on language learning, and teachers were more likely to emphasize this issue than pupils in Chinese learning. Besides, teachers felt more strongly than pupils that children found it easier to learn a language than adults. Pupils believed such advantages were more helpful with Chinese learning than other FL, but teachers thought there was no difference between different languages. Teachers also valued the assistance of Asian language learning experience more than pupils.

3. In terms of the importance of language learning, teachers tended to put oral communication in the

first place, whereas pupils were likely to view the importance of communication in both oral and written ways. As for the forms learning, both teachers and pupils shared similar beliefs about the importance of learning basic writing rules. However, teachers did not think grammar learning was important at all, whereas pupils were ambivalent about the role of grammar learning. In addition, teachers suggested starting Chinese with oral words, whereas pupils preferred starting with individual characters. Interestingly, teachers valued learning radicals of characters more than pupils. They also believed the role of Chinese culture and target language environment in learning Chinese was important, whereas pupils seemed ambivalent about this. Pupils, however, viewed Chinese as a special school subject more strongly than teachers.

4. Generally teachers shared similar beliefs to the pupils about strategies for learning Chinese. The differences between the two groups lay only in the degree of agreement. Teachers suggested pupils should have a go in speaking and guessing, and not be afraid of making mistakes, in that mistakes can be corrected in the future. They also thought repetition and practice, particularly in pronunciation and characters, was necessary. Pupils endorsed these but with weaker beliefs than teachers. It was only on two aspects that teachers and pupils held opposite beliefs. Teachers did not think pupils were grammar-aware when speaking, whilst pupils thought they were. Teachers expected pupils to experience anxiety in speaking, yet pupils thought they were fine.
5. As for motivation for learning Chinese, the key point was about motivation for character learning. Teachers tended to believe that learning characters was a necessary but a rather daunting job, whereas pupils did not think the role of characters learning was as important as teachers did, but they still enjoyed writing characters.

4.3.4 Beliefs of Pupils with Different Language Levels

As discussed in the previous chapter, although pupils all reported as beginner learners, their length of learning Chinese varied and in turn they could be divided into different levels of beginners. According to pupils' self-perceived language level and their length of Chinese learning, there were three sublevels of beginner learners in this sample:

- 1) Level 1, total beginners, who had just been learning Chinese for less than a year;
- 2) Level 2, experienced beginners, with 1-2 years' of learning experience; and
- 3) Level 3, advanced beginners to intermediate learners, with about 3-5 years' of Chinese learning experience.

The following comparison was made based on the three level groups to examine whether pupils' beliefs had changed as they became more experienced. As data were collected cross-sectionally from different individuals, to be more accurate, the comparison aimed to explore the beliefs of learners who carried on Chinese learning in the end.

4.3.4.1 The Difficulties of Learning Chinese

Descriptive analysis of means was displayed in Table 4-25. One-way ANOVA revealed that pupils' beliefs in different level groups were significantly different on items 3 and 4 regarding language skills, on items 9a, 9b, 9c, 9d and 9e regarding the specific linguistic points. Item 10 concerning the estimated learning time was found marginally significant across level groups, $p=.052$.

Figure 4-10 presented three level groups' views of difficulty about language skills and items. The difficulty rated in speaking Chinese well (items 3), recognising characters versus writing (item 4), the learning of pinyin (item 9b), words (9c), grammar (item 9d) showed a decline from level 1 to level 3. This

suggested that generally pupils at a higher level viewed Chinese learning as not as hard as pupils at a lower level. However, the situation was slightly complex when it came to tones and characters learning.

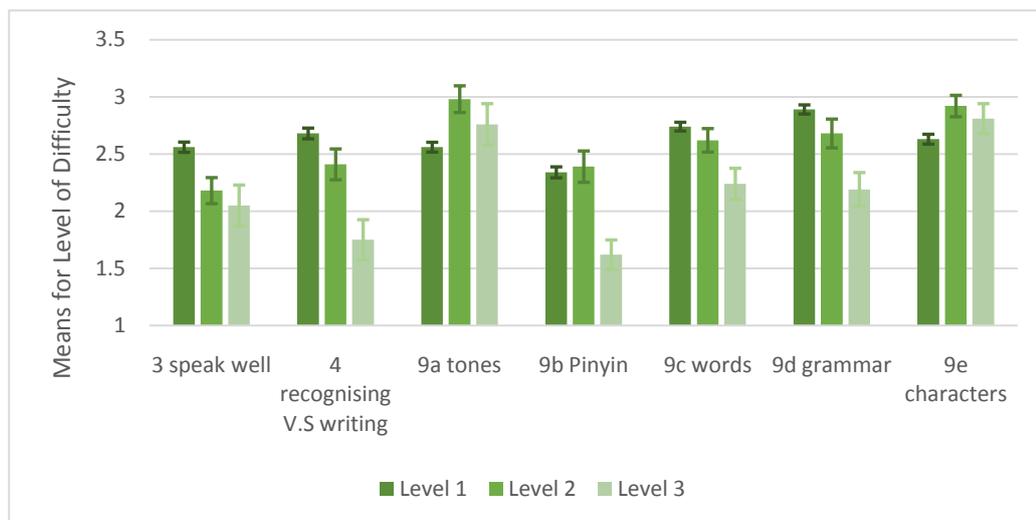


Figure 4-10 Beliefs about the Difficulties of Language Skills and Items at Different Levels

Analysis revealed that the main effect of level was on item 3- speaking Chinese well ultimately. There was a significant difference between Level 1 and Level 2 group, and between Level 1 and Level 3 group, yet no significance was found between Level 2 and Level 3 (see Table 4-25). Pupils who had learnt Chinese over a year were likely to gain more confidence and believed the goal of speaking Chinese well was achievable, than those who had just started to learn.

Regarding item 4, pupils' rated difficulty of recognising characters decreased across levels, compared with writing characters. Only pupils at level 1 thought recognising characters was harder than writing (2.68). However, level 2 and level 3 groups tended to believe that writing characters was actually harder than recognising them. Furthermore, Level 3 (1.75) estimated the difficulty of writing even higher than Level 2 (2.41). Post-hoc analyses showed that the mean scores of the three groups significantly differed from each other. That is to say, pupils with longer length of learning were more likely to realise that writing characters was actually much harder than recognising them, perhaps as the range of characters and importance of precision dawned on them.

As for tones and character learning, analyses revealed that only level 1 and level 2 were found to differ from each other on beliefs about tones and characters statistically. No significance was found between other groups. That is to say, compared with total beginners with less than a year's learning, experienced beginners held rather realistic attitudes that tones and characters were much more difficult to learn.

Analyses on words and grammar learning revealed that the level 3 group significantly differed to level 1 and level 2, yet no significance was found between level 1 and level 2 groups. As showed in Figure 4-10, the rated scores in level 1 and level 2 were above the baseline 2.50, yet the score in level 3 fell down below 2.50. This indicated that words and grammar were perceived to be easier to learn by pupils who carried on learning and had been learning for over two years. Yet for those who were complete beginners or experienced beginners, they simply felt words and grammar were hard.

The findings about pinyin are also interesting. Analyses revealed that only Level 1 and Level 3 learners were statistically different in terms of the difficulty of pinyin. Although all groups thought it was easy to learn pinyin, Level 3 had more positive attitudes than Level 1. That means that total beginner learners had some concerns about pinyin and did not think it was extremely easy to learn, but that those with two years' experience of learning thought it was easy. One explanation of this is that learning has an effect!

Item 10 about length of learning only showed a marginal significance among level groups, analysis found a main effect between Level 1 and Level 2, $p=.024$. Pupils at level 1 had a rather positive attitude that 3-5 years was enough to be able to speak fluent Chinese, whilst Level 2 and Level 3 estimated a longer time of over five years, if they only studied one hour a day. As they persisted in learning, they also learnt how large the task was!

Table 4-24 ANOVA among Level Groups about the Difficulty of Chinese Learning

| <i>Items</i> | <i>Level M^o</i> | | | <i>Sig.</i> |
|--|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| | <i>L1</i> | <i>L2</i> | <i>L3</i> | |
| The difficulty of learning grammar rules | 2.89 | 2.68 | 2.19 | .000 |
| Recognising the Chinese character is easier than writing the character. | 2.68 | 2.41 | .175 | .000 |
| I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak Chinese very well. | 2.56 | 2.18 | 2.05 | .001 |
| The difficulty of learning pinyin (e.g. nǐ hǎo) | 2.34 | 2.39 | 1.62 | .001 |
| The difficulty of learning tones | 2.56 | 2.98 | 2.76 | .003 |
| The difficulty of learning vocabulary | 2.74 | 2.62 | 2.24 | .005 |
| The difficulty of learning Chinese characters | 2.63 | 2.92 | 2.81 | .037 |
| If some spent one hour a day learning Chinese, how long do you think it will take him/her to become fluent? (1-2 years, 3-5 years, 5-10 years, over 10 years) | 2.08 | 2.39 | 2.30 | .052 |
| Some languages are easier to learn than others. | 3.48 | 3.47 | 3.33 | .059 |
| It is easier to speak than understand Chinese. | 2.75 | 3.00 | 2.90 | .113 |
| I find it confusing that Chinese words have same pronunciations but different characters and meanings | 2.88 | 2.83 | 2.52 | .150 |
| The difficulty of learning Chinese language in general | 2.70 | 2.69 | 2.38 | .202 |
| Matching pronunciation of words with characters is very difficult. | 2.72 | 2.88 | 2.57 | .275 |
| It is easier to read and write Chinese than to speak and understand it. | 2.67 | 2.84 | 2.71 | .438 |

Note: M^o means the adjusted mean scores based on questionnaire responses, not the original ones. * Significance is at the 0.05 level (2-tailed.)

4.3.4.2 Beliefs about What Makes a Good Language Learner

An ANOVA test showed that mean scores of items 1, 14, 3 and 17 were significantly different among level groups. Table 4-26 displayed mean scores, of each item in this section. Figure 4-11 showed the pupils' beliefs at different levels.

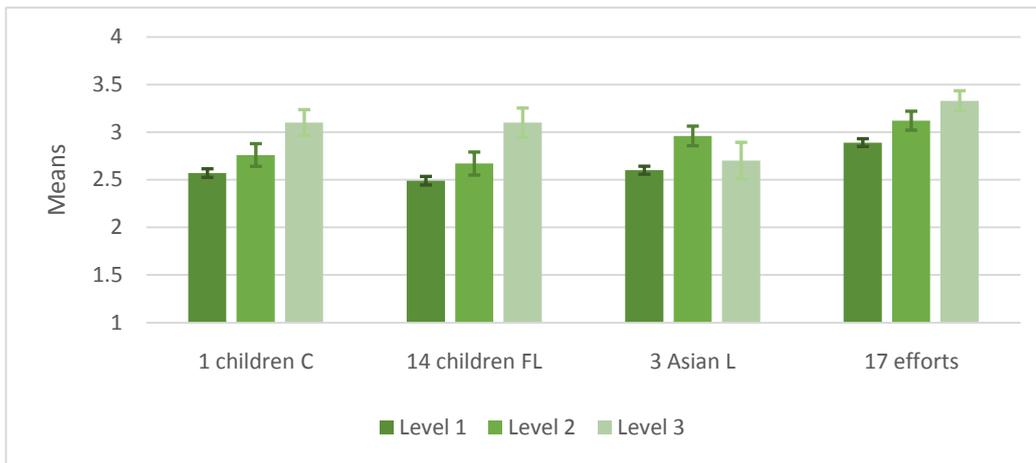


Figure 4-11 Beliefs about What Makes a Good Language Learner at Different Levels

It can be seen from Figure 4-11 that pupils' beliefs about children's advantages and efforts of learning became stronger across levels. Analysis revealed that a significance difference was only found between level 1 and level 3 on item 1. Beliefs of pupils at level 3 were more positive than at Level 1 about children's superiority at Chinese learning. Similarly, a significant difference was also found between level 1 and level 3 on item 14. A marginal significance was found between level 2 and level 3, yet it did not reach the significant level, $p=.051 > .05$.

As for item 17 about the role of effort, analysis found that the beliefs of pupils at level 1 significantly differed from those at level 2 and level 3, yet no difference was found between level 2 and level 3. Level 2 and 3 pupils were more aware of the role of efforts in learning Chinese, than those who just started to learn in the very beginning.

Regarding the language learning experience, analysis of item 3 showed that beliefs of level 1 students were significantly different from those at level 2. That is to say, compared to the total beginners, the experienced learners were more inclined to believe that Asian language learning experience helped with their Chinese learning.

Table 4-25 ANOVA among Level Groups about Beliefs about Good Language Learners

| <i>Items</i> | <i>Level M^o</i> | | | <i>Sig.</i> |
|---|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| | <i>L1</i> | <i>L2</i> | <i>L3</i> | |
| It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language. | 2.49 | 2.67 | 3.10 | .004 |
| How much you can improve your proficiency in Chinese depends on your effort. | 2.55 | 2.89 | 3.12 | .006 |
| It is easier for children than adults to learn Chinese. | 2.57 | 2.76 | 3.10 | .010 |
| It is easier for someone who already speaks an Asian language to learn Chinese. | 2.60 | 2.96 | 2.70 | .011 |
| I have the ability to learn Chinese. | 2.66 | 2.80 | 3.00 | .123 |
| I have the ability to learn foreign language. | 2.43 | 2.48 | 2.75 | .240 |
| People who speak Chinese are very intelligent. | 2.34 | 2.50 | 2.55 | .263 |
| English pupils are very good at learning Chinese. | 2.21 | 2.20 | 2.47 | .267 |
| How much pupils learn from the Chinese course mostly depends on the quality of the teacher. | 2.79 | 2.98 | 2.90 | .313 |
| Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn Chinese. | 2.23 | 2.44 | 2.24 | .318 |
| People who are good at Maths and Science are also good at learning Chinese. | 3.31 | 3.29 | 3.52 | .386 |
| Girls are better than boys at learning a foreign language. | 1.94 | 1.80 | 1.80 | .484 |
| Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language. | 3.08 | 3.16 | 3.24 | .529 |
| Some people are just born smart to learn a foreign language. | 2.21 | 2.32 | 2.35 | .577 |
| Pupils who do not do well in the Chinese class simply do not work hard enough. | 2.11 | 2.10 | 2.24 | .793 |
| Everyone can learn to speak Chinese. | 2.83 | 2.91 | 2.80 | .807 |
| The smart pupils also have to work hard to be able to speak Chinese well. | 3.23 | 3.20 | 3.20 | .939 |
| Girls are better than boys at learning Chinese. | 1.95 | 2.00 | 1.95 | .944 |

Note: * Significance is at the 0.05 level (2-tailed.)

4.3.4.3 Beliefs about the Importance of FL Learning

ANOVA analyses only found significant differences among groups on item 4 about grammar, item 6 about conversation, and item 12 concerning characters learning. Means scores on each item are presented in Table 4-26. Figure 4-12 displays pupils' attitudes at different levels.

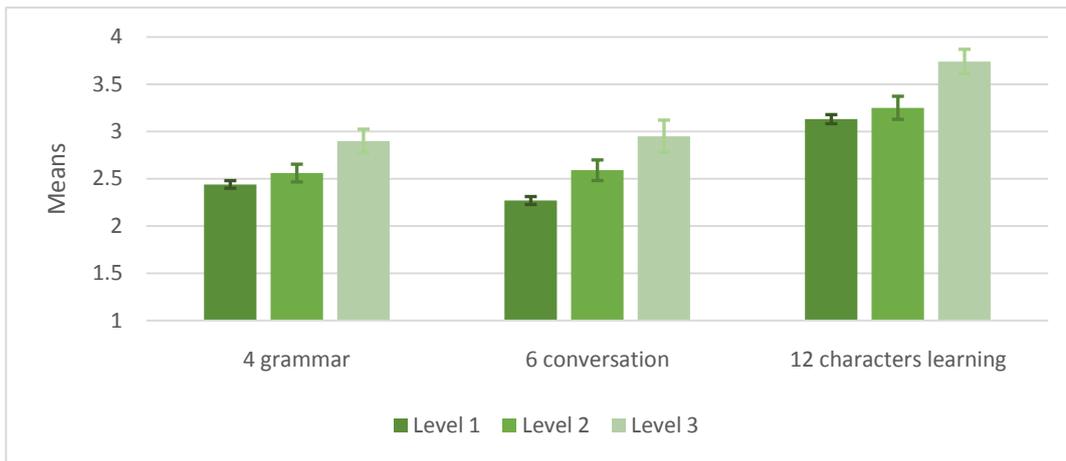


Figure 4-12 Beliefs about the Importance of FL Learning at Different Levels

From Figure 4-12, it can be seen that pupils with more experience had stronger beliefs about the importance of grammar, conversation and also character learning. Analyses revealed that, for item 4-grammar learning, beliefs of the level 3 group were significantly different from those at Level 1 and Level 2, $p=.006$ and $.008$, respectively, yet no difference was found between Level 1 and Level 2 in this sample. The mean scores of Level 1 and Level 2 were around 2.5. This means beginner learners in the first two years of Chinese learning were ambivalent about the role of grammar learning in Chinese. Yet more experienced learners focused much more on grammar learning.

The results for item 6 revealed that, pupils at level 1 and 2 were likely to believe learning to read and write was more important than carrying on a conversation, whereas beliefs of learners at level 3 held an opposite idea. This change of priorities might reflect a “hump” effect, in getting to grips with a new orthography.

Pupils’ attitudes towards the importance of learning how to write characters were found consistently positive across levels. Analyses revealed that beliefs of the three groups were significantly different from each other. It can be seen from Figure 4-12 that pupils at level 3 most strongly supported the necessity of writing characters among the three groups. As they learnt more about Chinese, characters became more

than just a novelty.

Table 4-26 ANOVA among Level Groups about the Importance of FL learning

| <i>Items</i> | <i>Level M^o</i> | | | <i>Sig.</i> |
|---|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| | <i>L1</i> | <i>L2</i> | <i>L3</i> | |
| Learning how to carry on conversation in Chinese is more important than learning to read and write. | 2.27 | 2.59 | 2.95 | .000 |
| Learning to write Chinese characters is not a waste of time. | 3.13 | 3.25 | 3.74 | .010 |
| Learning grammar rules is the most important part of Chinese learning. | 2.44 | 2.56 | 2.90 | .016 |
| It is important to learn character components (radicals) when learning characters. | 2.72 | 2.64 | 3.05 | .091 |
| Learning vocabulary is the most important part of Chinese learning. | 2.62 | 2.75 | 2.95 | .103 |
| It is good to begin Chinese learning with oral words. | 2.53 | 2.63 | 2.84 | .151 |
| It is important to know some basic writing rules of Chinese characters before learning to write. | 2.89 | 3.08 | 3.00 | .234 |
| I would like to learn Chinese from a teacher who is a native speaker of Chinese. | 2.85 | 3.04 | 3.00 | .301 |
| Learning Chinese is different from learning other school subjects. | 2.93 | 3.06 | 3.10 | .395 |
| It is good to start Chinese learning with pinyin. | 2.68 | 2.74 | 2.90 | .406 |
| It is good to begin Chinese learning with individual characters. | 2.71 | 2.63 | 2.67 | .721 |
| It is good to learn Chinese in China. | 2.52 | 2.57 | 2.42 | .805 |
| It is necessary to know the Chinese culture in order to learn Chinese. | 2.49 | 2.45 | 2.43 | .894 |

Note: * Significance is at the 0.05 level (2-tailed.)

4.3.4.4 Effective Strategies for Learning Chinese

ANOVA analyses were conducted among groups about their beliefs about Chinese learning strategies, in terms of practice, mistake-making and communication, as well as analysing and guessing. Table 4-27, 4-28 and 4-29 show the mean scores of each item.

4.3.4.4.1 Beliefs about practice in Chinese learning

Significant differences were found on item 1 regarding repetition and practice, item 20 regarding e-learning, item 16 about grammar drills, and item 9 about handwriting among level groups (See Figure 4-13).

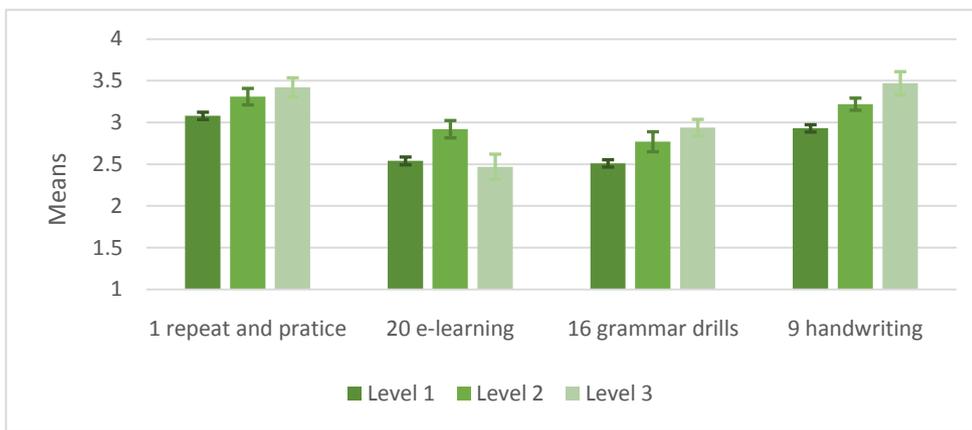


Figure 4-13 Beliefs about Practice among Level Groups

Analyses by using Turkey's HSD methods on item 1 revealed no significant difference between each group. This indicated that pupils' beliefs overall were different regarding the role of practice in learning Chinese, yet the beliefs of each level group did not differ from each other in the statistical sense. Such a result is possibly for the reason that the overall ANOVA and the pairwise comparisons ask different questions (Brace, Kemp and Snelgar, 2006). The overall ANOVA asks about the effect of language level as a whole, whilst pairwise comparison asks about the level effects between each pair groups.

Regarding beliefs about e-learning in a language laboratory on item 20, Post hoc analyses showed a significant difference between level 1 and level 2. Level 2 pupils expressed more support for e-learning than level 1 pupils.

Analysis on item 16 revealed a significant difference between level 1 and level 3. Pupils at level 1 were likely to have a neutral idea (2.51) about mechanical grammar practice, yet pupils at level 3 endorsed it (2.94).

As for item 9 about practice of Chinese characters, analysis showed that beliefs of level 1 significantly differed from those of level 2 and level 3. Pupils from all level groups tended to agree that character learning requires handwriting practice and memorisation. Moreover, such beliefs were stronger among

level 2 and level 3 pupils, than level 1 learners.

Table 4-27 Beliefs about Practice: Means Scores and ANOVA among Level Groups

| | <i>It is important to</i> | <i>Level M^o</i> | | | <i>Sig.</i> |
|----|---|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| | | <i>L1</i> | <i>L2</i> | <i>L3</i> | |
| 9 | handwriting practice and memorisation | 2.93 | 3.22 | 3.47 | .001 |
| 20 | practice in language laboratory | 2.54 | 2.92 | 2.47 | .008 |
| 16 | have some mechanical grammar drills exercises | 2.51 | 2.77 | 2.94 | .009 |
| 1 | repeat and practise a lot | 3.08 | 3.31 | 3.42 | .044 |
| 7 | repeat the sound of words several times | 2.97 | 3.16 | 3.11 | .186 |
| 2 | practise speaking Chinese if I heard someone speaking Chinese | 2.36 | 2.31 | 2.21 | .703 |

Note: * Significance is at the 0.05 level (2-tailed.)

4.3.4.4.2 Beliefs about making mistakes and communication

Item 10 about pronunciation, item 19 regarding grammar, and item 5 regarding mistake-making, were found significantly different among groups via ANOVA (Figure 4-14). The mean scores are presented in Table 4-28.

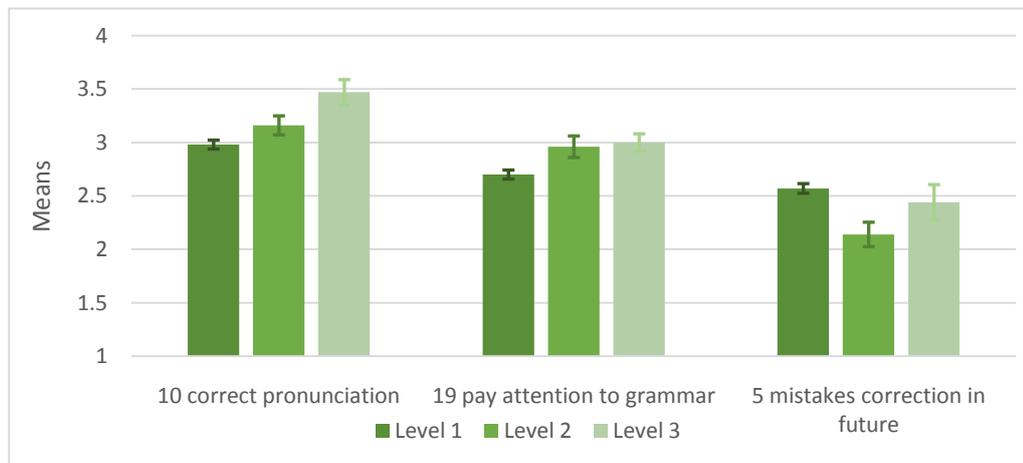


Figure 4-14 Beliefs about Mistake-making and Communication among Level Groups

From Figure 4-14, pupils tended to be quite aware of correct pronunciation and grammar when speaking. Analyses only found a significance between level 1 and level 3 groups on item 10 and 19 respectively, and a marginal significance between level 1 and level 2 on item 19, $p=.054$. That is to say, level 3 pupils were more likely than total beginners at level 1 to believe in the importance of correct pronunciation and

being grammar-aware in speaking.

Analyses of item 5 revealed that, pupils' beliefs about mistake-making and correction were significantly different between level 1 and level 2, and no differences were found between level 1 and 3, or level 2 and 3. Level 1 pupils tended to be ambivalent about the statement that "If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on", whereas level 2 pupils seemed to be more concerned about mistakes might be fossilised in their language if not corrected immediately.

Table 4-28 Beliefs about Making Mistakes and Communication

| | <i>Items</i> | <i>Level M⁰</i> | | | <i>Sig.</i> |
|----|--|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| | | <i>L1</i> | <i>L2</i> | <i>L3</i> | |
| 5 | It is not hard to get rid of mistakes in the future | 2.57 | 2.14 | 2.44 | .003 |
| 10 | It is important to speak Chinese with correct pronunciation | 2.98 | 3.16 | 3.47 | .008 |
| 10 | It is important to speak Chinese with correct pronunciation | 2.98 | 3.16 | 3.47 | .008 |
| 19 | I pay attention to my grammar when speaking Chinese | 2.70 | 2.96 | 3.00 | .024 |
| 13 | it is ok to make mistakes for communication | 2.81 | 3.02 | 3.11 | .068 |
| 14 | I am aware of my tones when speaking Chinese | 2.75 | 2.69 | 2.47 | .277 |
| 11 | You should have a go in speaking Chinese in the beginning | 2.94 | 2.96 | 3.16 | .492 |
| 4 | I feel self-conscious when speaking Chinese in front of others | 2.44 | 2.44 | 2.42 | .997 |

Note: * Significance is at the 0.05 level (2-tailed.)

4.3.4.4.3 Beliefs about guessing and analysing

One-way ANOVA analyses found significant differences between item 12 about context and item 17 regarding learning words as a whole (Figure 4-15).

Analysis revealed that the beliefs of the level 1 group significantly differ from those of the level 2 and level 3 groups on items 12 and 17, respectively. Pupils with more Chinese learning experience at level 2 and 3 preferred contextual clues when guessing new words, as well as the flexibility of withdrawing

analysing strategies when these were not necessary.

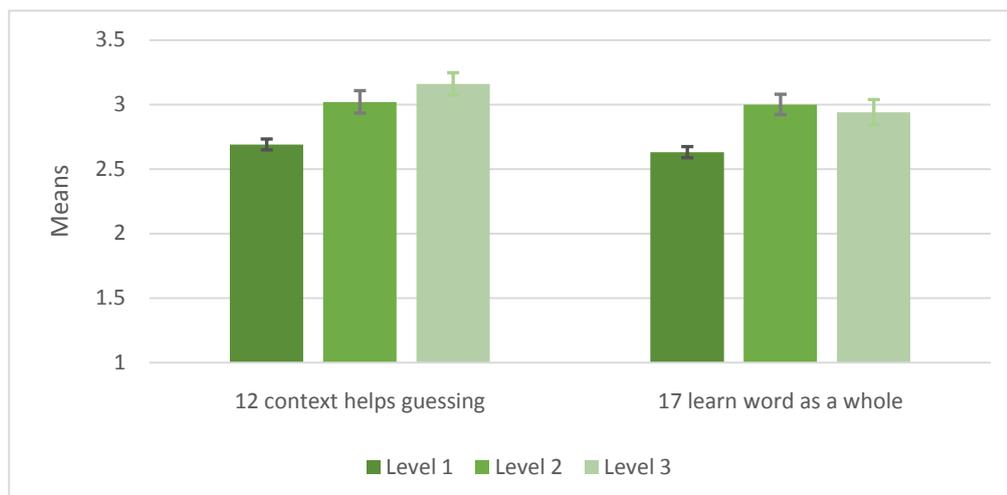


Figure 4-15 Beliefs about Guessing and Analysing among Level Groups

Table 4-29 Guessing and Analysing: Mean Score and ANOVA among Level Groups

| <i>Items</i> | <i>Level M^o</i> | | | <i>Sig.</i> |
|---|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| | <i>L1</i> | <i>L2</i> | <i>L3</i> | |
| 12 When you came across a word you do not know, the context gives you a good idea of what it means | 2.69 | 3.02 | 3.16 | .001 |
| 3 It is ok to guess if you do not know a word in Chinese | 2.65 | 2.47 | 2.42 | .202 |
| 6 When studying Chinese words, I try to think of link between components and word | 2.64 | 2.77 | 2.82 | .407 |
| 17 Sometimes you just have to learn a new word as a whole even if the meanings of component character seem to be unrelated to the whole meaning | 2.63 | 3.00 | 2.94 | .416 |
| 8 It is ok to guess meaning the meaning of the character if you only know part of it | 2.82 | 2.58 | 2.95 | .602 |
| 18 It is ok to guess the sound of character if you only know part of it | 2.66 | 2.59 | 2.67 | .840 |
| 15 When I study a new character, I try to recognise its parts | 2.87 | 2.90 | 2.89 | .962 |

Note: * Significance is at the 0.05 level (2-tailed.)

4.3.4.5 The Motivations for Learning Chinese

One-way ANOVA showed that mean scores of items 3 and 4 regarding knowing Chinese people, item 7 about character learning, and item 9 about career purpose, were significantly different among level groups

(Figure 4-16). Table 4-30 displays the mean scores of each item.

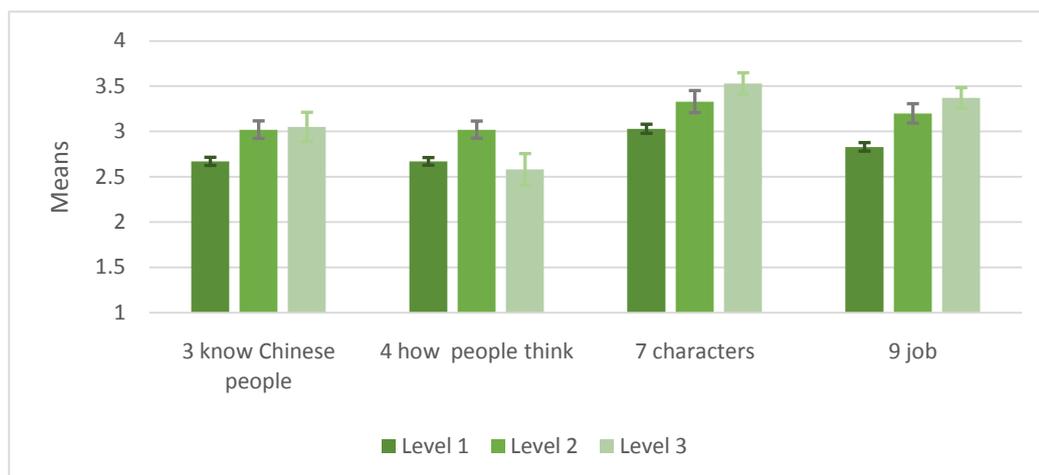


Figure 4-16 Beliefs about Motivations for Learning Chinese among Level Groups

Analyses revealed that, as for item 3, a significant difference was only found between level 1 and level 2. Pupils at level 2 held stronger motivation for knowing Chinese people than those at level 1. Presumably, those with less motivation have not continued learning!

There was a significant difference between level 1 and level 3 on item 7 about character learning. This indicated that after more than three years of learning, pupils at level 3 still had a strong intrinsic motivation for learning characters, and it was even stronger than that of the complete beginners at level 1.

