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Motivation for Learning Spanish as a Foreign Language: The Case of Chinese L1 Speakers at University Level

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Abstract. The study of motivation based on non-English languages has attracted increasing attention in recent years, but related research in China is still limited. In an attempt to address this situation and with Dörnyei's *L2 Motivational Self System* (L2MSS) as a framework, this paper studied seventeen Chinese university students' motivational disposition to learn Spanish as their university major without abandoning their English study. Based on Q-methodology and complementary interviews, the results of our experiment showed that these Chinese students displayed two types of foreign-language learning motivation, one being "Multilingual group with an English orientation", and the other "Strong Spanish". The first group, profoundly influenced by their *ideal L2 selves,* had a strong motivation to learn English instead of Spanish, while the second group learned Spanish with a motivation closely related to their *ought-to L2 selves*. A variety of analyses were applied to answer questions pertaining to group differences and students' attitudes towards Spanish and English learning mediated by individual, educational, and social factors.

Keywords: Motivation, Spanish learning, China, English, L2MSS

[zh] 西班牙语作为外语的学习动机研究：以中国大学生为例

摘要： 近年来，语言学界对非英语习得动机的关注越来越多，但在中国相关领域的研究仍然很有限。本研究以 Dörnyei 提出的二语动机自我系统（L2MSS）为理论框架，基于 Q 方法和补充性访谈，对 17 名以英语为二语以西班牙语为专业（L3）学习的中国大学生开展动机实验调查。研究结果表明，这些学生主要表现出两种外语学习动机类型：一种是"以英语为主导的多语学习动机组"，另一种是"强西班牙语学习动机组"。第一组学生受到理想二语自我的深刻影响，虽身为西班牙语专业学生，却仍有着强烈的英语学习动机，而第二组学生学习西班牙语的动机则与它们的应该二语自我密切相关。我们通过分析本实验结果试图回答中国学生因不同的个人、教育和社会因素影响有着怎样的西班牙语和英语学习动机这一问题。

关键词： 动机、西班牙语学习、中国、英语、二语动机自我系统

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1. Introduction

The political-economic relationship between China and the Hispanic world, especially Latin America, has been developing in recent years, leading to an increase in the demand for people who speak Spanish in China, and to an increasing awareness of the meaning and value of the Spanish language as an asset and resource in the labor market (González Puy, 2006). As a result, the teaching and learning of this language in China have undergone a remarkable boom in the past two decades. Currently, according to Zheng (2015), there are more than fifty thousand students who have chosen Spanish as a foreign language in China. In addition, the report of the 5th symposium on "Teaching Spanish in China", held in Beijing from July 15 to 21, 2018, indicates that the number of Chinese universities with Spanish departments exceeds 90. It seems that there is a burgeoning number of Chinese people who are concerned about learning Spanish.

It is widely acknowledged that the majority of Chinese students, Spanish-major university students in particular, have already acquired enough knowledge of English prior to approaching the Spanish language due to the globalization of English as a lingua franca (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006). Both secondary and tertiary school students attach great significance to English, not only because it is compulsory for the National College Entrance Examination, but also because it represents an effective tool with which they can get a better job in the future (Feng, 2009; Pan & Block, 2011). According to data collected by Wei and Su (2012), among the 416 million Chinese students of foreign languages, 94.6% chose English, suggesting that this is undoubtedly the dominant foreign language in Chinese society. Taking account of this clear tendency towards the study of English, it is curious that there is a group of students who choose Spanish as a foreign language and even as a university major, so it will be interesting to find out why they want to learn this language.

It is known that motivation is an important factor that affects both process and results in the acquisition of foreign languages. Thus, motivation is not only the initial impulse of the students to begin their study, but also the driving force that accompanies them all the way to acquire a new language.

After reviewing motivational studies from the last decade, it may be observed that 70% of them have been carried out in contexts where English is the object language (Boo, Dörnyei, & Ryan, 2015). Although there exists some research on motivation and attitudes for the acquisition of languages other than English (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005a, 2005b; Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Henry, 2010, 2011, 2014; Cabau-Lampa, 2007), most of these have taken Europe or the

United States as the context for learning. In terms of other parts of the world—for example, China—it is still largely unknown why there are students who want to learn foreign languages other than English (bearing in mind that this is an "English-dominant" society because of the globalization era that we live in), and how their attitudinal and motivational dispositions operate during the process of acquisition.

