

# Second Language Learning and Intrinsic Motivation of Multilingual Chinese Learners in the Philippines

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**Abstract:** The study focused on the intrinsic motivation factors that may identify what specific L2 communicative skill multilingual Chinese students are more motivated to learn and examined what variables (*i.e.* age, gender, and language proficiency) may relate to their motivation given their exposure to several languages such as Filipino, Chinese and English. 180 high school sophomore and senior students from a Chinese school in Manila were asked to complete a 48 – item IM questionnaire. The findings suggest that students are intrinsically motivated in learning and using the L2 communicative skills of reading and speaking under IM subtypes of Accomplishment and Knowledge. Moreover, age and gender are found to have moderate relationship to IM, whereas language proficiency seems to show otherwise. It can be noted that learners' intrinsic motivation stem from their early L2 exposure, proliferation of Internet – mediated tasks and western media, curricular activities, and prestige of the L2 being learned.

**Keywords:** Intrinsic Motivation, Second Language Learning, Age, Gender, Language Proficiency

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## 1. Introduction

Although there are a number of studies done highlighting intrinsic motivation over the years, not much work has been done on the very unique linguistic environment of Filipino-Chinese high school students. Eventhough they study Filipino language since they reside in the Philippines, and it is a part of their curriculum, they would more likely to use Fookien at home. Aside from these languages, these Filipino-Chinese students study English and Mandarin for formal and business communicative reasons, thus making them *multilinguals*.

According to Zhang (2011), these learners actually study all these languages particularly the Chinese as response to what their parents or elderly relatives want since most of these older generation family members are either pure Philippine – born Chinese or Chinese – speaking immigrants to the Philippines who originated from Fujian and Guangdong province in China. These parents or elder relatives want to inculcate to these younger generation of Filipino – Chinese learners their cultural identity of having

Chinese descent, create bond among their fellow Filipino – Chinese, and maintain their heritage language (e.g. Fookien or Mandarin).

Aside from the Chinese language, most Filipino – Chinese give much premium in learning English being a world language. For them, English is always associated with prestige, and economic progress, since it is considered to be the lingua franca of commerce, trade, sciences, culture, arts, and other areas of specializations. Fluency in English has always been a mark of good education to them considering their undeniable value on social stratification. Moreover, they find the impeccable value of English and its impact on business communicative transactions.

Aside from these reasons, the Philippine constitution itself has its fair share in the creation of such multilingual scenario. The 1973 Philippine Constitution dictates that all foreign schools in the country be *Filipinized* that means Filipino as a subject must be part of the curriculum, and the delivery of the curriculum must be in accordance to Philippine educational standards. The constitutional provision on *Filipinization* of all Chinese schools was implemented in 1976 (Zhang, 2011)

This paper aims to be part of the ever growing body of

literature on second language acquisition and intrinsic motivation that in one way or another may serve its purpose and contribute in the further understanding of L2 learning particularly those of multilingual learners. The respondents for this study are the growing Chinese multilingual learners who have a *complex* linguistic milieu where different languages are operant. These respondents tend to use Fookien in their households and Filipino, Mandarin and English in school. These learners actually respond and use different languages appropriate to the communicative opportunities they are placed into. The study attempts to investigate whether intrinsic motivation is related to the participants' age, gender, and language proficiency given their very unique and interesting linguistic milieu.

### **1.1. Motivation and Language Learning**

Considered as one of the key determinants in the success of learning a second or a foreign language, motivation has been continuously studied through the years to further understand and analyze each language learner and to establish a feasible framework in by which motivation together with the learner may be investigated (Carreira, 2005; Gardner, 2005; Matsumoto & Obana, 2001, Crookes & Schmidt, 1991, Dornyei, 1994; McIntosh & Noels, 2004; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gonzales, 2010; Yang, 2008; O' Sullivan, 2005; Yu & Watkins, 2008). Brought about by early works of Gardner, Lambert, and their associates, the Socio-Educational Model of Second Language Acquisition prompted much of the research on L2 motivation (McIntosh & Noels, 2004; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). Motivation is perceived as a complex variable which according to Gardner (1985) is an exquisite combination of effort plus the desire to achieve the goal of learning a language plus favorable attitudes towards learning a language.