Analysis of item 9 found the level 1 group significantly differed from the other two groups, which means, compared with total beginner learners, both experienced beginners and intermediate learners with at least a year of learning tended to have a stronger instrumental motivation in terms of finding a better job in learning Chinese. This might show that those with instrumental goals persist, or that those who persist come to see the instrumental value of Chinese.

Results found on item 4 show that level 2 pupils were more eager to know other people's thought than pupils at level 1, and this discrepancy reached statistical significance. Yet such difference between level

2 and level 3 did not show any significance in post-hoc analysis.

Table 4-30 ANOVA of Beliefs about the Motivation for Learning Chinese among Level Groups

| <i>Items</i> | <i>Level M^o</i> | | | <i>Sig.</i> |
|---|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| | <i>L1</i> | <i>L2</i> | <i>L3</i> | |
| Chinese people think that it is important to learn characters | 3.01 | 3.06 | 3.37 | .001 |
| If I learn to speak Chinese very well it will help me get a good job | 2.83 | 3.20 | 3.37 | .001 |
| I would like to learn Chinese so that I can get to know Chinese people better | 2.64 | 3.02 | 3.05 | .001 |
| If I learn Chinese I will know more about how other people think | 2.67 | 3.02 | 2.58 | .007 |
| Learning how to write Chinese characters is not boring | 3.03 | 3.33 | 3.53 | .008 |
| I would like to learn Chinese characters so that I can understand Chinese materials | 2.73 | 2.88 | 3.05 | .120 |
| If I learn Chinese I will learn more about my own language | 2.22 | 2.40 | 2.37 | .236 |
| If I am able to speak Chinese very well, I will have many opportunities to use it | 2.75 | 2.94 | 2.95 | .252 |
| I believe English people think that it is important to speak Chinese | 2.38 | 2.36 | 2.37 | .986 |

Note: * Significance is at the 0.05 level (2-tailed.)

4.3.4.6 Summary of pupils' beliefs across language levels

Pupils' beliefs across language levels are summarized below. It is important to note that these results are from different individuals in different groups, rather than the same group of pupils at different levels, but it does suggest that experience may shape views or that pupils with certain views may persist in learning Chinese.

1. One section asked about pupil expectations of learning Chinese, and pupils at level 2 and 3 tended to have more confidence in speaking Chinese well than the total beginners. Learning had made pupils more realistic about length of learning time, and the difficulty of learning to read and write characters, words and grammar. Producing characters was regarded as harder than recognition by pupils at level 2 and 3, yet complete beginners believed the opposite. Likewise, words and grammar were viewed as hard by level 1 and level 2 pupils, whereas the intermediate pupils at level 3 thought them easy. Level 3 pupils also held stronger beliefs than level 1 that pinyin was easy. Indeed

learning had had an effect on pupils' expectations in this respect.

2. As for beliefs about good language learners, pupils with more learning experience gave stronger support than total beginners to the advantage of learning as a child, the role of effort and Asian language experience in learning FL and Chinese.
3. In terms of the importance of Chinese learning, level 1 and 2 pupils did not notice the prominence of grammar learning, but preferred literacy learning to communication. On the other hand, pupils with 3-5 years learning experience focused on grammar learning and communication. Yet they also showed stronger beliefs than beginners in the necessity of writing characters.
4. In terms of strategies for Chinese learning, pupils with more learning experience were inclined to pay more attention than total beginners to practice and repetition, in terms of grammar learning and listening to audio or video materials. They were more confident in making use of context and learning words without analysing than pupils with less experience. However, level 2 pupils seemed more concerned about correcting mistakes in the future than total beginners.
5. The more experience pupils had, the stronger the motivations reported for knowing Chinese people, understanding Chinese materials, finding a good job and learning characters.

4.4 Analysis and Findings of Interviews and Class Observation

Semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were the main sources of the qualitative data in the present research. Pupils and teachers from 8 different schools were involved in the interviews (See Table 4-31 below). In some schools the researcher had a chance to be in the classroom with pupils and teachers, to observe their Chinese lessons as a basis for the discussion. Though it would have been ideal

to do this in all cases, insisting on it would have reduced the sample. Given the complexity of school contexts and interviewees' backgrounds, the qualitative data was coded and categorized within the individual schools first via Nvivo 10. The similar categories coded in single schools were exported by using Nvivo "report" to address the cross cases comparison. Thus findings are initially reported as separated cases, based on the individual schools below. Results of interviews with teachers and pupils, as well as classroom observations are presented in the subcategories of each school's case. Themes emerging from single school cases are also reported in the cross cases comparison.

4.4.1 Single Case in School Contexts

4.4.1.1 Case A: School in Southwest England

School A was a mixed, state-funded secondary school that had specialist sports college status, located in the southwest of England. Ofsted graded it as an "outstanding" school. Mandarin was one of the four foreign languages that were offered by the MFL department of the school. Around 440 pupils from Year 7 and 8 were required to take Mandarin "taster" lessons for about 12 hours, along with three other European languages, French, Spanish and German. After the taster sessions, around 120 pupils carried on learning Mandarin and they were expected to continue with it to KS4 and GCSE. At the time the researcher visited the school, there were approximately 200 pupils from Year 7 and 8 learning Chinese. Some of them were doing the taster lesson and the rest had already made their commitment to learning Mandarin. Pupils who carried on learning Chinese had 3 Mandarin lessons per 2 weeks.

Mandarin Teacher Kathy's beliefs from the Interview

Kathy was the only Mandarin teacher in school. She was also teaching Mandarin in school B, in order to

meet the required teaching hours as a recruited full-time teacher. She was a L1 Chinese speaker and obtained a PGCE Mandarin qualification in the UK a year ago. She had been working with Year 7 and Year 8 pupils in school A for nearly a year.

Key themes that emerged in Kathy's beliefs at her school are briefly reported below due to the limited space here.

- *Recognising Chinese characters, especially pronouncing them, was harder than writing characters (i.e. write down characters from memory).* Kathy pointed out that Chinese somehow had no link between shapes of characters and the pronunciation, which was the reason why pupils felt it was hard to recall the sound directly from characters. A cartoon tone chart with panda pictures was suggested helping pupils understand and learn how to pronounce Chinese sounds.
- *Listening and writing Chinese was not a difficulty for beginner learners, but rather a process of getting to know the novel things, which learners would encounter in other foreign languages as well.* Kathy said that at the beginning, pupils would feel a bit scared and not be used to the sounds, the speed of talking or the characters. Eventually they would get the hang of it and it was usually just a matter of time.
- *Effective strategies for classroom discipline management were peer management by pupils themselves rather than by the teacher.* The effective way she found to deal with this was to ask a pupil to voluntarily be a Panda captain in each lesson. The pupil was responsible for the manners of the whole class and made a record of both good performances and warnings. They even had systematic rules of reward and punishment according to their record of manners.
- *Differentiated learning and teaching in English schools was very important.* Kathy had a very strong awareness of differentiated teaching, particularly in terms of marking the pinyin on top of texts, for

pupils who had difficulty in reading; giving high level pupils extra work to do (i.e. writing down characters) in listening activities.

- *L1 and L2 Chinese teachers had different beliefs about the ways of teaching Chinese, and this was due to their own cultural and educational background. However, pupils thought that there was no difference in ways of teaching between L1 and L2 teachers.*

Beliefs of Pupils in Year 7

Six Y7 pupils, of a range of abilities in Chinese, participated in the interviews. The tone of their interviews was positive and these pupils, generally, relished the challenges they faced. Due to the wide range of and somewhat scattered pattern of beliefs from pupils' individual interviews, only the beliefs that were shared by more than three pupils are presented below.

- *Tones and pronunciation:* Pupils generally thought Chinese pronunciation and tones required them to “*spend time in learning...*” in order to “*...kind of get your tongue around it*”. They felt that, the difference of “*the tone going up and down*” and “*the going-down tone*” sometimes was hard to tell.
- *Role of pinyin:* Pupils thought pinyin helped remind them of the sound when learning words and characters. As pupils said, “*sometimes just with characters it is hard to say the word*”. Accordingly in order to build up a strong link of sound and characters, pupils proposed that it was best to “*do characters, pinyin and English together*”.
- *Chinese characters:* Pupils preferred to make images and stories by themselves to help remember the shapes of characters. For example, as pupils pointed out. “*Number 4(四) is a window and 5(五) is a bench*”. When making stories of the new characters, as pupils noted, “*we have to think what it is like if there is any other character inside it, that helps you memorise it*” and “*gives you a clue of what it*

is about". It showed that they had already noticed some connections between subcomponents and the whole characters.

- *Listening*: Pupils pointed out, compared to speaking, which needed the production of words and sentences, listening was a passive input processing.
- *Communication and mistake-making*: Pupils seemed to be high risk-takers when speaking. They concluded, speaking was *"the most common thing you do and the most important thing in a language"*, and *"when you make mistakes you learn what to do next, and then you practise and work on them"*.
- *Expectations of Chinese teachers*: Six pupils preferred to have a native Chinese speaker as their Chinese teacher. It seemed that pupils did not have confidence in English people's Chinese. One pupil stated, *"if English teachers trying to learn Chinese find it hard, it would be harder for them to teach us"*. Despite the high demand for Chinese language, some learners had tolerance for Chinese people's English, saying that *"sometimes it would be hard for Chinese teachers to explain everything, because English is not their native language"*.
- *Expectations of Chinese learning*: Pupils thought memorisation and practice in learning Chinese was necessary. They emphasised that hard work and fun were the two basic elements in learning Chinese. As one pupil pointed out, *"Mandarin can be very fun once you work hard, and it's very good once you understand it"*.

Classroom Observation

The researcher observed two classes of Year 7 pupils, taught by Kathy. Based on the analysis of

observation notes, some findings which are relevant to the beliefs of the teacher or pupils during the interview are discussed here.

Kathy followed a certain order of pinyin, characters and English when introducing the new words to pupils. She initially showed the Chinese characters “两个姐姐”(two older sisters) on the slide, and then showed pinyin underneath it, which quickly faded off, and then was followed by the English meanings above the characters. Such a way of presentation is actually consistent with pupils' suggestions to show the characters, pinyin and English together.

When doing writing exercises, Kathy gave them a literal stamp of approval for writing, and also corrected any of their mistakes after pupils finished writing. This is in line with what Kathy pointed out in her interview that a routine of writing practice along with rewards could stimulate pupils' motivation. Pupils all seemed to be happy to do this and enjoyed writing very much.

When teaching the word “和”(and), she pointed out the radicals which pupils had learnt, radical “口” was a mouth, radical “禾” was a tree. She also said that, a mouth AND a tree together meant AND. Pupils' interviews revealed that they already had some awareness about the component of characters as well as words, which was probably learnt from their Chinese teacher.

Kathy had a very good way of controlling the time of the classroom activities. She counted down from 3 to 1 when it was time to finish the task, and then she quickly moved on to the next step. However, classroom management problems were also observed. In an afternoon class, the peer management and teacher's supervision seemed not to have a great impact on two disruptive boys. Even worse, their behaviour affected other pupils' learning. After three ineffective warnings, Kathy asked for an external teacher for help to deal with the issue. Though Kathy did not say it at interview, Kathy sometimes

struggled to maintain the focus of Y7 pupils.

Summary of Case A

The beliefs of teachers and pupils from Year 7 in school A are quite consistent in many aspects. It is more likely that the beliefs of pupils at school A were deeply influenced by their Chinese teacher, such as working hard in writing practice and memorisation. Moreover, it also can be seen that some of the teaching methods that Kathy used had an impact on pupils' learning, yet she was not always able to manage pupil behaviour. Given the routine of writing practice with rewards, pupils showed strong interest in writing and had already formed good habits in doing so. By explaining parts of characters and the brainstorming activities of making stories of Chinese characters, pupils had developed some degree of logographic and morphologic awareness.

4.4.1.2 Case B: School in Southwest England

School B was located in Southwest England. It was a secondary school with a specialist status as a Language College. The Ofsted grade was "good". Mandarin was being taught as a curriculum subject to all 230 Year 7 pupils from September 2013. Year 7 pupils had a one hour lesson per fortnight. The top literacy group would continue to learn Mandarin in Year 8. There were also 5 Year 9 pupils learning Mandarin after class with their teacher Kathy for about 1.5 hours per week. These 5 Year 9 pupils all chose Mandarin as their additional language GCSE option. They would continue learning Mandarin at KS4 for two years. In addition, this school had established a good relationship with a Chinese international school, and a Language Centre had recently been built for visiting high school pupils from China.

As mentioned before, teacher Kathy at school A also taught in school B. Thus only pupils' interviews are

illustrated here. No classroom observation was available, because a demonstration of Chinese culture was carried out by L1 English pupils from England and pupils from the Chinese international school in lesson hours.

Interviews with Year 7 Pupils

Interestingly, the beliefs of Year 7 pupils at school B were not quite the same as their counterparts in school A, although they were all taught by the same teacher Kathy.

- *Tones and pronunciations:* Pupils were confident in perceiving Chinese tones. Some even used gestures to show the contour of how the specific pitch goes. However, when listening to speech, they still found some tones confusing, as one stated, *“the words are basically the same but they have got accents”*.
- *Beliefs about pinyin:* Interestingly, some pupils did not initially understand the term “pinyin” when the researcher asked them about it. Pupils noted that, *“If there is no pinyin available, it is ok as teacher will pronounce it for us and just remember the sound”*. This means pupils actually did not value pinyin much but considered it as a tool for learning pronunciation. This is interesting in terms of what it might mean for the questionnaire responses.
- *Chinese characters:* Pupils found some characters are quite hard as *“they look similar to each other”*. They also thought *“characters do not really sound like the word but look like pictures and real objects to them”*. Thus they suggested strategies for learning characters. For example, *“when I learn a chair (椅 in character), I just imagine it like a wooden chair with a little person sitting on it”*.
- *Listening:* The “listening” pupils referred to was to listen to Chinese with some additional help from their teacher. They said their Chinese teacher *“provides English translations or uses simple words”*

when speaking to them. For this reason, they did not think listening to Chinese was a problem at all.

- *Speaking*: Most pupils found speaking was easy for two major reasons: 1) *“it is only to do with the sounds and do not have to refer to the shapes of characters”*; 2) *“once you know the words you are about to say, you can just put them into sentences”*. Some pupils said that the speaking competition they took part in last autumn, *“largely boosted their confidence in speaking”*, because *“we only started Chinese learning a few weeks ago and still managed to do it well”*.
- *Reading and writing*: Pupils thought they were very good at learning characters. As one pupil stated, *“if you write it again and again, it gets stuck in your brain so you can do it”*. With regard to reading, pupils thought *“sometimes when you come across a new word it is difficult to understand the meaning”*.
- *Expectations of Chinese teachers*: By comparison with their teachers’ ways of teaching English or other MFL subjects, they thought their Chinese teacher used a contrasting way of teaching, *“starting with easy things- they build up to more complex ones”*. They felt this was understandable due to the relative difficulty of Chinese, therefore the teacher did not want to challenge and scare pupils from the very beginning. Interestingly, pupils pointed out that there was a mutual learning relationship between their teacher and themselves: *“the teacher can correct our mistakes in Chinese, while we can correct the teacher’s English mistakes”*.
- *Expectations of Chinese learning*: Pupils believed Chinese learning was *“a long process”* and learners should *“keep on learning even if they encounter difficulties”*, because *“once you get hold of it they will find Chinese is really easy and fun”*. They thought concentrating on what they hear and reviewing it over and over again could help with memorisation.

Summary of Case B

In sum, Year 7 pupils in school B were very tone-aware, specifically aware of the pitches. However, they did not seem to know the term “pinyin” well and merely considered it as a tool for pronunciation. This was something of a surprise and shows how strong the effect of one teacher’s choices can be. Some pupils thought characters were a challenge but still were keen to write and memorise them. They perceived some characters as representations of real objects in the world, and these were the ones they found most fascinating. As for listening, because of the teacher’s help, they did not think it was hard. Pupils were also very confident in speaking and quite communication-oriented. In addition, pupils believed learners should be persistent in learning Chinese. They appreciated the experience of sharing with their Chinese teacher and thought it benefitted them both in English and Chinese learning.

On the other hand, the Chinese teacher Kathy, as mentioned in school A, shared some beliefs with her pupils at school B. They thought reading could be harder than writing characters. Learning Chinese was worth carrying on no matter what difficulties they might encounter. However, Kathy believed L1 and L2 Chinese teachers’ ways of teaching could be different due to cultural background, whilst pupils did not notice this, instead pointing out discrepancies of mentioned Chinese teachers and their MFL teachers in terms of teaching FL.

4.4.1.3 Case C: School in West Midlands

School C was a non-selective academy in the west midlands. The Ofsted rating was “requires improvement”. Mandarin Chinese was offered along with French, German and Spanish in the faculty of MFL. Mandarin lessons within the curriculum of this school only started in September 2012 for Year 7 pupils. Approximately 150 pupils from Year 7 and Year 8 were learning Mandarin as compulsory sessions.

The school planned to continue the Mandarin provision to Year 9 pupils from the autumn term in 2014 and hopefully pupils could carry on their learning to GCSE level. When the researcher visited the school in January 2014, Year 7 pupils had been learning Chinese for about three months, and for Year 8 pupils, it had been one year and three months. There were two Mandarin teachers at this school. One was a native Chinese and the other was an L1 English teacher, who finished her University study in Mandarin Chinese as her major.

In line with the poor performance in the schools' Ofsted grade, the biggest concern that teachers and pupils showed at school C was discipline and teachers' classroom management. The detailed beliefs of teachers and pupils are reported below.

Mandarin Teachers' beliefs from the Interview

Selina's Beliefs

Selina was a university English teacher in China. She finished her MA study in Teaching English as a Second Language in the UK and had been teaching Mandarin to L1 English pupils from England since 2009. Before she came to this school as a full-time Mandarin teacher in 2012, she taught Mandarin in the extracurricular activities in different schools. She had not yet qualified as a Mandarin teacher. Selina's beliefs are presented below:

- *Whether and when to introduce pinyin:* Selina said whether and when to introduce pinyin was really a dilemma for her. She talked about her two failures of experience in teaching pinyin only and teaching characters only at the beginning stage. Therefore when teaching the new Year 7 pupils in the new term, she introduced the pinyin and characters together, and attempted to gradually reduce the amount of pinyin. In that sense, as Selina noted, "*pupils can neither rely on pinyin nor forget the*

sounds of characters".

- *Character learning and teaching*: Selina found that *"it is easy for pupils to copy characters with teachers"*, yet the difficulty was to do the strokes on their own, as *"they always miss one or two strokes"*. She also found pupils were keen to write characters. She said that, some pupils asked for more writing practice activities rather than learning Chinese culture in the course time.
- Selina noted that analysing the details of words and characters was an effective way of teaching new words, because *"if pupils make the right guess of the component, there would be a high possibility to know the meaning of the new word"*. For instance, when learning the word “起床”, pupils recognised the “木” in character “床”, and recalled it was a sort of a furniture made of wood, which was ‘bed’. In that sense, “起床” probably means “get up from the bed”.
- *Innate ability of FL*: Selina noted, *"some talented pupils do quite well at Chinese but not so good at other subjects"*, indicating an innate ability of learning Chinese exists. However, this ability could be developed by teachers as well.
- *Cultural expectations of learning*: Selina pointed out, motivation and class management were major issues when working with L1 English pupils from England. This was because, *"...for the purpose of developing individualization, pupils do not get much pressure from their parents, schools, as well as society as a whole"*. Thus they did not think *"pupils should work hard"* and it was *"teacher's job to stimulate their motivation"*. Therefore, Selina suggested, *"Chinese teachers need to shift their own beliefs of learning, and design various interactive activities to arouse pupils' interest in learning, rather than just plain lecture presentation"*.

Isabel's Beliefs

Isabel was an English teacher who studied Mandarin Chinese as her major in university. She spent her first two years learning Chinese in an English university and nearly one year in China. She was a new teacher with only five months' teaching experience in this school. Isabel shared her beliefs as a new Mandarin teacher as well as a learner in the following:

Beliefs as a teacher:

- Isabel thought teaching tones and characters “*are not difficult for teachers to teach but for pupils to learn*”, in terms of “*grasping the tones and remembering the characters*”. She emphasised the role of memorisation in learning Chinese but did not think “*pupils at this school are willing to put in time and effort to learn Chinese*”.
- Isabel noted that “*usually teenagers like things that are similar to themselves*”. In that sense, some of them did not feel interested in Chinese as “*they think China is too far away in distance and is also irrelevant to their daily life. They have nothing in common with Chinese teenagers*”.
- Isabel stated behaviour might be a general issue in her schools, as “*it occurred not only in Mandarin class but also in other MFL classes*”.

Beliefs as a learner:

- As an adult learner, Isabel did not find tones were difficult. As she said, “*When I hear it many times in a sentence, I kind of remember the way the tones go*”.
- Isabel thought immersion in the language environment facilitated Chinese learning in many aspects. During her one year's studying in China, she experienced a tremendous improvement in listening and speaking Chinese. When talking about the pupils here, she said they did not even have enough Mandarin classes, let alone exposure to the Chinese language.

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- With regard to the ways of memorising characters, Isabel believed the best way was writing. Radicals did not help memorisation as some characters share the same radicals, which could cause confusion. She thought speaking characters out loud helped remember its sounds because “*when you speak, you hear the sound as well*”.
 - Isabel suggested, speaking should be introduced first to beginner learners, the same way as baby learners learning their mother tongue. Pinyin and characters should be learnt at the same time so that they helped with both pronunciation and recognition of characters.

Interviews with three Year 7 Pupils

- *Tones and pronunciations:* Pupils found most sounds were easy to pronounce, which was a matter of getting used to the new sound system. The difficulty was to remember the sound and say it accurately. When they were asked about tones, pupils did not know what the “tones” meant at first. It seemed that they had not obtained explicit knowledge about Chinese tones. However, one pupil talked about her experience of learning French in primary school and thought it had helped her become familiar with Chinese sounds.
- *Word structures and processing:* One pupil said that some Chinese words were easy to learn as they followed the same constructional rule as each other. Take the weekday for example, “*knowing Monday (i.e. 星期一 in Chinese) it is easy to say the rest, 星期二 (Tuesday), 星期三 (Wednesday) etc. All you need to do is to put the number in the end*”.
- *Chinese characters:* Pupils thought Chinese characters were fascinating, and that they looked like “*pieces of art*”. One pupil stated, “*I can see a picture inside it, like shopping (i.e. 东西 in Chinese), you can see a basket on the counter, like a symbol*”. They believed making pictures of characters

helped recall the characters later.

- *Listening*: Pupils thought listening was not too hard, because they “*get used to listening to teacher talking and feel confident in understanding it well*”. They suggested that key words should be paid much attention to when listening.
- *Speaking*: The role of pronunciation in speaking was pointed out, that “*it is alright to speak in class as it is the place for learning and feedback will be provided by teachers, whereas if it is outside class, the incorrect pronunciation might cause misunderstanding in real communication*”. Pupils thought speaking should be the first thing to learn for total beginners, because “*once knowing how to say the words, it helps us know the pinyin*”.
- *Reading and writing*: Pupils thought reading required familiarity with characters. If they knew all the characters it could be easy for them, otherwise they would find it hard. As for writing, pupils all expressed their positive attitudes towards writing practice. A pupil stated, “*if you keep on practising, you will learn quite fast*”.
- *Expectations of Chinese teachers*: Pupils thought L1 Chinese speakers “*are more fluent in Chinese and better able to help us with characters and tones*”. They found it “*quite fun to work with teachers*” by using different activities, such as guessing words behind the picture, writing on whiteboards, and matching words to English on small worksheets. Interestingly, a pupil said L1 Chinese were better than L1 English teachers from England at dealing with disruptive pupils. As she explained, “*Chinese schools are very strict and pupils are supposed to be well-behaved. Thus a Chinese teacher probably does not accept bad behaviour at school, so she might try to sort it out rather than ignore it like some English teachers do*”.

Classroom Observation

Two Mandarin lessons for Year 7 pupils were both delivered by the native Chinese teacher Selina.

Regarding pronunciation teaching, when introducing a new word, she first showed pupils the characters and then wrote the pinyin besides it. When pupils seemed to have a problem distinguishing which sound was which, she wrote down the pinyin of both words on the board, and asked pupils to listen to her pronunciation carefully and guess the right pinyin for that sound. In that way, as she pointed out in the interview, basically pinyin was only used as a tool for representing the specific sound.

Writing practice was involved in nearly every task throughout the lesson, and there were also other language learning techniques used. Selina showed how to write the character stroke by stroke on the whiteboard, and asked pupils to write after her in their booklets. Moreover, the use of interactive whiteboard activity pointed out by both Selina and pupils in their interview was also observed in class. This is in line with Selina's beliefs from the interview that pupils should be encouraged to write characters, by using different and interesting ways.

I did not experience bad discipline as I expected from the chats with teachers and pupils. This may have been because of the effect of having a new comer in the class. Only one or two boys seemed so excited that they shouted and even stood up when Selina was explaining some grammar points. Selina looked very calm and stopped their shouting. She asked the boy to come to the front and sit next to her. This worked well and no more pupils were disruptive after that.

Summary of Case C

The English teacher Isabel, as well as being an adult Chinese learner, believed that practice and effort were required for learning Chinese, yet pupils had not realised this yet.

Pupils and teachers shared similar beliefs that pronunciation and tones were not difficult to learn but to remember them was difficult. Pupils thought words and characters were important since if they knew them well they would be able to speak and write. Moreover, it is also likely that pupils found their own ways of learning words. They took notice of the construction rules of some Chinese words and used it to remember the words.

On the other hand, the teachers' strategies for teaching had an impact on the beliefs of their pupils. Regarding learning pinyin, Selina emphasised, she only treated pinyin as a tool for helping the pupils recall the sound. Interestingly, Year 7 pupils who were interviewed were not aware of pinyin, which was consistent with their primary teacher Selina's practice in class.

Although the native teacher Selina, who used to be an English teacher in China, was not from the background of teaching Chinese as a second language, she reflected on her teaching practice frequently and was always ready to try out new strategies, for example, the introduction of pinyin for beginner learners.

4.4.1.4 Case D: School in East London

School D was a new academy school opened in 2013. Therefore it had not received any Ofsted inspection yet. The Mandarin Chinese lessons had started to be offered in Year 1-Year 5, and in Year 7. At the time of my visiting, 80 pupils in Year 7, around 11-12 years old were learning Chinese. Many of them were EAL (English as additional language) pupils. One came from a Cantonese background but seemed to have little knowledge of Mandarin. The main Mandarin teacher came from France and spoke French as her L1 language, and she was also teaching French here. There was a PGCE pupil and a Chinese assistant from Hong Kong in the school. Most Year 7 pupils had started Mandarin in September, yet some had started

later in January but were allocated to the same class. At the time the researcher visited the school in late February, the length of pupils' Chinese learning varied from a few weeks to nearly four months.

Both teachers and pupils at school D were very keen to speak Chinese and learn Chinese through various activities. The teacher Amelie kept speaking Chinese in class. She also valued much about pupils' performance in assessment. She showed me her notes of pupils' recent test results and expressed her concerns about their performance. The detailed views of teachers and pupils are presented below.

Mandarin Teacher Amelie's beliefs

Amelie was from France and spoke French as her L1. She was a Mandarin teacher in the school. She learnt Mandarin in France many years ago and came to England to teach. She had only been to China once as a tourist. From the interview, Amelie seemed to have strong beliefs about the target language use and interactive learning, as well as some concerns about the challenges of teaching Chinese in the UK context.

- *Target language use:* Amelie thought teachers should use the target language in class from the start. She said “*some simple instructions in Chinese, such as ‘please listen’, ‘please look’ actually are not hard to understand from the specific context*”. Furthermore, as Amelie said, she had already used positive statement, such as “*我很好(I am good)*”, “*我很忙(I am busy)*” as greetings in class. Thus when teaching the negative word “*不*”, she just said “*我不好(I am not good)*” and pupils understood it well. “*No more explanations of the words or phrases are needed*”. In addition, it also benefited EAL pupils as English translations did not need to be accessed in this process.
- *Interactive learning:* Amelie believed that interactive learning through activities was good for pupils: “*Young pupils like learning by having fun and to discover new things by themselves, rather than just*

being told what to learn by their teachers. Some pupils did not choose Mandarin voluntarily, so it is also important to arouse their interests from the beginning". Several activities were pointed out, such as competitions, games, and teaching Chinese to other people in school. Moreover, she gave high approval to the activity of *"being a little Mandarin teacher"*.

- *Challenges of teaching Chinese:* Amelie expressed the inconsistency of Mandarin teaching in schools as a challenge for Mandarin teachers. Pupils who had experienced a bit of Mandarin in primary school, faced repetitive learning in their secondary schools.

Interview with Pupils in Year 7

- *Tones and pronunciations:* Pupils thought *"pronunciation can be hard if you don't know how to pronounce it properly, for example, the initial X and Q"*. As for tones, they did not really focus on these in class. As a pupil stated, *"...we just say it and that's fine. Probably when you say it, it sounds like the accent"*. Some pupils thought pronunciation should be introduced first. They said such an idea was relevant to their own Chinese learning experience. They were taught pronunciation on the first day and found it easy to remember the sound, as well as to match up the words afterwards.
- *Word learning:* Pupils thought word learning was of much importance. Some pupils suggested learning a lists of words with a certain topic, such as words about family members, fruits, animals etc.
- *Attitudes to Chinese characters:* Pupils found it interesting to learn Chinese characters because it was very different from the English alphabet. What they felt were effective strategies were: 1) writing practice; 2) imaging characters as pictures and trying to relate them to the meaning as well. For example, one pupil said the character *"好"*(good), was about *"a woman and a baby, it is GOOD"*

because they are together". As for single character words, such as “鸟”, they thought the form looked like a real bird flying in the sky; 3) relating characters to simple songs. Pupils said that the teacher gave them a Chinese song to listen to, and also provided the Chinese lyrics underneath. In that way, they could work out some meanings of characters and remember the sounds as well.

- *Listening:* Pupils thought the difficulty of listening depended on who was talking and how fast the speech was. They said *“it is ok to listen to teachers talking but when listening to the recordings on computer, the words are all muffled up”*.
- *Communication and speaking:* Some pupils thought too many uncertainties were involved in speaking, in terms of pronunciation, the word, as well as the word order and other grammar. Nevertheless, pupils were very keen to speak Chinese. They taught their parents how to say simple words in Chinese, and would like to go to China to speak to people there.
- *Writing and reading:* Pupils thought writing was fun and they were confident in their skills of writing characters. A pupil noted, *“I have a technique of writing”*. Some pupils pointed out the role of stroke order and the components of characters in writing. For example, *“the character for ‘竹’(bamboo), is easy to write once you know which part to write first. It also looks like two Ks on the top which helps writing and memorisation”*.

A pupil noted writing and reading were easier than listening and speaking. This was because, *“writing and reading is all to do with the written forms which can be relied on. Learners can easily catch up in writing and reading as long as they keep doing it, whereas the progress in listening and speaking is slow and painful”*.

- *Expectations of Chinese teachers:* Pupils’ attitudes towards their Chinese teacher was somewhat contradictory. Some pupils thought their teacher was enthusiastic, creative and fun. As a pupil said,

“She uses the action. She is all over the place doing it”. In contrast, some pupils thought their Chinese teacher was boring and very strict. The reason for this was because of the homework and vocabulary tests that teacher’s frequently expected of them. Despite this, they preferred to have L2 Chinese teacher as their teacher Amelie. As a pupil explained, *“she can speak good Chinese and English, and it is easier for her to understand our feelings and difficulties of learning Chinese”*.

- *Cultural expectations of learning*: Pupils seemed to be interested in Chinese culture and the language itself. For instance, pupils were curious about why the literal translations of England (英国) and French (法国) in Chinese meant the Hero’s country and the Law country respectively.

In addition, pupils suggested having more interactive activities which everyone could get involved in. They also thought learners should concentrate in class and keep on practising if they wanted to learn Chinese well. However, some pupils seemed not to like homework and tests. They sometimes thought the homework was a bit too much.

Classroom Observations

One part of the Mandarin lesson for Year 7 pupils was observed. The interesting thing was that the lesson started in quite a Chinese way. All pupils stood up and said “好好学习，天天向上” (Study hard and make progress everyday) together after their teacher Amelie. This was a famous old saying in Chinese and was always used as a motto in Chinese schools. In addition, Amelie used hand gestures to show how the tones should be sounded. However, from the perspective of a native Chinese, the researcher found Amelie’s tones were not accurate (as discussed in the Chapter 2, every single word of Chinese has a fixed tone along with its syllable), although her hand gestures showed the right signs for the tones.

