

# MANDARIN NATIVE SPEAKERS' PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (L2)

by

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## DECLARATION

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## ABSTRACT

As the spread of the English language advances exponentially, the need for improving English language teaching for second language (L2) learners becomes more prominent along with subsequent research into factors affecting language learning. Perceptions and attitudes are two major factors which have an influence on language acquisition. While much has been written about the influence of these factors on L2 acquisition, new areas of focus for such investigation are becoming apparent. A significant number of native Mandarin speakers who prefer to learn English in South Africa offer novel research opportunities.

This thesis explores the perceptions and attitudes held by native Mandarin-speaking students who are learning English in South Africa by investigating the factors that have an impact on their language acquisition process.

A small-scale study was conducted through the dissemination of self-report questionnaires to native Mandarin speakers who are currently learning English at a South African language institute. A selected number of participants were requested to participate in follow-up interviews which provided additional qualitative data. The results show a wide range of reasons that underlie the impact of perceptions and attitudes on language learning. The findings indicate that native Mandarin speakers receiving their tuition in South Africa have positive perceptions of the English language and determined attitudes to successfully acquire English as a result of these perceptions. It is envisaged that this research will provide facilitators and teachers in English language instruction in South Africa with insight into particular perceptions and attitudes that aid L2 learners in their language acquisition process.

*Keywords: Mandarin Chinese, English, Second Language Acquisition, Attitudes, Perceptions*

## OPSOMMING

Namate die verspreiding van die Engelse taal eksponensieel groei, word die behoefte vir 'n verbetering in Engelse taalonderrig aan tweedetaalverwerwers meer prominent, tesame met die gevolglike ondersoek na faktore wat die aanleer van taal affekteer. Persepsies en houdings is twee van die meer belangrike faktore wat taalverwerwing beïnvloed. Terwyl baie oor hierdie faktore se invloed op tweedetaalverwerwing geskryf is, kom nuwe areas vir ondersoek nogsteeds aan die lig. 'n Noemenswaardige groep inheemse Mandaryns-sprekers wat verkies om Engels in Suid-Afrika aan te leer, bied nuwe navosingsgeleenthede.

Hierdie tesis verken die persepsies en houdings van inheemse Mandaryns-sprekers wat Engels in Suid-Afrika aanleer, deur die faktore wat 'n impak op die taalverwerwingproses het te ondersoek.

'n Kleinskaalse studie is uitgevoer deur middel van die verspreiding van self-verslaggewende vraelyste aan moedertaalsprekers van Mandaryns wat tans Engels by 'n Suid-Afrikaanse taalinstituut aanleer. 'n Geselekteerde aantal deelnemers is gevra om deel te neem aan opvolgonderhoude wat addisionele kwalitatiewe data tot die studie gevoeg het. Die resultate dui op 'n wye verskeidenheid redes wat onderliggend is tot die impak van persepsies en houdings op taalverwerwing het. Die bevindinge dui aan dat Mandaryns- moedertaalsprekers wat hulle onderrig in Suid-Afrika ontvang, positiewe persepsies van die Engelse taal besit en dat hulle vasbeslote houdings het om Engels suksesvol aan te leer as gevolg van hierdie persepsies. Daar word voorsien dat hierdie navorsing insig sal gee aan fasiliteerders en onderwysers in Engelse taalonderrig in Suid-Afrika met betrekking tot die spesifieke persepsies en houdings wat tweedetaalleerders in die taalverwerwingsproses van hulp sal wees.

*Sleutelwoorde: Mandaryns, Engels, Tweedetaalverwerwing, Houdings, Persepsie*

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In Second Language Acquisition (SLA), perceptions and attitudes are central to the debate surrounding successful language acquisition with substantial investigation being carried out into the impact these concepts have on language learners and language acquisition. It is argued that a learner's success in "learning a language is exactly and directly influenced by what they think and how they evaluate the target language, the target language speakers, culture, and of course, the learning setting" (Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013:63).

While there are several influencing factors in language acquisition, research has shown perceptions and attitudes to be two of the most important. Language attitudes and perceptions "may have an effect on language learning" (Bani-Khaled, 2014:401) where some "may have a facilitative effect" and "others can hinder" the language acquisition process (Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013:65). Gardner and Lambert (1972:132) argue that successfully acquiring a foreign language<sup>1</sup> largely depends on the learners' perceptions of the speakers of that language and their willingness to adapt. It is therefore certain that the vital role perceptions and attitudes play in language acquisition cannot be disregarded when carrying out investigation in this field.

The investigation into these factors is therefore not only of utmost importance but also allows for a better understanding of the actual process behind acquiring a L2 and the reasons for the success or failure thereof. One of the best approaches to investigating perceptions and attitudes is understanding the minds of language learners and discovering how learners successfully attain languages by carrying out investigation into their beliefs (Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013:63) and attitudes towards the main aspects of the language being acquired.

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<sup>1</sup> (Cf. Section 2.3)

Approaches employed in investigating students' attitudes to the learning situation and their perceptions of the language being acquired include the dissemination of questionnaires, surveys, the conducting of interviews and personal written reviews. This study employed two of these methods (disseminating questionnaires and conducting interviews) to obtain a better understanding of the perceptions and attitudes that are held by native Mandarin-speaking students who are learning English in the context of South Africa.

This chapter begins by discussing the importance and influence of perceptions and attitudes in second language acquisition. Thereafter it will shift focus to the research statement and the research questions. The research objectives and significance thereof are also discussed and the chapter concludes by providing a brief overview of the chapters that follow.

## **1.1 RESEARCH STATEMENT**

Over the past several decades China has been increasing its international ties with African countries and South Africa is no exception. The increased interaction between China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Africa in terms of trade, business and tourism has compelled South Africa to put significant focus on understanding the languages and cultures of these regions. South Africa has recently introduced the most widely spoken Chinese dialect, Mandarin, into several South African primary and high schools as an elective school subject (Chinese Embassy, 2016). Furthermore, this increased interaction with the Chinese has influenced South Africa and its citizens, bridging the gap between two very culturally and linguistically different nations. In addition, these recent advances have also shown the importance of adequately providing English language education in South Africa for foreigners and native Mandarin speakers.

