DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

An Empirical Study on Individual Differences of Chinese Students at Hungarian Universities:
English Learning Motivation, Strategies and Autonomy in a Study-Abroad Context

Xinhua Guo

2020
Eötvös Loránd University
Faculty of Humanities

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Abstract

Individual differences are widely regarded as significant variables in the success of foreign language acquisition, especially language learning motivation, strategies, and autonomy. Additionally, the study abroad context is also understood as an important factor for the promotion of language learning success. However, individual differences studies in a study abroad context, where English is not used as target language but as lingua franca or medium of instruction, have been very rare, particularly in terms of Chinese participants. The aim of this dissertation was to investigate the characteristics of Chinese students in Hungary regarding their individual differences in learning English, specifically in term of their strategy use, motivation types, autonomous learning behaviors, and language contact; the correlations of ID variables with genders, degree levels, lengths of study abroad, majors, and proficiency; as well as cause-effect relationships between IDs with English learning efforts and perceived English proficiency; along with dynamic changes of motivation and strategy use before and after coming to study abroad in Hungary. Quantitative and qualitative methods were respectively utilized to answer different research questions. 160 Chinese participants at Hungarian universities were investigated by using a questionnaire survey and 12 participants were interviewed. By means of different statistical analyses along with content analysis, the main findings revealed that: (1) Chinese students in Hungary showed very strong motivation, especially in information medium, displayed more frequent use of direct learning strategies, exhibited high levels of autonomous learning behaviors, as well as higher access to media contact. (2) Some differences were found between different genders, lengths of study abroad, academic majors, degree levels in terms of different scales of the ID variables. (3) Significant correlations existed not only amongst ID variables, but also between ID factors with efforts as well as proficiency; in particular, the strongest correlations existed between efforts with information medium and social responsibility. (4) Information medium and autonomous learning behaviors in academic settings turned out to be the significant contributors to predict English learning efforts; however, autonomous learning behaviors and language contact function as significant contributors influencing English proficiency. (5) There were indeed fluctuations in English learning motivation, changes in English learning strategies, and variation in English learning autonomy because of the change of learning contexts from home to study abroad.

Keywords: Chinese students, motivation, strategies, autonomous behaviors, language contact, SA, EMI, ELF
## List of abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELF</td>
<td>English as Lingua Franca</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
<td>Second Language Acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLA</td>
<td>Foreign Language Acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CET4</td>
<td>College English Test Band 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CET6</td>
<td>College English Test Band 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Study Abroad context</td>
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<tr>
<td>AH</td>
<td>At Home context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2MSS</td>
<td>Second Language Motivational Self System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILL</td>
<td>Strategy Inventory for Language Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMI</td>
<td>English as a Medium of Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBI</td>
<td>Content-based Instruction</td>
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<td>CLIL</td>
<td>Content and Language Integrated Learning</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Rationale of the research

Traditional research of foreign language acquisition (FLA) in applied linguistics has been trying to find the general effective learning and teaching methods for language learning; those methods include communicative teaching method, task-based teaching method, content-based instruction method, among others (Cui, 2016). However, researchers later found that even in the same learning context, with the same teaching methods, the learners still experience significant differences in their language outcomes (Gao, 2015; Dörnyei, 2006; Liu, 1999). Therefore, FLA researchers began to shift their research interests towards individual differences (ID) of language learners in an effort to explain the factors affecting the foreign language learning process (Chang, 2017; Cohen, 2009; Dai, 2005). Different linguistic researchers identified several different ID variables to predict foreign language achievements, such as age, personality characters, aptitude, IQ, gender, motivation, learning strategies, self-efficacy, autonomy, and so on. Among them, it is commonly believed that learners’ motivation, learning strategies, and autonomy are the three key elements which lead to differences in performance in foreign language learning (Wang & Wu, 2017). For example, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) argues that among the ID variables, it is commonly admitted that learning motivation is one of the crucial factors influencing the process and the outcome of second language acquisition. In addition, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) also claims that good language learners usually apply various learning strategies to fit their phases of learning. Moreover, Najeeb (2013) stresses that foreign language learning is a lifelong endeavor; therefore, developing learners’ autonomous learning plays an important role in the second language learning process.

In terms of research into ID variables, especially in regard to motivation, learning strategies, and autonomy, there are many findings; however, some of these are inconsistent, which calls for further research. Yet, generally speaking, motivation, strategies and autonomy seem to have significant correlations with language achievements (Ni, 2010; Xu & Li, 2014). It should be noted that most studies related to ID factors from different perspectives have been carried out in foreign language contexts, that is, on students learning a foreign language typically in school contexts (Cui & Liu, 2013). There are many empirical
studies investigating Chinese students learning English as a foreign language in China, where Chinese is the first language (Wang & Song, 2016; Lu, 2016; Liao & Chen, 2017).

What is more, with the development of international exchanges and cooperation, more and more students choose to go abroad to study for different purposes. Many scholars find that studying abroad is beneficial to second language acquisition (Freed, 1998; DeKeyser, 2007; Davidson, 2007; Lopez-Serrano, 2010), that is, learning the official language of the country where the student is studying. In the beginning, some researchers studied the effects of study abroad experiences on language gains, such as pronunciation (George, 2014), vocabulary (Grey et al., 2015), grammar (Arnett, 2013), and comprehensive skills in listening (Cubillos et al., 2008), speaking (Freed et al., 2004), reading (Kinginger, 2008), and writing (Adams, 2006), as well as intercultural competence (Engle & Engle, 2004). However, later researchers found that even in the same study abroad context, students have different L2 outcomes (Marijuan & Sanz, 2018). Thus, scholars began to connect Study Abroad with ID research (Tanaka & Ellis, 2003; Adams, 2006; Allen, 2010); moreover, some researchers study the social networks established through language contact among different L1 speakers studying and living abroad (Dufon, 2006; Kormos et al., 2014). However, it should be noted that most of the research into ID variables in SA contexts is conducted in the second language context in target language environments (Amuzie & Winke, 2009; Lafford, 2004; Isabelli-Garcia, 2006). A few of empirical studies have been conducted regarding individual differences of Chinese students studying in English as a second language in America, where English is used as target language (Li, 2017; Gao, 2006).

Nevertheless, with the advancement of globalization, English is already used as a Lingua Franca for international citizens in many fields, especially in educational exchanges in European countries (Seidlhofer, 2007). Recently, many European universities have begun providing English-medium programs to recruit international students (Bjorkman, 2010). Hungary is not an exception: more and more Chinese students come to Hungary to study different programs at different degree programs in English (Yongyali, 2019); hence, in this case, English is used as Lingua Franca for Chinese students to communicate with people who speak different mother tongues in social settings, and English is also used as the medium of instruction in academic settings (Firth, 1996; Jenkins, 2009). In other words, Chinese students learn English through content-based methods (Karim, 2016; Wannagat, 2007). Study abroad contexts where English is used as a lingua franca are quite different either from SA contexts where English is used by the majority of society as a second language, or from foreign language contexts, where English is learned as a foreign language only in classroom
settings (Cogo & Jenkins, 2010). In view of this domain, identifying the characteristics of the individual differences in English learning among Chinese students in this context is my main research interest, since there are very few studies on SA contexts where English is used as a lingua franca (Llanes et al., 2016). Until now, research is mainly on studying language variety of English as Lingua Franca (Seidlhofer, 2006; Schneider, 2007; Sung, 2014; Gao & Xu, 2015). There are very few studies on ID factors in SA contexts where English is not a native language but a lingua franca (Kaypak & Ortaçtepe, 2014; Naghdipour; 2014); studies on Chinese participants in this kind of context are even fewer. Therefore, the present research is aimed at filling this gap. Chinese learners of English make up the majority of English learners all over the world (Tan, Wang & Zhou, 2017), and Chinese students who study abroad also account for a large proportion of oversea students (Nian, 2020). Recent trends show that more and more Chinese students study in foreign countries, using English as a tool in their academic studies and daily lives (Xin Shi Li, 2009). Hence, researching this group of Chinese participants would provide important findings in the field of Individual Difference research.

1.2 Purposes of the research

Broadly, the overall purpose of this dissertation is to find out the characteristics of Chinese students’ individual difference in language learning at Hungarian universities, through the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Specifically, the dissertation is aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What characterize Chinese students in Hungary in terms of their overall strategies use, motivation types and intensity, autonomous learning behaviors and language contact?

2. What are the differences between different genders, different degree levels, different length of stay in Hungary, different majors, and different proficiency of these Chinese students in Hungary in terms of their English learning motivation, strategies, autonomy and L2 contact?

3. What are the relationships among the motivations, strategies, autonomy and L2 contact of this group of students?

4. How Individual Difference factors affect English learning efforts and perceived English proficiency?

5. How do their motivation and strategies dynamically change before and after coming to study abroad in Hungary?
1.3 Outline of the dissertation

This dissertation is composed of five chapters in total. Chapter 1 is the introduction of the study, in which the rationale of the study, research purposes, and the outline of the study are stated respectively. Chapter 2 is the literature review, in which the relevant definitions, theories, frameworks and previous empirical studies are systematically summarized and synthesized. Specifically, I will begin by reviewing individual difference variables, (the motivation, strategies and autonomy), in terms of their definitions, theories and related previous studies involving Chinese participants. Second, I review the research into the study abroad context. Third, I review the previous studies on motivation, strategy and autonomy in a study abroad context. Chapter 3 is the methodology section, in which I elaborate on the research methods applied in this project, including the research context, overall research design, pilot study on instruments, as well as quantitative and qualitative study procedures. Chapter 4 is the main body of this dissertation, which makes a detailed presentation of research results and findings, accompanied by the discussions and interpretation of the results according to the sequence of the research questions. Chapter 5 will conclude the dissertation by summarizing the main findings of this research, proposes the pedagogical implications from this study, pinpoints the limitations, and recommends suggestions for future research.
Chapter 2: Review of the literature

In this chapter, the relevant literature will be reviewed and synthesized, from general to specific and from broad to narrow. First, the literature regarding individual differences in second/foreign language acquisition will be summarized systematically, with particular focus on key definitions, theories, and previous empirical studies of English learning motivation, strategies and autonomy of Chinese students. Second, the literature related to research into English learning in a study abroad context will be reviewed. Third, I will look back at research on individual differences in a study abroad context, especially previous empirical studies on motivation, strategies and autonomy in a study abroad context. Based on the literature review and the theoretical frameworks introduced in this chapter, I will establish the research gap and formulate the research questions of this project.

2.1 Individual differences in English learning

Individual differences research originally began in psychology. As psychology studies “the general principles of the human mind”, it also focuses on “the uniqueness of the individual mind” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 1). The latter gradually developed into a relatively independent sub-discipline: “differential psychology” or “individual difference research” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 1). Since the mid-seventies of the twentieth century, the second language acquisition research gradually began to change the focus from the objects to the subjects; the objects referring to the language, the textbooks, and teaching methods; the subjects referring to the language learners (Liu, 1999, p. 8). Under this background, since 1980s, with the shifting focus on language education from teacher-centered to student-centered, the research on FLA has been turning to the subject of learners; accordingly, the research into the individual differences of foreign language learners gradually became one of the main topics (Zhao, 2010, p. 36). Particularly in the twenty-first century, more and more empirical studies began to emerge and concentrate on foreign language learners in China, with varying width, depth and research methods (Zhao, 2010, p. 36). An increasing number of studies showed that the individual differences of the learner play a crucial role in second language acquisition, which already became an indispensable part of Second Language Acquisition models as well as one of the most important research fields (Yang & Li, 2009, p. 147). Individual Differences were defined by Dörnyei (2005, p. 1) as “characteristics or traits in respect of which individuals may be shown to differ from each other”, and they include
language aptitude, learning motivation, learning strategies, cognitive styles, personalities and learning perceptions, to name a few. Over the past over 40 years, studies on language learners’ IDs undertook three major stages: single variable research, multi-variable research and comprehensive research (Cui, 2016, p. 2).

At the very beginning, research into language learners’ individual differences commenced with learning strategies (Cui, 2016, p. 14); later on, several researchers expressed their interest in new ID elements and proposed different ID variables and categorizations according to different perspectives and research needs. For example, Skehan (1991) proposed four main elements: language aptitude, motivation, learning strategies as well as learner styles; furthermore, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) suggested more than eight factors: age, language aptitude, social psychological elements (motivation and attitude), personality, cognitive styles, learning strategies, gender, and so on; moreover, Dörnyei (2005) summarized ten categories, including personality, aptitude, motivation, learning styles, learning strategies, anxiety, creativity, willingness to communicate (WTC), self-esteem, and learner beliefs. Similarly, Ellis (2008) categorized ten types as well, involving intelligence, working memory, language aptitude, learning styles, personality, motivation, anxiety, learning strategies, willingness to communicate and learner beliefs.

As far as the current dissertation is concerned, I selected three variables: motivation, strategy and autonomy in this research mainly for the following reasons: (1) it is practically impossible to conduct research into all ID variables in one research project; (2) among all the variables, several scholars and researchers find that there is a close relationship among motivation, strategy and autonomy (Ni, 2010). Many scholars believe that learning motivation is the starting point of learning behaviors, and regard autonomous learning as the process of choosing active learning strategies to achieve the study goal in the motivated condition (Biggs, 1987; Zimmerman et al., 2012). Autonomous learning must be based on internal motivation (wanting to learn), mastery of learning strategies (knowing how to learn) and the efforts (persisting in learning) (Guo & Zhou, 2007). Active motivation encourages learners to adopt active learning strategies; when the motivation and strategies interact, the autonomous learning behaviors will come into being (Long & Liu, 2016). Therefore, from all the ID variables, based on the research questions of the current dissertation, I selected these three elements; hence, the literature concerning motivation, strategies and autonomy are reviewed respectively as follows.
2.1.1 Language learning motivation

Language learners’ individual differences have long been the focus of second language acquisition studies; however, among the ID variables, it is commonly admitted that learning motivation is one of the crucial factors influencing the process and the outcome of second language acquisition (Dörnyei, 1994; Gardner, 1985). Learning motivation is the effective driving force of learning English; only if the learners have the purposeful motivation to learn English can they devote themselves to studying in depth, so as to generate active inner persistence in the entire English learning process (Zhang & Liu, 2015, p. 86). It has been commonly acknowledged in the field of SLA studies that motivation directly affects the students’ real learning experience, such as the application of L2 learning strategies, the amount of language contact with natives and target language input, academic achievement of language, level of second language proficiency, and persistence when finishing a specific language learning task (Oxford & Shearin, 1994, p. 12).

2.1.1.1 Relevant definitions

Motivation can be defined in various ways. Generally speaking, motivation means the driving force behind actions in all kinds of situations (Cui, 2016). Specifically speaking from a second language acquisition context, different definitions were given by different scholars based on their different points of view. Just as Dörnyei (1998) stated, “Although ‘motivation’ is a term frequently used in both educational and research contexts, it is rather surprising how little agreement there is in the literature with regard to the exact meaning of the concept” (p. 117), it is difficult to provide consistent and unified definitions, since the various research studies carried out focus on quite different aspects in regard to researching language learning motivation.

Earliest, Gardner (1985) states that motivation refers to “the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity” (p. 10), and further explained that “motivation involved four aspects, a goal, effortful behavior, a desire to attain the goal, favorable attitude toward the activity” (p. 50). Later on, other scholars tried to include different aspects in their definitions. For example, Brown (1987, p. 117) emphasizes the learners’ desire in motivation, and explains that motivation is generally thought of as an inner driving force, impulse, emotion or a hope; furthermore, Brown (1994) later summarized the definition of motivation given by the dictionary as “the extent to which you make choices about (a) a goal to pursue and (b) the effort you will devote to the pursuit” (p. 34). Meanwhile, Ellis (1994) also
associates motivation with efforts, and points out that motivation could be seen as efforts undertaken by learners in order to satisfy their own demands or realize their own expectations in the process of learning a foreign language. Although the scholars above give different definitions of their research focus, their proposed definitions are still regarded as not comprehensive (Cui, 2016). Contrastively, Gardner’s definition is widely acknowledged as relatively comprehensive in terms of covering the four aspects: the efforts, driving force, desire and target.

What is more, in regard to the micro-level in the classroom context, Crookes and Schmidt (1991) explained that a motivated student effectively participates in learning activities, and persist in that participation “without the need for continual encouragement or direction” (p. 480). In addition, Wen (1996, p. 174) gives a simple definition that English learning motivation could be simply explained as the reason or purpose to learn English. However, Dörnyei (1998) proposed that motivation is “a process whereby a certain amount of instigation force arises, initiates action, and persists as long as no other force comes into play to weaken it and thereby terminate action, or until the planned outcome has been reached” (p. 118). Dörnyei maintains that “motivation is one of the most elusive concepts in applied linguistics and indeed in educational psychology in general” (1999, p. 525).

By summarizing the key points of previous definitions, Manolopoulou-Sergi (2004) put forward as well that

(a) motivation is a process, (b) it involves goals which individuals have in mind and try to attain (or avoid), (c) it requires activity on the part of the individuals, the activities that students engage in are geared toward attaining their goal, and (d) motivated activity is both instigated and sustained. (p. 429)

Based on the information presented above, it can be easily concluded that no matter how many different definitions have been proposed, researchers commonly believe that motivation is related to the choice of a particular action, persistence with it, and effort spent on it (Li, 2017).

In my research, I mainly refer to two scholars’ definitions, Dörnyei (1998) and Wen (1996), because I will first use Dörnyei’s Motivational L2 Self System framework to investigate Chinese students’ motivational dispositions, which could be applied to interpret the participants’ efforts paid to learn English. In addition, I will also study Chinese students’ motivation types based on Gao (2003)’s framework, which could be explained in accordance with Wen’s definition, that is simply the reasons for learning English.
2.1.1.2 Relevant theories of language learning motivation

Motivation was first studied in the framework of the behavioral research to find “what moved a resting organism into a state of activity” (Weiner, 1990, p. 617). With the development of cognitive theory, educational psychologists began to focus on the reasons for learners’ individual behaviors (Weiner, 1990). It is commonly accepted that the stages of motivation research are divided into three different periods, respectively (1) the social psychological period, (2) the cognitive-situated period, and (3) the process-oriented period (Dörnyei, 2005), or socio-dynamic period (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Each stage is complete with theories and models proposed by the representative researchers during that period. However, just as there are different definitions reviewed above, the different theories, models and constructs of motivation were proposed by different researchers and scholars. As the L2 motivation field is vast, here, some of the main representative theories and categorizations by influential researchers in this field will be reviewed according to the diachronic development of motivation research. I will be mainly presenting Gardner’s Social-psychological Theory, Deci and Ryan’s Self-determination Theory, and Dörnyei’s Motivational L2 Self System Theory here for the following concerns: (1) motivation theoretical frameworks in terms of Gardner’s integrative-instrumental and Deci and Ryan’s intrinsic and extrinsic were widely used to analyze English learners’ motivational dispositions worldwide, especially on Chinese students in China. (2) Gao (2003) constructed motivation type framework based on the above-mentioned theories, which was also populously employed to investigate Chinese learners of English in China context. (3) Dörnyei’s motivational L2 self-system is a relatively newly developed motivational theory, which has been widely applied to explore foreign and Chinese students worldwide by scholars in recent years. Therefore, I will utilize Gao and Dörnyei’s frameworks in my present research. In addition, other motivation theories will also be briefly mentioned since it will be beneficial to discussing the results from different perspectives.

Gardner’s Integrative Motive Theory

As social psychologists, Gardner and his associates first showed interest in researching motivation in second language acquisition in Canada, a bilingual and multicultural country where English and French coexist. They researched the social and cultural influence on the second language learning process and found that the learners’ motivation to learn a second language was a result of their desire to integrate into the target L2 community (Gardner, 1985). In this special bilingual social context, target languages were thought of as “mediating factors” between two cultural communities and the motivation to learn the counterpart
language was seen as a “primary force responsible for enhancing or hindering intercultural communication and affiliation” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 67). Based on this assumption, Gardner put forward the Integrative Motive Theory, whose basic concept is that learning an L2 is not the same as other school subjects because L2 learning requires openness to the L2 culture and willingness to adopt the cultural elements from it (Gardner, 2007, p. 13; Al-Hoorie, 2017). The Integrative Motive Theory, also known as the classic socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985) consists of three components which interact with one another: integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation, and motivation.

First, Integrativeness refers to “an openness to identify, at least in part, with another language community”, which means that second language learners maintain an active attitude to the materials related to the target language, such as “pronunciations, word orders or other cognitive features” (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, p. 126). Second, the Attitude toward the Learning Situation refers to “the individual’s reaction to anything associated with the immediate context in which the language is taught” (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, p. 127), for example, how the learners feel about their teachers and classes. Third, Motivation refers to “goal-directed behaviors” (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, p. 128), which means the actual actions the learners take to achieve their goal; for example, how much effort the learners expend. The relationship between the three components is that integrativeness and attitude towards the learning situation indirectly influence second language achievements through
motivation, while motivation is the major direct variable affecting second language achievement, supported by integrativeness and attitude towards the learning situation (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003).

Moreover, in order to measure the motivational scales, Gardner and his associates (1985) designed the widely-adopted instrument, the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMBT), which is a multi-componential motivation questionnaire consisting of 11 subscales and 130 items in total; 2 subscales are related to anxiety, and 9 subscales measure attitudinal and motivational variables related to second language learning. To measure integrativeness, three subscales are used: Integrative Orientation, Interest in Foreign Language, and Attitude toward the Target Language Community To measure attitudes towards the learning situation, two subscales were applied: Evaluation of the Course and Evaluation of the Teacher. To measure second language motivation, three subscales were employed: Motivational Intensity (embodied by the efforts expended by the learners); Desire to Learn the Target Language (the extent to which the learners expect to achieve success in language competence); and Attitude towards Learning the Second Language. Besides the 8 subscales, the Instrumental Orientation scale is also involved.

However, Gardner’s socio-educational model were criticized for the conceptualization of integrative motivation. Apart from Canada, which is a special bilingual context, the concept of integrative motivation is too limited to explain the situation in monolingual countries where English is learned as a foreign language mostly in classroom-based settings (Dörnyei, 2005). Especially in a globalized world nowadays, an increasing number of students learn English in order to communicate with international citizens who speak different native languages (Kormos & Csizér, 2008); in this sense, English serves as an international lingua franca (Crystal, 2003), or as an intercultural language (Sifakis, 2004). Therefore, it is necessary to reinterpret integrative motivation in the foreign language context and discuss the validity of integrativeness in a globalized context from a broad perspective (Dörnyei, Csizér & Németh, 2006). Therefore, after other researchers’ comments and criticisms, Gardner with his colleagues created the extended socio-educational model, which is his second important theory. The most obvious changes of the extended model show that Tremblay and Gardner, with reference to the expectancy-value and goal theories, added Goal Salience, Valence, and Self-efficacy between Language Attitudes and Motivational Behavior. They illustrated the liner sequence of language attitudes, motivational behavior and achievement. Compared with the classic model proposed in 1985, the improved extended model shows the following differences, which can be found in the figure 2.
In the first socio-psychological period, besides Gardner’s theory and model, there are two other socio-psychological approaches worthy of attention. The first is Richard Clément and his colleagues’ Linguistic Self-confidence which refers to “the belief that a person has the ability to produce results, accomplish goals, or perform tasks competently” (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 123). That means if individuals feel confident when in contact with L2 members, they will have more desire to communicate with L2 group. This was evaluated as a major motivational variable in foreign language learning contexts as well, where there is not enough contact with target language members; however, language learners have a fair amount of contact with L2 culture by indirect means through media use (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 74). The second is Schumann’s Acculturation Theory, which focuses on the integration of second language learners into the L2 community. The theory assumes that language learners’ second language acquisition is influenced by the degree to which L2 learners acculturate themselves to the target language group at two levels: socially and psychologically. Social integration with the target language will result in considerable contacts with L2 community members; however, psychological integration with the target language will make the L2 learners “consciously or unconsciously” refer to the norms, values or customs of the target language community (Schumann, 1986, p. 380).
Gardner and his associates’ motivation theory studied the motivational dispositions of the general language learning communities from macro-perspective by the social psychological approach. However, due to a lack of focus on the motivational characteristics at the micro-level of the specific language classroom, by 1990s, the demand of integrating cognitive concepts in educational psychology to understand micro-level motivation in second language acquisition produced the next, cognitive-situated period (Dörnyei, 2005). Generally, Crookes and Schmidt’s (1991) publication “Motivation: Reopening the Motivation Research Agenda” characterizes the beginning of the new period. Dörnyei (2015, p. 80; 2005, p. 74) concluded that there were two main directions coexisting in the cognitive-situated period: the trend to broaden L2 motivation research by complementing cognitive concepts and the trend to specify L2 motivation from macro-level to micro-level by analyzing motivation in actual classroom contexts. In the second period, three influential theories should be mentioned: Self-determination Theory, Attribution Theory and Task Motivation.

**Self-determination Theory**

Self-determination theory is the psychological theory originally proposed by psychologists Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan. Self-determination Theory (SDT) is “a motivational theory of personality, development, and social processes that examines how social contexts and individual differences facilitate different types of motivation, especially autonomous motivation and controlled motivation, and in turn predict learning, performance, experience, and psychological health” (Deci & Ryan, 2015, p. 486). The core theme of the theory is that there are three basic psychological needs among all human beings: the needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2000); to meet these fundamental demands, individuals must enhance their ideal motivational attributes through high levels of autonomy and intrinsic motivation.

The essential constructs in Self-determination theory are intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to “behaviors done in the absence of external impetus that are inherently interesting and enjoyable” (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009, p. 134). Intrinsically motivated learners are motivated to learn something purely for the sake of fun, curiosity, and interest. According to Niemiec and Ryan (2009), satisfying the psychological needs for autonomy and competence play a vital role in keeping intrinsic motivation. The need for autonomy means “the experience of behavior as volitional and reflectively self-endorsed” and the need for competence refers to “the experience of behavior as effectively enacted” (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009, p. 135). For example, students are autonomous when they
are willing to study, while they are competent when they are confident of their capability of conducting study. Extensive experimental research has shown that lack of either of them leads to unsustainability of intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 1999).

Intrinsic motivation is undoubtedly a very important factor in learning; however, in most circumstances, it is impossible for individuals to always study with inherent fun or enjoyment because many subjects are necessary for them to learn even though they are not interesting. In this sense, extrinsic motivation carries out an important function. Extrinsic motivation refers to “behaviors performed to obtain some outcome separable from the activity itself” (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009, p. 137). Based on the different levels of autonomy, extrinsic motivation includes four categories from the lowest to the highest: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and integrated regulation.

The first type is external regulation, which reflects “behaviors enacted to obtain a reward or to avoid a punishment” (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009, p. 137). For example, Chinese university students study English in order to pass the CET4 (National College English Exam, Band 4) for fear of failing to get their degree. The second type is introjected regulation, which refers to behaviors that are “enacted to satisfy internal contingencies, such as self-aggrandizement or the avoidance of self-derogation” (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009, p. 137). For example, Chinese students study English under an internalized burden because they believe that as a global citizen, they have to speak English, so they link their achievements with their reputation in order to avoid losing face. Both of the two types above are regarded as controlling regulation; however, the latter two types are seen as autonomous regulation. The third type is identified regulation, refers to behaviors that are “enacted to do something which is believed valuable or important” (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009, p. 138). For example, a Chinese student might study English because it is helpful for his or her future competence as an interpreter or translator. The fourth type is integrated regulation, which means that the enacted behaviors are bound with other aspects of the self (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009, p. 138). For example, a student might study English to realize his career dream as an English teacher.

Besides intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, Ryan and Deci also proposed Amotivation, which refers to “the state of lacking an intention to act” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 61). Students who are amotivated might believe that the practices are not valuable, or that their abilities cannot reach an ideal result.

Many researchers tried to utilize this theory to understand L2 learning. It should be mentioned that Noels and her colleagues conducted several studies associating self-determination theory with L2 learning motivation research (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 79). Similarly
to Gardner and his associates, Noels and her colleagues (2000) also designed an instrument testing self-determination variables related to L2 learning, the Language Learning Orientation Scale, involving Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, and Amotivation.

**Attribution Theory**

Attribution theory, as one of several cognitive theories of motivation, became the most influential model in motivation research in the 1980s. It was with the introduction of *causal attributions* as the linking mediator that led to the association of past experiences with future achievement efforts (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 83). As Weiner (2010) explains, the core concept of the theory is how people’s perceived reasons for past success and failure contribute to their current and future motivation and action; in other words, the individual’s motivational disposition influencing future actions is to a large extent decided by their subjective reasons for their past successes and failures. The theory involved four causal attributions: ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck; each is characterized as stable or unstable, internal or external, and controllable or uncontrollable (Weiner, 2010). In accordance with Weiner’s theory, Ushioda found (as cited in Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015) that there were two attributional patterns: “(a) attributing positive L2 outcomes to personal ability or other internal factors, and (b) attributing negative L2 outcomes or lack of success to unstable shortcomings that might be overcome” (p. 83). In other words, language learners
contribute their success in learning a foreign language to internal elements, such as strong ability and efforts, and owe their failure in language learning to external elements, such as lack of luck or the difficulty of the test.

**Task Motivation**

Tasks have long been in the focus of research for SLA researchers because tasks, as basic units of classroom learning, make it feasible for researchers to decompose the complex L2 learning process into researchable separate pieces (Dörnyei, 2003). As opposed to the distinction between state and trait motivation proposed by Tremblay, Goldberg, and Gardner (1995), Dörnyei (2003) argues that task motivation is much more complicated than state and trait dichotomy; instead, he proposed a more dynamic *task processing system* to describe how task motivation is processed by language learners. According to Dörnyei (2003), this system consists of three interrelated mechanisms: first, *task execution* refers to “the learners’ engagement in task-supportive learning behaviors, following the action plan that was either provided by the teacher (through the task instructions) or drawn up by the student or the task team” (p. 15); second, *appraisal* refers to “the learner’s continuous processing of the multitude of stimuli coming from the environment and of the progress made toward the action outcome, comparing actual performances with predicted ones or with ones that alternative action sequences would offer” (p. 15); third, *action control* processes “denote self-regulatory mechanisms that are called into force in order to enhance, scaffold, or protect learning-specific action” (p. 16). Therefore, task processing is an interaction between three constructs: the moment L2 learners perform a task, they first evaluate all the stages; then, if it shows that the development is not fast, or even pausing or regressing, the learners carry out the action control system to maintain the actions (Dörnyei, 2003).
The cognitive-situated period of L2 motivation research was seen as an “interim ‘catching up’ phase” (Ushioda as cited in Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 83). As Dörnyei once argued (2005) when motivation is examined in its relationship to specific learner behaviors and classroom processes, there is a need to adopt a process-oriented approach/paradigm that can account for the daily ups and downs of motivation to learn the ongoing changes of motivation over time, (p. 83), but later, based on the dynamic character and temporal variation of motivation as a process, he reflected on the past research and renamed the third period as the socio-dynamic period (2015, p. 84). This period is mainly characterized by Dörnyei and his European colleagues’ research focusing on changing features, dynamic factors, and motivation fluctuation in the second or foreign language learning context. In the third period, two theories will be reviewed: Dörnyei and Ottó’s Process Model and Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS).

**Process Model**

Dörnyei and Ottó (1988) proposed the Process Model, which introduced a temporal aspect of L2 motivation. Different from other constructs which were studied before, the innovative concept from their Process Model lied in the “complex and evolutionary development” of learners’ motivation, which is to say, change in the individuals’ levels and intensity of motivation over time (Dörnyei, 2015 & Ryan, p. 84). The essential points of the process model of L2 motivation, mainly situated in the classroom context, are concerned with the changeability and fluctuation of motivation, based on progressive steps: “how initial wishes and desires are first transformed into goals and then into operationalized intentions, and how these intentions are enacted, leading to the accomplishment of the goal and concluded by the final evaluation of the process” (Dörnyei, 2015 & Ryan, p. 84). In this model, the motivational processes are composed of the pre-actional stage, when language learners choose what kind of tasks they will do or what goals they will achieve before acting; the actional stage, during which the foreign language learners persist in finishing the learning activities they choose; and the post-actional stage, when learners complete the tasks and evaluate their achievements so as to improve weaknesses later on (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 84).
Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System

Dörnyei (2005) first proposed The L2 Motivational Self System, on the basis of Markus and Nurius’s (1986) concept of possible selves and Higgins’s (1987) self-discrepancy theory, taking into account the previous studies on L2 motivation during the cognitive-situated period (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 87). Markus and Nurius’s possible selves embody “specific, individually significant hopes, fears, and fantasies”, referring to a person’s self-concept or self-belief of what they wish to become and what they hope not to become (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p. 954). Higgins’s Self-discrepancy theory accounts for how the individual’s motivation is stimulated to “reach a condition where our self-concept matches our personally relevant self-guides”, self-concept referring to the actual self-state; self-guides refer to ideal and ought-to self-states (Higgins, 1987, p. 321). The actual self is “a representation of the attributes that someone believes one actually possesses”; the ideal self is “the attributes that someone would ideally like to possess (i.e., representation of hopes, aspirations, or wishes)”, while the ought self refers to “the attributes that someone believes one should possess (i.e., a representation of someone’s sense of duty, obligations, or responsibilities)” (Higgins, 1987, pp. 320-321). Thus, motivation is the result of desire to shorten the distance between a person’s actual and ideal or ought selves (Dörnyei, 2015 & Ryan, p. 87).
Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System consists of three dimensions: the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning Experience. The Ideal L2 Self refers to the ideal self-concept related to the second language. For example, if an L2 learner imagines he or she would like to reach a high level of competence in the target language, then they would produce motivation, and make efforts to reduce the difference between the actual L2 self and the ideal L2 self. The ought-to L2 Self means the L2 state at which the L2 learners would arrive at in order to meet the requirements of others or to prevent the negative consequences such as losing one’s face. The L2 Learning Experience emphasizes the L2 learning context or environment, which includes the language teacher, language curriculum, language classmates, and the successful learning experience (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 87; for empirical studies, see You & Dörnyei, 2014; You, Dörnyei & Csizér, 2016; Wei, 2013).

2.1.1.3 Previous empirical studies on English learning motivation of Chinese students

Since the earliest research in the 1950s, research into second language motivation has been broadened and deepened continuously, not only in research perspectives and research content, but also in research subjects and research methodologies (Yang et al., 2013). However, research into language motivation in China began in the 1980s (Wang & Zhang, 2005). The studies on Chinese learners of English in terms of their motivation dispositions mainly involves following perspectives:

Studies on motivation types and tendency

Based on the models studied in western countries, some researchers in China focus on the theoretical studies to build different motivational models according to the learning features of Chinese students (Liu, 2006; Chen & Guan, 2007; He, 2008; Pan & Chen, 2009; Hu & Cai, 2010; Zhou et al., 2011; Qin & Dai, 2013). For example, Zhou et al. (2011) explore the structure of English learning motivation of non-English major students in the educational context on the basis of Dörnyei’s (1994) motivation framework. Based on the questionnaire survey of 2489 non-English major students of eight universities, it was found that there are eight types of motivation at three levels among Chinese university students: L2 deep value, L2 surface value, and L2 vitality at the language level; self-efficacy, attribution, language learning attitudes and beliefs at the learner level; and learning situation attitudes and L2 use anxiety at the learning situation level. The motivation at language level affects the motivation at learner level, and then influences motivation at the situation level. L2 deep value, language learning attitudes and beliefs are found to be the most important factors of motivation at the language level and the learner level. Although the authors
conducted a relatively comprehensive investigation into motivation types of Chinese learners of English, the learning situation level was not so extensively explored, as it should include peers, teachers, textbooks and so forth.

Furthermore, some researchers focus on the general motivation dispositions and the motivation types of Chinese English learners from different aspects. For instance, Shi (1999) analyzed the relationship between English learning motivation and learning achievement among 78 undergraduates of science and engineering, and statistical results showed that the certificate motivation is the most common among the students, and there is no difference in time spent between successful and unsuccessful learners, but most of the successful learners are intrinsically motivated, while most unsuccessful learners are inclined to be extrinsically motivated.

However, Jiang (2009) discussed the motivation types to learn other foreign languages. He explored the motivation dispositions among 268 Japanese major students in universities using questionnaires, and the results indicate that there are seven types of motivation among the students, namely exam competition, information communication, interest, going abroad, culture, reality and simplicity of language; the second-year students’ motivations are highest, while the forth-year’s is lowest; exam competition motivation is the strongest while culture motivation is the weakest. The paper found the same results about exam competition motivation to learn a foreign language among Chinese students. Therefore, exam-driven motivation to learn foreign languages indeed exists in China amongst those who study foreign languages. The question whether the Chinese students in the study abroad context still hold this kind of motivation type needs to be investigated in this dissertation.

In addition, Li (2009) conducted a study on motivational regulation strategies among 553 BA students in eight universities in China. Through the use of exploratory factor analysis, eight types of motivational regulation strategies were discovered, including interest enhancement, performance self-talk, mastery self-talk, self-reward, negative-based incentive, task value enhancement, volitional control and self-efficacy enhancement. The results indicated that these strategies were frequently used by students; girls apply strategies more frequently than boys, and there is no difference between science majors and art majors in term of motivational strategy use. This study integrated the notion of motivation with strategies and identified motivational dispositions as strategies to enhance English learning, which provides a new perspective for researching motivation.

**Studies on the relationship between motivation and L2 achievements**
Many researchers pay more attention to the relationship between motivation and language achievements. For example, Hao and Hao (2001) investigated 101 non-English major MA students, and analyzed the relationship of English achievement with *achievement motivation* and state anxiety. The results indicated that English achievement is significantly correlated with anxiety and anxiety resulted from the *cloze* test item on the exam. *Achievement motivation* is positively correlated with language learning success. Female students’ anxiety was shown to be higher than males’.

Later on, Ma (2005) investigated the effects of motivation and efforts on foreign language outcome, and found that foreign language achievement is directly affected by learning efforts, and indirectly influenced by motivation through efforts; in addition, *exam-oriented motivation*, as a passive and exclusive motivation, has a negative effect on both learning efforts and other motivational variables. There are similarities in terms of Hao and Hao’s (2001) achievement motivation, Shi’s (1999) certificate motivation, Jiang’s (2009) exam competition motivation, and Ma’s (2005) exam-oriented motivation, which are all related to getting high scores in English courses at university.

Moreover, Guo (2009) conducted a quantitative study into the correlation between motivation, gender and language achievements among MA students in China. His survey shows students’ *deep motivation* is stronger than *surface motivation*; according to Wen (1996), surface motivation means learning English to meet surface level needs, for example, getting a better job, earning high salary, and obtaining the degree; deep motivation means learning English to meet deeper needs or desires, for example, acquiring knowledge or internal interest. The English achievement has a negative correlation with surface motivation, and girls’ surface motivation is significantly weaker than boys’. Significant difference were shown in English performance between the high-proficiency group and the low-proficiency group; the deep motivation of the high-proficiency group is statistically significantly higher than the low-proficiency group; in contrast, the surface motivation of the low-proficiency group is higher than the high-proficiency group.

These different previous studies reached an agreement that English achievement is correlated with motivational scales; however, the results were inconsistent. Hao and Hao (2001) found a positive correlation between exam motivation and English success, while, Ma (2005) and Guo (2009) found that exam-driven motivation appeared to be in a negative relationship with English achievement. These findings could, to some extent, illustrate the motivational influences on English learning in the EFL context of China. As for English as a lingua franca in abroad contexts, however, there are not so many findings regarding the
relationship between motivation and English achievement, which calls for further investigation.

**Studies on factors affecting motivation**

Some researchers tried to investigate the factors affecting motivation, such as anxiety, age, gender, and so on. For example, Zhang (2004) analyzed the causal attribution of oral English performance among first-year non-English major university students, and the results indicate that 91% students perceived themselves as failures in oral English production and attributed their failure in oral English on their ability and efforts. Besides, Long (2010) investigated the factors affecting the motivation of 875 non-English majors with a self-designed questionnaire, on the basis of multiple dimensions of psychology including ecological psychology, cognitive psychology, social psychology, social cognitive psychology and social behavior psychology, and found that the main factors affecting the overall motivation of university students involve a lack of self-efficacy, lack of English foundation, lack of confidence, lack of learning interest, high anxiety and low self-beliefs.

Moreover, Xu (2008) investigated the influence of family background and level of self-beliefs on the motivation to learn English among Chinese university students from the perspective of the social context, and results show that the self-rated economic status of the students’ family and the self-reported family residential areas significantly affected English learning motivations of Chinese college students; and their self-beliefs determine the internalization of motivation to learn English.

Furthermore, Liu et al. (2012) studied the relations between the L2 Motivational Self System, anxiety and motivated behavior to learn English by structural equation modeling (AMOS 7.0) through a questionnaire survey among 706 non-English major undergraduates and postgraduates. They pointed out that all the variables significantly contributed to motivated learning behavior; they also showed that the ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self significantly interacted with each other. It was shown that more the learning behavior is motivated by the ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self, the more intense the anxiety will be; the positive L2 learning experience is advantageous to lessen students’ English anxiety.

However, Yuan (2012) conducted a comparative study on the impact of Content-based Instruction (CBI) on EFL learners’ motivation and anxiety in the university English context, and found out that the English learning motivation of learners in the treatment (CBI) group was higher than the control group; moreover, the treatment group students showed lower anxiety in learning English and more confidence in English communication than the control
group, which could predict that CBI helps to enhance learners’ affective factors to achieve better English performance.

The above-mentioned studies demonstrated that English learning motivation is affected by different factors. In summary, Zhang (2004) and Long (2010) found psychological effects on motivation; besides, Xu (2008) found social influences on motivation. Yuan (2010) explored the effects of learning setting (CBI context) on promoting English learning motivation, which is quite close to the topic of my dissertation, but the different point of view lies in that Yuan’s research was about CBI in EFL settings in China, and my study is on CBI in ELF setting in Hungary. My study could lend support to whether CBI also helps to enhance motivation to learn English in different context.

**Studies on the relationship between motivation and self-identity**

Some researchers focus on the relationship between motivation and self-identity. For example, Xu (2008) probed into the effects of language learning motivation and self-identity on university students’ attitudes towards bilingual learning in China. He found out that integrative motivation and intrinsic interest directly influence the formation of positive attitudes to bilingual learning through language proficiency and program features while instrumental motivation directly affects the formation of negative attitudes to bilingual learning. The researcher identified the effects of motivation and self-identity on attitudes to bilingual learning from the language learners’ perspective; however, this study lacks other objective factors, such as teachers, textbooks. Therefore, the explanation of the results has some limitations.

Moreover, Xu and Gao (2011) conducted a large-scale longitudinal study on the relationship between English learning motivation types and learners’ identity changes among 1300 students in five universities in China, collecting data 5 times over four years. The results showed that all types of English learning motivation and self-identities interact with each other, and the former impacts the later greatly. As time went by, the effect of English learning motivation on self-identities decreased, while the effect of self-identities on motivation first declined and then increased. **Immediate achievement** motivation was positively correlated to **learning situation** motivation and **going abroad** motivation showed a positive correlation to subtractive identity change. Later, Liu and Gao (2012) conducted a four-year longitudinal study with quantitative and qualitative methods, investigated English learning motivation and self-identity changes of English majors in their final year of university. Results show that when compared with results from the first three years,
significant changes occur in motivation and self-identity. There was a significant drop in motivational intensity but a rise in learning situation motivation. Social responsibility motivation and productive changes decreased as well, whereas subtractive changes were shown to be at their highest point in four years. These findings suggested that motivation types and self-identity interact with each other; however, the in-depth correlation between these two variables should be further probed through qualitative research.