The way that Amelie taught past tense and future tense was interesting. She did not explain many rules

about it, but simply told pupils two words used in the past tense and future tense respectively. After a brief introduction, they did a running game to practise the tenses. By doing the game, not only were the past tense and future tense practised, but the skills of fast reading and character recognition were also practised. Actually such interactive games were mentioned by both Amelie and pupils in the interviews.

Amelia was very aware of pupils being exposed in a large way to the Chinese language. She said lots of simple Chinese words and phrases in class, the same as she said in the interview. Moreover, when starting the lesson, she encouraged pupils to ask the researcher any questions they would like to ask in Chinese.

Summary of Case D

Pupils at school D already had some awareness of Chinese pronunciation, in terms of how to pronounce some specific sounds, such as Q and X, which were completely different from English sounds. However, they did not focus much on tones, and believed Chinese native-like tones could be naturally acquired as time went by. Pupils thought word learning was very important as it was closely related to the performance of listening, speaking, reading and writing. In addition, pupils enjoyed learning Chinese characters and suggested some good ways of memorising characters, in terms of writing practice, relating shapes of characters to images or real objects, as well as learning characters through Chinese songs.

As for language skills, pupils thought listening was hard due to the unfamiliar voices apart from their own teachers, and the fast speed. They thought speaking sometimes could be hard if they were not sure of the pronunciations, the word and the grammar. The difficulty of reading depended on the familiarity with words. However, reading and writing was easy in the sense of making progress much quicker than listening and speaking.

Both teachers and pupils at school D held strong beliefs that Chinese should be learnt in a fun way

through interactive activities, and games as well as songs. Pupils enjoyed being a teacher, teaching Chinese to their family or other pupils. On the other hand, they also shared similar beliefs that in learning Chinese you needed to practise and memorise a lot. However, compared with their teacher Amelie, who emphasised homework and assessment tests in Chinese learning, a few pupils seemed not too happy about the homework and vocabulary tests every week.

4.4.1.5 Case E: Catholic School in Somerset

School E was a state comprehensive school with Catholic background in Somerset. The Ofsted rating was “outstanding” when I visited the school. Mandarin Chinese was only offered to 30 pupils in total. 10 pupils in Year 9 had learnt Mandarin for less than a year and were still at the beginning level. 4 Year 10 pupils had one lesson a week in 2013 and obtained Asset Breakthrough level in Reading/writing and speaking, and had done a term of the GCSE course. There were also about 15 Sixth Formers who were learning Mandarin and were going to take the AQA Breakthrough examination. This school had established a relationship with a high school in China. Every spring term around 20 Chinese Sixth Formers came to England for a visit. The Mandarin teacher Nola was English, and she began to learn Chinese in university over 30 years ago. She was a part time Mandarin teacher at this school.

There was an extreme diversity of Chinese levels among Mandarin pupils at school E. 15 Six Formers were high level learners whereas Year 9 pupils were at the beginning stage. Nevertheless, although the school encouraged all learners to speak Chinese with exchange pupils from China, they still tended to speak English which seemed to be more comfortable for them. The beliefs of teachers and a high level pupil in Year 10 are reported below.

Nola's beliefs from Interview

- *Beliefs about pinyin:* Nola thought pinyin particularly “*benefits pupils’ preparation for speaking assessment, as writing the notes in pinyin is obviously faster than in characters*”. Nola also pointed out that “*reading pinyin is slow, hard, and easy to get confused*”. She reported an experiment of pinyin reading and characters reading which they had conducted in class. With the same short paragraph, it took a longer time for pupils to read pinyin than to read Characters. Furthermore, they were “*stumbling through*” reading sentences in pinyin. Another example Nola said was the misunderstanding of words caused by the same pinyin. She said pupils learnt the word Shujià for bookshelf (literally Shu means book, and ji à means shelf), and they said they would remember it because it was a home of the book. Nevertheless, there was another Jiā (which truly meant family) with a different tone. In that case, as Nola stated, “*when you are only operating in pinyin, you are actually confusing yourself. Shujiā, if you do not say it in the right tone, you would say the Jiā wrong, for family*”.
- *Beliefs about characters:* She felt that pupils’ imagination should be largely encouraged in the beginning, regardless of whether their mental pictures fitted the original etymology of characters. For example, the character 猫 for cat, pupils initially thought “田” was a window, and this was a cat sitting in the window. However, after pupils learnt a bit more, Nola pointed out, “*I want them to at least have some of the real things, like thread*”. Thus at this time, she introduced the real picture of “猫”, “*that is grass (艹) and field (田), and then you could imagine that a cat was crawling through the grass*”.

Regarding stroke order, Nola thought the correct stroke order was not merely a way of writing, but it

helped learners break down the characters and stop seeing them as random and meaningless drawings.

For beginners, Nola pointed out a way of using rhymes which was actually learnt from primary school pupils: “*They made it up of how to write ‘我’- give me a hat (that is the first stroke 丿 on the top), give me an arm (the second stroke 一), give a leg (the third one 丨), kick up (㇇), give a longer leg (㇏), kick down (㇏) and call me dot (丶)*”.

- *Cultural expectations of learning*: Various online resources such as Nciku dictionary, online apps “Chinese pod”, as well as audio and video materials were suggested for Chinese learning in the new era.
- *Cultural expectations of teachers*: Nola thought having a L1 teacher and a L2 teacher for teaching Mandarin was the best combination for the language department in schools. L1 Chinese teachers could speak better Chinese and were able to teach high level pupils. Teachers from England with English as their L1 were more aware of the linguistic difficulties and learning strategies than native Chinese were. Nola explained this was actually from her own teaching experience as an English teacher overseas. After teaching English to foreigners, she started to know how English works, as she “*learnt English as a child and only had a natural feeling of it*”. In addition, she said “*an English teacher who is good at Chinese can also be a good example for pupils*”. Nola also pointed out, L1 and L2 Chinese teachers could be different in their ways of teaching. For example, as Nola stated, “*those of us who had learnt Chinese from scratch that knew that if you don't get it (the stroke order) right then you never get it*”.

Regarding the pedagogy and classroom management, Nola said it was hard for native Chinese teachers, particularly Hanban teachers, most of whom received their education in China and then

came to England to teach. This was because, as Nola put it, *“they come here with Chinese cultural attitudes, education, and behaviour, and they all just think, oh my God, it’s (the class) awful”*.

Actually even for herself, she said, *“I was pretty much like a Chinese teacher too, I thought you walked into a room, you imparted the knowledge”*. In that sense, she expressed her understanding for those Hanban teachers, and pointed out that teachers from either cultural background had to learn to have an open mind in the present context. Probably the learning was extremely miserable for new-comer teachers from China.

Interview with a Pupil in Year 10

A Year 10 pupil Beth was interviewed. She had already been learning Chinese for nearly 8 years since primary school and was preparing for GCSE Mandarin.

- *Pronunciation, listening and speaking*: Beth was quite aware of the role of tone in discriminating different meanings. As she said, *“you have to get the tones right to say the word properly in Chinese”*. Moreover, she did not think pinyin was actually helpful to recognise the sound in Chinese, as *“Chinese tones can mean different things with the same pinyin spellings”*. Compared with listening, she thought speaking was much easier, because *“when you speak you understand yourself rather than the tape”*. Yet listening to people talking was very difficult.
- *Writing and stroke order*: Beth believed learning Chinese needed repetitive practice, especially for writing. She felt that *“sometimes the stroke order is difficult to remember”*, but with writing practice, *“it helps with reading and kind of assisting you of how to say it as well”*. Thus Beth suggested stroke order should be introduced initially to beginners. Beth also felt her teacher’s help with stroke order and writing practice.

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- *Attitudes towards Chinese teacher:* Beth felt more comfortable with an English person as her Chinese teacher. This was probably because “*I started learning Chinese with an English teacher*”. She also said “*I can understand an English person’s speaking better as they share the same first language*”. Moreover, she thought her English teacher was brilliant at teaching as she knew how to teach them in a simple way, based on her own Chinese learning experience.
 - *Attitudes towards Chinese learning:* Beth was quite interested in Chinese culture, in terms of Chinese people’s life in China. Every year the school had a group of pupils come from China for three months, and Beth found it was interesting to get to know the differences of their lives and life here in England. As she stated, “*the school time is different, for example, Chinese pupils wake up early in the morning and go home really late in China*”.

Classroom Observations

Part of a lesson with Year 9 pupils was observed. When teaching the word “猫” for cat, the teacher Nola asked pupils to think of the images of subcomponent parts. Pupils seemed to retrieve it easily and called it as “*animal, fire and window part*”. With the word “狗”, Nola related its sound to English “go”, which sounded similar and was easy to remember.

Nola knew how to make use of the native speaker visitors in class. My colleague and I were asked to speak Chinese to pupils, as a standard pronunciation model. Moreover, we were required to write a Chinese character as quickly as we could on the board. Nola analysed the joined part of separated strokes later, and explained to pupils the reason why stroke order was important. That is, as she stated, “*Chinese people’s handwriting showed the logic behind following the correct stroke order, and only in that way, you can write the characters quickly and cursively*”.

Summary of Case E

The teacher Nola seemed to focus much on the learning of character and stroke order. From her views, various strategies could be applied for learning characters and stroke order, such as mind pictures, writing practice and rhymes. She suggested that beginner learners could make up their own images when learning characters, to encourage their interests and imagination on the Chinese character. Yet for high level pupils, she insisted on introducing the correct images of radical or character based on the etymology, as well as correct stroke order. In addition, she had somewhat negative attitudes towards pinyin, because most of the time pinyin was hard to read and confusing. Nola's beliefs about stroke order and pinyin were in line with her Year 10 pupil Beth. Beth also emphasised the learning of stroke order, and did not think pinyin was helpful.

However, with regard to expectations of Chinese teachers, Nola thought the best situation for school was to have a native Chinese and an English teacher together. She thought native Chinese were good at language and were able to offer authentic input for pupils. This was consistent with Nola's teaching in class. Two Chinese visitors were asked to speak Chinese to pupils. On the other hand, L1 English teachers from the UK could communicate with pupils better and shared their own learning experience of Chinese with their pupils. Nola also noticed some differences of native Chinese and teachers with L1 English background in the ways they taught Chinese. L1 English teachers thought it was necessary to teach stroke orders whilst L1 Chinese teachers did not think so.

Interestingly, Year 10 pupil Beth thinks it was good to have an English teacher, which was also related to her experience of Chinese learning. She never had a native Chinese teacher before and felt comfortable with her English teacher.

Nola thought classroom management could be a common issue for both L1 and L2 Chinese teachers. Cultural as well as education background were both factors affecting their expectations of pupils in class.

4.4.1.6 Case F: Grammar School in Devon

School F was a selective boy's grammar school in Devon, England. The Ofsted grade was "outstanding" when I visited the school. Around 120 boys from Year 8 to Year 11 were learning Mandarin Chinese. Year 8 pupils had been learning Chinese for a term, Year 9 pupils had been learning for one year and a term. Year 10 and Year 11 boys were learning towards GCSE and had been learning for two years and a term, and three years and a term respectively. School F was a Confucius classroom and had three Mandarin teachers. Of the three teachers, one was from China, one was from England and the other originally came from Vietnam, but grew up in Hong Kong and Wales.

Due to lots of pupil volunteers and limited time for interviews, the Mandarin teachers helped me organise four group interviews according to their year group. There were four pupils in each group, with a range of performance in Chinese learning. All pupils seemed to be very excited and keen to share their views about Chinese learning. This was probably because of the group interview that enabled pupils to interact with each other, and in turn led to heated discussions on some topics. The merits and deficits of group and individual interviews are worth discussing, as I did in Chapter 3. But here I simply argue that both ways are effective to seek pupils' insights. In addition, it appeared to me that, the lower the year group pupils were in, the more engagement occurred in their discussion.

Interview with Year 11 Boys

- *Tones and pronunciations:* Pupils believed pronunciation was not difficult to learn, "*it is not*

particularly easy or hard, but just remembering which tones to use”, and “once you get used to it, it is quite easy to grasp. But at beginning it is quite complicated”. One boy stated, “I cannot do the slightly flat tone. I find it is hard to recognise at first, but later I am quite fine with it”. Pupils were well aware of pitches of tones and their corresponding symbols in the pinyin system. For example, the third tone (∨) looked like a “seagull” and fourth tone (↘) is “a sharp one which is very short and stops suddenly”. Moreover, pupils suggested visualising tones, and writing tone markers with pinyin spellings were helpful for remembering the tone and speaking it correctly.

- *Pinyin: Pupils realised the role of pinyin by saying that “without pinyin I would not hear and speak”. Thus they said, “in the beginning, instead of remembering characters we remembered the pinyin regularly”. However, pupils noted “pinyin could be quite complicated compared to the rest of the Chinese, because it is not like some English vowels, they do not make the same sounds”. For example the sound “x”.*
- *Grammar and words: Pupils noted Chinese grammar had no complicated structures, genders that “you just randomly put words in a whole”. Unlike “European languages get more mixed up with similar words”, there were no “cognates” in English and Chinese words.*
- *Characters: Pupils thought some characters were hard to remember, for example, characters for colours. Some explained “we have gone through so many characters, so it is impossible for us to remember all of them”. Making flashcards was suggested as the best way to learn characters. Pupils seemed to be aware of basic writing rules but not the specific stroke order, they said “I can hardly remember it...just go through the left to right, top to bottom”. They also talked about origins of characters, “all the characters are like a set of real things”. For instance, the character for “thousand (萬)” came from the face of a crab.*

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- *Listening*: Pupils talked about strategies for listening in terms of making use of context and time distribution. As they pointed out, “*tones can be confusing, but usually we can guess from the context of what we are listening to*”, and “*the faster they speak, the more time you spend on the words they said in the beginning, so you miss the rest of what they say*”.
 - *Speaking*: Compared with writing, pupils thought speaking was hard because of the uncertainty. In respect to speaking, a pupil stated, “*if you write it slightly wrong, you can still know what it means and correct it, yet with speaking, if you say it wrong, it is a whole different thing*”.
 - *Expectations of Chinese learners*: Pupils thought learners should find their own ways to memorise characters. They explained, “*It is easier to remember rather than try to find somebody else's way*”.
 - *Expectations of Chinese teachers*: Pupils agreed it was good to have an English person as their Chinese teacher. They explained, “*I have got used to having an English teacher*” and “*it's easier to talk with each other about where and why we don't understand*”. Mostly importantly, as a pupil noted, L1 Chinese teachers “*kind of expected us to learn stuff quicker and pick it up quicker, and we quickly move on from one thing than another. We would not be able to have teachers like that in England*”.

Interview with Year 10 Boys

- *Tones and pronunciations*: Pupils thought tones were difficult to learn, in terms of “*remembering their placement, things like write the pinyin out and get to know how to pronounce it, and where to put emphasis*”. However, they seemed to mix tones with intonations when giving further explanation. One pupil stated, “*for example you have to have a subtle intonation for a particular one or words, you don't have to say something you don't want to say*”.

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- *Pinyin and characters*: Pupils thought pinyin “*is not really an alphabet in Chinese*”, because “*you cannot work out how to write characters from the sound*”. However they believed “*beginning Chinese with pinyin is very helpful, but then you have to start moving on, to actually look at the character and understand it. If you just rely on pinyin, then it is not really much point of learning Chinese*”. Some also said, “*if you go to China, they wouldn't be in pinyin*”. Thus pupils suggested starting with pinyin and characters together.
 - *Words and grammar*: word order and complex structure were the major difficulty in learning Chinese grammar. As pupils pointed out, “*in structures you have particular thing like time and place, for example, and it is hard to know when to use it, where is the appropriate place to fill in*”. However, pupils believed knowing basic structures, such as 我觉得(I think), 因为(because), 但是(but) helped build up complex sentences and communicate with people.
 - *Characters*: Pupils emphasised details of characters that look alike. For example, “*the characters for Jade (玉) and King(王)*”. They seemed to be aware of the relationship of radicals and characters. As they stated, “*since we've learnt quite a few now, we know radicals which are shared between multiple different characters*”. In addition, pupils said “*we don't really focus on stroke order but it's very important when you are actually writing. It's like just more proper in a way*”. They also suggested training the brain to remember characters, such as making images or stories, using websites, flashcards as well as doing exercises.
 - *Listening*: Pupils thought listening was the hardest among the four skills, because “*you actually have to work out a lot more, and it is what you hear instead of what you see*”. A pupil talked about the listening process, “*if you try to listen to something that appeared in the first word and then you will try to think of the tone, but by the time you recognise the tones, you missed out another word*”.

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- *Writing:* Pupils thought writing referred to writing characters and composition. Writing characters was “*just memorising*”, and writing long sentences required paying attention to little function words, such as “and (和)”, and Chinese structures.
 - *Cultural expectations of learning:* Pupils were interested in cultural communication between the west and China in history. They said “*Marco Polo passed on his stories*” and “*we borrowed things from Chinese society and shared things in the middle ages*”. As for ways of learning, pupils agreed learning Chinese took more time and effort than European languages. They explained, “*because we've already got the alphabet bit instinct in our language, but in Chinese it's totally new thing*”. Thus they emphasised the role of homework in practising languages. They noted, “*homework is really useful because it's not just in school you practise languages, it means you can use it outside school as well*”. One boy with a Cantonese background talked about his parents’ expectations of homework in English schools: “*in China, obviously the academic aspect is much more important than here, so my parents came to England and they think it should be like the same as Chinese school in China, like homework everyday*”.
 - *Expectations of Chinese teacher:* Pupils agreed to “*go for one that could speak English better*”. They explained, “*if you are learning Chinese from someone who is not always comfortable about translating in English, you could get the Chinese, but it's difficult for people who speak English to learn*”. They also showed much confidence in and respect for their English teacher Susan and said “*she is a good and calm teacher*”.

Interview with Year 9 Boys

- *Characters:* Pupils noted “*the different shapes and lines of characters remind you something about*

what the characters mean". For example, *"the character for ride 骑, looks like a horse on the left, a little person on the top sitting on something"*. They also pointed out that their homework of copying characters and repeating sounds helped with memorising characters. As for stroke order, pupils thought it was a good habit to write in the correct stroke order but it was hard for them to follow.

- *Pinyin*: Pupils thought *"pinyin helps with speaking"* and linked the sound to the characters. One pupil stated, *"when you hear a sound in Chinese, you can draw a connection to the character that you have learnt alongside the pinyin words"*.
- *Tones*: Pupils found that some specific tones were hard to remember and perceive when listening to Chinese people speaking. However, they did not think words with the same tone were confusing, as they could decide meanings by the context. As one boy said, *"Such as she, he, and it are the same 'ta' in Chinese, but if you talk to someone, then what they said beforehand, you can guess what they mean, he or she"*. They also suggested writing down pinyin spellings with the tone marker when learning tones.
- *Listening, reading and speaking*: Pupils shared some strategies for listening and reading, such as focusing on the key words. As one pupil said, *"if you know what you are looking for, when you hear a certain phrase, you can pick out the bit you want"*. As for reading, pupils noted, *"you just have to understand the majority of characters and guess the rest of them"*. Speaking was generally thought easy at the current stage, as pupils said, *"I guess the level we are doing at is quite easy but once we adapt higher ...then you have to add in tones that is more difficult"*.
- *Good beginnings of learning*: Pupils thought learning Chinese should start with speaking. As they noted, *"a lot of people would rather know how to speak Chinese than write it"*. Yet they also pointed

out *“the characters are still important so it should be introduced later after a couple of weeks”*.

- *Cultural beliefs of Chinese learning*: Pupils felt *“it is a privilege to learn Chinese because not many people in the UK are doing it”*. Some pupils thought Chinese culture such as food, festivals and how people live in China motivated them to learn the language. Thus they believed learning Chinese depended on how much effort you put into it. As they noted, *“If you want to learn Chinese then you’ve got to accept that you have got to repeat and speak. If you don’t, then you won’t learn Chinese”*.
- *Beliefs of Chinese teacher*: Pupils said they *“definitely will choose a Chinese teacher”* because of their *“experience in language and culture”*. They showed a lack of confidence in having an English teacher by saying that *“...if it is an English teacher, teaching Chinese is new to them, and you will not get the same bits in terms of culture”*.

Interview with Year 8 Boys

- *Characters*: Pupils thought *“Chinese character is a kind of written form for reading only, not for speaking”*. They noted that the difficulty of character learning depended on its complexity. For example, *“虎 (tiger) is hard whilst number words are simple to read and write”*. Writing homework was pointed out by pupils. They were required to write characters in square boxes in the right size and right position. When asked if they are fed up with repetitive writing, pupils said it depended on the number of characters they had written. In addition, they thought making flashcards was also useful for learning.
- *Tones and pronunciations*: Pupils pointed out that it was easy to know that Chinese tones distinguished the meanings of words, but *“hard to do the tones with different characters and*

remember which tone is which".

- *Listening*: Boys thought listening was hard, especially listening to the real Chinese speaking. They explained, *"you have to work out what they just said, because there are so many words and sometimes you forget some of them"*. Moreover, *"Miss often exaggerates the tones and different sounds, which makes it easier to understand her speaking"*.
- *Reading and writing*: Boys thought *"writing is easy as you know the characters you have to write, whilst the difficulty of reading really depends"*. Some noted *"reading feels like work out the meanings of written texts and it's a bit hard"*, and some thought *"you kind of recognise characters, you don't have to think or remember, so it is easy"*.
- *Speaking*: Pupils thought speaking Chinese was easier than listening. As one boy stated, *"When you speak, you kind of understand what you are saying, because unless you do, you won't say it"*. However, some still thought it could be a bit difficult to speak in the right tones.
- *Good beginnings in learning Chinese*: Pupils noted *"you should write down the pinyin and the character but work more on the speaking and listening"* in the beginning. They explained *"it's quite important to make the relationship between the pinyin and the characters, the character of which pinyin goes and what character is like. If they just put characters in front of you, you've got no idea"*.
- *Beliefs about learning and teaching*: As for L1 and L2 Chinese teachers, pupils said *"there is not much difference and we really don't mind"* as beginner learners. They thought their English Chinese teacher was very good at Chinese. However, interestingly, they found that *"it takes a while to get used to Pan's (their Chinese assistant) accents"*. They explained that, *"Pan says differently some of the words"*, which were colloquial Chinese they were not familiar with.

Summary of Case F

Year 8 to Year 11 pupils' beliefs presented above include different aspects of Chinese learning and teaching. As for pronunciation learning, Year 8 and Year 9 pupils thought remembering tones was difficult, whereas Year 10 and Year 11 pupils believed it was just a matter of getting used to it. All year groups seemed to agree with the necessity of working hard and homework in learning Chinese, especially in character learning. With regard to listening strategies, pupils all suggested focusing on key words and making use of context to understand the meaning. With regard to Chinese teachers, interestingly, Year 8, 10 and 11 pupils preferred to have an English teacher, whilst Y9 pupils, taught by a L1 teacher currently, showed a lack of confidence in English Chinese teachers.

4.4.1.7 Case G: Confucius Classroom in West Midlands

School G was a comprehensive school in the West Midlands. The Ofsted rating was "outstanding". It also had been the only Confucius Classroom in this region since late 2010, the same year when Mandarin Chinese was introduced to pupils in Year 7. Approximately 200 pupils were learning Mandarin Chinese at this school. All pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 were taking two 12 week courses in Mandarin as part of an enrichment programme. Pupils from Year 9 to Year 11 were learning Mandarin towards GCSE. For Year 11 pupils who started Chinese when they were in Year 7, they had been learning Chinese for nearly four years. Only pupils were interviewed in this schools and their beliefs are presented below.

Pupils from Year 9 to Year 11 in school G seemed to be willing to share their views but did not tend to talk too much on each topic. I had to ask them to give me some specific examples of their learning experience. This was probably because pupils had been learning Chinese for at least two years, and thus Chinese learning might not be a new experience to them as to those total beginners.

Interview with Year 9 Pupils

- *Tones and pronunciations:* Pupils thought tones were hard to remember in terms of pitches and written symbols in the pinyin system. They said, *“I don't have a taste of tones”* and *“they (the tone markers) look like different lines to the different accents, but they all look the same so it's harder if you do not know the word”*. The strategy for learning tone and pronunciation, according to pupils, was to follow their teacher and repeat it. They thought writing down the pinyin with the correct tone was also a good way of learning pronunciation. In addition, pupils suggested in the beginning learners should get used to pinyin spellings. As one stated, *“i in pinyin is yi, sound like 'e', we don't have similar things like that, so it's quite different”*.
- *Characters:* Pupils thought *“characters are hard to memorise and it takes a lot of time”*. They also felt *“it is too complicated to remember all the strokes and stroke order”*. Writing practice and understanding meanings were regarded as effective strategies. As one pupil emphasised, *“if you don't practise you get it wrong”*. Furthermore, as another pupil noted *“you probably have to understand the meaning behind it, and that helps remember the character”*.
- *Listening:* Listening was believed to be the hardest of four skills. Pupils found it was difficult to pick up the sounds of characters, and *“you just kind of ramble with the thing you have heard”*. One pupil suggested that, *“if you only focus on listening to the key words, and then analyse the key structures, it can actually help get the main idea of the speech”*. Pupils also recommended a website “Go Chinese” where they could listen to different people speaking. Some said the assignment of making recordings of their own speaking was useful as well.
- *Grammar:* Pupils thought Chinese grammar was easy as it did not have tenses as in English or

French. The only thing they were concerned about was the word order.

- *Writing and reading*: Pupils thought reading was easier than writing, because as a pupil explained, “*I know some of the characters or part of forms then I can guess*”. Comparing with listening, “*reading, you base on your own speed and can return to some parts*”. Reading with pinyin was considered as the easiest as “*pinyin can tell you sounds of characters which relate to their meanings*”. Nevertheless, most of the time, as pupils pointed out, “*there is no pinyin available for reading*”. As for writing, pupils thought writing was not hard in the sense of copying practice, but it was hard to recall it from memory accurately.
- *Speaking*: Pupils had different attitudes about the difficulty of speaking. Some thought it was easy because “*you just say the words you know and do not have to write down the characters*”. Some found it was hard due to the experience of failure in speaking or the challenges of saying longer sentences. To increase their confidence in speaking, pupils said that sometimes they went to other classes and carried out activities together.
- *Good beginning of learning Chinese*: Some pupils thought Chinese learning should start with pinyin. As they explained, “*with pinyin you can interpret Chinese, speak it, see it and try to recognise it*” and “*characters are the more complicated, so I think you need be able to be prepared*”. Some suggested starting from oral words. The reason was that, “*when you are a child, you learn how to speak and listen before you learn to write*”. In addition, some pupils advised learning characters together with pinyin or starting from characters first, so that “*they can start to learn words in the beginning, such as 你好 (hello)*”.
- *Cultural beliefs of learning and teaching*: Unlike French where once you knew how to say a word it

was easy to spell it out, pupils believed that learning Chinese required more memorisations because of characters. With regard to Chinese teachers, pupils preferred to have the L1 Chinese to teach them for “*better Chinese*” and “*rich knowledge about culture and characters*”. They did not seem to be confident in the Chinese of their L1 English teachers from the UK. As one pupil noted, “*...if they are slightly wrong they teach you wrong*”. They also thought the L1 Chinese teacher had more teaching experience than L1 English teachers from the UK.

Interview with One Year 10 Pupil

- *Beliefs about language skills:* The pupil thought reading was easiest “*because you can recognise from some characters or the radical of characters*”. He believed distinguishing different sounds was the difficulty of listening. Speaking was also hard as “*you have got to pronounce it right with lots of tones, and it all sounds similar*”. As for writing, the pupil said he liked writing characters, but sometimes felt it was hard to memorise how to write.
- *General beliefs about learning Chinese:* The pupil thought learning Chinese should start with recognising characters, and then learning to speak them. He enjoyed doing writing practice and felt a sense of achievement when knowing how to write and say it in Chinese. In addition, he believed “*L1 Chinese teachers help a lot with learning due to their Chinese background and knowledge about culture and life in China*”.

Interview with Pupils in Year 11

- *Tones and pronunciations:* Pupils believed understanding Chinese tones was a slow process. One pupil pointed out, “*after nearly three years, I finally have confidence in telling the differences between tones and knowing what tone to use in speaking*”. The effective way to practise tones was

speaking the words. Pupils suggested *“preparing a list of words with different groups of tone combinations”*.

- *Beliefs about pinyin*: Pupils seemed to view pinyin equally as sound, because with the aid of pinyin they could know how to say it in Chinese. One pupil stated, *“if you want to have a conversation with someone, every point depends on the pinyin because you are not speaking characters, you are speaking pinyin”*.
- *Characters*: Pupils thought the hardest part was to learn Chinese characters, *“because it involves so much memory, you have to know what it means”*. They also mentioned the extra difficulty of remembering the correct stroke order. Pupils thought writing practice was necessary and *“learners should try to learn a few characters every week”*. Besides, playing games with characters was suggested as a good way to memorise.
- *Grammar*: Pupils noticed some word order in Chinese was the opposite of English. For example, *“when you say the dates in Chinese, you have to put biggest first and then the smallest”*.
- *Good start in learning Chinese*: Some pupils thought learners should start with speaking and listening in the beginning. They explained, *“you need to get used to listening and understanding before actually starting writing, because it is such a different language and writing isn't that easy”*. Some pupils thought it was good to learn characters along with pinyin, so that *“they would be able to know how to say it and identify the written forms”*.
- *Language skills*: Listening was perceived as difficult because learners could *“get confused with the tones when listening to a whole paragraph”*. Effective listening practice, according to pupils, was to communicate with other people. This was because communication involved both listening and

speaking activities when exchanging information with others. Pupils thought reading was to understand the gist of a paragraph, thus it was not difficult as radicals of characters gave hints of meanings. As for writing, they said *“it's good to have both a bit of typing and handwriting”*. They used pinyin input methods to type and thought it was a good way to practise. For example, *“if they want to type ‘我(wo)’, it might come up with several different characters with the same pinyin ‘wo’, you know the one that you need, so it could help you recognise characters along with pinyin”*. They thought *“sometimes it is good for typing because they can see the correct characters, whilst when they do handwriting, it is hard to tell if they write characters right or not”*. In terms of speaking, pupils thought it was easy as one pupil noted, *“just like Spanish, you are using pinyin not the characters to say it”*.

- *General beliefs about learning Chinese:* Pupils believed understanding should go alongside with the memorisation. They thought interactive and fun activities were also needed to learn *“such a difficult language”*. L1 Chinese teachers were preferred for their good Chinese. Besides, they said their L1 Chinese teacher’s ways of teaching were very helpful, such as using games and stickers, and providing rewards for good performance.

Summary of Case G

Three groups of pupils in Year 9, 10 and 11 shared some beliefs about the difficulties of discerning tones in listening, and memorising characters in writing. They agreed that Chinese tones and characters required time to learn. Given pupils were all taught by L1 Chinese teachers, they believed L1 teachers were better than L1 English teachers from the UK at language level. Year 9 pupils showed lack of confidence in an English teacher’s Chinese. Pupils also had different beliefs about what to start with in

learning. Year 9 pupils thought pinyin and speaking should come first, the Year 10 pupil suggested starting with characters only, whilst the Year 11 pupil said listening, speaking, and recognising characters could be introduced together. In addition, Year 10 and 11 pupils were concerned about accurate pronunciation when speaking. As for writing, only Year 11 pupils suggested typing characters on the computer and its role in recognising characters.

4.4.1.8 Case H: Catholic School in Durham, Northeast England

School H was a Catholic comprehensive academy in county Durham, Northeast England. The Ofsted grade was “outstanding” when I visited the school. The provision of Mandarin Chinese started in 2010 and approximately 270 pupils from Year 7 to Year 9 were learning Chinese as a compulsory course. None of them were learning Mandarin towards GCSE so far. This school was also a Confucius classroom and a teacher May from Mainland China was sent to teach Mandarin here. By the time the researcher visited the school, May had been working for nearly a year.

Unfortunately the researcher did not get approval from pupils’ parents to conduct interviews. The findings only report teacher May’s beliefs as well as classroom observations.

Interview with May

May finished her Master’s degree in teaching Chinese as a second language in a university in Beijing. During her Masters studies, she did several part-time jobs teaching Chinese to adult learners. She also had a short period of experience of teaching children learners in an international school in Beijing. The pupils she taught were total beginner learners around 12-13 years old.

- *Challenges of teaching Chinese:* May felt limited Mandarin lessons were the main challenge of

teaching. Pupils only had one lesson per week, thus “*next time when teacher and pupils meet each other, pupils cannot really remember what they have learnt in the previous lesson*”. In addition, she pointed out issues about consistency of Mandarin teaching at the school. May said the former Hanban teacher only taught a year and then left, which led to issues such as job handover and readjustment for her and the pupils.