Therefore, based on the "L2 Motivational Self System" (L2MSS) developed by Dörnyei (2005), this study attempts to reveal the motivations of these students and analyzes how their individual, educational, and social backgrounds may have influenced those motivations. It is also necessary to understand such issues because current theories on foreign language acquisition might be completed and perfected with data about different languages in different social and cultural contexts.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Motivation in Foreign Language Acquisition and the L2 Motivational Self System

In the last decade, the study of motivation has gained a good deal of attention in the field of second language (L2) acquisition. Motivation refers to the direction and magnitude of human behavior, including the choice of a concrete action, and the persistence and effort devoted to it (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003). Meanwhile, the socio-educational model proposed by Gardner and colleagues studies motivation from a socio-psychological perspective. They point out that learners' integrative attitudes and their contact with the target language's society affect their motivation, which directly impacts acquisition efficiency (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985). However, more recently the concept of integrative motivation has been questioned, since many L2 learners have neither opportunities to interact in a direct and profound way with the native speakers of the target language, nor a strong desire to integrate in their society (Dörnyei, 1994). Also, many linguists say that this proposal no longer accurately reflects the reasons why students learn English, because with the influence of globalization English has ceased to be a language that only relates to the English ethnic group, land, and culture. Rather, it has become a language of the international community (e.g. Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005a, 2005b; Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011; Lamb, 2004; Yashima, 2009; Graddol, 2006; Jenkins, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2011).

Considering these limitations, Dörnyei and colleagues (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009) proposed a new framework based on the concept of the "self". Known as the "L2 Motivational Self System", it may be used to find the incentives for learning an L2 in learners' self-images.

In this system, motivation is considered as a desire of the student to reduce the discrepancy between his possible self-guides formed by "the ideal L2 self", "the ought-to L2 self", and "the real self". Thus, motivation consists of three levels: (1) "the ideal L2 self", which refers to the internal part of the learner related to L2 to

realize the "ideal self", and covers cultural interest, integrative orientation and the instruments for improvement; (2) "the ought-to L2 self", which deals with the traits that a learner should have to meet the expectations of others or to avoid negative results, usually related to instrumental motivation; and (3) "the L2 learning experience", which consists of the motivation associated with the specific learning situation itself—that is, the immediate environment (the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, etc.). In brief, students' self-images are subject to influence by various factors, and also to their interaction with the sociocultural environment (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

The "L2 Motivational Self System" has already been applied to many studies carried out in different linguistic and cultural contexts, although the majority have focused on studying the motivation and self-identity of learners who are learning English as their foreign language. Since English occupies a dominant position in empirical exploration and the theoretical analysis of motivation for L2, other languages are less analyzed (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2017). However, there are also studies that explore the motivation of students who simultaneously learn two or more foreign languages—for example, in Hungary (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005a, 2005b; Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006), Sweden (Henry, 2010, 2011, 2014, 2015) ,and Austria (Mercer, 2011a, 2011b). These studies reflect the fact that English can work as a normative reference, exerting a negative influence on other languages due to the excessive dedication and resources that students expend in learning it.

2.2. Empirical Studies on Foreign Language Acquisition: Cases in Asian contexts

It may be noted that the theories with which linguists try to describe or understand L2 motivation have been developed mainly outside the Asian context. Therefore, it remains to be seen whether these proposals or beliefs reflect what is happening in Asia. In recent years there have been a number of studies taking the motivation of Asian students as their object of research (e.g. Yashima, 2009; Lamb, 2004; Apple, Da Silva, & Fellner, 2013; Apple, Da Silva, & Fellner, 2016; Huang, Hsu, & Chen, 2015; Huang & Chen, 2017, Siridetkoon & Dewaele, 2017, etc.), but this body of research is still limited, and as in other contexts, the main focus of all these studies is English acquisition. Yashima (2009) points out that 'the ideal L2 self' (English) of Japanese learners has a lot to do with the unassailable position that this language occupies in the international community. The Japanese show great interest in international affairs, hoping to study and work abroad.

In his studies in Indonesia, Lamb (2004, 2009) concludes that Asian students aspire to integrate into an imaginary international community by building a global English-speaking citizenship identity. Adopting a quantitative approach, Huang et al. (2015) show that Taiwanese students of foreign languages are influenced by a culturally and socially traditional identity. Thus, for example, those who learn Japanese and German always have a strong instrumental motivation, while a personal interest in culture and a willingness to learn play a more decisive role in learning French and Korean. Siridetkoon and Dewaele (2017) indicate that among

students in Thailand who are learning English (L2) and another foreign language (L3) (either Chinese, Japanese or Korean), their 'ideal self' and 'ought-to self' shape each other in connection with a series of internal (individual) and external (socio-environmental) factors. In addition, Lu, Zheng and Ren (2019), and Zheng, Lu and Ren (2019) using the Q methodology, note that Chinese university students of English learn Spanish not for very clear reasons but rather because they are searching for multilingual-self development.

Although some studies do address questions about studying languages other than English, there is still a paucity of research which analyzes why Chinese students choose to learn languages other than English in an English-dominant environment, how they develop their specific self-images with respect to these languages, and how the self-motivation system interacts for L2 (English) and L3 (Spanish, in our case).

