

## Discrepancies between students' and teachers' expectations of purposeful foreign language learning

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### ABSTRACT

Motivation has been found to play a pivotal role for the success of foreign language learning. Students generally stay motivated if they appreciate the purposefulness of their learning process, so if they did not share the same expectations with their teachers of the process, these discrepancies might affect their motivation and disrupt their learning. This mixed-method research uses online questionnaires to examine four major topics, namely program, curriculum, teachers, and students, and employs comparative analysis to the views of the two respondent groups to investigate such discrepancies. The results show discrepancies exist among the respondents, especially in what the students expect to learn, the line of work that they desire to take, and the different factors that affect their motivation. These results signify the need to better align the students' and the teachers' expectations of foreign language learning in order to maintain the students' motivation and to improve the effectiveness of the learning process.

**Keywords:** *Motivation, foreign language learning, curriculum, employment*

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## INTRODUCTION

Motivation plays a pivotal role for the success of any learning process, including learning a foreign language. According to Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), motivation serves as the primary stimulus that initiates foreign language learning and as the mental strength that sustains the time-consuming and tiresome learning process. Other studies have confirmed that motivation is the most influential factor in successfully learning a new language (Dörnyei, 2005; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Paradis, 2009) and hence, motivation has become a significant theme in language learning researches (Shrum & Glisan, 2016).

It is generally accepted that the study of motivation was first brought into the limelight by the work of Gardner and Lambert who introduced the well-known concepts of integrativeness and instrumentality. Integrativeness is a positive outlook on a target language and culture which may encourage a learner to integrate him/herself with the speakers or to become more similar to them, whereas instrumentality refers to the perception of pragmatic benefits from studying the language (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005). Interest in motivation reemerged in early 1990s due to the publication of three critical papers from Crookes and Schmidt (1991), Dörnyei (1994a), and Oxford and Shearin (1994), which propositioned expanding the framework in studying motivation. In reply, Tremblay and Gardner (1995) clarified what they perceived as a misinterpretation of Gardner's and Lambert's previous works, but agreed with the necessity to expand the motivational construct.

Ever since, researchers have attempted to make the study more education-oriented and congruent with the mainstream educational psychological research. This approach has successfully expanded the paradigm in language learning motivation with the inclusion of learners' cognitive aspects, the integration of influential theories from mainstream psychology; and the focus on situational factors pertinent to classroom application (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007). It had been quickly noted that motivational strategies encompass wider range than reward versus punishment (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008) and

various scholars have recommended various motivational strategies (Alison, 1993; Dörnyei, 1994a; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Williams & Burden, 1997) that could help improve teaching and learning situation.

A structured framework to evaluate motivation and guideline to implement motivational techniques are provided by Dörnyei. According to Dörnyei (1994b, 1997), the motivation components can be categorized into four levels. The first, the Language Level, consists of Integrative and Instrumental Motivational Subsystems. The second, the Learner Level, consists of two components, the Need for Achievement and Self-Confidence. The third, the Learning Situation Level, consists of the Course-Specific, the Teacher-Specific, and the Group-Specific Motivational Components, which each can be broken down further. Dörnyei (2001) also suggested a motivational strategy system that contains four dimensions: creating basic motivational conditions, generating initial motivation, maintaining and protecting motivation, and encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation.

In line with the current direction of motivation study, this research seeks to examine the students' and teachers' expectations of foreign language learning in a higher education setting and how they affect study motivation. The term 'expectation' in this research is used as a blanket term that encompasses the respondents' views and beliefs. It had been noted in previous studies that some foreign language learners might not fully understand the nature of language, language learning process, cross-cultural interaction, and communication management (Brecht, 1991), but unaware of this reality, academic decisions were often taken with the assumption that the students shared the same or similar beliefs with the teachers and/or the administrators (Lutz, 1990; Yorio, 1986), and therefore, Kuntz (1996) argued that language teachers and administrators need to address this discrepancy in beliefs. This urgency is the primary basis for this research.

As a background, I currently teach Indonesian language in the Department of Indonesian Language and Culture at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, located in Guangzhou, China. GDUFS was formed in 1995 after the merger of two higher institutions, namely Guangzhou Foreign Language Institute, which was founded in 1964, and Guangzhou Institute of Foreign Trade, which was established in 1980 (GDUFS, 2022). As of 2022, GDUFS offers 68 undergraduate majors, of which, 28 are in foreign language, including Indonesian language. In the four-year program, although every semester the students take additional courses (such as English, politics, and PE), they primarily focus on acquiring language proficiency, gaining understanding of various aspects of the culture, and equipping themselves with essential language-related skills, such as translation and interpreting. It is imperative for them to excel in their study, since this achievement will become their fundamental asset to secure a job when they graduate. Their challenge may be harder in the future, as technology advances and sociocultural situation changes with time, inevitably affecting the potential employers' demands and raising the bars for jobseekers (Milano, 2022, March 25; Mitchell, 2023, September 6; Standley, 2023, September 9).