- *Adult and children learners*: May believed child learners were different from adult learners in terms of metalinguistic awareness and discipline. She noted, “*children learners in Year 7 have not developed such awareness*”, and “*teenagers are more likely to get distracted or disruptive in class if they lose interest in learning*”.
- *Pupils’ difficulties in learning*: May believed that reading and writing were difficult for children learners, and writing was harder than reading. She also felt that remembering stroke order was an obstacle for pupils. This was because, as May pointed out, “*pupils learn characters along with the speaking words, thus they did not get chance to receive systematic instruction of how to write it as LI Chinese children did*”.
- *Expectations of learning*: May noted that homework was necessary for practice but it had to be fun, “*otherwise pupils simply do not want to do it*”. She mentioned some homework, such as writing down family members’ birthdays in Chinese, and making up three sentences about food.

Classroom Observations

Two morning lessons with Year 7 pupils were observed. May taught pupils how to do Chinese number gestures when saying number words. For instance, six (六) was like making a phone call, and eight (八) was like a gun, according to the shapes of characters of six and eight. Children were all excited about the

new gestures and quickly learnt how to say 1 to 10 in Chinese. When showing how to write character “四 (four)” on the board, May shouted out the strokes name in Chinese, such as 橫(horizontal line), 豎 (vertical line), the same as L1 Chinese children did in primary schools in China. The similar forms of characters were also put together for distinguishing, for example, 八, 人 and 入。

In class, some pupils seemed to have an awareness of similar pronunciations. They asked teacher questions about the difference between “si” and “shi”. Some pupils noticed that words with different tones had different meanings, such as ma (question word) and mǎ (horse).

Summary of Case H

The limited Chinese lesson time and the mobility of L1 Chinese teachers were regarded as two challenges for teaching in English schools. Comparing with adult learners, May noted pupils’ interests in learning were the priority of teaching. Thus instruction and homework design had to be fun. May also explained, pupils’ difficulty of reading and writing, especially remembering how to write strokes, was due to lack of systematic instruction for character learning. Thus in teaching practice, she consciously taught basic strokes the same way that Chinese school pupils were taught. In addition, May thought pupils had not developed language awareness at their age. However, evidence from classroom observation showed that some pupils noticed the similarity of pronunciation and raised questions about them. In that sense, it seemed that May underestimated her pupils’ ability to learn Chinese.

4.4.2 Teachers’ Interviews without a School Visit

Another 7 teachers were interviewed individually without school visits due to the constraints of the research mentioned above. This section selectively reports the main beliefs of teachers because of space limits.

4.4.2.1 Tina

Tina was an English teacher who learnt Chinese in university years ago. Tina had also obtained a primary PGCE in teaching Mandarin and had experience of teaching in primary and secondary schools. She was teaching in a small private girl school, which took in girls all the way from nursery to six form.

- *Music and pronunciation learning:* Being raised in a musical family and learning Chinese later, Tina found Chinese tones could be learnt well with music training. Thus she suggested learning songs, rhymes and raps to learn Chinese sounds, as well as using simple tone twisters, such as sh ísh ìsh í (ten is ten) for practice.
- *Chinese learners:* Tina noted her primary pupils were much better at pronunciation than secondary pupils. She explained it partly because of fewer music courses in secondary schools, and most importantly, that teenagers became shy and did not practise as much as primary pupils did.
- *Speaking and pronunciation:* Tina put a high requirement on good pronunciation. She pointed out candidates in a Chinese competition who had learnt Chinese for many years, “*they are still not learning how to say the sound properly. Pronunciation is my thing*”.
- *Pinyin:* Tina thought pinyin was better than the English spelling system. As she noted, “*it is difficult to make ourselves understand the old English because it changes itself, but pinyin is straightforward*”. However, she expressed her concern about relying on pinyin, “*because our brain is so trained with that automaticity of reading the western script*”.
- *Writing and characters:* Chinese calligraphy brushes, online websites, and animations about how to write strokes and where characters came from, were believed to be useful resources for teaching and

practice.

- *Behaviour*: Tina pointed out that pupils' behaviour depends on schools. She thought in her current school, *"they performed beyond my expectation all the time"*, yet in the previous school she taught, *"lots of difficulties, disrupted behaviour, sometimes violence in the middle of the class, just a nightmare"*.
- *Homework*: Tina pointed out that pupils should be trained to do homework. She said, *"you just try to remind them. They are not doing the homework, keep a note of the homework then"*.
- *Chinese teachers*: Tina stated that teaching legacies was not an advantage for a local English teacher here. She said, *"I was aware of this even though I've gone through this English education system. The difficulty with our system is every time the change of government...so we constantly have to update our knowledge through the continuing professional development courses, to make sure we are up-to-date"*.

4.4.2.2 Ying

Ying was a L1 Chinese who used to teach English in a high school in China. After finishing her MA study on teaching English as a second language, she started to teach Chinese in an English private school two years ago.

- *Learning from her daughter*: Ying noted her nine-year-old daughter tried to break down characters into different parts when learning characters at home, which *"largely inspired her teaching of characters to English pupils"*.
- *Memory training*: Ying concluded her ways of teaching characters and words as memory training. As

she said, *“the process is very quick. I write down a character on the board, wipe it out after 3 seconds, and then they have to recall it immediately”*. In addition, revising characters over and over again was required to retain the memory.

- *Flexible teaching approaches:* Ying emphasised that strategies should be flexible based on specific circumstances and pupils’ needs. For example, Ying talked about a lesson in a late Friday afternoon, when pupils seemed to be very tired, where she changed her plan and gave a challenging task to cheer them up.
- *Interactive learning:* Ying described a demonstration about “Christmas in China” made by pupils themselves. They searched resources online, gathered information and shared it with others in class. Ying referred to it as *“interactive learning”* and said pupils learnt much more in this way than from their teachers.
- *English pupils and Chinese pupils:* Ying believed *“the nature of children are the same regardless of countries. English and Chinese children can be naughty and want to play”*. Nevertheless, she noted, *“English pupils have less pressure than Chinese children, so they do not have the sense of hardworking and doing extra work after schools”*.
- *L1 English teachers from England:* Ying commented on foreign language classes she had observed and said that *“the English teacher is so energetic in class that they can arouse your interests from different sensory channels”*. However, for L1 Chinese teachers, she said, *“we do not have such things in our blood, so what we can do is to make use of our own advantages in teaching”*.
- *Disciplines in school:* Ying thought pupil behaviour was not an issue only in English schools, as she had experienced discipline issues in her previous high school in China.

4.4.2.3 Mei

Mei was a L1 Chinese speaker who immigrated to England twenty years ago. She used to teach history of Chinese philosophy in a university in China. Mei had rich experiences in teaching Chinese to a wide range of learners, from total beginner learners in Year 7 to A-level, as well as adult learners in university. She also helped pupils with GCSE, iGCSE and A-level preparation.

- *Difficulties of Chinese learning:* Mei believed pupils' learning difficulty depended on their learning stages. Total beginners found reading and writing was easy, because "*all the characters they learnt are simple ones, such as numbers*". However, when they reached a high level, they realised that reading and writing was hard, as "*they know the meaning of every single character but cannot understand its underlying meanings*".
- *Teaching strategies:* Mei noted the role of characters and stroke order in teaching characters, whereas in the beginning she did not have such a requirement but focused on listening and speaking. Her strategies were, as she said, "*letting pupils realise it on their own*". For example, she showed joined scripts writing to pupils and compared with their "baby writing"; asked pupils whether they had ever seen a Chinese person writing pinyin in China after a China trip.
- *Interests and challenges:* Mei believed L1 English pupils from England were generally willing to learn interesting things rather than something challenging. She said, "*if they are told Chinese is very difficult, they definitely do not want to try it at all*". In contrast, based on her learning experience in university, Mei noted, "*Chinese pupils are keen to conquer challenges, as we think it is a waste of time to do something simple and superficial*". Thus she concluded teachers should emphasise that Chinese was fun and easy to learn to encourage L1 English pupils from the UK.

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- *Homework*: Mei said that pupils' homework at her present school was strictly limited to 15 minutes for every subject. Teachers were not allowed to exceed the time, otherwise pupils would complain about the overburdening and report it to headmaster.
 - *Chinese teachers*: Mei thought it was better for L1 Chinese speakers to teach Chinese, because "*similar as Chinglish translation in Chinese textbook, an L2 Chinese teacher is likely to mislead learners*". For example, an English examiner's mistakes in a Chinese speaking test affected the pupils' marks. Mei also thought Hanban teachers were good at language but not quite aware of English education and the exam system, whereas L1 Chinese immigrants in the UK had to be aware of their old-fashioned Chinese, by watching Chinese TV series or new movies.

4.4.2.4 Li

Li was a L1 Chinese speaker who came to England over ten years ago. She used to be specialized in engineering and had worked for an English company for ten years. She changed her job after staying in touch with local complimentary schools as a parent, and then began to teach Chinese in her present English secondary school four years ago.

- *Pronunciation learning*: Li thought pronunciation should be learnt directly by listening and repeating teacher's speaking and Chinese songs. She also suggested preparing a list of common words with tone combinations for practice.
- *Mistakes correction*: For higher level pupils who had already had some bad habits of pronunciation, Li said, "*it is unwise to correct every single mistake in their speaking, but to focus on a certain amount of words which are used frequently in conversation*". For example, when helping with GCSE learners, Li told them to only pay attention to six words and their pronunciation greatly improved

later.

- *Role of pinyin:* Li illustrated that the purpose of introducing pupils to some pinyin was to help them form a good habit of pronunciation, with the aid of pinyin spelling. However, the timing of moving out of pinyin should be well-considered, because “*too early it could cause mistakes in pronunciation, and too late may lead to over dependence on pinyin and difficulty in recognising characters*”.
- *Character learning:* Li thought learning characters should start with the basic strokes. She said learners can learn how to say and write the strokes the same way as Chinese pupils do at primary schools. For example, the vertical line was called 竖(shù) in Chinese and written as “ | ”. In this way both pronunciation and writing were practised. In addition, Li found characters were the most difficult part to learn for pupils. She explained, this was because “*they tend to memorise characters individually and cause a huge burden to their memory*”. Therefore Li thought teachers should help learners recognise component parts or common radicals of the character. For instance, when learning “木”(wood), she asked pupils to think of other characters sharing the same radical “木” in different positions, such as 床(bed), 桌(desk), 林(forest).
- *Sentence memorisation:* Li believed it was useful to recite good sentences and short passages when learning Chinese. She said “*pupils were happy to recite a sentence within 3-5 minutes in class and their short-term memory got trained by doing this*”. Moreover, Li thought pupils should have sentence dictation to test their memory results.
- *Chinese grammar:* Li believed that Chinese word order was a difficulty for English learners. A useful way she had found was to make up sentences with flashcards, so that words could be physically separated.

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- *Chinese teachers:* Li preferred co-teaching L1 and L2 Chinese teachers in class. She said “*pupils can not only learn from L1 teacher’s language, but also get inspired from L2 teacher’s good example*”. In addition, she thought the L1 Chinese who had stayed in the UK were desirable. Given her “culture shock” when she first came to England, she noted “*Hanban teachers need time to be ready for teaching, as it takes time to go through all the cultural transitions*”. Based on her previous work with community schools, Li suggested Chinese community schools and main stream English schools should cooperate with each other and share teacher resources.
 - *Teachers as learners:* As a Chinese teacher from a science background, Li pointed out that frequent reflection on teaching practice and taking online professional courses were necessary. As she stated, “*it is definitely not true that you can teach Chinese as long as you are Chinese. I have so much to learn in this respect, and I think I will never graduate*”.

4.4.2.5 Wen

The teacher Wen was a L1 Chinese. She used to be a Hanban teacher teaching in a secondary school.

After completing her Master’s degree in England, she started to teach in her current school.

- *Difficulties of learning Chinese:* Wen believed “*pupils actually do not perceive Chinese as difficult or easy, they just do not have such kind of awareness*”. She also noted, “*it is only L1 Chinese who insist on the beliefs that Chinese is hard to learn*”. In addition, the difficulty in learning did not necessarily mean it was difficult for teachers to teach.
- *Good beginning of learning:* Wen suggested listening and speaking should start first and then be followed by simple characters. As she stated, “*no matter how fast you can learn, the speed of learning to recognise characters cannot catch up with the speaking*”. Besides, she said pinyin was

not very important and could be introduced later when pupils could say simple Chinese.

- *Target language use:* Wen said she always tried to speak Chinese in the classroom even at the beginning stage. She believed that the more Chinese pupils listen to, the better and faster they could learn the sounds and words.
- *Memorisation and understanding:* Wen emphasised memorisation was based on understanding rather than simply rote repetition. When speaking a new sentence for the first time, as she noted, *“I always give English translations after Chinese so that they can understand first, and then learning and memorisation can be possible”*.

4.4.2.6 Sam

Sam was an American teacher who used to teach Chinese in a secondary school. He learnt Chinese many years ago in university, and had been to Taiwan for four years after graduation.

- *Pinyin:* Sam thought pinyin was confusing for English speakers to learn pronunciation. For example, *“the letter ‘i’ in pinyin can represent three different sounds”*. He further noted, *“It is easier to remember the tones if they are reflected in the spelling as in the Bopomofo transliteration system. You think of a third tone and fourth tone of the same sound as different, which they should be, and you see them differently in your mind”*.
- *Pronunciation:* Sam said some pupils found that pronunciation was difficult but he thought it was easy to explain and understand. The hard part, as he stated, *“is building it into habit, practising so it becomes automatic. So I would not say it is particularly difficult. It just need practice”*.
- *Meaningful practice:* Sam stated that learning pronunciation and characters required practice, and

should be meaningful rather than rote repetition. For example, as he said, *“the hardest part is to speak correct tones when actually speaking, if you just repeat the action without putting much thinking into it, it could be useless and a waste of time”*.

- *Good start to learning Chinese*: Sam thought beginner learners had to learn pronunciation first, because they could not be expected to know how to pronounce characters without any assistance. However, he said it did not necessarily have to be pinyin but some transliteration system.
- *Words and characters*: Making flashcards was believed to be an efficient way to learn characters. Sam noted, *“with flashcards you can do 90% of characters”*. In addition, Sam advised reading stories to learn characters and words. For example, as he said, *“if you are reading a story about an old woman, and she is wearing a red dress and big blue hat, when you see the word blue, you think the hat on the old woman. And you will lose that association eventually, but for a while, you will still have the image to link to whenever you see the character”*. Sam also emphasised memorisation in learning characters. He explained, *“you can guess the meanings of characters, however there is about 30% of chance you will be wrong”*.
- *Stroke order*: Sam pointed out several reasons that should be consistent with stroke order: Firstly, it was much easier for electronic devices to recognise your handwriting written by your finger; secondly, it helped understand the homophone characters when talking to Chinese people on the street. Sam said, *“you have to clarify by writing something on your hand with your finger, and if you use the correct stroke order, it would be easy for them to follow”*; thirdly, you could understand other’s cursive handwriting if you knew the correct stroke order.
- *Language and culture*: Sam did not think culture was necessary to understand the language and he

did not teach pupils many things about Chinese culture either. As he stated, *“you don’t need to understand that people born in the year of Pig are supposed to have this kind of personality”*.

Nevertheless, Sam felt culture affected the level of appropriateness in using languages. For example, the greeting word “你好” was actually not often used among Chinese people.

- *Chinese teacher:* As an L1 English speaker, Sam thought he had several advantages in being a Chinese teacher. He said, *“I can explain things better in English; I know what confuses learners and the reasons behind it; and I am a role model that they can see an English speaker can actually speak Chinese well”*.

4.4.2.7 Hannah

Hannah was a Taiwanese who had learnt Mandarin Chinese (which is called “national language” in Taiwan, with a slightly different accent) since primary school. She understood the Taiwan dialect as well. Hannah learnt Bopomofo as a transliteration system and traditional characters in Taiwan. Hannah came to the UK six years ago and used to teach university pupils and secondary pupils. She was studying her MA degree in library studies.

- *Pronunciation:* Hannah noted, *“pronunciation is essential to some extent, and I just postpone its role to the next stage, as in the beginning there are so many things to learn that it is not feasible to master everything perfectly”*. Additionally, Hannah pointed out that, *“the key thing is to be able to communicate in Chinese. Pupil might have more chances to talk to international learners than L1 Chinese speakers”*. She suggested that the best strategy was to listen and imitate the sound models.
- *Practice:* Hannah believed that it was necessary to repeat when learning Chinese, but this should be in a meaningful way by doing activities, such as tic-tac-toe, Bingo. She talked about her experience

of learning English, *“I have no idea of what I am saying after repeating it over and over again”*.

- *Pinyin*: Although she learnt pinyin afterward by herself, Hannah thought that pinyin was straightforward and not hard to learn.
- *Characters and stroke order*: Hannah said that characters could be learnt in groups with common radicals or meanings. For example, characters with the female radical “女”, 妈(mother), 姐(older sister), 妹(younger sister). Hannah also said, *“it is necessary to follow the correct stroke order if learners write it fast, otherwise people will not recognise their handwriting”*.
- *Language and culture*: Hannah believed that teaching Chinese culture was not merely about paper cutting or calligraphy, but also about culture embedded in the language itself. For example, address, date, time in Chinese was written from big to small, which showed the Chinese ways of thinking.
- *Difficulty of Chinese learning*: Hannah believed that the difficulty of Chinese learning was not because of Chinese itself, but the distance between language systems. Nevertheless, if examining features of the Chinese language, she pointed out, the relationship of components and Chinese words made Chinese learning not difficult at all. For example, the word 天下 in Chinese is consisted of 天 (sky) and 下 (underneath), thus the meaning of 天下 was so straightforward when you put the meanings of two words together.
- *Online resources*: Hannah pointed out plenty of useful online resources for teaching Chinese, such as online pinyin diagrams with sound clips, character animations. She also noted that TV programs inspired her in designing classroom activities.

4.4.3 Cross Cases Comparison

4.4.3.1 Pupils' beliefs

Pinyin

It seemed that some pupils from all year groups viewed pinyin equally as pronunciation in their responses. For instance, some pupils stated “*speaking helps the pinyin*” and “*you are using pinyin not characters to say it*”. The “pinyin” used here was supposed to refer to pronunciation. As for the role of pinyin, pupils generally thought it helped with pronunciation, speaking, as well as learning characters. As some Year 7 pupils noted, with the aid of pinyin, they would know “*that a piece of pinyin goes with that character*”. However, some pupils in Year 7 expressed their concerns of over-reliance on pinyin, which might affect character recognition afterwards. Thus one pupil said pinyin was only a “backup” in that sense. Besides, some pupils noted pinyin was not the same as English spelling and pronunciation, thus sometimes it misled their pronunciation in Chinese.

What to start with in learning Chinese

Most pupils thought it was good to start Chinese with pronunciation or speaking, as learning oral Chinese first was easier than characters. They thought it was practical to learn how to communicate in speaking rather than in writing characters. In addition, a pupil in Year 11 suggested beginning with listening, which was the natural way that children learnt their mother tongue. He thought it easy to link to pinyin or characters after getting used to hearing Chinese sounds as well. Some pupils suggested starting with pinyin when learning pronunciation. Pinyin was suggested for learning first and quickly moving on to characters learning. Pupils in Year 7 to Year 10 all emphasised that pinyin was the only tool for knowing

sounds of characters. On the other hand, nevertheless, some pupils suggested starting with characters, because characters were more interesting than pinyin, and it was the main aspect in the assessment rather than pinyin. Some also explained, it was easier to relate to pinyin later after learning characters. There were some pupils in Year 10 and 11 who thought pinyin and characters should be learnt together from Day 1. A Year 10 pupil noted, Chinese learning was supposed to link all aspects (i.e. sound and character), instead of separating them individually. Another Year 10 pupil had concerns that starting with pinyin would result in difficulty in linking characters with sounds later on, whereas introducing characters at first could frustrate pupil's learning. Thus the best way was believed to be to introduce the two together but focus on pinyin and characters at different periods of time.

Oral Chinese: pronunciation, listening and speaking

As for general beliefs about Chinese pronunciation and tones, most pupils in Year 7 to Year 11 seemed to be aware of the classifications of tones, as well as their role in the Chinese language. Only a Year 7 pupil in school C mixed tones with accents, and said "*other FL also have accents*". Pupils from all year groups could explain how to pronounce tones, consonants and vowels, such as the third and fourth tone, x, q, sh, yi, e. Some pupils in Year 7 to Year 9 were confident in distinguishing and remembering the Chinese pronunciation of the words they had learnt so far. One pupil in Year 7 in school C attributed this to his French learning experience in primary school, and thought learning FL at an early age helps with getting used to Chinese pronunciation as well. Another Year 7 pupil in school B noted that distinguishing the visual forms of tones was relatively easy, as they had learnt the tone markers in Panda pictures. However, a Year 7 pupil in school D noted that "*they do not really focus on tones but on characters in class*". On the other hand, Year 10 to Year 11 pupils realised the importance of tones in speaking. They also believed that it was hard to tell the difference between tones in the beginning, and with learning they were able to

distinguish it now.

The difficulty in learning pronunciation, according to pupils, was understanding and speaking the similar sounds. Pupils in Year 7 in school A and B said tone 1 and tone 4, tone 3 and tone 4 were confusing and easily mixed up. Year 9 pupils in school G noted, “t”, “d” and “z” sounded similar to them. Furthermore, some pupils said it was not difficult to pronounce the single tone but to choose which tones to use in a sentence. Year 9 pupils in school F pointed out that the tone Sandhi in the flow of speech was the hardest. In addition, a Year 7 pupil in school A noted his pronunciation in Chinese differed from that of his L1 Chinese teacher. Indeed a pupil in Year 11 in school F thought listening to Chinese people’s speaking and distinguishing their tones was difficult.

The reason for the difficulty in tones learning were reported as follows: 1) L1 English pupils from England were not used to Chinese sounds, especially tones. A year 7 pupil in school B stated that, “*I am not good at tones*” and had “*few chances to speak Chinese after class*”; 2) not remembering the tones after learning too many words. A pupil in Year 9 noted this point; 3) lacking of attention on tones. Year 9 pupils in school G pointed out, they wrote pinyin without tone markers, which led to neglect the tones when learning words; 4) not pronouncing tones accurately as Chinese people did, and consequently it was hard to capture tones in speech. As mentioned above, both Year 7 and Year 11 pupils noted that a difference of pronunciation existed between English and Chinese people’s speaking.

Pupils suggested different strategies for dealing with difficulties in learning Chinese pronunciation. Year 7 pupils in several schools emphasised listening to teachers’ speaking and repeating after it. They advised turning to the teacher for help if they were not sure of the tones. Pupils in Year 10 suggested practising a list of words with different tone combinations. Some pupils in different year groups noted writing down the tone markers along with pinyin in order to memorise tones. A Year 11 pupil noted visualizing the tone

when speaking it. Besides, interestingly, some pupils suggested guessing the tones based on the word meanings or contexts. Paying attention to the start of tones was also believed to be a good strategy for distinguishing tones.

As for difficulty in listening and speaking, based on responses of pupils from all year groups, the difficulty in listening lay in distinguishing sounds and tones, and understanding long sentences. However, a Year 7 pupil noted it actually depended on the people who spoke Chinese. He thought it easy to understand his L1 Chinese teacher's speaking but not others. This was because his teacher tended to slow down the speed and exaggerate some words which made the sound easier to catch, or sometimes the teacher just spoke English afterwards. However, when it came to listening to tapes, it was always too fast to understand. Even for Year 10 and Year 11 pupils, they also pointed out, "*you actually have to work out more*" and "*usually miss out another words*" when "*trying to recognise the first bits*". A pupil in Year 11 emphasised that to be able to recognise sounds of speaking, pupils had to pronounce it properly at first.

As for speaking, surprisingly, pupils generally thought it was easy to speak, compared with listening and writing. Pupils in Year 7 to Year 9 seemed to be quite confident in speaking. They thought speaking in Chinese was the same as speaking in other FLs, which only involved oral words rather than written words. Therefore, speaking did not necessarily involve thinking about characters and how to write them. Year 7 pupils in some schools also said they did not mind tones, but just said them "randomly". Nevertheless, others pupils in Year 7, Year 9 and Year 10 pointed out that speaking at the low level was easy, whereas it could be difficult when adding the tones into it. Beside, pupils said speaking was easy if they had pinyin to refer to.

The best strategy for listening and speaking was consistently believed to be practice. For listening, pupils in Year 9 in Case G recommended a website called "Go Chinese", where they could listen to different

Chinese people's voices, and had pinyin and tones available to check the pronunciation. Another Year 9 pupil in Case G noted that making recordings of their own voices and listening to it turned out to be useful for recognising the difference between their own pronunciation and a standard one. Some pupils also advised listening skills such as focusing on key words to search relevant information. As for speaking, pupils suggested it could be practised with other skills in activities, such as role plays and flashcard games.

Pupils also believed that in learning Chinese you should "have a go" in speaking. They thought making mistakes was unavoidable at the beginning stage. Several pupils in Year 7 said that it was ok to speak wrongly in class as they did not know much about Chinese. They pointed out that only through speaking could they realise the gaps between what they knew and what they wanted to say. They noted that they could learn from mistakes when corrected by the teacher or peers. Most importantly, as some pupils emphasised, the purpose of speaking was to communicate. Thus speaking the wrong words or pronunciation was not a big deal as long as they could understand each other, by guessing their purposes. However, some pupils pointed out, if the pronunciation was very wrong then they would find difficulty in understanding.

Written Chinese: characters, reading and writing

Pupils held mixed beliefs about the difficulty of learning characters. Some pupils in Year 7 said character learning was hard in the beginning, but with time and practice, they felt confident in identifying and producing characters that they knew, such as number words, and characters on their booklets. A pupil in Year 7 stated "*I am quite a visual person and I am best at characters*". Yet when it came to the unknown characters, they thought reading was harder than writing, as a Year 7 pupil stated, "*I have no clue of what*

the character means". In addition, pupils in Year 7 generally believed, they had to know characters very well in order to recognise and understand the characters, due to the similarities of some characters. As for writing, some Year 7 pupils thought it was merely to do with strokes, and easy to write with the teacher's guidance. Yet as some Year 7 pupils pointed out, "*writing characters straight from the mind is hard*".

On the other hand, pupils in Year 9 to Year 11 generally thought some complicated characters could be hard to memorise, especially to remember all the details of them, such as 面 (noodle) and colour words. They thought it was difficult to make a match between the sound and shape of characters as well, because it was two separated things, how to say the character and how to write it. A Year 11 pupil simply said that they had learnt so many characters that it was unlikely they could remember all of them in their minds. Besides, pupils at a high level in Year 9 to 11 thought it easy to recognise characters from the clues of radicals which linked one character to another. As for reading sentences or paragraphs, they felt it easy as well. The reason they provided was that they could get the gist of sentences without necessarily knowing all the characters.

Nevertheless, in terms of writing characters, pupils reported that following the correct stroke order was extremely difficult (which is illustrated below) and unlikely for western learners to memorise. Apart from that, they thought it fine to recall the characters and write them down. In term of composition, Year 9 and Year 10 pupils said some linking words used in Chinese were a little confusing, such as 和 (and).

The strategy for learning characters, according to all year groups, was to put effort into memorisation and practice. A pupil in Year 10 noted that, the essential aim was to train your brain to remember pictures, such as shapes of characters and strokes. Three types of specific ways were suggested: 1) writing related practice, such as to keep copying characters many times, writing on a square paper sheet to know the positions of components, covering characters up and jotting it down quickly from short term memory; as

well as always writing characters along with pinyin to memorise shapes and sound together; 2) knowing origins of characters and making stories based on their shapes and meanings; 3) various activities by using multimedia and online resources, in term of singing Chinese songs and learning lyrics; making flashcards and reviewing them regularly; using online websites such as “Nciku”, “Go Chinese” and “Quizlet” to practise; and playing games with characters. It is necessary to note that pupils offered various strategies for reading, writing and memorising characters, which indeed showed their enthusiasm towards characters learning. Several pupils said that, “*they enjoy doing characters*” and, as a Year 11 pupils pointed out, Chinese characters were “unique” and “logical” in terms of “*how it is related to the nature*” and “*how they are linked to each other*”.

Chinese forms: grammar, writing rules

Pupils all thought Chinese grammar was easy. Compared with Spanish and French, no tenses or gender existed in Chinese. Some pupils said sentence order which required them to “*fill in the structure the correct bits in the correct place*”. They also noted, the addresses and dates started from biggest to the smallest, which was opposite to English habits. High level pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 in school F and school E reported some insights into stroke order. A Year 10 pupil in school F pointed out that stroke order was very important as it was a proper way of writing characters, although he found it hard to follow the correct order all the time. A Year 9 pupil believed that sticking to the right stroke order actually helped with memorising characters as the same order of writing was repetitively reviewed. However, another Year 10 boy argued that stroke order was only regarded as crucial to L1 Chinese people, whereas for western learners, learning how to write characters was hard enough that they did not necessarily think about which stroke came first. A Year 11 boy in school F also indicated, “*the stroke order can be wrong but once the character is done, nobody knows how I write it*”.

Repetition, memorisation and understanding

Most pupils thought that learning Chinese demanded more practice and memorisation than learning alphabetic foreign languages due to the characters and Chinese tones. Chinese words written in characters, except for some translation words, according to pupils' explanations, were unlikely to help you know their meanings from the sounds of characters. A slight difference in writing a stroke or saying a tone could result in completely different meanings of the word. Therefore pupils emphasised that memorising and practising was essential in learning Chinese. Apart from the linguistic characteristics, the major reason for pupils to put effort into practising and memorisation was because of their enthusiasm for doing it. Some reported that they "*feel competitive after practising*", and some simply stated "*it is well worth doing it*". Pupils' interests in Chinese learning seemed to be not only the knowledge of how the characters originated, what Chinese culture was like or how people's life was in China, but also and most importantly, about the sense of achievement and enjoyment when overcoming challenges in learning. Some pupils expressed it was a privilege to learn Chinese in school.

Pupils also talked about Chinese homework. Some Year 7 pupils in school D thought homework was a bit too much, whilst other Year 7 pupils in school B noted their interesting homework such as making a calendar. Some Year 10 pupils viewed homework as an additional practice of language after class, which was necessary for revising what they had learnt in class, and thus required more homework. A pupil from HK in Year 10 pointed out the difference in the amount of homework in English schools and in China, saying that "*the academic aspect is much more important in China than here*", thus his parents always expected him to have homework every day at first.

As for the best way of memorisation, pupils believed understanding always came first before memorising.

They suggested remembering characters through making up their own stories which connected the shapes and meanings of characters together. And also writing and using words regularly in sentences helped memorise. Some pupils noted that concentrating and listening to what the teacher said in Chinese was useful as well. Besides, activities and games, such as Bingo were reported favourably by pupils in all year groups.

Expectations of Chinese teachers

Pupils discussed both the advantages and disadvantages of L1 and L2 Chinese teachers. Some pupils who used to have L1 English teachers from England, thought it was easy to understand L2 Chinese teachers' explanation of linguistic points in English, as most of them were L1 English speakers. As learners of Chinese, L2 Chinese teachers also knew pupils' mistakes, especially the reason why they made these mistakes. In terms of teaching approaches, some pupils said that the merit of L2 Chinese teachers was that their teaching pace was not as fast as L1 Chinese normally went. According to some Year 11 pupils' responses, their English Mandarin teacher made sure they learnt an item and then moved on to the next thing, whilst L1 Chinese teachers expected them to learn it quickly. Besides, they thought L2 Chinese teachers made the learning more interesting by using games and interactive activities. On the other hand, the major deficit of the L2 Chinese teacher was their limited knowledge of Chinese language and culture. Some pupils noted that they lacked confidence in the L2 Chinese teachers' Chinese, in term of Chinese pronunciation, characters (its origins and writing) and believed L1 English teachers from England were not as good as L1 Chinese teachers anyway. Some expressed their concerns that "*a L2 teacher might teach you wrong*" if they had learnt something wrong themselves. Interestingly, those who were lacking trust in L2 Chinese teachers' competence were all reported to have learnt Chinese only with L1 Chinese teachers.

The disadvantages of the L2 Chinese teacher pointed out above were generally believed as merits of the L1 Chinese teacher. Apart from accurate pronunciation, and better knowledge of characters and phrases, pupils thought a L1 Chinese teacher's speaking in Chinese directly facilitated their Chinese learning, via constantly listening and understanding what they said in the classroom. Although some pupils realised that L2 Chinese teachers could explain better in English than L1 Chinese teachers did, most of them preferred Chinese input to language explanation. Some pupils also said that L1 Chinese teachers were more experienced than L2 Chinese teachers, on the aspects of mistakes correction and class control (which is reported more below).