2.3. Spanish Learning Motivation

Almost all previous studies on learning Spanish have been conducted in European or American contexts, and most are devoted to the description of the different types of motivation and attitudes that students have, taking the proposal of Gardner and Lambert (1972) as their theoretical framework. In this way, researchers have used questionnaires to discover that students in these contexts have more integrative motivation than instrumental motivation (Espí & Azurmendi, 1996; Minera Reyna, 2009; Fonseca & García, 2010). Likewise, other studies confirm that the motivation to learn Spanish usually varies with time and with changes of context, since this language is seen as a significant identity characteristic that can facilitate the insertion of a member in the Spanish-speaking community (Carrai, 2009; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). In summary, research conducted in Europe and the United States concludes that many students of Spanish in these areas have an incentive to integrativeness.

Regarding Spanish learning in the Asian context, Roncero (2017) notes that if we create a framework to speak about Spanish in the world following the theoretical framework for 'world English' developed by Kachru and Smith (2009), the expansion circle of Spanish would encompass the Asian context, and more specifically the Chinese speaking regions (Continental China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong), since 'the growing interest of Chinese students for the Spanish language and its culture is remarkable' (Roncero, 2017: 305). However, there is still not much research studying the motivation of students who learn Spanish as a foreign language. Among the few references found in Asia, Sun (2010) applied a series of adapted questionnaires to students in Beijing and Taiwan, and points out that the incentive to learn Spanish for almost 47.7% of the students depended on exam grades and the desire to graduate. Querol (2014) analyzed the current situation of learning Spanish in China, and highlights the importance of labor and economic prospects for students' motivated learning efforts.

Another aspect that is worth mentioning is the attitude of students towards different varieties of Spanish. It is known that Spanish is a language with variants at the level of pronunciation, accent, lexicon, morpheme-syntax, etc. In fact, the

Royal Spanish Academy is now trying to regulate the standardization of Spanish at a global level, instead of generating an emphasis on peninsula Spanish (Paffey, 2012). Thus, Van Wymersch (2017) mentions that these variants of Spanish represent a great challenge for the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language. This relates not only to students' beliefs about linguistic characteristics, but also to their cultural assumptions (Tollefson, 1999; Chan & Him, 2018). For this reason, this study explores how Chinese students behave in relation to different variants of Spanish, what their attitudes and beliefs are and if they influence Spanish acquisition.

Finally, as indicated above, we find that there is a lack of research studying the motivation of Chinese students to learn Spanish, taking account of the context of English dominance and the progressive expansion of Spanish in China. In addition, it will be interesting to verify whether there are relationships between the motivation shown by Chinese students and the social position of the Spanish language in China, as this is a geographically and culturally distant country from Europe and the United States.

Hence, drawing on 'the L2 Motivational Self System', the present study aims to answer the following questions:

(1) What are the motivations of Chinese learners who choose Spanish as their foreign language? Are they the same as for learners of English? How do self-images work in the acquisition process?

(2) Does the English-dominant context influence the acquisition of Spanish in China? How do the 'L2 self' (English) and the 'L3 self' (Spanish) of the students interact with each other?

(3) What are the individual, educational, and social factors that affect the motivation and attitudes of these students?

3. The Study

3.1. Methodology

Currently, the scale of the teaching and learning of Spanish in China is growing rapidly. There are more than fifty thousand students who have chosen Spanish as their foreign language (Zheng, 2015). Most of them learn the language as their university major, so it would be representative to analyze their motivation. We recruited a group of students from the Spanish Department of a prestigious university located in eastern China as our research participants. This university ranks in the top 50 in the 2018 QS World University Rankings, and offers undergraduate and graduate courses in the arts, humanities, social sciences, sciences, and medicine. In general, the students at this institution do not only have high academic scores in the National College Entrance Examination; they also possess well-developed integral qualities. Although the Spanish Department was only founded in 2017, the students have access to good learning resources and highly competent faculty members.

3.2. Design

A combination of quantitative (Q methodology) and qualitative (interview) methods was employed. The Q methodology was proposed by Stephenson in 1935. It helps to reveal the salient feelings and opinions of participants, and its most typical use is the objective measurement of subjectivity (Brown, 1995). In the words of Valencia Vallejo (2003: 146), the Q methodology 'reveals orderings by ranking people's opinions'.

To enrich the result obtained with the Q methodology, follow-up interviews were conducted with the participants after the experiment, as a supplementary method to get a better understanding of and explanations for their motivation.

