Learning Motivation and Attitude towards Learning Thai as a Third Language of Chinese Students at a Thai Private University

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Abstract

With the prevalence of multilingualism, research on learning motivation for learning a third language cannot be ignored (Siemund, 2022). In particular, the research on the motivation of learning a Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) as a third language is particularly important (Hennebry, 2022). This study adapted "Attitude/Motivation Test Battery" (AMTB) designed by Gardner (1985) with a sample group of 82 Chinese students from a population of 450 Chinese students and then with purposive sampling technique selected 8 highly motivated students to do the structured interview to explore the motivation and attitudes of Chinese students learning Thai as a third language at a private Thai university. The study found that there were two types of motivation for Chinese students to learn Thai, integrative orientation and instrumental orientation. However, Chinese students in this group had integrative motivation to learn Thai, while the instrumental orientation was the initial motivation. In addition, external motivational factors such as language environment, teacher's professionalism and learning atmosphere, and the Internet, as well as internal motivational factors such as learning interest and learning strategies, all affected students' Thai language learning motivation. The study found that Chinese students had a positive attitude towards learning Thai, from the affective, behavioral or cognitive aspects. Therefore, more attention should be paid to developing integrative motivation from instrumental motivation found at the beginning.

Keywords: *Learning motivation, Attitude towards learning, Motivational Factors, Learning Thai, Third Language, Chinese Students*

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of globalization, the world becomes borderless (Faulconbridge & Beaverstock, 2008; Ministry of Education of China, 2018; European Commission, 2021), the

interconnection of peoples of the world can be achieved instantly. Languages have become important as a mean of communication (Gvelesiani, 2012; Siemund, 2022). Language, as an important means for cognition of the world, and an essential tool for communication and cooperation, is the product of the civilization of mankind (Fauconier and Turner, 2008; Hennebry, 2022). Thus, a need to know more than one language, the bilingual and multilingual emerges. As a result, bilingual or multilingual education has become an inevitable requirement for education in all countries to face the world depending on the contexts they are in: "where two or three languages are in contact" or "where many languages are in contact" (Crystal, 1997, p. 9; Siemund, 2022).

However, some scholars (Dai, 1993; Dai, 2009; Deng, 2018) point out that while the international uniqueness of English is obvious to all, linguistic diversity should be protected. Along the same line, Crystal (1997, p.17) remarks, "When a language dies, so much is lost" and "language is the people's identity." Currently, more and more people are aware of the significance of the multilingualism. In fact, China has proposed English as the first foreign language in Chinese school education as early as 1964. Overall, Chinese students learn at least two languages, namely, the first language (L1) Chinese and the second language (L2) English. Therefore, in the Chinese context, language learning other than Chinese and English is the third language (L3) for Chinese students.

Thai, as one of Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs), has little influence in countries other than Thailand. In this way, it seems that the popularity of Thai in the world is not very optimistic. Thus, at this very point, there must be some reasons why some Chinese students learn Thai as their L3. The reasons may come from economic consideration, for example, Meng (2022) states that "Economic activity needs to be organized through language...Language and linguistic knowledge have become important economic resources". Therefore, while the reasons may be the objective reasons of social economy, the reasons coming from the subjective reasons of language learners themselves cannot be ignored as well. However, when it comes to the subjective reasons of language learners, the answers cannot be unified and concluded in advance. Previous studies on learning motivation, both at home and abroad, mostly focused on Chinese students learning English at home, only a few researches about LCTLs. This research innovatively studied

the motivation and attitude of Chinese students to learn Thai as a third language in Thailand, so as to fill the research gap. Investigation will be focused on their motivation type, attitude, and motivational factors of learning Thai as a third language.

2. Research Objectives

1) To find out the types of motivation of the overseas Chinese students to learn the Thai language

2) To explore the motivational factors of the overseas Chinese students in learning the Thai language

3) To explore the attitudes of the students towards learning Thai as a third language

3. Research Questions

1) What are the types of motivation of the overseas Chinese students in learning the Thai language?

2) What are the motivational factors that influence the overseas Chinese students learning the Thai language?

3) What are the attitudes of the students towards learning Thai as a third language?

4. Literature Review

This section concluded the review of motivation type, motivation theories and language attitude.

4.1 Types of Motivation

In motivation studies, there are two types of motivation that must be mentioned, namely integrative orientation and instrumental orientation (Gardner,1959). Gardner and Lambert (1959) conducted research on students studying French in Canada and found that students' learning motivation has two different tendencies; one is integrative orientation and the other is instrumental orientation. The former is about learning a language to communicate in the target language group, or to better understand the language community, their culture or way of life, while the latter is about learning a language for some practical purposes or for the individuals' future career development,

such as getting a good job or keeping better educated, meeting the requirement for graduation, achieving the higher social status, reading technical materials, or translation work.