In terms of the ways that Chinese teachers taught, pupils all showed positive attitudes towards their own Chinese teacher, regardless of their language background. They expressed that they had built up good connections with their teacher, and felt teachers were supportive, encouraging and good at teaching. Thus they genuinely liked their teacher and enjoyed Chinese lessons. Some pupils talked about their teacher's class management as well.

Some Year 10 pupils in school F pointed out that their L2 Chinese teacher was a good class controller as "*people respect her*" and were willing to do the work she requires. Another pupil from Year 7 in school C revealed that their L1 Chinese teacher was also good at dealing with disruptive pupils. The pupil explained that this was to do with the L1 Chinese teacher's education and teaching experience in China. Chinese pupils in schools were highly-disciplined due to the strict school management. Therefore L1 Chinese teachers could not accept the poor behaviour in English schools and were more likely to deal with it than L1 English teachers from England did. Besides, the pupil listed some strategies that the teacher used, such as writing down the naughty pupils' names on the board, keeping them in the front or back of the classroom, and giving detentions.

4.4.3.2 Teachers' beliefs 1: Challenges in Teaching Chinese

Behaviour issue

Teachers believed pupils' behaviour was not a universal characteristic of pupils but depended on individual schools, and it seemed to be a universal issue regardless of culture, target language of learning, and teacher's background. Private school teachers (Amelie, Li, Ying) generally reported better discipline than teachers in state schools. Some teachers (Isabel, Selina) pointed out that poor behaviour could be seen not only in Chinese classes but also in French classes. L1 Chinese teacher (Ying) noted that high schools in China also had disruptive pupils in class. Apart from L1 Chinese teachers, L2 Chinese teachers (Tina, Nola) also expressed their feelings of struggling with behaviour issues. Selina attributed this to four reasons in her Chinese class: 1) a lack of a strict teaching approach in the beginning; 2) the general poor academic performance of pupils; 3) pupils' low motivations for learning Chinese; and 4) effects of family environment. The strategy for class management, was suggested as giving warnings and detention after class. As for the extremely bad behaviour such as hitting teachers, which indeed happened in Selina's school, a report would be written by the teacher to inform the head teacher of the event. Teachers also suggested positive ways of dealing with such an issue, such as encouraging peer management and offering awards for well-behaved pupils (Kathy), getting external support from other teaching staff (Kathy, Tina), as well as drawing pupils' attention back to learning content (Ying, May). The example Ying illustrated in her class was that she taught "shame on you" in Chinese and asked other pupils to say it to the disruptive boy.

Although teachers had somewhat struggled with class management, most of them seemed to hold an open mind that it was normal for teenagers to behave like that, and realised the essential role of family

environment in pupils' discipline at school. A L1 Chinese teacher Li commented that, pupils who were able to "survive" in the school where behaviour was an issue actually would have no problem to deal with difficulties in society when they graduated from school. Another L1 Chinese teacher Selina, in contrast, believed that L1 English pupils from England who had no sense of consequences at school would eventually learn their lessons in society after graduation.

Homework

Two L1 Chinese teachers (Kathy, Mei) noted some pupils were too lazy to do the homework. Kathy and Mei also pointed out that L1 English pupils from England did not have as much homework as their counterparts in China. Two schools where the teachers were working had set up a systematic homework policy but this worked in different ways, one requiring teachers to give no more than 15 minutes' homework daily (Mei in a private school), and the other offering punishment and asking parental support for homework delay (Kathy, in a state school). Two teachers (Tina and Ying) in private schools, however, noted no support from schools. It was only for teachers to remind and encourage pupils to do homework. The effective ways of encouraging pupils to do homework, according to Tina, Kathy, May and Mei, included online practice via websites like "Quizlet" and "Memorise", and providing personalized tasks according to pupils' level and difficulty.

School and parental support

According to teachers (Selina, Kathy, Mei), the resources of materials and staff members for Chinese teaching were limited at their schools, as Chinese provision was relatively new compared with other taught FLs. Parental support could be either positive as the homework supervision noted above (Kathy), or negative in terms of discouraging or withdrawing pupils from learning of Chinese (Mei). Mei also

noted that a pupil who was good at Chinese gave up learning in Year 8 and chose French instead under parental pressure, for the sake of obtaining an excellent mark in GCSE.

Textbooks and materials

Some L1 Chinese teachers (Selina, Hannah and Li) expressed their concerns about no appropriate textbooks being available, time-consuming lesson and workbook preparation. Selina viewed *Jinbu* as the best textbook so far but it was still necessary to prepare more materials for teaching. Hannah pointed out that the textbook was chosen according to the content requirements of examination boards (i.e. AQA, EdExcel). L2 Chinese teacher Tina noted the textbook *Practical Chinese Reader (PCR)* when she studied Chinese in Beijing, and said she would not use PCR for L1 English pupils from England, as it was designed for adult learners in the Chinese context. Ying pointed out that, unlike schools in China that only follow a specific textbook for teaching, teachers in the UK normally designed a working sheet for every lesson according to pupils' level and interests. Selina also noted that pupils needed to stick the working sheet into their blank workbook, which was treated as their primary learning booklet of Chinese.

Workload

The workload of Chinese teachers was huge due to the early stages of Chinese provision at schools. Teachers (Selina and Wen) stated that they spent hours making presentations and booklets for teaching. Some L1 Chinese teachers (Kathy, Mei and Ying) noted that the differentiation of instruction as demanded in English schools was another pressure, as individual's level and ability should be taken into consideration in lesson planning and each pupil was supposed to make progress in the end.

4.4.3.3 Teachers' beliefs 2: Difficulties in learning Chinese

Most L1 and L2 Chinese teachers reported their beliefs about difficulties in Chinese learning for L1 English pupils from England, which are presented below. Isabel simply pointed out that Chinese was not hard to teach for teachers but hard to learn for pupils. However, L1 Chinese teacher Wen noted that it was only L1 Chinese people who held the belief that Chinese was difficult to learn. In fact, her pupils did not have such awareness of whether Chinese was hard to learn or not.

Pinyin

Two L1 English teachers from England (Sam and Nola) thought pinyin was “*confusing*” and “*hard to read*”, for the following reasons: a) the tone marks on top of the same spelling were easy to be ignored or misunderstood by English learners; b) some spellings of pinyin represented different sounds from English pronunciation; and c) meanings of homophones were less efficient to work out from pinyin spellings than from characters. However, other L1 English teachers from England (Tina and Isabel) and some L1 Chinese teachers (Kathy and Hannah) believed pinyin was “*a great spelling system*” and it was “*straightforward*”. They thought pinyin bridged the gap between Chinese characters and sounds, in terms of assisting how to pronounce characters and say words. It is interesting to point out that two teachers (Hannah and Sam) who had learnt Bopomofo before knowing pinyin held opposite beliefs about pinyin. Some L2 Chinese teachers attributed the confusion of pinyin spelling to the deficit of the transliteration system itself, yet L1 Chinese teachers merely regarded it as a learning difficulty for learners.

Nevertheless, most teachers believed pinyin was “*only a pronunciation tool but not a language*” and the danger of “*relying on pinyin*” by English learners was a concern. L2 Chinese teacher Tina noted this was due to “*our brain is trained with automaticity of reading western written script*”. Thus whether and when

to introduce pinyin, and how to balance the pinyin and characters teaching became an issue. Some teachers suggested introducing pinyin together with characters at the initial stage and then gradually getting rid of the aid of pinyin, some thought pinyin could be reviewed in the first 5-10 minutes every class as a warm-up, and some teachers noted, for young children learners, they could learn the sounds directly from listening and mimicking the teacher's models in the beginning, and then knew some pinyin knowledge afterwards. For adult learners, some teachers advised providing an online pinyin diagram for their systematic self-learning.

It is interesting to note that most teachers suggested using pinyin only at the beginning stage and strictly manipulated the amount of pinyin exposure for pupils. However, L1 Chinese teacher Mei, with the most experience among interviewed teachers, showed an open mind towards pupils' preference for using pinyin rather than characters in the beginning. The approach she used was to make pupil themselves aware of the uselessness of pinyin in China after their school trip to China.

Oral Chinese: pronunciation, listening and speaking

Chinese tone was perceived as one of the difficulties in learning pronunciation. Mei noted that the third tone was the hardest, whereas other teachers believed tones were difficult because of distinguishing different tones and producing the correct tone automatically, rather than individual tone learning.

However, Tina pointed out pupils with musical talents or those who grew up in a musical environment had less difficulty in perceiving pitches of Chinese tones than others. Apart from tones, some initials and finals, such as [tʂ], [tʂʰ], [ʂʰ], [ʒ], [tɕ], [tɕʰ], [ɕ] were also reported hard to learn.

For the specific difficult tones and sounds, teachers suggested emphasising their differences by using hand gestures or body actions, or referring to the similar sound in other languages, in order to help pupils

be aware of their tongues when pronouncing. They did not think sound diagrams with technical language about tongue position was effective for children or adult learners. However, Kathy noted that the tone chart with cartoon features was straightforward for pupils to understand and remember.

The key strategy for learning and teaching pronunciation, based on teachers' responses, was the need for massive listening and speaking practice. Listening practice focused on getting exposed to Chinese input without explicitly knowing the meanings, such as learning Chinese songs, or listening to teachers' talk in class or audio clips. Speaking practice, on the other hand, emphasised repetitive practice of certain word lists with different combinations of sounds and tones, tongue twisters, as well as speaking different words and sentences in real communication with others.

As for listening, most teachers thought it was extremely hard for beginner learners, because of their unfamiliarity with Chinese sounds, the transitory nature of speech and variations of Chinese accents in real speaking. Kathy suggested training pupils' listening skills in terms of focusing on key words and the gist of the information. For intermediate learners, according to Mei, listening became relatively easy.

All teachers encouraged learners to "have a go" in speaking at the initial stage. Indeed, most teachers believed speaking was viewed as easy by beginner learners, as they had no awareness of Chinese tones and produced the tone randomly. Experienced L1 Chinese teacher Mei added that, for higher level learners, speaking could be easy as spoken Chinese was generally shorter and simpler than the equivalent written forms, or hard because of mistakes of sentence order. Although teachers had some tolerance towards beginner learner's mistakes, their concerns on fossilization at later stages varied to different degrees. Taiwanese teacher Hannah pointed out that tones correction should be undertaken step by step, and different Chinese accents did not matter much in communication. However, another L1 Chinese teacher Li believed that sounds of high frequency words needed to be corrected in the beginning. L2

Chinese teacher Tina also showed similar beliefs by saying that “*pronunciation is my thing*”. Kathy suggested correcting common mistakes of pupils’ speaking by teachers or pupil peer group.

Written Chinese: characters, reading and writing

Most teachers believed that remembering the sounds and forms together was the biggest difficulty in learning characters and words. Kathy and Sam pointed out that this was due to the lack of connection between Chinese written forms and sounds, as well as the effect of pupils’ L1 on processing characters or words. Sam suggested that limited clues were available for guessing the sounds or meanings of new words or characters. The verbal knowledge of the characters was still of little help if learners had never seen the written forms. L2 Chinese teacher Isabel noted that stroke order was hard to remember as well. Ying believed pupils just needed lots of time to revise and practise characters, yet the limited class time did not allow teachers to spend much time on characters only. As for character recognition and production, Kathy thought pupils felt character production was only hard in the very beginning when they had no prior knowledge of basic strokes and how to write them.

Strategies for linking the sound and characters, as well as various activities to help with memorisation were proposed. The way noted by most teachers was to break down characters into different parts, or to make some stories or images related to meanings or shapes of the characters. Kathy, Isabel and Mei suggested drawing pupils’ attention to the same components in different characters and words, and remembering these parts first as they are usually used to make up other characters or words. To remember both the sound and shapes of characters, teachers recommended practising characters in activities, such as guessing or recalling new characters in short term memory, singing Chinese songs or raps, doing handwriting practice by using brushes, and playing missing stroke games. Watching videos or animations

about how to draw characters stroke by stroke was also believed useful for learning. Additionally, both L1 and L2 Chinese teachers emphasised the role of characters in Chinese learning. Characters were viewed as an indispensable part of Chinese language and of Chinese learning.

Chinese forms: grammar, writing rules

Both L1 and L2 Chinese teachers thought that Chinese grammar was easy. L1 Chinese teacher Selina noted she did not even teach grammar much as there were many fewer grammar rules in Chinese than in European languages. The only difficulty of grammar learning noted by teachers was sentence order. As for the best way to teach grammar, many teachers suggested learning it through communication in activities. The detailed example of Amelie's strategies for teaching negation form “不” and Chinese tenses can be seen in the single cases section above.

The learning of basic writing rules was much emphasised by teachers of Chinese. L2 teachers seemed to place more value than L1 teachers on the importance of learning to write characters according to the correct stroke order. Nola, Tina and Sam all pointed out that exploring strokes and stroke order of characters enabled learners to know the characters better, particularly for higher level learners.

Interestingly, both Nola and Sam pointed out that knowing the correct stroke order helped with guessing the characters (usually homophones) when Chinese people “*sketch characters in the air*” to clarify homophone words encountered in conversation. L1 Chinese teachers, on the other hand, although they agreed that it was important to learn correct stroke order, expressed their understanding about the challenges of remembering the correct stroke order for English-speaking learners (Mei, Hannah).

Moreover, L1 Chinese teachers noted their concerns about the lack of systematic instruction on how to write characters at schools, due to the limited time for teaching.

What should we start with in learning Chinese

Teachers generally thought in the beginning pinyin, characters and spoken words should be taught together. Amelie expressed that the aim was to “*make pupils feel Chinese*” by exposing them to Chinese input. Tina suggested counting was a good start because of its clear meanings and straightforward characters. She also believed starting with speaking was motivating for pupils. Selina noted that she thought what to start with at first depended on pupils’ age. Younger learners wanted to start with characters for fun, whilst teenagers may prefer to start with daily speaking for the purpose of communication. Interestingly, for most teachers, whatever they suggested starting with, introducing characters and how to write them as soon as possible were emphasised. In addition, L1 Chinese teacher Wen had a different idea, that speaking should be started first. She noted that it was not feasible to introduce speaking, reading and writing characters at the same time, as character learning was impossible for pupils to catch up with learning how to speak.

Repetition, memorisation and understanding

Generally, teachers overwhelmingly believed that repetition and memorisation were crucial in learning Chinese due to the features of Chinese characters. Sam emphasised that memorising characters by rote was “unavoidable”, and it was also what Chinese pupils did in schools in China. However, L1 Chinese teacher Kathy believed that L1 English pupils from England were bored with repetitive writing practice and rote memorisation, unless they were motivated by various activities and rewards. Another L1 Chinese teacher Li noted that intensive and repetitive listening and speaking was the ultimate way of learning languages. She suggested that revising sentences or short paragraphs in a short period of time was a good approach to memorisation. Li, Hannah and Selina also advised, even for repetitive practice, that activities

should be varied and take pupils' learning styles into account.

Expectations of L1 English pupils from England

Both L1 and L2 Chinese teachers believed that learning Chinese demanded more time and effort than learning other FL. Thus they expected pupils to put effort into learning Chinese in and after class.

Nevertheless, comparing with Chinese pupils, some L1 and L2 Chinese teachers did not think that L1 English pupils from England in general were hardworking. However, another L1 Chinese teacher Ying believed that children's nature was universal and that all children like playing. The difference of pupils' performance lay merely in the specific situation and expectation of pupils and learning in sociocultural contexts. According to L1 Chinese teachers, Chinese pupils received huge pressure from society and family, for the purpose of 'being the top' in school and society, and everyone was able to achieve this goal by making effort. In contrast, teachers felt L1 English pupils from England were given too much freedom in their individual development. English society encouraged interests and creativity in learning, and it did not necessarily involve pupils working too hard at it. Although Tina, Mei and Wen noted that L1 English pupils from England also had academic pressure on exams and university entrance, regarding Chinese learning, they were more flexible to choose or withdraw from it. However, Ying pointed out that the pressure from within L1 English pupils from England themselves might work better for learning than does the external pressure in China. Besides, Mei noted, pupils' interests could be influenced by the difficulty or enjoyment of the subject. Given that Chinese could be hard in some ways, only a very few pupils with deep interest were willing to put in effort and keep on learning however hard it was.

With regard to the pupils' general ability, interestingly, L2 Chinese teacher Isabel emphasised that learning Chinese had nothing to do with intelligence but only with time and effort. Other L2 Chinese

teachers Tina and Amelie thought that some pupils were bright and some found learning difficult. Pupils had different abilities, such as “*photographic memory for visual information*” and “*tuned to pitches*”. However, L1 Chinese teacher Selina believed that language learning, particularly Chinese learning, needed a talent which was different from learning other subjects, and that talent could be explored and developed by teachers. As for the effect of age in Chinese learning, Tina and May pointed out that younger pupils in primary schools generally performed better at pronunciation and tones than secondary pupils did. They explained this was because younger pupils did not feel shy and were willing to practice more than teenage learners.

Therefore for the majority of L1 English pupils in England, teachers suggested that encouraging pupils to find enjoyment and a sense of achievement in learning Chinese was the key approach. Various activities, feedback awards, and technological tools, such online apps and the white board, were preferable to stimulate and maintain pupils’ interests. Apart from that, Amelie and Hannah noted that being able to use Chinese in real contexts was the biggest motivation for learning. In addition, most teachers pointed out pupils’ needs, language levels and emotional conditions (i.e. tiredness, anxiety) should be taken into consideration in material preparation, activity design and homework assignment. Ying emphasised that listening to pupils’ feedback about their own progress was necessary to improve a teacher’s teaching effectiveness.

L2 Chinese teachers as adult learners

L2 Chinese teachers can be viewed as high level adult learners, as they started learning Chinese in University. Tina felt the difference of learning a foreign language as a teenager and an adult lay in the “gaps in knowledge” from her own learning experience. Adult learners were more mature than teenagers

in thinking and self-management. As Chinese major learners, Tina and Nola talked about teaching approaches in university in the UK. They had individual grammar, culture, reading and newspaper lessons, as well as language laboratory sessions for listening and speaking. Isabel pointed out that writing practice in university was “*done in a boring way*”. Besides, American teacher Sam noted he was taught traditional characters and Bopomofo in university, and learnt simplified characters and pinyin on his own for teaching. Taiwanese teacher Hannah also learnt pinyin later on by herself. All teachers appreciated their experience in China and noted that using Chinese in the actual context facilitated learning more than the instructions they received in University.

Culture

L1 Chinese teachers generally were confident in understanding and teaching culture. L1 Teacher Hannah believed that teaching culture was important, and she suggested the culture imbedded in the language itself was more worthwhile to teach than Chinese arts or history. American teacher Sam noted speaking Chinese in an appropriate way, as a Chinese people would speak, was useful for helping people to think in a way that Chinese people would think. However, he did not think understanding the culture was necessary to understand the language, and teaching Chinese culture such as dragon boat festivals, or the zodiac was unnecessary.

Expectations of Chinese teachers

As for the advantages and disadvantages of L1 and L2 teachers, some beliefs were shared by teachers and some differed. L1 Chinese teachers were generally believed to have strong subject knowledge of Chinese language, particularly the details of characters and correct pronunciation. L1 Chinese teachers also emphasised their deep understanding of culture, whereas most L2 Chinese teachers did not point out this

aspect. Sam talked about Chinese culture but disagreed that cultural facts, such as festivals and the zodiac, were necessary to understand the language or for communication. L2 Chinese teachers were generally viewed to be familiar with the English education system and school pupils, as well as having more flexible and creative teaching approaches. L2 Chinese teachers also believed themselves to be more aware of difficulties and to be able to better explain things in a way that pupils understand. Nola and Sam acknowledged themselves as role models for beginner learners, that English speakers could also speak Chinese well. However, the majority of the L1 Chinese teachers expressed their concerns about the accuracy of the English teachers' Chinese, and nobody expressed their confidence in having an L2 teacher teaching Chinese language at a high level.

Two types of L1 Chinese teachers, overseas teachers primarily sent by Hanban, and “local teachers”, who received English higher education or lived in the UK, were noted by teachers. Hanban teachers were viewed, by both L1 “local” teachers and L2 teachers, to be lacking in knowledge of the English education system and its principles, also of understanding the L1 English pupils from England. Thus Hanban teachers were generally believed to struggle with teaching here in England. Interestingly, in contrast, the interviewed Hanban teacher May felt confident in settling into the culture and teaching practice after half a year's teaching experience. Nevertheless, L2 Chinese teachers Tina and Nola noted that, the challenge Hanban teachers encountered was actually a universal issue. Due to the instability of British education policy, teaching approaches as well as pupils' discipline changed so dramatically that L1 English teachers from England also had been through “the same situation”, and they had had to update their knowledge and expectations. Besides, some L1 “local” teachers, who had lived in UK for many years, appreciated the cultural workshop organised by Hanban teachers, as well as their authentic and up-to-date oral words used in current Chinese society.

Therefore what the ideal Chinese teacher was at English schools, resulted in two different opinions. Most L1 teachers thought an L1 “local” teacher was favourable, whilst Li expressed preference for co-teaching with a L1 “local” Chinese and an English teacher together.

4.5 Summary

Findings from the questionnaire and interview responses are briefly summarized based on the four research questions pointed out in this study. To avoid repetition which could be tedious for readers to read, the major results are outlined with bullet points below.

4.5.1 Question 1: Pupils’ and Teachers’ Beliefs

4.5.1.1 Pupils’ beliefs

- 1) Listening to and understanding Chinese sounds was the biggest difficulty in learning Chinese; pupils’ answers to open ended questions attributed it to homophones and multi-meanings of some characters, whereas according to interview responses, it was because of the difficulty in discerning similar Chinese tones and words in fast speech flow, when the support of teacher and pinyin was not available.
- 2) Matching sounds with Chinese characters was another difficulty reported in both questionnaire and interviews, and this was due to the disconnection of Chinese sounds and logographic written form. Thus total beginner pupils in questionnaire revealed that reading was harder than writing, and in the interview, they explained that they had to remember characters well to be able to know the meanings. As for the unknown words, there was no way to guess the meaning of them. However, pupils in Year 9-11 noted that the clues of radicals could actually help with guessing.
- 3) Questionnaire findings showed that pupils believed that remembering words and characters were

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- difficult. However, pupils in different levels further explained that such difficulty only occurred at the beginning of learning when they were not used to the logographic nature of Chinese characters. With time and practice, they all seemed confident in remembering and writing characters they had learnt.
- 4) Compared with listening and writing, speaking Chinese was believed to be the easiest by beginner learners in both questionnaire and interviews. This was because, as some Year 7 pupils said in interview, they actually did not focus on the tones when speaking. Pupils in Year 9 and Year 10 noted that speaking in accurate tones could be difficult. However interestingly, all pupils responded in the questionnaire that they paid attention to tones when speaking.
 - 5) Grammar learning was rated as the second biggest difficulty in the questionnaire because of word order and measure words, yet pupils' responses in interviews were that they did not think grammar was hard to learn, compared with French and Spanish with tenses and gender. They noted word order and usages of some linking words, but found it was ok to remember.
 - 6) Both oral communication and literacy learning were regarded as significant by pupils in the questionnaire. They believed that when learning Chinese they should "have a go" and not be afraid of making mistakes. Such attitudes were also consistent with their interview responses, for the reason that the purpose of speaking was communication, and mistake making was a necessary process in learning, as long as they got corrected by others. Moreover, the enthusiasm of learning Chinese characters, in terms of writing them down, and knowing the origins of characters, was overwhelmingly expressed in pupils' interviews.
 - 7) As for character learning, in the questionnaire pupils emphasised the importance of knowing basic rules of writing and radicals. Their answers in interviews showed a great concern for the correct stroke order, which they believed to be extremely difficult to memorise and follow.
 - 8) The general strategy for learning Chinese, according to questionnaire and interview data, was

practice and memorisation. Pupils in the interviews emphasised that understanding came first before memorisation. Various techniques of practice and memorisation were suggested in pupils' responses, in terms of individual skill-related practice, such as writing characters, listening and reading materials, and interactive communication with peers and teachers in activities and online websites. Overall, persistent and industrious attitudes towards Chinese learning were highly valued by pupils.

- 9) According to the questionnaire findings, a good way of beginning to learn Chinese was viewed as starting with pinyin or characters. Yet pupils in interviews had rather mixed responses with respect to this. Pinyin, speaking, characters or listening were all noted to begin with in pupils' interviews. However, whatever was suggested being introduced first, pupils all emphasised that the learning of characters should be along with sounds afterwards.
- 10) In the questionnaire, pupils did not believe there was an innate ability for learning languages, and they thought the photographic memory required for learning characters could be developed with learning. The interview responses showed similar beliefs that pupils proposed to train their visual short memory when memorising characters. As for age, pupils in the questionnaire and interviews pointed out that learning a language at a younger age had more advantages than learning it later.
- 11) The questionnaire results revealed that an L1 Chinese teacher was preferred by pupils. However, pupils' responses in interviews showed that their choice of Chinese teacher primarily depended on what language background their Chinese teacher had, as they all showed satisfaction with their current teacher. They thought their teachers were supportive and good at class management. Some pupils taught by L1 Chinese teachers indicated some lack of confidence in L2 Chinese teacher's Chinese competence.

4.5.1.2 Teachers' beliefs

- 1) Not enough homework and memorisation, limited teaching time and few appropriate textbooks: these were the main challenges teachers encountered in English secondary schools, based on the questionnaire findings. Teachers in interviews not only noted these aspects but also added comments on pupils' behaviour, school and parental support, and workload. Most importantly, the pupils' discipline in class was regarded as a general issue for both L1 and L2 teachers, but the situation varied in different schools.
- 2) Teachers' answers to the questionnaire suggested that pinyin was easy for pupils to learn, whereas in interviews, some L2 Chinese teachers pointed out the confusion of some pinyin spellings, while others (including both L1 and L2 teachers) still believed pinyin was a straightforward system for learning pronunciation. On the other hand, most teachers showed concern about the balance of learning pinyin and characters. They suggested using pinyin only at the beginning and gradually moving on to learning characters afterwards.
- 3) Both questionnaire and interview findings noted that the learning of Chinese tones was viewed as a difficulty for L1 English pupils from England. According to teachers' responses in the interviews, the difficulty lay in distinguishing the pitches and producing the correct tone. Thus listening was believed to be extremely difficult for beginner learners. With regard to speaking, most teachers in interviews believed it was easy for beginners as they did not pay attention to the tones at all. However, this contradicted the teachers' answers in the questionnaire that productive skills were generally harder than receptive skills.
- 4) According to the questionnaire findings, learning characters was viewed as another difficulty for English learners. The interviews showed that most teachers thought remembering characters in terms

of their sounds and shapes together was hard. As for the character production, the stroke order was regarded as the hardest of all.

- 5) Grammar was perceived as easy in both questionnaire and interview responses. The writing rules and stroke order, on the other hand, were believed to be significant from the questionnaire responses, whereas in interviews, some teachers thought it was necessary to learn stroke order, and others did not.
- 6) Teachers tended to value communicative teaching approaches in both questionnaire and interviews. They thought pupils should “have a go” in speaking, and showed a certain degree of tolerance to pupils’ mistakes. Therefore most teachers emphasised getting pupils engaged in various interactive activities and learning Chinese implicitly through communication.
- 7) According to both the questionnaire and interview responses, teachers also expressed preference for repetition and memorisation in learning Chinese. However, some teachers commented in the interview that they did not think pupils were willing to do the rote memorisation and thus suggested using different activities to arouse their interest in practising.
- 8) The questionnaire revealed that teachers thought it was good to start with oral words, however in interviews, although some suggested beginning Chinese with spoken words, the general beliefs of most teachers was to start with pinyin, characters, and oral words together.
- 9) As for the expectation of L1 English pupils from England, teachers in the questionnaire believed there were advantages of learning language at a younger age and for pupils who had an innate ability to learn. Some teachers in interview noted that the younger pupils were willing to mimic and practise more than teenagers, thus they could have better pronunciation than teenagers. Besides, some pupils had “photographic memory” and “musical skills”, which facilitated their learning of characters and tones.

10) In the questionnaire, the quality of Chinese teachers' teaching was believed to be essential for pupils' learning performance. Moreover, the advantages and disadvantages of L1 and L2 Chinese teachers, overseas teachers and local teachers were discussed. The knowledge of Chinese languages as a subject, education background and cultural perspectives were pointed out in deciding who was an ideal Chinese teachers in schools. Most teachers preferred to have a L1 Chinese teacher, but some teachers thought a co-teaching pattern with both L1 and L2 teachers was preferable.

4.5.2 Question 2: Similarities and Incongruences of Beliefs of Pupils and Teachers

Given that the detailed beliefs of both pupils and teachers are outlined above, in this section, only some interesting beliefs are briefly listed below to avoid repetition.

4.5.2.1 Similarities of beliefs

- 1) Both groups agreed that tones were hard to learn and discerning tones and pronunciations in speech was difficult. In addition, matching sound with shapes of characters was believed to be difficult, as well as remembering the stroke order of characters.
- 2) Communication in Chinese was the major purpose of learning, thus pupils should try to speak in the beginning regardless of making mistakes.
- 3) Pinyin and character learning should be well-balanced to prevent over-reliance on pinyin afterwards.
- 4) Repetition and memorisation was essential in learning Chinese, particularly for character learning. Thus pupils should put forth effort in learning.
- 5) Teachers and some higher level pupils emphasised the usefulness of learning radicals, and making connections between different characters with the same components.
- 6) It was believed that learning languages, including Chinese, at a younger age was advantageous.

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- 7) Finding enjoyment in learning Chinese was the biggest and most sustainable motivation for learning.
 - 8) Some pupils taught by an L1 Chinese teacher did not trust L2 Chinese teachers' language competence, and some L1 Chinese teachers shared the same beliefs as their pupils.

4.5.2.2 Incongruence beliefs

- 1) Pupils thought character recognition was harder than writing, and listening was harder than speaking, whereas teachers held the opposite views, thinking that productive skills were generally more difficult than receptive skills.
- 2) In the questionnaire pupils claimed that they were aware of tones when speaking, whereas during the interviews they noted they actually did not focus on tones. On the other hand, teachers consistently believed that pupils did not pay attention to tones when speaking.
- 3) Pupils expressed huge enthusiasm for character learning, especially writing them and knowing the origins of characters, whilst teachers did not expect pupils to be so keen on character learning. Thus some pupils preferred starting Chinese with characters, whereas none of the teachers had such beliefs in either the questionnaire or interviews.
- 4) Teachers believed pupils in general were not hard-working and not willing to memorise and do homework. However, some pupils noted different strategies for memorisation, and noted that homework was necessary to consolidate what they had learnt in class.
- 5) As for the expectations of Chinese teachers, pupils tended to prefer a teacher whose language background was consistent with their current one, no matter whether they were L1 or L2 Chinese speakers. Nevertheless, some pupils and most L1 Chinese teachers showed confidence in L1 Chinese speaker's linguistic competence, yet L2 teachers still believed they themselves could be role models for pupils.

4.5.3 Question 3: Length of Learning Time and Pupils' Beliefs

- 1) Questionnaire data showed that pupils with more learning experience tended to believe character writing was harder than recognition, which was opposite to the beliefs of total beginners. Interviews showed that Year 9 to Year 11 pupils thought some details of complicated characters were hard to memorise, whereas when it came to reading, they could use radicals as clues to guess the gist of sentences.
- 2) In the questionnaire, word and grammar learning was regarded as difficult by level 1 and level 2 pupils, yet pupils at all levels in the interviews revealed that Chinese grammar was relatively easy without the necessity for learning tenses and gender. Only the writing rules and stroke order were difficult, as well as some connective words being confusing.
- 3) No significant difference across levels was found in the questionnaires about the difficulty of speaking and listening. However, in pupils' interviews, it showed that unlike complete beginners, higher level pupils seemed to be concerned about accurate tones and believed speaking could be difficult when adding tones to their speech.
- 4) In the questionnaire, level 3 pupils revealed a much stronger belief than pupils at level 1 that pinyin was easy to learn. The interview responses showed that all levels of pupils thought pinyin was easy and helpful with speaking, learning pronunciation and characters. However, pupils in interviews showed their concern about over-reliance on pinyin when learning.
- 5) From the questionnaire, pupils with more learning experience appeared to believe that grammar learning was equally as important as communication and literacy learning, whilst level 1 and level 2 pupils did not value the role of grammar learning. The interviews suggested that all levels of pupil were willing to communicate regardless of making mistakes, and were keen to learn and write

characters. Only high level pupils in Years 10 and 11 provided some insights about stroke order in writing.

- 6) Evidence in the questionnaires revealed that more experienced learners tended to make use of contexts and learn some words without analysis. The role of context was indeed realised in interviews by high level pupils. However, it showed that high level pupils pointed out making connections between characters with the same radical when learning words.
- 7) The motivation for learning Chinese seemed to increase across the different levels of advancement in learning Chinese according to the questionnaire findings. The interview responses showed that all levels of pupil were enthusiastic about learning characters, and were curious about knowing some Chinese culture.