This increased interaction and the need for adequate language teaching has given rise to the need for further investigation into the perceptions and attitudes which impact the language

acquisition process. Given that “people’s attitudes towards certain language varieties reflect their attitudes towards speakers of these varieties it is only plausible that they will also impact the willingness and motivation to learn them” (Heinzmann, 2013:46).

This study focused on native Mandarin-speaking students from mainland China and the Republic of China (Taiwan) who are learning English as a second or foreign language in Cape Town, South Africa. This study investigated the perceptions and attitudes of these students who have chosen to learn English at a South African language institute and in a South African context while simultaneously paying attention to how this affected their goals in attaining a L2.

## **1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

There are several main and subsequent research questions which directed the study. These can be divided into primary and secondary research questions which were investigated through the dissemination of self-report questionnaires as well as from follow-up interviews with several native Mandarin-speaking students who are learning English in South Africa.

### **PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION**

This study targeted a specific group of native Mandarin-speaking students, investigating their attitudes to learning English and their perceptions of the English language and its speakers, in a learning context that is unique and which varies greatly from their prior language learning experiences. The primary research question which formed the basis of the study reported in this thesis guided data collection, data analysis and the interpretation of results.

The primary research question is formulated as follows:

- (i) *What are the perceptions and attitudes towards English of native Mandarin speakers who are acquiring English as a second or foreign language?*

## SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In addition to the primary research question there are several additional secondary research questions which were explored in the study, they are formulated as follows:

- (i) *In what way do language skills affect native Mandarin speakers' perceptions and attitudes towards learning English?*
- (ii) *What do the perceptions and attitudes say about the way in which English is presented and taught in South Africa?*

### 1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this research was to determine the perceptions and attitudes toward English held by native Mandarin speaking students and what role this played in their goals in attaining English as a L2 while simultaneously determining what influence this has on English language education in South Africa. Thus, this research not only investigated learners' perceptions and attitudes but also allowed for further sociolinguistic investigation into Chinese and Taiwanese learners of English as a second or foreign language.

The study investigated four different types of attitudes/perceptions in language acquisition, namely:

- (i) perceptions of English
- (ii) attitudes towards learning English
- (iii) integration/contact attitudes
- (iv) attitude to successfully acquire English

These factors are extensively investigated in the questionnaire and further developed and clarified through conducting follow-up interviews. Furthermore, these factors formed the basis

of the research carried out in this thesis, which allowed the uncovering of common trends or opinions in terms of the perceptions and attitudes held by these students.

Furthermore, the results of this study provide a starting point for guiding new approaches to language teaching in South Africa which should benefit Chinese and Taiwanese students given the deeper understanding of their perceptions and attitudes.

#### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Investigation into perceptions and attitudes in language acquisition is by no means a new field of research. However, research specifically into native Mandarin speakers who are acquiring a language in a Western setting is new and the research on this is minimal (see section 2.4). This is even more so in terms of native Mandarin speakers who are learning English in a country such as South Africa, where English is only one of 11 official languages and is the mother tongue for only approximately 10% of the South African population (South African Census, 2011). This research is therefore unique and contributes new research to specific context.

This research seeks to discover the reasons behind acquiring English as a second or foreign language and the challenges which follow from this process of language acquisition. With several influencing factors in language learning, and a process that is rather complicated, investigation into learners' perceptions and attitudes is of vital importance.

Many researchers (McKenzie, 2008; Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009) have stated that results of attitudinal studies will aid in creating a model for linguistic teaching. Although this is an ambitious task, especially in terms of the differing cultural contexts that exist between China, Taiwan and the West, language perceptions and attitudinal studies can at bare minimum result in streamlining language teaching and allow for a better understanding of the students' needs. Furthermore, in order to streamline teaching or reform teaching curricula, it is necessary to understand students' attitudes to the language they are acquiring (Bani-Khaled, 2014:401).

Although this research is vital and can aid language learners, the small research group of participants investigated in this study means that the results of this study cannot be extrapolated to be considered as the norm across all native Mandarin speakers who are learning English in South Africa. It can however be considered an interesting point of departure for understanding and improving English language education in South Africa.

## **1.5 CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

This first introductory chapter served as the background to the study, discussing the research topic, objectives and significance. Furthermore, it discussed the research questions which guided the investigation into the perceptions and attitudes held by native Mandarin speakers.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the two main concepts, namely perceptions and attitudes. Additionally, it presents a review of the existing literature and the significant findings of prior research into perceptions and attitudes in L2 learning. This chapter explains the spread of the English language through the presentation of three pre-eminent models of World Englishes, namely those of McArthur (1987), Görlach (1988) and Kachru (1988). Furthermore, this chapter discusses Hofstede's dimensional model (1981) and its classification of Chinese culture.

Chapter 3 expounds the research methodology by providing explanations for the choice of the research instruments, discussing the choice of questions presented in the questionnaire and the questions employed in the follow-up interviews. This chapter discusses the process of data collection for the study, the participants who were selected and the general process of research.

Chapter 4 presents the data collected from the questionnaires and the follow-up interviews. The data are represented visually in this chapter (and are discussed in detail in Chapter 5). This fourth chapter also presents background information on the participants, giving details such as their education level, English language level, age and marital status. Furthermore, it presents



the findings of the interviews, discussing interesting comparisons as well as differences in the responses provided by the participants.

Lastly, Chapter 5 concludes and summarises the findings of the study, discussing the significance and implications of these findings. This chapter also provides recommendations for further research and concludes on the study.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter commences by discussing perceptions and attitudes and their roles within a language acquisition framework. This chapter also reviews the existing literature, most prominent previous studies and the research pertaining to perceptions and attitudes in language acquisition and linguistics.