When both integrative orientation and instrumental orientation are considered important orientations of motivation, researchers found that in a formal learning situation, integrative orientation can better sustain learning activities (Ellis, 1997). What is more, Gardner (1959) points out that students with an integration orientation tend to have stronger motivation to learn language and higher learning achievement compared with those students with instrumental orientation. Also, Gardner (1985) argues that it is important to note that instrumental orientation has only been acknowledged as a significant factor in some research, whereas integrative orientation is continually linked to successful second language acquisition. Those who tend to have integrative orientation to language study are usually more highly motivated and more successful in language learning (Gardner,1985).

4.2 Motivation Theories

Undoubtedly, Gardner's research studies play a pivotal role in the field of L2 motivation for decades. As early as the 19th century, Gardner and Lambert carried out the work on the social psychology of language learning in the bilingual context in Canada, started a number of studies of motivation.

Gardner initially proposes the Socio-educational Model to suggest how the social milieu, individual difference, second language acquisition context might operate to influence the outcomes (linguistic and nonlinguistic). In this motivation model, motivation is in constant change and development. The social environment and the specific environment in which the individual lives are the arousing factors of motivation. The degree of integrativeness of the target language of the individual and the attitude towards the learning situation promote learning motivation.

Some scholars have also studied motivation. Dornyei and Otto (1998) states that the motivation process model consists of three stages: before action, during action and after action.

Each stage is composed of many components and steps that will be affected by a variety of internal and external factors. In this model, motivation is an infinite loop from beginning to end, and then beginning again. Later, based on summarizing Gardner's Socio-educational Model (1985) other scholars and his own research on foreign language learning motivation, Dornyei (2001) puts forward the Three-Level framework of L2 motivation, namely the language level, the learner level and the situation level. This framework cannot only helps language educators to identify learners' motivation for language learning, but also help researchers develop engine frameworks (Ushida, 2005).

4.3 Attitude in Language Learning

Although motivation has been deemed as relatively fixed and stable for adults, research in recent decades shows that learners' language attitudes may be more dynamic. Scholars have explored language attitudes from different research perspectives.

Some researchers have proposed that language attitudes are a reflection of social psychology. Gao Yihong (1998) believes that people's attitudes towards a certain language reflect the social status of the language and the "stereotypes" in people's minds of related language users. People's language attitudes are closely related to the social status of the language. Stern (1983) distinguishes three attitudes in foreign language learning: general attitudes toward the language and language learners; attitudes toward the target language community and speakers of the target language; and attitudes toward learning the language. Notably, Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) proposes that attitude consists of three components, namely affective, behavioral and cognitive component. The affective attitude is an emotion representing the physical feeling, such as respect and contempt, liking and disgust, sympathy and ridicule, etc. While behavioral attitude is the action of emotion feeling. Meanwhile cognitive attitude is a belief to certain situation. The cognitive component of an attitude is often a statement with an evaluative meaning, that is, not only the individual's knowledge and understanding of the object of the attitude, but also the individual's judgment, approval or disapproval. This study analyzed the Chinese students' attitude toward learning Thai as a L3 from these three aspects: affective, behavioral and cognitive.

5. Methodology

5.1 Population and Sample

The population of the study was 450 Chinese students registered with Rangsit University. A sample size of 82 was drawn using simple random technique and Yamane' (1967: 886) formula was used to derive the sample size. Sample size for ±10% precision levels where confidence level is 95% and P=.5.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{450}{1 + 450(0.1)^2} = 82$$

For the interview. Eight highly motivated students from the 82 samples were chosen with purposive sampling as the interviewees.

5.2 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research approach integrating quantitative and qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the data were collected with two instruments: the questionnaire for the quantitative data and the structured interview for the qualitative data.

First, the questionnaire was randomly distributed to Chinese students in Rangsit University through Wechat, a social media platform. After that, eight highly motivated students were invited to the structured interview conducted online. For data analysis, the quantitative data were analyzed by the SPSS program and the qualitative data were analyzed by content analysis to get the answers for the research questions.

5.3 Research Instruments

Questionnaire. The study adapted the internationally recognized second language learning motivation survey tool "Attitude/Motivation Test Battery" (AMTB) designed by Gardner and Lambert (1985). The author modified the questionnaire according to the three Item Objective Congruence (IOC) experts' evaluation. There were 48 questions in three parts, namely integrative orientation, instrumental orientation and attitude dimension.

Structured Interview. This study uses structured interview with 8 highly motivated

students to investigate the deeper motivational factors of Chinese students learning Thai. In this study, the author prepared six key questions for the interview as follows:

1. Why do you want to study Thai?

2. What do you think about the Thai language?

3. What motivational factors you think make you succeed in learning Thai?

4. Where would you like to use your Thai ability?

5. Can you tell me about the strategies you use when studying Thai?

6. What do you think you will do after you graduate?

5.4 Validity and Reliability

The research instruments were considered valid after the questionnaire and interview questions were sent to three content experts from Rangsit University, Walailak University and Prince of Songkla University for Item Objective Congruence (IOC). In order to ensure the reliability, the questionnaire was sent to 31 Chinese students, whose major was the Thai language to pilot test the instrument. The result showed a Cronbach score of 0.975.