While teaching, I wondered whether my students share the same expectations with their teachers about purposeful language learning. I have always believed that students generally become and stay motivated in their learning when they realize and appreciate the purposefulness of their learning, and thus, unless the expectations from the students and the teachers are in agreement, the teaching learning process might not progress well. Recognizing the students' necessity to succeed in their foreign language study and the importance of motivation in ensuring a successful foreign language learning endeavor, I initiated this research. This research fundamentally investigated whether there are any discrepancies in the way students and the teachers perceive purposeful language learning, especially in its correlation with securing a job position in the future, and how these might affect motivation.

This research holds both practical and academic significance. In terms of practical significance, first of all, having the expectations revealed and put into better alignment would help to improve the effectiveness of the learning activities. Having better grasp of the learning purpose would help the students to stay motivated, while having better understanding of the students' aspirations would help the teachers to provide more relevant learning experiences, as well as ease their burden in lesson planning. Secondly, it will also help the university promotional effort. As students stay motivated, they would have higher chance to attain the competence required to be attractive recruits. Therefore, it would be more likely for them to associate the success of their job search with the degree they have earned, and consequently, be a promotor of their alma mater. In terms of academic significance, firstly, the results should inform our teaching practices, helping us polish our pedagogy and grow professionally as

language teachers. Secondly, as the research results paint a clearer, more thorough, and more up-to-date picture of how both teachers and students view what constitute purposeful foreign language learning, this research would consequently provide significant contribution to the field of foreign language teaching and learning.

## METHOD

A mixed method was employed to discover trends among the participants and to uncover thoughts that explain such patterns. Literature research was first carried out to study contemporary theories around motivation, foreign language program, and foreign language classroom practices. This generated a guideline for the data collection and an objective benchmark for purposeful language learning. Afterwards, quantitative and qualitative data collection took place.

The subject was limited to students who were currently studying foreign language in the School of Asian Languages and Cultures and their local Chinese teachers. There are seven departments in the School, namely the Departments of Cambodia, Indonesian, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. The total number of the student population is 253 and the total number of the teacher population is 29.

**Table 1. Student Respondents Profile**

Department	Gender		Academic Year				TOTAL (by dept)
	F	M	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	
1. Cambodia	4	1	0	2	0	3	5
2. Indonesia	21	7	10	7	1	10	28
3. Laos	8	1	0	3	3	3	9
4. Malaysia	14	3	5	3	6	3	17
5. Myanmar	6	3	0	5	2	2	9
6. Thailand	14	2	5	3	3	5	16
7. Vietnam	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL (by gender)	67	17					
Total (by academic year)			20	23	15	26	84

A total of 84 student participated in this research, making up 30% of the total population. As seen in Table 1, the female respondents are much larger in number than the male respondents, but this properly represents the population in which the female students far outnumber their male counterparts. Students from the Indonesian Department formed the largest group, while those from the Cambodian Department became the smallest. No student from the Vietnamese Department participated, perhaps due to their lack of communication with their foreign teacher, as she had just arrived at the university and possibly had not maintained a close relationship with her students.

Eight teachers participated, representing 27.6% of the teacher population. Their low participation rate might have been due to their hectic schedule or the lack of communication between the researcher, the foreign teachers, and the local teachers. Only three indicated their department: two from the Indonesian Department and one from the Burmese Department. Only one is male, while the rest are female, but this also represents the population since there are more female than male teachers.

Two sets of questionnaires were developed; one for the students and one for the teachers. Both questionnaires were first written in English and Indonesian. The English version was reserved for the report, whereas the Indonesian version was to be translated to Chinese. The questionnaires mainly examine the respondents' views on four major topics related to foreign language learning, namely the program, curriculum, teachers, and students. Aspects in each section were accumulated from the literature research, the researcher's teaching experiences, and local teaching-learning contexts in China in general or GDUFs in particular. They questionnaires were translated to Chinese and then converted into online questionnaires by the student-research assistant. Before being released, the questionnaires were piloted by several former students (graduates) to check for accuracy, clarity, and ease of navigation.

The data collection took place from November to December 2023. The questionnaires were made available online through the Chinese online survey service *WenJuanXing* and then shared through the Chinese instant messaging app, WeChat (*Weixin*). Both platforms were chosen because they were the most readily available and widely used in China. Links to the questionnaires were shared to the foreign teachers who then passed them to their students and colleagues.

By the end of the semester, the raw data was downloaded, but since it was in Chinese, it had to be translated first before it was recapped and analyzed in Microsoft Excel. Excel was chosen because the analysis required was not too complicated. The data from the two respondent groups were mostly tallied, calculated, and then compared. The data analysis and the report writing then took place during the 2023 winter break.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In accordance with the four major topics investigated, this section is divided into four sections. Findings will be first presented and discussion will follow afterwards.

### Expectations of Foreign Language Program

Two subtopics were examined, namely the aspects and the prospects of a foreign language program.