4.5.4 Question 4: Beliefs and Sources of Beliefs

The relationship of beliefs and sources of beliefs is not a simple question to answer in this section, as it is a rather key question linked to the answers to the three questions above. The findings of question 3 above revealed in some aspects higher level pupils had different beliefs from beginner learners, supporting the fact that Chinese learning had had an effect on pupils' beliefs. The results of question 2 showed that teachers' instruction and beliefs were relevant to the development of pupils' beliefs. Similarly, L2 Chinese teachers noted their Chinese learning experience when considering how to teach, and L1 Chinese teachers attributed their beliefs to their experience of teaching practice, English learning, as well as the inspiration of friends or online resources. Nevertheless, answers to questions 1, 2 and 3 revealed that pupils' and teachers' beliefs could be in some aspects irrelevant to their own background. L1 English pupils from England thought learning Chinese should involve working hard and memorising much information, which was a somewhat traditional Chinese way of learning. L1 and L2 teachers thought pupil behaviour and

teachers' knowledge about the education system was a general issue regardless of cultural background.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the main findings of the study in three main sections, and the pedagogical and political implications of this study, followed by some limitations and cautions of the instrument and sample issues. Further research and possible actions for teaching pedagogy and policy are also suggested based on the implications of this study.

The first section is an overview of the state of Chinese teaching in the current UK secondary schools. What makes good Chinese teachers and pupils in English schools is compared and discussed with previous studies in this area. This section will also begin to consider the policy and pedagogical implications of this state of affairs, and speculate about the possibilities for CFL teaching in future. At present, there is much discussion about compelling pupils and schools to study an “English baccalaureate” (EBacc) including the study of a language. This discussion will consider the way in which the findings of this study might affect such a future.

Beliefs about Chinese language and Chinese language learning is the topic in the next section. Based on the responses from questionnaires and interviews, three striking topics will be identified and discussed, in terms of the starting point in learning Chinese, perceived difficulties and useful strategies for learning Chinese tones and characters. This section will argue that the findings about the beliefs of teachers suggest that CLT pedagogy needs to be related to the particular language, Chinese in this case, and that it is not entirely appropriate to simply adapt a generic languages pedagogy.

The third section focuses on the stereotypes and expectations of teachers and pupils in a cross-cultural

context. Beliefs about L1 and L2 Chinese teachers, pupils' behaviour and classroom management, communicative teaching and learning, together with memorisation and commitment to learning are discussed. These beliefs are important for pedagogy and for the future of CLT. This section will discuss the implications for the employment and training of these teachers and how they can contribute to establishing a really distinct CLT pedagogy.

Following the discussion of the main findings of this study, implications and suggestions are provided for teaching practice, learning strategies, policy making and assessment development, as well as teacher training and establishment of professional organizations.

The final section presents some limitations of this study, and mention is made of research that is needed to be undertaken in the future.

5.2 The State of Chinese Teaching

At present, my study makes a significant contribution to the field because it is the largest survey of Chinese teachers and pupils in the UK to have taken place against a rather hazy background picture. We do not have good baseline information about who is teaching and learning Chinese in the UK. The annual languages survey is a questionnaire likely to be answered by schools offering languages, but less likely to be answered by those who do not. Broad and Tinsley (2015) reported only "a small but perceptible increase (from three to five per cent) over the eight-year period in a proportion of state secondary schools teaching Chinese within the curriculum" (p.126). It is possible more schools are choosing to offer Chinese, or not. We currently do not know how many schools or pupils are involved. However, my study makes a contribution to building a picture of contemporary CLT teaching by presenting a picture of the diverse and lively community of CFL teachers and their pupils, and their beliefs about CFL learning and teaching,

for academic scrutiny.

5.2.1 English School Pupils

In my study, pupils and teachers in a dozen schools offered important insights into Chinese teaching in English secondary schools. The schools involved consisted of both private and state schools of different types, in term of academy, grammar school, community school and schools with a religious background. The preponderance of beginner learners of Chinese was an issue of note. Pupils in these schools were all learning Chinese as a curriculum subject and large majority of them were beginner learners. Although results showed that Year 10 and Year 11 pupils claimed to have been learning Chinese for more than three years, according to my observation in individual schools and with regard to teachers' concerns about the limited time of Chinese lessons, pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 could still be regarded as beginner learners, only with a higher level of experience in learning the language. This is also consistent with the survey report in Broad and Tinsley (2015), that a very small percentage of pupils (less than 2%) are taking GCSE Chinese, indicating a prevalence of beginner learners of Chinese, and thus school pupils engaged in this study are, to some extent, representative of the current state of CFL pupils in this field. However such a claim has to be made with caution, as discussed previously, we cannot fully know the whole picture of Chinese teaching in the UK context, particularly in secondary schools. This suggests teaching Chinese in English secondary schools should focus on the characteristics and interests of beginner learners in learning, and accordingly encourage them to carry on learning.

This study showed that there are CFL learners in all year groups from Year 7 to Year 11 in English schools. The large majority of pupils were L1 English speakers from age 11 to 15. It is necessary to note that, again, the beliefs of teenager learners of Chinese have never been addressed in previous Chinese

studies on such a broad scale. Thus my study offers some preliminary but valuable information about who the school pupils are. Findings in my study showed that, as young language learners, pupils believed children were better at learning FL, and age facilitated their learning of Chinese.

As for gender, surprisingly, there were more boy learners than girls in this study. However, there being more boy learners than girls is, itself, worthy of note at a time when the annual languages survey (Broad and Tinsley, 2015, 2014, 2013) regularly reports that girls are much more likely to take GCSE languages and even more so A level, than boys. This small, seemingly unimportant finding could be particularly important in the context of policy changes taking place in England. If the “EBacc” becomes a reality, and all pupils are urged to take a GCSE language, it might be that the interest of boys in Chinese could be very significant. Schools will struggle to interest the full range of pupils in languages, as discussed in the review of literature, and a language which, in this study, has retained more boy pupils than girls, must offer some possibilities that boys could learn foreign languages well. The boys in this study were interested in character writing and analysing characters- something which is particularly Chinese, and which other languages usually cannot offer. However, the gender difference was not the main focus in this study. It would be interesting to further explore the gender and Chinese learning, and compare it with other FL studies in this respect.

Findings revealed that pupils did not believe that gender or intelligence affected the learning of foreign languages, including Chinese. They valued the essential role of hard-work and willingness to put effort into Chinese learning. Therefore, pupils generally estimated 3-5 years was enough time for speaking Chinese fluently, with one hour of learning every day. This is consistent with studies on American learners of Japanese in Oh (1996), and American French learners in Kern (1995), and Korean EFL learners in Truitt (1995), there were however different results in Horwitz (1988) with learners of French,

German and Spanish in an American university, who believed only 1-2 years were needed to achieve the same goal. However, it could be argued that the comparison between previous studies mentioned above and the current one might be doubtful, in that those studies were aimed at different target languages (i.e. Japanese, French, English, Spanish, German), with various backgrounds of language learners (i.e. English speakers and Korean speakers). So far, there is only one study in Liu (2012) addressing the beliefs of CFL learners, which estimated the time for learning Chinese to be in line with the current study, that English-speaking pupils in the UK thought 3-5 years was needed to learn Chinese well. This finding raises the issue of the amount of time it takes to learn a language. An hour a day is a huge commitment. This question goes beyond teachers, and has implications for policy in respect to “EBacc”.

Interestingly, in this study, pupils were positive about their own ability in Chinese learning; however, when asked whether they could speak Chinese well, they showed a lack of confidence. Such a contradiction was probably because the difficulty of Chinese language, which was discussed in the next section, limited learning and practice time. It is necessary to note that, school pupils expressed that they did not have an aptitude for other FLs but for Chinese. This perhaps was to do with the wording used in the two statements. The term “aptitude” was adopted when referring to ability for other FLs, while simple word “ability” was used for that of Chinese. This may have led to the literature of “growth mindset” proposed by Dweck (2006) that personal ability to learn FLs is not a fixed one but could be developed by effort and hard work.

Findings revealed that pupils tended to change their views with levels of experience. Pupils with higher levels of experiences were somewhat more realistic than total beginners about the difficulties experienced in character recognition and production, speaking and listening skills. Unlike total beginners, on the one hand, who claimed that Chinese tones were easy to speak, and on the other hand, noted that they “do not

mind tones” when speaking, higher level learners clearly showed their concerns for accurate tones, and believed “*speaking Chinese can be hard if adding tones into it.*” This supports the “alternativity” of individual beliefs proposed by Nespors (1987), which indicates that an individual’s beliefs are not always consistent with reality. According to interview responses, total beginners reported that discerning sounds including Chinese tones was hard. However, when it came to speaking, they simply ignored the tones and believed speaking to be easy. The shift in higher level pupils responses suggested that learning makes pupils more realistic in this respect. Similarly, the total beginners thought writing characters was easier than recognising them, whereas pupils with higher level of experience noted some complicated characters were more difficult to write than to recognise. This could also be because of the effect of learning more characters, so that they were learning more complicated characters and Chinese. Characters that total beginners learnt could be genuinely simple ones, for instance, number vocabulary items discussed earlier, while as learning carries on, more complicated characters appear, which creates greater difficulty for memorisation and production. The pupils with more learning experience showed a stronger preference for using contextual clues to guess words, indicating a positive effect that learning enabled them to make use of some previous knowledge in learning new things.

Indeed, the effect of instructional experience on shifting pupils’ beliefs echoed previous studies with EFL learners in Japan (Sakui and Gaies, 1999) and American learners of Japanese (Dewey, 2004). Moreover, the affective and evaluative aspects of beliefs have an influence on learning behaviours as learning goes on (Pajares, 1992). Pupils in this study showed a positive attitude towards learning characters, and their enthusiasm increased with length of learning. A similar result was found in Dewey (2004) looking at American students learning Japanese kanji. The plausible explanation that Dewey implied is that students’ beliefs are likely to be connected with their affection for the learning experience. In that sense, as students

in this study are fascinated by Chinese characters, the enjoyment they obtained from learning characters to some degree enhanced their interest in continuity of learning. Accordingly, students with higher level experience expressed a preference for handwriting practice in both questionnaire and interviews. This also supports research into a “process-oriented paradigm” in motivation and attitudes, proposed by Dornyei (2003), that learners’ motivations and beliefs were dynamically associated with processing specific tasks, and “depending on what stage the individual has reached in pursuing a goal” (p.18). This finding brings out implications for CFL teaching about how to maintain beginner learners’ commitment to CFL learning. It is sensible for flexible teaching approaches to take students’ interests into account. As regards subject content, the deeper interest in and commitment to CFL learning actually lies in the language itself, such as Chinese characters in this case.

5.2.2 Chinese Teachers

The situation of Chinese teachers in English schools is even more complex than pupils, and there is relatively limited research available in this respect. CILT (2007) reported that a large majority of Mandarin teachers in English secondary schools were L1 Chinese speakers. This is consistent with my study in that around 83 percent of L1 Chinese teachers responded to the questionnaire. However, little is known about who these teachers are, and what their professional development is like in this field.

L1 Chinese teachers, according to teacher responses in interview, consist of language teaching assistant (LTA), Hanban teachers, and “local” L1 Chinese speakers. Language teaching assistants were mainly recruited from China by Hanban and the British council. Teachers in interview revealed that, the LTA’s responsibility was to support the major Chinese teacher’s work at school rather than teach lessons. The Hanban teacher was supposed to teach Chinese independently in classroom, as some schools that I visited

were doing. However, given that school situations vary, in some schools where they already had a chief Chinese teacher, the Hanban teachers actually were viewed partly as LTAs, and were undertaking some outreach teaching in the nearby primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, it is worth noting that, both LTA and Hanban teachers were regarded as temporary staff in schools due to their mobility and working status in the UK. As a Hanban teacher May pointed out, the former Hanban teacher in her current school only served on a yearly basis, which resulted in readjustment of the learning context and the building up of the relationship for teachers and pupils. Comparing with the two types of teacher above, the so-called “local” L1 Chinese teachers, referred to those Chinese who had been in the UK for quite a long time, and a large majority of whom had received further higher education here. Interestingly, some “local” teachers were actually transformed from Hanban teachers or teachers in Chinese complementary schools. Among the interviewed teachers in my study, Wen was a Hanban teacher and managed to continue on her teaching after her Masters study in a university; Li and Mei used to teach Chinese heritage children in Sunday schools, and became teachers in mainstream schools years ago. In this study, a former teacher Wen, and complimentary school teachers Li and Mei successfully transformed their job status to permanent staff at schools, shedding some light on the possibility of integrating the different resources of CFL teachers. This is promising for the future of CFL teacher employment.

Another important point that is worth emphasising is the language and dialect background of L1 Chinese teachers. A large majority of L1 teachers speak Chinese dialects which could be completely different from Mandarin in terms of pronunciation and words (Li, 2004; Xing, 2006). In addition, a teacher in my study was a heritage Cantonese speaker, with some part of Vietnamese family background and having been raised in Wales. Taiwanese and HK speakers, apart from their own dialects, write using traditional characters, and the transliteration system is either Bopomofo (i.e. in Taiwan) or none (in HK). The

literature shows a huge variation of L1 Chinese speakers with different dialects as their first and heritage language, and using either simplified or traditional characters (Huang and Liao, 1991; Liu, 2006; Li, 2004; Wang, 2011). As the simplified Chinese characters and pinyin transliteration system are required in current schools, teachers more used to traditional characters and Bopomofo, had to self-learn simplified characters and pinyin. Nevertheless, unlike Wang (2011) who found that some teachers felt uncomfortable and lacked confidence in teaching pronunciation, the Taiwanese teacher in my study felt confident about it. Furthermore, when it comes to the diversity of accents, which is different from standard Beijing accent, again in contrast to the teacher mentioned in Wang (2011) study who was concerned and upset about not offering “pure” pronunciation, the Taiwanese teacher held a rather open-minded opinion that, being exposed to variation of accent is actually necessary for learners, in that it is important in actual communication, to understand the speaking of Chinese and international Chinese learners all over the world,.

As for the L2 Chinese teacher, my study showed that although there was a small proportion of L2 Chinese teachers in this group, they were not only English speakers from the UK but also from other countries. Teachers from the US and France were also teaching Mandarin in the UK. All these teachers learnt Chinese in university as adult learners, and some of them had stayed in China for the purpose of learning Chinese or teaching English for at least a year. Moreover, some teachers interviewed noted that they could be viewed as the earliest group who learnt Chinese in university. Thus the instructions they received back then were conventional, and probably out-of-date from current perspectives. As with the Taiwanese teachers discussed above, a US teacher noted that he learnt traditional character and Bopomofo in university and had to learn simplified script and pinyin on his own when he started to teach students.

This suggests the complication of Chinese teaching as a foreign language in the world, due to the

historical and political issues between Mainland China and Taiwan (Li, 2004; Wang, 2011). Even though the PRC Mandarin Chinese with simplified characters is prevalent in the western world (Tsung and Cruickshank, 2011) and indeed, such situation of Mandarin teaching is supported by teachers in interview, the gap between current language requirement and teachers' knowledge forces them to learn the simplified characters and pinyin on their own, before teaching Chinese to students. Furthermore, this study revealed that, it was not only an issue for L1 Chinese teachers from Taiwan or HK, but also happened to L2 teachers who had received Chinese instruction a long time ago. This finding is novel and added more insights into Wang (2011), that both L1 and L2 Chinese teachers encounter similar situations in terms of learning simplified characters and pinyin, due to the variations of Mandarin Chinese. This finding brings out the practical implications of teacher training. The variety of Chinese language and diversity of CFL teachers in terms of educational experiences, are key factors that should be considered in developing teacher training programmes. Most significantly, as L2 English speaking teachers still need to update their knowledge and beliefs according to the present educational policy, it is necessary to promote teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) in the long run.

With regard to qualification status, only two teachers (a L1 and L2 teacher respectively) reported to have the PGCE Mandarin qualification. Other than that, some teachers claimed to have qualified status, yet as noted in CITL (2007), "we do not know the subject of this qualification", which are probably "in another language or discipline" (p. 10). Indeed, some teachers interviewed in my study talked about their qualifications in MFL, Math education, or English language teaching. Some L1 Chinese teachers, especially Hanban teachers, had already been a qualified teacher in Chinese secondary schools, colleges or universities, but in various subjects. Some of them were newly graduated Masters students in China, majoring in teaching Chinese as a second language (TCSL). The academic background of other teachers,

covered a large range of fields, in terms of Chinese literature, philosophy, history and other subjects, such as law, medicine, aeronautics engineering and museum science. These were irrelevant to language and education.

This finding again shows a picture of diversity of CFL teachers' professional and educational background in English secondary schools. Previous studies mentioned the lack of qualified teachers as one of the biggest challenges of CFL teaching in the UK (Zhang and Li, 2010; CITL, 2007). However, this study shows the diversity of Mandarin teachers. This has implications for policy makers and teacher trainers to develop an international teacher assessment system, on the basis of the critical knowledge and practical skills required for international CFL teachers.

In terms of teachers' experience of Chinese teaching, this study showed that two thirds of teachers have been teaching Chinese fewer than 5 years, and only one third had more than 6 years' experience of Chinese teaching. Interestingly, some teachers noted that they were Chinese literature teachers or EFL teachers, teaching L1 Chinese students in China before coming to the UK. This is closely related to teachers' academic background mentioned above, and overseas teaching recruiting project organised by Hanban and the British Council. In that sense, these teachers might be relatively experienced in their subject area, yet when it came to teaching Chinese as a foreign language, their competence of teaching depended on how long they had been teaching L1 English pupils from England, rather than their pedagogical and subject knowledge in their own field. This study showed that teachers with more experience of teaching L1 English pupils at different levels were likely to have different views from those who only taught beginners. For instance, the most experienced teacher Mei in this study, held an open mind about students' preference for using pinyin at the beginning stage, whereas other teachers expressed their big concern of students' ignorance of characters if relying too much on pinyin in the beginning.

However, according to Mei, students could gradually realise the importance of characters after gaining more experience and being exposed to the natural environment in China. With regard to the difficulty of Chinese learning, teachers who only taught beginners thought writing was hard and speaking was easy for pupils. On the other hand, the more experienced teacher Mei thought that pupils perceived the difficulties of learning Chinese differently based on their language levels. She pointed out that the writing at beginning level could be easy because of the simple characters pupils learnt. As for speaking, intermediate learners may think speaking can be either easy, as daily informal speaking, or hard, as formal speech with complicated structures and words.

Moreover, teachers with professional training or a major in second language teaching were more likely to reflect on their beliefs and teaching practice with reference to language acquisition theories or education policy that they had acquired. Both L1 and L2 Chinese teachers noted this. In Li's interviews, she stated several times the online training course organised by a university in China she was currently taking, and commented that, *"It is definitely not true that you can teach Chinese as long as you are native Chinese."* Plenty of things need to be learnt, for example, Chinese linguistic aspects of which L1 Chinese speakers can actually be unaware, and implicit and explicit learning, as well as training in strategies. L2 Chinese teachers, Nola and Tina, pointed out their old knowledge and views about pupils' discipline and the English education system had had to be updated due to changes over the years. On the other hand, Kathy and Ying who were majoring in Chinese and English teaching respectively, noted they greatly benefited from academic learning in terms of their beliefs and expertise about who the pupils are and how to draw pupils' attention to learning. This indicated that teachers' experience of teaching and professional education had a large impact on their beliefs about language learning and teaching. This echoed the two aspects mentioned in Borg (2003)'s diagram, that is, profession education and classroom practice, which

play an important role in shaping teacher cognition. It is also consistent with Kim (2011)'s findings with L1 English teachers in a Korean university. The professional training facilitates their understanding of challenges encountered in teaching. This again emphasises the significance of continuing professional development for CFL teachers, in various aspects of training in terms of current theories, updated education policies, and most importantly, teaching practice with teachers' own reflective thinking.

Overall, this study provides a complex picture but a conclusion is that there was a diversity of this population of CFL teachers. It is sensible to suggest a systematic and continuing training of CFL teachers, with an international standard assessment system, should be designed and provided according to an individual's different educational and professional background. This also offers opportunity for teachers from different backgrounds to share resources in terms of subject teaching and personal development. As one of the focuses in this study is teacher belief, it is worth noting that, teachers' reflective thinking about their teaching practice and professional training are of great significance, and should be a focus for Chinese language teaching.

5.3 The Language and Difficulties

A relatively large proportion of this study focused on the beliefs about language difficulties, learning and teaching challenges, as well as how pupils and teachers overcame these difficulties. This is basic but essential information for a thorough understanding of what learning and teaching is like in English secondary schools, in terms of expectations and views of pupils and teachers. It is necessary to discuss several topics here, in terms of introduction to Chinese and the learning of tones and characters.

5.3.1 Beginning Learning Chinese

Pupils had mixed beliefs about what to start with Chinese learning. Pinyin, characters, speaking, and

listening were all pointed out in their responses.

Pupils supporting starting with pinyin believed that the learning of pinyin helped with knowing the pronunciation, which in turn enabled them to speak and to connect the sound of the character with the shapes. As some pupils noted, except for teachers' help, pinyin is the only way for them to know which "*pinyin goes with that character*". In fact, interviews showed that some pupils tended to view pinyin as pronunciation which is part of the language system, instead of an external transliteration tool. These beliefs about the advantages of pinyin were confirmed in previous empirical studies in Chung (2002) and Guan et al (2011). According to Guan et al (2011), the pinyin spelling explicitly presents the phonological representations of Chinese characters, which in turn enhances the character and phonology link for adult Chinese learners. In the current study, school pupils also agreed, but perhaps because of their younger age (mainly in the range of 11-15), as well as their learning experience, normally acquiring pronunciation from pinyin, some of them could not be fully aware of the difference between pinyin and pronunciation. Moreover, pupils' preference for introducing pinyin first is consistent with Dewey (2004) with American learners of Japanese, that suggests romaji (a Romanized written script) is learnt first before Japanese kanji.

However, some pupils preferred to start with pronunciation or speaking, and quickly move onto characters after pinyin. This is because, from their interview responses, they believed pinyin was only a "backup" for knowing and recalling pronunciation. The most important part in Chinese learning was characters. Moreover, the point of starting with pronunciation or speaking, based on pupils' responses, was for communication, which cannot be achieved by initial learning of characters. Besides, some noted that starting with characters might be difficult and confusing. Interestingly, only a few pupils noted the confusion of learning pinyin in the beginning, however this was not their reason for rejecting pinyin as a

starting point.

These different beliefs were also those expressed by Bassetti (2007). Although the phonetic features of pinyin caused trouble for English learners mastering Chinese pronunciation, she still concluded pinyin was necessary to use in the beginning stage.

Some pupils, on the other hand, emphasised the significance of character learning and suggested it should be introduced first. Those were the pupils who were passionate about character learning, enjoying writing and enquiring origins of characters. They were aware of the popularity of using characters rather than pinyin in life in China. Similarly to the pupils discussed above, they were concerned about sound-shape link of characters as well. However, instead of suggesting learning characters after pinyin, they believe it was easier to connect pinyin later with known characters. These beliefs are in line with Chung (2002)'s conclusion, that presenting characters prior to pinyin improved pupils' character learning. Nevertheless, Chung's (2002) aim was to examine effective ways of presenting character learning, rather than good introduction to Chinese learning in general. Additionally, some pupils believed the input of pronunciation and characters should be provided together, and then each item could be the main focus at a time. In that sense, the phonological and orthographic features of Chinese would be well-matched from the beginning. Indeed, a similar strategy was proposed by Guan et al (2011) that pinyin and characters should be learnt together.

Pupils had views about the role of spoken and written Chinese at the beginning stage. Questionnaire results showed that pupils viewed reading and writing as more important than oral communication in Chinese. However, when it came to individual beliefs, pupils were likely to be either communication-oriented and focus on the learning of oral Chinese, in terms of pronunciation, speaking, or listening; or character-enthusiastic and enjoy learning and writing new characters. Furthermore, the

two tendencies are not clear-cut at all, as in the middle were pupils who suggested learning both together. More balanced beliefs about learning listening, speaking, reading and writing of Chinese echo the review of CLT in Spada (2007), that both oral and written forms of foreign language should be taken into account in CLT adaptation. The disconnection of sound and written form in Chinese seemed to be a crucial factor affecting pupils' beliefs about the sequence of learning. This is related to the logographic characteristics of Chinese language, as reviewed in Chapter 2 (Shen, 2005; Sung and Wu, 2011), and pupils in this study seemed to have such awareness already. Although scholars (Shen, 2005; Ke, 1998) suggested using radical clues to guess the sound of characters, it is apparently not a feasible idea for complete beginners with no prior knowledge of Chinese.

Teachers' beliefs were not as complicated as those of pupils. They generally believed pinyin, characters and oral words should be introduced together. In fact, teachers' responses in the questionnaires emphasised starting with oral teaching. Yet their comments in interviews revealed that, apart from their communicative orientation, an issue of over-reliance on pinyin was a big concern. This was explained by Selina, Li, Mei and Tina, and again closely related to the logographic features of Chinese language. As Tina said: *"...almost without wanting it to happen, I start to grasp it towards the pinyin, and then I am losing the meaning of the characters. It's very difficult because our brain is so trained with automaticity of reading. You know, the western script just immediately pull it out"*.

This confirmed Everson's (1988) study that English speakers read Romanization script faster than they read characters, due to the automaticity of alphabetic reading. Moreover, as explained in Wang and Gao (2011) by examining L1 Chinese children's pinyin learning, the consistency of pinyin spelling and sound reduced the learner's memory burden in reading. This evidence is also in line with discussion by Huang and Hanley (1994) on the difference between reading pinyin and reading characters. Reading English

relies heavily on the phonological information decoded from a cluster of phonemes. Character reading, on the other hand, depends on deciphering complicated visual information to retrieve the meanings. In that sense, teachers in this study were concerned about pupils' over-reliance on pinyin, and thus attempted to balance the learning of pinyin and characters from the very beginning. In addition, it is also necessary to point out, teachers were likely to value communication much more than learning to read and write. This is different from pupils' beliefs, and thus, unlike pupils who were interested in character writing, teachers tended to disagree with starting with individual characters only. Moreover, their beliefs about introducing pinyin, characters and oral teaching together, to a large extent, were formed by their previous experience of struggling with character teaching afterwards.

The issue of what to start first with in Chinese, and the balance of pinyin and character instruction, is not a new phenomenon in teaching practice at schools. However, only in my study have such basic issues been brought out and addressed systematically from a theoretical perspective.

5.3.2 Chinese Tones

The difficulty related to tones mentioned most in this study, by both pupils and teachers, was listening and understanding Chinese speaking. This was due to the difficulty of discerning similar sounds, especially Chinese tones. The reasons students offered include confusions of individual tones, such as tone 1 and tone 4, tone 3 and tone 4, and the tone sandhi in the flow of speech. Apart from that, according to teachers, Chinese tones were unfamiliar for non-tonal English speakers, and thus only students with musical talents or trained with musical skills would feel easier than others to perceive pitches of Chinese tones. Indeed, the difficulty of aural reception by English-speaking learners has been well-addressed by a great deal of studies in different fields, and to some degree, a consensus has been reached in studies of

teaching Chinese to English adults (Chiang, 2002; Hu, 2010; Hu and Tian, 2012; Huang, 2000; Samimy and Lee, 1997; Tsai, 2011; Wang and Higgins, 2008), as well as to school pupils in the UK (Higgins and Sheldon, 2001).

It is reasonable to believe, based on linguistic and cognitive research, that Chinese tone is difficult because of its unique role in distinguishing the same syllables, which is different from English intonations or stresses (Huang and Liao, 1991; Liu et al, 2011). This affects the processing strategies adapted by listeners from different language backgrounds (Lin, 1985; Hu and Tian, 2012; Klein et al, 2001; Tsai, 2011; Wang, Jongman and Sereno, 2001). As Wang, Sereno and Jongman (2006) concluded, tones are processed similarly as stresses or pitches in students' L1 language, with little lexical information of the specific words. Indeed, it was exemplified in this study when a student stated, "*some French words have the same accents as Chinese.*" Lin (1985) noted that English speakers are basically "tone deaf" in discerning Chinese sounds (p.34.). Likewise, supported by Hu and Tian (2012) and Tsai (2011), English adult speakers cannot identify the subtle differences of tones. The same result was also found in the only study with L1 English pupils from England by Higgins and Sheldon (2001).

Nevertheless, evidence in Stagray and Downs (1993) provided another explanation that English listeners perhaps put the same tones into different categories, in that they tend to classify tones in more detailed categories in terms of frequency of pitches than L1 Chinese do. That is to say, when listening to Chinese tones, English learners cannot decide which tone is which. This is also noted in students' interviews. Moreover, given the limited short term memory discussed in Randall (2007), identifying the meanings from flow of tones is even harder, not to mention some pitches of tones will be changed by their neighbour tones. This is also confirmed with students' comments that they miss the rest of speech when concentrating on the first few sounds, as well as some teachers' beliefs that listening to a flow of tones is

harder than to individual tones.

Nevertheless, surprisingly, in contrast to the reported difficulty in discerning tones and the memory burden in processing transient oral information, students believed speaking Chinese, including the tones, was relatively easy. Students expressed a remarkable confidence in their knowledge about tones, in terms of its role as linguistic element, five distinctive types of tones, as well as the written forms in pinyin. Some students gave suggestions about how to pronounce tones, consonants and vowels of syllables. Moreover, students' answers on the questionnaire claimed they could remember the pronunciation of words they had learnt. Yet it turned out they tended to say the tones randomly when speaking! The reason for this is that they seemed to have no awareness of Chinese tones when speaking. This finding is interesting and contrasts to the conclusion of previous studies about tone production challenges (Chen, 1974; Miracle, 1989; Wang, Sereno and Jongman, 2006), as well as belief studies about the comparison of difficulty in speaking and listening (Chiang, 2002; Wang and Higgins, 2008).

Before discussing the reason why students in this study held somewhat contradictory beliefs about difficulty of tones, it is necessary to note that, according to Neper (1987)'s theory on the nature of beliefs, individual belief is actually stored as an episodic memory and connected to the specific domain for different application aims. Thus it is possible that conflicting beliefs coexist in the same beliefs system. In this case of learning Chinese tones, the specific domains for student to store their beliefs are probably relevant to some misleading of tone instruction, and the pinyin is used as a transliteration tool for pronunciation.

As Liu et al (2011) implied from linguistic and learning perspectives, Chinese tone is a super-segmental element attached to a cluster of phonemes in a syllable. In that sense, they concluded that beginner learners find the integration of tones and syllable difficult to identify. This is consistent with teachers'

beliefs in the current study, as well as findings by Hu and Tian (2012), English-speaking learners are likely to take tone as an isolated unit and learn the tones separately from syllables. Indeed, cognitive studies revealed, the regions of left hemisphere, responsible for processing verbal and logical information, are activated when L1 Chinese listen to Chinese sounds, whereas English listeners used the right hemisphere instead (Klein et al, 2001; Wang, Jongman and Sereno, 2001). In that sense, English listeners treat tone as non-lexical information in their mind. Therefore, beginner learners are actually not aware of tones in changing meanings of words when speaking Chinese. Given that communication is viewed as one of priorities in learning; they are likely to overlook the tones.

Another plausible explanation is from the implications by Lin (1985), that it is better for teachers to draw equal attention to both tones and syllables, than to focus on tones only. In contrast to Lin (1985)'s suggestion, teachers in the current study appeared to drift students' attention away from tones only, emphasising a communicative approach in Chinese teaching. In order to encourage students to "have a go" in speaking, some are tolerant of students pronunciation mistakes. Although, on the other hand, the large majority of teachers believe they still demand correct pronunciation in speaking yet, according to their interviews, the strategy is to postpone this requirement to the later stages. Furthermore, as the introduction of pinyin in Chinese learning, again the tone symbol is merely an "external" component on the top of pinyin spellings in the visual forms. As some students noted in this study, they normally write down the pinyin without tone markers. This issue was also raised by American teacher Sam who learnt pinyin after knowing another transliteration system called Bopomofo. Sam pointed out, *"It is easier to remember the tones if they are reflected in the spelling. You think of a third tone and fourth tone of the same sound as different, which they should be, and you see them differently in your mind."* In that sense, the separated tone symbols in the pinyin system are likely to cause confusion with pronunciation of the

same syllables, or simply to be neglected by learners. This finding echoes Orton's (2008) conclusion that tones could be simply unattended by students when learning how to speak Chinese.