5.5 Data Collection

Quantitative data collection and qualitative data collection were performed sequentially. First, a questionnaire was distributed to 82 Chinese students in the form of an online survey. Secondly, the author interviewed 8 interviewees via Wechat. Each interview generally lasted about 30 minutes.

5.6 Data Analysis

The questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS 26.0 and content analysis was used to analyze the interview data.

6. Results and Discussion

This section included data analysis and discussion.

6.1 Data Analysis for the First Research Question

To answer the first research question 'What are the types of motivation of the overseas Chinese students in learning the Thai language', the data were analyzed and discussed as follows.

Table 1. Mean and S.D of students' motivation and attitude in learning Thai

Item	Question	Mean	S.D	Interpretation
1) Students' integrative orientation toward learning Thai				
9	Studying Thai as a third language is important because it will allow me to be more at ease with people who speak Thai.	4.52	1.416	Agree
10	Most native Thai speakers are so friendly and easy to get along with, so I am fortunate to have them as friends.	4.71	1.291	Agree
11	Studying Thai is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.	4.56	1.306	Agree
12	Native Thai speakers are very sociable and kind.	4.56	1.297	Agree
13	Studying Thai is important because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate the Thai way of life.	4.49	1.250	Agree
14	I want to learn Thai so well that it will become natural to me.	4.60	1.256	Agree
15	I would like to know more native Thai speakers.	4.55	1.188	Agree
16	Studying Thai is important because I will be able to interact more easily with speakers of Thai.	4.59	1.422	Agree
22	I wish I were fluent in Thai.	3.78	1.648	Moderately agree
23	I have a strong desire to know all aspects of Thai.	3.76	1.696	Moderately agree
24	I really enjoy learning Thai.	4.18	1.641	Agree
25	I think Thai course is useful for me.	4.20	1.559	Agree
26	I plan to learn as much Thai as possible.	4.18	1.708	Agree
27	I look forward to the time I spend in Thai class.	4.18	1.701	Agree
28	Thai is one of my favourite courses.	4.27	1.499	Agree
29	Learning Thai as a third language is a challenge.	4.22	1.656	Agree
	Average	**4.33**	**1.470**	**Agree**

Item	Question	Mean	S.D	Interpretation
	2) Students' instrumental orientation toward learning Thai			
17	I want to learn Thai well in order to stay and work in Thailand after graduation.	4.52	1.354	Agree
18	I wish I could read newspapers and magazines in Thai.	4.34	1.363	Agree
19	I keep up to date with Thai by working on it to pass the exam.	3.63	1.781	Moderately agree
20	Studying Thai as a third language is important because it will make me more educated.	3.76	1.775	Moderately agree
21	Studying Thai as a third language is important because it will be useful in getting a good job in China.	3.88	1.636	Moderately agree
30	It encourages me to volunteer answers in Thai class to get rewards.	4.09	1.619	Agree
31	Studying Thai as a third language is important because other people will respect me more if I know Thai.	4.04	1.590	Agree
32	I learn Thai to please other people.	4.17	1.669	Agree
33	I really like Thai classroom environment.	4.01	1.567	Agree
34	My parents or other people have stressed the importance Thai will have for me when I leave school.	4.13	1.608	Agree
35	I enjoy the activities of our Thai class.	4.15	1.533	Agree
	Average	**4.06**	**1.590**	**Agree**

According to the analysis of the questionnaire data, it was found that the overseas Chinese students at Rangsit University learning Thai had both integrative orientation and instrumental orientation with integrative orientation as the more dominant motivation. The average mean score of their integrative orientation was 4.33 (S.D.=1.470). The data revealed that the instrumental orientation of overseas Chinese students was with the average mean score of 4.06 (S.D.=1.590). The results show that the reason why the majority of this group of students wanted to learn Thai

was mainly to communicate with the Thai natives, and to better understand the Thai language community as well as the Thai culture and the way of life.

The findings of structured interviews provided a further explanation of overseas Chinese students' motivation toward learning Thai as a third language. In the question 'Why do you want to learn Thai', six themes emerged from the analysis. The findings from the structured interview show that students study Thai for six reasons, they are: academic requirement; social needs; life needs; work demanded; personal improvement and cultural attraction. The details are shown below in Figure 1 and the interviewees' actual words.
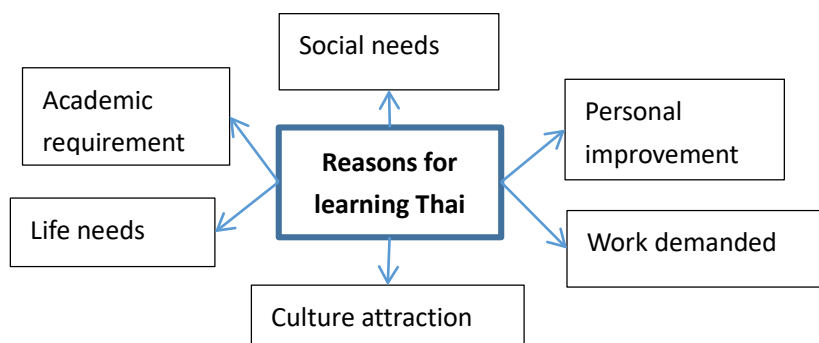