3.3. Participants

The participants were 17 university students (we call them Q1 to Q17 as required in the Q Methodology), whose university major was Spanish Philology. They started to learn Spanish from scratch in their first year and received ten hours of Spanish classes a week (in the first year, 360 hours in total) and studied an average of 15 extra hours in their after-school time. The experiment was carried out when they had been learning Spanish for three months. Table 1 presents the demographics of the participants.

	participants
Description	First-year academic students in the Spanish department
Gender	Male = 3 Female = 14
Age	17–19
L1	Chinese
L2	English
L3	Spanish (three months of learning from the beginning)
Knowledge of English and the expected level	More than 6 years of prior English learning; A level English equivalent to B1–B2 according to the CEFR

Table 1. Demographic data of the participants

It should be noted that these students already have more than six years' experience of learning English and have passed the English test in the National College Entrance Examination, so they are at B1–B2 level according to the CEFR. It must be emphasized that during their four years of Spanish study, they do not abandon English. According to the university program, students have to take eight credits in College English, which equals a total of 144 hours. This does not include extra hours in their free time dedicated to English learning.

3.4. Data collection

A Q methodological study typically involves four steps: (1) develop the statements (usually from 40 to 80 statements) to build a miniature of the set of shared knowledge; (2) collect the opinions of the participants—the 'Q classification'; (3)

carry out a factorial analysis of the 'Q classification'; and (4) interpret the emergent factors in relation to the statements. The factors represent the distinctive opinions shared within the group of participants, with the individuals grouped according to their shared points of view on a certain topic.

Following previous studies by Csizér and Dörnyei (2005a, b) and Dörnyei, Csizér and Németh (2006), we created a list of 47 statements (shown in Appendix I), to include different motivations and attitudes towards the acquisition of Spanish, from ordinary attitudes about languages and cultures to linguistic, cultural, and social values. Each statement was printed on a paper card (90mm x 54mm) in Chinese. Next, participants were asked to carry out the 'Q classification' task during a Spanish class of 45 minutes' duration. Each participant was given a set of 47 cards containing the 47 statements, and asked to classify the statements on the cards according to their degree of agreement or disagreement (from minus five to plus five; eleven possibilities), filling in the number of each statement in a forced distribution form (see Figure 1). The 17 participants generated 17 'Q classifications'.
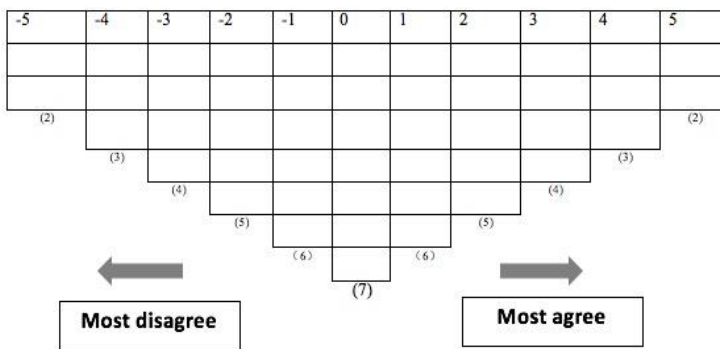

Figure 1. Forced distribution continuum used for 47-card sorts. (The numbers of Q statements to be placed in each ranking position from -5 to +5 were 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, and 2 respectively)

Third, we use the PQMethod (www.rz.unibw-munchen.de/~p41bsmk/qmethod), a free program, to perform the factor analysis required by the Q methodology. We entered the 17 'Q sorts' into the software and obtained a correlation matrix for the classifications through the extraction of the centroid. Then, the correlation matrix was delivered to the analysis of the main component with a varimax rotation (Kaiser normalization). After testing the solutions for one, two, and three factors, we found that the two-factor approach was the most appropriate based on the explained variance of 49%, which meets the requirements of the Q methodology (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Loadings were considered statistically significant with $\alpha = 0.01$, $r > .43$ (Watts & Stenner, 2012). That is, the final solution identified two groups of significant factors, with nineteen classifications in factor 1, representing 24% of the variance, and nine in factor 2, representing 25% of the variance. In

addition, there were four classifications loading on both factors, and one that could not be loaded; in the present study these classifications will not be studied.

   To carry out the interviews, first, we planned all the questions we intended to ask and prepared interview protocols (see the script in Appendix II). The questions to be asked were open and closely related to the attitudes and motivations of the students towards learning a foreign language other than English; the participant could express their opinions or make comments. We invited the 17 participants individually to a closed and quiet office in which they felt comfortable, conducted the interviews face to face, and audio recorded the interviews for later transcription. The whole process was conducted in the Chinese language so that participants could understand and express themselves easily. The interviews lasted about 20 minutes for each participant.

4. Findings

According to the individual classifications and the general configuration of the statements captured in the matrix, the two factors received the following descriptive labels: factor 1 (multilingual with English as priority), and factor 2 (Spanish). The two factors represented different types of attitudes towards the evaluation of the statements. For the first factor six participants were included, and for the second factor the other six were included. In addition, there were 4 participants who produced double loadings on both factors, and one participant whose categorization was impossible to load. Table 2 shows the grouping situation of the participants.