Furthermore, Wu and Bao (2013) explored the relationship between motivation to learn the content of courses in their programs and self-identity among 151 English-major MA students, and the results indicated that 1) three types of motivation are found in academic program learning: “motivation of self-realization”, “motivation of social needs” and “motivation of major recognition”; 2) there is a significant correlation between MA students’ self-identity and the three types of motivation; 3) there is no significant effects of demographic factors of students either on the three types of motivation or on self-identity; 4) different levels of motivation in academic learning can predict the situation of self-identity to some degree. Gao’s research was mainly based on a sample of undergraduate students, which is a limitation when attempting to explain relationships within the whole sample, including graduate students. Therefore, Wu and Bao further complemented Gao’s results, and they investigated MA students’ English learning motivation and identity.

Studies on correlations between motivation and language skills

Some researchers concentrate on correlations between motivation and specific language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. For example, Hui and Ding (2011) summarized six motivational regulating strategies in English writing employed by university students in China. The questionnaire data from 226 university students indicate that among the six strategies studied (interest enhancement, goal-oriented self-talk, metacognition, self-reward, efficacy control and giving up), the students applied the five positive motivational regulation strategies less frequently, and frequently use the negative giving-up strategy.

In addition, Wang and Liu (2002) analyzed the data of the sophomores’ reading test scores and explored the correlation between the factors affecting students’ reading efficiency and students’ reading test scores; the results show that reading motivation, reading interest and reading target are significantly correlated with reading efficiency. Similarly, Zou and Zhao (2009) explored the effects of motivation on English reading among non-English major university students with the help of mixed-methods research, and the results showed that the intensity of motivation would influence the efforts expended on reading. Moreover, Shi
(2011) analyzed the motivation to read English literature by surveying 240 senior English-major students on the basis of Dörnyei’s motivation theory, and found out that 30 percent of students’ reading could be explained by three factors in the learning situation level: course-related student-specific motivation, teacher-specific motivation and class-specific motivation; among these, course-related students-specific motivation had the greatest effect.

Later on, Yang and Ding (2004) explored the relationship between different dimensions of Chinese university students’ motivation and English listening behaviors, and concluded that there are nine types of motivation among students; besides grade awareness, all other dimensions are positively correlated with English listening activity, and students with different types of motivation showed different performance in English listening.

Furthermore, Tang (2005) investigated the effects of motivational factors on non-English major university students’ spoken English learning according to Gardner’s model, and indicated that instrumental motivation has a more important role in oral English learning than integrative motivation. Besides, Liu (2010) explored the correlation between English proficiency and motivation as well as lexical attrition among 100 second-year non-English major university students; the results showed that English proficiency is negatively correlated with the attrition of language skills and motivation is positively correlated with lexical attrition.

From the above empirical studies, the conclusion could be drawn that English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing are all related to the English learning motivation. It needs further investigation if the results are also suitable for the Chinese students in other contexts, for example, in study abroad context. How the participants’ perceived proficiency in the four skills are related to their motivation in Hungary could complement the results in this research perspective.

As for foreign scholars’ research on Chinese participants, a few previous empirical studies have been found; for example, You and Dörnyei (2014) conducted a large-scale stratified survey on over 10,000 Chinese students’ motivation in China from different perspectives. They investigated the general level of motivation among Chinese leaners of English across different regions, different school contexts by the L2 Motivational Self System, and the results revealed the general characteristics of English learning in China. Most recently, Liu and Thompson (2018) investigated 468 Chinese university students in the English major and non-English majors by questionnaires and interviews, and they found that ideal L2 self was a significant motivator. There were differences between different genders
and majors; girls showed stronger ideal selves and ought-to selves than boys in the Chinese university context, and the lower proficiency students had a stronger ought-to L2 self.

2.1.2 Language learning strategies

Research into learning strategies began in the 1970s and became popular in 80s and 90s; the earliest researchers were Rubin (1975), Naiman et al. (1978), Wong-Fillmore (1976) and Stern (1983). The study of second language acquisition shifted the focus from how to teach to how to learn, which resulted in studies on the influence of learning strategies in second language acquisition (Qian, 2004). Many researchers agreed on the essential positive effects of learning strategies on language learning success; for example, Wen (1996) argued that “a series of studies on foreign language teaching show that if other conditions are same, the differences in using strategies play a key influence on language achievement” (p. 11).

2.1.2.1 Relevant definitions

The concept of learning strategy was put forward 40 years ago; however, there is a great controversy on defining learning strategies. According to the existing literature, researchers tried to discover the characteristics of language learning strategies from different perspectives. Rubin (1975, p. 43) first gave the definition of language learning strategies as “the techniques or devices that a learner may use to acquire knowledge”. However, later researchers have not reached an agreement, and proposed different personal understandings. For instance, the strategies have once been interpreted respectively as “optional means for exploiting available information to improve competence in a second language” (Bialystok, 1978, p. 71), or “a particular method of approaching a problem or task, a mode of operation for achieving a particular end, a planned design for controlling and manipulating certain information” (Brown, 1980, p. 83), and even simply as “learning behaviors” (Wesche, 1979; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985), “cognitive processes” (Rubin, 1981, p. 117), and “tactics” (Ellis, 1994, p. 532).

Based on the summary of the above, O’Malley and Chamot (1990) defined learning strategies as “the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information” (p. 1). Meanwhile, Oxford (1990) stated “learning strategies are steps taken by students to enhance their own learning” (p. 1); furthermore, she proposed a more specific definition of learning strategies as “specific actions taken by the learner to make their learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations” (p. 8). In addition, MacIntyre (1994) stressed the
learners’ awareness and intention of the learners’ use of language learning strategies, so he proposed a different definition from the previous ones as “the actions chosen by language students that are intended to facilitate language acquisition and communication” (p. 190). Griffiths (2008; 2013), based on the review of previous versions, put forward the definition of language learning strategies as “activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own language learning” (p. 87; p. 36), which is regarded as the definition that is the simplest, but which also grasps the essence of the matter (Griffiths & Oxford, 2014). Most recently, Cohen (2014, p. 7) claimed that language learner strategies can be defined as “thoughts and actions, consciously chosen and operationalized by language learners, to assist them in carrying out a multiplicity of tasks from the very onset of learning to the most advanced levels of target-language performance”. In my dissertation, I will mainly apply Oxford’s definition because I will survey Chinese students in Hungary and their different specific actions taken to improve their English learning within Oxford’s framework.

2.1.2.2 Relevant categorizations of language learning strategies

Just as there are various definitions proposed by researchers, there are also a variety of categorizations of strategies identified (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Cohen, 2014). Since the late 1970s, researchers have been trying to categorize all possible language learning strategies. Wong-Fillmore (1976) conducted a study on five Chicano ESL students and discovered two social strategies of the successful language learners: 1) joining a group and trying to participate in activities, and 2) asking help from friends to stay in the conversation. Later on, Naiman et al. (1978) divided language learning strategies into five groups: 1) active task approach; 2) realization of language as a system; 3) realization of language as a means of communication and interaction; 4) management of affective demands, and 5) monitoring of L2 performance. Moreover, in the same year, Bialystok (1978) described these four classes of language learning strategies: 1) formal practicing; 2) functional practicing; 3) inferencing, and 4) monitoring. Later on, Brown (1980) categorized language learning strategies into communication strategies and learning strategies; according to him, a learning strategy is a method applied by language learners to comprehend and save particular learning items for recall afterwards, and a communication strategy is a method used by learners for communicating with each other.

Furthermore, Rubin (1981) proposed a classification that identifies major cognitive strategies that contribute directly to the language learning process and other strategies that
contribute indirectly. Direct language learning strategies include clarification, verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning, and practice. Indirect language learning strategies include creating practice opportunities and using production tricks such as communication strategies. Years later, Rubin (1987) synthesized her previous work and created three types of strategies including learning strategies (cognitive and metacognitive strategies), communication strategies, and social strategies.

In addition, O’Malley and Chamot (1990) adopted general categories as well as specific ones. They classified twenty-six specific strategies into three general categories: metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies. Metacognitive strategies include advanced preparation, self-monitoring, delayed production, self-evaluation, and self-reinforcement. Cognitive strategies consist of repetition, resourcing, directed physical response, translation, grouping, note-taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, key words, contextualization, elaboration, transfer and inferencing. Social/affective strategies include questioning for clarification, cooperation, lowering your anxiety, and encouraging yourself.

In contrast, Oxford (1990) put forward a more comprehensive and detailed classification of language learning strategies. She divided language learning strategies into two major categories: direct and indirect. Direct strategies refer to “language learning strategies that directly involve the target language and require mental processing of the
language” (p. 37); indirect strategies involve the learner’s ability to “support and manage language learning without directly involving the target language” (p. 135). Direct strategies include three subcategories: memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies. Memory strategies are ways to help learners store and retrieve new information by making use of grouping, mental linkages, physical techniques, or reviewing. Cognitive strategies are the direct ways to process and comprehend new language materials, such as analyzing, reasoning, translating, practicing, and note-taking. Compensation strategies are behaviors that make up for the learner’s lack of knowledge in using the target language such as guessing, gestures or synonyms. Indirect strategies also include three subcategories: metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. Metacognitive strategies are attempts to self-regulate learners’ whole learning process by means of task-planning, goal-setting, material organizing, self-monitoring and self-assessment. Affective strategies are in charge of managing learners’ emotions, motivation, and attitudes through self-encouragement or decreasing anxiety. Social strategies mean learning language through interactions with others, such as asking for clarification, cooperating with peers or understanding the culture of the target language. Furthermore, Oxford (1990) developed the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), a popular instrument for investigating the learning strategies applied by language learners, which has been described as “perhaps the most comprehensive classification of learning strategies to date” (Ellis 1994, p. 539). However, she later refined her categories to delete overlaps and proposed four strategy categories: cognitive, affective, sociocultural-interactive, and meta-strategies which includes metacognitive, meta-affective, and meta-social strategies (Oxford, 2011).

Later, Cohen (1995) made a distinction between second language learning strategies and second language use strategies. The former refers to the identification, grouping, retention and storage of linguistic material whereas the latter is used to refer to retrieval, rehearsal, cover (or avoidance) and communication strategies. All the above can also be differentiated according to whether they are cognitive, metacognitive, affective or social.

Language learning strategies are related to learning materials, which are further subdivided into traditional and untraditional learning strategies. Traditional strategies involve formal-practicing strategies, accuracy strategies, and mother-tongue-using strategies; untraditional strategies are composed of functional-practice strategies, fluency strategies, and mother-tongue-avoiding strategies. These strategies are somewhat similar to the cognitive strategies proposed by O’Malley and Chamot (1990). Wen and Wang (2004) believes that management strategies regulate the choice of language learning strategies. No matter how many different definitions and classifications of language learning strategies there are, the scholars commonly argue that language learners should choose their proper strategies in order to achieve successful results based on the specific characteristics of the learning environment, learning stages, and learning content (Zhang, 2004). Although my dissertation is mainly on the basis of Oxford’s framework, reviewing other researchers’ categorizations will be beneficial to the discussion, when I compare my study results with previous studies based on other categorizations.

2.1.2.3 Previous empirical studies on the English learning strategies of Chinese students

Over the past 40 years, since the concept of learning strategy has been put forward, researches of language learning strategies have made rapid progress in researching it. Research on language learning strategies began with the strategies of the “good language learner” by Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975). However, from the outset, researchers differed from each other as to how they defined learning strategies. As far as the research into Chinese students is concerned, Chinese researchers mainly conduct their studies on the following aspects.

Studies on strategy use and the preferences of various learner groups

Some researchers have focused on the preference of strategy use among a specific group of Chinese students, or have compared the preference of strategy use between two different groups. For instance, Qin (1998) investigated the strategies used by non-English major MA students and found that the most frequently used strategies by graduate students are function-focused strategies, which suggests that form-focused strategies and mother-tongue-using strategies are no longer important for graduate students.

Li (2002) conducted an empirical study on English learning strategies among Chinese ESL learners investigating the overall beliefs and applications of strategies, and analyzed the correlation between strategy use and three variables (gender, length of learning time, L2 proficiency). The results show that Chinese students use memory, cognitive and
metacognitive strategies most frequently, but employ social and affective strategies the least frequently. The study also indicates that there is no significant difference in the use of strategies between different genders, but there is significant correlation between strategies and the length of L2 learning and L2 proficiency.

Later on, Cheng et al. (2003) conducted a large-scale study on 1240 students from 12 different universities in China to investigate the difference in the use of English learning strategies between students who passed the College English Test and those who failed it. Results showed that there was a significant difference between the exam-passing and exam-failing groups; those who passed the CET used more strategies than those who failed. Moreover, English major and Science major students had a significant difference in their use of English learning strategies; English majors applied more strategies than science majors.

Moreover, Si et al. (2005) investigated 100 associate degree students in regard to their overall English learning strategy use and the differences between successful and unsuccessful learners, and between male and female learners. The results suggest that the overall frequency of strategy use is relatively low, and the most often used strategies are cognitive and compensatory ones; there is a significant difference between successful and unsuccessful learners in terms of memory, compensatory and metacognitive strategies, and there is also a significant difference between girls and boys in terms of memory, metacognitive and compensatory strategies.

Besides, Zhang (2005) conducted a study on the use of metacognitive strategies by 101 English majors at a military university and concluded that the these strategies are not often employed by students, that the use of self-managing, attention, goals and plans are correlated with their total scores of final English tests, and that there are differences between high and low score groups in the use of strategies of goals and plans, self-managing and attention.

However, Zhou and Gui (2006) conducted an empirical study on the English learning strategies among military university students including English and non-English majors based on Wen’s (1996) classification, and found that military university students used management strategies the most frequently, followed by formal-practice strategies; functional-practice and mother-tongue-using strategy were the least used. The English-majors and non-English majors in military universities have a significant difference in the use of functional-practice strategies and mother-tongue-using strategy. Students in military universities and ordinary universities have significant differences in the formal-practice strategies and mother-tongue-using strategies.
Meanwhile, Zhu (2006) conducted a quantitative study on different university English learning strategies used by 199 non-English major students from three normal universities, and investigated the correlation between the application of learning strategies and the learning outcome, and the differences in the use of learning strategies between different groups. The results indicate that 1) Non-English majors in normal universities tend to apply three strategies: form-focused strategies, using-mother-tongue strategies and self-monitoring strategies. 2) Significant differences exist between different groups of participants. 3) The participants’ achievements in their English study are closely related to their choice and application of learning strategies.

Gong (2008) compared 128 marine engineering students with 40 English majors in their English learning strategies and found that there is a relationship between exam achievement and all other strategies except compensatory ones; a significant difference was also shown between the two majors in memory strategy; all other strategies except compensatory strategies are found to be predictors of language exam achievements, of which the metacognitive strategy is the most affecting factor (31%) by regression analysis; metacognitive and memory have the highest correlations with exam achievement.

Tao (2009) conducted a comparative study on metacognitive strategy use among 810 students from three different disciplinary universities: medical, art and comprehensive. The results indicated that for the overall frequency of using metacognitive strategy, the students in comprehensive universities are significantly higher than those in medical and art universities; for the specific constructs of metacognitive strategies, the students in the medical university use directive attention and self-monitoring; there are significant differences in the use of language sense among all students; in addition, self-monitoring is more frequently used by students in comprehensive universities than those of medicine.

Li (2010) compared differences in the use of English learning strategies between 438 non-English major Bachelor degree program students and 361 non-English major vocational associate degree program students, and analyzed the correlations between strategy use and gender, as well as strategy use and English performance. Results indicate that the most frequently used strategies by the groups of students are compensatory and metacognitive strategies; the least frequently used strategies are social and affective strategies. Females use memory, metacognitive and affective strategies more frequently than males; the associate degree students use memory, cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social strategies more frequently than bachelor students. Memory strategies in the case of BA students and all six strategies in the case of associate degree students are positively correlated with their English
achievement; memory for BA students and metacognitive and cognitive for associate degree students were found to be a predictor of their English performance.

From these studies, it could be concluded that researchers tried to investigate English learning strategies of Chinese learners of English from different aspects. In terms of theoretical frameworks, researchers mainly adopted two frameworks: Oxford’s framework (Qin, 1998; Zhou & Gui, 2006; Zhu, 2006) and Wen’s framework (Li, 2002; Si et al., 2005; Li, 2010). As per the participants, many researchers studied strategy use among non-English majors (Qi, 1998; Zhu, 2006); while a few researchers conducted comparative studies between English and non-English majors (Cheng et al., 2003; Zhou & Gui, 2006); some researchers compared the strategies between boys and girls (Li, 2002; Si et al., 2005); however, some explored the strategy preference of students in military universities (Zhang, 2005; Zhou & Gui, 2006). In addition, some researchers studied some specific strategies, for example, metacognitive strategies (Zhang, 2005; Tao, 2009). Based on these studies, it was rare that strategies were investigated from the perspective of different degree levels and different periods of study abroad, which is a gap that will be filled by this thesis.

**Findings concerning the relationship between strategy use and L2 achievement**

Some researchers focus on the relationship between strategy use and language achievement. In China, language performance, language proficiency, language scores and language achievements all refer to the quantified exam results of different kinds of English tests (Gu & Zang, 2017). The most frequently used exam measurement is College English Test (CET band 4 and 6) organized nationwide by the Ministry of Education.

Jiang (2003) studied the effects of achievement motivation and attributional beliefs on non-English major students’ strategies to learn English, and found that the learners who passed the College English Test Band 4 use memory, cognition, metacognition and affective strategies more frequently than those who failed; there is a significant positive correlation between achievement motivation and strategies, and the degree of achievement motivation influences the choice of learning strategies; the learning strategies have the significant correlation with four attributional beliefs, and attributing success to ability, efforts and luck and attributing failure to luck are found to be significant predictors of learning strategies.

Later on, Yuan et al. (2004) investigated 515 non-English majors and 317 English major students in regard to the differences in their English learning strategies and the correlation between their strategy use and their scores on the national College English Test. T-test results showed that non-English major students use memory strategy more frequently than English majors, but the frequency of using different strategies among English majors are much higher
than non-English major students. Correlation analysis showed a positive correlation between strategy use and score on the college English test for non-English majors. Regression analysis showed that memory strategies can improve English scores for non-English major students, and metacognitive strategies can predict the score of all participants. It was also shown that the use of affective strategies negatively influences the score of the test.

Yuan and Xiao (2006) investigated 470 English major students using quantitative methods and explored the metacognitive and cognitive strategies used in TEM-4 (national test for English majors band 4). Through factor analysis, six factors were derived, and it was found that metacognitive strategies can be exemplified by monitoring and planning, test evaluation, process monitoring, and test item comprehending, and cognitive strategies can be exemplified by retrieval and test cognition. The results also indicate that there are different correlations between the questionnaire items and the sub-test scores to some degree.

Wang (2008) adopted O’Malley and Chamot’s strategy framework to investigate the strategy use of 194 university students in web-based and multimedia learning environment. The students were divided into successful and unsuccessful groups based on their final exam scores from the first and second semesters. The results showed that a significant difference exists in three types of metacognitive strategies between the two groups, and in five types of cognitive strategies, only two vocabulary-related strategies have a significant difference. There is no significant difference in social and affective strategies between two groups.

Dong (2009) explored the correlations among English scores on the National College Entrance Exam (NCEE), English learning strategies and scores on the College English Test (CET Band 4) over three-semesters of strategy-integrated teaching for 140 non-English major students. The results showed that regardless of their English score on the NCEE, after three months of strategy instruction, there was no significant difference in strategy use and there is no correlation between learning strategies and the score on the CET4, but the English score on the NCEE is found to be the predictor of CET Band 4. The results do not mean that strategy instruction is not significant, but the fact might be that the students’ unconscious learning strategies were made up before going to college, so that although students learned strategies, new strategies were hard to learn over a short period.

Shang and Wang (2010) conducted mixed research methods including the use of questionnaire, interview and classroom observation to explore strategy types, the difference in strategy use between high-scoring and low-scoring groups, and the correlation between English learning strategies and English achievement among 424 non-English major undergraduates. The results showed that the participants use seven types of strategies: social,
form-focused, memory, cognitive, metacognitive, compensatory, and using-mother-tongue
strategies; there are significant differences between high and low-scoring groups, and the
high-scoring group apply the learning strategies more effectively than low-scoring group;
English learning strategies are closely related to achievement on the College English Test
(Band 4), and memory, cognitive, metacognitive and compensatory strategies are positively
correlated with the CET-4, while using-mother-tongue strategy is negatively correlated with
scores on the CET-4.

Liu (2010) explored the relationship between cognitive learning strategies and English
exam achievement among 128 non-English major first year university students, and the
results showed that there is a significant difference in cognitive strategy use between students
of different genders, from different hometowns, as well as between high and low proficiency
students. T-tests show that girls used strategies more often than boys, local students used
strategies more often than students from other provinces, and high proficiency students
applied strategies more frequently than low proficiency students.

Zhang et al. (2013) reviewed 40 journal articles about the relationship between
language learning strategies and English achievement and used the Comprehensive Meta-
analysis V2 software to conduct a meta-analysis of the correlation between language learning
strategies and English achievement. The results showed that the effects of English
achievement on the frequency of using language learning strategies and the correlation
between strategies and English achievements are generally moderate. The metacognitive,
cognitive and memory strategies have stronger correlation with English achievement
compared with other strategies, which is in accordance with the previous research results
(Yuan, 2004; Ghiasvand, 2010).

Cha and Liu (2016) explored good English learners’ learning strategies by mixed
methods quantitative and qualitative research. The results indicate that there is a significant
correlation between English achievements and learning strategy use. Through the qualitative
analysis of interviews with good English learners regarding learning strategies, the
researchers generalized the comprehensive learning strategies and respectively encoded
learning strategies for English listening, speaking, reading, writing and vocabulary; therefore,
good English learners’ learning strategies were finally established: these suggest that good
students listen more, speak more, read more, write more, recite more, and learn English in
real contexts, which is in accordance with a holistic language approach.

These studies mainly investigated the relationship between strategy use and English
achievement based on standard CET scores in the Chinese context, which indicated that
strategies are positively correlated with English performance. However, few studies were conducted based on the perceived English proficiency in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Therefore, further exploration is needed into the relationship between strategy and L2 outcomes in different context, for instance, the study abroad context.

**Studies on the relationship between motivation and learning strategies**

Some researchers study the relationship between motivation and language learning strategies (Wen, 2001; Zhang & Guo, 2001; Xiao et al., 2008). For example, Wen (2001) surveyed English major students three times and studied the changes and features of English learning motivation, beliefs and strategies. The results show that relationships among three variables are relatively stable, and motivation affects beliefs and strategies, and beliefs affect strategies, as well. Similarly, Zhang and Guo (2001) explored the effects of strategies on motivation by experimental methods, and the results indicated that the treatment group is significantly lower than the control group in terms of surface motivation, which means the treatment group students study English not only for dealing with the exam, and the treatment group was much higher than the control group in achievement motivation after receiving the learning strategy training, which is to say that the treatment group students study English in order to achieve more praise.

Furthermore, Xiao et al. (2008) studied the influence of metacognitive strategy training on students’ motivation to learn English, and found out that there are significant differences among students in terms of their learning attitudes, learning strategies and learning motivation before and after receiving training on metacognitive strategies; metacognitive strategy training could stimulate students’ English learning motivation.

Moreover, Liu and Cha (2010) researched the differences in motivation and strategy use of BA, MA and PhD students in a university of science and engineering from the perspective of an internet-based autonomous learning context by using Pintrich et al. (1991)’ Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) and found that there is a significant difference among different degree levels of non-English major students, and their strategy use preference is also different. There is high correlation between choice of strategies and self-efficacy, learning task and learning target; moreover, there is a significant difference in cognitive strategies and resource management strategies between the high-motivation group and the low-motivation group: high-motivation students frequently use cognitive strategies, while low-motivation students prefer to use resource management strategies.
In addition, Xu and Feng (2012) investigated the use of motivational teaching strategies and found internal correlation between English learning motivation and class behaviors by conducting a questionnaire survey among 376 non-English major university students. The study indicated that motivational teaching strategies used by teachers improve students’ English learning motivation as well as their behavior in class. Besides, the results also show that integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation and instrumental orientation predicted the students’ motivation to learn English. Also, attitudes towards the learning situation and motivation were positive predictors of students’ in-class behavior while language anxiety was a negative predictor of in-class behavior.

These studies investigated the relationship between motivation and strategies from different aspects; however, a new approach to ID research calls for multi-dimensional investigations (Cui, 2016). Since IDs comprise a complex system, researching the correlations of two variables only would be too limited to explain how language learning outcome is related to ID variables. Therefore, including autonomy could make up for this shortage, and add further explanatory power to ID research from a multi-dimensional aspect.

**Research into factors affecting strategy**

Some researchers have explored the factors affecting the use and choice of learning strategies, including learners’ factors (aptitude, motivation, leaning style, gender, efforts, etc.) and context factors (culture, learning conditions, environment, learning tasks, etc.). However, some researchers study the relationship between learning strategies and other individual difference variables, such as autonomy (Tan et al., 2011; Shao & Zhao, 2011; Xiao et al., 2011; Zhang & Li, 2004). For example, Gao (2006) conducted a qualitative study on 14 Chinese students learning in the UK, and the results suggested that the participant changed their English learning strategies after they moved to England to adjust themselves to a new context.

Furthermore, some researchers have studied the effects of strategy training on the students’ English learning and achievement by means of longitudinal experimental teaching studies. It is commonly acknowledged that receiving proper strategy training contributes to English learning results and frequency of strategy use (Li, 2008; Huang & Hu, 2009), especially metacognitive strategy training (Gao et al., 2012; Zhang, 2004), and affective strategy training (Ouyang & Zhang, 2008).

In addition, some researchers focus on the learning strategies used in specific language skills and the effects of certain learning strategies on specific skill outcomes, such as listening strategies (Wang, 2002; Jiang, 1994; Zhou, 2000; Su, 2003), speaking strategies
(Huang & Van Naerssen, 1987; Si-Qing, 1990; Gao, 2000; Wang, 2002), reading strategies (Xu, 2003; Zou et al., 2002), writing strategies (Cheng, 1994) and strategies in learning vocabulary (Gu & Johnson, 1996; Zhang, 2001; Zhang et al., 2003; Zhao & Duan, 2008).

2.1.3 Autonomous language learning

As today’s digital media represents an explosion of information, more and more learning resources and channels are available to students; therefore, autonomous learning ability has emerged as a topic of major importance for university students (Long & Liu, 2016). Since Holec (1981) put forward the concept of autonomy, autonomous learning has been a more and more focused research topic in applied linguistics, especially in second language pedagogy (Li, 2014). However, several scholars have mentioned the importance of the correlation between autonomy and strategy use as well as motivation in the process of L2 learning. For example, Oxford (1999) argued that students who use a wide variety of language learning strategies are probably on the way to becoming autonomous, self-regulated learners. Zimmerman (2000) also proposed that motivation is the key determinant to stimulate, promote and sustain self-regulated learning activities (as cited in Long & Liu, 2016).

2.1.3.1 Relevant definitions

As far as autonomy is concerned, there are several synonymic but confusing terms used by researchers, such as “self-directed learning” (Holec, 1996), “self-instruction” (Hughes, 1997), “self-access learning” (Reinders, 2000), “independent learning” (White, 2008), and “self-regulation” (Bown, 2009). Similarly to the diverse definitions of motivation and learning strategies, autonomy is also difficult to give a unified definition to.

First, Holec (1981) defined learner autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (p. 3), and also listed the main elements of learner autonomy as “determining the objectives, defining the contents and progressions, selecting methods and techniques, monitoring the procedure of acquisitions, and evaluating what has been acquired”. Holec’s definition described the actual learning steps which might be expected from an autonomous language learner. However, Benson (2011) pointed out that there are some problems in Holec’s definition, because this definition does not involve “the cognitive capacities underlying effective self-management of learning”, although it covered “the decision-making abilities involved in autonomous learning in technical terms” (p. 60). Be that as it may, this definition is the most widely cited in various research studies.
Moreover, Dickinson (1987, as cited in Oxford, 1999, p. 110) defined autonomy as a situation in which the learner takes over his or her own language learning. Allwright (1990, as cited in Oxford, 1999, p. 110) emphasized that autonomy involves not only ability and willingness but also action in the direction of responsibility for learning. Littlewood (1996) explained that learner autonomy is “an independent capacity to make and carry out the choices which govern his or her actions; this capacity depends on two components: ability and willingness” (p. 428). Littlewood later argued that autonomy could be characterized as an individual’s ability to establish personal agendas for learning, which is to say, the learners should regulate not only their learning activities but also the directions of activities, as well. (Littlewood, 1999).

Furthermore, Little (1991) also provided another definition of learner autonomy as “the capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action” (p. 4). Additionally, Little (2009, p. 223) sketched learner autonomy as the learners’ ability to “set their own agenda and follow it through, to feel competent in what they do and to be assured of their relatedness to other people”. Little’s definition was regarded as complementary to Holec’s version by adding the psychological dimension (Benson, 2011).

In response to Holec’s definition of autonomy, Benson (2011, p.58) put forward a refined definition of autonomy as “the capacity to take control of one’s own learning”. This version of autonomy has proved remarkably stable over the years (Benson, 2013). The difference between the two definitions can be easily found in the term “capacity” replacing “ability”, and “take control of” substituting “take charge of”. Benson commented (2011, p. 60) that Holec’s and Little’s definitions covered two important dimensions of autonomy, but understated a third dimension regarding control over the content of learning. Consequently, Benson (2011) proposed the three dimensions of learner autonomy: control over learning management, cognitive processes and learning content.

In addition, autonomy is “complex, multidimensional, and variably manifested” (Benson, 2013, p. 840). Therefore, different definitions of autonomy might produce different descriptions of autonomy, particularly in English as a foreign language (EFL) settings (Teng, 2019). In some cases, the similar meanings would be defined by different terminological names. The concept of “self-regulated learning” is very much like “self-direction”, “self-directed learning”, “self-instruction” and “autonomous learning” (McDonough, 2001). For instance, Knowles (1975, p.18) defined self-directed learning as “a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning,
choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes”. Zimmerman (1986, p. 308) argued that self-regulated learning means that the learner is “metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participant in his or her own learning process”. Holec (1996) found “learner autonomy” and “self-directed learning” very similar, and stressed that the learners should have responsibility for their own learning. Hughes (1997) used “self-instruction”, which means giving the learner the responsibility for instruction instead of relying on a teacher. White (2008, p.4) proposed “independent learning” as “independence from the mediating presence of an instructor during the course of learning”. In response, Oxford (1999) highlights that autonomy in the foreign and second language field is often known as self-regulation in the psychology field. Furthermore, while different contexts using different terms shape somewhat different research agendas, the objectives and goals of these researchers are chiefly the same: to learn about the attributes and skills of those who take control of their own learning, and the conditions that promote learning development (Hiemstra, 1996, as cited in Li, 2017, p. 52).

In conclusion, although various definitions have been put forward, there is one thing in common among researchers, which is the importance of the learners’ active participation in learning; therefore, an autonomous learner should be responsible for self-planning, self-management, self-reflection and self-evaluation (Teng, 2019). These scholars gave the different definitions from their perspectives; however, Benson’s definition was relatively all-around as it considers three dimensions of learner autonomy: control over learning management, cognitive processes and learning content. In my dissertation, I would refer to Benson’s definition in terms of the control over learning management, which focuses on the English learners’ autonomous learning behaviors.

2.1.3.2 Relevant models of autonomous language learning

On the one hand, scholars tried to conceptualize the definitions of learner autonomy, on the other hand, they also attempted to put the concept into practice by establishing different models and approaches. Some researchers proposed their divisions of autonomy based on stages of development. For instance, Littlewood (1996, p. 431) set up a three-level framework for developing autonomy based on three dimensions. The first level is autonomy as a communicator in the language acquisition dimension, which involves “an ability to use the language creatively and use appropriate strategies for communicating meanings in a specific situation”. Second, autonomy as a learner in learning approach dimension involves “learners’ ability to engage in independent work and use appropriate learning strategies both
inside and outside the classroom”. Third, autonomy as a person in the personal development dimension was seen as a higher-level goal, which involves “an ability to express personal meanings and create personal learning contexts through interacting outside the classroom”. Similarly, Macaro (1997, pp. 170-172) later proposed another three-stage model including autonomy of language competence, autonomy of language learning competence and autonomy of choice and action. In addition, Littlewood (1999, p. 75) also put forward two levels of autonomy: proactive and reactive. Proactive autonomy “affirms [learners’] individuality and sets up directions which they themselves have partially created, while the term reactive autonomy implies that “[learners] do not create its own directions but, once a direction has been initiated, [it] enables learners to organize their resources autonomously in order to reach their goal”.

Furthermore, some researchers have classified autonomy based on how autonomy is conceptualized in the educational context. For example, Ribé (2003, pp. 13-15) proposed convergence, divergence-convergence and convergence-divergence positions, and he explained that in the process of convergence of autonomy, students are guided to reach the same target set by the previously designed curriculum and syllabus; in divergence–convergence, the language learners are given more free space to regulate their learning process through setting learning goal, deciding learning content, and evaluating the outcome; in convergence-divergence position, much more open-ended space is given to language learners not only for the self-management of the learning process, but also for content and final outcomes. Moreover, O’Rourke and Schwienhorst (2003, pp. 48-49) put forward individual–cognitive, social–interactive and exploratory–participatory perspectives. In addition, Oxford (2003, pp. 76-80) extended Benson’s model into technical, psychological, sociocultural, and political–critical perspectives; furthermore, Holliday (2003, p. 115) proposed native–speakerist, cultural–relativist and social approaches. At the same time, Smith (2003, p.131) described the differences between weak and strong pedagogies for autonomy. Later on, Allford and Pachler (2007, p.14, as cited in Benson, 2011) proposed radical and gradualist versions of autonomy.

However, Benson (1997) first proposed three versions of autonomy (technical, psychological and political), and three dimensions of autonomy (learning management, cognitive processes, learning content). He matched the three versions of autonomy with the three dimensions; thus, technical versions focus on learning management, psychological versions on cognitive processes, and political versions on learning content. According to Benson (2011), control over learning management refers to the daily actual behaviors
involved in language learning, including control over where, when and how a language is learned; control over cognitive processing refers to control over how a language is learned at the cognitive level; and control over learning content is concerned with what and why a language is learned.

Additionally, Benson (2011, p. 123) distinguishes three terms: autonomy, autonomous learning, and autonomous learning programs. According to him, autonomy, as “a learner attribute”, refers to “a capacity that learners possess and display to various degrees in different contexts”; autonomous learning, as “a mode of learning”, refers to “learning in which learners demonstrate a capacity to control their learning”; and autonomous learning programs, as “educational practices designed to foster autonomy”, refer to “educational initiatives designed to foster this capacity or allow it to flourish and, in general, the use of this term signals no more than a claim or intention”.

One of the most important classifications of autonomy is that proposed by Benson (2011, p. 124) which includes six broad headings of approaches to foster autonomy.

1) Resource-based approaches focusing on independent interaction with learning materials.
2) Technology-based approaches focusing on independent interaction with educational technologies.
3) Learner-based approaches focusing on the direct production of behavioral and psychological changes in the learner.
4) Classroom-based approaches focusing on learner control over the planning and evaluation of classroom learning.

5) Curriculum-based approaches extending the idea of learner control to the curriculum as a whole.

6) Teacher-based approaches focusing on the role of the teacher and teacher education in the practice of fostering autonomy among learners.

2.1.3.3 Previous empirical studies on the autonomous English learning of Chinese students

The research into the autonomy of Chinese students is generally concentrated on the following aspects: approaches to improving autonomous learning ability, the role of teachers in autonomous learning contexts, the beliefs and awareness of autonomous learning ability, and the factors affecting autonomous learning, such as self-efficacy, causal attribution, learning strategies, learning motivation, learning styles, etc. (Xu & Zhan, 2004; Yin, 2014; Ma & Zhu, 2011; Bai, 2010).

Investigating language learners’ autonomous ability

Some researchers have investigated the language learners’ autonomous abilities including learners’ beliefs, awareness, attitudes and behaviors concerning autonomous
learning. In this research aspect, there are mostly large-scale surveys. For example, Littlewood (2000) conducted a questionnaire survey on 2000 high school and university students in 11 countries (8 Asian countries, including China, and 3 European countries). The results found that there is no difference in the awareness of autonomous learning between Asian and Western students, and students in Asia do not expect teachers to output knowledge, but wish to explore the key to the questions by themselves; in addition, they hope to study together in a friendly and mutually-beneficial atmosphere. Furthermore, Qi (2004) followed up Littlewood’s study and compared Littlewood’s results with his survey data collected from 210 students from two universities; consequently, the results are in accordance with Littlewood in the sense that Chinese university students share similar attitudes toward autonomy with those of western countries.

However, Li (2006) explored the overall tendency of learner autonomy among 413 English major students from three different universities (one foreign languages university, one comprehensive high-level university and one ordinary university). Through comparative studies on learner autonomy between first-year and third-year as well as between male and female English majors, it was found that the learners’ autonomous learning ability is generally very high; there is a significant difference in learner autonomy between first-year and third-year as well as between male and female English majors. The third-year students showed higher autonomous ability than first-year students, and female students are higher than males in autonomous learning ability.

In contrast, some researchers found different results regarding Chinese students’ autonomous learning ability. For example, Xu et al. (2004) conducted a large-scale study on the autonomous ability of 1340 non-English majors from 14 universities in China using a mixed methods study using both questionnaires and interviews. The results showed that the autonomous learning abilities of Chinese students are generally not strong because of the influence of long-term exam-oriented education in China.

However, Zhang and Li (2004) investigated Chinese and western European students studying in the UK using questionnaires, interviews and class observations, and argued that Chinese students are at the same level as western European students in terms of overall autonomous learning ability. Researchers also found that Chinese students are confident in learning English well and have strong instrumental motivations; they can participate in class activities, adopt proper learning strategies, and evaluate their learning. At the same time, they lack integrative motivation, so they do not often communicate with teachers, stress the learning of language rules, and ignore understanding the culture.
Moreover, there are also some micro investigations. For example, Zhang (2012) believes that learning beliefs and attitudes are important factors in fostering autonomous learning ability, so he explored the learning beliefs of 2000 non-English major freshmen, and the results revealed that participants changed the traditional concepts about the role of teachers and realized their role and responsibility in the process of learning English. He also found that some students lack strategy knowledge and self-efficacy.

Especially with the development of the internet and multimedia technologies, many researchers began to study learners’ autonomy in computer-based and internet-based contexts (Guo & Zhou, 2007; Lin, 2006; Fu & Yang, 2007; Chen, 2007; Qu & Lv, 2016; Luo, 2017). Guo and Zhou (2007) investigated autonomous learning in internet-based environments among 300 non-English major MA students from 7 universities, and found that although students hold an active attitude towards Computer-Aided Language Learning (CALL), they cannot make effective use of modern IT techniques, and there are significant differences in the autonomous learning behaviors among students with different levels of English proficiency and time spent on learning outside of class.

Based on the investigation of 6 foreign language courses on a famous Chinese and American MOOC platform, Luo (2017) explored the current problems of autonomous learning in online contexts, including the lack of autonomous learning awareness, little interaction among learners, deficiency of effective language output and imbalance of autonomous learning abilities. Based on his findings, a new module was constructed in the internet environment, involving comprehensive autonomous learning qualities, an interactive online learning environment and output-driven autonomous learning processes.

**Factors affecting learners’ autonomy**

Some researchers concentrate on the internal and external factors affecting learners’ autonomous ability. Their studies found that autonomous learning abilities are influenced by many individual internal factors, such as self-efficacy, causal attribution, metacognitive and cognitive strategies, motivation, learning styles, age and so forth, as well as external factors, such as family, teachers, educational techniques, peers, learning environment, and social culture (Wang, 2007; Hu et al., 2009; Xiao et al., 2011).

For example, Yue and Shi (2009) adopted interviews and questionnaires to investigate the autonomous learning of 230 non-English major students, and also studied the effects of metacognitive ability on autonomous English learning from three dimensions of metacognition: metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experience, and metacognitive
monitoring. The results indicate that the three dimensions interact with each other and play a key role in autonomous learning.

**Studies on the relationship between motivation and autonomy**

Some researchers have studied the relationship between motivation and learning autonomy. For instance, Hua (2009) reviewed the main motivational theories in foreign language teaching and researching, and explored the relationship between motivation and autonomy using questionnaires among 109 English major BA students. Using factor analysis, five factors appear, namely intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, teachers’ role, causal attribution and autonomous learning approach. The results indicate that four variables (intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, teacher role, achievement attribution) are all more or less correlated with autonomy, but the relationship between autonomy and intrinsic motivation is the strongest, which means the more intrinsically motivated the students are, the more autonomous learning the students will take.

Later on, Wei (2013) investigated 361 non-English first-year university students through a questionnaire survey, and analyzed the correlations between the L2 Motivational Self System and self-regulated learning behavior. The results indicate that the ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience significantly affect self-regulated learning behavior while the ought-to L2 self has little effect on self-regulated learning behavior. The ideal L2 self has a stronger influence on self-regulated learning behavior than the ought-to L2 self does, while the L2 learning experience has a mediating role. There is a negative correlation between the ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self, but a positive correlation between the ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience. Therefore, teachers should help students to construct an ideal L2 self to improve students’ autonomy in FL learning.

**Studies on the relationship between strategies and autonomy**

Some researchers have focused on investigating the relationship between English learning strategies and learning autonomy. For example, Liu and Liu (2010) investigated the relationship between metacognitive learning strategies and autonomous learning ability. By longitudinally tracing the use of metacognitive strategies, the time spent studying on line, the times doing test on line, and the final exam scores among 93 college students of different programs, the results showed that there is a strong positive correlation between final scores and autonomous online study, and metacognitive learning strategies can promote students to be active and positive in learning. Similarly, Shao and Zhao (2011) also explored the relationship between metacognitive strategies and autonomous learning ability, and found
that a positive correlation exists between metacognitive strategies and autonomous learning ability, and claims that metacognitive strategies training could help students strengthen and consolidate learner beliefs and attitudes towards autonomous learning.

In addition, Tan et al. (2011) studied the use of learning strategies in the Autonomous Learning Center, and found that participation in studying in the Autonomous Learning Center is not high; most students were able to use cognitive strategies effectively, but seldom used metacognitive and social strategies.

More comprehensively, Ni (2010) explored the correlations among three individual variables: motivation, strategies and autonomy of 202 second-year students out of 2900 in one university in China; the study indicates that both English learning motivation and learning strategies are positively correlated with autonomous learning ability. They also found that the correlation between learning strategies and autonomy is higher than that between strategies and motivation; correlation between instrumental motivation and autonomy is higher than that between integrative motivation and autonomy; and the correlation between metacognitive strategy is significantly higher than that between the other strategies and autonomy.

The studies investigating the relationship between autonomy and strategies were mainly focused on metacognitive strategies and autonomous leaning, commonly suggesting that metacognitive learning strategies were positively correlated with autonomous learning in language learning. Although these studies could highlight the veracity of Chinese students’ autonomous English learning in the Chinese context, few studies were designed to explore how learning strategies overall were correlated with autonomous learning behaviors, especially in terms of Chinese participants in a study abroad context. Therefore, it is necessary to overview the ID variables in study abroad contexts in the next section.

2.2 English learning in study abroad contexts

In section 2.1, I have reviewed the previous research into the individual differences of Chinese students. After this section, I will associate the ID variables with the study abroad context. With this in mind, it is essential to discuss the variation in Chinese students’ IDs in different contexts in comparison with previous research results. Section 2.2 starts with a general overview of research on the study abroad context. Secondly, I will elaborate the previous empirical studies on individual differences with a focus on motivation, learning strategies, autonomy and English contact in the study abroad context. Finally, I will pinpoint
the role of English to Chinese students in the Hungarian context and identify the research gap.