Figure 1. Students' reasons for learning Thai

Academic requirement

"First of all, I went to university in Thailand, so our daily study courses include Thai language classes, so we need to study" (Interviewee L).

"During the study period, the school has such a compulsory Thai language course, so we must study and get enough credits to graduate. If I don't study, I can't get credits and I can't graduate......" (Interviewee T).

Life needs

"Like I said just now, even if the school doesn't ask me to learn Thai, I have to learn it myself, because it's not just for schoolwork, right? Thai is my tool, right? I need to use Thai in my daily life" (Interviewee Z).

"Later, I found that after learning a little bit, it would be helpful to some of my daily life in

Thailand, and then I would like to learn more to gain more Thai expression and listening ability" (Interviewee G).

Social needs

"During my study in Thailand, I made some local friends. I need to communicate with them. This made me feel that Thai is a widely used language, and I also became interested in it, so I was more determined to learn it" (Interviewee T).

"Because I live in Thailand, I usually get along with teachers and classmates. If you can speak Thai, you will feel better able to integrate into them" (Interviewee C).

Personal improvement

"Because I am studying in Thailand after all, it is a small language used by the locals, and it is also a kind of improvement for myself, but also to expand my knowledge" (Interviewee Z).

"......I just want to say that if I can learn one more language, it can be regarded as one more skill. Then, as I continue to study Thai, I find that Thai helps me. There will be benefits in all aspects, and then I want to learn more" (Interviewee G).

Work demanded

"I also considered some work directions for my graduation, and then I took the initiative to learn Thai." (Interviewee W).

"......so I think this aspect is very important for me to learn Thai for my employment. There are still relatively large benefits" (Interviewee J).

Culture attraction

"I learned Thai because I really liked a Thai movie......This movie sparked my desire to explore the Thai language" (Interviewee J).

"Because Thailand is a relatively popular tourist country in the world, I think it is very good to live in Thailand......it will be more convenient to travel or settle down" (Interviewee L).

The questionnaire and interview show that students of this group have both types of motivation, integrative orientation and instrumental orientation. However, the integrative orientation is the more dominant motivation type of students to learn Thai. The result of this study is in line with Bao and Lee (2012), whose study points out that students in LCTLs experienced higher integrative orientation. The result of this study also agree with Nicol and De France (2020) who stated that integrativeness is a precursor to motivation, and Hernández (2006), who found that integrative motivation was a significant predictor of his 130 intermediate students' desire to continue studying Spanish. The result of this study is also in line with Oller et al. (1977) who pointed out that learners who are with higher integrative motivation performed better than those with lower integrative motivation. The result of this study is agree with Gardner's (1985) Socio-educational Model. The Socio-educational Model emphasizes the important position of integrative orientation in foreign language learning. In many cases, integrative motivation, against other types, is found to have the most positive effect in language learning (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Gearing & Roger, 2019).

However, this result is opposite to Chen (2005), who studied Chinese EFL learners' motivation in Taiwan. He found that integrative motivation plays no significant role. Wen (2011) added to this puzzle, pointing out that in a setting where Chinese culture and native speakers are not directly accessible, integrative orientation become a minor motivation and might be integrated into more dynamic motivational dimensions such as instrumentality. This reason may be true in certain study contexts such as Wen's (2011), but it is not true in the current study context. The conclusion of this research proves that Gardner's Socio-educational Model with the core of integrative motivation is suitable for the motivation research of Chinese students studying Thai in Thai universities.

In this study, Chinese students were in full contact with the target language environment. Under such social milieu, students show a strong integrative orientation of the Thai language, the Thai culture and the Thai community. Indeed, changes in the social environment affect individual motivation. As the integratively motivated student goes to Thailand to learn Thai, he or she has a

further understanding of the cultural environment of the target language. He or she interacts with more Thai people, recognizes more of Thailand's national conditions, and experiences life through the use of authentic Thai every day.