#### *Aspects of Foreign Language Program*

The twelve aspects examined in the first subtopic can be grouped into five categories: 1) the ability to communicate using the language (language proficiency); 2) the grammatical aspect of the language (linguistic knowledge), 3) the practical skills more directly associated with foreign language learning (translation, interpreting, presentation, and writing), 4) the less directly related skills (teaching and researching), and 5) the content knowledge around the target language (cultural, historical, economic, and socio-political knowledge). Both groups also disclosed their evaluation on whether those aspects had been sufficiently taught by giving a rate ranging from 1, indicating insufficiency, to 10, indicating sufficiency.

**Table 2. Aspects of Foreign Language Program**

Aspects	Students		Teachers	
	To Learn	Sufficient	To Learn	Sufficient
Language Proficiency	94.0	5.0	100	8.9
Linguistic Knowledge	48.8	4.6	62.5	6.4
Translation Skill	86.9	4.8	100	8.4
Interpreting Skill	84.5	3.8	100	8.1
Presentation Skill	52.4	3.8	62.5	6.9
Writing Skill	45.2	4.6	62.5	7.3
Teaching Skill	36.9	3.6	0	6
Research Skill	34.5	3.2	37.5	5.5
Cultural Knowledge	69.0	5	87.5	7.5
Historical Knowledge	48.8	4.5	87.5	7.6
Economic Knowledge	52.4	4	75	6.6
Socio-political Knowledge	51.2	4.5	87.5	7.3

First of all, both groups perceived that language proficiency is the most essential aspect to learn in a foreign language program, as almost all stated that foreign language students should expect to acquire it. Interestingly, neither of the groups correlated language proficiency with linguistic knowledge, as fewer respondents believed foreign language students should expect to study it in the program.

Secondly, both groups expressed similar expectations regarding the importance of the skills. Translation and interpreting skills were valued highly by both, but not so with the other four skills. In addition, none of the teachers thought that foreign language students should expect to study teaching skill in their program.

Thirdly, a discrepancy appeared among the views of the content knowledge. The teachers mostly perceived that the students should expect to study the cultural, historical, economic, and socio-political aspects (75% and higher), but the students did not share this perception, as all four aspects scored below 70%. The sharpest contrast appeared in the historical knowledge; 87.5% of teachers thought students should study it, but only 48.8% of the students thought so.

Lastly, a striking finding is found in the second part of the data. The teachers believed that most aspects had been covered adequately, but the students marked all low in term of sufficiency. The highest score, merely 5 out of 10, was given for language proficiency and cultural knowledge. All other aspects scored below 5, including the two skills that the students deemed necessary, namely translation (4.8) and interpreting (3.8).

These wide discrepancies of views between the two groups indicate they had different ideas about how the program should be and what it should contain, as well as in the gap in satisfaction with the coverage of the aspects in foreign language program. These discrepancies might become the source of discontent among the students and might affect their perception of the program quality.

### ***Prospects of Foreign Language Program***

In regards to the prospects, both group of respondents generally shared similar perception.

**Table 3. Confidence in Foreign Language Program Prospect**

	Statement	Students	Teachers
1.	Graduates take employment related to their language major.	94.0	87.5
2.	Foreign language degree will help secure future employment.	98.8	100
3.	Graduates will use the language in future employment	91.7	100
4.	Foreign language is a preferable major these days	38.1	25
5.	I would recommend foreign language major	47.6	75

Almost all of the student respondents stated that they would be interested to take a job related to their degree. Several respondents were driven by integrative motive in their study, as they mentioned they loved learning it, they became attracted with the target language and its culture, they wanted to continue improving their language proficiency, and they wanted to interact with the target language speakers. Few others, who were driven by instrumental motive, wanted to put into use what they have learned, and thought learning foreign language would improve their employment prospect. Among few who answered no, one blamed his/her lack of language aptitude, while another one thought the language major offered limited job opportunities.

Among the teachers, most stated their students did take degree-related jobs. As also shown in above, both groups still had high rate of confidence in the value of a foreign language degree in securing a job and in its usability in the employment. However, both groups' attitude about foreign language program itself is rather negative, as majority did not consider foreign language a preferable major nowadays, mainly due to these reasons: 1) Rapid technological development: Foreign language graduates will lose out to new technology, such as artificial intelligence (AI); 2) Weak prospect of foreign language competence: A skill in foreign language is not useful nor appealing enough to secure a job and is easily replaceable; 3) Mismatch between language majors and job opportunities: Only few job opportunities are available, but there are too many graduates already; 4) Geopolitical situation: Domestic conflict has made several target language countries uncondusive for economic development.

More than half of the students said they would not recommend their program to their friends and family, and the most cited reason was the difficulty in finding a job with the language major. For those who would, it was because they loved learning language and believed it could widen the learner's insights. The teachers' attitude was more positive, but few also shared the students' thoughts. All in all, if this attitude does not change, it is surely less possible for the graduates or even the teachers to spread positive word-of-mouth regarding the instrumental attractiveness of foreign language as a major.