2.2.1 Overview of research on the study abroad context

Study Abroad, as a popular research field in foreign language acquisition, can be traced back to 1960s. With globalization taking place all, an increasing number of universities pay much attention to educational internationalization, and increasing numbers of students go abroad to pursue their studies for different purposes, such as to improve their foreign language ability and become familiar with new cultures, to receive professional knowledge in their field, or to gain international experiences, etc. Therefore, applied linguists and educators have become interested in how the study abroad context affects students’ foreign language learning compared to the home context. Over the past forty years, many researchers and scholars have found out the different kinds of study abroad advantages in enhancing the foreign language improvement, and they generally hold the similar assumption that SA is a most beneficial approach to enhancing language proficiency (Allen, 2010; Coleman 1997; Davidson, 2007; Kinginger, 2008; López-Serrano, 2010) as well as cultural competence (Byram & Feng, 2006).

For example, Freed (1998) mentioned that students who live abroad for a period of time eventually become proficient in their target language. DeKeyser (2007, p. 209) also argues that study abroad might be the “ultimate opportunity to practice a foreign language” in second language acquisition. At the same time, Davidson (2007, p.277) explains, “[I]t has long been understood that language acquisition at the highest levels of proficiency is generally not possible without a substantial immersion experience”. In addition, López-Serrano (2010) also argues that SA experience not only benefits language proficiency, (such as fluency, pronunciation, discursive abilities, or vocabulary), but also stimulates students’ motivation and adjusts their approaches to learning the second language. Moreover, Ferrer further argues that learners can be exposed to certain L2 concepts and characteristics in the SA context that they could not easily access in a traditional language classroom (as cited in Cigliana & Serrano, 2016).

As far as the definition of study abroad is concerned, Freed (1995, p.5) describes the SA context as “students who combine a period of residence in another country or province with classroom-based language and/or content area study”. Kinginger (2009, p.11) defines study abroad as “a temporary sojourn of pre-defined duration undertaken for educational purposes”. Study abroad is also seen as “one of the major vehicles for assisting language
learners to become translingually and transculturally competent, open-minded, and tolerant individuals” (Goldoni, 2013, p.359). Murphy et al. (2014, p.1) refer to study abroad as a “vehicle for building students’ global competence”.

As can be seen from the above, the study abroad produces the positive effects on language and cultural competence. However, from the 1960s till now, researchers have been studying the SA context from different perspectives. From reviewing the relevant literature, it can be generally summarized in the following aspects.

(1) Many researchers have studied the effects of SA on language gains, including language fluency, proficiency such as vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar; and comprehensive skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is generally agreed that SA experience benefits L2 outcomes not only in the L2 foundations of vocabulary complexity (Grey et al., 2015; Leonard & Shea, 2017), pronunciation (George, 2014; Ringer-Hilfinger, 2012), grammar (Arnett, 2013; Grey et al., 2015); but also in listening (Cubillos et al., 2008), oral fluency (Collentine & Freed, 2004; Freed et al., 2004), reading (Brecht et al., 1995; Lapkin et al., 1995; Kinginger, 2008) and writing (Meara, 1994; Adams, 2006).

(2) Many scholars have researched the positive effects of SA on cultural competence and intercultural awareness (Engle and Engle, 2004; Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004; Berg, 2009; Jackson, 2009; Beaven & Spencer-Oatey, 2016), including sociolinguistic competence (Khorshidi, 2013; Ren, 2013; Felix-Brasderfer & Hasler-Barker, 2014), pragmatic competence (Shardakova, 2005; Diao, 2011), and sociocultural competence (Regan et al., 2009).

(3) A few of researchers investigated the effects of SA on individual difference variables (Isabelli-García, 2018; Brecht et al., 1995; Davidson, 2010) including self-belief (Amuzie & Winke, 2009; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003), strategies (Adams, 2006; Lafford, 2004; Paige, Cohen & Shively, 2004), and motivation (Allen, 2010; Allen & Herron, 2003; Hernández, 2010; Isabelli-García, 2006; Sasaki, 2011).

(4) Some scholars have explored the effects of language socialization (Dufon, 2006; Kinginger, 2015; McMeekin, 2017); from the perspective, language learning is regarded as a process of socialization instead of acquisition (Isabelli-García et al., 2018). This research field involves constructs like language contact (Briggs, 2015; Kormos et al., 2014), homestay (Di Silvio et al., 2014; Martinsen, 2010), and social networks or communities of practice (Baker-Smemoe et al. 2014; Isabelli-García, 2006; Dewey, Belnap, et al., 2013; Dewey et al., 2012).
However, based on previous research achievements, some researchers advocate new directions for future studies, such as using mixed-methods research to study the dynamic changes of individual variables in SA context (Marijuan & Sanz, 2018) and research into language socialization, such as the language contact among students studying and living abroad (Kinginger, 2017). However, few researchers have attempted to conduct empirical studies in the field.

2.2.2 Language contact in the SA context

Study abroad is generally regarded as a very advantageous context for second language learning since learners are able to gain access to adequate L2 contact (Briggs, 2015). Language learners, teachers and parents all hold a similar concept that studying abroad could provide overseas students with a greater amount of contact with the target language, which consequently helps to enhance their second language proficiency (Magnan & Back, 2007). For example, SA learners always spend their time using the target language in class and often live as neighbors with those who do not speak their L1 outside the classroom, such as in a mixed-language residential apartment (Briggs, 2015). Trentman (2017) found that one of the most significant impacts is language contact abroad (the amount of time spent on the target language while abroad), which supports the assumption that the more contacts students make, the more gains they will achieve. However, Briggs (2015) argues that even relatively frequent L2 contact in the SA context does not always make second language learner proficient if learners lived alone or spoke their mother tongue with their country fellowman, or seldom accessed language contacts in the target language outside class. Therefore, some scholars try to explore individual differences in learners’ comprehensive language proficiency, such as spoken English fluency, as well as pragmatic competence, by analyzing what kinds of predictors could affect language development in the study abroad experience (Trentman, 2017). Consequently, the effects of exposure to the second language in the study abroad context would differ from individual differences factors such as motivation, strategies, gender and so on (Tanaka, 2004; Woodman, 1998; Briggs, 2015).

Furthermore, there is a lack of studies on what specific language contacts overseas students access inside and outside of class, and there is also little attention paid to correlations between contact and concrete language achievements (Briggs, 2015). Many students suppose that it is of significance to have access to L2 contacts after class in a SA context for those who want to have a competent command of the second language (Briggs, 2015). In order to explore students’ language contacts in study abroad contexts, researchers
usually adopt quantitative data from self-reported questionnaires, such as the Language Contact Profile (Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz, & Halter, 2004) or Milroy’s (1980) theories of social networks, and such measures can also be established with the help of qualitative data from interviews; other researchers simply count the time length spent abroad (Trentman, 2017). The Language Contact Profile (LCP) designed by Freed et al. (2004) includes five-point Likert-scale items describing L2 contact in the host country for the participants to select from “almost never” to “daily”, which has been applied to investigate language contact of language learners outside class in study abroad contexts (Briggs, 2015). Many researchers have adopted the LCP and other analogous questionnaires to explore the correlation between L2 contact and language achievements from different aspects: oral fluency (Freed et al., 2004; Hernandez, 2010; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004; Yager, 1998), vocabulary gains (Dewey, 2008; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004), pronunciation improvement (Munoz & Llanes, 2014), and intercultural competence (Martinsen, 2011). However, previous studies have mostly concentrated on the language contact of American students taking part in study-abroad programs (Dewey et al., 2012; Cohen et al., 2005; Kinginger, 2008; Aveni, 2005); few studies has been previously conducted to explore the relationship between L2 contact with individual difference variables (motivation, strategies, autonomy and so on) among Chinese students in SA contexts.

2.2.3 Previous empirical research into individual difference variables in the SA context

Many inconsistent outcomes have been found among language learners in the SA context (DeKeyser, 2010; Isabelli-García, 2006; Martinsen, 2010), and many researchers argue that simply living abroad is not certain to result in successful language achievement; therefore, individual differences among students might be of great significance in second language achievements in the SA context (Cigliana & Serrano, 2016). Several individual difference factors related to L2 achievement in study abroad contexts were studied before by researchers, including gender, age, personality, aptitude, working memory, beliefs, motivation, attitude, L2 anxiety, willingness to communicate, L2 socialization etc (Hessel, 2017). In the following sub-sections, some empirical studies will be reviewed, which are relevant to my research topic in terms of motivation, strategy and autonomy studied in SA context.
2.2.3.1 Previous empirical studies on motivation in the SA context

In recent years, some researchers have studied the motivational dispositions of L2 learning students in study abroad contexts. For example, Allen (2010) conducted a qualitative study on the motivation types to learn French among six American students who were taking part in a short-term study abroad program in France. The results showed that the participants were mainly motivated by two types of motives, either by linguistic orientation (learning French to reach fluency and proficiency for future academic, professional purposes) or pragmatic orientation (learning French for achieving French minor and certificate for future careers). The study also found that the two main effective reasons for participation in SA programs were 1) to improve foreign language fluency and 2) to travel and learn about the culture. Moreover, the motivation of those who were linguistically orientated was increased through SA experience, but the students who had pragmatic orientation did show any changes in their language learning motivation.

Similarly, Weger (2013) conducted a quantitative study on the motivation constructs of 131 international students from different countries who were studying English in an Intensive English Program in the SA context of America. Three subscales of motivation were investigated: language learning attitudes, orientations and learning confidence. Through factor analysis, five motivational constructs were found: Learning Self-Confidence, Attitudes toward English Language Learning/Community, Personal English Use, Value of English Learning, and International Posture. The results also indicated that instrumentality could be a factor in promoting both the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self in proportion to the degree to which the instrumental motive was internalized. Even in a study abroad context, the positive attitudes toward the English community showed little impact on the promotion of students’ motivation; however, the participants were found to be motivated by English learning for international posture and personal English use.

However, other research has focused on the relationship between the SA context and L2 learning motivation. For instance, Hernández (2010) explored the relationship between oral L2 performance and motivation as well as L2 language and cultural contact through collecting data from twenty American university students who spent one semester studying in Spain. From the data analysis of the motivation questionnaire, the language contact profile and the Stimulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI) before and after SA, the findings indicated that one semester of SA learning experience could enhance students’ oral L2 proficiency. Furthermore, the integrative motivation of the students was positively correlated with L2 cultural contacts in the SA context; also, the students’ L2 spoken progress was
significantly influenced by their L2 contact. The research also proved that the learning activities (not only in the home context but also in the SA context) are beneficial to the improvement of students’ integrative motivation and the promotion of students’ interaction with L2 culture.

Additionally, Ueki and Takeuchit (2015) studied how study abroad impacted L2 motivational variables and perceived L2 proficiency among 151 Japanese university students taking part in one-year SA programs during their time at university based on Dornyei’s L2 Motivational Self System. Through analysis of the questionnaire data by means of structural equation modelling (SEM), the findings indicated that the motivated learning behaviors were impacted by three factors: the ideal L2 self, self-efficacy, and L2 learning attitude. However, before SA, the ideal L2 self showed the strongest effects, while after SA self-efficacy was the most influential factor affecting motivated learning behaviors. Moreover, before SA, there was a negative correlation between the ideal L2 self and L2 anxiety, and the ought-to L2 self was found to be affected by both language learning experience, (such as teachers, parents and classmates), and anxiety. In other words, the lack of the ideal L2 self could result in L2 anxiety, and the discrepancy between the actual L2 self and ought-to L2 self could produce L2 anxiety, as well. Nevertheless, after SA, L2 anxiety obviously became weakened, and the ought-to L2 Self became internalized as a factor affecting L2 motivation SA learning experience. Therefore, the SA learning experience is beneficial in maintaining L2 learning motivation so as to enhance L2 proficiency.

Nevertheless, in recent years, there is a new trend in researching motivation in SA contexts, which focuses on the dynamic changes in the motivation of students. For example, Li (2017) explored the motivational dynamic changes in a case study of eleven Chinese learners who studied English at a language institution in New Zealand. Through qualitative analysis of participants’ diaries and personal interviews during their three-month stay abroad, the findings demonstrated that generally speaking, there were indeed dynamic changes in L2 motivation when the participants were studying abroad because of the impact of both classroom and out of class contexts. Specifically speaking, of the four motivational constructs, (ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, L2 learning experiences and motivated learning behavior), there were no changes in the ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self, but there were some changes in the L2 learning experience and motivated learning behavior. Moreover, the 11 participants could be classified into five groups: 1) those with ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self orientations, and a positive L2 learning experience, 2) those with ought-to L2 self orientations and positive L2 learning experience, 3) those with ideal L2 self and ought-to L2
self orientations, but negative L2 learning experiences, 4) those with positive L2 learning experiences, 5) those with ought-to L2 self orientations. The motivation was increased among the participants in the first three groups.

Furthermore, most recently, Fryer and Roger (2018) conducted a longitudinal study on how the changes of students’ L2 motivational Self System influenced their motivation, study goals and learning behaviors in the short term and the long term after their SA experience. Through collecting qualitative data using interviews and narration from 8 Japanese students who spent one year abroad during their university studies, the results indicated that there was a significant relationship between the L2 Motivational Self System and students’ motivation, as well as learning behaviors. Specifically, three categories of findings show that: 1) some participants changed to be motivated by the ideal L2 self because of the influence of a positive learning experience during SA; 2) some students were affected by the feared L2 self, which emphasized the avoidance from the image that they did not hope to become; 3) some participants were motivated by both the ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self. All in all, study abroad experiences would influence students’ possible selves and help to maintain the students’ English learning motivation and behaviors.

2.2.3.2 Previous empirical studies on strategies in SA contexts

As for research into language learning strategies in the SA context, there were few empirical studies in this field. However, from the current review of literature, some researchers were identified who have mainly focused on the specific strategies applied to studying in study abroad settings. For example, Lafford (2004) conducted a comparative study on communication strategies utilized by twenty students learning Spanish in at home context and twenty-six students in a study-abroad context. Lafford defined communication strategies as

strategies used by L2 learners in a conscious attempt to bridge a perceived communication gap, either caused by the learner’s lack of L2 knowledge (resource deficit), problems with his or her own performance or problems resulting from interaction with an interlocutor. (p. 204)

Two groups of participants were tested twice before and after SA learning, and the findings indicated that the students in home contexts applied more communication strategies than those in the SA setting, and the application of communication strategies respectively had a negative correlation with frequent utilization of Spanish out of class as well as with the host family. The reason might be that SA group students in authentic language contexts
concentrate more on meaning, while AH students focus more on L2 forms and grammatical accuracy.

Paige et al. (2004) explored the strategy use by participants to learn language and culture in a study abroad context, through respectively investigating a pair of groups of American students who spent one semester abroad in two different semesters. The comparative analysis of the pre- and post-test data of the control and experimental groups indicated that there was no significant difference in language learning strategies in general; however, significant differences were found in some specific strategy items between two groups: for example, the experimental group focused more on native speaker pronunciation and sentence stress when listening; the group used vocabulary memorizing strategies and word-for-word translation strategies less frequently, but more actively participated in conversation; the group also used gestures to convey information less frequently. Nevertheless, the qualitative data from e-journals illustrated that the students in the experimental group improved language learning strategies while abroad; moreover, the use of strategies in speaking and listening increased more frequently.

There are also some researchers who have focused on the changes in strategy use before and after going abroad, but varying results were found. For example, Gao (2006) investigated the changes in the utilization of English learning strategies through a qualitative study of fourteen Chinese students who studied in the UK. Based on socio-cultural theory, the analysis of the participants’ retrospective narratives revealed that while in China, the Chinese students’ preference and frequency of using English learning strategies was influenced by three mediating factors: popular language learning discourses (language learning motivation such as English as a tool, or interest), assessment methods, and influential agents (teachers, parents); however, after they had moved to Britain and stayed for 9 months, these influential factors became weak; therefore, the shift of context from at home to study abroad resulted in changes in the use of English learning strategies.

By contrast, Adam (2006) explored the influence of study abroad on the use of language learning strategies among 132 American students of Spanish, French, German and Portuguese who spent 4 months studying in different countries. Through pre- and post-tests and questionnaires given to the participants, the results reflected that no significant differences in language strategies were found in general. However, there was a difference in the affective and cognitive strategies between different genders; females used affective strategies more than males, while males applied more cognitive strategies than females. The results also suggested that group travel could not enhance communication strategy use;
therefore, the students were advised to communicate with native speakers more frequently while study abroad; moreover, combining strategy instruction with study abroad can have the potential to enhance language learning.

2.2.3.3 Previous empirical studies on autonomy in SA contexts

So far, few empirical studies on L2 learning autonomy in the study abroad context have been found in the existing literature. However, Lee (2011) studied, based on the social constructivist approach, how students in a study abroad context enhanced their autonomous L2 learning and intercultural competence by means of computer-mediated communication (CMC) by blogs and face-to-face (FTF) communication with native speakers out of class. Through investigating sixteen American BA students who spent one semester in a study abroad program in Spain, the findings showed that blogs provided the participants with more chance to study autonomously and have self-reflection on inter-cultural issues. However, the students were found to lack critical thinking, since most of the communications were information exchanges and not opinionated argumentation. It was also found that the different tasks and topics assigned by the teachers could make students think critically, and free topics could make students engage in more self-regulation of their own learning. Finally, the researcher suggested that well-designed tasks, effective metacognitive and cognitive skills, and the accessibility of the Internet are key factors in amplify the functions of blogs to foster learner autonomy and intercultural communication.

2.2.3.4 Previous empirical studies on language contact in the SA context

Some researchers have focused on the effects of L2 contact abroad on linguistic gains; most of these studies are related to oral fluency, listening comprehension as well as vocabulary improvement. For example, Magnan and Bake (2007) explored how language socialization affected L2 linguistic achievement through investigating 24 American students participating in a study abroad program for two semesters in France. The participants were tested twice, once before and once after their overseas study by three instruments: the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), the Can-Do self-assessment scale (Clark, 1981), and a modified Language Contact Profile (LCP; Freed et al., 2001). Finally, the findings revealed that although there appeared to be L2 gains promoted by the study abroad experience, the residing environment and L2 interactions with the target language were found not to be such influential factors as they were commonly believed to be by researchers. However, when comparing the individual background factors between the participants who
made progress in L2 gains and those who did not, the results indicated that the students’ previous course work was the key factors that influenced L2 performance while studying abroad.

However, Trentman (2017) conducted a similar study but came to a different conclusion. Trentman (2017) also explored the linguistic gains in L2 spoken fluency and sociolinguistic competence among 21 American students of Arabic who participated in a four-month study program in Egypt. Through pre- and post-testing, the participants’ oral fluency by speech rate was measured, as well as their sociolinguistic competence, which was measured by the percentage of Egyptian dialect forms in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. The findings indicated that generally the participants’ sociolinguistic competence increased, which was characterized by their discourse containing more than 35 percent Egyptian Arabic dialect forms, which nobody had been exposed to before going abroad; however, the speed of oral fluency did not change significantly. Moreover, there was a positive correlation between the number of hours spent in L2 contact and spoken performance; furthermore, the contrastive analysis of the two groups (high and low improvers) illustrated that those who had more gains established language socialization not only with members of the local population but also with other international students, while those who gained little tended to interact in English with other international students.

Furthermore, Taguchi (2008) tried to explore how the study abroad context affected the improvements of L2 listening comprehension in accuracy and speed, and the relationship between L2 gains and cognitive processing ability as well as the effect of the amount of L2 contact the students had. The 44 Japanese learners in American universities were invited to fill in the instruments three times during their semester abroad; they took a listening comprehension test, a vocabulary test, and a L2 contact amount test. After taking into account the correct percentage achieved at the listening exam and the time spent answering the questions correctly, the amount of time engaged in L2 contact after class, and the speed of cognitively processing vocabularies, three conclusions were reached regarding the findings: 1) the speed of listening comprehension significantly improved among the participants; however, the accuracy was not enhanced; 2) there was a significant positive correlation between cognitive ability to process vocabulary and the speed of listening comprehension; 3) there was a significant correlation between the speed of listening comprehension and the amount of L2 contact that students spent in speaking and reading after class. However, it is worth mentioning that there was no relationship between the
accuracy of listening comprehension and cognitive ability in vocabulary processing and the amount of L2 contact in the study abroad context.

Moreover, Briggs (2015) investigated the effects of L2 contact outside of class on the lexical gains in a study abroad context among 241 international adult learners of English who participated in language courses in the United Kingdom. The participants had their vocabulary tested two times before and after their study abroad, and they were also invited to complete a questionnaire concerning the types and frequency of English contact after class. Through comparative study on the differences between differently labelled groups (different areas of residence and different lengths of stay), the results revealed that there was no significant difference in out-of-class L2 contact between students in two different destinations, but there was a significant difference between three groups with different lengths of stay in the UK. Using correlation analysis, the results also indicated that there was no significant correlation between out-of-class L2 contact and lexical gains, due to lack of chances to apply new words caused by limited receptive activities and interactions.

Nevertheless, few empirical studies were found which aimed to research the relationship between language contact and individual difference variables. Kormos et al. (2014) conducted a mixed-methods study on the characteristics and fluctuations of L2 contact in spoken, written and media contact and English learning attitudes and efforts among 70 international students (73% Chinese) participating in courses of a one-year preparatory program in Britain. All the participants were given questionnaires three times during their study; in addition, a qualitative study was conducted in which ten extra students and two English teachers were interviewed after finishing the questionnaire. Through the analysis of the changes of participants’ English learning motivation and the frequency of contact with the target language at three different testing periods, the findings implied that during the whole school year, the participants increased direct written contacts together with media contact; however, the direct spoken contact was not found to be frequently used when the semester was about to terminate. Moreover, both quantitative and qualitative data reflected significant relationships between target language contact and motivation among the participants, which together influenced international students’ English learning.

One of the most comprehensive studies was carried out by Cigliana and Serrano (2016), who explored the individual differences of fifty-four American students participating in a study abroad program in Spain with the help of a quantitative study which analyzed the correlations of attitude, motivation, and language contact with perceived gains in four L2 skills. The results indicated that the participants showed high motivation to learn the L2 in
the study abroad context, and there was a significantly positive correlation among integrative orientations, attitude, language contact and self-perceived gains in second language skills; moreover, the researchers revealed that the amount of L2 contact that students had with the target language and students’ perceived progress in L2 skills were significantly affected by a positive attitude towards the target language and integrative motivation.

However, it is necessary to note that all the related studies on the SA context are focused on second language contexts; thus, the previous results about students’ learning situation in the SA context also originate from second language contexts, where the language used in society is the students’ target language. There is a lack of research on the impact of SA on the acquisition of English when students study in non-English speaking countries (Llanes et al., 2016), and there are few empirical studies investigating the effects of SA on L2 English learning in countries where English is used not as the official language of the country but as a lingua franca in academic contexts, e.g. Chinese students with L2 English studying in Hungary. Students under these circumstances do not need to learn the official language of their host country since L2 English works as a lingua franca. Consequently, research into the individual difference variables of the students in such a setting is non-existent. Until now, no results have been found in relation to Chinese participants in SA contexts where English is used as lingua franca.

When it comes to language learning contexts, there are generally two main settings for English language acquisition: the first is the foreign language or home context, where English as a foreign language subject is learned and taught mainly in classroom-based domains; the second is the second language context, where English as second language is acquired “institutionally, socially and functionally” in immersion-based domains, such as in the US, UK, Canada (Llanes et al., 2016, p.2); these are the contexts traditionally used for study abroad (SA) programs. However, as for the foreign language context, there are two sub-categories: the foreign-language instructed setting (for example, non-language program students study English as a course in school for about 2-4 hours a week) and the intensive domestic immersion setting, in which English majors study English more or less 25 hours a week (Serrano et al. 2011, p.134; Llanes et al., 2016).

Nevertheless, with the advancement of globalization, more and more universities in non-English speaking countries, such as European countries, provide programs instructed in English for international students; therefore, there appears a second category of study abroad contexts which is a non-second language/non-target language SA context. This new emerging context is between the home and target-language study abroad contexts. As for
this group of students in study abroad contexts, where English is used as a lingua franca and as the medium of instruction, there is a lack of empirical studies. Therefore, the question arises: what impact does this use of English have on the development of L2 English since it cannot be assumed that these students have much contact with English native speakers? The present dissertation is aimed at exploring the motivational dispositions, strategy use and autonomous behaviors of Chinese students learning English in Hungary, a non-English speaking European country. Therefore, the current study will fill this gap and contribute complementary data to this new research perspective.

2.2.4 The role of English for Chinese students in the Hungarian context

English generally functions in three roles in Europe: first as a native language, such as in Britain (ENL), second as a foreign language in language education contexts in non-English speaking countries (EFL), and third as a lingua franca both for intra-European and for global communication (ELF) (Seidlhofer, 2007, p.138). According to Cogo & Jenkins (2010), the differences between ELF and EFL can be summarized as follows.

ELF is part of global Englishes, in which most interaction is among nonnative speakers, and all English varieties are accepted in their own right rather than evaluated according to a native speaker version; by contrast, EFL is part of foreign languages, in which most interaction is between native and non-native speakers, and the goal is to approximate a native variety of the relevant language as closely as possible. (p.275)

ELF is described simply as “an additionally acquired language system which serves as a common means of communication for speakers of different first languages” (VOICE, as cited in Cogo & Jenkins, 2010, p. 275). Other researchers have given similar definitions. For example, Samarin (as cited in Seidlhofer, 2007, p. 138) defined lingua franca as “any lingual medium of communication between people of different mother tongues, for whom it is a second language”. Firth (1996, p.240) defines ELF as “a ‘contact language’ between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication”. Furthermore, Seidlhofer (2005, p. 339) defined ELF as “a way of referring to communication in English between speakers with different first languages”. Later, Jenkins (2009, p. 200) defined ELF as “the common language of choice, among speakers who come from different linguacultural backgrounds”. Therefore, in line with the proposed definitions, ELF generally refers to English as a
common communicative language in a common study or workplace among those who speak different first languages and come from different cultural backgrounds.

Since great changes have occurred in European higher education because of the influence of the Bologna process, more and more European universities have started to promote their programs and curriculums instructed in English, especially in northern European countries; additionally, more programs in English are being developed in other European countries to absorb students worldwide (Björkman, 2010). The internationalization of universities in non-English-speaking countries has led to English increasingly being used as the medium of instruction, which has led to the flourishing of so-called English-medium instruction (EMI) programs (Carty & Susser, 2015). EMI could be defined as “the teaching of a subject using the medium of the English language”; however, EMI is usually associated with Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), a language pedagogical methods characterized by “situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language” (Madhavan & McDonald, 2014, p. 1).

Moreover, there is another similar methodology of second language learning, Content-based Instruction (CBI), which is defined as “the concurrent teaching of academic subject matter and second language skills” (Brinton et al. as cited in Karim, 2016, p. 255). The purpose of CBI is to improve the learners’ second/foreign language skills and content knowledge at the same time through “authentic and meaningful academic contexts” (Karim, 2016, p. 255). Several scholars have postulated that learning English through content-based instruction is beneficial for second language improvements. For example, Wannagat (2007) argued that Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) have the same teaching notions and learning targets: to improve students’ L2 proficiency by teaching content-based courses through the second language. Similarly, Schmidt-Unterberger (2018, p. 4) also proposed that “English-medium programs should equip the students with the linguistic skills they need to communicate the expertise developed in the program”. Furthermore, Muñoz (2014) also emphasized the benefits of CLIL to strengthen both content and language at the same time. Overall, Content and Language Integrated Learning related methods for language learners offers a number of advantages: “(1) it produces better language learners, (2) it produces better content learners and (3) it creates motivation for teachers as well as students” (Wolff as cited in Costa & Coleman, 2013, p. 5).
Since the current research is neither focused on the language varieties of ELF, nor on English teaching methods of EMI or CBI, the dissertation is only using these terms as category labels to identify the participants as autonomous language learners learning English through content-based instruction and using English as a medium of communication, that is lingua franca, in SA academic and social settings; therefore, empirical studies on EFL and EMI are not reviewed and discussed in this dissertation.

2.3 Summary

In the second chapter, I systematically reviewed the literature related to individual differences and study abroad contexts. First, I gave a general overview of individual differences research, and summarized the key definitions and influential theories and frameworks relevant to the study of motivation, learning strategies, and autonomy, as well as previous empirical studies on the above-mentioned three ID variables of Chinese students, which were mostly researched in the Chinese context. Second, I overviewed the study abroad research trends and the previous empirical studies in the SA context. Most of studies reviewed here are related to American students in exchange programs in mostly Spanish-speaking countries. A few of studies are focused on Chinese students studying abroad, mostly in English-speaking countries. Hardly any studies exist on individual differences in SA contexts where English is used as a lingua franca. There are similarly few studies on the variety of English called English as a lingua franca in the case of students who study and work in European countries. There are no studies on Chinese students’ individual difference in SA contexts where English is used as lingua franca. In fact, more and more European countries provide English programs to international students and more and more Chinese students choose to go to non-English-speaking countries to study, using English as the language of instruction. Therefore, this study will fill the gap in this field, and contribute to future research into this topic regarding Chinese students’ individual differences in non-English study abroad contexts. Based on this, I will raise the research questions in the following methods chapter.
Chapter 3: Research Methods

3.1 Research context

Since the “One Belt, One Road Initiative” was proposed, China has established close ties with the outside world, especially with European countries (Yidai Yilu, 2017). Under these circumstances, professionals are in demand who not only have knowledge and skills related to their respective majors, but also have fluent and solid English language competence. According to the Ministry of Education in China, over six hundred thousand students went abroad to study in 2017, of which over sixty thousand are studying in the countries along the Belt and Road Initiative. There is no doubt that China is sending more students to study abroad than any other country. Regardless of the specific study abroad program that Chinese students are a part of, English is the key for them to fulfill their studies successfully because English is the only language that allow them to study and live abroad, especially in English-speaking countries such as the US, UK and so on. However, with increase in international cooperation all over the world, more and more non-English speaking countries have opened the English-medium programs to recruit international students. In this case, English is already being used as lingua franca in order to work, study, live for global citizens. Due to particularly increasing cooperation between China and European countries, more and more European universities have opened degree programs of different levels in English to Chinese students.

As far as Hungary is concerned, especially in recent years, since 2014 more and more students have been going to Hungary to study because of the increasing cultural and educational exchanges influenced by the One Belt and One Road Initiative; for example, there are approximately over 2,000 Chinese students presently in Hungary, among which around 500 students in various degrees programs are scholarship-supported students; a rising number of self-financed students have chosen to study in Hungary as well (personal communication with the head of Education Office of the Chinese Embassy in Hungary, 2019). Hungary, as a non-English speaking country, provides Chinese students with English programs; in this sense, English as a lingua franca plays a vital role for Chinese students pursuing their education and living in a study abroad context to fulfill academic achievements, while learning about Hungarian as well as European cultures.
For this group of investigated participants, they are not English majors and they do not take English language courses. For them, English is utilized as the Medium of Instruction (EMI), and they learn and improve their English by Content-based Instruction (CBI) in academic settings and through international contact in social settings in a study abroad context. Therefore, in this given context, how the students’ individual differences factor into their English language learning is the focus of this research. In particular, from the different individual difference variables, motivation, strategy and autonomy were chosen to be investigated in this project. In addition, English contact was also surveyed, as well.

3.2 Research questions

The current research aims to investigate the individual differences of Chinese students studying in Hungary from multiple dimensions, and analyze their realistic motivational dispositions, strategy preference, autonomous learning behaviors and the frequency of language contacts in their social and academic settings in a study abroad context. The research involves not only macro tendency of the students’ motivation and strategy use, but also micro behaviors and language contacts in coping with the English language during their study in Hungary. Specifically, I aim to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the general characteristics of Chinese students’ motivational dispositions and orientations, learning strategies preferences, the autonomous learning behaviors in the English learning process; in addition, which aspects of L2 contact are more easily accessed by the Chinese participants?
2. How do gender, major, degree level, length of study broad, and English proficiency relate to students’ motivational scales, learning strategy choice, autonomous learning behaviors, and access to language contact?
3. How do the scales in each individual difference variable have inner correlations with each other? How does each ID variable correlate with the others? How does English proficiency correlate with any of the ID variables?
4. How do ID variables affect English learning efforts as well as the perceived English proficiency?
5. What are the differences in students’ perceived English learning experience in terms of motivation, strategy use, and autonomy when crossing from the at-home to the study-abroad context?
3.3 Overall research design

In order to achieve the proposed aims of the study and answer the research questions, I designed two separate empirical studies. Study One is the quantitative survey which used questionnaires as the data collection instrument, and Study Two is a qualitative interview study which was used to supplement the quantitative data. For the purpose of answering the research question 1 to 4 by means of the quantitative methodology, I intended to investigate the actual individual differences of the subjects based on the data collected from the self-reported questionnaires. Meanwhile, with the aim of answering research question 5, through the qualitative methodology of the semi-structured retrospective interviews, I attempted to explore the dynamic characteristics of participants’ motivation, strategies and learning experience. In this way, the two research methods have the potential to make up for each other’s shortcomings. First, the research instruments were designed based on the relevant theories in the reviewed literature; then, a pilot study was conducted to measure the reliability of the questionnaire instruments and interview questions; after that, the formal study was carried out; finally, the data was collected and analyzed.

3.4 Designing and piloting the instruments

In order to achieve the research objectives, great care was taken in the design of the research instruments. I attempted to design the instruments in a way suitable for the participants and context of this research. First, based on the reviewed literature and with reference to the theoretical frameworks, the questionnaires for quantitative research were designed, and then used to conduct a pilot study. After that, the interview questions for qualitative research were designed and piloted.

3.4.1 Designing questionnaire

As discussed in the literature review, individual differences research is a large discipline with many sub-disciplinary components. Confined by the limited time and practical conditions, it is impossible to study all of the related ID factors; therefore, I decided to conduct an empirical study on four main dimensions: the three ID variables (motivation, strategy and autonomy) and L2 contact related to the study abroad context. In order to validly examine the variables, the instruments play a vital role in the realization of the research purposes. In choosing the instruments, three principles were taken into consideration: the validity of the instruments, the relevance to the participants and the context, and control over the length of time for answering the questionnaire, as a questionnaire that is too long will
cause the participants to lose their patience to answer the items seriously. It is generally agreed that the proper time for answering the whole questionnaire should be around 20 minutes.

Hence, on the basis of the three principles and the reviewed literature, I worked out the comprehensive questionnaire which is based on referring to Dörnyei’s L2MSS questionnaire (You & Dörnyei, 2016), Gao’s Chinese student motivation type questionnaire (Gao, 2003), Oxford’s SILL questionnaire (Oxford, 1990), and Csizér’s autonomous behaviors questionnaire (Csizér, Pawlak, Szatzker, & Erdő-Bonyár, in press) and language contact questionnaire (Kormos, Csizér & Iwaniec, 2014). Then, I modified some items to be adapted to the tested participants in the given context; meanwhile, some irrelevant parts were deleted, and some overlapping items were integrated for the sake of controlling the proper length of the questionnaire.

In order to guarantee that the participants fully understand the items and are able to validly respond to the questions, the questionnaire was written and surveyed in the Chinese language. After selecting and revising the items based on the original version, I began to translate the items into Chinese. Firstly, as for L2MSS, there is a validated Chinese version available on Dörnyei’s personal website, since it was once conducted to investigate Chinese students in mainland China in 2006. As for Oxford’s SILL 7.0, since it was widely used worldwide, a Chinese version was also used to measure Chinese students attached in the researchers’ journal articles. As for motivation Types, it was originally designed in Chinese by Gao. I re-checked the Chinese statements in order to remove unclear expressions for the present research context. As for the autonomous learning behavior and language contact questionnaire, I first translated originally English items into Chinese, and then asked one of his colleagues to do back-translation.

Eventually, the finalized version of the questionnaire consisted of five main sections: motivation, strategy, autonomy, language contact and background information; in total, the questionnaire contains 119 items and takes 20 minutes to complete. Apart from the biographical information, the other four parts of the scales using five-point Likert scales. The first part of the questionnaire, from question 1 to question 45, enquires about the motivational dispositions. The second part, from item 58 to 85, attempts to investigate the use of English learning strategies. The third part, from 46 to 57, investigates the autonomous learning behaviors in a study abroad context. The fourth part, from item 86 to 105, explores the students’ actual language contact in daily life. The fifth part, from item 106 to 119, inquires about the personal information and self-reported language proficiency, including
gender, age, the year in which the participant came to Hungary, programs, degree level, when the participant started learning English, English score on the Chinese College Entrance Exam, IELTS score and self-reported English proficiency in four English skills.

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<th>Section</th>
<th>Scale</th>
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<td>Part one</td>
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<td>45</td>
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<td>Part two</td>
<td>Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part three</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part four</td>
<td>L2 contact</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part five</td>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.4.1.1 Motivation

The first part of the questionnaire is related to the scales measuring motivation. As far as the motivation part is concerned, two sections were composed. The first section aims to measure participants’ L2 selves based on Dörnyei’s L2MSS; the reason why this variable was adopted is that it is not only the most popular framework for explaining the motivational dispositions, but also it embodies the dynamic features of motivation to learn a second language. The second section aims to investigate the tendency and intensity of L2 motivation types in the Chinese participants. Since Chinese students have long been educated in an EFL context in the Chinese educational system before going abroad, in order to make the motivation instrument better fitted to Chinese participants, I adopted a widely used motivation type questionnaire designed by Gao. However, these two scholars’ instruments were revised according to the research context, research topics and participants who were involved in the current dissertation.

**Modification of the L2 Self questionnaire**

Based on Dörnyei’s L2MSS theory, L2 learner selves consist of three scales: Ideal L2 self, Ought-to L2 self and L2 learning experience. In order to make the questionnaire fitted to the participants and the context, several items are revised based on Dörnyei’s original version. For example, the items measuring the ideal L2 Self “I can imagine a situation where I am doing business with foreigners by speaking English” is revised into “I can imagine a situation where I am working with foreigners by speaking English”. Moreover, in Chinese culture, “gaining face” among relatives is very important, so one more item is added in regard to the Ought-to L2 Self: “studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of my relatives”. In order to be in accordance with the present research context in Hungary, 6 items were newly designed in the scale measuring the L2 Learning Experience.
“I like it that via studying my chosen field of study in English in Hungary, my command of English improves.”; “I like the challenges that being instructed in English at a Hungarian university pose.”; “Being able to study my university subjects in English really appeals to me.”; “Conducting my studies in English at a Hungarian university is a disheartening experience.”; “Having to take my courses in English makes me less successful in my field.”; “I like English less since I started studying at my Hungarian university.” Finally, the L2 Self System with 17 items includes three scales, the Ideal L2 Self (5 items), the Ought-to L2 Self (6 items) and the L2 Learning Experience (6 items).

**Modification on motivation type questionnaire**

As for the instrument for measuring motivation types, based on the Gardner’s classic model of integrative and instrumental motivation, I adopted four scales from Gao’s Chinese student seven-motivation-type questionnaire, and made certain modifications to the original items. Gao (2003) conducted a large-scale investigation into 2278 undergraduate students in 30 universities of different discipline in China, trying to explore the overall tendency of motivation types of Chinese university students in learning English through a bottom-up research methodology. She first adopted open-ended questions asking “why do you study English” to hundreds of students. Based on participants’ answers as well as some literature references, the researcher included as many different types of motivation as possible. After that, the questionnaire was piloted five times in five different universities, and then some items were corrected and deleted according to the feedback from piloted students. Later on, a Cronbach α of 0.77 was reached. Finally, after the formal investigation was conducted, through MANOVA and factor analysis of the data, seven factors were identified: 1) intrinsic interest; 2) immediate achievement; 3) learning situation; 4) going abroad; 5) social responsibility; 6) individual development; and 7) information medium. Gao framed these seven motivation types into three categorizations based on Gardner’s (1972) classic model and Dörnyei’s (1994) extended model (Xu, 2008). According to Gao (2003), among seven factors, *Intrinsic Interest* was close to *Integrative Motivation* in Gardner’s classical model, whereas *Immediate Achievement*, *Individual Development* and *Information Medium* all had some characteristics of *Instrumental Motivation*. *Going abroad* overlapped with *Integrative motivation* if it refers to cultural experience or immigration, and *Instrumental* elements if it is for receiving education or getting a job. *Immediate Achievement* and *Social Responsibility* might be unique features of the Chinese EFL context. Influenced by the exam-oriented education system in China, the students learn English for passing different kinds of exams; in addition, Chinese students learning English would be associated with the development of
the family and the motherland. *Learning Situation* is an independent motivation which is closely related to Dörnyei’s language situation level. From then on, Gao’s questionnaire was widely applied by Chinese researchers to measure motivation in Chinese learners of English.

On the basis of Gao’s motivation type questionnaire of Chinese students, I referred to four scales related to the present context: *Intrinsic Interest, Personal Development, Information Medium* and *Social Responsibility*. The other three scales *Go Abroad, Immediate Achievement and Learning Situation* were not borrowed because of irrelevance to the current research context, since students are already in a study abroad context, and they do not have English language teachers and classmates, nor have different English language exams as in the EFL settings in China. In the *Intrinsic Interest* scale, one item was newly added: “I learn English in order better to integrate into the global community.”; in the *Information Medium* scale, three items were added: “I learn English in order that I can easily communicate with foreigners.”; “English is very important to me because it is the useful communicative tool in today’s society.”; “I speak English so I could make more friends with foreigners.”; in the *Social Responsibility*, one item was added: “I study English because I want to spread Chinese culture to foreigners.” Finally, the four scales were revised, which consist of 19 items all together: *intrinsic interest* with 5 items, *personal development* with 4 items, *information medium* with 5 items, and *social responsibility* with 5 items.

### 3.4.1.2 English learning strategies

To investigate the use of English learning strategies by Chinese students studying abroad in Hungary, I mainly used the *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (SILL 7.0) designed by Rebecca Oxford, but with some modifications, because it has been well-accepted and validated instrument worldwide. SILL reflects Oxford’s theoretical framework of English learning strategies, which includes the Chinese students’ English learning habits, and is suitable for exploring Chinese students’ leaning strategies (Xu, 2008). Oxford (1990) divided language learning strategies into two main categories: direct and indirect strategies, which are further divided into six sub-categories: memory, cognitive, compensatory, metacognitive, social and affective strategies. Some items were rewritten to fit the participants and the context, and some irrelevant items for the learning habits of Chinese students were deleted in order to shorten the length of questionnaire (Rao, 2006). For example, such items were deleted in each scale: in memory strategies: “I physically act out new English words”; in cognitive strategies: “I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand”; in compensatory strategies: “I read English without
looking up every new word”; in metacognitive strategies: “I look for people I can talk to in English”; in affective strategy, “I write down my feelings in a language learning diary”; and in social strategies: “I ask questions in English”. Eventually, through my discussions with some colleagues teaching English in China, those items in each scale are kept which are suitable for Chinese students’ habits in learning English (see Table 2). The final version of the strategy instrument consists of 26 items all together, and is made up of six scales: memory (4 items), cognitive (5 items), compensatory (4 items), metacognitive (5 items), social (5 items) and affective strategies (3 items).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy items kept</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>“I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the word to help me remember the word”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>situation in which the word might be used”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I use rhymes to remember new English words”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>“I say or write new English words several times”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I practice the sounds of English”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I watch English TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I read for pleasure in English”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensatory</td>
<td>“To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“When I can think of a word during a conversation in English, I use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gestures”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I can think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>same thing”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>“I notice my English mistakes and I use that information to help me do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>better”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I try to find out how to be a better learner of English”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I have clear goals for improving my English skills”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think about my progress in learning English”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>“I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mistake”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>“If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>slow down or say it again”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I practice English with other students”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I ask for help from English speakers”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I try to learn about the culture of English speakers”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4.1.3 Autonomous learning behaviors

In order to explore the autonomous learning behaviors of Chinese students’ studying abroad in Hungary in social and academic settings, I referred to Csizér’s research instrument and made some further modifications to the items. Dr. Kata Csizér conducted a validation study investigating students’ social and academic autonomous behavior in a study abroad context. Based on Benson’s (2001) model, Csizér designed a questionnaire with 80 items, respectively investigating students’ academic, social and individual behaviors before, during and after studying abroad. The questionnaire consists of three segments: before, during and after the study abroad period. In each segment, it includes learner-based and teacher-based settings. There are three subscales included under the learner-based and teachers-based settings, individual, social and academic autonomous behaviors. In order to make the items relevant to the participants and the context, I adopted learner-based items related to study abroad, and revised some items to fit the context. One item from the individual autonomous behavior subscale was altered: “During the study abroad I try to learn the language of the target” was changed into “During my stay in Hungary, I try to improve those aspects of my English knowledge that allow me to handle everyday problems”. One item from the social autonomous behavior was altered: “During the study abroad, I try to talk to people in the language of the target country” was revised into “During my stay in Hungary, I try to socialize with local people using English”. The final version of the autonomous behavior instrument involves three scales with 12 items: academic behavior (4 items), social behavior (4 items) and individual behavior (4 items).