6.2 Data Analysis for the Second Research Question

To answer the second research question, 'What are the motivational factors that influence the oversea Chinese students learning the Thai language?', the answer came from the structure interview questions 'What motivational factors do you think make you succeed in learning Thai?' and 'Can you tell me about the strategies you use when studying Thai'. External factors and internal factors emerged in this question. The themes can be summarized into language environment, teacher professionalism and learning atmosphere, the Internet, learning interest and learning strategy. The details are shown in the figure and the actual words are given as examples.
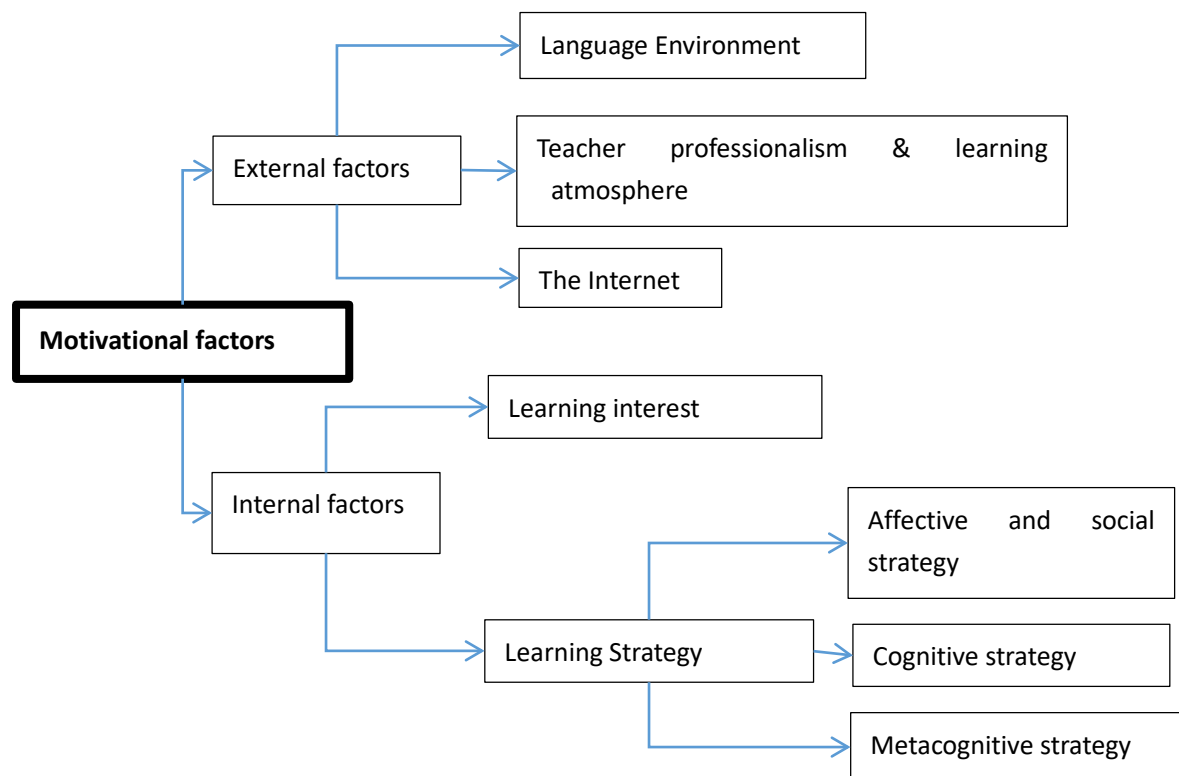
Figure 2. Students' motivational factors

Language environment

"...so the most favorable factor for me to learn Thai is the language environment, because

80% of the people you work with are Thai people living and working here, and then you, as a foreigner, you have to communicate with them in Thai, and in the process of communication, you will subtly remember a lot of words, because it requires you to keep saying it..." (Interviewee W).

"I think the reason that helps me to learn Thai is that I am in Thailand and ......everything is in Thai, that is, I live in a world of Thai, I can learn Thai anytime, anywhere without time and space constraints, I can contact Thai, and master Thai" (Interviewee J).

"...You will find that when you learn a language, environmental factors are particularly influential......" (Interviewee G).

Teacher professionalism and learning atmosphere

"The teacher's teaching style is very interesting, mainly because the classroom atmosphere is very active, and the teacher himself is also quite funny, so we are more willing to learn" (Interviewee C).

"... teacher used some very simple methods that he understood to tell us how to think and how to speak Thai, to read and to write. There is definitely nothing to complain about the quality of the teachers. Then the classmates around me also learn from each other, which is a good learning atmosphere." (Interviewee Z).

The Internet

"Another favorable factor is the current Internet. Internet learning is also very convenient, and although we usually don't have a lot of time to take some regular Thai language training classes in our life and work, I can go to some Thai online classes in my spare time, and then follow the teacher to learn some systematic Thai courses..." (Interviewee W).

Learning interest

"I think that my interests is the main guide for learning Thai. If you feel bored when you learn Thai, it may be difficult to study systematically, or you may give up halfway during learning. These things may happen" (Interviewee H).

"In fact, when I started to learn Thai, I was self-taught. I needed to learn things by myself.

It was only after I had a great interest in it that I could stick to it" (Interviewee W).