Groups	Q classifications that make up the
Factor 1 (multilingual with English as a priority)	Q2 Q5, Q8, Q12, Q14, Q15
Factor 2 (Spanish)	Q4, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q13, Q17
Group with double loadings	Q1, Q3, Q6, Q7
Impossible to load	Q16

Table 2. Grouping of the two factors

In this article, we only focus on the students loading on either factor 1 or factor 2. Those that showed double loadings or which were impossible to load are not the objective of our research. However, it is worth mentioning that while we were writing this paper student Q16, who did not want to learn languages, transferred from the Spanish Department to the Law School. This means that our Q methodology has shown us a relatively faithful result to what these students think. Next, we will try to interpret the results obtained by comparing extreme statements that define the two groups.

4.1. Factor 1: Multilingual with English as a Priority

The statements scoring +5, +4, -5 and -4 that were chosen by students in the factor1 group are the following:

	Most agreed		Most disagreed
+5	Statement 47: I have not learned English for a few months, it seems that I am losing my English. I'm very worried. Statement 12: Although I have a good level of English, mastering one more language (Spanish), without a doubt, makes me more competitive.	-5	Statement 11: Since I speak English well, it is not important if I cannot master Spanish well. Statement 20: When I encounter difficulties in studying Spanish, I always console myself: "It's OK, at least I speak English well".
+4	Statement 5: I can imagine that in the future I will be able to use English without any problem in work or in daily life. Statement 6: I can imagine that in the future I will be able to use Spanish without any problem in work or in daily life. Statement 8: I have to learn Spanish well, if not, it will affect my academic qualifications.	-4	Statement 19: I choose the Spanish major because I believe that English learners are not competitive. Statement 42: I am looking forward to going to Latin America to do an interchange or Master's degree in the future. Statement 37: There are many resources and materials for learning Spanish, I can find them easily.

Table 3. Extreme sentences selected by factor 1

From Table 3 we can see that the students loading on factor 1 consider learning English to be very important. Students on the Spanish major in this university do not usually take English classes in their first academic year, to avoid inter-linguistic transfers at thier initial stage. Not only did these students express their concern about the time when they were not learning English (statement 47), but they also showed a strong desire to use English in the future (statement 5). They stated that English occupies an irreplaceable position in current society. As noted by one participant:

> **Q14**: 'I know that learning more foreign languages can bring me more advantages. But I cannot ignore the importance of English. I believe that in my future work or future life, I will use English more frequently. Of course, I will also take Spanish seriously because it is my major and academic qualifications are very important for university students.'

In this response it may be noted that, apart from English, this student is also aware that mastering additional foreign languages (in this case Spanish) will help them to become more competitive (statement 12). However, their motivation to learn Spanish is closely related to passing exams and academic grades, and is perhaps something that seems non-voluntary (statement 8). The students in factor 1 showed a desire to use both English and Spanish in the future (statements 5 and 6). While English was seen as more universal and fundamental, Spanish could provide more opportunities for them to lead a better life.

As for the ideas with which the students in factor 1 did not agree, students exhibit a positive disposition toward the necessity of having a multilingual world. Some students recognized that there should not be only one language in the world, in this case English, and understood that mastering this language does not mean you do not need to learn Spanish (statements 11 and 20). In fact, this group of students seems to have developed a certain degree of multilingual awareness, although they still prioritized English:

Q15: 'I like to learn Spanish, it's very interesting. It makes me know the world better, and perhaps it will help me in the future. But I always think that English is the basis and that we all have to learn it well.'

Surprisingly, despite this multilingual awareness, some of these participants originally choose Spanish as their university major not by their own choice but for other external reasons, as exemplified by the following interview excerpts:

Q2: 'I study Spanish because my score in the National College Entrance Examination does not qualify me for other specialties.'

Q8: 'Because in my province this university only offered Spanish, I had no choice but to make this decision.'

Q5: 'It seemed to me that there would not be much competition to enter the Spanish Department.'

In addition, it was unexpected to find that the students in factor 1 aspire to a high Spanish proficiency without a desire to integrate into the Latin American community where the majority of Spanish speakers live (statement 42). In other words, they are only interested in the culture of the Iberian Peninsula, and it seems that they have an idea of 'standard Spanish'. For example, when discussing studying abroad in future, participant Q2 expressed his choice of Anglophone countries as priority, underlying his firm desire to practice English:

Q2: 'To tell the truth, to go on exchanges or study in the future, my first option would be to go to Australia or the United States, the second option may be Spain. The Latin American countries do not interest me at all.'

Almost all the participants indicated that it was very difficult to find materials or resources to learn Spanish in their extracurricular hours (statement 37). Consequently, their learning experience tended to be somewhat difficult, which may partially demotivate their L3 learning, as one student mentioned:

Q12: 'Since now in China there are not many Spanish films or TV series translated into Chinese, we find it a bit difficult to learn this language in a fun way.'