Because of the exponential spread, use and evolving status of the English language, the varieties of Englishes, such a global spread produces, are discussed in detail through the presentation of the pre-eminent models of World Englishes. A further focus that has relevance to the literature review of perceptions and attitudes when learning a foreign language concerns Hofstede's dimensional model (1981) and its classification of Chinese culture by highlighting the influence culture has on language acquisition.

### 2.1 DEFINITIONS OF PERCEPTIONS

Perceptions in a general sense can be seen as the way in which people regard or view things. However, in terms of language acquisition they can be defined as the way in which people perceive the language being acquired or the way in which they perceive the native speakers and even non-native speakers of the language and the differences from their own language (Ellis, 2015). Perceptions are thoughts or ideas which arise either because of the individuals' prior learning experiences, interactions with teacher(s), student(s) or communication with others (Tse, 2000:72). Due to the frequent influence of others and external influences when determining or forming perceptions, they are seen as collective as well as individual.

Perceptions, both individual and collective, can impact and alter the language acquisition process in many ways. For example, perceptions may prevent a student from learning a language or impact the way in which he approaches the language learning process, ultimately

impacting the success or failure of language learning. Perceptions, in their collective sense are often widespread and commonly accepted.

There are several collective perceptions that exist about the English language and its speakers. One of these common collective perceptions held by students in China and other parts of Asia is that English is the key to obtaining better job prospects and more education opportunities. Many students in China view English “as an indispensable language for international exchange and better-paid employment” (Honna, 2006:115). Furthermore, there are perceptions that exist about people who can speak English fluently or have near fluency in English. One of these is the perception that Chinese people who speak English fluently are more educated, well-travelled and generally of a better standing in life, which would subsequently increase their chances of studying or succeeding in their chosen career paths.

This is not far removed from the perceptions surrounding English that exist in South Africa. Although English is widely spoken and most people can communicate in English, albeit not fluently, many see knowing English as vitally important for several reasons. South Africans, along with their Chinese counterparts, also consider English as the gateway to success, good education, employment and travel opportunities.

Even though English is considered the main language of communication, whether it be in business or education in South Africa, the country has had "a long history of migration and, thus, multilingualism" (Meierkord, 2012:96) and today recognises eleven of its languages as official languages. The most widely spoken official language is isiZulu which is closely followed by isiXhosa. An additional two official languages, English and Afrikaans "serve as intranational lingua francas" and are therefore widely understood by the majority of South African citizens (Meierkord, 2012:95-96). It can be said that English is widely considered lingua franca for countries that do not speak the same language as well as for countries where

the population speaks several different languages such as South Africa.

## 2.2 DEFINITIONS OF ATTITUDES

Researchers in several fields including education, psychology and linguistics suggest several different definitions for attitude. These definitions indicate the vastly different opinions and ideas surrounding the concept. This section will discuss some of the definitions that can apply broadly to several fields of study while also focusing on language attitudes.

Jeffrey Pickens (2005:44) suggests that attitudes in a general sense encompass the beliefs, emotions or behaviours of an individual about a certain idea or concept. A more general definition of attitude however, defines an attitude “as a disposition or tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain thing such as an idea, object, person, or situation” (Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013:63). Attitudes can therefore be classified as either negative or positive beliefs or behaviours that can affect several situations.

## LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

From the broader definitions of attitudes, attitudes can be seen as both positive and negative and are often a response to objects, things, people or certain situations. In terms of language acquisition, however, an attitude can be defined from several different perspectives. Attitudes can be seen as the approach one takes to the language being acquired, the speakers of that language, the culture of the speakers, and/or the study of that language.

Robert Gardner (1985b:9) who has carried out substantial research into language learning attitudes and motivation defines an attitude as “an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred based on the individual beliefs or opinions about the referent”. Gardner is a strong advocate of the importance of attitude in language acquisition. Gardner’s research (1985b) found attitudes to be one of two top predictors for success in language learning, the other being motivation. Furthermore, his research “suggests that attitudes to the second

language and motivation to learn a second language are crucial additional ingredients into the language learning recipe” (Baker & Jones, 1998:645).

The *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching* (2002:297) provides an overview of what attitudes entail within a linguistics framework:

The attitudes which speakers of different languages or language varieties have towards each other’s languages or to their own language. Expressions of positive or negative feelings towards a language may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, ease or difficulty of learning, degree of importance, elegance, social status, etc. Attitudes towards a language may also show what people feel about the speakers of that language. Language attitudes may influence second language or foreign language learning. The measurement of language attitudes provides information which is useful in language teaching and language learning.

Pamela Wesely (2012) concurs by saying that attitudes toward second language acquisition can include attitudes pertaining to the learning situation as well as the target community and target language. Shameem Ahmed (2015:6) also agrees by saying “learners’ attitude can be defined as a collection of feelings regarding language use and its status in society”. These definitions indicate how the concept of attitude can be seen from different perspectives, either from individual feelings or from the actions and status of the target community or target speakers. Although there is evidence that suggests that attitudes are unique to the individual, individual attitudes can arise as a result of influential collective attitudes (Al-Dosari, 2011:1042). Attitudes are influential and can be transferred from one individual to another and attitudes can be learned or changed through experience or over time. In terms of language acquisition

attitudes, the attitude one has toward a target culture or language in the initial phases of acquiring a L2 may change from negative to positive or vice versa. Pickens (2005:48) agrees that “attitudes come in different strengths, and like most things they are learned or influenced through experience, they can be measured and they can be changed”.

From these brief discussions pertaining to the concepts of perception and attitude, there are several key findings. Perceptions and attitudes are both individualistic and collectivistic and are often influenced by interactions with other individuals. Furthermore, perceptions and attitudes are “attributes that are unobservable” (Wesely, 2012:98) and therefore difficult to easily demarcate and define. Perceptions and attitudes can however be determined by investigating people’s responses to statements or questions and thereby inferring certain things about their perceptions and attitudes. The following section discusses perceptions and attitudes in terms of their role in language acquisition.