Both groups also revealed their thoughts on what line of work a foreign language program graduates expect to take, and below are the details.

**Table 4. Expected Line of Work**

	Line of Work	Students	Teachers
3.	Translation	56.0 <sup>1</sup>	75.0 <sup>1</sup>
10.	Diplomacy	50.0 <sup>2</sup>	37.5 <sup>4</sup>
1.	Language Teaching	47.6 <sup>3</sup>	75.0 <sup>1</sup>
7.	Commerce	44.0 <sup>4</sup>	37.5 <sup>4</sup>
8.	Marketing	32.1 <sup>5</sup>	75.0 <sup>1</sup>
5.	Interpreting	31.0 <sup>6</sup>	25.0 <sup>5</sup>
9.	Public Relation	27.4 <sup>7</sup>	37.5 <sup>4</sup>
11.	Administration	27.4 <sup>7</sup>	62.5 <sup>2</sup>
12.	Content Creation	26.2 <sup>8</sup>	37.5 <sup>4</sup>
6.	Tourism	23.8 <sup>9</sup>	62.5 <sup>2</sup>
2.	Non-language Teaching	17.9 <sup>10</sup>	50.0 <sup>3</sup>
13.	Research & Consultancy	15.5 <sup>11</sup>	50.0 <sup>3</sup>

*Note.* Numbers in the first column indicates the order of the item in the questionnaire. The superscript numbers next to the score indicates the rank for the respondent group.

Among the students, the three most expected lines of work for foreign language graduates were translation, diplomatic work, and language teaching. Meanwhile, the three least expected lines of work among the students were research and consultancy, non-language teaching, and tourism. Among the teachers, the three most expected lines of work for foreign language graduates are translation, language teaching, and marketing, whereas the least expected was interpreting job.

This finding has provided several interesting points for discussion. Firstly, tourism was chosen as the third least expected job by the students, but it was one of the second most expected jobs among the teachers, so there is a huge discrepancy between the two in how they perceive this work. Secondly, diplomatic work ranked second among the students, but it was fairly low among the teachers. Furthermore, it is rather bewildering that the students have high expectation of this job, while this opportunity is limited since the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not always recruit new personnel every year and when it does, the position is usually a few and extremely competitive. Thirdly, it is interesting that the teacher group chose language teaching as one of the most expected jobs for their graduates, but none of them believed the students should expect to learn this in the program (see Table 2), and acknowledged that this aspect was not sufficiently covered in this program. Finally, non-language teaching and research & consultancy both ranked at the bottom among the students but they ranked quite high among the teachers. All in all, if these discrepancies are not addressed, it is likely for the students to be disappointed when they could not obtain their desired job.

### **Expectations of Curriculum**

Seventeen aspects that denote good curriculum practices were gathered from the preliminary study and they encompass five criteria, namely 1) curriculum design (coherence, clarity, consistence, and adaptability); 2) assessment (validity, frequency and format, and constructiveness); 3) teaching-learning materials (sequence, coherence, substantiality, authenticity, attractiveness, and relevance); 4) teaching-learning activities (effectiveness, engagement, and self-actualization); and 5) classroom instruction (use of target language). Regarding these aspects, two subtopics were examined, namely 1) perception of their importance, and 2) evaluation of their presence.

### ***Perception of Importance***

Both groups were first asked to reveal their opinion on the importance of the curriculum aspects above, by rating each aspect from 1 to 5 (lowest to highest value).

**Table 5. Importance of Curriculum Aspects**

Curriculum Aspects		Students	Teachers
1.	The course objectives, assessment, materials, and activities are in sync.	4.3	4.4
2.	Teachers explain the objectives of the course and of every lesson unit.	4.3	4.4
3.	Teachers sticks to the course design/lesson plan no matter what.	2.6	3.0
4.	Teachers adjust the course/lesson plan according to class dynamic.	4.3	4.0
5.	Teachers give assignment in reasonable frequency and amount.	4.3	4.0
6.	Assessment assesses targeted levels, areas, and objectives.	4.3	4.4
7.	Assessment returns with constructive feedbacks.	4.4	4.4
8.	Learning units follow sequential gradation.	4.4	4.4
9.	Learning focus is precise and in line with objectives.	4.5	4.8
10.	Learning content provides meaningful information.	4.4	4.5
11.	Learning materials are not artificially made for foreign learners.	4.5	4.8
12.	Learning materials are presented in interesting layout.	4.4	4.4
13.	Learning materials are up to date, discussing current issues.	4.4	4.6
14.	Activities let students demonstrate, practice & acquire language skills.	4.4	4.8
15.	Activities invite the students to be active and involved.	4.4	4.9
16.	Activities let students reflect and self-actualize.	4.4	4.5
17.	The language of instruction is the target language	3.6	3.9

The findings reveal that both groups shared the same perception on good curriculum practices. Aspect 3 and 4 actually check the same issue—whether the respondents prefer teachers who stick with the lesson plan or teachers who respond to the class dynamic—and it turns out that both respondents value adaptability over rigidity.