3.4.1.4 L2 contact in the study abroad context

In order to investigate the characteristics of the frequency and types of language contact experienced by Chinese students studying in Hungary, I referred to the questionnaire designed by Kormos, Csizér and Iwaniec. Items from the questionnaire were revised in order to adapt to the given participants and context. Kormos et al. (2014) investigated the intercultural contact of international students in the UK. They analyzed the variations in learning motivation and the frequency and type of language contact experienced by the students. The language contact section of the original questionnaire consists of 21 items in four scales: direct spoken contact, direct written contact, media contact, and perceived importance of contact. Based on the Language Contact Profile, and referring to some items from Kormos et al. (2014)’ instrument, I revised the items and categorized them into three scales in both academic and social settings: direct English spoken contact, direct English...
written contact, and English media contact; moreover, I added some items related to Chinese language contact.

For example, in terms of direct spoken contact, the item “how often do you speak a foreign language with foreign visitor at your school?” was changed into “how often do you talk with your teachers or classmates in class at university in English?”; “how often do you speak a foreign language when on holiday in Hungary” was changed into “How often do you talk with your teachers or classmates out of class in English?”; “how often do you see foreigners (e.g. in the street, restaurant, public places)” was changed into “How often do you go shopping to talk with shop assistants in English?”. Moreover, a new item was added in direct spoken contact: “How often do you participate in parties or activities to socialize with foreigners in English?”. Furthermore, in direct written contact, due to the rare occurrence of written paper letter, the item “how often do you write letters in a foreign language” was changed into “How often do you write longer academic texts like homework/reports/essays in English?”. In media contact, the item “how often do you read book in a foreign language?” was revised into “How often do you read books/materials in English for academic purposes?”. Finally, I also added some items related to Chinese mother tongue contact: “How often do you talk to your Chinese friends in Chinese in Hungary?”, “How often do you attend social events in Hungary where the language of communication is Chinese?”, “How often do you go to Chinese shops in Hungary and use Chinese with the shop assistants?”, and “How often do you talk to your Chinese colleagues at your Hungarian university in Chinese?”. The final version of the language contact instrument involves four scales with 20 items: direct spoken contact (8 items), direct written contact (3 items), media contact (5 items) and Chinese contact (4 items).

3.4.1.5 Background information

For the convenience of data analysis and based on the research questions, the participants personal background information was investigated as reference variables and included gender (male and female), the year in which the participant came to Hungary (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, before 2014), programs (Humanities, Science & Engineering, Business & Administration, Agriculture, Medicine, Art, Linguistics), degree level (Preparatory, BA, MA, PhD), when the participant started learning English (from kindergarten, from primary school, from junior high school). Besides the biographic information, the English proficiency of the students was also investigated by self-reporting their English scores from two previous authorized exams (the China National College
Entrance Exam & the IELTS) and self-perceived level of present proficiency in four skills (listening comprehension, spoken communication, reading and writing ability).

As far as perceived English proficiency is concerned, a 5-point Likert scale was applied to rank the participants’ comprehensive level of English proficiency based on self-evaluation. Listening and reading were evaluated from hardly understanding anything at all to fully understanding everything, while speaking and writing were evaluated from hardly being able to express oneself to fluently being able to express oneself with correct vocabulary and grammar. The reasons for using self-evaluation were that on the one hand, it was not feasible to organize a standardized language exam to the participants from different backgrounds in terms of degree, major, and length of study abroad; on the other hand, the Gaokao exam was taken many years ago by the MA and PhD students, and IELTS scores were not reported by all the participants; therefore, I used perceived English proficiency as a variable to conduct a variety of statistical analyses. Furthermore, some researchers have already effectively utilized self-perceived proficiency in their previous studies (MacWhinnie & Mitchell, 2017; Taguchi, et al. 2009; Papi, 2010; Zhou, 2016). In addition, in order to validate the reliability of perceived English proficiency, correlation analysis was conducted which proved that Gaokao and IELTS scores were significantly positively correlated with self-perceived English proficiency results, which means that perceived proficiency could be used as a variable in the research.

3.4.2 Piloting the questionnaire

When the questionnaire design was completed, the instrument was piloted mainly in four steps:

(1) I asked one of my colleagues to do back-translation, who is a university English teacher majoring in translation in China. After that, a second colleague was asked, who is PhD student in linguistics, to check the language and information equivalence one more time.

(2) I invited three Chinese students (one PhD in linguistics, one PhD in history, and one PhD in engineering) to have a proof-reading and think-aloud session in order to catch misunderstood expressions or confusing items. After receiving the feedback, the questionnaire was finalized with minor modifications.

(3) The online questionnaire was designed, and the link was sent to fifty-three pilot participants who were my WeChat friends studying in Hungary. The participants could answer the questionnaire either by smartphone or by computer when opening
the link. When they finished filling in, they submitted it at once. One week later, the piloted participants were asked for providing feedback regarding unclear items; however, they responded that there were no unclear or puzzling items for them.

(4) I conducted the measurement of the reliability of the scales in late October 2018. By using the reliability test in SPSS, the Cronbach $\alpha$ of each scale was measured, and all scales were above 0.6., which is consistent with the accepted standard of social science (Pallant, 2007; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009); therefore, it means the instrument is reliable and testable. The specific scores are listed in the Table 3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sections</th>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Cronbach$\alpha$</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Ideal L2 Self</td>
<td>0.874</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1, 6, 9, 12, 19,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ought-to L2 Self</td>
<td>0.849</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2, 4, 8, 14, 16, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L2 Learning Experience</td>
<td>0.715</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3, 5, 7, 10, 18, 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude towards L2</td>
<td>0.828</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28, 34, 39, 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effort to learn L2</td>
<td>0.713</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35, 38, 41, 43, 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intrinsic interest</td>
<td>0.654</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11, 13, 15, 20, 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>0.731</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21, 25, 27, 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information medium</td>
<td>0.681</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23, 30, 32, 33, 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social responsibility</td>
<td>0.755</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17, 29, 37, 40, 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>0.693</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>58, 60, 65, 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>0.626</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compensatory</td>
<td>0.618</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>67, 68, 71, 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>0.838</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>79, 80, 81, 83, 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>0.627</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>70, 75, 78, 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>0.740</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>72, 74, 76, 77, 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Academic behaviors</td>
<td>0.668</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46, 48, 50, 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social behaviors</td>
<td>0.787</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>47, 49, 51, 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual behaviors</td>
<td>0.742</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>52, 54, 56, 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 contact</td>
<td>Direct spoken contact</td>
<td>0.805</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>86, 87, 88, 89, 91, 96, 98, 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct written contact</td>
<td>0.743</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>92, 94, 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Media contact</td>
<td>0.782</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>90, 92, 93, 95, 99, 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese contact</td>
<td>0.732</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>102, 103, 104, 105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.3 Designing the interview questions

The qualitative research is conducted in the form of semi-structured interviews. The outline of the interviews is a basic guidance or instruction for organizing the semi-structured interview with the selected interviewees. The interview questions were designed on the basis of the literature review and data from quantitative phase, whose purpose is to probe into the
participants’ previous learning experience in China, including their previous motivational dispositions and strategy applications, as well as their present learning experience in Hungary. Through comparison, I tried to explore the changes in the participants’ motivation and strategies, as well as the factors influencing their changes, such as culture, content-based learning, and language contact through socialization in Hungary. To make the discussion smooth and the questions fully understandable for the participants, the interview questions were written in Chinese. In reference to relevant qualitative and empirical studies in the literature review, and for the purpose of gathering information to respond to the research questions, the guideline of the interview includes four sections: the first section is related to lead-in questions regarding the participants’ general background information and English learning experience in the past and present. The second section is focused on how the participants studied and are studying English for the purpose of receiving information about their previous and present English learning strategies. The third section is concentrated on why the participants studied English in China and why do they continue to study now, so as to see the motivation changes after coming to Hungary. The fourth part is to know students’ learning experience in a study abroad context in Hungary, including their language interaction and language contact, so as to explore the factors affecting students’ motivation, strategies and autonomy.

3.4.4 Piloting the interview questions

When I finished designing the outline of the interview questions, one Chinese student (a PhD student in linguistics) was invited to have a proof-reading and think-aloud session to check for ambiguous expressions and confusing statements. After receiving the feedback, the questions were finalized with minor modifications. Generally, the piloted participant felt that the interview questions were understandable, and no puzzling or strange questions were found.

3.5 Quantitative research phase

The quantitative study was conducted to obtain data through a questionnaire survey from the sample of participants. First, after piloting, I officially collected the questionnaire data from the participants, and then used statistical methods to analyze the data sets according to the research questions one by one. The purpose of the quantitative research was to investigate how Chinese students characterize their English learning motivation, learning strategy use, autonomy and English contact when studying abroad.
3.5.1 Participants

After validating and piloting the instruments, the formal survey was executed in November, 2018. From the perspective of research methodology, the participants are a sample of the target population of the research. The research population of the current dissertation is Chinese students in Hungary, who are pursuing their programs in English at different degree levels. Before they come to Hungary, they meet the English language requirements of the programs of different levels. Most of them no longer take English language courses, but they attend all the program courses instructed in English, but some of them take a selective academic English class, and all of them communicate with teachers, colleagues and friends in English, as well. For the purpose of making the sampling more representative, and fully reflecting the individual differences of the target population of Chinese students in Hungary, I tried to include sampling of Chinese students in all different programs, from different universities, different years of stay, and different levels of degree. By means of descriptive analysis, information about the distribution of the participants can be seen in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4</th>
<th>General description of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of stay in HU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than a year</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to two years</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than three years</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities &amp; Art</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; Engineering</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; Administration</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA and PhD</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived proficiency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4 above, in the sample who took part in the questionnaire survey, there were 66 males, making up 41.3% of the total number of participants, and 94 females, making up 58.8%. As far as the degree level is concerned, there were 100 students in BA degree programs, taking up 62.5%; 36 in MA, taking up 22.5%; 15 in PhD, taking up 9.4%;
the rest all together made up 5.7%, including 3 preparatory and 6 visiting exchange students. As for the length of stay in Hungary, 20 students had been in Hungary for more than 4 years (2014 intake or before); 33 for more than 3 years (2015 intake); 31 for more than 2 years (2016 intake); 35 for more than one year (2017 intake); and 41 for one semester (2018 intake). As for the study programs, the majority of the sample were studying Business and Administration, 74 students taking up 46.3%; the second largest group was Science and Engineering, 52 students taking up 32.5%; the rest was taking up 21.2%, including 15 students in humanities, 6 in art, 6 in foreign language, 6 in agriculture, and 1 in medicine. The structure was in accordance with the real program distributions according to the report from the Education Office of the Chinese Embassy in Hungary.

3.5.2 Instrument

After the piloting of the instrument, the finalized version of the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) consists of five main sections: motivation, strategy, autonomy, language contact and background information. Except for the background information part, all of the other four parts were surveyed in the form of a five-point Likert scale. The first part, motivation investigation, consisted of two main constructs: the L2 self-system and motivation types of Chinese students in Hungary, and two sub-scales: efforts and attitudes to learn English, making up 45 items in total. Students were asked to choose one choice from the five, from “totally disagree” to “totally agree”. The second part, strategy investigation, consisted of six strategies: memory, cognitive, compensate, metacognitive, social and affective, all together 26 items. Students are asked to pick one choice from the five, from “I never do it this way” to “I always do it this way”. The third part, autonomous behavior, consists of three constructs: individual learning behavior, academic learning behavior and social learning behavior, all together 12 items. Students are asked to select one choice from the five, from “totally disagree” to “totally agree”. The fourth part, L2 contact, consists of four scales: direct spoken contact, direct written contact, media contact, and Chinese contact, all together 20 items. Students are asked to choose one choice from the five, from “less than one time in a month” “at least once a month” “at least once a week” “several times a week” to “almost every day”.

3.5.3 Data collection

In order to collect as much data as possible and also make the respondents conveniently answer the questionnaires without restriction related to time and place, an online
questionnaire was designed and sent the link to the participants. The participants could answer the questionnaire either by smartphone or by computer when opening the link. When they finished filling in the questionnaire, they submitted it immediately. In order to collect valid data, the condition was set up that if an item was missing, the questionnaire could not be submitted, and the participants cannot answer the questionnaire twice; therefore, there was no missing data. At the very beginning of the questionnaire, the key instructions were explained that the participants should pay more attention to, and the principles were stressed to follow. I first expressed great gratitude to the participants for their support in helping with the survey, and clarified that the questionnaire is conducted anonymously only for the purpose of academic research. It was also stressed that in order to make the questionnaire valid, the questions should be answered truthfully based on what is true for the individual. In order to collect as much data as possible, the convenience sampling and snowball sampling were adopted. In the first round, I sent the link to the questionnaire to around 60 friends studying in Hungary by Facebook messenger or the WeChat application, asking them to answer the questionnaire. Then, in the second round, I asked those who had completed the questionnaire to share the link with their friends or classmates who are studying in Hungary, as well. In the third round, I did a last attempt to ask for help from the Education Office of the Chinese Embassy to get the email contact of some government-supported scholarship students. In total, around 300 questionnaires were sent out, and the data collection lasted three weeks; finally, 160 valid questionnaires were collected.

3.5.4 Data analysis

When the data collection finished, the data was downloaded to an Excel file, and then transferred into the statistics software SPSS 20.0 for further analysis. In order to assure that the research questions were answered, I conducted the data analysis by using the following statistical methods: (1) scale reliability analysis was checked for the consistent reliability of each scale of the instrument. (2) descriptive analysis was used to display the frequency of each variable. (3) A T-test was used to compare the differences between two groups of variables. (4) ANOVA was used to compare the differences between more than two groups of variables. (5) correlation analysis was used to explore the relationship between variables. (6) regression analysis was used to predict the factors affecting the variables.
3.6 Qualitative research phase

The qualitative study was carried out to acquire information through conducting face-to-face discussions with the selected participants, so as to further testify and explain the data received from the quantitative research. Another purpose of the qualitative research is to trace the learners learning experiences through retrospection, which could make up for the shortcomings of quantitative study. The qualitative part takes the form of semi-structured interviews, based on the outline of the interview questions.

3.6.1 Interviewees

In the questionnaire, the last item asked the participants whether or not they were willing to take part in an interview later. 13 students ticked yes and provided their contact email; therefore, one student was chosen to do a think aloud pilot for the interview questions, and 12 students were chosen as interviewees. The information of the interviewees is shown in Table 5 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Pseudo name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Year of coming</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person 1</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 2</td>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>International trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 3</td>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 4</td>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 5</td>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 6</td>
<td>Rob</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 7</td>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 8</td>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 9</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 10</td>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 11</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Electronics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person 12</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6.2 Semi-structured interview outline

After piloting the first version of the interview questions, the final version of the interview guide contains 30 questions in total, comprising four parts. In the first part, the participants will be asked some lead-in questions regarding their general background information and English learning experience in the past and present. In the second part, I will concentrate on asking the participants how they studied and are studying English about their previous and present English learning strategies. In the third part, I will focus on the motivation and reasons why the participants studied English in China and why do they...
continue to study now, so as to find out the dynamic changes in motivation after coming to Hungary. In the fourth part, I will try to learn about students’ learning experience in a study abroad context in Hungary, particularly about their language interaction and language contact, so as to probe into what factors affect students’ motivation, strategies and autonomy.

3.6.3 Data collection and analysis

In order to collect valid and reliable information from the interviewees, the whole interview was conducted in a very relaxing atmosphere. I prepared Chinese tea and fruits for the participant, and told them to feel at ease, and that the interview was just a kind of free talk to discuss their feelings and experiences in learning English. Participants were also informed that the data will be only used for academic analysis, and for the convenience of analyzing the information, the participants were informed the conversations will be recorded. The whole interview lasted around 50 to 60 minutes, depending on the interviewee. After the interview, the recording was transcribed in a MS Word file, and I coded the data and find the emergent themes.
Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

4.1 Overall motivation intensity, strategies preference, autonomous behaviours and English contact

The first research question was intended to explore the general characteristics of motivational dispositions in English learning, strategy preferences, and autonomous learning behaviours, as well as the English language contact of Chinese students in Hungary. Through descriptive analysis of mean values of each scale, the data revealed the general trends of the present English learning experience of the participants, which could help provide a holistic picture of the features of Chinese students’ individual differences. The results are reported and discussed in terms of each scale. Since the first research question is purely aimed at discovering the general trends of ID variables through descriptive statistical analyses, the results and discussion will not be separated, and the discussion will be integrated into the results of each scale.

4.1.1 Motivation

In order to probe into the general motivational dispositions among the sample, I attempted to investigate it from three aspects: First, looking at participants from the framework of the Motivational L2 Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2015) would be beneficial for understanding Chinese students’ general motivational tendency from a new perspective, which could later be compared to other studies using the same theoretical framework. Second, exploring participants’ motivation types (Gao et al., 2003) could show the students’ general motivational intensity regarding different types of motivation from a traditional integrative and instrumental theoretical framework (Gardner, 1985); in doing so, the results could be contrasted with previous research findings in China. Third, participants’ efforts and attitudes toward learning English were also examined, as it is likely that these variables might be predicted based on the motivational scales. Some researchers regard efforts as motivated learning behaviours, using it as criterion measure in statistics (Papi, 2010; Far, Rajab & Etemadzadeh, 2012; Prasangani, 2014; You &Dörnyei, 2014; Moratinos-Johnston et al., 2018, Brady, 2019).

The L2 Motivational Self System
With regards to the framework of the L2 Motivational Self System, as shown in Table 6, it can be seen that, among all scales, the mean values range from 3.52 to 4.16 on a 5-point scale, and overall the mean values of all five scales are above 3.50. Specifically, the Ideal L2 Self scale scored the highest, with the mean value of 4.17, while the L2 learning experience scored the second highest ($M = 3.89$), and the Ought-to L2 Self scale showed the lowest value ($M = 3.58$). This means that regarding the L2 Motivational Self System, the whole sample generally shows high intensity in terms of the participants’ future ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and current L2 learning experience. More importantly, these data suggest that Chinese students studying at Hungarian universities have their strongest dispositions with regard to their ideal L2 self; the significance of this finding will be discussed in the following section, using independent sample $t$-test. These results are consistent with the findings of You and Dörnyei (2014) that Chinese students generally have favorable motivational disposition towards learning English; however, in comparison with the previous study ($M = 3.84$), Chinese students in Hungary showed an overall stronger motivational disposition towards English than those in China, especially in regard to the ideal L2 Self ($M = 4.17$). The reason for this difference might be that the study abroad context made the students more motivated to improve their English in order to deal with academic and daily affairs.

**Attitudes and Efforts**

Moreover, as regards the other two variables: Attitude and Effort to learn English, the data revealed that students have a strong positive attitude towards learning English ($M = 3.75$), and their efforts toward English learning are also above the average level ($M = 3.52$). This seems to suggest that, generally speaking, students have a favourable attitude toward learning English; however, because of their lower means, their efforts might not match these; the significance of the results will also be determined in the following section, using independent sample $t$-test. This finding was in line with a previous study by Kormos, Cszer, and Iwaniec (2014), which indicated that international students including Chinese participants investigated in the UK showed positive attitudes but weak efforts in an ESL study abroad context. Moreover, the author of this study found lower values for efforts than those reported by You and Dörnyei (2014), who stated that the highest scale value obtained in their study was for Intended Effort ($M = 4.32$). This might be explained by the fact that Chinese students learning English in China were mainly in a classroom-based context, where they are obligated to prepare for different kinds of English tests, such as the CET4 and CET6, which push students to devote greater efforts towards learning English.
**Motivational types**

In investigating Chinese students’ motivational types on the basis of the framework from Gao et al. (2004), it can be seen in Table 7 that the Information Medium scale shows the highest mean ($M = 4.11$) among the four types of the participants’ current motivation to learn English; then, Personal Development is the second highest with a mean value of 3.95. The third highest is Intrinsic Interest, with the mean value of 3.93; Social Responsibility comes fourth, with a mean value of 3.83.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation type</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Medium</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Development</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Interest</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the criteria of evaluating motivation intensity proposed by Ehrman and Oxford (1989), if the mean value of motivation is more than 3.5, it shows that the motivation intensity is very strong; if the mean value ranges from 2.5 to 3.4, it indicates an intermediate level of motivation intensity; finally, if the average score is under 2.4, this reflects weak motivation intensity. Therefore, based on the criteria above, it appears that the whole sample generally shows a strong level of motivational intensity for all of the four motivational types. In particular, the motivation to learn English as an Information Medium is the strongest among Chinese students studying in Hungary. This might reflect the linguistic environment of the students, in which they use English as lingua franca in social settings and as medium of instruction in academic settings in Hungary. When analysed in depth, items of the scales
showed that Chinese students at Hungarian universities mostly reported that they study English because they think it is an important communicative tool in today’s society, or because they use it to communicate with foreigners through English; moreover, their purpose of learning English is to study their program subjects more effectively.

In addition, according to the explanation of motivational types provided by Gao (2004), Intrinsic Interest is similar to Gardner’s integrative motivation, and Personal Development, Information Medium, and Social Responsibility are similar to Gardner’s instrumental motivation. To put it in another way, the overall motivational dispositions among Chinese students in the study abroad context are quite strong, not only concerning culture-related integrative motivation, but also pragmatic-oriented instrumental motivation.

4.1.2 Strategies to learn English

With regards to English learning strategies among Chinese students in Hungary, as seen in Table 8 below, Compensatory strategies show the highest mean value \( (M = 3.76) \) among all the six strategies; Memory is the second highest with the mean value of 3.640, while the third is Cognitive strategies with the mean value of 3.54. The order of the rest of the scales is Social, Metacognitive, and Affective, with mean values of 3.49, 3.39, and 3.28 respectively. Affective strategies showed the lowest scores, with a mean of 3.28.

On the basis of Oxford’s (1990) interpretation, if the average score of certain strategies is more than 4.5, it means that this kind of strategy can be regarded as always used; if mean value ranges from 3.5 to 4.4, the strategy can be regarded as frequently applied by learners; when the mean value is between 2.5 and 3.4, the strategy is regarded as sometimes used; if the mean value ranks between 1.5 and 2.4, the strategy is regarded as seldom employed; finally, when the average score is under 1.5, this kind of strategy might be recognized as never being utilized.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compensatory</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Therefore, in view of the mean values presented above, it is interesting to see that of the six strategies investigated here, Memory, Cognitive, and Compensatory strategies are frequently employed by participants whereas Metacognitive, Affective, and Social strategies are shown as sometimes used by Chinese students. This is consistent with Li (2002), who found that the most often used strategies by Chinese university students are Memory, Cognitive, and Compensatory strategies as well. Comparing the results to previous studies conducted in the at-home context, it can be seen that the overall strategy use by Chinese students in Hungary is somewhat higher than it is for students in China, since in their studies the overall strategy use by Chinese students was at the middle level, which is around 2.5-3.4 (Li, 2002; Li, 2008; Tan & Zhang, 2015). In addition, among the six strategies, Compensatory strategies were the most preferred, which is accordance with previous empirical results from Tam (2013) and Huang (1997). Tam (2013) found that compensatory strategies were the most popular for learning English among Hong Kong university students, and Huang (1997) found that compensatory strategies were also the most popular English learning strategies among college students in Taiwan. However, in the present research, social strategies closely approach the level of frequently used strategies ($M = 3.49$). Affective strategies were the least frequently used among the six by the sample in this research, which is also in line with results found by Tam (2013). This likely implies that participants have relatively more linguistic confidence in study abroad settings, and are less influenced by emotions and anxiety; as Oxford (1990) explains, affective strategies assist learners with controlling and regulating personal emotions through processes such as anxiety reduction and self-encouragement. What is different from Tam (2013), however, is memory strategies. In this study, memory is the second most frequently used ($M = 0.36$) strategy among Chinese students, but it was found in Tam’s (2013) study that memory is the least popular among the six strategies. This is perhaps because of the fact that the Chinese exam-orientated education system still influences students in mainland China by encouraging them to utilize memorization for passing the exams, which is quite different from students in Hong Kong, China. Interestingly, to interpret this from another perspective, it could be argued as well that direct learning strategies are more frequently used than indirect strategies by Chinese students in Hungary, because according to Oxford (1990)’s framework, Memory, Cognitive, and Compensatory strategies belong to direct strategies, while Metacognitive, Affective, and Social strategies are classified as indirect. This suggests that Chinese students in Hungary would be inclined to apply strategies which directly influence the English learning process (Oxford, 1990).


4.1.3 Autonomous learning behaviour

In terms of the participants’ autonomous English learning behaviours in a study abroad context, as displayed in Table 9 below, it seems that in general, autonomous learning reaches a relatively high level, with the mean values of all of the scales over 3.5; specifically, participants’ individual behaviours scored the highest ($M = 3.95$); social behaviours are second with the mean value of 3.83; the third highest mean value is reported for academic behaviours, with the mean value of 3.79.

The results suggest that Chinese students in Hungary show higher autonomous learning ability in English compared to those in China, in comparison with previous findings where Chinese students overall autonomous English learning was under the level of 3.5 (Tan & Zhang, 2015; Ni, 2010). This might be due to the different learning contexts: In China, the EFL context is classroom-based, and students mostly follow the teachers’ instructions; in Hungary, the EFL context is content-based, which pushes students to be more autonomous to deal with academic or daily affairs through the English language. For example, in terms of academic autonomous behaviours, answers on the scales suggest that Chinese students in Hungary aim to improve their academic English skills as much as possible; second, in terms of individual autonomous behaviours, they aim to improve the aspects of their English knowledge that allow them to handle everyday problems; moreover, in the social context, they aim to socialize with local people using English as much as possible. The comparative analysis of the results suggests that the participants at Hungarian universities concentrate on improving English learning to benefit the course studies of their academic programs, and they also focus on socialization with local persons through using English; in addition, they pay much attention to improving their English knowledge in relation to coping with daily problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Autonomous English Learning Behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic behaviours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.4 Language contact in SA context

Language contacts can best illustrate Chinese students’ actual practice of using English while living and studying abroad. As seen in Table 10 below, media contact scored the highest \((M = 3.76)\) among all of the four language contacts; direct written contact scored the second highest, with a mean value of 3.69; the third highest was direct spoken contact, with a mean value of 3.63. The lowest mean value was shown by the Chinese contact scale, with a mean value of 3.40.

Based on the mean values, it could be argued that Chinese students in Hungary most frequently gain access to English contacts through media such as reading academic books or materials, reading English websites to find academic materials, looking for English materials for the selected courses from the internet, checking universities’ websites for education offers, or watching English-language Direct written contact and spoken contact are quite similar in their mean values \((M = 3.69\) and \(M = 3.63\), respectively) which suggests that they often experience English contact in speaking and writing. For example, in speaking contact, they are likely to talk with teachers or classmates in class and out of class, speak English with foreign friends, speak English when they are travelling in Hungary or other countries, or speak with shop-assistants in English while shopping. In addition, in written contact, Chinese participants would frequently chat online with foreigners in English and write homework or papers in English. These findings are in accordance with results from Kormos et al. (2014), which show that Chinese students seldom participated in social activities. However, compared with English contact, Chinese contact is the least experienced by Chinese students \((M = 3.40)\), which implies that the participants use English more frequently than Chinese, because the opportunities to use English are more frequent than those for using Chinese in the Hungarian study abroad context.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall L2 Contact</th>
<th>(n)</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>(M)</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media Contact</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Written Contact</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Spoken Contact</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Contact</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.5 Perceived English proficiency

The descriptive analyses were also used to measure the average level of the English skills of the Chinese students in Hungary through their perceived English proficiency level in listening, oral communication, reading, and writing. As seen in Table 11 below, listening comprehension showed the highest mean value ($M = 3.99$) among all four language abilities; speaking had the second highest, with a mean value of 3.63; the third highest was shown to be reading comprehension with a mean value of 3.56. The lowest scoring skills was writing with a mean value of 3.52. All English skills exceed the middle point, and the mean of the overall proficiency levels is 3.67.

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English proficiency</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the mean values, it can be seen that Chinese students’ self-reported English abilities are above an intermediate level. This implies that when they listen to spoken English, they more or less understand what they listen to; when they communicate in English, they can basically communicate with others through speech. Moreover, when they read in English, they more or less understand what they read, and when they write in English, they can basically communicate with others in writing, but in broken sentences.
4.2 Differences in English learning motivation, strategies, autonomous behaviours and language contact across genders, lengths of abroad, majors, degree level, and proficiency level

The second research question aims to find whether there are any group differences in relation to gender, length of stay abroad, major, degree level, and level of English proficiency amongst the Chinese students in Hungary in terms of their English learning motivation, strategies, autonomous learning behaviours, and language contact. Analysing statistically significant differences among the participants along different dimensions by means of independent-samples t-tests and ANOVAs helps shed light on the characteristics of Chinese participants’ English learning in a study abroad context. Based on each independent variable, four dependent variables were analysed one after another, producing a large amount of comparative information. In order to avoid confusion, the results and discussion are presented under each section, where four ID factors are compared based on the same dependent variable.

4.2.1 IDs across genders

Gender has proved to be an important factor for researchers to focus on in individual differences studies. Some researchers have found correlations between gender and other individual difference variables (You & Dörnyei, 2016; You, Dörnyei & Csizér, 2016); however, several researchers have found differing results as a result of varying participants and contexts (Sylvén & Thompson, 2015; Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2016). In this dissertation, I will also explore potential significant differences based on gender in the ID variables of the Chinese participants studying at Hungarian universities. I adopted the independent-samples t-tests, choosing gender (male, female) as the independent variable, and sequentially selected motivational variables, strategy use, autonomous learning behaviours, English contacts, and perceived English proficiency as the dependent variables. By doing so, I tried to establish whether gender is an influential variable in this group of Chinese participants in the Hungarian context.

4.2.1.1 Results

Motivation across genders

Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to compare gender differences in motivational variables. From the table 12, it can be seen that there were almost no significant
differences between males and females in terms of all the other motivational scales with the exception of Intrinsic Interest, where a significant difference exists in the scores for males ($M = 3.7936$) and females ($M = 4.1702$); $t = -2.627$, $p = 0.009$. This result suggests that females show stronger motivation in Intrinsic Interest than males. In other words, female participants are more intrinsically motivated than males in studying English.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male ($n=66$)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female ($n=94$)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 Self</td>
<td>4.1576</td>
<td>4.1702</td>
<td>-1.132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 Self</td>
<td>3.6237</td>
<td>3.5479</td>
<td>.568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learning Experience</td>
<td>3.8586</td>
<td>3.9184</td>
<td>-.652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Interest</td>
<td>3.7939</td>
<td>4.0255</td>
<td>-2.627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Development</td>
<td>3.8674</td>
<td>4.0053</td>
<td>-1.222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Medium</td>
<td>4.1000</td>
<td>4.1191</td>
<td>-.228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>3.7394</td>
<td>3.8936</td>
<td>-1.411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards L2</td>
<td>3.6439</td>
<td>3.8218</td>
<td>-1.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort to learn L2</td>
<td>3.5364</td>
<td>3.5085</td>
<td>.277</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strategy across genders**

Independent-samples t-test were conducted to compare the differences in English learning strategies between the male and female participants in the study abroad context. It was demonstrated that there was no significant difference between males and females in the use of learning strategies in Hungary at the $p < 0.05$ significance level.

**Autonomy across genders**

Independent-samples t-tests were adopted to compare the differences in autonomous English learning behaviours between the male and female participants. It was revealed that no significant difference existed between males and females in their autonomous learning behaviours at the $p < 0.05$ significance level.

**L2 contact across genders**

Independent-samples t-tests were used to compare the differences in language contact between the male and female participants in the study abroad context. The results reflected that males and females did not have significant differences in their language contact in Hungary at the $p < 0.05$ significance level.
4.2.1.2 Discussion

In section 4.2.1, I analysed whether or not gender is an influential factor for Chinese learners’ L2 motivation. The t-test results revealed that females and males had different levels of motivation for the construct of Intrinsic Interest in the Motivation Type framework, but did not show significant differences in either of the other three instrumental-related motivation types or in L2 Motivational Self System. In terms of the motivation types, this finding is consistent with the finding from Li et al. (2003) that girls scored higher than boys in motivation of intrinsic interest. In addition, the finding was also similar to Guo’s (2009) results that deep motivation from female participants was higher than male participants. According to Wen (1996), deep motivation means learning English for internal interest; therefore, in this case, deep motivation is similar to intrinsic interest because they are integrative and culture-related. However, in terms of L2 selves, the findings in this dissertation vary from those of previous studies. Liu and Thompson (2018) found that Chinese female university students’ ideal self was stronger than males’. As for the L2MSS framework, previous empirical research found inconsistent results regarding gender differences. For example, female English language learners have stronger ideal and ought-to selves than males in the Chinese context (You & Dörnyei, 2016; You, Dörnyei & Csizér, 2016), but in the Swedish context (Sylvén & Thompson, 2015) and the Turkish context (Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2016) gender differences were not found. These contradictory findings indicate that gender can be a culture-specific characteristic influencing L2 motivation (Liu & Thompson, 2018).

In relation to strategy use in English learning, the t-test results showed that no significant differences between male and female Chinese participants in the Hungarian study-abroad context. This finding is consistent with the results from previous studies in Chinese contexts (Li, 2002), which might imply that Chinese male and female students do not have major differences in strategy use when learning English in either at-home or in study abroad contexts. However, this finding is inconsistent with some other studies in Chinese context (Si et al., 2005; Li, 2010); in their research, they found that males and females had significant differences in terms of using memory and metacognitive strategies. This might be because of a difference in the language proficiency levels of the participants (Li, 2010). Chinese students learning in Hungary might have higher proficiency than the participants in China, because those in Hungary have to meet certain English language requirements to be admitted.
to their university programs, and they also use English in their daily lives and academic studies.

With regard to autonomous learning behaviours, the t-tests showed no differences across genders either. The results are contrary with Li’s (2006) findings, which reported that females showed higher levels of autonomous learning behaviour than males. These inconsistent findings might be due to the fact that the participants are majoring in different programs and studying in different contexts. Li (2006) investigated English major students in the Chinese context, while this dissertation examined non-English majors in the Hungarian context. In Hungary, the same academic pressure might outweigh the gender differences; as Kormos and Csizér (2014) suggest, students in Hungary have to be more autonomous in order to accomplish their major studies through English as the medium of instruction. Likewise, the same reason could also account for why no significant differences existed across genders in terms of English language contact in the Hungarian context. Similar daily routines and learning pressures in a study abroad context might reduce the differences in the autonomous learning behaviours and L2 contacts of males and females.

4.2.2 IDs across different lengths of study abroad

Many researchers have found that living abroad influences students’ English learning in many aspects, not only in L2 linguistic gains, but also in terms of individual difference variables (Allen, 2010; Weger, 2013; Lafford, 2004; Paige et al., 2004; Lee, 2011; Kormos et al., 2014). Therefore, I am interested in determining whether the length of time spent living abroad is correlated with the ID factors of the Chinese participants in this context. To start with, it needs to be clarified that in regard to the length of stay, the participants were divided into three groups: Group one \((n = 41)\) was labelled as staying less than one year, and began their studies in 2018; group two \((n = 66)\) was labelled as staying one to two years, who began their studies in 2017 and 2016; group three \((n = 53)\) is labelled as staying for more than three years, who began their studies in 2015 and 2014. One-way between subjects ANOVAs were employed with the length of stay in Hungary as the independent variable, with motivational variables, strategies, autonomous learning behaviours, English contacts, and Perceived English proficiency as the sequential dependent variables. The results and discussion are presented below.

4.2.2.1 Results

Motivation across different lengths of study abroad
One-way between subjects ANOVAs were conducted to investigate differences in the motivational variables among three different groups of participants: those who have lived in Hungary for less than a year, for one to two years, and for more than three years, so as to discover how the length of the study abroad period is related to the students’ L2 learning motivation. From the Table 13, it can be seen that the length of stay in Hungary does not affect other motivational constructs except for Personal Development at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups [$F = 7.395, p = 0.001$]. Post hoc comparisons using the LSD test indicated that the mean score for the group of students who have lived in Hungary for less than a year ($M = 3.750$) was significantly lower than those who have been there for one to two years ($M = 4.193$); moreover, the participants who have been in Hungary for one to two years are significantly different from those who have stayed for more than three years ($M = 3.792$). However, students who have stayed for less than a year do not significantly differ from those who have been in Hungary for more than three years.

Table 13

ANOVA Differences in Motivation among different lengths of study abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$&gt;1$ year</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>$&lt;3$ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 41</td>
<td>n = 66</td>
<td>n = 53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 Self</td>
<td>4.0537</td>
<td>4.1545</td>
<td>4.2642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 Self</td>
<td>3.4512</td>
<td>3.6818</td>
<td>3.5503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learning Experience</td>
<td>3.9228</td>
<td>3.8359</td>
<td>3.9434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Interest</td>
<td>3.8488</td>
<td>3.9273</td>
<td>3.9962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Development</td>
<td>3.7500</td>
<td>4.1932</td>
<td>3.7972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Medium</td>
<td>4.0537</td>
<td>4.1394</td>
<td>4.1208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>3.7415</td>
<td>3.9061</td>
<td>3.8038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards L2</td>
<td>3.7683</td>
<td>3.7500</td>
<td>3.7311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort to learn L2</td>
<td>3.4878</td>
<td>3.5152</td>
<td>3.5509</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken together, these results suggest that there is a dynamic fluctuation in Personal Development motivation among the three groups of students who have been living in Hungary for different periods of time. Specifically, the results show that Personal Development motivation increased when students were abroad for more than a year;
however, students who lived in Hungary longer saw decreased levels of Personal Development motivation.

**Strategies across different lengths of study abroad**

One-way between subjects ANOVAs were conducted to compare the differences in English learning strategies between different groups of participants with different lengths of stay in a study abroad context. The results showed that there were no significant differences in learning strategy use between students who have been living in Hungary for different period of time at the $p < 0.05$ significance level.

**Autonomous learning behaviours across different length of study abroad**

One-way between subjects ANOVAs were conducted to compare what differentiates the autonomous English learning behaviours among three different groups of participants with different lengths of stay in Hungary, so as to discover how the length of stay affects students’ autonomous learning behaviours. From the Table 14, it can be seen that different lengths of stay in Hungary only affected Chinese students’ academic autonomous learning behaviours at the $p < 0.05$ level in the case of the three groups [$F = 3.459, p = 0.034$]. Post hoc comparisons using the LSD test indicated that the mean score for group of students who have lived in Hungary for less than a year ($M = 3.609$) was significantly lower than those who have been in Hungary for more than three years ($M = 3.948$). However, the participants who have been in Hungary for one to two years ($M = 3.753$) are neither significantly different from students who have stayed for more than three years nor significantly different from those who have stayed for less than a year. Taken together, these results suggest that autonomous learning behaviours in academic settings increased when students stayed abroad for longer periods of time.

Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANOVA Difference in autonomy among different coming years</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$&gt;1$ year</td>
<td>3.6098</td>
<td>3.7538</td>
<td>3.9481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$&lt;3$ years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$n = 41$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$n = 66$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$n = 53$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3.7317</td>
<td>3.7652</td>
<td>3.9811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>3.8659</td>
<td>3.9545</td>
<td>4.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**L2 contact across different lengths of study abroad**
One-way between subjects ANOVAs were conducted to compare what differentiates the language contact among three different groups of participants: those who have lived in Hungary for less than a year, for one to two years, and for more than three years, so as to determine how the length of time spent abroad affects students’ L2 contact. From the table 15, it can be seen that there was a significant difference in terms of media contact amongst the groups of participants with different lengths of stay in Hungary at the $p < .05$ level [$F = 4.283, p = 0.015$]. Post hoc comparisons using the LSD test indicated that the mean score for the group of students who have lived in Hungary for less than a year ($M = 3.678$) was significantly different from those who lived there for more than three years ($M = 4.193$); moreover, the participants who have been in Hungary for one to two years ($M = 3.587$) showed a significant difference in media contact from students who have stayed for more than three years. However, the participants who have been Hungary for less than a year ($M = 3.678$) are not significantly different from students who have stayed for one or two years ($M = 3.587$). Taken together, these results suggest that the students who have been living abroad for a longer period of time spend more time learning English through media contact.

### Table 15

**ANOVA Differences in language contact among different lengths of stay**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;1 year</td>
<td>3.678</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>3.587</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;3 years</td>
<td>4.034</td>
<td>4.283</td>
<td>.015*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$n = 41$</th>
<th>$n = 66$</th>
<th>$n = 53$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese contact</td>
<td>3.3598</td>
<td>3.2993</td>
<td>3.5472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken contact</td>
<td>3.5366</td>
<td>3.5720</td>
<td>3.7594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written contact</td>
<td>3.5854</td>
<td>3.6010</td>
<td>3.8742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media contact</td>
<td>3.6780</td>
<td>3.5879</td>
<td>4.0340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.2.2.2 Discussion

With regards to motivational variables, the results suggested that the lengths of stay were indeed related to motivation to learn English, but not related to all constructs. First, the length of stay in Hungary was shown to be related only to Personal Development in the Motivation Type framework. There appears to be a fluctuation in the motivation construct Personal Development, which is to say, the instrumental motivation to learn English for the purposes of personal career development varied with the length of stay in Hungary. This is not to say that the longer they stayed abroad, the more motivated they were to learn; the
results revealed that Personal Development motivation increased when students stayed abroad for more than a year; however, when students lived in Hungary longer, Personal Development motivation decreased. This might be explained by considering that students in their second year have more or less decided on their career paths; therefore, their Personal Development is shown to be higher in the second year; however, those in their third year already developed plans, while those in their first year abroad may have not, or are in the process of doing so; hence, they showed lower levels of Personal Development motivation. In addition, the lack of significant differences in the other three motivational constructs in the Motivation Type framework suggests stable levels of motivation during a 1-3 year study abroad program.