The effective strategies to deal with the difficulty of tones, in both oral reception and production, suggested by students and teachers, can be summarized into three principles-- listening and speaking practice, teacher's corrective feedback, as well as strategy instruction, all of which further implicate a CLT pedagogy of Chinese tones. Listening practice focused on familiarizing variations of tones and pronunciation spoken by different L1 Chinese people from different resources, rather than on the voices of students' teachers only. The issue of Mandarin tone changes is sorted out by practising a list of words with different tone combinations, as well as real speaking in communication. This strategy of intensive input and listen-and-repeat is consistent with the study of Tsai (2011) and Wang and Higgins (2008). It is necessary to point out that some students realise the role of speaking practice in overcoming listening difficulties. As a student in Year 11 noted, only the modelling of proper pronunciation could enable students to recognise sounds when listening to Chinese. This indicates that students with a higher level of experience noticed the importance of attending to tones in Chinese speaking.

Teachers' feedback is another important aspect. Students noted turning to teachers for help if they did not know the tones. Moreover, students' high risk-taking in communication, based on their responses, was derived from their expectations of teachers' corrective feedback. Indeed, as teacher Li pointed out, the intensive correction of six highly frequently used tones makes a change in students' tone production and pronunciation. However, since teachers seemed to prefer communicative approaches to teaching beginners, it is hard to say to what degree they actually focused on correcting students' tone mistakes. This echoes the concerns mentioned in previous studies on CLT, that the major purpose of communication and fluency, to some extent, seemed to be achieved at the expenses of accuracy (Lightbown and Spada,

1990; Williams, 1995). In this case the accuracy of tones was perhaps overlooked at time by both teachers and students.

Strategies instruction refers to students' and teachers' suggestions about developing awareness of tones by visualizing tone markers in pinyin, as well as training in listening skills to catch the gist of sentences.

Considering the disadvantages of pinyin and separated instruction of syllable pronunciation and tones, as discussed above, Tina and Li suggested listening and repeating Chinese sounds directly, such as Chinese songs and rhymes, was a good starting point in learning pronunciation. Pinyin can be introduced later as an additional tool for learners. Such beliefs were also shared by students who suggested starting with characters or listening in the beginning. This is a somewhat new finding, as in most cases researchers tend to take for granted utilizing pinyin transliteration system for pronunciation acquisition and instruction from the very beginning stages (Lin, 1985; Tsai, 2011; Bassetti, 2007). This is also in line with discussions of CLT by Spada (2007), that learners should be exposed to more genuine and authentic target language. In this case, as pinyin is merely a tool of transliteration for Chinese sounds, it is sensible to expose CFL learners to Chinese sounds straight away.

Interestingly, there is one exception. Liu et al (2011) found that presenting pinyin spellings visually before listening to the syllables facilitated learners' attention to the tones, and in turn increased the rate of tone learning. Based on short-term memory theory, Liu et al (2011) explained that, "pinyin served to help fix a representation of the segmental phonemes in mind and further allowing attention to focus on the tone as the spoken syllable was presented" (p.1136). Moreover, Liu et al (2011) concluded that visual contours of tones and auditory input with pinyin spellings work best for tone acquisition. As a matter of fact, the approach that teachers noted in this study, such as using hand gestures or body actions to exemplify the pitch contours of tone markers in pinyin, supports the conclusion in Liu et al (2011)'s study. Teacher

Kathy pointed out a cartoon tone chart with panda pictures was straightforward for pupils to understand and remember the tones. For some students, who had already learnt pinyin in schools, suggested strategies for drawing attention to tones were by “*writing down tone marker along with pinyin spelling*”, or “*visualizing it when speaking*”.

5.3.3 Chinese Characters

Chinese characters were another characteristic of Chinese, and learning difficulties relevant to characters were presented in the beliefs of pupils and teachers. Surprisingly, pupils in this study generally believed Chinese characters could be easy as long as they put in much effort and practice. Although pupils with higher levels of experience noted that some complicated characters were hard to remember, they still showed confidence and enthusiasm in character learning. This finding contrasts with previous studies on the difficulty of Chinese characters from linguistic and cognitive psychology perspectives (Shen, 2005; Lin and Child, 2010; Wang, Perfetti and Liu, 2005). When it comes to the belief studies on characters learning, it also conflicts with the findings in Samimy and Lee (1997), Huang (2000), as well as Mori (1999)’s study about the learning of Japanese kanji, a written script derived from Chinese characters.

The striking finding in this study on pupils’ beliefs was probably to do with pupils’ interest and commitment to learning characters. Indeed, pupils rated the difficulty of character learning as 2.68 in their questionnaires, indicating a perception of challenge (the score is above neutral 2.50). However in the interviews, pupils overwhelmingly expressed their strong interests in learning characters, as well as a willingness to practise and master Chinese characters well. Pupils pointed out, at the beginning stage, the characters they encountered were not too complex, such as numbers, and thus their confidence in learning characters greatly increases. Such affection for learning characters was not mentioned in the previous

studies, and this could be the reason why the current finding differs from previous results in Shimizu and Green (2002), and Dewey (2004) on Japanese kanji learning.

Students' beliefs about the ease of learning characters should not be diminished as naïve. Rather they reflect the optimism of the beginner learner and represent one appropriate strategy in learning. However, it was not the aim of the research to construct experimental control groups to exam the efficacy of the strategy in respect to learning outcomes.

With regard to the difficulties of specific skills related to Chinese characters, total beginner learners believed writing was easier than reading, whereas pupils with more experience of learning disagreed. Teachers in this case seemed to share the beliefs of higher level pupils. In fact, total beginner pupils' beliefs support the study of Kuntz (1996a) on Swahili learning, but contradict most CFL studies which concluded writing was harder than or as hard as other skills (Huang, 2000; Chiang, 2002; Samimy and Lee, 1997; Wang and Higgins, 2008). The reasons provided by total beginners in this study were difficulties in understanding unknown characters and identifying similar characters. They thought reading Chinese differs to that of other alphabetic languages in which cognates or similar sounds helped them guess the meaning. In Chinese, there was no such clue available to know what the character means if they had never met it before. Indeed, previous studies concluded that the sound of character was unlikely to be indicated from its orthographic form, with a low degree of validity (Everson, 1998; Shen, 2005; Sung and Wu, 2011; Zhu, 1987).

Chinese reading requires decoding more detailed visual information in characters than that of alphabetic letters (Lin and Childs, 2010; Perfetti and Wang, 2006; Tan et al, 2005). As Perfetti and Wang (2006) noted, the orthographic difference between two characters can be subtle in strokes. Additional attention and deep processing are demanded for English-speaking learners. However, high level pupils noted some

radical cues benefited their Chinese reading. As pupils stated in interviews, *“I can recognise them because the radicals tell me about that”* and *“since we have learnt quite a few now, we know radicals which share between multiple different characters”*. This supports previous studies by Ke (1996) and Shen (2008) with more experienced readers, as they had developed some orthographic awareness in learning. It could also explain why total beginners find no clue to refer to in reading, simply due to their limited Chinese learning experience.

As for the difficulty of writing, beginner learners in this study believed it was easier than reading, because of the simple characters they had learnt and, again, their interests in writing practice. However, a few total beginners in interview noted writing characters from memory could be hard. More experienced pupils pointed out some complicated characters were hard to memorise. In that sense, comparing with reading characters involving dealing with unknown information, and thus requiring deep processing of details, the difficulty in writing merely lies in the memorisation of the form of characters. And this could be compensated easily by practice, from total beginner learners’ perspectives, as what they encountered at the beginning stage was a limited number of rather simple characters. When it comes to high level pupils, according to their interview comments, *“we have gone through so many characters, so it is impossible for us to remember every single one”*. Interestingly, such difficulty in recalling characters is not a problem at all for total beginners, in that a Year 7 pupil noted, *“writing characters straight from mind is hard.”*

It is indicated that perhaps the perceived lesser difficulty in writing characters is the over-confidence held by total beginners, in terms of their views about the nature of characters, and their ways of memorising. Many pupils noted characters are *“logical”* and resemble the real objects in the world. Thus it was fascinating to know the origins of characters, and think of images and stories linking the shapes and meanings of characters. Thus remembering characters, as a pupil stated, is simply *“to train your brain to*

remember pictures”. In fact, the features of Chinese characters and making use of their pictographic forms are proposed in many studies (Kuo and Kooper, 2004; Lam, 2011; Li, 1996; Xing, 2006). In that sense, pupils in the current study shared the same beliefs with researchers about the characteristics of characters, and even put their thoughts into the practice of memorisation.

It is necessary to point out that, for total beginner learners the characters they referred to in writing and reading tasks were not the same characters. The difficulty in reading was mainly about unknown characters. On the other hand, the characters for writing were ones they had known, in that it is impossible to ask learners to write down from memory something they had never come across. It also leads to another point about the definition of reading and writing in this study. Based on pupils’ and teachers’ interviews, reading could refer to both character recognition and sentence understanding. Similarly, writing includes producing characters and writing composition. It is perhaps reasonable to believe that, in this study, when asked for their views about reading, pupils tended to retrieve their memories of reading sentences where unknown words impeded their understanding. As for difficulty of writing, since most learners were at the beginning level, they talked more about writing characters rather than composition. Only a small group of pupils at a high level noted sentence order and linking words in writing short passages.

Stroke order is another important aspect pointed out by pupils and teachers. One of the difficulties in remembering and writing characters, is reported to be the stroke order. Interestingly, most participants pointed out that following the correct stroke order was necessary and benefited writing. However, pupils generally found it almost impossible for them to remember all the orders except the basic writing rules. Teachers believed writing rules were important, yet seemed not to demand too much in respect to right stroke order. The plausible explanation for that, as pointed out in Guan et al (2011)’s study, is that the

shape of characters along with a fixed sequence of strokes in writing place a huge memory burden on learners. Thus it was not feasible to add more difficulty to learners at the beginning stages. Such consideration is also pointed out in Mei and Nola's interviews, and indeed they suggested postponing the requirement of stroke order until the later stages when pupils had gained more experience.

The value of stroke order that both teachers and some pupils cherished, supported some previous studies on memory and mental representations in the neuropsychology field. Luo et al (2010), and Qiu and Zhou (2010) pointed out, consistent stroke sequence in writing enhanced the sensor-motor memory and facilitated handwriting automatism in handwriting. Moreover, some teachers pointed out, it would also be easier for pupils to read the cursive writing by L1 Chinese people. Unfortunately, almost none of the research available explained why the standard fixed sequence of order was necessary for writing characters. Yet teachers' comments in this study about cursive handwriting recognition probably indicate a role in developing orthographic awareness of characters.

Thus the strategies the pupils and teachers pointed out for learning characters, some of which has been discussed above, were primarily writing practice, making up images or stories of characters, and practising different language skills, such as making flashcards, singing songs and learning lyrics. It is necessary to note that underlying all these specific approaches to learning, there was a tendency for teacher to believe that character learning was not a tedious task but could be very interesting and fun, and could develop pupils' orthographic awareness. Moreover, from some teachers' comments that writing characters was not a mechanical repetition without understanding or thinking, meaningful communication should be involved via activities, even for the learning of written language. This is actually in line with teachers' preference for CLT in Chinese characters mentioned previously. CLT is generally discussed in the pedagogy of speaking and listening, yet in this study, it suggests reading and writing could also adapt

to CLT approaches, through communicative activities and meaningful analysis.

As for pupils, the principles behind their beliefs about character learning were mainly their writing practice, which was somewhat less communicative than that of their teachers. Indeed, such discrepancies were revealed in their answers on the questionnaire as well. Pupils in this study, as mentioned many times, were keen to learn and write Chinese characters. Pupils' preference and strategies for character learning, raises an argument that CLT should be adapted. In that sense, to some degree controlled practice might be needed for pupils to strengthen their memory of characters.

5.4 Stereotypes and Expectations

Some stereotypes and expectations were found in this study, in terms of L1 and L2 Chinese teachers, pupils' discipline and behaviour in schools, communicative language teaching as well as attitudes to learning.

5.4.1 L1 and L2 Chinese teachers

Many Chinese teachers are L1 Chinese speakers, as found in this study, so the question of which kind of Chinese teachers, in terms of their language background (i.e. L1 or L2 Chinese speakers) pupils would like to have seemed to be pointless. Yet interestingly, although a large majority of pupils and teachers agreed with the questionnaire statement that, "*it is good to learn Chinese from a L1 speaker of Chinese*", pupils' responses to interviews varied based on personal learning experience. Pupils who have been taught by L1 Chinese teachers were likely to prefer L1 teachers. Some of them even expressed a lack of trust in L2 Chinese teachers' language competence. A pupil stated, "*if English teachers try to learn Chinese and find it hard, it would be harder for them to teach us*". This is in line with findings in the study of Medgyes (2001) on teachers of English. Low language proficiency was perceived by all the

participants (L1 and L2 teachers of English) as a disadvantage, and limiting L2 teachers' use of the target language in class. Pupils had never seen an English or other L2 Chinese learner speaking fluent Chinese. Unlike pupils' worries as to that, some L2 teachers realised their ability to be a role model when speaking fluent Chinese in class. This is a new finding which was not shown in the study of Medgyes (2001). Thus the conflicting beliefs between pupils' and L2 Chinese teachers' indicate a lack of role model of Chinese speakers in some English schools.

In my study, pupils who started Chinese with L2 teachers did not think having a L1 Chinese speaker as their Mandarin teacher was a good choice. These learners had some confidence in their L2 teachers' Chinese. Some said, *"Miss takes a course and she knows how to speak."* A high level experienced pupil noted, *"a L1 teacher probably is better for intermediate and advanced learners, yet for the beginner learners a L2 teacher is ok"*. The preferences for L1 or L2 teachers in this study challenge the stereotypes that only the L1 speaker is acceptable for teaching foreign languages. All pupils, no matter whether they preferred L1 or L2 teachers, noted that they felt comfortable with their teachers of Chinese and believed they were very supportive of their CFL learning. L2 teachers viewed their Chinese learning experience as an advantage in teaching, in that they were more aware of pupils' difficulties and could explain better in English. Such beliefs were also mentioned in the study of Medgyes (2001) about L2 English teachers.

In that sense, it seemed that as long as pupils could learn the target language well with their teacher's instruction, teachers' language background was of less significance in their preference for teachers. This is in line with previous studies about what makes a good FL teacher (Ghanem, 2015; Medgyes, 2001; Shulman, 1986). As Medgyes (2001) pointed out, both L1 and L2 teachers have "an equal chance of success", and "since each group had its own strengths and weakness, they would complement each other well in any school" (p.439). Indeed, following L1 Chinese teacher Li's suggestion in interviews,

co-teaching of L1 and L2 Chinese teachers might be a good pattern.

This provides implications for teacher employment and training. Schools should recruit teachers of Chinese based on their professional expertise, regardless of their language background. Moreover, collaborations and communications should be encouraged in teacher training programmes and in teaching practice at schools. If “EBacc” could become a reality, we simply need more teachers of FL languages, including Chinese, and thus the recruitment criteria might need to be reconsidered rather than just focusing on L1 teachers who can speak better Chinese.

5.4.2 Student Behaviour

With regard to student behaviour and classroom management, it seems that students did not think it was a challenge for teachers, yet both L1 and L2 teachers expressed their struggles with poor student discipline in some schools. As a L2 teacher Tina stated, *“Lots of difficulties, and getting the lessons started, really poor behaviour, disrupted behaviour, sometimes violence in the middle of the class, just a nightmare”*.

This was heavily influenced by the specific schools. The challenge of classroom management pointed out by teachers of Chinese, contradicts the stereotypic beliefs that only L1 Chinese teachers, particularly those recruited from China (i.e. FLA and Hanban teachers) have experienced such difficulties. The experience of L1 Chinese teachers struggling with student behaviour can be seen in the survey report by CILT (2007) of a group of FLA who had no idea of English students’ expectations or useful strategies for classroom management, and also in Wang (2011) about some L1 Chinese teachers’ complaint of poor students discipline in English schools.

Studies also showed that, the challenges that L1 Chinese teachers encountered were attributed to their cultural beliefs about the role of teachers and students (Li, 2003; Jin and Cortazzi, 1996). In Chinese

culture, which is heavily influenced by the Confucius education principle, teachers should be well respected, and learning is students' own responsibility if they want to be successful. In that sense, student behaviour might not be an issue in Chinese schools. Indeed, this was pointed out in a student's interview in my study, that "*Chinese schools are very strict and students are supposed to be well-behaved*".

However, when it comes to CFL teaching in English schools, from the perspectives of most teachers and headteachers, the incongruence of beliefs between Chinese and western culture might be the main factor that leads to the tensions of L1 Chinese teacher's class management (CILT, 2007; Wang, 2011). Such common beliefs are exemplified the other way around. In the study of Kim (2011) in a Korean university, L1 English teachers were amazed to find that Korean students were quiet and exceptionally well-behaved in class.

In addition, in this study, some L2 Chinese teachers in interviews pointed out their expectations of student discipline could be somewhat unrealistic. This was due to the gap between the current situation in schools in terms of students behaviour and approach of language teaching, and their educational experience years ago, as well as the ever changing education policy in the UK context, as stated by local English-speaking teacher Nola and Tina that, "*difficulty with our system is every time the change of government.*" This suggests a need for providing continuing teacher training courses and workshops for teachers from L1 and L2 background, to update their knowledge of education policies and current situations in the specific school context, and accordingly renew their expectations of student behaviour.

5.4.3 Communicative Teaching Approaches

In this study, findings from the questionnaire showed that teachers of Chinese tended to believe in the importance of both communicative and non-communicative aspects of Chinese learning. All teachers

believed communication was more important than learning to read and write. However, they also thought learning the rules of writing was essential in Chinese learning, suggesting an inclination towards supporting learning of form. In terms of learning and teaching approaches, teachers showed a preference for communicative orientations. They suggested students should take risks in speaking from the start. Providing students with sufficient language exposure was encouraged, and meaningful activities should be conducted in the limited class time.

The complex pattern of CLT shared by L1 and L2 Chinese teachers, conflicts with the findings of Haley and Ferro (2011) that L1 Chinese teachers newly arrived from China tended to emphasise grammar-based rather than communication-based instruction. It also contradicts the discussion in the study of Medgyes (2001) that L2 teachers of English tend to use rather less flexible approaches which mainly focused on grammar rules and language accuracy, due to their lower language proficiency than L1 teachers, and in turn become less confident in using the target language. In this study, both L1 and L2 teachers showed a communicative teaching orientation in interviews. For instance, teacher Amelie of French origin emphasised the use of target languages in class. Some other L2 teachers noted learning Chinese through meaningful and interactive activities.

Nevertheless, in this study, teachers' concerns about character learning and teaching by the use of CLT were in line with the results found in Wang (2011), that L1 Chinese teachers doubted the role of interactive communication in learning Chinese written script. This indicates that the features of Chinese characters might be a factor affecting teachers' beliefs. The logographic nature of characters and strict writing orders might limit the implementation of CLT through communication. Although teachers in interviews emphasised meaningful practice and memorising characters via various activities, it seemed that teachers did not talk about the details of how to achieve the purpose of communication in teaching

practice and how to support students to learn the writing skills (i.e. character production in this case). This leads to an important issue about the interpretation of CLT and its application to learning reading and writing, which has been misinterpreted for a long time (Spada, 2007). Chinese teachers in this study appeared to have showed communicative orientations in general, but they also had concerns about teaching characters via CLT. This further suggests that, a distinct CLT pedagogy should be established with the consideration of the specific features of Chinese, rather than simply adapting a generic CLT approach which was used in ELT or other foreign languages.

In addition, according to Borg (2003), teachers' beliefs are closely related to their schooling, professional training, classroom practice and contextual factors. In this study, although L1 Chinese teachers had been brought up in China and received Chinese education since primary school, when they came to the UK and teach Chinese, their classroom teaching practice, professional training, and contexts in English schools also affected their beliefs about how to teach Chinese. Indeed, many teachers in interviews noted they had had to adjust their teaching approaches to meet L1 English pupils' needs. They also noticed the difference in the school system and teaching principles between the UK and China. Moreover, L1 Chinese teachers noted that a shift of beliefs from a Chinese context to English schools was a long process along with their teaching practice and a deep understanding of English culture and school systems. Given all L1 Chinese teachers interviewed had been in the UK for more than a year, and they were open-minded and eager to adjust and develop their beliefs by constantly evaluating their teaching after lessons, it is sensible to say that, L1 Chinese teachers conflicted with the stereotypical thought pointed out in Wang (2011) and Yang (2008) that, all L1 Chinese teachers tend to use a non-communicative teaching approach due to their Chinese background and schooling in China.

5.4.4 Memorisation and Hard Work

Both L1 and L2 Chinese teachers emphasised the essential role of memorisation and repetition in learning Chinese. However, they did not show such expectations of their pupils in the process of learning. The conflicting beliefs held by Chinese teachers were probably due to the limited time given to Chinese learning in English secondary schools. Chinese teaching was taking place in a crowded curriculum. Pupils did not have enough class time to learn Chinese. In that sense, it seems that the beliefs of Chinese teachers were realistic.

Although teachers of Chinese seemed not to have high expectations of their L1 English pupils from England in terms of persistence and commitment to learning Chinese, they still believed hard work and memorisation were significant in learning. Moreover, teachers believed that, as for L1 English pupils from England, putting effort into repetitive practice and memorisation was simply not their way of learning in a British context. This is consistent with the previous discussions about ways of learning in western and Chinese cultures. Li (2003, 2005) identified the aim of learning in western culture as “mind orientation” (p.191). That is, learning is to seek knowledge of the world and thus individual creativity and enthusiasm towards tasks were largely encouraged in the society. However, pupils’ interests in learning were likely to be frustrated if the task was too difficult to conquer (Li, 2005). Indeed, according to teachers’ interviews, Chinese language, especially Chinese characters, was one of the major difficulties of learning Chinese for English-speaking learners. Besides, doing homework was another challenge for them, partly because of the limited time, and most importantly, because pupils were not used to doing lots of homework after school, compared with their counterpart peers in China. This could explain why some teachers suggested designing activities, in order to draw pupils’ attention to and interests in learning. Even for “unavoidable repetition”, as teacher Sam said, such as characters learning and writing practice, it was

necessary to make it fascinating and motivating by providing rewards after the task.

Interpretations of ability in and effort towards learning in western and Chinese culture was probably another factor affecting teachers' expectations of pupils. According to Li (2003), western people believed that personal inherent ability in learning is a quality that "enables him or her to learn, rather than something which increases through learning" (Li, 2003, p. 265). This is supported in this study by some L1 and L2 teachers' comments on pupils' ability. They noted special ability, such as "*photographic memory for visual information*" and "*tuned to pitches*" may exist for learning Chinese. Such beliefs are also in line with a "fixed mindset" that individuals' talents in language aptitude play a major role in their FL learning.

However, when it came to pupils' beliefs about learning strategies, L1 English pupils from England in this study tended to believe in somewhat traditional ways of learning in Chinese culture, such as memorisation, or as what Dweck (2006) identified "growth mindset". They expressed their demands for making an effort and working hard in Chinese learning. Some pupils who were passionate about learning Chinese characters pointed out doing extra work, such as copying characters, making flashcards in their spare time. They did not think special ability and personal intelligence helped with learning. Given the evidence in pupil questionnaires and interviews, pupils in this study focused much on persistence and commitment to learning Chinese, which is in line with Li (2003), and Jin and Cortazzi's (2006)'s discussion on Confucius principles of learning in Chinese culture. It also echoes the "growth mindset" proposed by Dweck (2006) that personal abilities in learning can be developed by hard work and concerted effort.

This also demonstrated the argument by Mercer and Ryan (2009) that pupils' mindset is not a "simple dichotomous division" of either a fixed or growth one (p.3). Under certain circumstance, it can be

changed from one mindset to another to a certain extent. In this case, teachers' beliefs that effort and hard work was a significant factor in successful CFL learning largely affected their students' beliefs about the nature of and strategies for CFL learning, in the English school settings.

This offers some implications for educators about appropriate ways of learning from cross-cultural perspectives. The "growth mindset" developed by western researchers had actually already been put into practice in Chinese society for many decades. This indicates that Chinese and western views about learning in general, and how to best learn a FL in this case, can lead to more comprehensive theories of learning, in the current context of globalization.

5.5 Implications for Policy and Practice

Although some suggestions have been made in each sections above, there are some implications for policy and practice of teaching and learning Chinese which it is necessary to emphasise here. First of all, context is a crucial element in understanding pupil and teacher beliefs. Context refers to the general educational systems and policies of the country, individual school environment, as well as specific language classrooms. Both L1 and L2 Chinese teachers, as discussed above, were aware of the role of context in developing their expectations of pupils and teaching approaches. This study revealed that L1 Chinese teachers were keen to understand the complicated context in the UK, and L2 Chinese teachers also suggested updating their obsolete beliefs based on the current contextual information. Moreover, for policy makers and school headteachers, understanding both the broad and specific context of Chinese teaching and learning was a priority in designing the principles of a Chinese language curriculum, as well as language learning and teacher training programmes.

Secondly, it is suggested that the characteristics of Chinese language and language learning should be

taken into consideration in the adaption of CLT, curriculum and assessment development. As the findings of this study showed, apart from contextual factors, language itself was also an essential factor that affected teacher and pupil beliefs about learning and teaching. Unlike teachers' expectations, memorisation strategies for learning were favoured by L1 English pupils from England. This is because they realised the special features of Chinese characters, and felt fascinated in writing and memorising them. On the other hand, teachers of Chinese preferred to use communicative approaches in learning and teaching. Therefore, the teaching of Chinese, in the settings where CLT is commonly used in other FLs, should consider the features of Chinese language, in terms of Chinese tones and characters. As pupils are keen to learn how to read and write characters, it suggests that the implementation of CLT, instead of only focusing on listening and speaking, should also take reading and writing into account. In addition, national curriculum and assessment for foreign language learning should also be language-specific. Given that the framework for the current Chinese language curriculum is basically borrowed from that for European languages, it is an urgent task for policy makers and researchers to work on the speciality of the Chinese language, in order to establish a feasible framework for Chinese teaching. Besides, given the "washback effect" that the assessment of a subject shapes the curriculum that is taught (Cheng and Watanabe, 2004), the assessment of Chinese language should focus not only on speaking and listening, but also on reading and writing. In that sense, it might push teachers to pay more attention to character learning, which appeared to be one of the key interests for pupils.

The finding of this study revealed that teacher and pupil beliefs were not only congruent with each other in some aspects, but also mismatched in other aspects. Moreover, this study showed a rather complex cross-cultural interaction in terms of beliefs about ways of teaching and learning. L1 Chinese teachers tended to be communicative-orientated in teaching as L2 Chinese teachers did. L1 English pupils from

England were likely to agree with the role of memorisation and repetitive in learning characters. This indicates the importance of mutual communication between teachers and pupils, L1 and L2 Chinese teachers, as well as two cultures (i.e. western and Chinese cultures). The study found that western ways of learning in terms of motivation-orientations, appeared to fit well with Chinese ways of learning in terms of persistence and commitment from pupils' perspectives. It indicated that Chinese learning and teaching was a cross-cultural activity, and that effective strategies from both western and Chinese cultures can be utilised. In that sense, when it comes to Chinese teaching practice, teachers suggested being open-minded to different approaches to teaching. It is also necessary for them to listen to pupils' voices about their interests and effective strategies, and accordingly adapt suitable teaching approaches to meet pupils' expectations. As for policy makers and headteachers, it suggests more professional organisations for school teachers could be established, to provide more opportunities for teachers to exchange their ideas and reflections about teaching.

5.6 Limitations and Caution

This study shed insight into beliefs about Chinese learning and teaching in the cross-cultural context in the UK, which has seldom been explored in other studies. However, the results have to be interpreted with caution due to some limitations and constraints. One of the limitations is about the instrument for collecting quantitative data in this study. There were not many instruments about beliefs available in this field. The BALLI chosen for this study was adopted from many previous studies and a satisfactory reliability and validity was identified (Diab, 2006; Hong, 2006; Peacock, 1999, 2001; Wu, 2010; Wang et al., 2006; Yang, 1992). However, the BALLI designed by Horwitz (1988) originally aimed at investigating beliefs about foreign language learning for American students. In this study, the FL specific refers to Chinese languages, rather than the European languages examined in previous studies. It could be

argued that some statements of BALLI might not be quite suitable for addressing Chinese language due to its characteristics. As discussed in the methodology chapter, the BALLI used in this study was modified and some statements about Chinese language learning were added. Perhaps this could compensate for the limitations of BALLI to some extent. It is reasonable also to make comparisons between Chinese language learning with other FLs in previous studies by using the same instruments.

Another point worth noting is that the respondents in most BALLI studies were adult language learners. In this study, school pupils with an age range of 11-18 answered the questionnaire. Therefore, some wording of statements might have been hard for teenage learners to understand. This has been taken into account by researcher when modifying BALLI for this study. However, some wordings which were not brought up by pupils in pilot study, turned out to affect pupils' responses on one or two items. For example, "the aptitude" used for asking pupils' language ability seemed to be too technical for school pupils, thus the result of this statement was explained with caution, and further analysis of this finding can be seen in Chapter 4.

The study found that culture, language and individual experiences affected beliefs about teaching and learning. As for pupils, quantitative results revealed that different levels of learning experiences, defined by length of leaning in this study, had an impact on their beliefs. It is necessary to point out that the comparison was a cross-sectional sample collected over a certain period of time. It is difficult for the researcher to determine whether pupils' beliefs changed or remained unchanged along with their length of learning. It is only reasonable to conclude that pupils with certain beliefs about learning, such as that some characters can be hard and that handwriting practice was useful, were those who carried on with their Chinese learning. Future work is needed by undertaking a longitudinal study. However, the level of experience does not mean pupils' actual language proficiency level of Chinese, which is hard to obtain

due to the lack of authorized and consistent assessment in Chinese language. It might be worthwhile comparing the pupils' Chinese language level with their beliefs in further research.

In addition, the study showed that pupils generally did not think Chinese tones and characters were difficult, which contradicted their teachers' beliefs. Given individual beliefs cannot be judged as right or wrong (Borg, 2003; Horwitz, 1988; Nespors, 1987), it would be interesting to examine if pupils' claimed beliefs are realistic in their real learning. This would require studies on the assessment of pupils' performance with comparison between their beliefs and actual learning results. Nevertheless, this is beyond the scope of the current study as beliefs are the core topic here. Similarly, the relationship of teachers' beliefs and their classroom practice is worthy to be addressed in further research.

The core theme of this study has been beliefs, teacher beliefs and pupil beliefs about learning Chinese. Throughout the thesis beliefs have been shown to be complex both in how they are measured and in how they have been seen as impacting on teaching and learning. An individual's beliefs can be both dynamic and inconsistent. Belief can be focused on the cognitive domain but also have affective and evaluative dimensions. Beliefs, even conflicting ones can coexist in a system, and beliefs can change. Beliefs are influential but their influence needs to be seen in a wider context (Borg, 2003). In this study that context included curriculum requirements, surrounding classroom practice, previous experiences and professional preparation. There was also a wider context, that of systems of schooling and indeed the promoting of the teaching of Chinese. Beliefs are important but they are not the only influence on what happens when teaching and learning and there is much more that needs to be studied about the teaching of Chinese in English schools. Just as Pajares (1992) noted, belief was a "messy construct" but understanding the effect of beliefs on actions was significant (p.307).



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Appendix 1 Chinese Beliefs Questionnaire for Students

The purpose of this survey is to help us find out more effective ways of teaching and learning Chinese. Your feedback is important to us. Please answer the questions below. This survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary, and your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous.

Part 1 About You

1. Your first language is...?
 - A. English
 - B. French
 - C. Chinese
 - D. Others, please specify_____
2. Your age is...?
 - A. 7-11
 - B. 12-15
 - C. 16-18
 - D. 19-22
3. Are you...?
 - A. Male
 - B. Female
4. Are you a...?
 - A. School pupil
 - B. University student
 - C. Part-time student of Chinese
5. How long have you been studying Chinese?
 - A. Less than a year
 - B. 1-2 years
 - C. 3-5 years
 - D. 6-9 years
 - E. 10 years or longer

6. At what level do you think you are regarding the Chinese language skills listed below?

| | Total Beginner | Experienced Beginner | Intermediate | Advanced |
|------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| In general | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Speaking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Listening | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Reading | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Writing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

7. Have you learnt other foreign languages other than Chinese?
 - A. No
 - B. Yes, please specify the language you have learnt:
8. Have you been to China?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No

If yes, how long did you stay in China?
What was the purpose of your stay?
9. Why did you choose Chinese instead of other foreign languages?
10. What is your goal(s) of learning Chinese?
11. Do you think what you are learning in your Chinese class is valuable to you?

Not at all 1-----2-----3-----4 very valuable
12. Do you enjoy learning Chinese?