These results thus affirm the theories on best curriculum practices, as the respondents gave highly valued most aspects, except for the use of target language as the language of instruction. It is understandable because although this practice has been generally recommended for effective language teaching-learning, it still becomes a point of contention even among language experts. It would clearly require a lot of efforts to convince both students and teachers that such a practice is more useful in learning a new language. For example, both groups should be provided with good examples on how such teaching-learning could take place well.

### ***Evaluation of Presence***

The students were also asked to evaluate the presence of those aspects in their foreign language program, but the teacher group was not, because the researcher considered such a self-evaluation would be less reliable and might be taken as rather offensive. The student respondents were asked to see the aspects once again and score them from 1 to 5, but now to evaluate how much each takes place in their learning situation (from least to most frequent).

**Table 6. Presence of Curriculum Aspects**

Curriculum Aspects		Students
1.	The course objectives, assessment, materials, and activities are in sync.	4.4
2.	Teachers explain the objectives of the course and of every lesson unit.	4.4
3.	Teachers sticks to the course design/lesson plan no matter what.	3.1
4.	Teachers adjust the course/lesson plan according to class dynamic.	4.5
5.	Teachers give assignment in reasonable frequency and amount.	4.3
6.	Assessment assesses targeted levels, areas, and objectives.	4.4
7.	Assessment returns with constructive feedbacks.	4.4
8.	Learning units follow sequential gradation.	4.4
9.	Learning focus is precise and in line with objectives.	4.4
10.	Learning content provides meaningful information.	4.4
11.	Learning materials are not artificially made for foreign learners.	4.4
12.	Learning materials are presented in interesting layout.	4.2
13.	Learning materials are up to date, discussing current issues.	4.3
14.	Activities let students demonstrate, practice & acquire language skills.	4.4
15.	Activities invite the students to be active and involved.	4.3
16.	Activities let students reflect and self-actualize.	4.4
17.	The language of instruction is the target language	3.9

The results are very positive. The student respondents gave positive scores for most of the aspects, showing that they consider those good curriculum practices had been mostly present in their learning situation. The score for aspect no. 3 was lower, but it was expected, since the students did not positively value rigidity in curriculum. Nevertheless, since the score of 3 indicates ‘sometimes’, it means such a practice still took place and hence, it would be better if in the future the teachers could be more dynamic in conducting the teaching-learning process.

The last aspect was not rated as high as other aspects either, but it is understandable since neither group considered such a practice to be very important. The fact that this aspect received a score of 3.9 (closer to often than to sometimes) is actually a good thing, since it shows that target language use was still present in a large extent in the classroom.

### **Expectations of Teachers**

Criteria that normally define competent teachers have been mostly covered in the previous section, since it can be said that pedagogically competent teachers are well capable of designing curriculum, crafting assessment, developing teaching materials, planning teaching-learning activities, and carrying out classroom instruction. Therefore, this section is more informal, examining four aspects: 1) teacher’s characteristics (funny, patient, friendly, strict, and professional), 2) teacher’s target language proficiency, 3) teacher’s knowledge (on target culture and on other related areas), and 4) teacher’s mastery of teaching strategy.

### **Perception of Importance**

Like in the previous section, the student group was asked to first state whether those aforementioned aspects are important or not, and then to evaluate whether they see those aspects among their teachers, whereas, the teacher group was only asked to express their perception on what aspects are important for foreign language teachers. For the first subtopics, both respondents were asked to state whether the teacher aspects are important for them or not, by giving a score ranging from 1 to 5 (lowest to highest).

**Table 7. Importance of Language Teacher Aspects**

	Language Teacher Aspects	Students	Teachers
1.	The teacher should be funny	4.4	4.1
2.	The teacher should be patient	4.8	4.6
3.	The teacher should be friendly	4.8	4.4
4.	The teacher should be strict (discipline)	3.8	4.4
5.	The teacher should be professional	4.8	5
6.	The teacher should be proficient in the target language	4.8	5
7.	The teacher should be knowledgeable in the target culture	4.7	5
8.	The teacher should be knowledgeable in other related areas	4.4	4.4
9.	The teacher should demonstrate mastery of teaching strategy	4.6	4.8

The results show that almost all of the aspects examined are considered important by both groups. The only outlier is the strictness (discipline) aspect, which was marked slightly lower than 4 by the students. Nevertheless, with the score of 3.8 this aspect is closer to important than moderately important. Hence, it can be said that both groups valued positive traits, professionalism, language proficiency, depth of knowledge, and mastery of teaching strategy in language teachers.

### **Evaluation of Quality**

The student group was also asked to indicate whether they perceive that the teachers in their language program show the aspects above, but, like in the previous section, the teacher group was not, because the researcher considered such self-evaluation would be less reliable and might be taken as rather offensive. They are asked to give every aspect a value between 1 to 5, but now with these meanings: 1 = Not true at all, 2 = Not really true, 3 = So and so, 4 = Somewhat true, and 5 = True.