As for learning strategies, there were no significant differences between groups of Chinese students staying in Hungary for different periods of time. This finding was not in line with Gao (2006), whose qualitative research findings showed that 14 Chinese learners changed their English learning strategies use after they moved to Britain to adjust to a new context. This might suggest that the strategies used by the participants in Hungary are relative stable, perhaps because once students are accustomed to using some learning strategies in a given context, they would often use them consciously or unconsciously.

In regard to autonomous learning behaviours, different groups of students displayed differences in their autonomous learning behaviours in academic settings. These results suggest that autonomous learning behaviours in academic settings increased based on the length of time spent abroad. The surprising finding is that the Chinese students who have been Hungary for one to two years are neither significantly different from students who have stayed for more than three years nor significantly different from those who have stayed for less than a year. This might be explained by the fact that this group is in an intermediary position, so it can be argued that the differences between their means and those of the other two groups are not large enough to reach statistical significance.

Concerning language contact abroad, the only significant difference existed in media contact between groups who lived in Hungary for different periods of time. The results imply that students who lived in Hungary for a longer period of time gained more access to media contact in the English language. This could be perhaps explained by the fact that because students in the third year of their studies abroad do not have many classes to attend, they spend most of their time studying by themselves through contact with English-language media.
4.2.3 IDs across different majors

A number of researchers have also tried to find individual differences based on different academic majors. They assumed that majors would be related to variations in English learning motivation and strategies (Cheng et al., 2003; Li, 2009; Zhou & Gui, 2006). As for different major programs in this dissertation, since there is a low number of students studying medicine and agriculture, these group of students were ignored, and the participants were categorized into three groups: Group one \( (n = 27) \) is labelled as Humanities and Art; group two \( (n = 52) \) is labelled as Science and Engineering; group three \( (n = 74) \) is labelled as Business and Administration.

4.2.3.1 Results

Motivation across different majors

One-way between subjects ANOVAs were conducted to compare what the differences were in the motivational constructs among three different academic programs of participants (Humanities and Art, Business and Administration, and Science and Engineering) to uncover the relationship between major programs and students’ L2 learning motivation. From the Table 16, it can be seen that there is no relationship between the different study programs and motivation, except in the case of Social Responsibility \( [F = 3.717, p = 0.027] \), at the \( p < .05 \) level for the three groups. Post hoc comparisons using the LSD test indicated that the mean score for the group of students who majored in Humanities and Art \( (M = 3.666) \) was significantly different than those who study Business and Administrations \( (M = 3.964) \); moreover, the participants who majored in Business and Administration are significantly different in terms of the Social Responsibility scale from those who are specialized in Science and Engineering \( (M = 3.669) \). However, the students in Humanities and Art do not differ significantly from those in Science and Engineering. Taken together, these results suggest that students in different programs have different levels of motivation related to Social Responsibility, which means that students who major in Business and Administration display more social responsibility associated with their English learning than students in Humanities and Art, as well as Science and Engineering. Specifically, through comparing the mean values of items in the Social Responsibility scale, the participants in programs related to Business and Administration show high motivation towards studying English, mostly in order to either contribute to the prosperity of China or spread Chinese culture to foreigners.
The table below illustrates the differences in motivation among different study programs using ANOVA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td>n = 27</td>
<td>n = 74</td>
<td>n = 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 Self</td>
<td>4.1481</td>
<td>4.1838</td>
<td>4.0846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 Self</td>
<td>3.4136</td>
<td>3.6486</td>
<td>3.5801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learning Experience</td>
<td>3.8519</td>
<td>3.8784</td>
<td>3.9327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Interest</td>
<td>3.9704</td>
<td>3.9946</td>
<td>3.7923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Development</td>
<td>3.9259</td>
<td>3.9696</td>
<td>3.9087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Medium</td>
<td>4.0593</td>
<td>4.1730</td>
<td>4.0192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>3.6667</td>
<td>3.9649</td>
<td>3.6692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards L2</td>
<td>3.6667</td>
<td>3.8142</td>
<td>3.6538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort to learn L2</td>
<td>3.6000</td>
<td>3.5973</td>
<td>3.3423</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strategies across different majors**

One-way between subjects ANOVA were conducted to determine the differences in English learning strategy use among the three different academic programs of the participants (Humanities and Art, Business and Administration, and Science and Engineering) to uncover how the study program affects students’ use of L2 learning strategies. From the table, it can be seen that the different programs do not affect other learning strategy preference, except in the case of Memory strategies \( F = 3.593, p = 0.021 \), at the \( p < .05 \) level for the three groups. Post hoc comparisons using the LSD test indicated that the mean score for the group of students who majored in Science and Engineering (\( M = 3.447 \)) was significantly different from those who majored in Business and Administration (\( M = 3.804 \)); however, the students in Humanities and Art programs do not significantly differ from either students in Science and Engineering or in Business and Administration. Taken together, these results suggest that different programs are related to students’ memory strategies, and that students who major in Business and Administration use memory strategies more frequently than students in Science and Engineering. Specifically, through comparing the mean value of items in the Memory Strategy scale, the participants belonging to Business and Administration programs show a high frequency of using rhymes to
remember new English words, and connecting the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help remember the word in studying English.

Table 17 ANOVA Differences in strategies among different study programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Business</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>3.6481</td>
<td>3.4471</td>
<td>3.8041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>3.5704</td>
<td>3.4462</td>
<td>3.5757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensate</td>
<td>3.9259</td>
<td>3.6971</td>
<td>3.7500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>3.1852</td>
<td>3.1731</td>
<td>3.3874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3.4815</td>
<td>3.5000</td>
<td>3.4676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>3.4593</td>
<td>3.2000</td>
<td>3.5189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Autonomous learning behaviours across different majors**

One-way between subjects ANOVAs were conducted to determine what differentiates the autonomous English learning behaviours of three different groups of participants in different majors. It was found that there was no significant difference among Chinese students in terms of their academic, social, and individual autonomous learning behaviours at the $p < 0.05$ significance level, which means that the academic programs appear not to affect students’ autonomous learning behaviours in the Hungarian study abroad context.

**L2 contact across different majors**

One-way between subjects ANOVAs were conducted to determine the differences in language contact among the three different academic programs of the participants (Humanities and Art, Business and Administration, and Science and Engineering) to discover how the students’ major programs affect students’ experiences with language contact. From the table 18, it can be seen that there was no significant difference in English contact among students majoring in different programs, except in Chinese contact ($F=3.143$, $p=0.046$), at a $p <.05$ level of significance. Post hoc comparisons using the LSD test indicated that the mean score for the group of students who major in Humanities and Arts ($M=3.074$) was significantly different from those who study Business and Administrations ($M=3.598$) in terms of Chinese contact; however, the students in Science and Engineering do not significantly differ from either students in Humanities and Arts or in Business and Administrations. Taken together, these results suggest that the different programs are not
related to the frequency of English contact but to Chinese contact, and that students who major in Business and Administration used their mother tongue more frequently than students in the Humanities and Arts group.

Table 18
ANOVA Differences in language contact among different study programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>3.0741</td>
<td>3.2260</td>
<td>3.5980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.143</td>
<td>0.046*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.117</td>
<td>.889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese contact</td>
<td>3.5709</td>
<td>3.5691</td>
<td>3.5631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken contact</td>
<td></td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>.311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written contact</td>
<td>3.5631</td>
<td>3.5631</td>
<td>3.5631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media contact</td>
<td>3.6703</td>
<td>.331</td>
<td>.719</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.3.2 Discussion

With regards to the motivation differences between the groups of different academic majors, the results showed that significant differences existed in the Social Responsibility construct, which suggests that students in Business-related programmes have stronger motivation towards social responsibility than those in Humanities or Science. This finding is not entirely consistent with previous studies by Gao et al. (2003), which indicated that different majors showed differences in intrinsic interest, social responsibility, personal development, and information medium. The reason for the differences might be explained by differences between the set of participants used in Gao et al. (2003) and the participants used in the present study: First, Gao et al. (2003) found differences between English and non-English majors, but the participants in the present study were all non-English majors; second, the learning context changed: Gao et al.’s research took place in an at-home context, while the present study took place in a study abroad context. Nevertheless, the findings in this study confirm Chinese educational culture: all of the other motivation types (intrinsic interest, personal development and information medium) are related to individual factors; however, social responsibility is related to the relationship between the individual and the group, such as the motherland and the family. In Chinese educational culture, students’ choosing a major program would take many factors into consideration, such as country’s development, family influence, parental encouragement, which could be explained by Chen et al. (2005)’s “Chinese imperative”, which is regarded as “a highly internalized aspect of
the Chinese achievement-related mindset, equating value with exam success, further enforced by societal, educational, and familial expectations” (as cited in You & Dörnyei, 2014, p. 20). Moreover, the lack of significant differences in terms of the L2 self is somewhat consistent with the results found by Liu & Thompson (2018), who found that English major students showed higher levels of ideal self motivation than the students of other majors; other majors also did not differ in terms of the ideal L2 self. This finding also confirms the lack of significant differences across majors in relation to the ought-to self and L2 learning experience.

When it comes to strategy use, the results show that students majoring in Science and Engineering used memory strategies less frequently than those in Business and Administration, which implied that students in Science and Engineering do not prefer rote memorization. However, the difference was not found between students in Humanities and Art, which is likely because the means of Humanities and Arts students are in an intermediary position, so the differences between them and the two other groups are not high enough to reach statistical significance. The reliance on memory strategies by Business and Administration students may be explained by their use of memory strategies in their area of study; in contrast, Science and Engineering majors might be less inclined to use memory strategies than Business students, and humanities might be in the middle in this respect.

Considering autonomous learning behaviours based on the majors of the participants, the results showed no significant differences. This implies that no matter which program the students are in, their autonomous learning behaviours in social, academic, and individual settings are similar. This could be due to the fact that in the same learning experience and same learning context, English plays the role as an information medium to all Chinese students in all academic programs; this might reflect the similarities between English-medium programs in Hungary.

As for language contact, it is an interesting finding that Chinese students in Business and Administration have more access to Chinese contact in Hungary. Specifically, by looking at the items in the Chinese contact scale, the participants belonging to Business and Administration programs show a high frequency of talking to Chinese classmates or friends in the Chinese language. This high frequency can potentially be explained by considering the nature of communication among business students, which might be easier to carry out through the mother tongue; moreover, another possible explanation might be that students in business-related programs prefer to socialize with others for business communication
regarding internships and job opportunities, which can create more incentive for them to use their mother tongue compared to other students in the program.

### 4.2.4 IDs across different degree level

Very few studies were previously conducted to explore the ID difference across groups of different degree levels. In this dissertation, I attempted to find whether degree levels are related to ID variables. Regarding the different degree levels, since the sample of PhD participants \((n = 15)\) are not enough to be compared with other groups, the author combined MA students with PhD students as one group of graduate students; 9 preparatory students were ignored. Group one \((n = 100)\) is labelled as undergraduate (BA), and group two \((n = 51)\) is labelled as graduate (MA + PhD). In the discussion, it is difficult to establish links with previous studies because of the limited results based on different degree levels. Therefore, the findings related to this aspect are mainly novel in nature.

#### 4.2.4.1 Results

**Motivation across different degree level**

Independent-samples T-tests were conducted to compare the differences in motivational scales between the participants in different degree levels. Table 19 demonstrated that there were significant differences between undergraduate and graduate students in terms of the Ideal L2 Self, Personal Development, Information Medium, and Attitude towards the L2. Separately speaking, concerning the L2 Motivational Self System, a significant difference was found in the Ideal L2 Self scores of the undergraduate \((M = 4.044)\) and graduate \((M = 4.384)\) students; \(t = -3.413, p = 0.001\). Moreover, with regards to the motivation type framework, the motivational component Personal Development displays a significant difference in the scores for undergraduates \((M = 3.832)\) and graduates \((M = 4.112)\); \(t = -2.328, p = 0.021\). Furthermore, in Information Medium there is also a significant difference in the scores for undergraduate \((M = 4.030)\) and graduate students \((M = 4.235)\); \(t = -2.300, p = 0.023\). In addition, in terms of attitudes and efforts to learn English, there was a significant difference in the Attitude towards the L2 between undergraduates \((M = 3.602)\) and graduates \((M = 4.004)\); \(t = -3.213, p = 0.002\). In short, these results suggest that graduate students exhibit stronger motivation than undergraduate students in regard to the Ideal L2 Self, Personal Development Motivation, Information Medium Motivation and Attitudes towards learning English.
Table 19

t-test Degree Differences in Motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Undergraduate (n = 100)</th>
<th>Graduate (n = 51)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 Self</td>
<td>4.0440</td>
<td>4.3843</td>
<td>-3.413</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 Self</td>
<td>3.5317</td>
<td>3.6503</td>
<td>-0.816</td>
<td>0.416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learning Experience</td>
<td>3.8400</td>
<td>4.0131</td>
<td>-1.747</td>
<td>0.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Interest</td>
<td>3.9040</td>
<td>4.0000</td>
<td>-0.994</td>
<td>0.322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Development</td>
<td>3.8325</td>
<td>4.1127</td>
<td>-2.328</td>
<td>0.021*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Medium</td>
<td>4.0300</td>
<td>4.2353</td>
<td>-2.300</td>
<td>0.023*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>3.8160</td>
<td>3.8353</td>
<td>-0.163</td>
<td>0.871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards L2</td>
<td>3.6025</td>
<td>4.0049</td>
<td>-3.213</td>
<td>0.002*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort to learn L2</td>
<td>3.4440</td>
<td>3.6314</td>
<td>-1.725</td>
<td>0.087</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strategies across different degree levels

Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to compare the differences in English learning strategy use between the participants in different degree levels. From Table 20, it can be seen that there were significant differences between undergraduate and graduate students in the use of Memory, Cognitive, and Social strategies significant at the p < 0.05 level. Separately speaking, Memory strategies display a significant difference in the scores of undergraduate (M = 3.515) and graduate (M = 3.857) students; t = -2.700, p = 0.008. Moreover, Cognitive strategies also show a significant difference in the scores of undergraduate (M = 3.454) and graduate (M=3.702) students; t= -2.483, p=0.014. Furthermore, there was a significant difference in Social strategies between undergraduates (M = 3.344) and graduates (M = 4.004); t= -3.213, p=0.002. In a word, these results suggest that graduate students exhibit a higher frequency of applying English learning strategies than undergraduate students in regard to Memory, Cognitive, and Social strategies.

Table 20

t-test Degree Differences in strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Undergraduate (n = 100)</th>
<th>Graduate (n = 51)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>3.5150</td>
<td>3.8578</td>
<td>-2.700</td>
<td>0.008*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>3.4540</td>
<td>3.7020</td>
<td>-2.483</td>
<td>0.014*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensate</td>
<td>3.6925</td>
<td>3.8775</td>
<td>-1.683</td>
<td>0.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>3.2867</td>
<td>3.1699</td>
<td>0.801</td>
<td>0.425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3.3440</td>
<td>3.7098</td>
<td>-3.058</td>
<td>0.003*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>3.3260</td>
<td>3.4627</td>
<td>-1.005</td>
<td>0.316</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Autonomous learning behaviours across different degree levels
Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to determine the significance of differences in participants’ autonomous learning behaviours between participants in different degree levels. From Table 21, it can be seen that there were significant differences between undergraduate and graduate students in academic, social, as well as individual autonomous learning behaviours at the $p < 0.05$ level. Separately speaking, academic autonomous behaviours exhibited a significant difference in the scores of undergraduate ($M = 3.710$) and graduate ($M = 3.951$) students; $t = -2.359$, $p = 0.020$. Moreover, social autonomous learning behaviours also showed a significant difference in the scores of undergraduate ($M = 3.655$) and graduate students ($M = 4.156$); $t = -4.578$, $p = 0.000$. Furthermore, there was also a significant difference in individual autonomous learning behaviours between undergraduate ($M = 3.787$) and graduate students ($M = 4.240$); $t = -4.304$, $p = 0.000$. In brief, these results suggest that graduate students exhibit stronger autonomous learning behaviours than undergraduate students in all aspects of academic, social, and individual settings, which illustrates that students in higher academic degree levels have higher autonomy in terms of self-regulation related to their studies.

Table 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$t$-test</th>
<th>Degree Difference in autonomy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n = 100)</td>
<td>(n = 51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>3.7100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3.6550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>3.7875</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

L2 contact across different degree levels

Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to compare the differences in language contact between the participants in different degree levels. From Table 22, it can be seen that there were significant differences between undergraduate and graduate students in not only Chinese contact but also English contact with speaking, writing, and media, at the $p < 0.05$ significance level. Separately speaking, Chinese contact exhibits a significant difference in the scores for undergraduate ($M = 3.612$) and graduate ($M = 2.985$) students; $t = 3.507$, $p = 0.001$. Moreover, Direct English spoken contact also displays a significant difference in the scores of undergraduate ($M = 3.453$) and graduate ($M = 3.875$); $t = -2.947$, $p = 0.004$. 
Furthermore, there was a significant difference in English written contact between undergraduates ($M = 3.490$) and graduates ($M = 4.032$); $t = -3.338$, $p = 0.001$. In addition, there was a significant difference in English media contact between undergraduates ($M = 3.590$) and graduate students ($M = 4.058$); $t = -3.260$, $p = 0.001$. To put it briefly, these results suggest that students in higher degree programs more frequently gain access to English contacts; thus, they use English more frequently than those in lower degree levels in terms of spoken English, written English, and media contact; by contrast, students in lower degree levels more frequently connect with Chinese contacts than those in higher degree levels, and consequently, probably use Chinese more.

### Table 22

$t$-test Degree Differences in language contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Undergraduate ($n=100$)</th>
<th>Graduate ($n=51$)</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese contact</td>
<td>3.6125</td>
<td>2.9853</td>
<td>3.507</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken contact</td>
<td>3.4538</td>
<td>3.8750</td>
<td>-2.947</td>
<td>0.004*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written contact</td>
<td>3.4900</td>
<td>4.0327</td>
<td>-3.338</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media contact</td>
<td>3.5900</td>
<td>4.0588</td>
<td>-3.260</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.2.4.2 Discussion

As far as the motivation differences between groups of different degree levels are concerned, the results suggest that students in higher degree levels have a stronger wish to reach an ideal state of English proficiency in the future. In addition, graduates mostly study English either for the sake of personal future development (for example, getting a better job, feeling a sense of achievement, or displaying a sign of an educated and civilized person) or for the purpose of an information medium for learning academic knowledge and social communication (for example, to study other subjects better, to get to know the world development, to communicate ideas with foreigners). What is more, high degree level students have more active attitudes towards learning English than those of lower degree levels. This finding is consistent with previous results found by Liu and Cha (2010); they argued that postgraduates showed stronger motivation than undergraduates perhaps because a skilled command of English would be helpful for thesis writing and academic careers.
Regarding strategies, the results suggest that high degree level students used strategies more frequently than those of lower degree levels. Through comparing the items in these three scales, the results implied that the students in higher degree levels are skilled at using different kinds of learning strategies, not only in using direct learning strategies such as memory and cognition (for example, remembering a new word by creating a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used), but also in using indirect strategies like socializing with others in English (for example, practicing English with other students, or trying to learn about the culture of English speakers). This indicates that higher degree level students not only focus on the cognitive processing of English words but also concentrate on putting them into practice via socialization. The results are in line with Liu and Cha’s (2010) research findings; they postulated that postgraduate students applied English learning strategies more effectively than undergraduates, which was probably because of the fact that through several years’ of training, they learned how to adjust different strategies to complete their research work.

With regards to autonomous learning behaviours, the results suggested that the Chinese students with higher degree levels displayed more autonomous learning behaviours than those with lower degree levels. Especially through comparing the items in these three scales, the results suggested that the students with higher degree levels focus on autonomous learning in academic ways (such as improving academic English as much as possible, using the Internet to find materials for the taken courses) or in social ways (for example, looking for opportunities to engage in conversations to develop English skills, asking foreign friends online to help manage everyday affairs, keeping in touch with foreign students through Facebook, or socializing with local people through English) as well as in individual ways (for instance, using the Internet to find interesting events, watching videos about habits of the people in the host country, or handling daily problems using English). In light of this, it appears that high degree level students focus on self-regulated learning behaviours in every aspect. These results confirmed Liu and Cha’s (2009) findings that the higher degree level students are more autonomous in performing as students.

When it comes to language contact, the results suggest that students in higher degree levels more frequently gain access to English contacts; thus, they use English more frequently than those in lower degree levels in the aspects of spoken, written, and media contact; by contrast, students in lower degree levels more frequently connect with Chinese contacts than those in higher degree, and consequently, probably use Chinese more.
4.2.5 IDs across different proficiency levels

Concerning English proficiency, I investigated three types of scores: English subject score of the Gaokao (National University Entrance Exam, full mark = 150), IELTS score (International English Language Testing System), and the perceived level of English proficiency in four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Since the Gaokao score was received a long time ago, and IELTS scores were not reported by all participants, the comparative study here only explores differences primarily based on the perceived level of proficiency. Each English skill was represented by one item featuring a five-point Likert scale, and the four skills were counted as one construct to demonstrate students’ English proficiency. Therefore, students’ average score was considered to be their overall English proficiency. The score of 3.0 was the cut-off point to separate the total of 160 participants into a group of low proficiency and a group of high proficiency. I labelled group one as low proficiency, and group two as high proficiency.

4.2.5.1 Results

Motivation across different proficiency levels

I aimed to determine differences in motivational constructs between students whose self-perception of their proficiency is either high or low. Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to identify significant differences in motivational scales between the participants based on different levels of self-perceived proficiency. From Table 23, it can be seen that there were significant differences between students with low and high self-perceived English proficiency in terms of the Ideal L2 Self, the L2 Learning Experience, Intrinsic Interest, Information Medium, and Attitude towards the L2.

Table 23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>Perceived Proficiency Differences in Motivation</th>
<th>( M )</th>
<th>( t )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low (( n = 92 ))</td>
<td>High (( n = 68 ))</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 Self</td>
<td>3.9826</td>
<td>4.4118</td>
<td>-4.830</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 Self</td>
<td>3.6033</td>
<td>3.5466</td>
<td>.426</td>
<td>.671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learning Experience</td>
<td>3.7862</td>
<td>4.0392</td>
<td>-2.832</td>
<td>0.005*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Interest</td>
<td>3.8217</td>
<td>4.0765</td>
<td>-2.916</td>
<td>0.004*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Development</td>
<td>3.9049</td>
<td>4.0074</td>
<td>-.910</td>
<td>.364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Medium</td>
<td>4.0152</td>
<td>4.2412</td>
<td>-2.767</td>
<td>0.006*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>3.7761</td>
<td>3.9029</td>
<td>-1.163</td>
<td>.246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards L2</td>
<td>3.5734</td>
<td>3.9853</td>
<td>-3.599</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort to learn L2</td>
<td>3.4565</td>
<td>3.6059</td>
<td>-1.504</td>
<td>.135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In particular, in regard to the L2 Motivational Self System, there is a significant difference in the Ideal L2 Self between the scores of low proficiency students \((M = 3.982)\) and high proficiency students \((M = 4.411)\) \(t = -4.830, p = 0.000\). In addition, there is also a significant difference in the L2 Learning Experience between low \((M = 3.786)\) and high \((M = 4.039)\) proficiency students; \(t = -2.832, p = 0.005\). Moreover, regarding other motivational type constructs, Intrinsic Interest displays a significant difference in the scores of low proficiency \((M = 3.821)\) and high proficiency students \((M = 4.076)\); \(t = -2.916, p = 0.004\). Furthermore, Information Medium also shows a significant difference in the scores for low proficiency \((M = 4.015)\) and high proficiency students \((M = 4.241)\); \(t = -2.767, p = 0.006\). In addition, concerning efforts and attitudes to learning English, there was a significant difference in the Attitude towards the L2 between the low group \((M = 3.573)\) and high group \((M = 3.985)\); \(t = -3.599, p = 0.000\). These results suggest that students with perceived high English proficiency exhibit stronger motivation than those with low perceived English proficiency in regard to the Ideal L2 Self, the L2 Learning Experience, Intrinsic Interest Motivation, Information Medium Motivation, and Attitudes towards learning English.

**Strategies across different proficiency levels**

Based on Table 24, independent-samples t-test scores demonstrated similar results to the differences based on degree levels when comparing strategy use between different perceived proficiency levels. The findings indicated that there were significant differences between students with low and high perceived English proficiency in the use of Memory, Cognitive, and Social strategies at a \(p < 0.05\) significance level.

Table 24  
**t-test Self-perceived Proficiency Differences in Strategy Use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Low ((n = 92))</th>
<th>High ((n = 68))</th>
<th>(t)</th>
<th>(p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>3.4293</td>
<td>3.9265</td>
<td>-4.416</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>3.3696</td>
<td>3.7706</td>
<td>-4.534</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensate</td>
<td>3.6929</td>
<td>3.8603</td>
<td>-1.671</td>
<td>.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>3.2971</td>
<td>3.2451</td>
<td>.389</td>
<td>.698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3.3413</td>
<td>3.6971</td>
<td>-3.218</td>
<td>0.002*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>3.2870</td>
<td>3.5324</td>
<td>-1.933</td>
<td>.055</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specifically, in Memory strategies there is a significant difference between the scores of low proficient students \((M = 3.429)\) and the high proficient group \((M = 3.926); t = -4.416, p = 0.000.\) Moreover, Cognitive strategies also display a significant difference in the scores for the low proficient group \((M = 3.369)\) and high proficient group \((M = 3.770); t = -4.534, p = 0.000.\) Furthermore, there was a significant difference in Social strategies between the low proficient group \((M = 3.341)\) and high proficient group \((M = 3.697); t = -3.218, p = 0.002.\) These results suggest that students with high perceived English proficiency apply English learning strategies more frequently than students with low proficiency in the aspects of Memory, Cognitive, and Social strategies.

**Autonomous learning behaviours across different proficiency levels**

Independent-samples \(t\)-tests were conducted to determine the significance of the differences in autonomous learning behaviours between the participants with different proficiency levels on the basis of self-perceived English proficiency levels. From Tables 25, it can be seen that there were significant differences between students with low and high English proficiency in academic, social, and individual autonomous learning behaviours with a significance level of \(p < 0.05.\)

Table 25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low ((n = 92))</th>
<th>High ((n = 68))</th>
<th>(t)</th>
<th>(p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>3.5978</td>
<td>4.0294</td>
<td>-4.476</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3.5870</td>
<td>4.1544</td>
<td>-5.250</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>3.7582</td>
<td>4.2022</td>
<td>-4.584</td>
<td>0.000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the scores of perceived English proficiency, academic autonomous behaviours show a significant difference in the scores of the low proficient group \((M = 3.597)\) and high proficient group \((M = 4.029); t = -4.476, p = 0.000.\) Moreover, social autonomous learning behaviours also demonstrated a significant difference between the scores of low proficiency group \((M = 3.587)\) and the high proficiency group \((M = 4.154); t = -5.250, p = 0.000.\) Furthermore, there was a significant difference in individual autonomous learning behaviours between the low proficient group \((M = 3.758)\) and high proficient group \((M = 4.202); t = -4.584, p = 0.000.\) These results suggest that students with high perceived English
proficiency show stronger autonomous learning ability than those with low proficiency in all aspects of academic, social, and individual settings.

**L2 contact across different proficiency levels**

Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to compare the differences in language contact between the participants of different levels of English proficiency. From Table 26, it can be seen that there were significant differences between students of low perceived proficiency and high perceived proficiency not only in Chinese contact but also in English contact connected to speaking, writing, and media at a $p < 0.05$ significance level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>Self-perceived Proficiency Difference in Language Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low ($n = 92$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese contact</td>
<td>3.6685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken contact</td>
<td>3.3397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written contact</td>
<td>3.3623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media contact</td>
<td>3.4478</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Separately speaking, in Chinese contact there is a significant difference in the scores for the low proficient group ($M = 3.668$) and high proficient group ($M = 3.029$) conditions; $t = 3.835$, $p = 0.000$. Moreover, Direct English spoken contact also exhibits a significant difference in the scores of the low proficiency group ($M = 3.339$) and high proficient group ($M = 4.011$); $t = -5.427$, $p = 0.000$. Furthermore, there was a significant difference in English written contact between the low proficient group ($M = 3.362$) and high proficient group ($M = 4.127$); $t = -5.326$, $p = 0.000$. In addition, there was a significant difference in English media contact between the low proficient group ($M = 3.447$) and high proficient students ($M = 4.179$); $t = -5.960$, $p = 0.000$. These results suggest that students of high perceived English proficiency more frequently establish English contact than low proficient students in the case of spoken, written, and media contact; by contrast, students of low English proficiency more frequently establish Chinese contacts than high proficient students.

**4.2.5.2 Discussion**

With regard to motivation between groups of different proficiency levels, the results suggest that students with a high level of perceived English proficiency display a stronger orientation towards an ideal state of English proficiency in the future. This finding is partly
consistent with Liu and Thompson’s (2018) findings that students with a high level of English proficiency have a stronger sense of the ideal self than students of low proficiency; however, the fact that no significant differences were found in the Ought-to L2 self in this study is inconsistent with their results. Moreover, it is an interesting result that in the Hungarian study abroad context it was found that students’ learning experiences in Hungary differed significantly depending on their perceived proficiency, which indicates that highly proficient students found the learning environment of the study abroad context more motivating.

Additionally, in the motivation type framework, significant differences were found in the scores of the Intrinsic Interest and Information Medium scales, indicating that highly proficient participants study English not only for the sake of intrinsic interest (for example, English culture-related purposes) but also for the purpose of an information medium channel, for learning academic knowledge, and social communication (for example, to effectively study other subjects, to understand social development all over the world, or to communicate ideas with foreigners more effectively). In other words, highly proficient students have both integrative motivation and instrumental motivation; they are especially motivated to learn English as a medium for academic and social settings in Hungary. This finding is partly consistent with results from Gao et al. (2003) which suggest that high-level English learners had higher intrinsic interest motivation than low-level students. The reason why information medium motivation showed a significant difference among Chinese students in Hungary might be explained by the fact that English is used as a medium of instruction in academic and social settings in Hungary. Moreover, this finding is confirmed by results from Wen & Wang (1996) and Guo (2009), which show that the deep motivation of high-proficiency groups is higher than that of low-proficiency group. However, this finding differs slightly from Shi (1999), who suggests that successful learners are intrinsically motivated, while unsuccessful learners are extrinsically motivated. This might be partly due to the effect of the different learning context in the present study. In Hungary, the instrumental motivation to learn English for academic purposes is also very important for Chinese students; however, in China, instrumental motivation to learn English for passing exams has been shown to have negative effects (Ma, 2005). What is more, highly proficient students are likely to possess more favourable attitudes towards learning English than those of low proficiency.

In regard to English learning strategies, the results suggested that students with high perceived English proficiency apply English learning strategies more frequently than students with low proficiency in the use of Memory, Cognitive, and Social strategies. In
other words, students with high proficiency applied different learning strategies, not only in using direct learning strategies such as memory and cognition, but also in using indirect strategies such as socializing with others in English. This suggests that highly proficient students not only focus on the cognitive processing of English words but also concentrate on putting them into practice through socialization. This finding is consistent with the study of Cheng et al. (2003), indicating that those who passed the CET4 used more strategies than those who failed. The results were also similar to Si et al. (2005) and Jiang (2003). Si et al. (2005) found that successful learners use memory, compensatory, and metacognitive strategies more often than unsuccessful learners, and Jiang (2003) found that learners who pass the CET4 use memory, cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies more frequently than those who did not pass.

With regard to autonomous learning behaviours, the results reflect that students with high perceived English proficiency show stronger autonomous learning abilities than those with low proficiency in all aspects of academic, social, and individual settings. This finding is consistent with previous findings (Guo & Zhou, 2007) showing that autonomous learning behaviours were present among students with different levels of English proficiency.

Concerning language contact in the study abroad context, the results suggest that students of high perceived English proficiency more frequently establish English contacts than low proficient students in spoken, written and media contexts; by contrast, students of low English proficiency more frequently establish Chinese contacts than high proficiency students. This finding is confirmed by Wen & Wang (1996), who indicated that unsuccessful Chinese learners of English employed mother-tongue-using strategies more frequently than successful learners. This might be explained by considering that students with low proficiency levels are dependent on the Chinese language to a greater extent than those with high proficiency levels. All in all, the results found based on different proficiency levels were similar to those found based on degree levels, which might be due to a possible positive correlation between degree level and proficiency level in learning English.
4.3 Relationships amongst motivation, strategies, autonomy, and language contact

The third research question aimed to explore the correlations among English learning motivation, strategies, autonomous behaviors, and the language contact of Chinese students studying in Hungary. In order to answer this question, I applied three categorizations of correlations. First, the inner relationships among the scales of each ID variable were investigated; second, the intercorrelations across ID variables were examined; third, the correlations between ID variables with perceived English proficiency were also assessed. By means of Pearson product-moment correlation analyses, I aimed to solve how the ID factors are correlated with each other in Chinese participants in a study abroad context. The comparisons were conducted pairs by pair. However, because of the many pair combinations, there were a large number of possible correlations; therefore, the discussion related to the correlations will concentrate on highly significant correlations only.

4.3.1 Correlations between scales within each ID variable

In the following sub-section, the results of the correlation analysis of the constructs in the four individual difference variables are presented. These include: (1) correlations among the three scales in the L2 Motivational Self System: the ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience, (2) correlations among the four scales in Motivation Type framework: intrinsic interest, personal development, information medium, and social responsibility, (3) correlations among the six scales of English learning strategy types: memory, cognitive, compensatory, metacognitive, affective, and social, 4) correlations among the three scales in autonomous learning behavior: academic autonomous behaviors, social autonomous behaviors, and individual autonomous behaviors, 5) correlations among four scales in language contact: English spoken contact, English written contact, English media contact, and Chinese contact.

4.3.1.1 Results

Correlation among the L2 Motivational Self System scales

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to assess the inner relationships among the three scales of the L2 Motivational Self System. From the table 27, it could be revealed that all scales in L2 Motivational Self System have a significantly positive correlation with each other at the significance level of $p < .01$, with varying strength. Specifically, the ought-to L2 Self showed a significant correlation with the ideal L2 Self $[r$
= 0.186, \( n = 160, p = 0.018 \) and the L2 learning experience \([ r = .191, n = 160, p = 0.015 \)]. Moreover, the Ideal L2 Self had a significant correlation with the L2 Learning experience \([ r = 0.389, n = 160, p = 0.000 \)] as well. In short, the data suggests that the correlation among the three scales are relatively weak, although the relationship between the ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience is relatively stronger than the correlations between others.

Table 27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ideal L2 self</th>
<th>Ought-to L2 self</th>
<th>L2 learning experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 self</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.186*</td>
<td>.389**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 self</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.191*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 learning experience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations among the Four Motivation types

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to assess the inner relationships among the four types of Motivational orientations. From the Table 28, it could be seen that all four motivation types had a significantly positive correlation with each other at the significance level of \( p < .01 \), but to varying degrees. In particular, intrinsic interest showed positive correlations with personal development \([ r = 0.386, n = 160, p = 0.000 \]), information medium \([ r = 0.466, n = 160, p = 0.000 \]), and social responsibility \([ r = 0.439, n = 160, p = 0.000 \]). Moreover, personal development also showed a significant correlation with information medium \([ r = 0.551, n = 160, p = 0.000 \]) and social responsibility \([ r = 0.559, n = 160, p = 0.000 \]). Furthermore, information medium was correlated with social responsibility as well \([ r = 0.657, n = 160, p = 0.000 \]). Briefly, the results suggested that the correlations among instrumental-related motivations were stronger than those with intrinsic interest; in addition, the relationship between information medium and social responsibility was the strongest of all the correlations.

Table 28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>interest</th>
<th>development</th>
<th>medium</th>
<th>responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>interest</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.386**</td>
<td>.466**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.551**</td>
<td>.599**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.657**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsibility</td>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Correlations among English learning strategy types

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to assess the inner relationships among the six English learning strategies. Table 29 shows that all of the L2 learning strategy types had a significantly positive correlation with each other at the level of $p < .01$, but to varying degrees. First, memory strategies had the strongest significant correlation with cognitive strategies ($r = 0.625, n = 160, p = 0.000$), and also had relatively strong correlations with metacognitive strategies ($r = 0.585, n = 160, p = 0.000$) and social strategies ($r = 0.537, n = 160, p = 0.000$); moreover, memory was significantly correlated with compensatory ($r = 0.466, n = 160, p = 0.000$) and affective strategies ($r = 0.402, n = 160, p = 0.000$). Second, cognitive strategies showed the strongest relationships with social strategies ($r = 0.547, n = 160, p = 0.000$) and metacognitive strategies ($r = 0.538, n = 160, p = 0.000$), and also showed strong correlations with compensatory strategies ($r = 0.416, n = 160, p = 0.000$); moreover, cognitive strategies were significantly correlated with affective strategies ($r = 0.364, n = 160, p = 0.000$). Third, compensatory strategies had a relatively strong relationship with social strategies ($r = 0.479, n = 160, p = 0.000$), but had a relatively weak correlation with affective strategies ($r = 0.272, n = 160, p = 0.001$) and metacognitive strategies ($r = 0.256, n = 160, p = 0.001$). Fourth, affective strategies had the strongest relationship with metacognitive strategies ($r = 0.643, n = 160, p = 0.001$) and a relatively strong correlation with social strategies ($r = 0.475, n = 160, p = 0.000$). Lastly, social strategies had the strongest relationship with metacognitive strategies ($r = 0.653, n = 160, p = 0.001$) among its relationships with other strategies. In short, the results showed that all of the scales in the learning strategies construct are positively correlated with each other; furthermore, the correlations between memory and cognitive, affective and metacognitive, and social and metacognitive strategies were the strongest of all relationships, with $r$ values above 0.600.

Table 29
Correlations Among English Learning Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>memory</th>
<th>cognitive</th>
<th>compensatory</th>
<th>affective</th>
<th>social</th>
<th>metacog</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>memory</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.625**</td>
<td>.466**</td>
<td>.402**</td>
<td>.537**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.416**</td>
<td>.364**</td>
<td>.547**</td>
<td>.538**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compensatory</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.272**</td>
<td>.479**</td>
<td>.256**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affective</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.475**</td>
<td>.643**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.653**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metacog</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Correlations among autonomous learning behaviors

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to assess the inner relationships among the three scales of autonomous learning behaviors in a study abroad context. From Table 30, it could be found that all autonomous learning behaviors in academic, social, and individual settings had a very strong significant positive correlations with each other at the significance level of \( p < .01 \). First, academic autonomous behaviors had a strong, significant correlation with social autonomous behaviors \( r = 0.717, n = 160, p = 0.000 \) and individual autonomous behaviors \( r = 0.656, n = 160, p = 0.000 \). Moreover, social autonomous behaviors had strong significant correlations with individual autonomous behaviors as well \( r = .754, n = 160, p = 0.000 \). In brief, the results suggest that the correlation between social and individual autonomous learning behaviors was the strongest of all, and the relationship between academic and social autonomous learning behaviors was the second strongest; moreover, the correlation between academic and individual autonomous learning behaviors was also relatively strong.

Table 30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>autoacademic</th>
<th>autosocial</th>
<th>autoindividual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>autoacademic</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.717**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.656**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>autosocial</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.754**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>autoindividual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Correlations among L2 contact

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to assess the inner relationships among language contact scales in a study abroad context. Table 31 demonstrates that L2 contact scales in speaking, writing, and media had a very strong significant positive correlation with each other at the significance level of \( p < .01 \). First, direct L2 spoken contact had a strong significant correlation with direct L2 written contact \( r = 0.756, n = 160, p = 0.000 \) and L2 media contact \( r = 0.669, n = 160, p = 0.000 \). Moreover, direct L2 written contact had a strong significant correlation with L2 media contact as well \( r = .695, n = 160, p = 0.000 \). The results revealed that the correlation between L2 spoken and written contact was the strongest of all, and the relationship between written contact and media contact was the second strongest; moreover, the correlation between spoken contact and media contact was also relatively strong. Chinese contact was not significantly correlated with L2 contact.
### Table 31

**Correlations Among L2 Contact Scales**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese contact</th>
<th>Spoken contact</th>
<th>Written contact</th>
<th>Media contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese contact</td>
<td>R 1</td>
<td>-.039</td>
<td>-.023</td>
<td>-.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken contact</td>
<td>R 1</td>
<td>.756**</td>
<td>.669**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written contact</td>
<td>R 1</td>
<td>.695**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media contact</td>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

### 4.3.1.2 Discussion

With regards to the correlation of constructs in the L2 Motivational Self System, the results suggest that the ideal L2 Self showed a stronger correlation with the L2 learning experience than with the ought-to L2 Self. This is consistent with findings from Liu et al. (2012), and similar to previous results found by Wei (2013), who indicated that the ideal L2 self was significantly correlated with the L2 learning experience. However, the difference is that Wei’s research reported that the ought-to L2 Self was negatively correlated with the ideal L2 Self and the L2 learning experience, respectively. However, the current research found that the ought-to L2 Self was positively correlated with the ideal L2 Self and L2 learning experience, but at a very weak degree of strength, which is consistent with Papi’s (2010) results. This might be explained by the fact that the ought-to L2 self might vary with the context and extent of pressure from others. If the L2 learning experience is favorable for students, and the expectations from others did not produce anxiety out of too much pressure, then the ought-to L2 self would be positive; otherwise, it would be viewed negatively.

As for the correlation of the scales in Motivation Types, the results suggested that the four types of motivation are all positively correlated among the participants; this suggests that integrative/culture-related orientations and instrumental orientations might work together to motivate Chinese students in learning English. In another words, it reflects that Chinese students are not only motivated by one single orientation in a study abroad context. Moreover, the relationship between information medium and social responsibility was the strongest of all correlations, which means that these two types of motivation are likely to appear together; therefore, it might be that students who are motivated to learn English as an information medium are quite likely to be motivated by social responsibility as well. This finding supports the argument from Gao et al. (2003) that these motivation types co-exist.
Regarding the correlation of learning strategies, the results suggest that in Oxford’s SILL framework, all strategies are positively correlated with each other, although the strengths were different. This finding is in agreement with a previous study by Xu (2008). This suggests that Oxford’s SILL framework is an intercorrelated system and that the strategies are not independent from each other. On the one hand, direct strategies are correlated with indirect strategies; on the other hand, all six specific strategies are correlated with each other as well. This illustrates that the process of learning a foreign language means applying different strategies comprehensively; learners require more than simply memorizing language information and understanding language knowledge with cognitive processing in mind, but also need behaviors to regulate the learning process as well as their emotions (Xu, 2008). Thus, it can prove more effective when two strongly correlated strategies collaborate in the learning process (Gong, 2008); for example, memory and cognitive strategies are strongly correlated, and metacognitive and social strategies are strongly correlated. To interpret it another way, the results reflected that Chinese students in Hungary usually apply one strategy with a combination of another strategies.

As per the correlations among autonomous learning behaviors, the results suggested that the three scales of autonomous learning behaviors had high positive correlations with each other. This means that when Chinese students behave autonomously in one setting, they would be autonomous in other settings, as well. Since there are no previous results found based on this framework of autonomous learning behavior, the findings related to these constructs are relatively new. However, when comparing the overall autonomous learning levels with results found in China, this finding seems to contradict previous results. For example, Yin and Han (2014) found that non-English major university students generally showed lower levels of autonomous learning behavior. The inconsistent results might be explained by the fact that Chinese participants studying and living in Hungary are required to behave more autonomously in academic, social, and individual contexts.