## **2.3 PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

Most people acquire their first language (L1) naturally and unconsciously (automatically) and completely, however, learning a L2 is often complicated, and influenced by several factors (White, 2003).

Many theorists have researched what makes learning a L2 more complicated and why some learners are more successful than others. While L1 acquisition is considered fairly easy because of the genetic predisposition to learn a language which all human beings are born with (Chomsky, 1965:25-26), theorists suggest “that differences in the final outcomes of L1 and L2 learning are attributable to other factors” (Saville-Troike, 2006:17). These other factors could involve the learning situation, the learning environment and language ability.

Moreover, language learning can be affected by the status of the language being acquired. For example, a foreign language could be more difficult to learn given that it is a language that is

learned in an area where the language is not generally spoken whereas a second language is a language that is not the native language of the learner (Punchihetti, 2013). As a result of this research social psychologists have noted “that success in mastering a foreign language would depend not only on intellectual capacity and language aptitude but also on the learner’s perceptions of that group, and his willingness to identify enough to adopt distinctive aspects of the behavior, linguistic and nonlinguistic” (Gardner & Lambert, 1972:132). Thereby determining that factors such as motivation (the willingness to learn a language), perceptions and attitudes as well as the ability or willingness to integrate are vital to the language acquisition process.

While there is substantial evidence that exists for the importance of perceptions and attitudes in language learning, there are theorists that believe that perceptions and attitudes are not at all paramount in the success of language acquisition. John Macnamara (1973) for example, argues that people who are required to learn a language out of necessity will learn that language regardless of their attitude towards the language. Macnamara would therefore argue that perceptions and attitudes are not important in motivating the student to learn the language nor do they impact language learning. Macnamara believes that the necessity to speak the language motivates the person to acquire the language and that they will learn the language regardless of what they think or feel about the language itself and its speakers.

It is therefore also important to briefly mention motivation and the role this plays in the language learning process. Motivation which is another influencing factor, is generally a factor that impacts the initial decisions people are required to make in terms of language learning and can also be one that assists in maintaining that learning process. While motivation is important in language learning, perceptions and attitudes are two influential factors which impact the language acquisition process in several different ways. These include influencing the choice of

language to learn, the reasons for learning that language and the outcome of the process of learning.

While motivation, perceptions and attitudes can have an impact on language acquisition there are still several other factors such as personality and prior learning experiences which can also influence the process of successfully acquiring a L2. However, these factors are often unique to the individual and therefore difficult to determine or define. Perceptions and attitudes can be similar amongst a group of individuals and can be seen through investigation into learners' beliefs, behaviours and opinions (Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013:63) and therefore were chosen to form the basis of this research. According to Ortega (2009:174) attitudes "come from the collective values, beliefs, attitudes and even behaviours that are rewarded and modelled for the learner in the communities in which he or she participates, be it a classroom, the family or the wider environment of neighbourhoods and institutions". Furthermore, perceptions and attitudes, both in collectivistic and individualistic form are constantly changing and being altered. The following section discusses some of the prior research into studies pertaining to language perceptions and attitudes.

## **2.4 SIGNIFICANT RESEARCH**

Prior research into perceptions and attitudes has been carried out by several researchers and the amount of literature pertaining to these two concepts in language acquisition and pedagogy is vast. However, a great deal of the research into perceptions and attitudes has focused on the perceptions and attitudes that students have towards specific aspects of the language learning process which include the learning situation and the teacher (Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013). Minimal research has been carried out with a specific focus on attitudes towards learning the language and towards its speakers and the perceptions that learners have of the actual language itself.



Furthermore, prior research into native Mandarin speakers' perceptions and attitudes of English, particularly in a South African context is non-existent. Nevertheless, prior research into perceptions and attitudes in the field of language acquisition has provided several significant findings. These studies and findings are discussed in the sections that follow.

#### 2.4.1 ROBERT GARDNER'S RESEARCH

Robert Gardner has conducted some of the most significant research into language acquisition and more specifically into motivation and attitudes in this field. In the 1980s, Gardner along with his colleagues investigated undergraduate students who were learning French as a L2 in Canada (Ortega, 2009). His research focused on motivation and attitudes in L2 learning. This research resulted in the development of the widely-used Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) questionnaire. The AMTB questionnaire investigated four main factors and their sub-units, these main factors included integrativeness, attitude toward the learning situation, motivation and language anxiety (Gardner, 2011).

Gardner believes that the goals of learning a L2 are twofold, "partly linguistic and partly non-linguistic" (Gardner, 1985b:1). In order therefore to measure these 'partly non-linguistic' goals Gardner developed the AMTB questionnaire (Gardner, 1985b).

The AMTB is a 6-point Likert-scale test (Dewaele, 2009) "which has been developed to assess the major affective components shown to be involved in second language learning" (Gardner, 1985a:5). The test was employed and "developed to measure attitudinal and motivational attributes believed to be associated with second language learning" (Gardner, Masgoret, Tremblay 1999:421). Several of the findings of Gardner's research using the AMTB show that there are direct links between factors such as integrativeness and motivation and the success or failure of language acquisition (Gardner et al., 1999). Integrativeness here is a difficult concept to define (Gardner, 2001), but in "broad terms, [it] is an 'integrative' motivations orientation"

concerning “a positive interpersonal/affective disposition toward the L2 group and the desire to interact with and even become similar to valued members of that community” (Dörnyei, 2003:5). Gardner’s research also found that there is “a causal relationship between attitudes and learning outcomes” (Atchade, 2002:46). The study which incorporated the AMTB suggested that attitudes and motivation are the reasons behind successful learning (Atchade, 2002).

The significance and success of the AMTB are widely accepted. The AMTB which is considered a “standardised instrument with well documented psychometric properties, also offers a comprehensive list of motivational factors that have been found to affect learning achievement significantly in past empirical studies” (Dörnyei, 1998:121).