Affective and social strategy

"That is to say, go out more often, and then feel the local humanities, some culture, and their expressions in Thai, to learn more authentic expressions and Thai culture. This is my strategy for learning Thai" (Interviewee L).

"Because I am in Thailand, the easiest and most direct way is to communicate with the local people and listen to what they have to say, which may be more helpful for my study, rather than buying some tapes, some textbooks, etc." (Interviewee T).

"That is to practice more or discuss with the teacher more, and usually try to communicate with classmates in Thai as much as possible, even with our Chinese classmates, we will communicate in Thai, so that we can practice Thai proficiency better." (Interviewee C).

Cognitive strategy

"...because Thai writing can be difficult for me, and then I often practice writing Thai at home..." (Interviewee H).

"Learning Thai depends on rote memorization, just like Chinese primary school students learn Hanyu Pinyin, the hard rules, you have to memorize" (Interviewee Z).

Metacognitive strategy

"I will go straight to some Thai publications, and then when I watch some Thai movies, I will only watch the Thai version, only the Thai subtitles, not the Chinese translation, and then try to understand what they are saying" (Interviewee G).

"Before the exam, I will practice conversations with my classmates in my spare time, because most of this content is arranged by the teacher or written by ourselves, and to a large extent, we will depend on the degree of our own Thai vocabulary mastery, we will make some self-choice. I would choose very long articles to transcribe. In the process of copying, I observe how they break the sentences, and then I write some dialogues and imitate some articles by myself, and then I will check the gaps and fill in the gaps, which is probably to prepare for the exam" (Interviewee H).

From the findings of the study, it was reported that external motivational factors (such as language environment, teachers' professionalism and learning atmosphere, and the Internet) and internal motivational factors (such as learning interest, learning strategy) jointly effect students' Thai learning.

Firstly, according to Baroto (2017), language environment plays important role in determining the second language acquisition of language learner. It includes everything the language learner hears and sees in the new language. Based on this study, language environment can be varied in terms of the situations, such as conversation with friends or vendors, watching television, reading street signs and magazines, as well as classroom activities. The result of this study is in line with Krashen (1982), who states that the quality of the language environment is of paramount importance to success in learning new language and Gholami (2012), who confirms that the language environment in the social context is believed to influence attitude and motivation. Other researchers also presented similar findings in their studies (Gardner, 1985; Barkhuizen, 2004; Montero, 2014). In this study, students lived in a Thai-speaking environment and have many opportunities to come into direct contact with the Thai culture. Students participated in activities related to Thai, found the fun of learning Thai in the activities, felt the sense of achievement brought by learning Thai, and thus students were highly motivated to learn the target language, Thai.

Secondly, teachers with professionalism can also stimulate students' motivation to learn Thai. The result is in line with A Saeed (2021), who states that teachers' professional skill has positive impact on students' learning. Also, the result supports the statement with Sung and Tsai (2014) who suggest that language teachers not only need to introduce the culture of the target language in order to foster integrative motivation of learners, but they should also provide their learners with an authentic and meaningful learning context by means of interactive and suitable activities and tasks. In this study, Thai language class teacher is a native Thai teacher with rich knowledge, which enables students to better understand the Thai language and Thai culture in the Thai class. The teacher's professional knowledge, interesting teaching style, and the establishment

of good teacher-student relationship all motivate students to learn the Thai language. At the same time, the positive learning atmosphere created by teachers and students also has a positive effect on students' learning of Thai. Moreover, the Internet helps students learn Thai. Students enjoy the convenience brought by Internet learning. Learning Thai courses on the Internet is different from the traditional on-site courses, with a certain freshness, which can stimulate students to learn.

Thirdly, learning interest is one of the important aspects of motivational factors as well. The finding agrees with Sung and Tsai (2014), who finds that interest is one of the motivational factors among learners at the university level in the United States. In this study, students' interest in learning Thai comes from their love for the Thai culture, their recognition of the Thai life, and their desire to communicate with the Thai community. According to John Dewey (1913), who states that interest facilitates learning, improves understanding and stimulates effort as well as personal involvement. With the students' in-depth exposure to the Thai language and Thai culture, an emotion is built between the enthusiastic learners and the Thai culture, and students develop interest in the Thai language and its culture, thereby enhancing their motivation to learn Thai beyond the attraction of a high exam score and a good job with a good pay.

Moreover, the findings showed that students tended to use affective and social strategy, cognitive strategy and metacognitive strategy to learn Thai. Other researchers have also presented similar findings in their studies (Chou, 2004; Parra, 2010; Galti, 2016; Zakaria, Hashimand & Yunus, 2019)

However, Wang (2004) finds that some Chinese college students are passive language learners refusing to abandon the influence of high school, and always waiting for teachers to do everything for them in the learning process. In this study, students were no longer passive learners because they were outside their comfort zone and had to handle a lot of things on their own. As a result, learning was no exception. They live in a pure Thai language environment every day, adopt positive affective and social strategies, actively communicate with people, and continuously improve their Thai speaking and listening skills. At the same time, Chinese students firmly believe

that diligence can make up for weakness, so Chinese students tend to adopt cognitive strategies, practice Thai repeatedly, and consolidate the foundation of Thai. In addition, before the exam, Chinese students will check for gaps, actively adopt metacognitive strategies, carry out targeted review, and improve their Thai language performance.