When it comes to the correlations amongst language contact scales in the study abroad context, the results implied that English contacts in speaking, writing, and media show strong positive correlation with each other. This suggests that when Chinese students gain access to one kind of English contact, they are likely to gain access to others, as well. This is supported by the mean values of English contact in speaking, writing, and media, which showed similar frequencies, meaning that these Chinese students come in contact with the English language in a parallel fashion with these three channels in Hungary. This finding varies from previous research conducted by Kormos et al. (2014), which found that
international students in the UK, especially Chinese students, did not gain access to enough spoken contact with native speakers because of a lack of equal status and equivalent level of English proficiency compared to natives. In this project, Chinese students generally showed a higher frequency of English spoken contact, which might be accounted for by the fact that in Hungary, international students come from different countries, and English is used as a lingua franca for everyone; therefore, the explanations which Kormos et al. (2014) proposed might not apply to Hungary.

4.3.2 Correlations between ID variables

The following section will report seven pairs of correlational comparisons in total. These correlations will be reported in the following sequence: (1) correlations between motivation and efforts, (2) correlations between motivation and strategies, (3) correlations between motivation and autonomous learning behaviors, (4) correlations between motivation and language contact, (5) correlations between strategy and autonomous learning behaviors, (6) correlations between strategy and language contact and (7) correlations between autonomous learning behaviors and language contact.

4.3.2.1 Results

Correlations between motivation and efforts

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to assess the relationship between the Motivational scales and attitudes towards/efforts to learn English. First, correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between the L2 Motivational Self System and attitude towards learning English as well as efforts to learn English. From table 32, it could be seen that all scales in the L2 Motivational Self System framework had significant positive correlations with attitudes towards learning English and efforts to learn English, varying in strength at a significance level of $p < .01$. Specifically, the results showed that attitudes had stronger correlation with the Ideal L2 Self [$r = 0.500, n = 160, p = 0.000$] and the L2 learning experience [$r = 0.520, n = 160, p = 0.000$] than with the ought-to self [$r = 0.295, n = 160, p = 0.000$]; by contrast, efforts had stronger correlations with the ought-to self [$r = 0.416, n = 160, p = 0.000$] than with the ideal self [$r = 0.396, n = 160, p = 0.000$] and the L2 learning experience [$r = 0.350, n = 160, p = 0.000$]. In addition, the correlation between attitude and efforts was the strongest of all [$r = 0.620, n = 160, p = 0.000$].

Second, correlation coefficients were also computed to assess the relationship between the four scales of Motivation Types and attitudes as well as efforts. From table 32, it can be
seen that all scales in the motivation type framework had significant positive correlations
with attitudes to learning English and efforts to learn English, varying in strength at a
significant level of \( p < .01 \). Specifically, the results showed that attitudes had stronger
correlations with information medium \( [r = 0.575, n = 160, p = 0.000] \), social responsibility
\( [r = 0.538, n = 160, p = 0.000] \) and intrinsic interest \( [r = 0.535, n = 160, p = 0.000] \) than with
personal development \( [r = 0.431, n = 160, p = 0.000] \); by contrast, efforts had stronger
correlations with social responsibility \( [r = 0.613, n = 160, p = 0.000] \) and information
medium \( [r = 0.589, n = 160, p = 0.000] \) than with personal development \( [r = 0.424, n = 160,
p = 0.000] \) and intrinsic interest \( [r = 0.412, n = 160, p = 0.000] \). In short, the results revealed
that the relationship between efforts and social responsibility was the strongest of all, and
the correlation between effort and information medium was the second strongest.

Table 32
Correlations Between Motivational scales and Attitudes & Efforts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Efforts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 self</td>
<td>( r = .500^{**} )</td>
<td>( .396^{**} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 self</td>
<td>( r = .295^{**} )</td>
<td>( .416^{**} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Experience</td>
<td>( r = .520^{**} )</td>
<td>( .350^{**} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Interest</td>
<td>( r = .535^{**} )</td>
<td>( .412^{**} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Develop.</td>
<td>( r = .431^{**} )</td>
<td>( .424^{**} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Medium</td>
<td>( r = .575^{**} )</td>
<td>( .589^{**} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>( r = .538^{**} )</td>
<td>( .613^{**} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>( r = 1 )</td>
<td>( .620^{**} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efforts</td>
<td>( r = 1 )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

Correlations between motivation and strategy

As seen from table 33, Pearson correlation analyses were used to examine the
relationships between the motivational scales and English learning strategies. The results
indicated that 51 out of 54 correlations were statistically significant at varying degrees of
strength greater or equal to \( r (160) = +.214, p < .01 \), with the exception that affective learning
strategies were not significantly correlated with either the Ideal L2 self \( [r = 0.086, n = 160,
p = 0.281] \) or the Ought-to L2 self \( [r = 0.081, n = 160, p = 0.309] \); moreover, compensatory
strategies showed no significant correlation with the ought-to L2 self \( [r = 0.101, n = 160, p
= 0.206] \).
Table 33

*Correlations Between Motivation and Strategies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Memory</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Compen.</th>
<th>Affective</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Metacog.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 self</td>
<td>$r = .406^{**}$</td>
<td>$ .382^{**}$</td>
<td>$ .304^{**}$</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>$.469^{**}$</td>
<td>$.352^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 self</td>
<td>$r = .319^{**}$</td>
<td>.161*</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>.284**</td>
<td>$.269^{**}$</td>
<td>$.317^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Experience</td>
<td>$r = .411^{**}$</td>
<td>$.348^{**}$</td>
<td>$.221^{**}$</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>$.336^{**}$</td>
<td>$.335^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Interest</td>
<td>$r = .387^{**}$</td>
<td>$.542^{**}$</td>
<td>$.221^{**}$</td>
<td>$.256^{**}$</td>
<td>$.365^{**}$</td>
<td>$.375^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Develop.</td>
<td>$r = .404^{**}$</td>
<td>$.276^{**}$</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>$.317^{**}$</td>
<td>$.375^{**}$</td>
<td>$.390^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Med.</td>
<td>$r = .493^{**}$</td>
<td>$.479^{**}$</td>
<td>$.387^{**}$</td>
<td>$.326^{**}$</td>
<td>$.526^{**}$</td>
<td>$.476^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Resp.</td>
<td>$r = .453^{**}$</td>
<td>$.427^{**}$</td>
<td>$.272^{**}$</td>
<td>$.470^{**}$</td>
<td>$.527^{**}$</td>
<td>$.476^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>$r = .481^{**}$</td>
<td>$.541^{**}$</td>
<td>$.268^{**}$</td>
<td>$.358^{**}$</td>
<td>$.529^{**}$</td>
<td>$.536^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort to learn L2</td>
<td>$r = .473^{**}$</td>
<td>$.489^{**}$</td>
<td>$.214^{**}$</td>
<td>$.447^{**}$</td>
<td>$.527^{**}$</td>
<td>$.658^{**}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

In detail, when comparing the relationship between the L2 Motivational Self System with English learning strategies, the results indicated the following: First, the ideal L2 Self had significant positive correlations with all types of learning strategies except affective [$r = 0.086, n = 160, p = 0.281$], but had a stronger correlation respectively with Memory [$r = 0.406, n = 160, p = 0.000$] and Social strategies [$r = 0.469, n = 160, p = 0.000$] than with cognitive [$r = 0.382, n = 160, p = 0.000$], compensatory [$r = 0.304, n = 160, p = 0.000$] and metacognitive strategies [$r = 0.352, n = 160, p = 0.000$]. Second, the Ought-to L2 Self had significant positive correlations with all learning strategies except compensatory strategies [$r = 0.101, n = 160, p = 0.206$], but had a relatively weak correlation respectively with Memory [$r = 0.319, n = 160, p = 0.000$], with cognitive strategies [$r = 0.161, n = 160, p = 0.041$], with affective strategies [$r = 0.284, n = 160, p = 0.000$], with Social strategies [$r = 0.269, n = 160, p = 0.001$] and with metacognitive strategies [$r = 0.317, n = 160, p = 0.000$]. Thirdly, the L2 Learning Experience had a strong positive correlation with Memory strategies [$r = 0.411, n = 160, p = 0.000$] and a relatively weaker correlation with cognitive [$r = 0.348, n = 160, p = 0.000$], compensatory [$r = 0.221, n = 160, p = 0.005$], social [$r = 0.336, n = 160, p = 0.000$] and metacognitive strategies [$r = 0.335, n = 160, p = 0.000$], but had no correlation with affective strategies [$r = 0.081, n = 160, p = 0.309$].

What is more, from the perspective of motivation types, it could be found that all types of motivation had significant positive correlations with learning strategies at varying levels of strength. First, intrinsic interest had a stronger correlation with cognitive learning strategies [$r = 0.542, p = 0.000$] than with memory [$r = 0.387, n = 160, p = 0.000$], compensatory [$r = 0.221, n = 160, p = 0.000$], affective [$r = 0.256, n = 160, p = 0.000$], social
Moreover, Personal Development had a strong correlation with memory learning strategies \(r = 0.404, n = 160, p = 0.000\), and had relatively weaker relationship with cognitive \(r = 0.276, n = 160, p = 0.000\), affective \(r = 0.317, n = 160, p = 0.000\), social \(r = 0.375, n = 160, p = 0.000\), and metacognitive strategies \(r = 0.390, n = 160, p = 0.000\), and had the weakest relationship with compensatory strategies \(r = 0.168, n = 160, p = 0.034\). Furthermore, Information Medium had strong positive correlations respectively with memory strategies \(r = 0.493, n = 160, p = 0.000\), cognitive strategies \(r = 0.479, n = 160, p = 0.000\), social strategies \(r = 0.526, n = 160, p = 0.000\), and with metacognitive strategies \(r = 0.476, n = 160, p = 0.000\), but had relatively weaker relationships with compensatory \(r = 0.387, n = 160, p = 0.000\) and affective strategies \(r = 0.326, n = 160, p = 0.000\).

Additionally, Social Responsibility had stronger correlations with memory strategies \(r = 0.453, n = 160, p = 0.000\), cognitive learning strategies \(r = 0.427, n = 160, p = 0.000\), affective strategies \(r = 0.470, n = 160, p = 0.000\), social strategies \(r = 0.527, n = 160, p = 0.000\), and metacognitive strategies \(r = 0.546, n = 160, p = 0.000\), but had a weaker correlation with compensatory strategies \(r = 0.272, n = 160, p = 0.000\).

**Correlations between motivation and autonomous behaviors**

As seen from table 34, Pearson correlation analyses were used to examine the relationship between the motivational scales and autonomous learning behaviors. The results indicated that all 27 correlations among the scales were statistically significant at varying degrees of strength, and greater or equal to \(r (160) = +.202, p < .01\). When comparing the relationships between the components of the L2 Motivational Self System with autonomous learning behaviors, the results indicated the following: First, the ideal L2 Self had significant positive correlations with all of the autonomous learning behaviors, such as with academic behaviors \(r = 0.574, n = 160, p = 0.000\), social autonomous behaviors \(r = 0.581, n = 160, p = 0.000\), and individual autonomous behaviors \(r = 0.506, n = 160, p = 0.000\). However, the Ought-to L2 Self had weak correlations with academic behaviors \(r = 0.221, n = 160, p = 0.005\), social autonomous behaviors \(r = 0.208, n = 160, p = 0.008\), and individual autonomous behaviors \(r = 0.202, n = 160, p = 0.010\). Furthermore, L2 learning experience had significant positive correlations with all of the autonomous learning behaviors, but had a stronger correlation with individual autonomous behaviors \(r = 0.407, n = 160, p = 0.000\) than with academic behaviors \(r = 0.365, n = 160, p = 0.000\) and social autonomous behaviors \(r = 0.387, n = 160, p = 0.000\). From the results mentioned above, it could be seen
that the Ought-to L2 Self had the weakest correlation with autonomous learning behaviors among the factors of the L2 Motivational Self System.

Looking at from the perspective of motivation types, it could be found that all of the motivation type scales had significant positive correlations with autonomous learning behaviors at varying levels of strength; however, Intrinsic Interest had a stronger correlation with individual autonomous behaviors \( r = 0.468, n = 160, p = 0.000 \) than with academic behaviors \( r = 0.387, n = 160, p = 0.000 \) or social autonomous behaviors \( r = 0.376, n = 160, p = 0.000 \). Moreover, Information Medium had a strong correlation with academic behaviors \( r = 0.483, n = 160, p = 0.000 \), social autonomous behaviors \( r = 0.561, n = 160, p = 0.000 \), and individual autonomous behaviors \( r = 0.626, n = 160, p = 0.000 \). Furthermore, Personal Development had positive correlations with all academic behaviors \( r = 0.348, n = 160, p = 0.000 \), social autonomous behaviors \( r = 0.318, n = 160, p = 0.000 \), and individual autonomous behaviors \( r = 0.330, n = 160, p = 0.000 \). Additionally, Social Responsibility had strong correlations respectively with academic behaviors \( r = 0.434, n = 160, p = 0.000 \), social autonomous behaviors \( r = 0.448, n = 160, p = 0.000 \), and individual autonomous behaviors \( r = 0.456, n = 160, p = 0.000 \). The results shown above suggest that Information Medium and Social Responsibility have stronger correlations with autonomous learning behaviors than Personal developments and Intrinsic Interest. What is more, Attitudes towards the L2 had strong correlations with academic behaviors \( r = 0.525, n = 160, p = 0.000 \), social autonomous behaviors \( r = 0.564, n = 160, p = 0.000 \), and individual autonomous behaviors \( r = 0.578, n = 160, p = 0.000 \).

**Table 34**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Individual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 self</td>
<td>.574**</td>
<td>.581**</td>
<td>.506**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 self</td>
<td>.221**</td>
<td>.208**</td>
<td>.202**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Experience</td>
<td>.365**</td>
<td>.387**</td>
<td>.407**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Interest</td>
<td>.387**</td>
<td>.376**</td>
<td>.468**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Develop.</td>
<td>.348**</td>
<td>.318**</td>
<td>.330**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Medi.</td>
<td>.483**</td>
<td>.561**</td>
<td>.626**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Respon.</td>
<td>.434**</td>
<td>.448**</td>
<td>.456**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to L2</td>
<td>.525**</td>
<td>.564**</td>
<td>.578**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort to learn L2</td>
<td>.536**</td>
<td>.512**</td>
<td>.572**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

Correlations between motivation and language contact
As seen from table 35, Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between the motivational scales and language contact scales in a study abroad context. The results indicated that all 27 out of 36 correlations among the scales were statistically significant at varying degrees of strength, and greater or equal to \( r (160) = +.202, p < .01 \), with a few exceptions, there were no significant correlations between Chinese contact and the motivational scales.

When comparing language contact with the components of the L2 Motivational Self System, the results showed that direct L2 spoken contact had a stronger relationship with the Ideal L2 Self \([r = 0.445, n = 160, p = 0.000]\) and a weaker relationship with Learning Experience \([r = 0.282, n = 160, p = 0.000]\), but had no significant correlation with the Ought-to L2 Self \([r = 0.133, n = 160, p = 0.096]\). Besides, direct L2 written contact had a relatively weaker correlation with the Ideal L2 Self \([r = 0.388, n = 160, p = 0.000]\) and the L2 learning experience \([r = 0.306, n = 160, p = 0.000]\), but had no correlation with the Ought-to L2 Self \([r = 0.108, n = 160, p = 0.173]\). Moreover, L2 media contact had weaker correlations with the Ideal L2 Self \([r = 0.368, n = 160, p = 0.005]\) and L2 Learning Experience \([r = 0.265, n = 160, p = 0.008]\), but had no significant relationship with the Ought-to Self \([r = 0.061, n = 160, p = 0.444]\). From the results mentioned above, it could be concluded that the Ought-to L2 Self had no correlations with any L2 language contact scales, and the correlation between L2 spoken contact and the Ideal L2 self were the strongest of all.

When comparing language contact with four types of Motivation, the results indicated that direct L2 spoken contact had weaker relationships with Intrinsic Interest \([r = 0.187, n = 160, p = 0.018]\), Personal Development \([r = 0.195, n = 160, p = 0.014]\), and Social responsibility \([r = 0.234, n = 160, p = 0.003]\), but had relatively strong correlations with Information Medium \([r = 0.345, n = 160, p = 0.000]\). In addition, direct L2 written contact had relatively stronger correlations with Information Medium \([r = 0.330, n = 160, p = 0.000]\) than with Social Responsibility \([r = 0.163, n = 160, p = 0.040]\), but had no relationship with Intrinsic Interest \([r = 0.095, n = 160, p = 0.231]\) and Personal Development \([r = 0.150, n = 160, p = 0.058]\). Furthermore, L2 media contact had weak correlations with Intrinsic Interest \([r = 0.209, n = 160, p = 0.008]\) and Information Medium \([r = 0.265, n = 160, p = 0.001]\), but had no relationship with Personal Development \([r = 0.109, n = 160, p = 0.170]\) and Social Responsibility \([r = 0.139, n = 160, p = 0.080]\). From the results mentioned above, it could be seen that the correlations between motivation types and L2 contact were generally not strong; however, Information Medium had relatively stronger correlations with the three types of L2 contact.
Table 35

*Correlations Between Motivation and Language Contact*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spoken contact</th>
<th>Written contact</th>
<th>Media contact</th>
<th>Chinese contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideal L2 self</strong></td>
<td>$r = .445**$</td>
<td>$.388**</td>
<td>$.368**</td>
<td>-.106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ought-to L2 self</strong></td>
<td>$r = .133$</td>
<td>.108</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>.177*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L2 Experience</strong></td>
<td>$r = .282**$</td>
<td>.306**</td>
<td>.265**</td>
<td>-.134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intrinsic Interest</strong></td>
<td>$r = .187*$</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>.209**</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Dev.</strong></td>
<td>$r = .195*$</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Info. Medium</strong></td>
<td>$r = .345**$</td>
<td>.330**</td>
<td>.265**</td>
<td>.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Resp.</strong></td>
<td>$r = .234**$</td>
<td>.163*</td>
<td>.139</td>
<td>.266**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude to L2</strong></td>
<td>$r = .381**$</td>
<td>.275**</td>
<td>.263**</td>
<td>-.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effort to learn L2</strong></td>
<td>$r = .250**$</td>
<td>.161*</td>
<td>.217**</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

**Correlations between strategies and autonomous behaviors**

As seen from table 36, Pearson correlation analysis were used to examine the relationships between the English learning strategies and autonomous learning behaviors in the study abroad context. The results indicated that all 18 correlations among the scales were statistically significant at varying degrees of strength and were greater or equal to $r (160) = +.202, p < .01$.

When comparing learning strategy scales with autonomous learning behaviors, the results indicated that academic autonomous behaviors had strong relationships with Cognitive [$r = 0.471, n = 160, p = 0.000$], Social [$r = 0.4495, n = 160, p = 0.000$], and Metacognitive strategies [$r = 0.437, n = 160, p = 0.000$], but had relatively weaker relationship with memory [$r = 0.363, n = 160, p = 0.000$], compensatory [$r = 0.295, n = 160, p = 0.000$], and affective strategies [$r = 0.209, n = 160, p = 0.008$]. Besides, Social autonomous behaviors had stronger correlation with Memory [$r = 0.417, n = 160, p = 0.000$], Cognitive [$r = 0.520, n = 160, p = 0.000$], compensatory [$r = 0.423, n = 160, p = 0.000$], social [$r = 0.637, n = 160, p = 0.000$] and metacognitive strategies [$r = 438, n = 160, p = 0.000$], but had weaker correlation with affective strategies [$r = 0.303, n = 160, p = 0.000$]. Moreover, Individual autonomous behavior had strong correlations with Memory [$r = 0.406, n = 160, p = 0.000$], Cognitive [$r = 0.512, n = 160, p = 0.000$], social [$r = 0.487, n = 160, p = 0.000$], and metacognitive strategies [$r = 465, n = 160, p = 0.000$], but had weaker correlations with compensatory [$r = 0.302, n = 160, p = 0.000$] and affective strategies [$r = 0.294, n = 160, p = 0.000$]. From the results mentioned above, it could be easily seen that
autonomous learning behaviors generally had stronger correlations not only with Direct Memory and Cognitive learning strategies, but also with indirect social and metacognitive strategies.

Table 36 Correlations Between Strategy and Autonomous Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Individual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>r .363**</td>
<td>.417**</td>
<td>.406**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>r .417**</td>
<td>.520**</td>
<td>.512**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensate</td>
<td>r .295**</td>
<td>.423**</td>
<td>.302**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>r .209**</td>
<td>.303**</td>
<td>.294**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>r .495**</td>
<td>.637**</td>
<td>.487**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>r .437**</td>
<td>.438**</td>
<td>.465**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations between learning strategies and language contact

As seen from table 37, Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships between English learning strategies and language contact in a study abroad context. The results indicated that 24 out of 36 correlations among the scales were statistically significant at varying degrees of strength, and greater or equal to \( r(160) = +.202, p < .01 \), with the exception that L2 contact in relation to speaking, writing, and media had no relationship with affective learning strategies. In addition, Chinese contact was shown to have no significant correlations with any learning strategies, with the exception of a weak correlation with affective strategies at the significance level of \( p < .05 \), \([r = 0.189, n = 160, p = 0.017]\).

When comparing learning strategy scales with each component of the L2 contact scale, the results indicated that direct spoken contact had a strong relationship with Social strategies \([r = 0.497, n = 160, p = 0.000]\), but had relatively weak correlations with Memory \([r = 0.366, n = 160, p = 0.000]\), Cognitive \([r = 0.376, n = 160, p = 0.000]\), Compensatory \([r = 0.335, n = 160, p = 0.000]\), and Metacognitive strategies \([r = 0.308, n = 160, p = 0.000]\). In addition, Direct written contact had weak correlations with Memory \([r = 0.265, n = 160, p = 0.001]\), Cognitive \([r = 0.259, n = 160, p = 0.000]\), Compensatory \([r = 0.282, n = 160, p = 0.000]\), social \([r = 0.365, n = 160, p = 0.000]\), and Metacognitive strategies \([r = 0.191, n = 160, p = 0.016]\). Moreover, L2 media contact had a strong correlation with Cognitive strategies \([r = 0.417, n = 160, p = 0.000]\) and a relatively weak relationships with Memory \([r = 0.330, n = 160, p = 0.000]\), Compensatory \([r = 0.341, n = 160, p = 0.000]\), and Social strategies \([r = 0.326, n = 160, p = 0.000]\), but had the weakest correlation with Metacognitive strategies \([r
= 0.190, n = 160, p = 0.016]. From the results mentioned above, it could be easily seen that L2 contact had correlations with all of the language learning strategies except for Affective strategies, but media contact had a stronger correlation with Cognitive strategies, and spoken contact had a stronger relationship with Social strategies.

Table 37
Correlations between Strategy and Language Contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spoken contact</th>
<th>Written contact</th>
<th>Media contact</th>
<th>Chinese contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>r .366**</td>
<td>.265**</td>
<td>.330**</td>
<td>-.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>r .376**</td>
<td>.259**</td>
<td>.417**</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensate</td>
<td>r .335**</td>
<td>.282**</td>
<td>.341**</td>
<td>-.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>r .497**</td>
<td>.365**</td>
<td>.326**</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>r .308**</td>
<td>.191*</td>
<td>.190*</td>
<td>.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

Correlations between autonomous learning behaviors and language contact

As seen from table 38, Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships between the English learning behaviors and language contact in the study abroad context. The results indicated that 9 out of 12 correlations among the scales were statistically significant at varying degrees of strength, and greater than or equal to $r (160) = +.390, p < .01$, with the exception that Chinese contact was shown to have no significant correlation with any scales of the autonomous learning behaviors.

When comparing autonomous learning behaviors with each L2 contact scale, the results indicated that direct spoken contact had a strong relationship with academic learning behaviors [$r = 0.503, n = 160, p = 0.000$], social learning behaviors [$r = 0.617, n = 160, p = 0.000$], and individual learning behaviors [$r = 0.462, n = 160, p = 0.000$]. In addition, Direct written contact had strong correlations with academic learning behaviors [$r = 0.461, n = 160, p = 0.000$], social learning behaviors [$r = 0.569, n = 160, p = 0.000$], and individual learning behaviors [$r = 0.442, n = 160, p = 0.000$]. Moreover, L2 media contact had strong correlations with academic learning behaviors [$r = 0.520, n = 160, p = 0.000$], and social learning behaviors [$r = 0.498, n = 160, p = 0.000$], but had a relatively weaker relationship with individual learning behaviors [$r = 0.390, n = 160, p = 0.000$]. From the results mentioned above, it could be easily found out that L2 contact generally had strong correlations with all aspects of autonomous learning behavior; most importantly, spoken contact had the strongest correlation with social autonomous learning behaviors.
4.3.2.2 Discussion

With regards to correlations between motivational scales with efforts to learn English, the results suggested that the ideal L2 Self, ought-to L2 Self, and L2 learning experience were all positively correlated with efforts to learn English. This finding confirmed previous results by Papi (2010), although his study found that correlations between efforts with the ideal L2 self and the L2 learning experience were stronger than that between efforts and the ought-to L2 Self. In the present study, the correlation between effort and the ought-to L2 Self was stronger than that between efforts with the ideal L2 Self and L2 learning experience. This might be explained by the fact that the two studies were conducted on different samples. In Papi’s research, the participants were pupils, who might be considered more emotional, while in the current research, the participants were university students from BA to PhD, who might be considered more rational.

When comparing the relationship between motivation types with English learning efforts, the results showed that all four motivation types were positively correlated with efforts at relatively strong levels; remarkably, the strongest correlations existed between efforts with information medium and social responsibility, which implied that the more Chinese students in Hungary are motivated to learn English for an information medium and social responsibility, the more efforts they would devote to learning English. A reasonable explanation for this finding might be that in a study abroad context, where English is used as a lingua franca and medium of instruction, the instrumental motivation to learn English as an information medium is of great significance to Chinese students studying and living in Hungary. Meanwhile, the expectations from the mother land from parents and relatives might motivate students to devote more efforts into improving their English abilities. This finding shares a number of similarities with Gao et al. (2003), who found that Chinese students with higher motivations related to intrinsic interest, individual development, and

Table 38

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Type</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Individual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spoken contact</td>
<td>$r = 0.503^{**}$</td>
<td>$0.617^{**}$</td>
<td>$0.462^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written contact</td>
<td>$r = 0.461^{**}$</td>
<td>$0.569^{**}$</td>
<td>$0.442^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media contact</td>
<td>$r = 0.520^{**}$</td>
<td>$0.498^{**}$</td>
<td>$0.390^{**}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese contact</td>
<td>$r = 0.031$</td>
<td>$-0.006$</td>
<td>$-0.030$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
information media would devote more effort towards their English learning, and those with high social responsibility motivation also made more efforts than groups with lower motivation.

Regarding correlations between motivation and strategies, the results suggest that motivation scales overall are positively correlated with the learning strategies types, suggesting that the students who are motivated to learn English apply various learning strategies. Specifically, the participants who showed high scores in ideal L2 self scale use memory and social learning strategies, while those who had strong motivation related to intrinsic interest apply cognitive strategies frequently; besides, those who had strong scores in terms of the information medium and social responsibility scales make frequent use of different kinds of learning strategies such as memory, cognitive, social, and metacognitive strategies. Generally speaking, all four motivation types were positively correlated with the six types of learning strategies, only with the exception of personal development motivation, which had no correlation with compensatory strategy. The findings are largely in accordance with findings reported by Wang and Wu (2017), which showed that intrinsic interest, personal development, and social responsibility are all significantly related to learning strategies. However, a difference must be pointed out between the present study and Wang and Wu (2017): in the present study, the information medium scale is correlated with learning strategies at a higher level, which might highlight the fact that learning and using English for an information medium is a significant motivation type for Chinese students in Hungarian contexts.

Concerning the correlation between motivation and autonomous learning, the results suggested that general motivation significantly correlated with autonomous learning in this sample, which implied that students who are motivated to learn English have strong autonomous learning behaviors. Specifically, participants who had more highly developed ideal L2 selves appear to study English more autonomously. This finding differs somewhat from a previous study by Wei (2013), who found that the ought-to L2 self was not significantly correlated with self-regulated learning behaviors. Although in this sample there were statistically significant correlations between these two variables, the ought-to L2 Self had the weakest correlation with autonomous learning, which perhaps could be explained by the fact that if someone is autonomous, they might not be especially motivated by expectations from others.

Moreover, as far as the motivation types are concerned, the results indicated that all motivation types are positively correlated with all scales of autonomous learning behaviors,
which is basically consistent with what has been found in previous studies (Xu & Li, 2014; Ni, 2010). It is interesting to note that in this research, among all correlations, information medium and social responsibility showed stronger correlations with autonomous learning behaviors than the other motivation scales, which is to say that those who had strong motivation related to information medium and social responsibility would have more autonomous behaviors in learning English. This finding supports previous findings of Ni (2010), in which the correlation between instrumental motivation and autonomy was stronger than that with integrative motivation. This might be explained by considering that, on the one hand, motivation to use English as a medium of instruction in their studies and as a lingua franca in their daily lives in Hungary made the participants study English more autonomously in three aspects (individual, social and academic settings); on the other hand, Chinese students’ desires to spread Chinese culture to foreigners and gain fame and dignity for their family may have also urged them to study more autonomously. However, the findings of the present study are not in line with Hua (2009), in which the relationship between autonomy and intrinsic motivation was the strongest amongst all correlations. In addition, the participants who had positive attitudes towards learning English would study English more autonomously, and those who made more efforts would also have more autonomous behaviors in learning English.

As for the relationship between motivation and language contact, the results interestingly suggested that in regard to correlations between the L2 Motivational Self System and language contact, the ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience are positively correlated with English contact through speaking, writing, and media; the ought-to L2 self is significantly correlated with Chinese contact. A similar finding also emerged among the correlations between motivation types and language contact, where social responsibility is significantly correlated with Chinese contact, as well. This coincidence might be explained by the fact that both the ought-to self and social responsibility are related to the expectations from others (such as family and country), which suggests that those respondents who find these expectations important also maintain contact with Chinese speakers more, although Chinese contact is correlated with the ought-to self and social responsibility to a weak degree. In addition, the positive correlation between social responsibility and English spoken contact could be accounted by considering that when Chinese students want to introduce Chinese cultures or some information about China, they attempt to gain more access to English spoken contact. Furthermore, although there is a weak correlation between information medium and English contact, this motivation type is correlated with all forms of English contact.
contact, which could be interpreted to show that learning English as an information medium is an important motivating force for Chinese students in Hungary.

When it comes to the correlation between learning strategies and autonomous learning, the results suggest that in general, all strategies were positively correlated with autonomous learning among Chinese students in Hungary. This suggests that the more frequently Chinese students used strategies in learning English, the more autonomous learning behavior they would display in academic, social, and individual settings in Hungary. This finding is in accordance with previous research on Chinese students’ autonomous English learning in China (Wu & Zhang, 2009; Ni, 2010; Tan & Zhang, 2015). However, a novel finding in the present study is that autonomous learning behaviors showed relatively strong correlations with Memory and Cognitive direct learning strategies and social and metacognitive indirect strategies. It is easy to understand that memory and cognitive strategies are important learning methods for Chinese students for directly processing the English language; moreover, metacognitive strategies are in charge of self-regulated learning: the more metacognitive strategies the student uses, the more autonomous they will be (Shao & Zhao, 2011; Goh & Taib, 2006; Thompson, 2012). Additionally, social autonomous learning behaviors had the strongest correlation with social strategies among all correlations. This could be accounted for by considering that for Chinese students learning in an abroad context, there are more opportunities to speak English with foreign friends or classmates.

Regarding the correlation between strategies and language contact, the results suggest that memory, cognitive, compensatory, social, and metacognitive strategies are correlated with all of the English contact aspects of speaking, writing and media at stronger or weaker degrees; however, none of the English learning strategies are significantly correlated with Chinese contact; in addition, affective strategies are not correlated with the English contact scales at all. This could be interpreted to mean that the more Chinese students gain access to English contact through speaking, reading, and media, the more varied their strategy use is in practice. The strongest correlations were shown between cognitive strategies and media contact, as well as social strategies and spoken contact. It is reasonable to suggest that reading English materials or watching English videos online is related to cognitive processing, and speaking English with others is closely related to socialization.

In regard to the correlation between autonomous learning and language contact, the results suggest that English contact through speaking, writing, and media are all correlated with autonomous learning behaviors in academic, social, and individual settings. That is to say, the more autonomously Chinese students behave in academic, social, and individual
settings, the more access they would gain to the English language through speaking, writing, and media. Moreover, comparatively, the correlations between the autonomous learning behaviors and English contact are relatively stronger than those between English contact and other ID variables. The reason for that might be that both English contact and autonomous learning behaviors influence language learning activities directly. In addition, it needs to be noted that Chinese contact is not correlated with any of the autonomous learning behaviors.

4.3.3 Correlations between ID factors and language proficiency

In the next sub-section, I will report the results regarding the correlations between the four ID factors and perceived English proficiency. The order is as follows: (1) L2 Selves with proficiency, (2) Motivation types with proficiency, (3) Strategies with proficiency, (4) Autonomous learning behaviors with proficiency, and (5) Language contact with proficiency.

4.3.3.1 Results

As seen from table 39-41, Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between perceived English proficiency and Individual Differences variables investigated in the present study. When comparing perceived English proficiency with the L2 Motivational Self System, the results showed that perceived English proficiency had a strong relationship with the Ideal L2 Self \( r = 0.431, n = 160, p = 0.000 \), a weaker relationship with the L2 learning experience \( r = 0.324, n = 160, p = 0.000 \), but had no significant relationship with the Ought-to L2 Self \( r = 0.008, n = 160, p = 0.924 \).

Regarding the relationships between perceived English proficiency and the four motivational types, it was revealed that English proficiency had relatively weaker correlation with Intrinsic Interest \( r = 0.246, n = 160, p = 0.002 \) and Information Medium \( r = 0.270, n = 160, p = 0.001 \); moreover, perceived language proficiency had no significant correlations with Personal Development \( r = 0.098, n = 160, p = 0.217 \) and Social Responsibility \( r = 0.103, n = 160, p = 0.194 \).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Correlations Between Motivational scales and Proficiency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 learning exp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social responsibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Moreover, the results demonstrated that perceived English proficiency had significant positive correlations with direct learning strategies like Memory [r = 0.216, n = 160, p = 0.000] and cognitive strategies [r = 0.349, n = 160, p = 0.000], as well as indirect learning strategies like social [r = 0.336, n = 160, p = 0.000] and metacognitive strategies [r = 0.230, n = 160, p = 0.003]. However, there was no correlation between perceived English proficiency and affective learning strategies [r = -0.022, n = 160, p = 0.779] and a very weak relationship with compensatory strategies [r = 0.165, n = 160, p = 0.037].

Table 40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency</th>
<th>Memory</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Compensatory</th>
<th>Affective</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Metacognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>.316**</td>
<td>.349**</td>
<td>.165*</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td>.336**</td>
<td>.230**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Furthermore, when comparing perceived English proficiency with autonomous learning behaviors, the results showed that perceived English proficiency had strong correlations with academic learning behaviors [r = 0.443, n = 160, p = 0.000] and social learning behaviors [r = 0.502, n = 160, p = 0.000], and a relatively weak relationship with individual learning behaviors [r = 0.378, n = 160, p = 0.000].

In addition, when comparing perceived English proficiency with language contact in the study abroad context, the results revealed that perceived English proficiency had strong positive correlations with all aspects of L2 contact: spoken [r = 0.485, n = 160, p = 0.000], written [r = 0.469, n = 160, p = 0.000], and media contact [r = 0.472, n = 160, p = 0.000]; however, it had a significant negative relationship with Chinese contact [r = -0.277, n = 160, p = 0.000].

Table 41

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency</th>
<th>Academic autonomy</th>
<th>Social autonomy</th>
<th>Individual autonomy</th>
<th>Spoken contact</th>
<th>Written contact</th>
<th>Media contact</th>
<th>Chinese contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>.443**</td>
<td>.502**</td>
<td>.378**</td>
<td>.485**</td>
<td>.469**</td>
<td>.472**</td>
<td>-.277**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
4.3.3.2 Discussion

When discussing the correlation between proficiency with motivation to learn English, the results suggest that the perceived English proficiency had positive correlations with the ideal L2 Self and L2 learning experience; however, the ought-to L2 self is not significantly related to proficiency. This could be interpreted to mean that the discrepancy between Chinese students’ actual L2 self and ideal L2 self and favorable L2 learning experiences could lead the students to become more motivated to learn English in practice; consequently, their English proficiency levels might be promoted at the same time. This finding is in line with previous findings by Ueki and Takeuchi (2015).

In addition, in regard to the framework of the four motivation types, only intrinsic interest and information medium were significantly correlated with perceived proficiency; in contrast, personal development and social responsibility did not correlate significantly with perceived proficiency. This finding might suggest that in a study abroad context, these two motivational orientations are the most important and practical for Chinese students in Hungary. On the one hand, Chinese students make contact with international cultures, not only from European countries but also from Latino, African, or other international contexts; this could be recognized as re-interpreted integrative motivation in a global context, which makes Chinese students interested in English. On the other hand, through living and studying in Hungary, Chinese students use English as a means of acquiring academic knowledge from professors and information from other international peers. In this sense, the more Chinese students are motivated by these two orientations, the more they might be motivated to study to improve their English abilities. What is more, in comparison, it seems that the L2 Motivational Self System is more prominent than the motivation type framework as regards relationships with proficiency, as there are stronger correlations between the L2 Motivational Self System and perceived proficiency.

When it comes to the relationships between proficiency and learning strategies, the results suggest that except for affective strategies, all the other five strategies significantly correlated with perceived language proficiency, although the strengths of the correlations varied. It could be assumed that the more frequently Chinese students applied different English learning strategies, the more proficient they might perceive their English level. This finding is in line with general findings from previous studies (Wen & Wang, 1996; Jiang, 2003; Yuan et al., 2004; Shang & Wang, 2010, Liu, 2010), which found that highly proficient students employed strategies more frequently.
In regard to the correlations between proficiency and autonomous learning behaviors, the results suggest that perceived English proficiency positively correlates with autonomous learning behaviors in academic, social, and individual settings. That is to say, the more autonomously Chinese students behave in their academic, social, and individual settings, the more proficient their level of English might be. This finding is consistent with previous results (Wang, 2002; Wu & Zhang, 2009), in which it was found that English performance and autonomous language learning were positively correlated. Moreover, in comparison, the correlation between proficiency and autonomous behaviors were stronger than those between proficiency and motivation or strategies. This might be explained by considering that although motivation and strategies form the basis of autonomous learning, autonomous learning behaviors likely influence the English learning process more directly. This could be further tested in the next section by regression.

With regards to the correlation between proficiency and L2 language contact, the results suggest that perceived English proficiency showed significant positive correlations with English contact in the aspects of speaking, writing, and media. This suggests that the more Chinese students access English materials through speaking, writing, and media, the more proficient their English level will become. This confirms previous conclusions reached by Briggs (2015), Magnan and Back (2007), and Trentman (2017), who generally believed that a greater amount of contact in class or out of class abroad would enhance English proficiency. In other words, it can be presumed that more contact in a study abroad context would be beneficial for improvement of English abilities; however, this presumption needs to be further tested by multiple regression analysis to predict causality. Interestingly, Chinese contact showed significant negative correlations with English proficiency, which is quite reasonable and can be explained by considering that the more Chinese contacts students gain access to, the less English contacts they will interact with; therefore, they will become less proficient in English.
4.4 How individual difference variables affect efforts & proficiency?

In an attempt to answer the third research question, I explored the correlations among the ID variables, and found correlations among ID variables as well as with efforts and English proficiency. In light of the previous findings, the fourth question was put forward to determine whether there are cause-effect relationships between ID variables and efforts as well as perceived English proficiency; specifically, which constructs of each ID variable have the strongest predictive ability. With this aim in mind, in section 4.4, I will investigate how ID variables affect efforts and perceived English proficiency. In order to answer this question, the Standard Multiple Regression Analysis was used to separately predict dependent variables (English learning efforts and perceived English proficiency) based on different independent variables (ID factors), so as to inquire into which factors have the most predictive influence. First, I explored how individual difference factors with two motivational frameworks (the L2 Motivational Self System; Four motivation types) respectively affected L2 learning efforts and English proficiency in a study abroad context. Second, the path analyses were used to probe into how efforts and perceived English proficiency were the most influenced by the constructs of ID factors: motivation, strategies, autonomy, and language contact.

4.4.1 How ID factors affect English learning efforts

Several researchers previously claimed that L2 motivation is a strong driving force behind learning English (Dörnyei, 1994; Gardner, 1985); therefore, they conducted studies on the predictive ability of motivation (Hao & Hao, 2001; Ma, 2005; Guo, 2009; Wen & Wang, 1996). Some set motivated behaviors as criterion measures, and investigated how efforts were affected by motivational scales (Li, 2014; Papi, 2010; Brady, 2019; Kormos & Csizér, 2008), but few studies were conducted to see which one emerges as the most influencing contributors when the ID variables predict the efforts together. Based on previous studies, I proposed a hypothesis that among the Chinese participants in Hungary, the students’ efforts to learn English could be predicted by their motivation, use of different strategies, their autonomous learning behaviors, and their access to English contacts in regard to speaking, writing, and media aspects. Therefore, in the following sub-section, I first conducted regression analysis of the effects of motivational scales on efforts to prove the previous results, and then, path analyses were conducted to further investigate which constructs of ID variables predict the efforts the most significantly.
4.4.1.1 Results

Effects of the Motivational scales on efforts

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to predict English learning efforts based on the L2 Motivational Self System. Choosing Chinese students’ efforts as dependent variables and the scales of the L2MSS as independent variables, the enter method was used to see how the L2 Motivational Self System affects Chinese students’ efforts to learn English in a study abroad context. From Table 42, it could be seen that overall the Chinese students’ efforts to learn English were significantly affected by the L2 Motivational Self System.

Based on the $R^2$ value of 0.40, the results (see Table 42) indicated that the L2 Motivational Self System significantly predicted efforts to learn English, explaining 30.6 percent variance of efforts ($F = 22.969, p = .000$). Therefore, the results suggested that the L2 Motivational Self System significantly influenced Chinese students’ efforts to learn English to a relatively strong degree. In terms of specific predictors, further analysis illustrated that among the three scales in the L2 Motivational Self System, in regard to efforts to learn English, the Ought-to L2 Self was the strongest predictor (Beta = .332, $p = .000$), followed by the ideal L2 self (Beta = .262, $p = .000$) and L2 learning experience (Beta = .184, $p = .013$). The results suggest that efforts were more influenced by the ought-to L2 Self.

Additionally, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to predict efforts to learn English based on the four types of motivation. Choosing efforts to learn English as dependent variables and the four motivational types as independent variables, the enter method was used to test how the four types of motivation affected Chinese students’ efforts to learn English in a study abroad context. From Table 42, it could be found that overall Chinese students’ efforts were significantly affected by Motivation types.