### **1.2. Language Learning and Self-Determination Theory**

Ryan, Kuhl and Deci in 1997 introduced the Self – Determination Theory as an active response to the research paradigm shift on motivation and learning. Self – Determination Theory is grounded on humans' basic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). They reiterate that motivation should never be viewed as a unitary phenomenon as suggested by other motivation theories, for people vary in motivation in different terms. For one, each person may vary in level of motivation (e.g., how much motivation); also, he may also differ according to the type of motivation he has (e.g., what motivation orientation). Although the SDT is a learning framework, its applications and implications to second and foreign language learning are worth noting.

SDT presents a dichotomous view of motivation – intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation, according to Ryan and Deci (2000), pertains to accomplishment of a task because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable. As an addition, intrinsic motivation (IM) is something that emanates from within, and is associated with

the learner's identity and sense of well-being. Intrinsically motivated learners are characterized to treat learning as a goal in itself. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation (EM) refers to doing something because it may lead to a separable outcome. Extrinsic motivation may be influenced by external factors and not all human endeavors, strictly speaking, are intrinsically motivated. Learners with this kind of motivation are characterized by attaching learning with incentives or rewards (e.g., grades, awards, or honors) (Ryan & Deci, 1985, 2000).

Furthermore, according to Ryan and Deci (2000), there may have been no single phenomenon like intrinsic motivation that is capable of reflecting the positive potential of man's nature – his innate or inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1993; Vallerand, 1997; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Erhman, Leaver, and Oxford (2003) suggested that intrinsically motivated students are also geared towards rewards but in the form of enjoyment in the activity itself, and the sense of competence espoused in the task, which is termed by Bandura (1993) as self-efficacy. Csikszentmihalyi (1991 in Gonzales, 2010) further added that intrinsically motivated learners get to experience an optimal flow of both enjoyment and competence in performing an L2 task. Hence, environmental factors and language learning situations are a major consideration in either promoting or thwarting intrinsic motivation among learners (Julkenen, 1989; Biggs, 1987; Cheng & Dornyei, 2007). As such, several studies posit that the correlation between language learning success and intrinsic motivation seem to be higher than that of extrinsic motivation (Walqui, 2000; Gonzales, 2010).

### **1.3. Age, Language Proficiency, Gender, and Language Learning**

Muñoz and Tragant (2001) found that younger school children tend to be more intrinsically motivated, whereas the older ones seem to gravitate more on the extrinsic and instrumental types of motivation. Such assertion may be supported by Collier (1988) and Gomeksiz (2001) who both opine that successful language acquisition depends on the learner's age. In another study of Munoz (2006) argues that longer time studying a particular language would influence the shift on motivational orientation of the language learners, thus making them more mature in terms of their linguistic performance (Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2003) and culture (Thompson & Gaddes, 2005). Such assertions may be supported by the discussions of Stark, Bentley, Lowther, and Shaw (1991) that explain students being more intellectually – oriented tend to increase their intrinsic motivation in learning a second language, for they need to satisfy their "Need for Cognition" (NC) (Cacioppo et al., 1982). According to Cacioppo et al. (1982), NC refers to the tendency for an individual to engage in and enjoy thinking. Hence, with age and L2 proficiency is the inherent propensity to learn a second language though it may mean partaking into effortful cognitive tasks (Cacioppo et al., 1996). This means a high –

NC has also high IM to do all tasks related to learning a second language.

In a similar vein, Gonzales (2010) argued that level of motivation differed to an extent with consideration to the various factors identified in the study such as age, gender, and length of studying. He found that females tend to be more motivationally oriented than males towards communication, affiliation, and self-efficacy. He further posits that the longer exposure to the target language in school, the higher the motivation is.