#### 2.4.2 RELATED RESEARCH

Along with Gardner’s ground breaking research in the field, several other researchers have contributed to our understanding of the role of perceptions and attitudes in L2 acquisition. Horwitz (1988) at the University of Texas in Austin. Horwitz examined how beliefs differ across different learner groups, amongst others she investigated Americans who were learning French, Spanish and German (Horwitz, 1999). In this study, she introduced the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) questionnaire, which is an instrument for investigation into the language learning beliefs (Nikitina & Furuoka, 2006). These beliefs are classified as foreign language aptitude, the difficulty of language learning, learning and communication strategies and motivations (Horwitz, 1999). The study found that there is little cultural differences in beliefs about language learning in students from different cultural backgrounds (Horwitz, 1999).

An additional influential study which focused on Asian learners is that of Sandra Savignon and Chao Chang Wang. Savignon and Wang (2003) conducted research into L2 learners’ attitudes

and perceptions pertaining to the classroom situation. Their study investigated the attitudes and perceptions of Taiwanese university students studying L2 English by means of a 5-part, 72 statement questionnaire. The findings of their study suggest that there is a clear discrepancy between the learners' needs and preferences and what they are afforded through the lessons in the classroom (Savignon & Wang, 2003).

These prior studies and existing literature on the topic of perceptions and attitudes present several key ideas. One of the main findings of the research into perceptions and attitudes which many theorists agree on is that positive attitudes towards and perceptions of language acquisition allow for success in achieving the end goal of successfully acquiring a language (Bell, McCallum, Kirk, Brown, Fuller & Scott, 2009) (Heidarabadi, Barimani & Kaviani, 2012). These factors determine not only one's approach to the language learning situation but also the outcomes thereof. A main factor affecting the outcome of language learning is most probably the attitude a student has towards the language, the target culture and the target speakers as this will determine their motivation and drive to attain the language.

Not only do attitudinal factors influence language acquisition but motivational factors also have a huge impact. According to Gardner and Lysynchuk (1990:256), "one way in which attitudinal and motivational variables have been found to affect L2 achievement is by influencing the extent to which individuals take advantage of opportunities to develop language proficiency". Learners who take every opportunity presented to them inside and outside the classroom are more likely to succeed in acquiring a second or foreign language.

Many researchers believe that attitude and motivation are closely linked. For example, Gardner believes that the "learner's motivation for language study, it follows, would be determined by his attitudes and readiness to identify and by his orientation to the whole process of learning a foreign language" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972:132).

Having discussed various prior research and studies into the variables which influence language acquisition, it is also vitally important to discuss the English language itself and the influence the spread of the English language has on L2 learners.

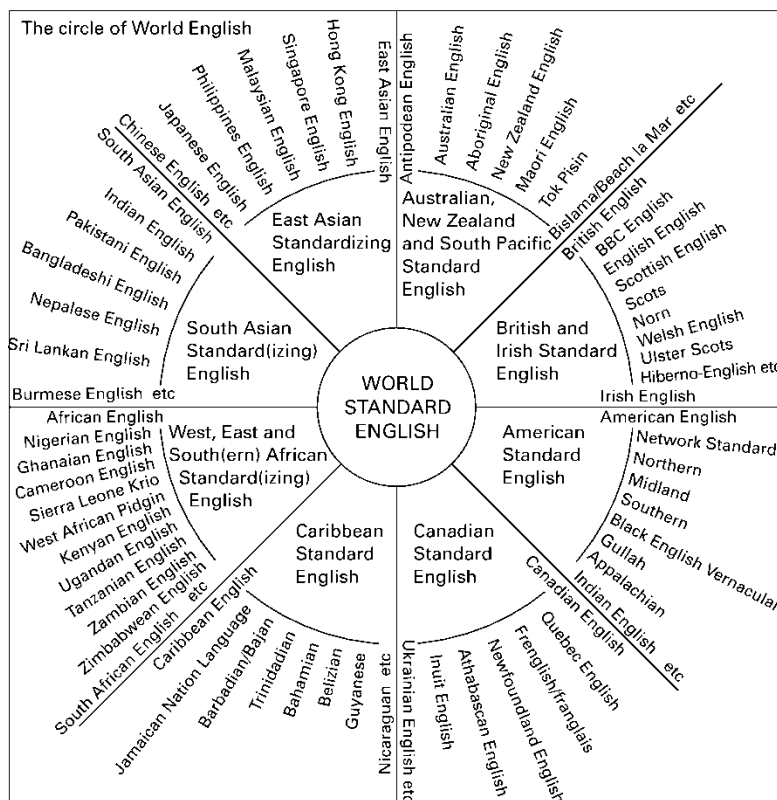
## 2.5 MODELS OF WORLD ENGLISHES

English and its status as lingua franca across the world has resulted in a steady increase in wanting to acquire English as a second or foreign language and hence the global spread of the English language. In fact, at the “end of the twentieth century English was already well on its way to becoming a genuine *lingua franca*” (Harmer, 2007:13). Although the umbrella term, ‘English’ is often used to describe the English language as spoken in many parts of the world, there are many different varieties of English that are in existence. Two commonly known types of Standard English are British English and American English while other Standard English types include South African English and Australian English.

To describe these different varieties of English and demonstrate that “English no longer has one single base authority, prestige and normativity” the more appropriate word *Englishes* has recently come into use (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008:3). In fact, “the status of English as one language is challenged by many different ‘Englishes’ being used around the world, and the ownership of English has shifted dramatically” (Harmer, 2007:13-14). To explain the spread of English and the different varieties of English across the world several models have been devised by theorists in the field of language studies. Some of the most prominent scholars to come up with these classification models are McArthur (1987), Görlach (1988) and Kachru (1988).