Not at all 1-----2-----3-----4 very much

Part 2 Is Chinese difficult to learn?

Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|
| 1. Learning Chinese is not as difficult as learning European languages (e.g. French, Spanish). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Some languages are easier to learn than others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak Chinese very well. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Recognising the Chinese character is easier than writing the character. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. It is easier to speak than understand Chinese. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. It is easier to read and write Chinese than to speak and understand it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. I find it confusing that Chinese words have same pronunciations but different characters and meanings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. Matching pronunciation of words with characters is very difficult. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. How difficult do you find learning Chinese in the following aspects? | Very Difficult | Difficult | Easy | Very Easy |
| Tones | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Pinyin (e.g. nǐ hǎo) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Vocabulary | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Grammar rules | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Chinese characters | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Chinese language in general | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. If some spent one hour a day learning Chinese, how long do you think it will take him/her to become fluent? | 1-2 years | 3-5 years | 6-10 years | More than 10 years |

If you have other comments on the difficulty of Chinese learning, please share them here:

Part 3 What are good language learners like?

Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 1. It is easier for children than adults to learn Chinese. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn Chinese. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. It is easier for someone who already speaks an Asian language to learn Chinese. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. | I have the ability to learn Chinese. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. | Girls are better than boys at learning Chinese. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. | English students are very good at learning Chinese. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. | How much students learn from the Chinese course mostly depends on the quality of the teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. | I have the ability to learn foreign language. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. | Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. | Everyone can learn to speak Chinese. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. | Students who do not do well in the Chinese class simply do not work hard enough. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. | People who are good at Maths and Science are not good at learning Chinese. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. | People who speak Chinese are very intelligent. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. | It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. | Girls are better than boys at learning a foreign language. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. | Some people are just born smart to learn a foreign language. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. | How much you can improve your proficiency in Chinese depends on your effort. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. | The really smart students don't have to work hard to be able to speak Chinese well. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

If you have other comments on good language learners, please share them here:

Part 4 What is important in learning a language?

Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-----|-------------------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 1. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| English. | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 11. It is better to begin Chinese learning with individual characters. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. Learning to write Chinese characters is a waste of time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. I would like to learn Chinese from a teacher who is a native speaker of Chinese. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. It is important to know some basic writing rules (i.e. types of strokes, stroke order) of Chinese characters before learning to write. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

If you have other comments on the importance in learning a language, please share them here.

Part 5 What are your views about learning strategies?

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------|----------------|
| 1. It is important to repeat and practice a lot. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. If I heard someone speaking Chinese, I would go up to them so that I could practice speaking Chinese. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. It is ok to guess if you don't know a word in Chinese. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. I feel self-conscious speaking Chinese in front of other people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. When studying Chinese words, I try to think how each character is related to the meaning of the whole word. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. It is important to repeat the sound of words several times in order to say it correctly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. It is ok to guess the meaning of the character if you only know part of it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. Learning Chinese characters involves a lot of handwriting practice and memorisation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. It is important to speak Chinese with correct pronunciation and intonation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. You should not say anything in Chinese until you can say it correctly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. When you came across a word you do not know, the surrounding context gives you a good idea of what it means. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. I do not mind making mistakes if I can learn to communicate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. I am aware of my tones when speaking Chinese. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. When I study a new character, I try to recognise its parts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. It is necessary to have some mechanical grammar drills exercises. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. Sometimes you just have to learn a new word as a whole | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|
| | even if the meanings of component character seem to be unrelated to the whole meaning. | | | | |
| 18. | It is ok to guess the sound of the character if you only know part of it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. | I pay attention to my grammar when speaking Chinese. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. | It is important to practice in language laboratory with audio-visual and e-learning materials. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

If you have other comments on learning strategies, please share them here:

Part 6 Why do you learn a language?

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

| | | SD | D | A | SA |
|----|--|----|---|---|----|
| 1. | If I am able to speak Chinese very well, I will have many opportunities to use it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. | I believe English people think that it is important to speak Chinese. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. | I would like to learn Chinese so that I can get to know Chinese people better. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. | If I learn Chinese I will know more about how other people think. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. | I would like to learn Chinese characters so that I can understand Chinese materials. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. | If I learn Chinese I will learn more about my own language. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. | I don't want to learn how to write Chinese characters because it is boring. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. | I believe Chinese people think that it is important to learn characters. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. | If I learn to speak Chinese very well it will help me get a good job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Appendix 2 Chinese Beliefs Questionnaire for Teachers

Part 1 About You

1. Your first language is...?
 - A. English
 - B. Chinese
 - C. Other, please specify_____
2. Are you...?
 - A. Male B. Female
3. Are you a ...? (You can tick all that apply)
 - A. British teacher of Chinese (non-Chinese heritage)
 - B. British teacher of Chinese (Chinese heritage)
 - C. Primary teacher of Chinese
 - D. Teacher of Chinese in secondary school (not towards exam)
 - E. Teacher of Chinese for GCSE (all children)
 - F. Teacher of Chinese for GCSE (Chinese heritage children)
 - G. Teacher of Chinese for university-level course (Chinese major)
 - H. Teacher of Chinese for university-level course (non-Chinese major)
 - I. Other, please specify_____
4. How have you learnt your Chinese? (You can tick all that apply)
 - A. Chinese is my first language
 - B. I learnt Mandarin Chinese at primary and secondary school
 - C. I studied Mandarin Chinese at university
 - D. I trained as a teacher of Chinese
 - E. I learnt Chinese by myself
 - F. Other, please specify_____
5. What is your degree? (You can tick all that apply)
 - A. Teaching Chinese as a second language
 - B. TESOL
 - C. Linguistics
 - D. Chinese literature
 - E. Other, please specify_____
6. How long have you been teaching Chinese?
 - A. Less than a year
 - B. 1-2 years
 - C. 3-5 years
 - D. 6-9 years
 - E. 10 years or longer
7. How long have you been teaching Chinese in the UK?
 - A. Less than 3 months
 - B. 3-6 months
 - C. 7 months- 1 year
 - D. 1-2 years
 - E. 3-5 years
 - F. 6-9 years
 - G. 10 years or longer

8. How far do you agree or disagree that the statements below represent the challenges in teaching Chinese?

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------|----------------|
| I do not know the syllabus well. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Lack of textbooks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Students do not behave as I expect | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I am unsure of students' expectations of lessons. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Planning lessons is difficult. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Assessing progress is difficult. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| It is hard to get support from colleagues. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Students do not do enough homework. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Students do not memorise work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| There are not enough lessons in the week | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Lack of parental support and encouragement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Students are lack of motivation of learning | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Less opportunity for students to use Chinese outside of class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

9. If you have other comments on challenges in Chinese learning, please share them here:

Part 2-6 is the same as student survey, except for some differences in wording.

Appendix 3 Pupil Interview Guidelines

1. Which year are you in?
2. How long have you been learning Mandarin? Could you tell me your previous experience of Mandarin learning, like what year, how long, your Mandarin teacher (Ns or non-Ns)...
3. Have you learnt other foreign language before other than Mandarin? What is it?
4. Do you notice any differences between learning FL and Mandarin? What are they?
5. What interests you most when you learning Mandarin? Why do you find it is interesting?
(Could be characters, completely new and different cultures...)
6. What have you found difficult in learning Mandarin? Why do you think this?
(Could be tones, characters, speaking also related to tones and pronunciation, lack of time or practice...)
7. In your lessons do you do Speaking? What?
In your lessons do you do Listening? What?
In your lessons do you do Reading? What?
In your lessons do you do Writing? What?
Which are most difficult? Why?
Do you have any good ways to master the skills?
(Perhaps bring up issues of tone, characters...)
8. Have you been learning Chinese characters? How have you found it? What is it like? (use my character learning experience as a native Chinese to probe more) (Perhaps raising discussions about different ways of learning, learning for fun V.S. hardworking and memorisation) Learning Mandarin requires a lot of practice and memorisation, to what degree and in what aspect?
9. When you began Chinese, did you learn pinyin? Did you learn Chinese characters? Did you learn spoken words and phrases?
If you had to tell a younger pupil how to start Chinese, what should they start with? pinyin? Characters? Just speaking? Why do you think this?
10. Is your teacher of Chinese a Chinese person? Is he/she from China? Do you think this makes a difference to how they teach? Would you choose a Chinese person or a British person as your teacher if you had a choice? What is your teacher like?

Appendix 4 Teacher Interview Guidelines

1. How long have you been teaching Mandarin? How did you become a Mandarin teacher in English school?
2. In terms of Mandarin Chinese, do you find anything that your students may find difficult to learn? If there is any, how did you deal with that? Could do give me some examples?
For example:
 - a) Language structures (pronunciation, tones, homophones, words, characters, grammar), which are most difficult?
 - b) Language skills (listening, speaking, reading characters, writing characters and paragraphs, memorizing), which are most difficult?
3. In terms of teaching Mandarin in English school, do you notice any challenges of teaching English pupils?
For example:
 - a) behavior issue, homework, working hard and making effort (perhaps native Chinese speakers want to compare it with pupils in China);
 - b) paying attention, etc.
4. In your class, do you think your students are willing to take risks of speaking out, no matter how good their pronunciation is? (ex, sing a song, performing a dialogue in front of class etc). To what degree do you think a good student should be a risk-taker in speaking? Why do you think this?
5. How do you think the role of practice and memorisation in learning Mandarin? To what degree and in what aspect do you think so? Any good way to help them memorise?
6. For the beginning Mandarin learners, what should they start first with, pinyin, characters or speaking? Why do you think this?
7. There are three kinds of Mandarin teacher in English schools: English person as Mandarin teacher, Native Chinese person as Mandarin teacher and Hanban teacher or teaching assistant. Do you think this makes a difference to how they teach? What the advantages and disadvantages of these three kinds of teacher?

TABLE 8.1 SAMPLE SIZE, CONFIDENCE LEVELS AND CONFIDENCE INTERVALS FOR RANDOM SAMPLES

| Population size | Confidence level 90% | | | | | Confidence level 95% | | | | | Confidence level 99% | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| | Confidence interval 5% | | Confidence interval 4% | | Confidence interval 3% | | Confidence interval 5% | | Confidence interval 4% | | Confidence interval 3% | | Confidence interval 5% | | Confidence interval 4% | | Confidence interval 3% | |
| | 27 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 |
| 30 | 42 | 45 | 47 | 48 | 48 | 48 | 48 | 48 | 48 | 48 | 48 | 48 | 48 | 48 | 48 | 48 | 48 | 48 |
| 50 | 59 | 64 | 68 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 |
| 75 | 73 | 81 | 88 | 91 | 91 | 91 | 91 | 91 | 91 | 91 | 91 | 91 | 91 | 91 | 91 | 91 | 91 | 91 |
| 100 | 83 | 94 | 104 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 | 108 |
| 120 | 97 | 111 | 125 | 132 | 132 | 132 | 132 | 132 | 132 | 132 | 132 | 132 | 132 | 132 | 132 | 132 | 132 | 132 |
| 150 | 115 | 136 | 158 | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 | 168 |
| 200 | 130 | 157 | 188 | 196 | 196 | 196 | 196 | 196 | 196 | 196 | 196 | 196 | 196 | 196 | 196 | 196 | 196 | 196 |
| 250 | 143 | 176 | 215 | 221 | 221 | 221 | 221 | 221 | 221 | 221 | 221 | 221 | 221 | 221 | 221 | 221 | 221 | 221 |
| 300 | 153 | 192 | 239 | 249 | 249 | 249 | 249 | 249 | 249 | 249 | 249 | 249 | 249 | 249 | 249 | 249 | 249 | 249 |
| 350 | 162 | 206 | 262 | 273 | 273 | 273 | 273 | 273 | 273 | 273 | 273 | 273 | 273 | 273 | 273 | 273 | 273 | 273 |
| 400 | 170 | 219 | 282 | 297 | 297 | 297 | 297 | 297 | 297 | 297 | 297 | 297 | 297 | 297 | 297 | 297 | 297 | 297 |
| 450 | 176 | 230 | 301 | 312 | 312 | 312 | 312 | 312 | 312 | 312 | 312 | 312 | 312 | 312 | 312 | 312 | 312 | 312 |
| 500 | 187 | 249 | 335 | 343 | 343 | 343 | 343 | 343 | 343 | 343 | 343 | 343 | 343 | 343 | 343 | 343 | 343 | 343 |
| 600 | 192 | 257 | 350 | 364 | 364 | 364 | 364 | 364 | 364 | 364 | 364 | 364 | 364 | 364 | 364 | 364 | 364 | 364 |
| 650 | 196 | 265 | 364 | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 | 378 |
| 700 | 203 | 278 | 389 | 401 | 401 | 401 | 401 | 401 | 401 | 401 | 401 | 401 | 401 | 401 | 401 | 401 | 401 | 401 |
| 800 | 209 | 289 | 411 | 422 | 422 | 422 | 422 | 422 | 422 | 422 | 422 | 422 | 422 | 422 | 422 | 422 | 422 | 422 |
| 900 | 214 | 298 | 431 | 448 | 448 | 448 | 448 | 448 | 448 | 448 | 448 | 448 | 448 | 448 | 448 | 448 | 448 | 448 |
| 1,000 | 218 | 307 | 448 | 464 | 464 | 464 | 464 | 464 | 464 | 464 | 464 | 464 | 464 | 464 | 464 | 464 | 464 | 464 |
| 1,100 | 222 | 314 | 464 | 478 | 478 | 478 | 478 | 478 | 478 | 478 | 478 | 478 | 478 | 478 | 478 | 478 | 478 | 478 |
| 1,200 | 225 | 321 | 478 | 491 | 491 | 491 | 491 | 491 | 491 | 491 | 491 | 491 | 491 | 491 | 491 | 491 | 491 | 491 |
| 1,300 | 228 | 326 | 491 | 503 | 503 | 503 | 503 | 503 | 503 | 503 | 503 | 503 | 503 | 503 | 503 | 503 | 503 | 503 |
| 1,400 | 230 | 331 | 503 | 519 | 519 | 519 | 519 | 519 | 519 | 519 | 519 | 519 | 519 | 519 | 519 | 519 | 519 | 519 |
| 1,500 | 240 | 351 | 549 | 549 | 549 | 549 | 549 | 549 | 549 | 549 | 549 | 549 | 549 | 549 | 549 | 549 | 549 | 549 |
| 2,000 | 246 | 364 | 581 | 581 | 581 | 581 | 581 | 581 | 581 | 581 | 581 | 581 | 581 | 581 | 581 | 581 | 581 | 581 |
| 2,500 | 258 | 392 | 657 | 657 | 657 | 657 | 657 | 657 | 657 | 657 | 657 | 657 | 657 | 657 | 657 | 657 | 657 | 657 |
| 3,000 | 263 | 403 | 687 | 687 | 687 | 687 | 687 | 687 | 687 | 687 | 687 | 687 | 687 | 687 | 687 | 687 | 687 | 687 |
| 4,000 | 265 | 408 | 703 | 703 | 703 | 703 | 703 | 703 | 703 | 703 | 703 | 703 | 703 | 703 | 703 | 703 | 703 | 703 |
| 5,000 | 269 | 417 | 729 | 729 | 729 | 729 | 729 | 729 | 729 | 729 | 729 | 729 | 729 | 729 | 729 | 729 | 729 | 729 |
| 6,000 | 270 | 419 | 738 | 738 | 738 | 738 | 738 | 738 | 738 | 738 | 738 | 738 | 738 | 738 | 738 | 738 | 738 | 738 |
| 7,000 | 270 | 421 | 742 | 742 | 742 | 742 | 742 | 742 | 742 | 742 | 742 | 742 | 742 | 742 | 742 | 742 | 742 | 742 |
| 8,000 | 271 | 422 | 745 | 745 | 745 | 745 | 745 | 745 | 745 | 745 | 745 | 745 | 745 | 745 | 745 | 745 | 745 | 745 |
| 9,000 | 272 | 424 | 751 | 751 | 751 | 751 | 751 | 751 | 751 | 751 | 751 | 751 | 751 | 751 | 751 | 751 | 751 | 751 |
| 10,000 | 272 | 424 | 752 | 752 | 752 | 752 | 752 | 752 | 752 | 752 | 752 | 752 | 752 | 752 | 752 | 752 | 752 | 752 |
| 15,000 | 272 | 424 | 753 | 753 | 753 | 753 | 753 | 753 | 753 | 753 | 753 | 753 | 753 | 753 | 753 | 753 | 753 | 753 |
| 20,000 | 272 | 425 | 754 | 754 | 754 | 754 | 754 | 754 | 754 | 754 | 754 | 754 | 754 | 754 | 754 | 754 | 754 | 754 |
| 25,000 | 272 | 425 | 755 | 755 | 755 | 755 | 755 | 755 | 755 | 755 | 755 | 755 | 755 | 755 | 755 | 755 | 755 | 755 |
| 30,000 | 272 | 425 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 |
| 40,000 | 272 | 425 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 |
| 50,000 | 272 | 425 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 |
| 100,000 | 272 | 425 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 |
| 1,000,000 | 272 | 425 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 | 756 |

Application for Ethical Approval for Research Degrees

(MA by research, MPhil/PhD, EdD)

Name of student Juan Yang

| | | |
|-------------------|-----|----------|
| MA By research | EdD | PhD ✓ |
|-------------------|-----|----------|

Project title: Teacher and pupil beliefs about beginning to learn Chinese language in English secondary schools

Research student Juan Yang

Date 06/12/2012

Supervisor

J. Medwell

Date 06/12/2012

Action taken

Approved

Approved with modification or conditions – see below

Action deferred. Please supply additional information or clarification – see below

Dear headteacher and parents,

My name is Juan Yang from the University of Warwick. I am a Ph.D student with a great interest in teaching Chinese to English speaking learners. I am doing a study about teachers' and students' beliefs about learning and teaching Chinese in English primary and secondary schools. I am writing to ask if it is possible for me to get your permission to conduct the research with your child at school, with the help of Mandarin teacher as well. I think your supports are also very important to our joint research. I would like to know more about the challenges and difficulties in current Chinese teaching in the UK from them, in order to provide some useful information and suggestions for both teachers and students.

The study would include:

- A questionnaire – the questionnaire is administered in the class time with the help of teachers, and I need as many pupils as possible to help me gain a wide enquiry in a large context.
- Interviews with teachers and pupils (as least 1 teacher and 3 pupils). I will only record the conversation if the pupils agree me to do so. The interview for each pupil lasts 7-10 minutes.

The interviews questions are as follows:

1. What interests you most when you learning Mandarin? Why do you find it is interesting?
2. What have you found difficult in learning Mandarin? Why do you think this?
3. In your lessons do you do Speaking? Listening? Reading? Writing? Which are most difficult? Why? Do you have any good ways to master the skills?
4. If you had to tell a younger pupil how to start Chinese, what should they start with? Pinyin? Characters? Just speaking? Why do you think this?
5. Is your teacher of Chinese a Chinese person? Is he/she from China? Do you think this makes a difference to how they teach? Would you choose a Chinese person or a British person as your teacher if you had a choice? What is your teacher like?

As for data analysis, no school, teacher or pupil name will be recorded on the computer, to address data protection legislation, and all names will be coded. No names will appear in the report to maintain the anonymity of the participants. All the information obtained from interview will not share with the third person either. In addition, any findings that might be traced back to a particular person will be avoided and pseudonym will be used in the report.

If I get the permission to do the study with your child at school, I will do it carefully with sensitivity to ethical considerations. No children will be identified in my report. They can be opted out at any time. I have a CRB clearance as well.

Appendix 8 Beliefs of Pupils and Teachers

| <i>The difficulty of learning Chinese</i> | <i>Pupil (%)</i> | | | | | <i>Teacher (%)</i> | | | | |
|---|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|--------------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | <i>SD</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>A</i> | <i>SA</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>A</i> | <i>SA</i> |
| Some languages are easier to learn than others. | 1 | 2 | 45 | 52 | 3.47 | 2.93 | 2 | 12 | 76 | 10 |
| I find it confusing that Chinese words have same pronunciations but different characters and meanings | 7 | 21 | 51 | 21 | 2.86 | 3.05 | 0 | 19 | 57 | 24 |
| The difficulty of learning grammar rules | 5 | 24 | 54 | 17 | 2.83 | 2.38 | 10 | 48 | 38 | 5 |
| It is easier to speak than understand Chinese | 9 | 24 | 49 | 19 | 2.79 | 2.36 | 10 | 50 | 36 | 5 |
| Matching pronunciation of words with characters is very difficult | 6 | 31 | 48 | 16 | 2.73 | 2.90 | 0 | 26 | 57 | 17 |
| The difficulty of learning vocabulary | 3 | 35 | 50 | 11 | 2.70 | 2.76 | 0 | 31 | 62 | 7 |
| It is easier to read and write Chinese than to speak and understand it | 19 | 40 | 30 | 10 | 2.69 | 2.21 | 10 | 64 | 21 | 5 |
| The difficulty of learning Chinese language in general | 7 | 33 | 46 | 15 | 2.69 | 2.95 | 0 | 7 | 90 | 2 |
| The difficulty of learning Chinese characters | 6 | 34 | 47 | 13 | 2.68 | 3.00 | 0 | 12 | 76 | 12 |
| The difficulty of learning tones | 8 | 35 | 43 | 14 | 2.62 | 3.21 | 0 | 10 | 60 | 31 |
| I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak Chinese very well. | 14 | 32 | 45 | 10 | 2.50 | 2.71 | 2 | 31 | 60 | 7 |
| Recognising the Chinese character is easier than writing the character. | 18 | 37 | 34 | 12 | 2.39 | 3.12 | 0 | 14 | 60 | 26 |
| The difficulty of learning pinyin | 18 | 43 | 28 | 11 | 2.31 | 1.98 | 14 | 76 | 7 | 2 |
| If some spent one hour a day learning Chinese, it will take him/her (1-2 years, 3-5 years, 5-10 years, over 10 years) to become fluent. | 25 | 45 | 22 | 8 | 2.13 | 1.95 | 31 | 52 | 7 | 10 |
| Learning Chinese is not as difficult as learning European languages | 22 | 50 | 24 | 4 | 2.11 | 2.50 | 10 | 38 | 45 | 7 |

| <i>What makes a good language learner</i> | <i>Pupil (%)</i> | | | | | <i>Teacher (%)</i> | | | | |
|---|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|--------------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | <i>SD</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>A</i> | <i>SA</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>A</i> | <i>SA</i> |
| People who are good at Maths and Science are also good at learning Chinese. | 2 | 7 | 47 | 44 | 3.32 | 3.29 | 0 | 5 | 62 | 33 |
| The smart students also have to work hard to be able to speak Chinese well. | 4 | 9 | 48 | 39 | 3.23 | 3.12 | 0 | 17 | 55 | 29 |
| Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language. | 6 | 9 | 56 | 30 | 3.10 | 3.12 | 2 | 5 | 71 | 22 |
| How much you can improve your proficiency in Chinese depends on your effort. | 5 | 17 | 58 | 21 | 2.94 | 3.07 | 0 | 7 | 79 | 14 |
| Everyone can learn to speak Chinese. | 7 | 23 | 48 | 22 | 2.84 | 3.00 | 0 | 19 | 62 | 19 |
| How much students learn from the Chinese course mostly depends on the quality of the teacher. | 7 | 22 | 52 | 19 | 2.82 | 3.02 | 0 | 21 | 55 | 24 |
| I have the ability to learn Chinese. | 11 | 19 | 58 | 11 | 2.69 | 3.12 | 0 | 5 | 79 | 17 |
| It is easier for someone who already speaks an Asian language to learn Chinese. | 9 | 29 | 51 | 11 | 2.64 | 2.88 | 0 | 21 | 69 | 10 |
| It is easier for children than adults to learn Chinese | 9 | 34 | 43 | 14 | 2.62 | 3.14 | 2 | 12 | 55 | 31 |
| It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language. | 13 | 32 | 44 | 11 | 2.54 | 3.14 | 0 | 19 | 48 | 33 |
| I have the ability to learn foreign language. | 13 | 37 | 41 | 9 | 2.45 | 2.67 | 0 | 36 | 62 | 2 |
| People who speak Chinese are very intelligent. | 14 | 44 | 33 | 9 | 2.37 | 2.33 | 10 | 50 | 38 | 2 |
| Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn Chinese. | 22 | 39 | 30 | 9 | 2.25 | 3.05 | 0 | 14 | 67 | 19 |
| Some people are just born smart to learn a foreign language. | 21 | 42 | 29 | 8 | 2.23 | 3.12 | 0 | 12 | 64 | 24 |
| English students are very good at learning Chinese. | 13 | 55 | 31 | 2 | 2.22 | 2.33 | 0 | 69 | 29 | 2 |
| Students who do not do well in the Chinese class simply do not work hard enough. | 24 | 46 | 25 | 6 | 2.12 | 2.26 | 7 | 62 | 29 | 2 |
| Girls are better than boys at learning Chinese. | 39 | 35 | 17 | 9 | 1.96 | 2.07 | 14 | 64 | 21 | 0 |
| Girls are better than boys at learning a foreign language. | 37 | 41 | 14 | 7 | 1.92 | 2.24 | 10 | 6- | 29 | 2 |

| <i>The importance of learning Chinese</i> | <i>Pupil (%)</i> | | | | | <i>Teacher (%)</i> | | | | |
|---|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|--------------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | <i>SD</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>A</i> | <i>SA</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>A</i> | <i>SA</i> |
| Learning to write Chinese characters is not a waste of time. | 6 | 14 | 38 | 43 | 3.17 | 3.43 | 5 | 2 | 38 | 55 |
| Learning Chinese is different from learning other school subjects. | 6 | 18 | 52 | 24 | 2.95 | 2.64 | 5 | 41 | 41 | 14 |
| It is important to know some basic writing rules of Chinese characters before learning to write. | 5 | 16 | 60 | 19 | 2.92 | 3.00 | 2 | 21 | 50 | 26 |
| I would like to learn Chinese from a teacher who is a native speaker of Chinese. | 7 | 24 | 44 | 25 | 2.88 | 2.85 | 5 | 21 | 57 | 17 |
| It is important to learn character components (radicals) when learning characters. | 6 | 26 | 58 | 10 | 2.72 | 3.24 | 0 | 5 | 67 | 29 |
| It is better to start Chinese learning with pinyin. | 8 | 26 | 54 | 12 | 2.70 | 2.74 | 0 | 43 | 41 | 17 |
| It is better to begin Chinese learning with individual characters. | 6 | 29 | 56 | 10 | 2.70 | 2.33 | 5 | 57 | 38 | 0 |
| Learning vocabulary is the most important part of Chinese learning. | 6 | 35 | 48 | 12 | 2.65 | 2.81 | 0 | 29 | 62 | 10 |
| It is better to begin Chinese learning with oral words. | 8 | 36 | 49 | 8 | 2.55 | 2.93 | 0 | 17 | 74 | 9 |
| It is better to learn Chinese in China. | 10 | 43 | 33 | 15 | 2.52 | 2.83 | 5 | 26 | 50 | 19 |
| It is necessary to know the Chinese culture in order to learn Chinese. | 9 | 41 | 45 | 6 | 2.48 | 3.26 | 5 | 7 | 45 | 43 |
| Learning grammar rules is the most important part of Chinese learning. | 6 | 49 | 37 | 8 | 2.48 | 2.21 | 7 | 67 | 24 | 2 |
| Learning how to carry on conversation in Chinese is more important than learning to read and write. | 14 | 46 | 34 | 7 | 2.34 | 2.67 | 2 | 41 | 45 | 12 |
| Learning Chinese is mostly a matter of translating from English. | 13 | 49 | 32 | 6 | 2.31 | 1.74 | 31 | 64 | 5 | 0 |

| <i>The effective strategies for learning Chinese</i> | <i>Pupil (%)</i> | | | | | <i>Teacher (%)</i> | | | | |
|--|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|--------------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | <i>SD</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>A</i> | <i>SA</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>A</i> | <i>SA</i> |
| repeat and practise a lot | 6 | 8 | 54 | 32 | 3.13 | 3.38 | 2 | 2 | 50 | 45 |
| It is important to speak Chinese with correct pronunciation | 4 | 16 | 55 | 26 | 3.03 | 3.00 | 2 | 17 | 60 | 21 |
| repeat the sound of words several times | 5 | 13 | 60 | 22 | 3.00 | 3.24 | 0 | 10 | 57 | 33 |
| handwriting practice and memorisation | 4 | 20 | 50 | 26 | 2.99 | 3.24 | 0 | 10 | 57 | 33 |
| You should have a go in speaking Chinese in the beginning | 6 | 15 | 60 | 22 | 2.95 | 3.69 | 0 | 0 | 31 | 69 |
| When I study a new character, I try to recognise its parts | 7 | 17 | 60 | 17 | 2.87 | 2.98 | 0 | 14 | 74 | 12 |
| It is ok to make mistakes for communication | 6 | 15 | 60 | 22 | 2.85 | 3.21 | 0 | 0 | 31 | 69 |
| It is ok to guess meaning the meaning of the character if you only know part of it | 7 | 27 | 54 | 13 | 2.80 | 2.98 | 0 | 14 | 74 | 12 |
| When you came across a word you do not know, the context gives you a good idea of what it means | 6 | 23 | 59 | 12 | 2.76 | 3.21 | 0 | 2 | 74 | 24 |
| I pay attention to my grammar when speaking Chinese | 6 | 26 | 56 | 12 | 2.74 | 2.33 | 5 | 57 | 38 | 0 |
| I am aware of my tones when speaking Chinese | 10 | 33 | 50 | 8 | 2.73 | 2.50 | 2 | 12 | 81 | 5 |
| Sometimes you just have to learn a new word as a whole even if the meanings of component character seem to be unrelated to the whole meaning | 10 | 27 | 52 | 12 | 2.69 | 3.05 | 0 | 24 | 71 | 5 |
| When studying Chinese words, I try to think of link between components and word | 9 | 27 | 52 | 12 | 2.66 | 2.81 | 0 | 24 | 71 | 5 |
| It is ok to guess the sound of character if you only know part of it | 8 | 30 | 52 | 11 | 2.65 | 2.79 | 10 | 12 | 69 | 10 |
| It is ok to guess if you do not know a word in Chinese | 10 | 31 | 48 | 12 | 2.62 | 3.00 | 2 | 10 | 74 | 14 |
| practice in language laboratory | 10 | 34 | 45 | 12 | 2.58 | 3.14 | 0 | 7 | 71 | 21 |
| have some mechanical grammar drills exercises | 10 | 33 | 50 | 8 | 2.56 | 2.88 | 2 | 12 | 81 | 5 |
| It is not hard to get rid of mistakes in the future | 11 | 37 | 41 | 11 | 2.51 | 2.69 | 7 | 26 | 57 | 10 |
| I feel self-conscious when speaking Chinese in front of others | 14 | 40 | 35 | 11 | 2.44 | 2.69 | 0 | 36 | 60 | 5 |
| practise speaking Chinese if I heard someone speaking Chinese | 13 | 47 | 32 | 8 | 2.34 | 2.57 | 5 | 36 | 57 | 2 |

| <i>The motivation for learning Chinese</i> | <i>Pupil (%)</i> | | | | | <i>Teacher (%)</i> | | | | |
|---|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|--------------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | <i>SD</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>A</i> | <i>SA</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>A</i> | <i>SA</i> |
| Learning how to write Chinese characters is not boring | 7 | 15 | 40 | 38 | 3.09 | 2.81 | 0 | 26 | 67 | 7 |
| Chinese people think that it is important to learn characters | 5 | 15 | 54 | 27 | 3.03 | 3.31 | 0 | 2 | 64 | 33 |
| If I learn to speak Chinese very well it will help me get a good job | 6 | 23 | 46 | 25 | 2.90 | 2.98 | 0 | 19 | 64 | 17 |
| If I am able to speak Chinese very well, I will have many opportunities to use it | 10 | 25 | 43 | 22 | 2.78 | 2.74 | 0 | 36 | 55 | 10 |
| I would like to learn Chinese characters so that I can understand Chinese materials | 7 | 24 | 54 | 15 | 2.76 | 3.02 | 0 | 14 | 69 | 17 |
| I would like to learn Chinese so that I can get to know Chinese people better | 8 | 27 | 51 | 14 | 2.71 | 3.00 | 0 | 17 | 67 | 17 |
| If I learn Chinese I will know more about how other people think | 7 | 28 | 53 | 12 | 2.71 | 3.02 | 0 | 14 | 69 | 17 |
| I believe English people think that it is important to speak Chinese | 9 | 51 | 36 | 5 | 2.38 | 2.48 | 2 | 48 | 50 | 0 |
| If I learn Chinese I will learn more about my own language | 15 | 53 | 26 | 7 | 2.25 | 2.74 | 2 | 33 | 52 | 12 |