Moreover, Lucas et al. (2010) found that EFL may all be intrinsically motivated in all the linguistic skills, but learning each skill was propelled by different IM subtypes. Moreover, findings suggested there are a significant and positive relationship between the students' IM and their L2.

Given that males and females differ biologically and socially, men and women tend to behave differently, and such behavioral differences may actually be reflected in their respective academic aptitudes (Chang, 2004; Brassards 2004). Chang (2004) noted in her study that females do perform well as a means of being socially accepted in a community, an Asian community at that.

## 2. Research Questions

The purpose of this investigation is to explore the different intrinsic motivation factors interplaying with the second language learning of English by multilingual Chinese learners in the Philippine context. Furthermore, the study also examined whether certain variables could influence differentiation in the motivation of L2 learning among these aforesaid students. Following are the points that were studied:

2.1 Whether students are intrinsically motivated to learn the four L2 communicative skills?

2.2 Whether intrinsic motivation is related to learners' age, gender, and language proficiency?

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Setting

The research locale is considered as one of biggest Chinese schools in the Philippines. The school itself is located at the heart of the largest Chinese community in Manila.

The institution offers education in all levels from preschool to graduate school. It uses both English and Chinese for instructions. A number of languages such as Filipino, English, Fookien, and Mandarin actually operate in the chosen research setting, thus making it to be a good and contextualized linguistic milieu for "multilingualism."

As expounded in the previous pages, one of the researchers has been practicing language teaching in this learning institution for years.

### 3.2. Participants

The participants involved in this study were one hundred eighty (180) high school students from a Chinese school in

Manila. These participants were purposively selected due to their being multilingual (e.g. Filipino, English, and Chinese). The selection was based on their performance in their recently concluded standardized aptitude tests in English, Mathematics, and Science as administered by an independent body, Asian Psychological Services and Assessment Corporation (APSA). Only those who got proficient and highly proficient scores were chosen to participate in the study.

Second year students whose ages range from 13 to 15 and fourth year students whose ages range from 16 to 17 were involved in the investigation. Such selection and numbers were purposively done to address age as one of the study's variables. Table 1 shows the participants' profile in terms of gender, year level, and language proficiency.

The participants studied three languages (Filipino, English, and Mandarin) as mandated by the dichotomous curriculum of the school – English and Chinese. However, most of them speak purely Fookien or Fookien and Filipino at home since these respondents are either children of Chinese migrants or products of intermarriages between Chinese and Filipino.

### 3.3. Instrument

The survey questionnaire used in the present study is the 48-item questionnaire developed and used by Lucas, et al. (2010) in their study on intrinsic motivation. Lucas et al. (2010) devised a questionnaire based on the work of Noels et al.'s (2000) study which solely highlighted intrinsic motivation and its subtypes (IM – stimulation, IM – accomplishment, and IM – knowledge) and the corresponding macro skills in English (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Table 2 shows the item distribution in the modified questionnaire.

### 3.4. Procedure

A letter addressed to the President of the institution asking permission to conduct a study on the school, to administer a survey, and to request school data pertinent to the study concerned was done.

Upon the approval of the request, the researcher administered the questionnaire to the one hundred eighty (180) selected participants of the study. An ample time was given for them to answer the questionnaire. Furthermore, a brief orientation was made by the researcher himself before the actual administration of the questionnaire, which is in English. It was also surmised that respondents understood the questionnaire since they belong to the proficient and highly proficient levels.

The data on gender and age were also generated from the same administered questionnaire. As for the data related to language proficiency of the participants, the researcher requested the Guidance and Counseling arm of the school for the recent standardized aptitude test scores of the participants involved. The sampled responses were tabulated and subjected to non-parametric statistical analyses to determine the importance of these qualitative data.

## 4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the main findings of the study, which are based on the results of the survey conducted to the multilingual Chinese learners.

*Research Question 1: Whether students are intrinsically motivated to learn the four L2 communicative skills: (a) listening, (b) speaking, (c) reading, (d) writing?*

Comparisons were done between the second language communicative skills of the respondents grouped according to their year levels (e.g. Second year and Fourth year). The analyses of the data were determined through mean and their standard deviations and ANOVA. Some significant relationships were noted.