To summarize, the factor 1 students of Spanish as a major still attached great importance to English. Despite seeking a multilingual path, the students considered English as irreplaceable, and they therefore learn English by their own choice—which, as Dörnyei (2005) points out, reduces the distance between their 'ideal L2 self', with perfect English in the future, and their 'actual L2 self' at this moment, providing considerable impetus to acquire the language. In addition, a pleasant learning experience of watching movies or TV series, reading English novels, listening to music, etc. will affect them positively throughout their learning

process, as proposed by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011). In contrast, the shortage of facilitating resources and materials in Spanish to some extent diminishes the students' motivation to learn Spanish.

On the other hand, unlike what happens with English, the factor 1 students learn Spanish not by their own choice but for external reasons, such as to gain more competitiveness, because of social pressure, or to achieve academic excellence because of the obligation to be a good student. This means that Spanish, instead of functioning for self-realization, is rather taken as an instrument for improvement in life. Huang et al. (2015) point out that in many East Asian countries, Confucianism profoundly influences people's self-concepts and behavior. In this traditional philosophical thinking, high academic achievements are an individual's duty or obligation in society. Therefore, the knowledge of foreign languages has been seen as a demonstration of high academic achievement. In our case, in order to obtain self-satisfaction and social recognition, students make an effort to learn both languages.

Finally, it should be noted that despite having an awareness of multilingual issues, these students maintain the traditional notion of 'one nation, one language' without seeing each language as a global resource. For example, they do not want to integrate into the Latin American community, but only pay attention to the language and culture of Spain. Thus, s conclusion can be drawn that the students have not yet developed a broad intercultural vision, but only take foreign languages as a means to achieve self-satisfaction.

4.2. Factor 2: Spanish

Table 4 shows the sentences that scored +5, +4, -5 and -4, reflecting the extreme and most typical attitudes of the students who loaded on factor 2.

Unlike the students in factor 1, those in factor 2 consider that Spanish is the most important language for them at present. They voluntarily invest more time in learning Spanish, and some even completely focus on it in order to achieve a good result (statement 2). Interview data from students Q4 and Q17 help to illustrate this point:

Q4: 'Being a student in the Spanish Department, what I have to do now, without a doubt, is to learn this language well. In fact, this language seems very difficult, and therefore I have to spend more time.'

Q17: 'Spanish classes, with so many academic credits, nobody can ignore its importance.'

However, although this group of participants stressed the importance of learning Spanish, their motivation does not stem from the 'ideal L2 self' that might lead the student to use the language or integrate into the Spanish community. Rather, it is their 'ought-to L2 self' that is closely related to academic qualifications, exams, certificates and their future work that drives them to move forward (statements 4, 8, and 10). Moreover, despite their recognition of the necessity of mastering English, the pressure of academic qualifications enables them to concentrate on Spanish for a while, at the expense of English. Some students reported a great level

of apprehension about attrition in English (statement 47). For example, some students reported:

> **Q10**: 'English is important, but now I do not have so much time to learn English as to learn Spanish. I know my English level is going down, but what can I do?'

> **Q4**: 'I am not only very concerned about the study of Spanish, but also about English. English, before, was an advantage that I had, but now ... I don't know. To tell you the truth, I'm worried.'

Most agreed		Most disagreed	
+5	Statement 2: I prefer to dedicate more time and effort to the study of Spanish. Statement 8: I have to learn Spanish well; if not, it will affect my academic qualifications.	-5	Statement 11: Since I speak English well, it is not important if I cannot master Spanish well. Statement 35: I do not think there is a problem of pure Spanish or impure Spanish. We can learn the Spanish of any Spanish-speaking country.
+4	Statement 4: I am going to make a lot of effort in learning Spanish, because I want to get certificates in this language to show my level. Statement 10: I have to learn Spanish well, otherwise I will not be able to find a good job in the future. Sentence 47: I have not learned English for a few months, it seems that I am losing my English. I'm very worried.	-4	Statement 18: It seems to me that learning Spanish helps me in the acquisition of English. Statement 20: When I encounter difficulties in studying Spanish, I always console myself: "It's OK, at least I speak English well." Statement 28: We can use English to participate in international community affairs, it does not matter if we do not know other foreign languages.

Table 4. Extreme sentences selected in factor 2.

A review of the statements with which the students loading on factor 2 disagree reveals that they hold views similar to the students in factor 1—for instance, in statements 11 and 20. This supports our result that the students in factor 2 have a strong motivation to learn Spanish, and that they will not abandon it easily although they have mastered English. Furthermore, these students also state that speaking only English is not enough to integrate into the international community (statement 28).

The students' emphasis on 'pure Spanish' (statement 35) was unexpected. Many of them stated that they only wanted to learn Spanish as spoken in Spain, which seemed more standard. That is to say, these participants are showing prejudice against Latin American communities because they do not recognize the Spanish of those areas as 'pure Spanish'. In other words, similar to the students loading on factor 1, the participants in this group believe that standard Spanish exists.