6.3 Data Analysis for the Third Research Question

The results of the third question 'What are the attitudes of the students towards learning Thai as a third language' are presented below.

Table 2. Students' attitude toward learning Thai

Item	Question	Mean	S.D	Interpretation
	3) Students' attitude toward learning Thai			
36	I am confident in learning Thai well.	4.20	1.559	Agree
37	Learning Thai as a third language is really great.	4.12	1.400	Agree
38	I feel very much at ease when I have to speak Thai.	4.06	1.346	Agree
39	I feel confident when asked to speak in my Thai class.	4.05	1.482	Agree
40	It doesn't bother me at all to speak Thai.	3.96	1.409	Moderately agree
41	I will keep learning Thai even after graduation	4.18	1.549	Agree
42	I would feel quite relaxed if I had to express my destination in Thai to take a taxi.	4.00	1.563	Agree
43	I really work hard to learn Thai.	4.15	1.483	Agree
44	When I am studying Thai, I ignore distractions and pay attention to my task.	4.09	1.557	Agree
45	Thai is a very important part of the school programme.	4.01	1.503	Agree
46	I believe learning Thai is useful.	3.98	1.507	Moderately agree

47	I think that learning Thai is interesting.	4.05	1.396	Agree
48	I make learning Thai well as my goal.	4.13	1.480	Agree
	Average	**4.07**	**1.479**	**Agree**

The results of the questionnaire show that the students' attitude towards learning Thai as a third language is positive, with the average mean score of 4.07 (S.D 1.479). However, in order to better understand students' attitudes towards learning Thai, this study analyzed students' attitudes from the affective, behavioral and cognitive aspects when conducting qualitative analysis of the interviewed data. To the question 'What do you think of Thai language?', five themes were found. The results show that some students thought that Thai language is difficult to learn, while some students thought Thai is close to Chinese dialects. And some students praised Thai as a value language, beautiful language, and some students expressed learning Thai is interesting. The details are shown in the figure below and the actual words that are given as examples.
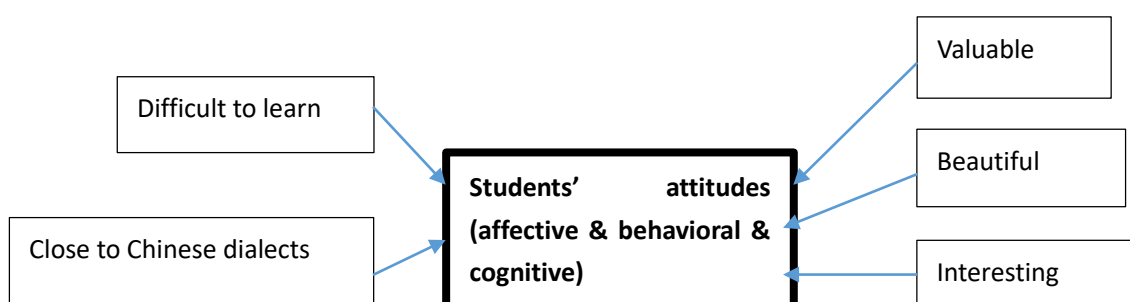

Figure 3. Students' attitude

Difficult to learn

"I think there are still some differences between Thai and Chinese and English. It may be difficult to learn at first, because the characters and tones are quite different, so it may be difficult to learn" (Interviewee G).

"Then although Thai is a small language, it is not particularly easy to learn, because its pronunciation is very different from Chinese, and there are also some very similar pronunciations between the two words. So, it is difficult for us Chinese to distinguish..." (Interviewee W).

Close to Chinese dialect

"...because Chinese and Thai are both Sino-Tibetan languages, I think there may be some similarities in their grammar, so for me, learning Thai is easier than learning English..." (Interviewee J).

"As long as you have learned the basics, and then mastered the vowels and consonants, learning is relatively simple. And because I am from Guangxi, there are people in our family who can speak Zhuang. Thai and Zhuang are the same language family, so I may have some learning foundation, and I will feel familiar with the Thai language" (Interviewee C).

"I think Thai is much simpler than Chinese, because there are many classmates around me, from Chaoshan, including Guangdong, and friends from Yunnan. Many of them are familiar with Thai." (Interviewee Z).

Valuable

"No matter what language it is, it is a language. It is a culture; it is the culture of a region...All languages are equal. As a local culture in Thailand, I think it will be worthwhile for us international students to learn more about it. So to me, I think it is to learn as a culture and a skill, without considering whether it is a popular language or a universal language" (Interviewee G).