Table 3 presents the combined mean scores and standard deviations of each L2 communicative skills of the second year respondents. Sophomore respondents seem to show intrinsic motivation (IM) towards all the L2 communicative skills: reading (M=16.11; SD=2.41), speaking (M=15.77; SD=2.34), listening (M=15.28; SD=2.49) and writing (M=15.21; SD 2.62). A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effects of intrinsic motivation to the sophomore students' communicative skills. There was a significant effect of intrinsic motivation towards students' communicative skills at the  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions [ $F(3,361)=2.393, p=.068$ ].

Table 4 illustrates the IM of the senior students with regard to the identified L2 communicative skills. As presented, the senior respondents seem to show parallel results with their sophomore counterparts, with the intrinsic motivation (IM) towards the L2 communicative skills: reading (M=16.66; SD=1.70), speaking (M=16.65; SD=1.78), listening (M = 16.05; SD=1.72), and writing (M = 15.98; SD=2.22). A one-way between subjects ANOVA (please refer to 4.1.) was also conducted to compare the effects of intrinsic motivation to senior students' communicative skills. There was a significant effect of intrinsic motivation towards the students' communicative skills at the  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions [ $F(3,396)=3.850, p=.010$ ].

Taken together, the results seem to suggest that all participants are intrinsically motivated to learn all the L2 communicative from reading, speaking, listening and writing respectively. The participants in the present study may have registered generally high IM on all the skills because they are taught in an "integrative" way, meaning in each lesson, all the skills are integrated and are carried out through varied tasks in the classroom. With this practice, the current participants are exposed to various learning opportunities and materials that they might be interested in. This may be supported by assertions of Ryan and Deci (2000) that students' IM may be increased through activities that appeal to novelty, challenge or aesthetic value on the students' part. In the current study, several tasks, embedded with skills on reading, speaking, listening and writing, related to the students' lessons are given. Although in these classroom tasks, IM is not the only motivation concerned since grades are considered to be part of extrinsic motivation. Gonzales

(2010) stresses that motivation as a whole is a hybrid of other dichotomies and constructs as advocated by Gardner et al. and other motivational research scholars such as Dornyei (1994), and Ryan and Deci (1985, 2000).

In sum, all these classroom practices may tend to promote and sustain the intrinsic motivation, for IM, according to Ryan and Deci (2000), highlights not only what influences this type of motivation but also highlights the conditions that elicit and sustain, versus subdue and diminish this innate propensity. Similarly, these tasks may ensure the student participants' needs for autonomy and efficacy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Moreover, these findings tend to highlight what Dornyei (1994), Julkenen (1989), Ryan and Deci (1985), Biggs (1987), Lim and Cheong (2004), and Chang and Dornyei (2007), are positing which is the pertinent role of language learning situation and environment in facilitating intrinsic motivation among the L2 learners inside second language classrooms.

To delve deeper, the researchers decided to take a more detailed treatment of these findings to further determine as to what L2 communicative skill these respondents are intrinsically motivated when learning English in general.

Table 5 shows the type of intrinsic motivation sophomore students have in learning certain L2 communicative skills. As highlighted in the table, reading is preferred by sophomore students who are intrinsically motivated by knowledge (IM – Knowledge, M = 16.42, SD=2.647) and also those who are intrinsically motivated by accomplishment (IM – Accomplishment, M = 16.39, SD=2.583). Furthermore, they are interested in speaking under (IM – Accomplishment, M = 16.17, SD=2.550), and (IM – Knowledge, M = 15.85, SD=2.506). A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the different intrinsic motivation in each communicative skills of sophomore students. There was a significant effect of intrinsic motivation towards the students' preferred communicative skills at the  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions [ $F(11,948)=3.026, p=0.001$ ]. A post hoc Tukey test showed that the mean scores of both reading and speaking under IM – Knowledge and Accomplishment differed significantly from the other IM type and communicative skills at  $p < 0.05$ .