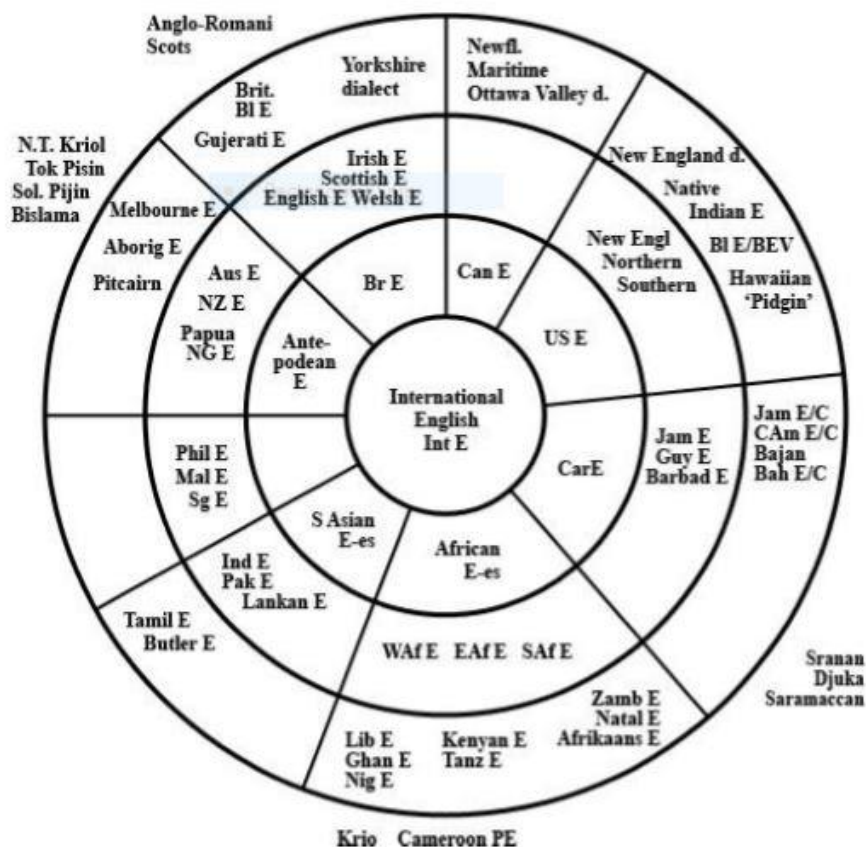
British linguist, McArthur (1987) explains the spread of world Englishes with the aid of his circle of world Englishes model. McArthur’s model which consists of a wheel, hub, rim and spokes can be clearly seen in Figure 2.1 below. The hub represents the “*World Standard*

English, within an encircling band of regional varieties, such as the standard and other forms of African English, American English, Canadian English and Irish English” (McArthur, 1998:223). The remaining spokes segregate an additional eight areas of the world English varieties, which include Singaporean English and Japanese English varieties (McArthur, 1998).



**FIGURE 2.1 MCARTHUR’S CIRCLE OF WORLD ENGLISH (McArthur, 1987:9)**

German Anglicist, Görlach (1988) suggests a circle of International English which is similar to McArthur’s model (1987). Görlach presents a wheel model where the hub represents International English which is “surrounded by a range of ‘regional standards’ such as African Englishes, Antipodean English, British English, United States English” (McArthur, 1998:98) which is “enclosed in ‘sub regional semi-standards’ such as Australian English, Irish English, Jamaican English, Scottish English and Southern US English” (McArthur, 1998:98). This model is represented in Figure 2.2 below.

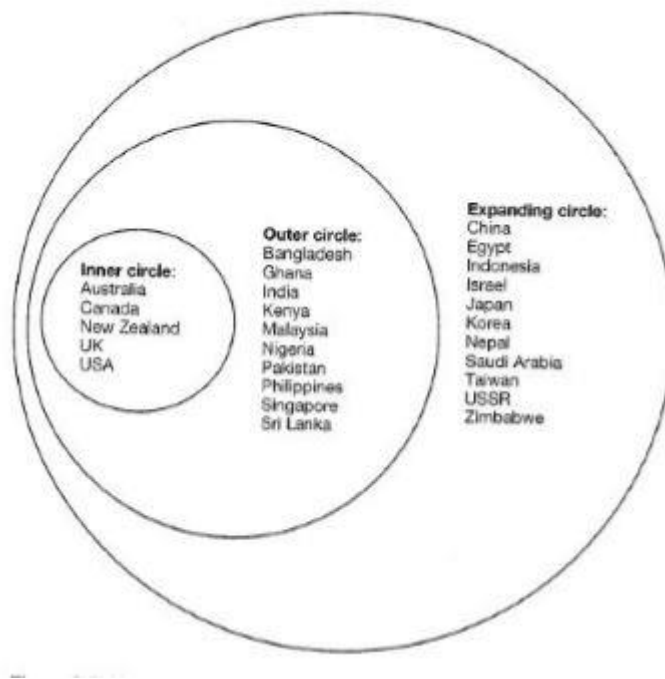


**FIGURE 2.2 GÖRLACH'S CIRCLE OF INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH (Görlach, 1988:9)**

While McArthur and Görlach's theories are similar, the third model of world Englishes, that of Indian born Kachru presents a very different conceptualization of world Englishes (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008) which is an influential model in terms of its broad approach to explaining the spread of the English language.

Kachru devised the Three-Circle Model of World Englishes (1985) which refers to "the pluricentricity of the language and its cross-cultural reincarnations" (Kachru, 2006:447).

Kachru's three-circle model was historically and politically based (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008) and was "intended to represent (1) the *types of spread* of English worldwide, (2) the *patterns of acquisition*, and (3) the *functional domains* in which English is used internationally" (Bolton, 2008:292). Kachru's three-circle model is shown below in Figure 2.3.



**FIGURE 2.3 KACHRU'S THREE-CIRCLE MODEL OF WORLD ENGLISHES (Kachru, 1985:12)**

Kachru defines English as having two broad categories, “those who consider English as a foreign language and use it in highly restricted domains” and “those who use institutionalized second-language varieties of English” (Ronowicz, 1999:15). Kachru’s model proposes the diffusion of world Englishes into the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. These circles are a representation of “the type of spread, the patterns of acquisition and the functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages” (Kachru, 1992:365).