Through looking at the $R^2$ values, the results (see Table 42) indicated that the four motivation types significantly predicted efforts to learn English, explaining 44.6 percent variance of efforts ($F = 31.241, p = .000$). In regard to specific predictors, further analysis illustrated that among the four scales representing the motivation types, in regard to efforts to learn English, social responsibility was the first strongest predictor (Beta = .373, $p = .000$) followed by information medium (Beta = .294, $p = .001$). Efforts were not significantly predicted by intrinsic interest (Beta = .113, $p = .105$) and personal development (Beta = -.005, $p = .947$). The results suggest that efforts were more influenced by information medium and social responsibility significantly.
Regression Analysis of Motivation
al scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Efforts</th>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
<th>Efforts</th>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>Predictors</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 self</td>
<td>.262</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 self</td>
<td>.332</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>-.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 learning exp.</td>
<td>.184</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>.294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>.373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>.554</td>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>.668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.306</td>
<td></td>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 (adjusted)</td>
<td>.293</td>
<td></td>
<td>R2 (adjusted)</td>
<td>.432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>22.969</td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>31.241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05

Path analysis of ID variables’ effects on efforts in the model

First, I chose the L2 Motivational Self System together with strategy use, autonomy, and language contact as predicting variables, and English learning efforts as dependent scale. The stepwise method was used to test which ID variables most affect Chinese students’ efforts to learn English in the model. The level of significance was set for \( p < .001 \), the results of strength above .20 will be reported. From Table 43, it shows that, out of all scales, English learning efforts were directly and positively affected by metacognitive strategies (Beta = .440, \( p = .000 \)), autonomous learning behaviors in individual settings (Beta = .325, \( p = .000 \)), and ought-to self (Beta = .211, \( p = .000 \)). Furthermore, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the effects of ID variables on efforts, a path analysis was conducted subsequently. When I set in turn autonomous learning behaviors in individual setting, metacognitive strategies, and ought-to self as dependent variables, and the others scales of the ID factors as predictive variables, the results (see Table 44-46 and Figure 9) demonstrated that metacognitive strategy was significantly positively predicted by affective strategy (Beta = .382, \( p = .000 \)), social strategies (Beta = .338, \( p = .000 \)) and memory strategy (Beta = .250, \( p = .000 \)). In addition, autonomous learning behaviors in individual settings were significantly predicted by autonomous learning behaviors in social setting (Beta = .583, \( p = .000 \)), and autonomous learning behaviors in academic setting (Beta = .238, \( p = .001 \)). Ought-to self was significantly positively predicted by memory strategy as well (Beta = .319, \( p = .000 \)).
Regression Analysis of ID variables Affecting English learning efforts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive strategies</td>
<td>.440</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual autonomous learning behaviors</td>
<td>.325</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 self</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>.750</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.563</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 (adjusted)</td>
<td>.555</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>67.058</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .001

Table 44
Regression Analysis of ID variables affecting metacognitive strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective strategies</td>
<td>.382</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social strategies</td>
<td>.338</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory strategies</td>
<td>.250</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>.783</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.613</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 (adjusted)</td>
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<td>F</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .001

Table 45
Regression Analysis of ID variables affecting individual autonomous behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social autonomous learning behaviors</td>
<td>.583</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic autonomous learning behaviors</td>
<td>.238</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>.772</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 (adjusted)</td>
<td>.590</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>115.510</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .001

Table 46
**Regression Analysis of ID variables affecting ought-to L2 self**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory strategies</td>
<td>.319</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>.319</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 (adjusted)</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>17.927</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* p &lt; .001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9 Model (L2MSS, strategy, autonomy, and contact) predicting efforts

Second, in order to see the difference of two motivational frameworks, I chose the motivation type framework together with strategy, autonomy, and language contact as predicting variables, regression analyses (see Table 47 and Figure 10) demonstrated the interesting results that English learning efforts were significantly positively predicted by the metacognitive strategy (Beta = .432, p = .000), information medium motivation type (Beta = .281, p = .000) and autonomous learning behaviors in academic settings (Beta = .211, p = .001). Comparatively, metacognitive learning strategies merge in both models. Later, through further path analysis, when I set metacognitive strategy, information medium
motivation, and autonomous learning behaviors in academic settings as dependent variables, and the others scales of the ID factors as predictive variables, the results (see Table 48-50 and Figure 10) demonstrated one same result as the former model with Dörnyei’s L2 self system, which was that metacognitive strategy was significantly positively predicted by affective strategy (Beta = .382, p = .000), social strategies (Beta = .338, p = .000) and memory strategy (Beta = .250, p = .000). However, the different results showed that information medium motivation was significantly positively predicted by autonomous learning behaviors in individual settings (Beta = .397, p = .000), social responsibility motivation type (Beta = .350, p = .000), and personal development motivation type (Beta = .210, p = .001). Moreover, autonomous learning behaviors in academic settings was significantly positively predicted by autonomous learning behaviors in social settings (Beta = .415, p = .000) and individual settings (Beta = .260, p = .001), as well as English media contact (Beta = .212, p = .001).

Table 47
Regression Analysis of ID variables Affecting English learning efforts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive strategies</td>
<td>.432</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information medium</td>
<td>.281</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic autonomous learning behaviors</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>.750</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.563</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 (adjusted)</td>
<td>.555</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>67.053</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .001

Table 48
Regression Analysis of ID variables affecting metacognitive strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective strategies</td>
<td>.382</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social strategies</td>
<td>.338</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory strategies</td>
<td>.250</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>.783</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.613</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 (adjusted)</td>
<td>.605</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>82.244</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .001
Table 49  
Regression Analysis of ID variables affecting information medium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>(p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual autonomous learning behaviors</td>
<td>.397</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social responsibility</td>
<td>.350</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>.210</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R)</td>
<td>.771</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R^2)</td>
<td>.594</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R^2) (adjusted)</td>
<td>.586</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F)</td>
<td>76.111</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(p)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\* \(p < .001\)

Table 50  
Regression Analysis of ID variables affecting academic autonomous behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>(p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social autonomous learning behaviors</td>
<td>.415</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual autonomous learning behaviors</td>
<td>.260</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media contact</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R)</td>
<td>.761</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R^2)</td>
<td>.579</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R^2) (adjusted)</td>
<td>.571</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F)</td>
<td>71.483</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(p)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\* \(p < .001\)

Figure 10 Model (motivation types, strategy, autonomy, and contact) predicting efforts
4.4.1.2 Discussion

With regards to motivation predicting efforts to learn English, the results reveal that both motivational frameworks could predict the efforts put forward to learn English amongst Chinese students in Hungary. Among Chinese students in Hungary, the ideal L2 self, Ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience all significantly influence efforts to learn English. This suggests that Chinese students’ imagination of themselves as successful English users, the pressure to meet the expectations of their family, and satisfactory learning experiences in Hungary all contributed to students’ making efforts to learn English. The effective degree from the strongest to the lowest are the ought-to L2 self, the ideal L2 self, and the L2 learning experience. There is common ground between the present findings and previous research (Li, 2014; Csizér & Kormos, 2008; Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Taguchi et al., 2009); however, there are some inconsistencies, as well. In previous studies, the prominent role of the ideal L2 self in predicting efforts was found, while in the current research, the ought-to L2 self was found to be the most influential factor predicting the efforts to learn English. This possible explanation might be due to differences in the learning context. While previous studies investigated the participants in ESL and EFL contexts, the present research was situated in an ELF context.

In regard to the motivation types framework affecting efforts to learn English, the results suggest that among this group of participants in Hungary, only the information medium and social responsibility constructs significantly contributed to efforts to learn English. This implies that Chinese students’ making efforts to learn English were affected by their personal goals for using English as a medium in dealing with academic and social affairs, as well as the expectations from their motherland and family. A possible explanation might be that this is reasonable, considering that the ought-to L2 self was the most prominent predictor to efforts; social responsibility is similar to the ought-to L2 self, as both are related to external expectations. Moreover, it is also understandable that information medium is a significant predictor in influencing efforts as well, since English is used as an academic and social lingua franca for Chinese student in Hungary.

Subsequently, in order to see which variable and which scale function as the most significant contributors to efforts in a study abroad context, I created a model by putting ID variables together as predictors, and then used path analysis to find the structure of the relationships of variables and scales. The first model with Dörnyei’s L2 self-system (see Figure 9) reflected that overall, the English learning motivation, strategies, and autonomous
learning behaviors act as significant factors affecting the efforts to learn English; however, English contact did not emerge as a significant predictor directly affecting English learning efforts. This might imply that motivation, strategies and students’ autonomous learning work together as important individual variables in foreign language acquisition and that might also to suggest that the three variables are inter-correlated with each other (Ni, 2010).

Specifically, the results indicated that ought-to L2 self, metacognitive strategies, and autonomous learning behaviors in individual settings emerged as important predictive variables affecting English learning efforts. This might be explained with reference to the fact that in a study abroad context, self-regulation is a very important factor in influencing efforts to learn. Metacognitive learning strategies are mainly in charge of self-regulating the entire learning process of students’, from setting goals to monitoring the learning process and finally to evaluating the results, which is quite close to autonomous learning. However, autonomous learning behaviors in individual settings are relevant to personal self-access to learning English materials such as finding some interesting English materials on the internet or solving daily problems via use of English. The finding partially supports previous study results that metacognitive strategies are strongly correlated with autonomous learning (Xu & Li, 2014; Wang & Wu, 2017).

Moreover, further path analysis demonstrated that metacognitive strategies were significantly predicted by affective strategies, social strategies, and memory strategies. This could can be interpreted in the following ways: First, self-regulated learning strategies could directly affect efforts to learn English, with all indirect learning strategy scales working closely together to influence efforts. Second, memory strategy could result in metacognitive strategy to predict proficiency, which revealed that in the current sample, it was the use of social, affective and memory strategies that was associated with the use of metacognitive strategies, which is a finding that should be investigated further on other samples.

Furthermore, individual autonomous learning behaviors acted as an important factor predicting efforts, which indicated that in a study abroad context, Chinese students’ efforts to learn English is mostly influenced by autonomous learning behaviors in individual settings such as reading English materials from the Internet, communicating with foreigners online, and watching English movies. The path analysis showed that autonomous learning behaviors in individual settings are directly affected by autonomous learning behaviors in social and academic settings. This means that autonomous learning behaviors in three settings work together in predicting efforts to learn English amongst Chinese participants in a study abroad context.
Unexpectedly, ought-to L2 self emerged as important factor predicting English learning efforts, which could be understood that the expectation from others in terms of English learning could influence Chinese students’ effort paid to learn English in Hungary, which is surprisingly inconsistent with the previous findings by Kormos & Csizér (2008), who found that ideal L2 self acted as a significant predictor among Hungarian university students’ efforts to learn English. This might be explained with the reference to the reason that even though the place is the same, Hungary, for Hungarian students, it is EFL context, while for Chinese students, it is ELF context. Interestingly, path analysis showed that memory strategy could predict ought-to L2 self as well, suggesting that in this particular sample the use of memory strategies was linked to having an influential ought-to self.

In order to see the differences between the two motivational frameworks, I also put the motivation type framework together with other ID variables as predictors to predict efforts in a study abroad context, and the regression model (see Figure 10) reflected some interesting results accordingly. First, the same finding that emerged in the above model (Figure 9) suggested that metacognitive strategies are still significant contributors to efforts, which is further influenced by affective, social and memory strategies, as well. This confirms that self-regulating strategies are very important for students in a study abroad context. Second, the point where the former model differs from the this one is that information medium motivation and autonomous learning behaviors in academic settings emerged as significant predictors affecting efforts to learn English. This implies that using English as a medium of instruction in academic settings could make students devote more efforts to improving their English ability to meet the demands of academic studies in a study abroad context.

Interestingly, the subsequent path analyses (see Figure 10) show that the information medium motivation is predicted by two motivation types: social responsibility and personal development. This finding is easy to explain in the sense that according to Gao (2003), these three motivation types belong to instrumental orientations for different learning purposes; for example, information medium is relevant to learning English as a tool to study for university majors or to communicate with foreigners; social responsibility means learning English for making contributions to the development of motherland, China; and personal development is about learning English for getting a good career in the future. In light of this result, it could be argued that Chinese students’ efforts to learn English are mostly motivated by instrumental-related orientations, which is in line with Dörnyei and Clément’s (2001) previous finding that instrumentality was one of the most important scales predicting efforts. This might be argued that social responsibility and personal development influence efforts
through medium information, which is to say that Chinese students’ motivation to learn English for the motherland’s development and for personal future benefits, so they go abroad to study their academic programs by using English. Consequently, they devote efforts to improve their English ability. It could also be concluded that as per the sample of Chinese participants in this study abroad ELF context, instrumental motivation emerges as a significant variable to make efforts in learning English. Additionally, information medium is also affected by individual autonomous learning behaviors, which suggests that learner characterized by a higher level of individual autonomy were more likely to display instrumental motivational tendencies.

Furthermore, academic autonomous learning behaviors are predicted by individual and social autonomous learning, which reflects the similar implications to the model (Figure 9), confirming that autonomous learning behaviors in different settings work together to affect the Chinese students to make the efforts to improve English level. Interestingly, academic autonomous learning behavior is also predicted by English media contact, which shows that those students with higher levels of English media contact tended to be more autonomous, as well.

4.4.2 How ID factors affect perceived English proficiency

Research question three found a number of correlations between perceived language proficiency and ID variables. I aim to proceed investigating to what extent the perceived English proficiency is affected by ID predictors. In the following sub-section, I report the results regarding how perceived English proficiency was predicted by ID factors respectively. The order is as follows: (1) Motivation predicting proficiency, (2) Strategies predicting proficiency, (3) Autonomous learning behaviors predicting proficiency and (4) Language contact predicting proficiency. Based on that, in order to create models containing all of the investigated ID variables, I integrated the two motivational frameworks one after the other with learning strategy use, autonomous learning behaviors, and L2 contact as independent variables to predict English proficiency, so as to see which ID factors and scales contributed the most to English proficiency in terms of the Chinese participants in Hungary. Multiple regression analyses with a stepwise approach were conducted to explore how perceived English proficiency is affected in each model. The path analysis is portrayed in Figure 11 and 12.
4.4.2.1 Results

Effects of motivation on perceived English proficiency

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to predict perceived English proficiency based on the L2 Motivational Self System. Choosing perceived English proficiency as the dependent variable and the components of the L2 Motivational Self System as the independent variables, the enter method was used to determine how L2 selves affect language proficiency in a study abroad context. From table 51, it can be seen that perceived English proficiency was significantly affected by the L2 Motivational Self System.

Table 51
Regression Analysis of Motivation Affecting Perceived English Proficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Perceived proficiency</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Perceived proficiency</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideal L2 self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interest</td>
<td></td>
<td>.189</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ought-to L2 self</td>
<td>-.100</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>-.056</td>
<td>.572</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 learning exp.</td>
<td>.198</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>.321</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>-.151</td>
<td>.171</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>.474</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>.331</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.224</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 (adjusted)</td>
<td>.209</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>R2 (adjusted)</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>15.041</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>4.763</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05

Based on the $R^2$ values, the results indicate that the L2 Motivational Self System significantly explained 22.4 percent of the variance for perceived English proficiency ($F = 15.041, p = .000$). In regard to the specific predictors, further analysis illustrates that among the three scales in the motivational L2 self-system, the Ideal L2 Self was the strongest predictor for English learning proficiency (Beta = .373, $p = .000$); in addition, the L2 learning experience was a relatively strong predictor for perceived English proficiency (Beta = .198, $p = .011$); however, the Ought-to L2 Self did not significantly predict perceived English proficiency (Beta = -.100, $p = .170$).

Furthermore, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to predict proficiency based on the four types of motivation. Choosing perceived English proficiency as the dependent variables and the four motivation types as the independent variables, the enter
method was used to determine what motivational types affect language proficiency in the study abroad context. From table 51, it could be seen that perceived language proficiency was significantly affected by the Motivational orientations. Based on the $R^2$ values, the results indicate that the four types of motivation significantly explained 10.9 percent of the variance for perceived English proficiency ($F = 4.763, p = .001$). In regard to the specific predictors, further analysis illustrates that among the four types of motivation, the information medium construct was the strongest predictor for English learning proficiency (Beta = .312, $p = .004$); in addition, intrinsic interest was also a significant predictor for perceived English proficiency (Beta = .189, $p = .034$); however, perceived English proficiency was not significantly predicted by personal development (Beta = -.056, $p = .572$) and social responsibility (Beta = -.151, $p = .171$) in a study abroad context.

**Effects of strategies on perceived English proficiency**

Multiple liner regression analysis was conducted to predict perceived English proficiency based on English learning strategies. Choosing perceived English proficiency as the dependent variable and English learning strategies as the independent variables, the enter method was used to determine what learning strategies affect language proficiency in a study abroad context. From table 52, it could be seen that perceived language proficiency was significantly affected by English learning strategies.

Table 52

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>$p$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
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<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensate</td>
<td>-.053</td>
<td>.547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R$</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.226</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$ (adjusted)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>7.446</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$p$</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$

Based on the $R^2$ values, the results indicate that English learning strategies significantly explained 22.6 percent of the variance for perceived English proficiency ($F = 7.446, p = .000$). When it comes to specific predictors, further analysis illustrated that among the six English learning strategies, social strategies were the strongest predictors for English learning proficiency (Beta = .272, $p = .011$); cognitive strategies were also
relatively strong predictors for perceived English proficiency (Beta = .203, \( p = .039 \)); however, affective strategies negatively affected perceived English proficiency (Beta = -.319, \( p = .001 \)). Nevertheless, perceived English proficiency was not significantly predicted by compensatory (Beta = -.053, \( p = .547 \)) and metacognitive learning strategies (Beta = .072, \( p = .544 \)) in this study abroad context.

**Effects of autonomous behaviors on perceived English proficiency**

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to predict perceived English proficiency based on autonomous learning behaviors. Choosing perceived English proficiency as a dependent variable and autonomous learning behaviors as independent variables, the enter method was used to determine which autonomous learning behaviors affect language proficiency in a study abroad context. From table 53, it can be seen that perceived language proficiency was significantly affected by autonomous learning behaviors. Based on the \( R^2 \) values, the results indicate autonomous learning behaviors significantly explained 26.7 percent of the variance for perceived English proficiency (\( F = 18.932, p = .000 \)). In regard to specific predictors, further analysis illustrates that among the three scales in autonomous learning behaviors, social autonomous learning behaviors were the strongest predictors for English learning proficiency (Beta = .407, \( p = .001 \)); however, perceived English proficiency was not significantly predicted by academic autonomous behaviors (Beta = 183, \( p = .073 \)) and individual autonomous behaviors (Beta = -.049, \( p = .652 \)) in the study abroad context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social autonomous learning behaviors</td>
<td></td>
<td>.407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic autonomous learning behaviors</td>
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<td>.183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual autonomous learning behaviors</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( R )</td>
<td>.517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( R^2 )</td>
<td>.267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( R^2 ) (adjusted)</td>
<td>.253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( F )</td>
<td>18.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( p )</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \( p < .05 \)

**Effects of L2 contact on perceived English proficiency**

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to predict perceived English proficiency based on L2 contact. Choosing perceived English proficiency as the dependent variable and the language contact constructs as independent variables, the enter method
was used to determine how English contact in speaking, writing, and media affect language proficiency in a study abroad context. From table 54, it could be seen that perceived language proficiency was significantly affected by L2 contact. Based on the $R^2$ values, the results indicate that L2 contact significantly explained 28.2 percent of the variance for perceived English proficiency ($F = 20.396, p = .000$). When it comes to specific predictors, further analysis illustrated that among the three constructs of L2 contact, direct L2 spoken contact was the strongest predictor for English learning proficiency (Beta = .231, $p = .035$); L2 media contact was also a significant predictor for perceived English proficiency (Beta = .218, $p = .029$); however, direct written contact did not significantly predict perceived English proficiency (Beta = .142, $p = .207$) in this study abroad context. Moreover, Chinese contact negatively influenced perceived English proficiency (Beta = -.250, $p = .000$).

Table 54

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>$p$</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese contact</td>
<td>-.250</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>L2 written contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 spoken contact</td>
<td>.231</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>L2 media contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>.531</td>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 (adjusted)</td>
<td>.268</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20.396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$P$</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$

**Path analysis of ID variables affecting English proficiency in the model**

First, I chose the L2 Motivational Self System together with strategy use, autonomy, and language contact as predicting variables, and perceived English proficiency as dependent scale. The stepwise method was used to test which ID variables most affect Chinese students’ perceived English proficiency in the model. The level of significance was set for $p < .001$, the results of strength above .20 will be reported. Table 55 shows that, out of all scales, English proficiency was directly and positively affected by autonomous learning behaviors in social settings (Beta = .365, $p = .000$) and English contact in media (Beta = .271, $p = .000$), and negatively influenced by Chinese contact (Beta = -.255, $p = .000$). Furthermore, through path analysis, when I set in turn autonomous learning behaviors in social setting, English contact in media, and Chinese contact as dependent variables, and the others scales of the ID factors as predictive variables, the
results (see Table 56- 58 and Figure 11) demonstrated that autonomous learning behaviors in social settings were significantly predicted by autonomous learning behaviors in individual setting (Beta = .377, p = .000), social learning strategies (Beta = .259, p = .000), autonomous learning behaviors in academic setting (Beta = .254, p = .000), and English written contact (Beta = .191, p = .000). English media contact was significantly positively predicted by English written contact (Beta = .454, p = .000), cognitive learning strategies (Beta = .206, p = .000), English spoken contact (Beta = .248, p = .004). Finally, Chinese contact was significantly predicted by affective learning strategies (Beta = .189, p = .017).

Table 55

Regression Analysis of ID variables Affecting Perceived Proficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social autonomous learning behaviors</td>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>.365</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 media contact</td>
<td></td>
<td>.271</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese contact</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.255</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td>.618</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td></td>
<td>.382</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R2 (adjusted)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.370</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.076</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .001

Table 56

Regression Analysis of ID variables Affecting social autonomous learning behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual autonomous learning behaviors</td>
<td>Social autonomous behaviors</td>
<td>.377</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic autonomous learning behaviors</td>
<td></td>
<td>.254</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English written contact</td>
<td></td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td>.860</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td></td>
<td>.739</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 (adjusted)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.733</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>109.930</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .001

Table 57

Regression Analysis of ID variables Affecting English media contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written contact</td>
<td>English media contact</td>
<td>.454</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

151 / 234
Spoken contact & .248 & .004 \\
Cognitive strategies & .206 & .000 \\
R & .753 \\
R2 & .567 \\
R2 (adjusted) & .559 \\
F & 68.122 \\
P & .000 \\
* *p < .001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Chinese contact</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td>.189</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td>.189</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td></td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.848</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* *p < .001

Table 58
Regression Analysis of ID variables Affecting Chinese contact

Second, when I chose the motivation type framework together with strategy, autonomy, and language contact as predicting variables, regression analyses (see Figure 12) demonstrated the roughly same results as in the case of the L2 Motivational Self System: English proficiency was significantly positively predicted by the autonomous
learning behaviors in social settings and English contact in media, and was negatively influenced by Chinese contact. The only difference was that through further path analysis, when the author set autonomous learning behaviors in social settings, English contact in media, and Chinese contact as dependent variables, and the others scales of the ID factors as predictive variables, the results (see Table 59) demonstrated that Chinese contact was significantly positively predicted by social responsibility motivation type (Beta = .364, \( p = .000 \)) and negatively predicted by memory learning strategies (Beta = -.216, \( p = .012 \)).

Table 59  
**Regression Analysis of ID variables Affecting Chinese contact**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Dependent variable Chinese contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social responsibility</td>
<td>.364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory strategies</td>
<td>-.216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>.329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 (adjusted)</td>
<td>.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>9.506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( P )</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\* \( p < .001 \)

![Diagram](image)

Figure 12 Model (motivation types, strategy, autonomy, and contact) predicting proficiency

**4.4.2.2 Discussion**

In regard to motivation predicting perceived English proficiency, beginning with the L2 Motivational Self System, the results suggest that the ideal L2 self and the L2 learning experience significantly influence English proficiency. This finding is partly consistent with
Liu and Thompson’s (2018) results. The consistent findings are that the ideal L2 self is the most significant influential factor to predict English proficiency; however, the inconsistency is that in the present research the ought-to L2 self did not predict English proficiency, while in Liu and Thompson’s study the ought-to L2 self had a negative effect on English proficiency. This might be explained by the fact that Chinese students in Hungary likely lack anxiety and stress from external pressures, whereas Liu and Thompson argued that participants in China received a high amount of anxiety and pressure from outside expectations from teachers and parents.

Second, in regard to the Motivation types prediction of English proficiency, the results suggest that although motivation types predict perceived English proficiency, the influence was not very strong. Specifically, it was only the intrinsic interest and information medium constructs that influenced perceived English proficiency significantly. This finding partially supports previous findings by Cigliana and Serrano (2016), who argued that students perceived L2 skills were significantly affected by integrative motivation. The present study differs from Cigliana and Serrano (2016) in regard to the significant effect of the information medium construct, which perhaps results from differences in the learning context. EFL is more focused on instrumental motivation, while ESL prefers integrative; ELF, however, is in between them, emphasizing both integrative-based intrinsic interest and the instrumental-based information medium construct. However, personal development and social responsibility could not predict proficiency; these results provided further support for the findings that no significant correlation existed between perceived proficiency and personal development/social responsibility. More importantly, it should be noted that the information medium construct contributed to English proficiency to a stronger degree, which further supports the previous finding regarding the significant correlation between the information medium construct and proficiency. This suggests that Chinese students’ motivation to learn English as a medium of instruction and communication might indeed affect students’ English proficiency level in a study abroad context, where English is used as lingua franca for international students in Hungary.

With regards to learning strategies predicting proficiency, the results suggest that English learning strategies predict perceived language proficiency; however, specifically speaking, only cognitive and social strategies affected English proficiency positively. This means that Chinese students’ frequent use of cognitive and social strategies could result in high English proficiency. This finding is in line with previous findings that frequent use of English strategies can enhance the overall level of English proficiency (Yuan et al., 2004;
Surprisingly, the results showed that affective strategies could negatively influence perceived English proficiency. The reason for this might be that the frequent application of affective strategies probably signals that students have high L2 anxiety, which could in turn lead to low proficiency in English.

When it comes to autonomous learning behaviors predicting proficiency, the results suggest that only autonomous learning behaviors in social settings strongly affect English proficiency. In other words, high autonomous learning behaviors in social settings may contribute to high English proficiency. This is very much in line with the finding that among the strategies, social strategies seemed to be the most influential to perceived language proficiency. This might be the reason that while living and study abroad, Chinese students use English mostly to socialize with their professors, classmates, and international friends.

In regard to language contact predicting perceived English proficiency, the results suggest that overall English contact predicts English proficiency; English spoken contact and media contact can positively affect English proficiency in this context. This suggests that as far as Chinese participants are concerned, their frequent access to spoken and media contact in English contributes to their high perceived English proficiency. This provides support to previous findings arguing that the more contact students make, the more gains they will achieve in language learning (Sigliana & Serrano, 2016; Trentman, 2017; Taguchi, 2008); the finding also supports the positive correlation between L2 contact with spoken performance and listening comprehension. Interestingly, Chinese contact could negatively influence English proficiency, which is understandable in the sense that more frequent access to Chinese language would decrease opportunities to establish contacts in English, which may eventually result in low English proficiency. This is also in line with results found in the correlation analysis of Chinese contact with proficiency, which revealed that Chinese contact negatively correlated with English proficiency. Another possible explanation might be that Chinese students’ lack of confidence and lower level of English proficiency make them establish Chinese contacts and use their mother tongue extensively.

Lastly, in creating a model by path analysis from the ID variables that potentially affect English proficiency in a study abroad context, the results suggest that motivation and strategy use did not act as significant predictors affecting English proficiency; however, autonomous learning behaviors and language contact function as significant contributors influencing English proficiency. This might be explained if motivation and strategies are considered to have been transformed into the actual practices and conducts in students’ autonomous learning as well as language contact.
Surprisingly, the results indicate that autonomous learning behaviors in social settings and English contact in media emerged as important predictive variables affecting English proficiency. This might be due to the fact that in a study abroad context, socialization is a very important factor in influencing English ability, which supports previous research results that socialization in a study abroad context can improve language achievement (Dufon, 2006; Kinginger, 2015; McMeekin, 2017). Meanwhile, social autonomy was significantly predicted by individual autonomous behaviors, academic autonomous behaviors, social strategies, and written contact, which could be interpreted in the following ways: First, autonomous learning behaviors could directly affect language proficiency, and with all three autonomous learning scales working closely together to influence English proficiency. Second, social strategies could result in social autonomous learning behaviors to predict proficiency, which is in line with the previous assumptions that strategies are the prerequisite for autonomous learning in learning English, and in order to increase autonomous learning ability, learning strategies have to be promoted first (Ni, 2010; Wenden, 1991). Third, written contact could also predict social autonomous learning behaviors, which might be due to the fact that students socialize with their foreign classmates or friends in written forms via emails and written messages.

In addition, English contact in media acted as an important factor predicting English proficiency, which indicated that in a study abroad context, Chinese students’ English is mostly improved through media contact such as reading English materials from the Internet, communicating with foreigners online, and watching English movies. Interestingly, just as individual and academic autonomous learning behaviors contributed to social autonomous learning behaviors, English written contact and spoken contact still predicted English media contact, which means that written contact and spoken contact work together with media contact in predicting English proficiency amongst Chinese participants in a study abroad context. Moreover, cognitive learning strategy use also predicted media contact, which is easy to understand since reading English materials from the Internet or watching English movies belongs to cognitive learning processes.

In addition, Chinese contact negatively affected English proficiency in both of the models, which is easy to interpret since less Chinese contact likely means more English contact, which should result in English achievement. Surprisingly, Chinese contact was positively affected by the social responsibility motivation type, and negatively affected by memory strategy use in one of the models, which can be explained by the fact that promoting Chinese culture might urge students to come into contact with the Chinese language to
review facts about Chinese culture in Chinese. Besides, more English memorizations, reflected by memory strategy use, would probably reduce the amount of Chinese access, indirectly affecting English proficiency. However, one unanticipated finding was that in the model of the L2 Motivational Self System, Chinese contact was positively predicted by affective learning strategies, which indicated that when Chinese participant use affective learning strategies to regulate their nervousness in speaking English, that can potentially take the form of Chinese ideas used to relax themselves. Therefore, in view of the model, it is further illustrated that individual differences are complex, intercorrelated, as well as interplaying constructs.
4.5 How did Chinese students perceive changes in their English learning experience after coming to Hungary from China?

The fifth research question aims to trace Chinese students’ different English learning experiences between the at-home and study-abroad context. Through introspective interviews, the selected participants were asked to recall their English learning experiences from the starting point of learning English in China up to their present stay in Hungary. The questions mainly concern their initial motivations to learn English, their English learning strategy use, and their autonomous learning behavior at home as well as in the study abroad context. The qualitative data were analyzed to investigate how Chinese participants’ perceived motivation, strategy use, autonomous learning behavior, and L1 cultural influence have changed since they left home and experienced the study abroad context.

Since the participants had different lengths of education in China and Hungary (for example, some finished their BA in China and came to Hungary to study for their MA and PhD, while others completed high school in China and went to Hungary for BA studies), the participants’ English learning experiences were generally divided into two main phases: at home and abroad. In the at-home context, regardless of the level of education in China, the participants had some common features regarding their English learning experience, which can be described as classroom-based and exam-oriented. English languages courses are compulsory throughout the entire education process in China for the purpose of exams at different phases.

4.5.1 Changes in motivation

Through finding the different motivational dispositions of Chinese students at home and abroad, I intended to understand how motivation fluctuated from the at-home context in China to the study abroad context in Hungary. After coding the emergent themes, it was found that there were a variety of motivational orientations related to the experiences of Chinese participants studying in China and abroad. The results and discussion will be presented below.

4.5.1.1 Motivation in the at-home context

In regard to Chinese students’ motivation to learn English in China, the qualitative data analysis demonstrated that motivational dispositions towards English learning generally resulted from China’s education system, which is focused on achievement in various forms of examination, so as to be admitted by high level educational institutions. Through
analyzing the interview data, four emergent themes appeared which were related to the motivational dispositions of Chinese students studying in China, namely *exam-orientation, parental influence, teachers’ influence*, and *going abroad*.

When Chinese students studied in China, they mostly studied English for the purpose of exam-driven motivation because of the impact of the Chinese education system. The teachers, parents, and schools all pay great attention to the students’ marks in their school subjects. The Chinese Gaokao (National Exam for University Admission) especially has a great influence on every student and every family. Students in primary school tried to do their best to achieve high scores in order to go to a better middle school, while middle school students tried to achieve high performance in order to go to the well-regarded high schools. Most importantly, high school students worked hard to score high marks in order to go to their ideal university. In addition, high schools focused on how many students would be admitted by well-regarded universities: the so-called admission rate of famous universities. The whole education system is focused on exams; therefore, under these circumstances, Chinese students mostly studied English in a similar way to all of their other essential compulsory school subjects, such as mathematics, chemistry, and so on; all they cared about were the exam scores. Therefore, they lacked both the time and awareness to use English for communication, let alone learning English for cultural interest in the L2. For example, Mary explained that “I studied English in China only to achieve a score for the subject, which was my primary motivation to learn. When I had a plan to go abroad, I began to realize that I should speak English a little bit.” David also mentioned that “I had to study English well because it is a compulsory subject and there are exams throughout all the phases of education in China.” However, the data suggested that exam-oriented motivation had a negative influence on students’ interest in English learning. Overall, these results are consistent with previous findings. For example, Shi (1999) proposed that certificate motivation is the most common among Chinese students; in addition, Jiang (2009) also found seven types of motivation among Chinese students, of which exam competition is very important; furthermore, Ma (2005) found that *exam-oriented motivation* has negative effects on learning efforts. Gao et al. (2003) found one of seven motivation types, immediate achievement, which is directly related to exam achievement.

Moreover, I also found that, in China, another important influential factor motivating Chinese students to learn English is parental encouragement or pressure, in particular for those who started to learn English at a very early age. Some parents realized that English is a very important tool in the globalized world; moreover, some parents thought English is a
compulsory subject, taking up a big portion of the total scores in the school curriculum; therefore, parents encourage or push their children to study English. For example, Rob stated that “my parents strongly inspired me to learn foreign languages, when I went back home, my dad would ask me if I had read English today.” Most students did not have any interest or did not even know why they should learn English at an early age, but their parents arranged for them to learn English anyway. For instance, Lucy said that “my mother realized the importance of English; therefore, she urged me to start learning English, and she registered me at an English training class outside school when I was very little. At the very beginning, I was rebellious because I was the youngest in the class; however, later, my mother encouraged me to persist in learning it.” Parental influence was generally prominent when the students were very young: in kindergarten or primary school. However, data suggested that the students who learned English at a very early age as a result of parental influence have more L2 cultural interest to learn English later when they had grown up, which could be perhaps explained by the fact that learning English at the early age would lay a foundation for their future L2 studies, which made them more confident than those who started learning later. These findings could provide further support to the previous findings by You and Dörnyei (2014), in which they highlight the influence of parental expectations in children’s English learning, explaining that when English is directly related to their children’s future career, parents become increasingly interested in good achievement.

Furthermore, another factor was discovered, which is the motivating impact of the teacher. Some participants mentioned that they enjoyed studying English because their English teacher set a positive example for them, so they wanted to become as skilled as their teachers in pronunciation and speaking. For example, Jack mentioned that “my English teacher in primary school liked me very much, and whenever there was an activity related to English, she would encourage me to participate in it, which was a very good opportunity for me to practice my English.” However, other students mentioned they put increased effort into their English studies because their English teacher was very strict with them, and they were afraid of being punished. Anne also said, “When I studied English at a young age in China, I was very much frightened by my strict teacher; however, she spoke very beautiful English, so I wanted to become as good as her.” Regardless of whether students liked their teachers or were afraid of them, the teacher’s influence is shown to be another affecting factor motivating students to learn English in the Chinese context. This might be explained by using Dörnyei’s learning situation level, which emphasized the effects of language teachers. Besides, Gao et al. (2003) identified the learning situation motivation type, which
stresses the influence of teachers in motivating and demotivating students in the English learning process.

It was also found that going abroad was another motivational factor stimulating students’ English learning in China. Some students mentioned that they wanted to study abroad and receive an overseas degree in order to land a better job at an international company in the future; therefore, English was a requirement for them to go abroad. This was a prevailing theme for most participants; for example, Lucy said that she was “perhaps influenced by my parents, when I was very young; I had a dream of going abroad to pursue a better education and broaden my horizon for the future; therefore, learning English well was a prerequisite of studying and living abroad.” However, some participants mentioned that they had a dream of going abroad, but it was very distant. They regarded going abroad as simply an ideal in the future, but in reality, passing the exam was the main priority. For instance, Paul mentioned that “When I was looking for a job after graduating from my university in China, I found that English was very important; therefore, I thought that if I had a good command of English, I would be able to hunt for a better job; meanwhile, getting an overseas degree was also popular in China.” These findings implied that going abroad not only for instrumental purposes, such as getting an oversea degree to be more competitive in work but also for an intrinsic interest in foreign cultures, would be motivating Chinese students to engage in English learning conducts, which are in line with previous findings from Gao et al. (2003) which showed that besides the four motivation types adopted in the quantitative phase of the present dissertation, Gao et al. also found that going abroad was one of the significant motivation types among Chinese students in China.

4.5.1.2 Motivation in the study-abroad context

When it comes to Chinese students’ motivation to learn English in a study abroad context, the analysis of the interview data suggests that motivation to learn English is closely related to the study abroad context itself. Influenced by the change of study context, from AH to SA context, Chinese students shifted their intentions from focusing on achievements in English examinations to concentrating on how to apply English to their academic studies and social communications. Through data analysis, four emergent themes were identified as well, generally showing the Chinese students’ motivational dispositions to English learning when Chinese students studied in Hungary, namely academic influence, cultural interest, travelling, and L2 cultural influence.
The data indicated that when Chinese students came to Hungary, the most influential factor motivating their English learning was the fact that English was used as the medium of instruction (EMI), regarded as academic influence. Most students mentioned that because they liked their major, they wanted to study their major well, and since the major’s subjects were taught in English, they began to enjoy studying English. Some students stated that they had to learn English well because they listen to the lectures in English, communicate academic ideas with professors and peers in English, do homework and team-work projects in English, and read academic literature in English. Later on, they began to enjoy English and felt that English was a part of their major studies. They communicated and socialized with those who do not speak Chinese, and English was used as a Lingua Franca for them to communicate with foreigners whose L1 is not English. In Hungary, they studied English through content-based materials; most participants expressed that learning major subjects through English is beneficial for enhancing English proficiency. These findings are also supported by the results of the quantitative section of the present dissertation, where it was found that information medium motivation was a significant orientation considering the scales of the Chinese motivation types examined. In addition, it was also found that the English learning experience scale of the L2 Motivational Self System – in which participants rated statements about participating in academic programs through English in Hungary – was also an important factor. As for motivation in the study abroad context, the interview data provided the richest information of all the emergent themes: it illustrated that using English as a medium in academic and social settings in Hungary is the most significant motivation in the ELF context. Specifically, academic influence motivation could be manifested by four aspects, including attending lectures in English, reading academic literature in English, doing homework in English, and academic communication in English.

In regard to attending lectures through English, Mary said that “I need to understand the professors’ lecture and communicate with my classmates in English in order to avoid embarrassment for not getting the speakers’ points.” Rose mentioned that “in class, sometimes the teacher would ask some questions, and I would think over how to answer it in a better way through an English expression.” Jack stated, “when I began to study in Hungary, my motivation to learn English was shifted to the academic orientation because I want to settle my issues in my academic program through English.”

In connection with reading academic literature in English, Rose mentioned that “I feel that my difficulty concerning my academic studies is reading literature in English. Although Chinese students’ English is ok, compared with other European students, our ability to read
literature in English is relatively weak.” Kate stated that “Now in Hungary, I not only need basic skills to communicate, but I also need to use English to write academic papers; in order to be able to do that, I was forced to read more academic materials in English.”

In regard to doing homework in English, Rose explained that “what promoted me in English is the homework assigned by the teachers, such as presentations; the next one is doing a team project together with my classmates.” Rob said that “I study English mainly because of the research project I am doing now, and later, my thesis writing also needs better English. I also like learning my program through English.”

In connection with the issue of academic communication through English, Lucy explained that “In Hungary, everything is based on English, and if your English is not good enough, your studies at the program would be damaged. Moreover, I need to discuss a lot of homework and project questions with my classmates. If we weren’t able to express ourselves clearly, we would not be able to reach the purpose of discussion.” Bill said that “Besides attending class, the most time is spent doing research tasks assigned by the supervisor, during which we have to communicate with each other not only about daily issues but also about academic problems.”

The interview data also indicated that studying abroad enhanced students’ motivation regarding cultural aspects of the language as well: when they went abroad, Chinese students gained access to more contact with western cultures, international students, and foreigners from different countries. When they learnt about their culture, politics, architecture, history, and so on, in the case of using English as an international language, Chinese students expressed that they began to enjoy different cultures. For example, Rose said that “After I came to Hungary, I began to feel that some English songs, melodies, and architecture are very unique; therefore, I would research some general information in English.” In this sense, English no longer belongs to the cultures of English-speaking countries only, but to all western cultures, especially European cultures. For example, Tom mentioned that “my interest in learning English gradually increased. In the past, in China, I studied English only for the exam, but now I want to know more foreign cultures, which originated from the living environment.” This could be understood to mean that studying abroad can potentially make students come in contact with international information, which is re-interpreted integrative motivation in a global context (Dörnyei et al., 2006; Kormos & Csizér, 2008). This finding is also consistent with the results achieved from the questionnaire survey, which showed that besides information medium motivation, intrinsic interest was also the obvious motivational disposition among Chinese participants in Hungary.
I found that travelling was also a motivational factor for most Chinese students to study English when they study abroad. This might be due to the fact that by studying in Hungary and holding Schengen visas, students were able to go travelling to European countries freely during the holidays. When they went to different countries, they would search for background information about the destination (such as history, geography, politics, and so on) in English. When they would visit different touristic places, they encountered many travelers from different counties with whom they could exchange feelings of historical attractions with. In addition, they went to restaurants for local flavors or shops for local souvenirs, with the only channel of communication being English. Therefore, some participants mentioned that if they spoke English well, they could go traveling to different countries and understand different cultures. For example, Rob said that “Traveling could also enhance my English; if you go traveling to different places, you chat with different people, exchange different ideas, learn German’s opinions, French opinions...” Anne said stated that “I often go traveling in Europe; for example, when I go to France, or Italy, I would speak English all day long.”

Another interesting finding was that Chinese culture also had a stimulating impact on the students’ motivation to learn English well in the study abroad context. For instance, Kate mentioned that “In order to eliminate prejudice, I feel I need to exhibit our own culture. Although English is not my native language, I can still do a good job in my class. I got this idea when I came here.” Some Chinese students mentioned that they wanted to promote the excellence of traditional Chinese culture to foreign classmates and friends, so they had to study the relevant expressions and explain Chinese culture in a proper way in English. For example, Rose explained that “As a Chinese person, you should be familiar with your own culture. Then if you spoke English well, it means you could be a culture transmitter. When I communicate with foreigners, they would find China very interesting and want to know more about Chinese culture. In this case, we mutually promote our cultures to each other.” In addition, Paul also mentioned that “When communicating with others, I would like to introduce something of which I am proud in Chinese culture. So, I tried to express it in English, which involves many aspects.” With regards to promoting Chinese culture through English, it should be pointed out that L1 cultural influence was quite similar to the social responsibility motivation type in the quantitative section of the present study. As argued in Gao et al. (2003), intrinsic interest is centered on L2 culture, while social responsibility is centered on L1 culture; the L1 cultural influence might be related to aspects of traditional Chinese culture, such as China’s patriotic education, nationalist consciousness, and the role
of English in the nation’s development. Moreover, some students did not want to lose face when they had a discussion with their classmates in the classroom. Since they represent China, they did not want foreigners to think that Chinese students’ English was poor. For example, in connection with earning Chinese reputation and avoiding losing Chinese face, Mary stated that “When I am abroad, especially studying in Hungary, I have to have an idea that I represent my motherland and the Chinese people, so I cannot lose face. I cannot leave my classmates an impression that Chinese people have poor English.” This finding confirmed Magid’s finding about the Chinese concept of “losing face” (as cited in You and Dörnyei, 2014, p. 20).