As for the senior respondents of the study, Table 6 illustrates which type of intrinsic motivation they tend to have when engaging them in learning English. Relatively similar to the sophomore respondents, the senior respondents seem to show inclination towards the reading skill under IM Accomplishment (M = 17.09, SD=1.870), closely followed by speaking under IM Accomplishment still (M = 17.08, 1.889). A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the different intrinsic motivation in each communicative skill of senior students. There was a significant effect of intrinsic motivation towards the students' preferred communicative skills at the  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions [ $F(11,1188)=4.969, p .001$ ].

Taken together, these findings seem to suggest that both respondents (sophomore and senior) who participated in the study are in general intrinsically motivated to learn the four

communicative skills of English. Furthermore, these participants are specifically found to be motivated intrinsically in reading and speaking, and these aforesaid findings indicate quite complementary, yet contradicting results to previous investigations like those of Lucas et al. (2010), and Yang (2008). In the study of Lucas et al. (2010), it was underscored that though reading may have been considered to be one if not the most neglected macro skill, the participants in their 2010 study still showed their quite high preference towards it, whereas in Yang's (2008) study that involved East Asian learners, the results tend to show otherwise since speaking and listening topped the students' preference over reading and writing as language macro skill.

Also, the respondents seem to be found motivated intrinsically in reading and speaking by large via IM-accomplishment and knowledge. As Vallerand (1997) postulates, IM – Accomplishment pertains to one's propensity to perform a challenging task and its inherent satisfaction when mastered, whereas IM – Knowledge refers to the type of motivation that comes from doing a task for the gratification brought about by learning highlighting new discoveries and novel ideas. The preponderance of the two IM subtypes (e.g. IM – Accomplishment and Knowledge) among the participants seem to suggest that these multilingual learners are willing to learn English as a second language either to obtain new developmental knowledge or acquire or master a skill which in this case are reading and speaking.

Being exposed in a multicultural social environment, it may not be that surprising for these multilingual learners to be intrinsically motivated in learning English since the aforesaid language, as Lucas, et al. (2010) explains, plays a key role in the socio-academic milieu where the students move; also, Ryan and Deci (1985) further expatiates that social and environmental conditions, when conducive, can actually promote intrinsic motivation. Henceforth, the students are exposed at early stage not only to Chinese instruction but also to English instruction.

Additionally, Ryan and Deci (1985) expatiate that learning the target language may further enhance intrinsic motivation due to the tangible rewards it may bring like self-direction and language learning success. In the study, it seems that the students are interested in learning English as their L2 via the various macro-skills, for they tend to view it as a tool for learning and accomplishing more in life which may be then classified as benefits assuring their autonomy, self-competency (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Erhman, Leaver & Oxford, 2003, Csikzentmihalyi, 1991 in Gonzales, 2010; Noels, 2001a in Lucas et al., 2010), and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993).

*Research Question 2: Whether intrinsic motivation is related to learner's age, gender, and language proficiency?*

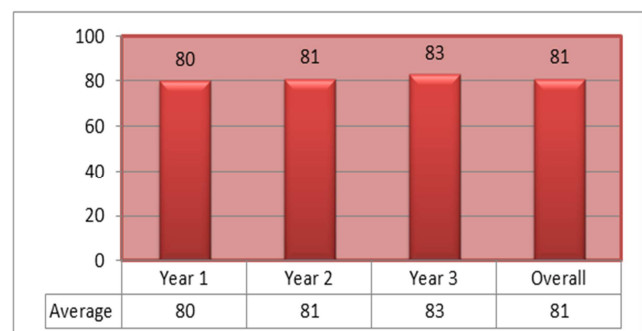
Table 10 shows moderate correlations between intrinsic motivation with age ( $r=.186$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and gender ( $r=.397$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) but weak correlation with language proficiency ( $r=.123$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