**Table 8. Quality of Teachers**

	Teacher Aspects	Students
1.	My teachers are funny	4.7
2.	My teachers are patient	4.8
3.	My teachers are friendly	4.7
4.	My teachers are strict (discipline)	4.3
5.	My teachers are professional	4.8
6.	My teachers are proficient in the target language	4.8
7.	My teachers are knowledgeable in the target culture	4.8
8.	My teachers are knowledgeable in other related areas	4.6
9.	My teachers demonstrate mastery of teaching strategy	4.5

As shown above, the students generally had a very positive evaluation of their teachers, as they ranked their teachers highly across all aspects examined in this research. The highest score was given for their teachers' patience, professionalism, target language proficiency, and knowledge in the target culture. Meanwhile, the lowest score was given for the strictness aspect, but this is in line with the result from the previous section, which shows that the students did not value this aspect as important as other aspects, and thus, it is not an issue that the score is lower than the rest.

### Expectations of Students

This section is divided into two parts: 1) perceptions of the students' performance; and 2) evaluation of motivational factors.

#### *Perceptions of Students' Performance*

Both groups were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the students' study results, perception of the students' activeness level, and perception of the amount of work that the students have put in their study, by giving a score ranging from 1 to 10 (lowest to highest).

**Table 9. Perceptions of Students' Performance**

Score	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Avg.
<i>Satisfaction with Students' Results</i>											
<b>S</b>	5	4	15	<b>31</b>	19	5	3	2	0	0	<b>6.9</b>
<b>T</b>	1	2	<b>3</b>	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	<b>8.1</b>
<i>Perception of Students' Activeness Level</i>											
<b>S</b>	<b>21</b>	13	15	14	9	7	2	3	0	0	<b>7.8</b>
<b>T</b>	2	2	<b>3</b>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>8.6</b>
<i>Perception of Students' Effort</i>											
<b>S</b>	7	9	<b>26</b>	19	17	3	3	0	0	0	<b>7.4</b>
<b>T</b>	1	2	1	<b>3</b>	1	0	0	0	0	0	<b>7.9</b>

In term of satisfaction with the students' results, the average score from the teachers was higher than that of the students. However, while their median score is 8, it should be noted that one teacher gave a score as low as 6, indicating a certain amount of dissatisfaction with the students' results. Among the students, the median was 7 and almost 90% of the respondents scored themselves higher than 5. Then, in term of the students' activeness level, both groups generally showed positive perception, as the students gave themselves an average score of 7.8, whereas their teachers gave 8.6. The median score was 10 among the students and 8 among the teachers. Lastly, in term of the students' effort, it appears that both groups were quite appreciative of the amount that the students had put in their study. The average scores for both groups are higher than 7, whereas the median score among the students was 8 and among the teachers was 7.

The teachers generally praised their students positively, because they believed the students possessed good traits. Some mentioned that their students were motivated, positive, studious, and hardworking. Some teachers believed the students were active in class because they had a strong desire for knowledge, a need to apply what they learn, and a willingness to communicate with their peers. Few believed that the students were active in classes because of the teacher's hard work and use of teaching strategies, such as multiple interactive activities. However, some mentioned that the students were still not trying their best, that their basic was weak, and their level was still low. On a more neutral side, one

teacher believed that the students actually had bigger potential but they had been bogged down by external pressures, mentally and physically worn out by the overwhelming number of courses and campus activities, and were facing suppressing level of competition.

Among the students, quite a large number were satisfied with their results because they enjoyed their learning process and they felt they had learned something from it. However, a large number were not satisfied, because they deemed their proficiency still low, as they had trouble communicating with native speakers or friends in the target language, they had not mastered the material, and they had not progressed as much as they expected. Several students actually blamed themselves, as they felt that they should have studied harder. The students attributed their activeness to their desire to improve themselves or to progress in their study. Some students cited various positive teaching learning aspects, such as the good class atmosphere, the fun activities, the humorous or teachers, and the interesting learning content. Personal characteristic was also pointed as a contributing factor, as some students mentioned they were active in the class due to them being serious or studious learners, whereas some blamed their introverted nature for their passivity in the class. A small number rated themselves inactive in class, and they cited their lack of confidence, high anxiety level, and low language ability for the reasons. Few students mentioned they could not put as much effort as they wanted because they were disrupted by other things, such as additional courses, assignments from those courses, or campus activities.

There are not too many discrepancies in these findings, but the major takeaway here is that the students had been negatively impacted by the number of additional courses, assignments, and activities that they have to take, and if this is not addressed properly it could negatively affect the students' performance, results, and motivation.

### **Motivational Study Factors**

Both respondent groups were also asked to identify motivational study factors which are significant for foreign language students, by giving a score ranging from 1 to 5 (from least to most significant), and then, to indicate whether those aspects positively or negatively influence the foreign language students' motivation, by giving another score also ranging from 1 to 5 (from least to most positively).