In reality, however, from the linguistic point of view, the assumptions underlying this idea—that is, the need for a standard language and the beliefs

created in relation to the correction of a language—are wrong (Rojas, 2012). The students' responses demonstrate that these students, with their view of 'one language, one nation', are not aware that Spanish can be a resource for living in different societies and for integrating into a multicultural community. Tollefson (1999) and Van Wymersch (2017) suggest that the attitude has much to do with the students' cultural assumptions. Since the participants do not have much knowledge about Latin America, they are not as motivated to learn the Spanish variant from that area.

Finally, factor 2 students do not think that Spanish acquisition will help them to learn English (statement 18). They believe that Spanish may cause a negative transfer to the acquisition of English, especially in aspects such as pronunciation or the spelling of words.

To recapitulate, learning Spanish, at least in the initial stage, does not work favorably in the concurrent learning of English. As some researchers point out, no matter how many foreign languages are being learned, the process of acquiring each one never occurs in isolation, and the means of motivating an individual to learn each foreign language are not the same (Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006; MacIntyre, Mackinnon, & Clément, 2009). This result illustrates that our students believe that learning Spanish has slowed their acquisition of English.

4.3. Discussion

From the aforementioned analyses, we can observe that there are considerable differences between the students who loaded on the two factors, although they share some similarities with regard to their motivation to learn English and Spanish simultaneously, as illustrated in Figure 2.

The two groups of students employed very different distributions of time and energy in the study of the two languages. The students in factor 1 prefer to devote more of their resources to English, despite the fact that they are engaged in Spanish major studies. From the interviews, we know that they chose Spanish as their university specialism not by their own will, but for external reasons related to institutional constraints. These students may have been influenced by the powerful position of English in Chinese society. Notably, this new generation of university students not only uses English for academic purposes (Feng, 2009; Pan & Block, 2011) or intra-national purposes (Bolton & Graddol, 2012), but also has a strong desire to contact English-speaking society, and even to integrate into it. That is to say, instead of only being influenced by their 'ought-to L2 self', the students already have a tendency to realize their own 'ideal self'. As a result of this strong motivation, these students insist on continuing to learn English during their university studies. Their dedication to English means that they must sacrifice some of the time and effort that would otherwise be devoted to the study of Spanish. However, they also attend to the study of Spanish because of their sense of responsibility and their strong 'ought to L3 self'. Their motivation to learn Spanish is more related to academic pressure.
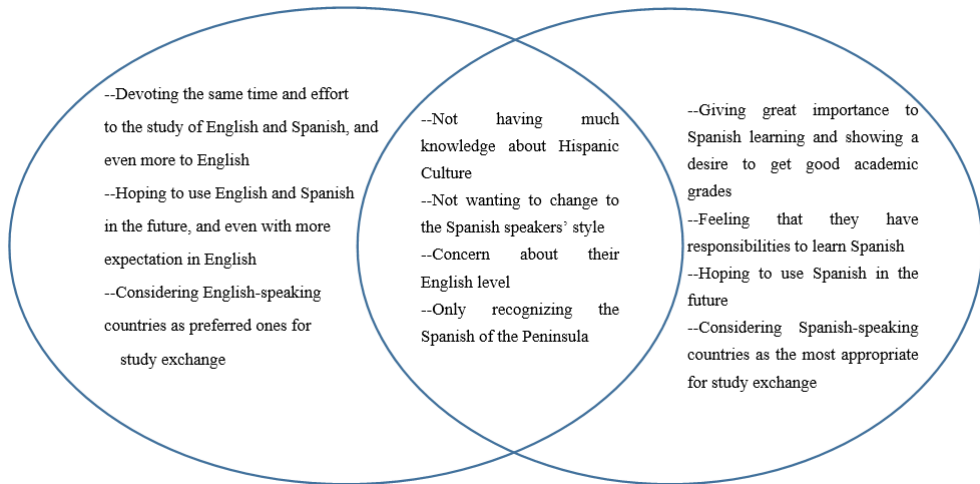
Figure 2. Summary of the ideas and attitudes of the two factors.

Another aspect that is worthy of discussion is that our result coincides with previous studies reflecting that English may sometimes have a negative influence on other foreign languages (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005a, 2005b; Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Dörnyei et al., 2006; Henry, 2010, 2011, 2014, 2015; Mercer, 2011a, 2011b). Thus, when analyzing why the students loading onto factor 1 gave priority to English, it may be observed that the social position of this language in the specific Chinese context has a critical role to play (Henry, 2014; Huang et al., 2015). English and its culture are recognized as having a higher social status in Chinese society than Spanish. Students, influenced by traditions, common social consciousness, and contextual factors, think that English is more important and useful than Spanish. This finding also corresponds to the result of Busse's (2017) study.