The findings may not be consistent with the results of

Gonzales' (2010) study on college freshmen students showing age or length of studying and gender as factors affecting differentiation on motivation in learning a target language. However, in the present study, the respondents used were high school multilingual Chinese learners who may not be that mature socially and linguistically as compared to their college counterparts. On the other hand, examining the average of English grades across all year levels shows a continuous increase on scholastic assessment scores in various year levels with age as an important factor as shown in Figure 1 (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Erhman, Leaver & Oxford, 2003, Bandura, 1993). As Munoz and Tragart (2001) assert, motivation in language learning increases as school experiences accumulate, and curricular tasks ensuing sense of autonomy, competence, and efficacy. This only shows the importance of classroom practices to language learning as advocated by various motivational researchers such as Dornyei (1994), Julkenen (1989), Cheng and Dornyei (2007), Ryan and Deci (1985, 2000) Lim and Cheong (2004), and Biggs (1987).

Since it has been surmised that the respondents in the present study are generally intrinsically motivated to learn all L2 communicative skills, the differentiation in motivation brought about by gender as affected by social orientations (Chang, 2004; Brassard, 2004; Gonzales, 2010; Lim and Cheong, 2004) may not be that apparent.

In terms of the relationship between intrinsic motivation and language proficiency, the comparison between the two sampled groups highlighting language proficiency (proficient and highly proficient) yielded no significant difference with each other. Both groups belong to the high spectrum of Need for Cognition (NC) (Cacioppo, et al., 1982), thus making the relationship of language proficiency to intrinsic motivation not very significant in the present study. Due to the high NC of the two sampled groups, they tend to be predisposed to participate in learning activities for the intrinsic enjoyment of the language tasks as highlighted in Ryan and Deci's (1985) SDT, as compared to their low – NC counterparts (McIntosh & Noels, 2004); hence, Olson, Camp and Fuller (1984) posit that NC is positively associated with academic curiosity. In sum, the nature of the sampled groups' L2 competency may explain the relationship between intrinsic motivation and language proficiency.



**Figure 1.** Comparison of Average per Level in English in the Research Locale.

**Table 1.** Participants' Profile in terms of Gender, Year Level, and Language Proficiency.

Gender	Year		Language Proficiency	
	II	IV	II	IV
Girls	42	50	Proficient: 25 Highly Proficient: 17	Proficient: 25 Highly Proficient: 25
Boys	38	50	P: 25 HP: 13	P: 25 HP: 25
Total:	80	100	80	100

**Table 2.** Item Distribution in the Questionnaire.

Communication Skills				
IM Type	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Stimulation	1, 13, 25, 37	10, 22, 34, 46	7, 19, 31, 43	4, 16, 28, 40
Accomplishment	5, 17, 29, 41	2, 14, 26, 38	11, 23, 35, 47	8, 20, 32, 44
Knowledge	9, 21, 33, 45	6, 18, 30, 42	3, 15, 27, 39	12, 24, 36, 48

**Table 3.** A Comparison on IM across L2 Communicative Skills of the Sophomore Multilingual Chinese Learners.

L2 Communicative Skills	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Listening	80	8.67	19.67	15.28	2.49
Speaking	80	9.33	19.67	15.77	2.34
Reading	80	9.33	20.00	16.11	2.41
Writing	80	8.00	20.00	15.21	2.62
Total	80				

**Table 4.** A Comparison on IM across L2 Communicative Skills of the Senior Multilingual Chinese Learners.

L2 Communicative Skills	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Listening	100	11.33	20.00	16.05	1.72
Speaking	100	12.33	20.00	16.65	1.78
Reading	100	12.33	20.00	16.66	1.79
Writing	100	9.00	20.00	15.98	2.22
Total	100				

**Table 5.** Means and Standard Deviations of the Different Types of Intrinsic Motivation on Various L2 Communicative Skills among Sophomore Multilingual Chinese Learners.