The Inner Circle refers to the “traditional cultural and linguistic bases of English” (Kachru, 1992:365) whereas the Outer Circle represents “the institutionalized non-native varieties (ESL) in the regions which have passed through extended periods of colonization” (Kachru, 1992:365). The Inner Circle, which is the smallest of all the circles, includes countries which

use English primarily as a mother tongue, for example countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia and Ireland (Xiaoqiong & Xianxing, 2011). These countries would be considered the “norm-providing” countries where the norms of the English language communication are originally set (Low, 2010:395).

The Outer Circle includes countries which make use of English as an official language, an institutionalized language but not as a mother tongue. Examples of Outer Circle countries include India, Nigeria, Malaysia, Kenya and Tanzania (Xiaoqiong & Xianxing, 2011). The Outer Circle countries are therefore “norm-developing countries” in that they are inadvertently creating the norms of communicating in English (Low, 2010:395).

Lastly, the Expanding Circle “includes regions where the performance varieties of language are used essentially in EFL contexts” (Kachru, 1992:366). Countries which form part of the Expanding Circle use or consider English as a foreign language. Examples of these countries include China, Russia, Japan, Korea and Egypt (Xiaoqiong & Xianxing, 2011). The Expanding Circle countries are considered “norm-dependent” countries in that they depend on the Inner Circle countries for norms which have already been set by the native English speakers (Low, 2010:395).

Based on Kachru’s three-circle model, China and Taiwan would form part of the Expanding Circle due to the fact that they regard English as a foreign language as opposed to countries where it may be considered a L2 or a nationally spoken language. South Africa should be considered to be part of the Outer Circle countries given that English, although it plays a vital role in South Africa, is not the native language of the majority of its population. However, Kamwangamalu (2009:162) argues that “South Africa belongs simultaneously to two of the proposed three concentric circles of English: the Inner Circle on the one hand, and the Outer Circle on the other”. He claims this is due to part of the South African population, namely those



descending from the United Kingdom, using English as a mother tongue (Kamwangamalu, 2009:162).

Kachru's model provides not only a clear idea of the spread of English across the various different cultures and regions but also allows for the classification of English speaking countries and clearly indicates the differences between the ways in which they regard or give power to the English language. Kachru's Three-Circle Model of World Englishes was, however, only part of his substantial contribution to the field of second language acquisition. In the next section, perceptions and attitudes will be discussed with relation to world Englishes and the spread of the English language. In the next section, perceptions and attitudes and world Englishes are discussed in detail.

## **2.6 PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES AND WORLD ENGLISHES**

Along with a concise and clear idea of the spread of World Englishes, Kachru's model says a great deal about the initial perceptions and status of Englishes. In China, English is only seen as a foreign language which is identical to the way in which South Africa would categorise Mandarin. In many ways this may influence perceptions and attitudes of the English language. The status of English in China, although it is often highly regarded in terms of its value in job prospects and education opportunities is still that of a foreign language. Due to the fact that South Africa does not quite fall into the category of native English speaking countries in the same way as England or the United States do, for example, one would imagine that the evaluation of English in a South African context would be less favourable by second language English learners than that of inner circle countries. However, there are several advantages for Chinese and Taiwanese natives who choose to come to South Africa to learn English. Firstly, the main reason many choose to learn English in South Africa is for economic reasons. Studying in South Africa with the low exchange rate and low living costs is more economically viable for many people compared to studying in countries such as the United Kingdom and the

United States of America where exchange rates are much higher and the cost of living is comparatively higher.

South Africa, although it considers several languages as national languages, has a long history with English education and more specifically English language education. In South Africa, “English has dominated the business and industrial sector and higher education” (Meierkord, 2012:102) and in many sectors this is still on-going.

South Africa is also an accepting nation given the wide cultural differences, races and languages the South African population exhibit. The rainbow nation of South Africa is therefore understanding of tourists or visitors with different cultural, linguistic and racial backgrounds. In previous years, more lenient travel rules also allowed for freer travel for many visitors who wanted to come to South Africa.

Furthermore, South Africa has strong economic and military ties with countries like Taiwan and China. South Africa has also established bilateral trade agreements with the Chinese, taking part in economic coalitions such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) coalition. These economic dealings coupled with the increasing import and export with the Chinese have increased travel and interaction between the two nations.

And lastly, South Africa already has large and established Chinese and Taiwanese communities. The Taiwanese in particular have set up Mandarin teaching schools and cultural centres for those of Taiwanese descent who have settled in South Africa. South Africa has the longest history on the continent of Chinese immigration (Park & Rugunanan, 2010). And in fact, “South Africa is the only country in Africa with a longstanding Chinese community” (Wilhelm, 2006:351) thereby making it the optimal place for Chinese and Taiwanese natives who are wanting to learn English.

There are however those who would strongly disagree with the fact that English learners can have positive attitudes toward the English language varieties in Outer Circle countries such as South Africa and South African English. Yu, for example, argues that (2010:52) “English learners have more positive attitudes toward the Inner Circle Englishes, especially American and British Englishes, rather than other varieties of English”. According to what Yu claims, the perceptions and attitudes of those students who are learning English in South Africa, because it forms part of the Outer Circle, would be less positive.

When discussing perceptions and attitudes of South African English, it is however also important to look at how South Africans themselves view and perceive the English language. Perceptions and attitudes “towards English in South Africa can be described as community-specific” (Kachru, Kachru & Nelson 2009:162) and opinions vary greatly. For example, many people in South Africa see English as being a threat to the native Afrikaans language while others see it as a positive in that it allows one access to more job opportunities and education (Kachru et al., 2009).