Beautiful

"I think Thai is a very beautiful language and it is written very beautifully. Then the second point, I think the pronunciation of Thai is very pleasant and interesting" (Interviewee J).

"I think Thai is a very good language, because Thai is very unique, and it feels very different to have its own unique culture. I personally feel that Thai is very good. In short, I feel that Thai is a very good language in general" (Interviewee L).

Interesting

"It may be difficult to learn it, but after learning Thai, I think it is quite interesting" (Interviewee H).

The results show that students found it was difficult to learn Thai because the Thai alphabets were difficult to write and the Thai tones were difficult to pronounce. For some students the Thai language was close to their Chinese dialects that they were familiar with. Thai is especially close to the Zhuang dialect in Guangxi, the Dai dialect in Yunnan. These languages belong to the Sino-Tibetan language family. Students admitted the value and the beauty of the language, and what they perceived Thai is interesting revealed the students' positive affective and cognitive attitudes towards the Thai language.

The findings of this study reveal that students of this group generally have positive affective, behavioral and cognitive attitudes toward learning Thai as a third language. This is in line with Karahan (2007), who affirms that positive attitudes lead students to positive orientation in language learning and Eka et al. (2020), who finds that both higher achievement class and lower achievement class students' language attitudes were mostly positive (91.83%) in cognitive, affective and behavioral language attitudes. The similar finding can also be found in other studies (Moh Radhi, 2020; Chanisa, 2021).

In this study, firstly, the findings show that students' affective attitude toward learning Thai is positive. According to Chen (1999), affective attitude is linked to the life experience or the language environment where individuals live in. In this study, students deemed that the Thai language is good, unique, beautiful, and interesting. This is because Chinese students' studying and living in Thailand gradually develop a close affection for the Thai language, as well as the uniqueness of Thai culture, all attract Chinese students to further study the Thai language. In addition, this is inseparable from Chinese students' inclusive and open mind towards foreign cultures.

Secondly, the results showed that students' behavioral attitude is positive as well. Dornyei and Otto (1998) believes that positive behavioral attitude may be related to the learning effort. In this study, students found Thai language to be very difficult at the beginning because Thai is very different from Chinese, both in the Thai alphabetical system and pronunciation, while some found

Thai is easy to learn because Thai and some Chinese dialects are of the same language family, Sino-Tibetan languages. Regardless of whether the students thought the Thai language was difficult or easy to learn, they kept on learning Thai and the students showed a positive attitude. There may be two reasons for this. One is that Thai is a compulsory subject and students have to learn it. Second, Chinese students have developed an interest in Thai since they are immersed in the Thai environment and will continue to learn it no matter how difficult it is.

Thirdly, the findings also showed that students' cognitive attitude toward learning Thai is positive. According to Lambert (1967), cognitive component refers to an individual's belief structure. In this study, students believed that Thai is a valuable language and learning Thai is useful. There are many reasons why students have a positive cognitive attitude towards Thai. On the one hand, students think learning Thai is useful because they deem Thai as a tool to communicate, to broaden their horizons, to understand the culture, and to find a job after graduation. On the other hand, students have an open and inclusive attitude towards language learning. In addition to the charm of Thai culture itself, the phenomenon of "Southeast Asian language fever" under the economic background of the Belt and Road Initiative has increasingly made students see the value of Thai.

7.Conclusion

Through the investigation of Chinese students' motivation for learning Thai as a third language, it is found that there are generally two types of students' motivation for learning Thai: integrative orientation and instrumental orientation. Among them, the instrumental orientation is the initial motivation, and the integrative orientation is the dominant motivation. This means that students learn Thai at the beginning because of academic requirements, and students have to learn it in order to get credits to graduate. However, after the students lived in Thailand for a period of time, the students continued to become interested in the Thai language, and wanted to integrate into the Thai-speaking community and communicate with people in Thai, so as to meet their own social needs and life needs. In addition, external motivational factors such as language environment, teacher's professionalism and learning atmosphere, and the Internet, as well as internal motivational

factors such as learning interest and learning strategies, all affect students' Thai language learning motivation. The study also found that Chinese students have a positive attitude towards learning Thai, whether it is from the affective, behavioral or cognitive aspects.

7.1 Recommendation for LCTLs' Learning Motivation

1) Students should be encouraged to find the fun of learning, stimulate learning interest, establish learning goal.

2) Teachers should create a relaxed and pleasant language learning atmosphere and encourage students to participate in the activity and help them understand the culture of a foreign country.

3) Thai curriculum design should pay more attention on the students' integrativeness so as to meet the students' integrative orientation.

7.2 Recommendation for Future Research

Based on the results of this study, coupled with the limitation of the research, the researcher would like to give some recommendations for future research as follows:

1) Future research should focus on the relationship between motivation and attitudes in learning Thai and academic achievement.

2) Future studies should investigate changes in motivation for learning Thai before and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

3) Future research should study demotivation for learning Thai as a third language.

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9. The Authors

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