4.5.1.3 Fluctuation of perceived motivation to learn English

At the end of the interview, each participant was asked to describe a motivation fluctuation graph of their whole English learning experience. Although different participants described different fluctuation trends in detail, in general, they had similar tendencies during four periods of time: primary school, high school, university, and abroad. The high school period was generally reported as the lowest because the Chinese Gaokao pressure had a very negative influence on students’ English learning motivation; when the participants went to university, their motivation slightly increased due to a lack of exam pressure. However, when they went abroad, their motivation increased dramatically because there, English is used as medium of program instruction and as a Lingua Franca to communicate with foreigners of different first languages in Hungary. For example, Jack described that

“When I studied at high school, my motivation to learn English was weak because there was a lot of exam pressure and the teacher at high school was not good; however, when I went to Hungary, my motivation increased to be very strong, because of many reasons, the first being the academic requirement: I have to complete my academic affairs in English; second, I have to get to know different cultures in English and I use English to deal with 90 percent of my affairs here in Hungary.”

4.5.2 Changes in strategies

The qualitative data also showed that the Chinese students adopted very monotonous methods to learn English in China in order to meet the requirements of the exam items. However, when they studied in Hungary, they made use of various learning strategies to improve their English consciously or unconsciously, so as to cope with their daily lives and academic studies abroad. The findings concerning the strategies used by Chinese participants in the two contexts are reported in the following two sections.
4.5.2.1 Learning strategies in the at-home context

The qualitative data indicated that when the participants studied in China, they generally used very limited strategies or tactics of learning, targeting the different levels of exams existing throughout the education process in China. Except for the mid-term and final-term exams, which are organized locally, in each academic year in every level of education, Chinese students must complete important exams organized by the government. For example, middle school students must prepare for the exam for high school admission, which is organized by the provincial government; moreover, high school students need to prepare for the national exam for university admission; furthermore, university students should prepare for the CET 4 (College English Test, Band 4), which is organized by the Ministry of Education. Specifically, most universities set CET4 as the basic requirement for applying for a Bachelor Degree for undergraduate students. If the undergraduate students plan to take part in further education, they should also pass the English subject of the National exam for graduate admission. Because of the influence of exam-oriented education, it was reported that the most frequently used strategy was the memorization of English vocabulary and practicing the exam exercises. The three emergent themes that could be coded based on the interview data are Memorizing English vocabulary, Doing exam exercises, and Taking part in speaking contests.

The qualitative data demonstrated that the most frequently mentioned learning methods are memorizing English words. The majority of participants mentioned that in order to prepare for the exam, they memorized the English vocabulary through reading aloud, copying, and dictation. For example, Lucy mentioned that “because English speaking was not required, I seldom practiced spoken English.” In addition, Tom stated that “Because of coping with exams, all I remembered about learning English was memorizing new words; I neither put them in sentences, nor paid attention to their pronunciation. Leaning English in China means reciting the new words, and the purpose was to deal with the exam. That’s it.” Moreover, Kate also said that “Generally speaking, the whole process of learning English in China was mainly based on vocabulary memorization. As for the writing, I at first recited the sample passages, but I felt it was not suitable for me and easy to forget.” The finding implies that the exam-driven education system encourages Chinese students to devote no time to practicing communicative English but to remember English glossaries for dealing with paper-and-pencil exercises. This similar finding can be compared to Wen’s (2004) results that formal-practicing strategies were frequently employed by Chinese students.
Besides reciting new words, the other learning tactics that were most frequently mentioned were doing exam exercises such as multiple-choice grammar, reading comprehension, and cloze tests. For example, Mary said that “Reading and writing were all related to exams, like reading comprehension.” David stated, “I had to do a lot of exercises and recite new words every day.” Bill explained that “I copied the new words and did a lot of multiple-choice exercises.” When doing these exercises, they never considered whether or not they would use English to communicate with foreigners in the future. This is a typical feature in China’s exam-oriented education.

Additionally, a new finding about students’ learning means in China not reported in previous studies is taking part in speaking contests, which was also common among Chinese students learning English. Some participants who started to learn English at an early age would take part in speaking contests because of either their teachers’ encouragement or their parents’ enhancement. In China, the schools proposed an education concept of “promoting teaching through contest”. Different kinds of contests, such as speaking, writing, debating, interpreting, and different levels of contest, such as the school level, city level, province level, and national level, would be regularly organized. Through preparing for the contest, the learner would improve their English proficiency with the help of an instructor in an intensive period of training, which was also a way to learn English. For example, Jack said that “every year the English song singing contest and English speaking contest improved my English very much.” Moreover, Anne mentioned that “When I was in primary school, I always received the first prize in the English contest in my city. When I was in grade six, I went to other provinces to compete on behalf of my city.” This might be another form of gaining achievement under the influence of exam-oriented education. These three forms of learning are all related to the achievement-driven force in the at-home context, which could be understood in a way that the learning situation to some extent influences the choice of English learning strategies.

4.5.2.2 Learning strategies in the study-abroad context

The interview data showed that there was an obvious variation in English learning strategies when the participants moved from China to Hungary, which means that English leaning strategies could be influenced by the changes of the learning context from classroom-based EFL context to ELF SA context. Without the exam pressure and with access to more opportunities to use English in daily life, what students described showed that the strategies they applied for learning English in a study abroad context are more abundant than in the at-
home context. Students mentioned they no longer memorized new words mechanically as before in China, because of the lack of English exam pressure. They were more likely to learn English in real life through improving their English while learning program courses, communicating with teachers, classmates, and foreign peers, reading academic literature, searching materials in English, and so on. The participants mentioned that the learning strategies they used in Hungary were richer than in China, and the main reason for that was that they put English learning to practical use. Without the pressure of exams, they could learn English in real life situations. The most frequently used strategies were cognitive learning strategies and social strategies; moreover, because students have more opportunities to use English in social and academic settings, compensatory strategies and affective learning strategies were also sometimes employed accordingly. The four emergent themes could be coded based on the interview data analyses, namely Cognitive, Social, Compensatory and Affective.

The data revealed that without the language exam pressure, Chinese students focused on the application of English to their academic studies and to their daily routines in Hungary. In this case, they did not rely on rote memory; however, they used broader methods than memorization; these mainly belong to cognitive learning strategies. For example, Mary said that “I feel that English learning is more authentic here, and my speaking is better than before. I often watch English movies, or English videos online; besides, I read English materials.” In addition, Rose mentioned that “I watch English videos myself, and I will read some books and reading tasks assigned by teachers. The most useful is attending lectures instructed in English. When I come across difficult academic words, I would look them up. I feel that in Hungary, I focus more on application, and I have been reading academic literature.” Tom said, “I no longer memorize vocabulary mechanically; whenever I need, I would use it in a sentence and read it out.” Kate said that “if I read something and found some useful expressions, I would write them down and apply them in daily life.” The finding could be explained by the fact that in the study abroad context, more access to English makes students learn English by using it in their daily lives, which is beyond the narrow memory strategies; therefore, more cognitive strategies were employed in using English. This is in line with the quantitative results of the present dissertation, which showed that cognitive strategies were the most frequently used among Chinese students in Hungary.

Besides cognitive strategies, social strategies are also frequently applied among Chinese students in Hungary. This may be due to the influence of the study abroad context. There are mainly two ways of communications in English: one is academic communication and the
second is social communication. These two kinds of communications in English depend on Chinese students’ use of English as medium of instruction and as a Lingua Franca in Hungary. On the one hand, students need to communicate with their professors and colleagues in connection with their academic issues in English; on the other hand, they have to socialize in English with foreign friends from different countries. Specifically, two subgroups of social strategies in academic communication and social communication are presented below.

As for Academic communication, Jack said that “the most important thing for me is to communicate with my classmates; we often work together on homework or revision for the exams. It is very helpful to explain the exam items to each other because we have to make ourselves understood. Another point is to make presentations in class.” Additionally, Tom mentioned that “the most helpful way to improve English is doing homework projects with teachers and classmates because we have to cooperate with each other and search for the materials by ourselves.” Moreover, Kate stated that “perhaps I have more homework; most of the activities are group discussion on projects face to face or online.” In regard to social communication, Bill said that “whenever I went to a party, I noticed that in the following days, I was quite motivated to speak more and became more talkative.” What is more, Paul mentioned that “I sometimes have a meal together with a classmate, or sometimes I take part in activities organized by international students, for instance, climbing. We would like to get to know each other.” These findings suggest that social learning strategies are somewhat influenced by the study abroad context, which is also supported by the findings of the quantitative study which suggest that social strategies are frequently employed in the study abroad context.

It was also revealed from the interviews that since the students engage in more English communication when studying and living in Hungary, during their communication, they naturally adopt certain compensatory strategies. For example, Lucy mentioned that “when I don’t know how to express something in daily conversation, I make a short hesitation and find a word with similar meaning to replace it.” Rob explained that “I would use a clause to define it if I don’t know the exact word in the discussion.”

Some students mentioned that since they did not pay much attention to spoken English in China, when they came to Hungary, they sometimes became nervous about talking with others in English. In order to prevent this nervousness, they would use affective strategies to overcome it. For example, Lucy said that “in the very beginning, I indeed felt quite nervous when I spoke in English, but I encouraged myself and said 'your English is ok, and try to
pronounce as clearly as possible; you could ask repeat if you did not hear clearly’. Then, I found that my English was not worse than expected.” Moreover, Tom stated that “in order to prevent nervousness, I would make some preparations, write the transcript down and rehearsing it sometimes.”

All in all, the students’ strategy use regarding their English learning in Hungary was improved because of changing the study context. These finding can be supported by previous findings from the qualitative study carried out by Gao (2006). In his research, Gao (2006) found that the shift of context from at home to study abroad resulted in changes in the use of English learning strategies.

4.5.3 Changes in autonomous English learning

As far as autonomous learning is concerned amongst the Chinese participants, it could be found from the interviews that leaners’ autonomous learning in China was relatively weak, as they were expected to simply follow the teachers’ instructions by completing the assigned homework and exercises, which can be regarded as passive learning. Since there was no information stated by the participants in connection with this topic, no emergent themes were found related to the participants’ autonomous learning in China. However, based on what has been reported and discussed in connection with motivation and strategies in the at home context, it could be assumed that Chinese students’ learning autonomy was not strong.

By contrast, through comparative analysis, it could be obviously demonstrated that in Hungary Chinese students behaved more autonomously than they had in China. When they studied in Hungary, they had no specific English language classes dedicated to learning language skills, but they were influenced by the need to learn English as a medium of instruction in academic and lingua franca socialization. Therefore, everything that they did in connection with improving English could be regarded as autonomous learning in academic and social settings, which is seen as positive learning. One student stressed that autonomous learning should be conducted out of class. For example, Kate mentioned that “I feel what the teacher gives you is not enough, because one and a half hours in one class is very limited, you cannot only depend on in-class learning.” Moreover, some students expressed their self-regulated learning plans; for example, Bill stated that “I have clear goals in my study; for example, as for my speaking, I should reach the level of expressing fluently; for writing, I wish I could write up academic papers; for listening, I must understand 95 percent. According these goals, I would put them into my daily life in this context and make every day fully scheduled. Since everything is associated with English, if I only do these
scheduled things, I would practice using English. I tried to avoid using Chinese.” Furthermore, Paul said that “sometimes, if I feel some parts need improving in my daily use of English, I take some time to concentrate on practicing it; for example, this period of time, I improve vocabulary, next time, pronunciation.” This is interesting especially in the light of what has been found out about the role of Chinese contact in the quantitative section of the present study, which was that Chinese contact has a negative influence on English proficiency.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

In the previous chapters, what has been found was discussed in response to the five research questions. In this chapter, conclusions will be drawn from the study. First, the main findings will be summarized briefly, and then based on the findings, pedagogical implications will be put forward. Afterwards, the shortcomings and limitations of the research will be pointed out. Finally, keeping the limitations in mind, directions for future studies in this field will be proposed.

5.1 Main findings of the research

The main aim of the dissertation was to investigate Chinese students in Hungary their ID characteristics from four important dimensions: motivation, strategy, autonomy, as well as English contact in the study abroad context. The results have been detailed in the last chapters, accompanied with discussion. In this section, on the basis of the results in general and in particular, some important, interesting, and surprising findings are summarized according to the five research questions. In view of the findings, the answers to the research questions are highlighted as follows.

5.1.1 Main findings of RQ1

The first research question was aimed at investigating the general characteristics of Chinese students’ English learning motivational dispositions, strategy preferences, autonomous learning behaviours, as well as English language contact at Hungarian universities in a study abroad context. The findings of this research indicate that generally speaking, Chinese students studying in Hungary show a very strong intensity of motivation not only in terms of the ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and L2 learning experience in the L2 Motivational self-system, but also in terms of the four motivation types of intrinsic interest, personal responsibility, information medium, and social responsibility. This finding gives partial support to You and Dörnyei’s (2014) finding suggesting generally favourable motivational dispositions towards English learning. Moreover, the participants relatively frequently applied direct learning strategies and sometimes employ indirect strategies in learning English. The finding is still consistent with previous findings (Li, 2002), which imply that Chinese students prefer using memory, cognitive and compensatory strategies more than metacognitive, affective and social ones; but this finding is also partially consistent with Tam (2013), whose results suggest that memory strategy is the least often
applied among Chinese students in the Hongkong context. Furthermore, the level of their autonomous learning behaviours is relatively high in the three aspects of academic, social, and individual settings. Unexpectedly, this finding is somewhat different from a previous studies (Tan & Zhang, 2015; Ni, 2010), which indicated that Chinese students’ autonomous English learning was not very high. This might be due to the change of learning context from classroom-based at home to content-based abroad. The same reason might also be suitable for explaining the finding that Chinese students studying in Hungary seem to have more English contacts than Chinese ones. The study abroad context makes the participants have more access to English in their daily study and lives. Finally, the perceived English proficiency among Chinese students generally showed intermediate-level English skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

5.1.2 Main findings of RQ2

The second research question is targeted at comparing whether any differences existed across groups of different genders, different lengths of study abroad, different majors, different degree levels, and different levels of perceived English proficiency amongst the Chinese students in Hungary in terms of their English learning motivation, strategy use, autonomous behaviours, and language contact. Many novel findings were revealed from my study: Unexpectedly, gender was only related to the intrinsic interest aspect of motivational scales, which lends support to a previous study (Li et al., 2003; Guo, 2009); however, no difference was found between males and females in instrumental motivation types, learning strategies, autonomous learning behaviours, and language contact, which is inconsistent with previous studies (Si et al., 2005; Li, 2010; Li, 2006). This might be due to the difference in language proficiency and major programs between this study and the previous ones.

Interestingly, the length of study abroad was related to personal development in motivation, autonomous learning behaviours in academic settings, and English contact with media; this finding implied that the students’ personal development motivation would fluctuate during stay abroad, which is proven by the interview data. Surprisingly, the findings revealed that students majoring in different programs have the different social responsibility motivation, memory strategy use, as well as the access to Chinese language, which suggests that Business-related students have stronger motivation towards social responsibility for promoting the Chinese culture; therefore, they would have more access to the mother language in Hungary; while, Science and Engineering students do not prefer using rote memory strategies in learning English, perhaps because of their major influence on study
habits. Importantly, the academic degrees were related to different scales of each variable, specifically, students in higher degree not only show the stronger motivational scales in the ideal L2 Self, personal development, and information medium; but also used strategies more often than lower degree in learning English, such as memory, cognitive, and social, which is in line with previous findings (Liu & Cha, 2010). In addition, the finding also implies that higher degree students display more autonomous behaviours in different settings (academic, social and individual), which supports the findings of Liu and Cha (2009). Furthermore, my new finding of this study suggested that higher degree students grasped more access to English contact via different aspects (speaking, writing and media) than lower ones. Moreover, highly proficient students have stronger ideal L2 self and better L2 learning experience, which is partly confirmatory to Liu and Thompson’ (2018) finding; however, my new finding revealed that more proficient students study English not only for the purpose of intrinsic interest but also for the sake of the information medium, which gives partial support to Gao et al.’s (2003) findings in terms of intrinsic interest motivation types. However, information medium showed a significant difference between different proficiency groups, which might be the effect of the ELF study-abroad context. Moreover, my findings lent further support to the previous results that highly proficient learners used strategies more frequently, displayed more autonomous learning behaviours in academic, social and individual settings, and gained more contact with the English language in terms of speaking, writing, and media in the study abroad context (Cheng et al., 2003; Si et al. 2005; Guo & Zhou, 2007; Wen & Wang, 1996).

5.1.3 Main findings of RQ3

The third research question was aimed to probe into the correlations among English learning motivation, strategy use, autonomous learning behaviors, and language contact of Chinese students studying in Hungary. A lot of findings related to correlations were revealed. With regards to the inner correlation of constructs in each variable, the results revealed that the scales of each variable showed the correlation with each other, which supported the previous argument for the L2 Motivational Self System (Wei, 2013), Motivation Types (Gao et al., 2003), strategies (Xu, 2008); however, I found inconsistent results regarding previous studies in terms of autonomous English learning (Yin & Han, 2014) and language contact (Kormos et al., 2014).

When it comes to correlations amongst ID variables, the findings could be summarized as follows: First, the finding suggested that even though the ideal L2 Self, ought-to L2 Self,
and L2 learning experience were all positively correlated with efforts to learn English, the correlation between ought-to L2 self and efforts was stronger, which is somewhat different from Papi’s (2010) results suggesting that the relationship between ideal L2 self and efforts was stronger. Remarkably, my novel finding suggested that the strongest correlations existed between efforts with information medium and social responsibility, which implied that the more Chinese students are motivated by those two types of motivation, the more efforts they would pay to English learning in Hungary. Second, in regard to correlations between motivation and strategy use, my findings suggested that overall motivation scales were positively correlated with the strategies constructs; more importantly, the participants who had strong information medium and social responsibility would make frequent use of different kinds of learning strategies such as memory, cognitive, social, and metacognitive strategies, which is not in accordance with Wang and Wu’s (2017) finding in terms of information medium with strategy, perhaps due to the fact that using English as medium is a vital motivating factor in Hungarian contexts. Third, concerning the correlation between motivation and autonomous learning, the findings suggested that generally motivation significantly correlated with autonomous learning among this sample; particularly, the participants who had a strong sense of the ideal L2 self appear to study English more autonomously. Interestingly, in this research, my finding also suggested that those who possess strong motivation to learn English as an information medium and for social responsibility have more autonomous behaviors in learning English, which gives support to Ni’s (2010) findings that for Chinese students, instrumental motivation was more correlated with autonomy than integrative one. Fourth, as for the relationship between motivation and language contact, my surprising results suggested that the ought-to L2 self and social responsibility motivation type are coincidently correlated with Chinese contact significantly, which perhaps implied that both the ought-to L2 self and social responsibility are related to expectations from others. It is worth noting that although there is a weak correlation between information medium and English contact, this motivation type correlated with all forms of English contacts. Sixth, when it comes to the correlations between strategy types and autonomous learning, the novel findings of the research implied that relatively autonomous learning behaviors had stronger correlations with Memory and Cognitive strategies in direct learning strategies and social and metacognitive in indirect strategies; moreover, social autonomous learning behaviors had the strongest correlation with social strategies among all correlations, which could be interpreted that in the abroad context, students have more opportunities to socialize with foreigners via English. Seventh, regarding the correlations
between strategies and language contact, the interesting findings suggested that the strongest correlations existed between cognitive strategies and media contact, and social strategies and spoken contact, which is reasonable because reading English materials and watching English videos are all related to cognitive learning processing, and speaking English with foreigners is a form of socialization. Eighth, as regards the correlations between autonomous learning and language contact, the new findings indicated that English contacts in speaking, writing, and media are all correlated with autonomous learning behaviors in academic, social, and individual settings; comparatively, the correlations between autonomous learning behaviors and English contact are relatively stronger than those between English contact with other ID variables. Finally, as per the correlations between perceived English proficiency and ID variables, the findings revealed that generally speaking, the perceived English proficiency correlated with all individual difference factors, which mostly supported previous findings, for example, concerning L2 self system (Ueki & Takeuchi, 2015), strategies (Wen & Wang, 1996; Jiang, 2003; Yuan et al., 2004; Shang & Wang, 2010; Liu, 2010), autonomy (Wang, 2002; Wu & Zhang, 2009), and L2 contact (Briggs, 2015; Magnan & Back, 2007; Trentman, 2017). Most importantly, my new finding reflected that perceived English proficiency had stronger correlations with autonomous learning behaviors and L2 contact than with motivation and strategies. This might be the reason why autonomous learning behaviors and English contact function more directly in the process of English learning.

5.1.4 Main findings of RQ4

The fourth research question aimed to investigate in depth how ID variables affect English learning efforts and perceived English proficiency, and which scales of ID variables can significantly predict efforts and English proficiency in the model of path analysis. There appeared some expected findings, as well as some unexpected ones: First, when it comes to how motivation predicts English learning efforts, it was revealed that both motivational frameworks could predict the efforts paid to learn English amongst Chinese students in Hungary; to start with, the ideal L2 self, Ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience all significantly influence the efforts, which corresponds with previous findings (Li, 2014; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Kormos & Csizér, 2008); however, the slightly different point from the previous studies was that in my research, the ought-to L2 self affected the effort to the strongest degree. As per motivation types, the interesting findings suggested that only information medium and social responsibility contributed significantly to efforts to learn
English. These findings indicated the unique features regarding using English as academic and lingua franca in non-English speaking countries.

Furthermore, when I subsequently conducted a path analysis of ID variables together predicting efforts in the model, the findings revealed that ought-to L2 self, metacognitive strategy, and autonomous learning behaviors in individual settings merged as influential predictor to English learning efforts in the model with Dörnyei’s L2 Self System included. What is more, the in-depth path analysis further revealed that metacognitive strategies were affected by affective, social, and memory strategies, which implied that self-regulating strategies were very important for the participants in SA context, and indirect strategies can work together to affect students’ effort to learn English. Moreover, the model with Chinese motivation types framework showed somewhat different results from Dörnyei’s model, which suggested that information medium and autonomous learning behaviors in academic settings turned out to be the significant contributors to predict English learning efforts. This finding implied that using English as medium of instruction in academic settings could contribute to students’ efforts to learn English. However, the subsequent path analysis further demonstrated that information medium motivation was further predicted by social responsibility, personal development and individual autonomous behaviors. The interesting findings suggested that two models with two motivational frameworks co-testify that Chinese students are more likely to be influenced to pay English learning efforts by instrumental-related motivation, either from expectations of their motherland or family, or from the pressure of learning their academic programs via English as academic lingua franca. Most importantly, the common ground in two models suggested autonomous learning behaviors in three settings merged as important predictors working together to contribute to Chinese students paying efforts to learn English in the study abroad context.

Second, with regards to how proficiency was respectively affected by the individual difference variables, the findings showed that as for Dörnyei’s motivational self system, the ideal L2 self and the L2 learning experience significantly influenced English proficiency, which gave partial support to Liu and Thompson’s (2018) findings. Moreover, in Chinese motivation types framework, intrinsic interest and information medium could contribute to perceived English proficiency significantly; more importantly, information medium contributed to English proficiency at a stronger degree level. This finding implied that motivation to learn English as lingua franca in instruction and communication could indeed affect Chinese students’ English proficiency. As per strategy, only cognitive and social strategies could positively affect English proficiency, which is in agreement with previous
findings (Yuan et al., 2004; Liu, 2010; Zhang et al., 2013); surprisingly, affective strategies negatively influenced perceived English proficiency, which perhaps suggested that using affective strategies means high English anxiety, which leads to low proficiency. The finding also suggested that only autonomous leaning behaviors in social settings strongly affected English proficiency, which might be explained by previous findings implying that social strategies seemed to be the most influential predictor to proficiency. This might be the reason why the participants mostly socialized with their teachers, peers and international friends. As for English contact scales, the findings indicated that English spoken contact and media contact could positively affect English proficiency in this context, which supports the results of previous studies (Sigliana & Serrano, 2016; Trentman, 2017; Taguchi, 2008); interestingly, Chinese contact appears to negatively influence English proficiency.

Finally, when I subsequently conducted a path analysis of ID variables together predicting proficiency in the model, my unexpected findings reflected that in both models with Dörnyei’s Self System and motivation types framework, motivation and strategy use did not act as significant predictors affecting English proficiency; however, autonomous learning behaviors and language contact function as significant contributors influencing English proficiency. This finding might be understood in a way that students’ motivation and strategies are likely to be transformed into actual behaviors and actions through their autonomous learning and L2 contacts. Surprisingly, social autonomous learning behaviors and media English contact merged as significant predictors in the model. When I used these two scales as dependent variable, and others as independent variables, the in-depth path analysis further revealed that social autonomous learning behaviors were further affected by individual and academic autonomous learning behaviors, and media contact was further affected by English written and spoken contact respectively. These findings implied that in terms of actual English proficiency, the scales in either autonomous learning behaviors or language contacts are more likely to work together to directly influence the improvement of English levels. Most importantly, social autonomous learning behaviors was also affected social strategies; in addition, media contact was also influenced by cognitive strategies. This implied that social strategies are the preconditions for social autonomous learning behaviors, and reading materials from the internet is related to cognitive learning.

5.1.5 Main findings of RQ5

The fifth research question aimed to trace Chinese students’ different English learning experiences between the at-home and study-abroad context. The findings from the
qualitative data revealed the dynamic features of the individual difference factors of Chinese students studying at Hungarian universities. Overall, as far as the whole English learning experience is concerned, there indeed existed fluctuations in English learning motivations, English learning strategies, and learning autonomy. Specifically speaking, Chinese students were mainly motivated by the exam-oriented system to learn English in China whereas in Hungary, they are primarily motivated by their academic program studies to use English as medium of instruction in Hungary. It was agreed on among the participants that studying English-instructed programs would be more beneficial to improve students’ English language proficiency in the study abroad context than the exam-oriented motivation in the at-home context, because they felt that they integrated language learning with their major studies. In addition, when students went to Hungary, their motivation of cultural interest increased as well, due to the influence of more contact with foreigners and travelling in different European countries. Furthermore, the participants were found to use more English learning strategies in Hungary than in China. Moreover, the Chinese students became more autonomous in English learning behaviors in the SA context than in the AH context. One more interesting finding was that those who started to learn English at a very early age were more inclined to have cultural interest motivation, and those who had a successful English experience in the past did not find much improvement in the ELF context because they felt they did not improve much while communicating with other non-English native speakers.

5.2 Implications of the research

The findings of this dissertation could make potential contributions towards filling in gaps in certain fields of research. In addition, the findings also highlight some theoretical and practical implications for future researchers, English learners, and English instructors.

First, the results of the present dissertation will provide pedagogical implications to Chinese researchers who study English for Specific Purposes in China’s EFL context, as the research would provide them with useful data for reference regarding Chinese students’ motivation to learn English, learning strategy use, and autonomous learning behaviors in a study abroad context, where English is used as lingua franca in non-English speaking countries. What is more, the findings can also be helpful in proposing a new perspective and area of research for those who investigate individual differences in the settings of English-medium Instruction (EMI), Content-based Instruction (CBI), and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). In addition, this research also provides new data for reference
to those who comparatively study individual differences in a study abroad context, where English is used as a second language.

Second, the findings of this dissertation are meaningful to overseas students, especially Chinese students, who study by means of English as a medium of instruction and academic lingua franca. If students are aware of which motivation they possess and which strategies are beneficial, it can benefit them in training and improving their motivational strategies, strategy application, and autonomous learning ability in academic and social settings when they go abroad for studies.

Third, the findings of the present dissertation provide a clear framework through which English teachers can understand the characteristics of their students’ motivational dispositions to learn English, the language learning strategies preferred by them, and how they behave in autonomous learning. Through knowing these features of the language learners, the teachers would know how to conduct teaching activities for students with different motivational dispositions and English learning strategy preferences, so as to better cultivate students’ autonomous learning ability in the process of English learning.

5.3 Limitations of the research

Although the findings of the present study are linked to the research questions, and also made contributions towards theoretical and practical implications, the shortcomings and limitations of the research should not be ignored either. Looking back at the research, there indeed exist certain limitations in some aspects which should be pinpointed here, so that future research can be improved by learning from them.

The first limitation concerns the research sample. Although the makeup of the sample may be representative of the whole population of Chinese students in Hungary, the number of students could have been larger as a larger sample size can produce more generalizable results.

Second, there are also limitations in connection with the research methods. Although I adopted quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the research questions, a longitudinal study might have been more appropriate in certain respects, especially regarding detecting changes in the constructs over time. However, it is also very difficult to contact the same participants at different times over a long cycle of research. If a relatively fixed sample is willing to cooperate with the researcher, it would be more beneficial to explore the dynamic characteristics of motivation fluctuations, strategy changes, and autonomous learning variations in a study abroad context. This is especially true if the participants are
willing to join a longitudinal study; language contact could be recorded more precisely by amount of hours to better reflect the relationship between L2 contact and ID variables.

Third, some limitations still lie in the research instrument. Although I tried my best to revise the instrument to adapt it to the learning context, there is still some room for improvement. For example, the results demonstrated that information medium motivation is a significant orientation among Chinese students because of the influence of the study abroad context, where English is used as medium of instruction and a Lingua Franca. However, some specific items could have been added to better illustrate their motivation to learn English as a Lingua Franca in the information medium scale and in the L2 learning experience constructs.

Fourth, a final limitation is also related to the research perspective. In this research, I adopted perceived English proficiency as a variable to investigate the relationship between ID factors and language achievement. However, perceived English proficiency is a self-reported result, which might not be objectively assessed by some participants. Therefore, if official standard scores, such as IELTS, TEFOL, CET, could have been reported by all participants, the results would be more persuasive.

5.4 Suggestions for the future research

Based on the lessons learnt from the research limitations, future research might concentrate on the following aspect: First, the research scope could be broadened from Chinese to all international students who speak different languages, but all use English as an academic Lingua Franca in content-based learning contexts in different non-English speaking countries; these participants could be investigated in terms of their motivation, strategy use, autonomy, and English contact. Second, a comparative study could be conducted to investigate the differences in students’ motivation, strategy use, and learning autonomy between the study abroad contexts of English as a Second Language and English as a Lingua Franca. Third, English achievement is affected by many individual difference factors; therefore, more ID variables should be taken into account. However, if too many factors are investigated in a project, it might lead to feasibility problems. In recent years, the Dynamic System Theory (DST) was recommended for individual differences research (Cui, 2016; Dörnyei, 2015); hence, future research might just as well conduct a comprehensive empirical study on those relevant ID variables on the basis of the Dynamic System Theory to probe into the correlations amongst different variables as well as English achievement in a longitudinal research project.
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Appendix A Quantitative study questionnaire

Questionnaire for English Learning ID variables of Chinese students in Hungary

I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following questions in a survey conducted for my PhD dissertation research to better understand English Learning ID variables of Chinese students in Hungary. This questionnaire is not a test so there are no “right” or “wrong” answers and you do not even have to write your name on it. We are interested in your personal opinion. The results of this survey will be used only for research purposes so please give your answers sincerely, as only this will ensure the success of this project. Thank you very much for your help!

**Part A** In this part, I would like you to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements by clicking a number from 1. to 5. Please do not leave out any items.

1. **Strongly Disagree** 2. **Disagree** 3. **Uncertain** 4. **Agree** 5. **Strongly Agree**

### L2 Motivational Self System

#### Ideal L2 self

I can imagine myself speaking English in the future with foreign friends at parties.

I can imagine myself in the future giving an English speech successfully to the public.

I can imagine a situation where I am working with foreigners by speaking English.

I can imagine that in the future in a cafe with light music, a foreign friend and I will be chatting in English casually over a cup of coffee.

I can imagine myself in the future having a discussion with foreign friends in English.

#### Ought-to L2 Self

My parents/family believe that I must study English to be an educated person.

Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of my teachers.

Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of the society.

Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of my peers and friends.

I consider learning English important because the people I respect think that I should do it.

Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of my relatives.

### English Learning experience

I like it that via studying my chosen field of study in English in Hungary, my command of English improves.

I like the challenges that being instructed in English at a Hungarian university pose.

Being able to study my university subjects in English really appeals to me.

Conducting my studies in English at a Hungarian university is a disheartening experience.

Having to take my courses in English makes me less successful in my field.

I like English less since I started studying at my Hungarian university.
Motivation Types

Intrinsic Interest
I learn English because I am interested in people and the culture of English speaking countries.
I like English-speaking films.
I really like the music of English-speaking countries.
I like the literature of English-speaking countries.
I learn English in order better to integrate into the global community.

Personal development
Speaking English well would make me feel a sense of achievement.
If I study English well, I will get a better job in the future.
English is a very significant key to a successful life.
Speaking good English is a sign of an educated and civilized person.

Information Medium
My purpose of learning English is to study other subjects better.
My purpose of learning English is to get to know the developments of economy and technology of other countries in the world.
I learn English in order that I can easily communicate with foreigners.
English is very important to me because it is the communicative tool in today’s society.
I learn English in order to make more friends with foreigners.

Social Responsibility
I study English because I want to make China known to the world.
Mastery of English could make me contribute to the prosperity of China.
I study English because I want to spread Chinese culture to foreigners.
My good command of English will create a better impression of Chinese people in foreigners.
Mastery of English could make me live up to my parents’ expectations.

Attitude to learning English
I really like the actual process of learning English.
I find learning English really interesting.
I think time passes faster while studying English.
I really enjoy learning English.

Efforts
I expend a lot of efforts on learning English.
I spend lots of time studying English.
I concentrate on studying English more than any on other subjects.
Even if I am not satisfied with my current level of English, I would continue to put efforts into it.
I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.

**Autonomous learning behaviors**

**(Academic subscales)**

During my stay in Hungary, I frequently check the university’s English language website about educational offers.
During my stay in Hungary, I am in touch with the foreign student coordinator.
During my stay in Hungary, I use the internet to find materials for the courses that I take in English.
During my stay in Hungary, I try to improve my academic English as much as possible.

**(Social subscales)**

During my stay in Hungary, I look for opportunities to engage in conversation to develop my English skills.
During my stay in Hungary, I ask my English-speaking friends online to help me manage my everyday affairs.
During my stay in Hungary, I am in touch online (e.g., through Facebook) with other foreign students.
During my stay in Hungary, I try to socialize with local people using English.

**(Individual subscales)**

During my stay in Hungary, I use the Internet to find programs/events/trips I am interested in.
During my stay in Hungary, I read blogs/watch videos about the habits and ways of life of the people in the country I am staying in in English.
During my stay in Hungary, I try to handle everyday problems by myself using English.
During my stay in Hungary, I try to improve those aspects of my English knowledge that allow me to handle everyday problems.

Part B *In this part, please answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements.*

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

Strategies

Memory
I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.
I use rhymes to remember new English words.
I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.
I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.

Cognitive Strategies
I say or write new English words several times.
I practice the sounds of English.
I watch English-speaking TV shows and movies.
I read for pleasure in English.
I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.
When I write or speak something in English, I first think it over in Chinese in my mind, then translate or interpret it into English.

Compensatory strategies
To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.
When I cannot think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.
I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.
When I cannot think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

Affective strategies
I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.
I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.
I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.
I notice it if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.

Social strategies
I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.
If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.
I practice English with other students.
I ask for help from English speakers.
I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

**Meta-cognitive strategy use**
I have clear goals for improving my English skills.
I notice my English mistakes and I use that information to help me do better.
I try to find out better ways to improve my English.
I think about my progress in learning English.
I plan my schedule so that I have enough time to study English.

**Part C. In this part, please answer according to the frequency.**

1. **fewer than once a month**
2. **several times a month at least once a month**
3. **almost every week**
4. **several times a week**
5. **almost every day.**

**Contact in Study Abroad context**

**English Spoken Contact**
How often do you talk with your teachers or classmates in class at university in English?
How often do you talk with your teachers or classmates out of class in English?
How often do you communicate with the university staffs (secretary or coordinator) in English at my university?
How often do you speak English with people living in my neighborhood?
How often do you speak English with your foreign friends?
How often do you speak English when traveling in Hungary or in other foreign countries?
How often do you go shopping to talk with shop-assistants in English?
How often do you participate in parties or activities to socialize with foreigners in English?

**English Written Contact**
How often do you write emails to teachers, executive staffs or classmates about my study issues in English?
How often do you write longer academic texts like homework/reports/essays in English?
How often do you chat online with foreigners in English?

**English Media Contact**
How often do you read books/materials in English for academic purposes?
How often do you use the internet to find English materials for the courses that you take?
How often do you check the university’s website about education offers?

How often do you watch English-speaking films?

How often do you read Internet websites in English?

**Chinese Contact**

How often do you talk to your Chinese friends in Chinese in Hungary?

How often do you attend social events in Hungary where the language of communication is Chinese?

How often do you go to Chinese shops in Hungary and use Chinese with the shop assistants?

How often do you talk to your Chinese colleagues at your Hungarian university in Chinese?

*Please provide the following information or write your response in the space provided to help us better interpret your previous answers.*

**Personal Information**

Gender (male, female)

Age

Year of coming (2018 intake, 2017 intake, 2016 intake, 2015 intake)

Programs (Humanities and Arts, Science, Engineering, Agricultural, Medical, Business and Management, Linguistics)

Degree level (Preparatory, BA, MA, PhD)

Starting time of English learning (from kindergarten, from Primary school, from junior high school)

University entrance exam for English score (above 140, above 130, above 120, above 110, above 96, below 96)

IELTS scores (7.5, 7, 6.5, 6, 5.5, 5, below 5)

When I listen to people speaking English,

(1) I do not understand at all what I listen to.

(2) I understand very little of what I listen to.

(3) I more or less understand what I listen to.

(4) I mostly understand what I listen to.

(5) I fully understand what I listen to.

When I communicate with people in English,

(1) I cannot express my ideas at all in speech.

(2) I can express my ideas with limited words/expressions in speech.
(3) I can only express my ideas in broken sentences, but I can basically communicate with others in speech.

(4) I can express my ideas mostly without any problems in speech.

(5) I can express whatever I want to say accurately and fluently in speech.

When I read in English,

(1) I do not understand at all what I read.

(2) I understand very little of what I read.

(3) I more or less understand what I read.

(4) I mostly understand what I read.

(5) I fully understanding what I read.

When I write in English,

(1) I cannot express my ideas at all in writing.

(2) I can express my ideas with limited words/expressions in writing.

(3) I can only express my ideas in broken sentences, but I can basically communicate with others in writing.

(4) I can express my ideas mostly without problems in writing.

(5) I can express whatever I want to say accurately in writing.

Do you attend English language class? Yes or No

Age?

Are you willing to attend Interview later on? If yes, please leave your email; if not, please ignore this item.

By submitting this questionnaire, I agree that my answers, which I have given voluntarily, can be used anonymously for research purposes. Thank you again for your cooperation!
Appendix B Interview outline

Outline of Interview Questions

1. Questions about background
1) When did you start to learn English and how did you learn at that time?
2) How do you feel about your English learning experience in China (in primary school/in secondary school/in high school/at the university)?
3) Before coming to Hungary, what was your attitude toward English, English-speaking people and English-speaking countries in general?
4) What were your parents' opinions about English learning and English-speaking people? Did they encourage you to learn English?
5) Before coming to Hungary, how many years have you studied English?
6) Have you spent time in a foreign country before? If so, specify where, when and for how long?
7) What is your expectation before coming to Hungary? How you changed during your stay?
8) Do you attend an English language course now? If so, how many hours per week do you attend this English language class?
9) How many hours per week do you attend classes taught in English (not including English language classes)?
10) On average, how many hours per day do you use English to communicate with others in Hungary? Who do you use it with and for what purposes?
11) How many hours per day do you use Chinese to communicate with friends/family in China via WeChat, Skype, phone calls, messaging, etc.?
12) Why did you decide to study in Hungary?
13) What did you hope to accomplish by living and studying in Hungary? What were your personal, cultural, linguistic, academic, and professional goals?
14) Provide some details about your initial motivations for participating in a study abroad program in Hungary.

2. Questions about learning strategy
Before
1) When you studied in China, how did you learn English generally?
2) What did you do to improve your listening, speaking, reading, and writing?
3) When you started to learn English, how did you learn the language (e.g. in class, English training camps, through travel/study abroad)?
4) Did you enjoy your English learning experiences? What learning experience contributed to your motivation to learn the language?
Now
5) When you are studying in Hungary now, in what ways do you usually improve your English?
6) How are you now improving your listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English?
7) How do you learn English in class in Hungary? What is the most effective learning method for you?
8) How do you learn English out of class in Hungary? What is the most effective learning method for you?
9) What would you recommend to a Chinese student who is about to come to Hungary?

Difference and changes
10) What are the differences in your English learning methods in China and in Hungary? What affects these changes? Why did you change the strategies?
11) What are significant differences in learning English here and home? (In terms of classroom activities, home tasks, examination method, learning environment). What are most significant to you as a learner?
12) Do you enjoy learning here? If not, what might be factors that stop you from enjoying it?

**Concrete strategies**
13) What are your clear plans for English learning and how do you implement them?
14) What will you do when you feel nervous or anxious in learning English?
15) What will you do when you meet some difficulties in your learning?

3. Questions about motivation

**Before**
1) When you studied in China, what was the major purpose or goal for you to learn English?
2) Why did you learn English? What was the most important factor? How would you describe your motivation for English learning?

**Now**
3) What is the major purpose or goal for you to learn English now in Hungary?
4) When you are studying in Hungary now, what encourages you to go on learning English?

**Difference and changes**
5) What are the differences in your English learning motivation in China and in Hungary? What affects these changes?
6) What motivates you to improve your English in Hungary? How would you describe your current motivation to learn the language? How has your motivation changed since you moved to Hungary?
7) To what extent do you consider English as a survival tool in Hungary? How does this influence your motivation?
8) Which tasks do you find the most motivating in your program and why?
9) In what areas do you think your English should be improved to perform tasks better?

4. Questions about experience in learning and living in the abroad context

**Before**
1) How does the experience of studying in Hungary affect your English learning?
2) Can you tell me about a particular experience that affected your English learning in a positive way?
3) Is it helpful for you to improve your English in studying abroad in a non-English speaking country by using English as a lingua franca? If yes, in what ways do you improve your English? If not, why?

**Social development**
4) What language do you now use most of the time (Academic/Social/Internet entertainment)? Is your language use in Hungary similar to your previous expectations?

**Academic development**
5) Before coming to Hungary, who did you socialize with most often? What language did you use with your friends?
6) Who do you socialize with most often now? Where are your friends from?
7) Does your social circle encourage you to use and improve your English? What do you think has helped you to learn English the most since you arrived in Hungary (i.e. An event, activity, experience, friend, teacher, etc.)? Mention one or two things:
8) Have you scheduled or joined any activity/group outside of regular university courses which would allow you to interact more with the English-speaking community? (i.e. Playing a sport, joining a choir, part time work, dance classes, joining a gym, etc.)
9) What have you found to be the most challenging in adjusting to the academic environment? What strategies have you used to cope?
10) How important are good English skills for your academic success at the University? Has its importance motivated you to improve your English?

**Intercultural adjustment**
11) How well have you adapted to life in Hungary? What strategies have you used to deal with culture shock/homesickness?
12) What role do good English skills play in your adaptation to life in Hungary?
13) To what extent did you want to get to know and understand people from other parts of the world? How did it influence your motivation for English learning?

**Identity**
14) Does living in Hungary make you think more about your identity? How do you prefer to identify yourself in Hungary and when you go back to China?
15) How has your identity influenced your attitude toward English?