Types of Intrinsic Motivation	Listening		Speaking		Reading		Writing	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
IM - Stimulation	14.98	2.774	15.26	2.663	15.53	2.619	15.40	2.675
IM - Accomplishment	15.39	2.665	16.17	2.550	16.39	2.583	14.76	2.869
IM - Knowledge	15.46	2.705	15.85	2.506	16.42	2.647	15.48	2.972

**Table 6.** Means and Standard Deviations of the Different Types of Intrinsic Motivation on Various L2 Communicative Skills among Senior Multilingual Chinese Learners.

Types of Intrinsic Motivation	Listening		Speaking		Reading		Writing	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
IM - Stimulation	15.99	2.172	16.15	2.190	16.02	2.197	16.04	2.242
IM - Accomplishment	16.04	1.969	17.08	1.889	17.09	1.870	15.66	2.539
IM - Knowledge	16.13	2.043	16.72	1.886	16.88	1.935	16.24	2.594

**Table 7.** Means and Standard Deviations of Differentiation in the Intrinsic Motivation of L2 Learning between Age Groups.

	Year/ Age	Mean Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overall	2nd Year	13.64	80	15.593	2.309
	4th Year	15.64	100	16.336	1.623

**Table 8.** Means and Standard Deviations of Differentiation in the Motivation of L2 Learning between Language Proficiency Groups.

Language Proficiency	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Proficient	100	15.788	2.032
Highly Proficient	80	16.279	1.907

**Table 9.** Means and Standard Deviations of Differentiation in the Motivation of L2 Learning between Genders.

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overall	Male	88	15.384	1.966
	Female	92	16.601	1.827

**Table 10.** Correlation of Intrinsic Motivation to Key Variables Identified.

		Age	Gender	Language Proficiency
Intrinsic Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.186*	.307**	.123
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.000	.099
	N	180	180	180

Significant at  $p < 0.05$

## 5. Conclusion

The current study clearly showed that the multilingual Chinese students have high intrinsic motivation in learning the L2 communicative skills. However, these learners are more intrinsically motivated in learning specific L2 macro-skills such as reading and speaking. This can be explained by the students' active engagement to various Internet – mediated tasks which are academic or non – academic by nature. The student participants being electronically adept, use it to their advantage whether in searching for on – line references in accomplishing school work or in simply navigating various social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, and various blogs and sites of their interests). Moreover, the nature of the learners' curriculum would support why reading has the one of the highest IM level.

In terms of speaking, its nature of immediacy between interlocutors, and prestige of having L2 command explain its rank of being the one of the linguistic skills that students are intrinsically motivated in. As an addition, communicative opportunities brought about by school tasks and travel experiences of these student participants further highlighted the functionality of speech, thus preponderantly giving speaking a high intrinsic motivation.

By and large, the student participants are found to be intrinsically motivated via the IM subtypes of Accomplishment and Knowledge. Specifically, the second year group put premium on IM – Knowledge, whereas the fourth year group showed inclination towards IM – Accomplishment. Hence, these findings suggest that each group of student participants have inherent propensity to learn the L2 communicative skills under different motivating purposes as influenced by the interplay of various factors. In sum, these findings suggest that both groups put effort in attempting to master their skills in reading and speaking as shown in their intrinsic motivation via Accomplishment, and regard the pertinence of learning these L2 communicative skills as manifested in their intrinsic motivation via Knowledge.

Moreover, the findings suggest that age and gender would have no significant effect on intrinsic motivation in the study. However, the researchers tend attribute the inconsistency to the idea that the respondents used in the present study are only high school students who may not be that socially and

linguistically mature. As for language proficiency, the findings suggest that there is no significant difference between the two language proficiency groups (e.g. proficient and highly proficient), thus purportedly showing an indirect effect between IM and language proficiency in the present study.

This present study suggests that despite the number of languages operating in the student participants' milieu with respect to their L1 and their heritage language, students will always be interested to learn English as their L2 or second language due to the array of benefits it may bring them in the future. The fact that these Chinese student participants are multilingual by nature as brought about by their multicultural orientation make it easier for them to learn and appreciate the English language. Moreover, this unique linguistic feature is further enhanced by their early exposure to English in school and their immersion to vicarious L2 related tasks through time, thus giving them communicative edge over their high school counterparts.

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