We have also found that the students in factor 1 had developed some degree of multilingual motivation, although they presented different attitudes towards different foreign languages. Given this circumstance, Henry (2017) introduces the concept of 'ideal multilingual self', which consists of the aspiration to be multilingual. Dornyei and Alhoorie (2017) state that students of foreign languages other than English could get more support from the constructed identity of an ideal multilingual self, since 'the ideal multilingual self" has a stabilizing effect on the self-images of several specific L2s. That is to say, in the learning of Spanish and English, the incentives of students may be understood as part of a high-level multilingual motivational system within an ecology of interconnected and interpenetrated systems.

The factor 2 students dedicate more time and effort to the study of Spanish than to English, as well as showing more interest in the Spanish language and culture. However, the results of the study presented here reveal that they are learning the language not because they believe it to be useful for the labor market, as González

Puy (2006) has claimed, and nor because they have very specific professional or life plans. They are learning it because of their perceived obligations as students of the Spanish major course, and because of the desire to get a language certificate, and thus to achieve self-satisfaction. Therefore, we can say that these students' motivation to learn Spanish mainly comes from their 'ought-to L3 self'. Nevertheless, it is also worth noting that their self-images are gradually influenced more by the 'ideal self' that forms as they acquire more linguistic knowledge and achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the Hispanic culture. In other words, their motivation to learn Spanish may become stronger during the process of acquiring the language. Although at the current stage our data are not sufficient to investigate this assumption, it may offer an interesting perspective to track the students' motivational shift from 'ought-to' to 'ideal'.

These two groups of students also share much in common. First, both groups noted difficulties in accessing materials for learning Spanish. Compared to the amount of English cultural products that exist in China (music, movies, TV series, etc.), it is still difficult to find similar resources related to the Hispanic world. That is to say, the cultures and civilizations of Spain and Latin America are almost unknown to Chinese students. We might even speculate that the Spanish language and culture have not exerted great influence in this Asian territory. Therefore, the Spanish language, in comparison with English, has a lower cultural and social impact, which inhibits the motivational growth shown by the Spanish major students.

Second, the two groups both convey the idea that Spanish as spoken on the Iberian Peninsula is the standard. They are not interested in learning Latin American variants, and nor do they want to become like Latin American-style people. In other words, Chinese students have a strong preference for the Spanish of Spain, and particularly the center-north of the Peninsula. Van Wymersch (2017) points out that the arguments behind these preferences lie in the importance given to speakers forming correct structures, speaking clearly and getting closer to the Spanish that the Royal Spanish Academy promotes. To this we must add that our students appeared to have the linguistic ideology of 'one nation, one language', without paying sufficient attention to language variants or seeing the language as a resource for access to a multilingual society.

Considering these aspects, we note that the students loading on factor 1 learn Spanish to obtain extra points in the development of their linguistic competence. English remains their main focus of attention, and Spanish functions as an ability affiliated with English. Meanwhile the factor 2 students, who have the responsibility of learning their L3 major, temporarily replace their motivation to learn English with the desire to learn Spanish, and therefore they see Spanish as more important at that time. For this reason, students show different beliefs and attitudes towards learning the two languages.

5. Conclusion

This study utilizes the Q methodology and interview data, and draws conclusions as follows.

Among Chinese students who learn Spanish as a university major, there are two main types of motivation: one is 'multilingual with English as a priority', and the other is 'Spanish only'. Students in the first group dedicate more time and effort to their English study since they want to use it in the future. Their incentive to learn English comes, above all, from their 'ideal L2 self'. However, for students in the second group, despite the fact that they are also multilingual, their motivation to learn Spanish is mainly related with their 'ought-to L3 selves'. In addition, we recognize that as the students' learning about language and culture progresses and their knowledge grows, the 'ought-to self' motivating the factor 2 students to learn Spanish may shift into an 'ideal self' motivation. At this point, a longitudinal study would be required to investigate how the motivation of Chinese students changes during their four years of learning Spanish.

In previous studies the increasingly important social position of the Spanish language in China is mentioned. However, our report reveals that the spread of this language and its culture, especially the Latin American Spanish variant, is still quite limited compared to the expansion of English.

On the other hand, despite the potential limitations of this study—for example, the focus on university students and the small sample size—it has allowed us to reach the significant conclusions mentioned above. We have discovered that English is the most influential foreign language in the Asian context, and that this affects the motivation of students to learn other languages. However, we should not be pessimistic about the monism of English in China, because when a situation becomes extreme the natural tendency is for it to move gradually in the opposite direction, according to the rules of natural and social development. Thus, there are many students who have already replaced the learning of English with other languages such as Spanish, and there are also students who give high priority to English but who have already begun to study other languages as associated subjects. Perhaps in the not too distant future, Chinese students will be more aware of the importance of multilingualism, and will follow a path of simultaneously learning several foreign languages.

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