**Table 10. Motivational Study Factors**

Motivational Study Factors	Students		Teachers	
	Sig.	P/N	Sig.	P/N
12. The competence and the attitude of the teaching staff.	4.5 <sup>1</sup>	4.4	4.0 <sup>5</sup>	4.1
6. Satisfaction from acquiring a new language.	4.4 <sup>2</sup>	4.3	4.0 <sup>5</sup>	4.0
13. The effectiveness of the teaching-learning activities.	4.4 <sup>2</sup>	4.3	4.1 <sup>4</sup>	4.1
22. Hobbies, part-time works, and other personal activities.	4.4 <sup>2</sup>	4.2	3.8 <sup>7</sup>	4.3
1. The value of the degree in obtaining future employment.	4.3 <sup>3</sup>	4.2	4.6 <sup>1</sup>	4.8
10. The quality of the curriculum (course, assessment, materials, etc.)	4.3 <sup>3</sup>	4.2	4.1 <sup>4</sup>	4.3
16. The relationship between your country and the target country.	4.3 <sup>3</sup>	4.3	4.3 <sup>3</sup>	4.4
17. The overall stability, security, and/or prosperity of the target country.	4.3 <sup>3</sup>	4.2	4.3 <sup>3</sup>	4.3
2. The opportunity to live, work, and travel in another country.	4.2 <sup>4</sup>	4.2	3.9 <sup>6</sup>	4.3
3. The opportunity to interact with the target language speakers.	4.2 <sup>4</sup>	4.2	3.8 <sup>7</sup>	3.8
5. Satisfaction from making academic achievement.	4.1 <sup>5</sup>	4.2	4.4 <sup>2</sup>	4.3
14. The quality of supporting facilities in the university.	4.1 <sup>5</sup>	3.9	3.8 <sup>7</sup>	3.9
19. The condition of the university location (city or province).	4.1 <sup>5</sup>	4.0	3.3 <sup>10</sup>	3.8
4. The chance to enjoy cultural products (food, movies, books, songs)	4.0 <sup>6</sup>	4.1	3.4 <sup>9</sup>	3.5
7. Approval and/or compliments from teachers.	4.0 <sup>6</sup>	4.0	4.0 <sup>5</sup>	3.8
9. Self-confidence over language aptitude or academic talent.	4.0 <sup>6</sup>	4.2	3.5 <sup>8</sup>	4.3
15. The extracurricular activities in the university.	4.0 <sup>6</sup>	3.9	3.4 <sup>9</sup>	3.0
20. Personal relationship between you and your family.	4.0 <sup>6</sup>	3.9	3.4 <sup>9</sup>	3.6
18. The general current situation of your own country or society.	3.9 <sup>7</sup>	3.8	3.4 <sup>9</sup>	3.1
8. Approval and/or compliments from parents and relatives.	3.8 <sup>8</sup>	3.8	3.5 <sup>8</sup>	3.6
21. Personal relationship between you and your friends.	3.5 <sup>9</sup>	3.7	3.3 <sup>10</sup>	3.5
11. The additional courses (English, PE, politic, etc.)	3.4 <sup>10</sup>	3.6	2.9 <sup>11</sup>	2.9

*Note.* Numbers in the first column indicates the order of the item in the questionnaire. The superscript numbers next to the score indicates the rank for the respondent group.

The data reveals several discrepancies between the two groups, mostly in regards to the factors' significance. Firstly, the most significant factor among the students was *The competence and the attitude of the teaching staff*, but among the teachers, this only ranked 5<sup>th</sup>. Meanwhile, the most significant factor among the teachers was *The value of the degree in obtaining future employment*, which ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> among the students. Three motivational factors tied for the 2<sup>nd</sup> spot among the students, namely *Satisfaction from acquiring a new language*, *The effectiveness of the teaching-learning activities*, *Hobbies, part-time works, and other personal activities*, but all three were valued lower among the teachers, ranking 5<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> respectively. Among the teachers, the 2<sup>nd</sup> spot was occupied by *Satisfaction from making academic achievement*, which only ranked 5<sup>th</sup> among the students. For the 3<sup>rd</sup> spot, the students chose four factors, namely *The value of the degree in obtaining future employment*, *The quality of the curriculum*, *The relationship between your country and the target country*, and *The overall stability, security, and/or prosperity of the target country*. Curriculum was ranked slightly lower by the teachers (4<sup>th</sup>), but the last two factors also placed 3<sup>rd</sup> among the teachers. In regards to the influence of all these factors, both groups generally agreed that they positively influence the students' motivation.

For the least influential motivational factor, both groups' perceptions were more in line; both voted for *The additional courses* and both did not rate this factor positively in term of influence, indicating that they perceived the presence of these courses negatively impacted the students' motivation. The 2<sup>nd</sup> least influential factor among the students (9<sup>th</sup> rank) was *Personal relationship with friends*, while the 3<sup>rd</sup> (8<sup>th</sup> rank) was *Approval and/or compliments from parents and relatives*. Among the teachers, personal relationship with friends was one of the two second least influential factors (10<sup>th</sup> rank), but the other one, *The condition of the city or the province where the university is located* ranked differently among the students, placing 5<sup>th</sup>. A rather sharp contrast appeared in the teacher's choice for the 3<sup>rd</sup> least influential factors (9<sup>th</sup> rank), which consisted of *The chance to enjoy the target language's cultural products*, *The extracurricular activities in the university*, *The general current situation of the students' own country or society*. While the last two factors also ranked rather low among the students—6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> respectively—factor 4 actually ranked 4<sup>th</sup> for the students. The teachers believed this factor did not too positively influence the students' motivation to study, but it was the other way around for the students.

Several key takeaways are worth discussing from this data. Firstly, the students seemed to value the integrative aspects more, whereas the teachers seemed to value the instrumental aspects more, because factor 2, 3, and 4—all integrative factors—all ranked higher among the students, while factor 1, the most defining example of instrumentality, was chosen as the most influential by the teachers. Secondly, both groups highly valued the importance of teaching-learning quality and geopolitical aspect as related factors all ranked highly among them. Thirdly, in terms of reward-value, the student group valued an intrinsic reward more than the teachers, as the students ranked intrinsic factor (number 6) higher than the teachers (2<sup>nd</sup> vs. 5<sup>th</sup>), whereas the teachers ranked extrinsic factor (number 5) higher than the students (2<sup>nd</sup> vs. 5<sup>th</sup>). Lastly, the students valued the significance of personal activities higher than the teachers, as it was one of the 3<sup>rd</sup> most influential among the students, but only placed 7<sup>th</sup> among the teachers. Nevertheless, both groups agreed that that factor contributes positively to the study motivation.

## CONCLUSION

In regards to foreign language program, there was an agreement between the respondents that language proficiency is the most important aspect to learn, whereas translation and interpreting are the two most important skills to acquire. However, there was a difference in how they perceived the importance of content knowledge, and a wider discrepancy in regard to the coverage of the program aspects. Discrepancies also existed regarding the expected lines of work for the graduates. Moreover, while the respondents presently still had confidence in the prospect of a foreign language degree, they did not consider it too preferable in the future due to several potential threats. All of the discrepancies and the reality around the first topic signify the need to improve the coherence and the quality of the program content, as well as the image of the program.

For curriculum, the lack of discrepancy in how the respondents viewed the importance and the presence of the aspects has affirmed the importance of the latest theories on the best curriculum practices. This signifies that foreign language teachers familiarize themselves with those theories and attempt to improve their classroom practices. Meanwhile, the lack of discrepancy in how the respondents evaluated the teacher aspects signifies the need for foreign language teachers to maintain and improve the attitude,

professionalism, language proficiency, depth of knowledge in their field, and mastery of teaching strategy.

The wide discrepancies in the respondents' views of the motivational factors have to be addressed. To make the students more motivated there has to be an improvement in the teacher competence and the learning situation quality. While focusing on the more instrumental factor—such as grades and employment prospect—the teachers also have to pay more attention to the integrative factors, providing the students with more opportunity to immerse themselves in the target culture and to interact with the target speakers. In addition, the agreement among the respondents about the negative impact of the additional courses must be addressed too.

In consideration of the findings, several recommendations can be made: 1) The intended outputs of foreign language program must be set and communicated carefully, so students and teachers share the same reasonable expectations of different career prospects that are available for the students and what sets of competence, skills, and knowledge that the students must learn to secure any of those prospects; 2) It is crucial for the university to assure the students of the value of their degree, but it is also imperative for the university to be responsive to technological advancement and sociocultural changes, and to adjust the design of its foreign language program accordingly; 3) It is compulsory for the university to make sure that the standards for curriculum practices and teachers' performance across all aspects continue to be observed, maintained, and improved; 4) The university should pay close attention to various array of factors that affect the students' study motivation, in order to understand their significance and influence, and to make the adjustment necessary for the improvement of that motivation; 5) It is essential for the university to continuously and constantly examine the discrepancy of expectations between the students and the teachers, as well as other shareholders, in order to maintain and boost the motivation of the students, to ensure the effectiveness of its foreign language program, and to improve the quality of its graduates.

Although these recommendations were made for the setting of a university, particularly Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, I believe they should be as useful for any foreign language institution which seeks to maintain and improve its effectiveness and quality. This study is still limited in its scope, whether in the number and the diversity of the respondents, or in the inclusion of the aspects examined. In order to improve the impacts of the study, it is recommended for future researches to include more participants, such as students and teachers from other language programs, university administrations or higher-ups, the alumni, and potential recruiters. Future researches can also narrow the focus but add more variables to examine, for example focusing on the curriculum but adding classroom observation and teaching material examination. Considering the importance of motivation in the foreign language learning, hopefully more studies are carried out in this area.

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