English is fast becoming hazardous to minority languages in that it is so widely used across the world. The rapid spread of English has meant that it is highly regarded and used more often than other minority languages. Furthermore, the rapid spread of the English language and “the force of English in globalization is beginning to have a deep impact on English language teaching across the globe” (Xiaoqiong & Xianxing, 2011:220). We therefore “need to rethink some of our traditional aims and objectives of English teaching” (Xiaoqiong & Xianxing, 2011:220).

The following section discusses English language education in China to provide some background to the teaching situation many of the participants in this study are familiar with.

## 2.7 ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN CHINA AND TAIWAN

Traditional Chinese views which suggest that education and self-improvement are a way of improving one's social class and standing in society (Huang & Gove, 2012:10) still stand firm in Chinese societies today.

Along with the importance of education in general, English language education has become equally as important. English language education across the world and not only in China, has seen an increase in recent times. In fact, today there are now more non-native English speakers than native English speakers in the world (Crystal, 2003:61). According to Meierkord (2012:1) "English has gained the status of an international medium of communication, allowing for interactions across individuals who do not share the same first language".

In mainland China, the rise of the English language and an increase in English language education, only really became apparent after the end of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in 1979. The Chinese have had a long but unsteady past with English and English language education with the first recorded contact between Chinese and English speakers, mainly missionaries and traders, taking place as early as 1637, many years prior to the Cultural Revolution (Honna, 2006).

In more recent years, however, the Chinese government has placed an immense amount of emphasis on English language education in mainland China as a result of the increased interaction with English speaking countries. English which was not at all a priority in China for many years has recently become popular and widespread. Nowadays, English is taught to school children from as young as age three in most major Chinese cities. Moreover, university students across China take part in English language examinations and courses as part of degree requirements. Many parents, teachers and professors have begun to see the importance of

English language education, encouraging students to work hard at learning English or to take part in extra-curricular English lessons to improve their English.

According to Bob Adamson (2004:8) in China “in 1957, there were only 843 secondary school teachers of English throughout the whole country, compared with some 400,000 teachers teaching an astonishing 50 million schoolchildren by the year 2002”. The sudden surge of English students has only recently emerged, the reasons for this being that people want to increase their opportunities for employment, travel and studying abroad. According to *China Daily* (2010) approximately 400 million people are learning English in China making it the most studied second language in the country. In fact, in China, English has recently “become a de facto requirement through the nationwide college curriculum” (Yu, 2010:2).

The national College English Test (CET) along with the China Public English Test Systems (PETS) promote English language learning (Honna, 2006) and often ensure that students successfully learn English or leave school with a certain level of English education.

Additionally, in Taiwan, “the government has even made English ‘a quasi-official language’ on the island [...] which has led to an exponential increase in its use in many important sectors of society and in many schools” (Feng, 2011:9) thereby giving “some indication that Taiwan is moving towards being an ‘outer circle’ country in linguistic terms” (Feng, 2011:9).

Because of the increase in English language education in China and Taiwan, English is now seen as the gateway “to opportunities for self-development and material gain” (Car & Robertson, 2009:9).

Along with English language education and the perceptions and attitudes that influence language acquisition, there are other factors which influence the acquisition of English as L2 such as the native culture of learners and differences between the learners’ native culture and

the target language culture. The following section discusses culture and language acquisition, exploring the Chinese culture through the dimensional model set out by Hofstede (1981).

## **2.8 CULTURE AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

Research into the complexity of the notion of culture and its relevance to the field of language acquisition is vital to any research into SLA. Language and culture are inextricably linked and culture plays an immensely important role in language acquisition. As a result of the close interaction between these factors, second language acquisition essentially involves learning a second culture.

This complex notion of culture can be defined in many ways. Prominent researchers, Hofstede and Guirdham show the different viewpoints on culture through their varied definitions. According to Hofstede culture is “a collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another. Culture in this sense, is a system of collectively held values” (Hofstede, 1981:24). Guirdham (1999:61) however believes that culture is “a historically transmitted system of symbols, meanings and norms” where “symbols and meanings define what groups of people say, do, think and feel; it’s not the people but the communication that links them together”. However one decides to define culture, it is evident that it can affect the way in which people approach not only their own language but also any given task including that of L2 learning.

Chinese culture and Western culture differ vastly which would ultimately result in the processes of language acquisition and language education being more complicated. In order to better understand these cultural differences and provide a method for analysing cultures, Hofstede devised a model (1981) which analysed cultures using six cultural dimensions.

## HOFSTEDE'S DIMENSIONAL MODEL

Hofstede was one of the most prominent researchers to carry out investigation into culture and cultural differences, starting in the 1980s. The results of Hofstede's research (2001) led to the creation of a cultural model which consisted of, initially four, later six dimensions of culture (Hofstede, 2001). These dimensions are namely Power Distance, Individualism versus Collectivism, Masculinity versus Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-term Orientation versus Short-term Orientation and Indulgences versus Restraint (Hofstede, 2011). Hofstede's research (2011) provides an excellent model for analysing and allowing the positioning of countries relative to scores given on each dimension (Hofstede, 2011). The following section will discuss Chinese culture in terms of the dimensions, as presented by Hofstede.

## CHINESE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS ACCORDING TO HOFSTEDE

Exploring Chinese culture using Hofstede's model (1981) suggests that Chinese culture is highly collectivistic, pragmatic, driven by success and has an affinity to being unequal (Hofstede, 2009).

In terms of the first dimension, Power Distance, the Chinese are a society which accepts inequalities amongst people (Hofstede, 2009). The power distance that exists in Chinese society is evident in both business operations and in daily life. For example, in business there are clear ranks and divisions between workers and leaders. Additionally, individuals do not often aspire to go beyond what is expected of their positions or ranks because of these divides (Hofstede, 2009).

In daily life, there are also important power distances which can be seen through the approach taken in terms of the concept of respect. In Chinese societies respect is based on traditional Confucian ideals which varies greatly from the Western view of the concept, which is based on personal interactions and age-related judgments. In Chinese society, respect for one's elders

or those of a higher position is more important than giving respect to those who have earned it through achievements or actions. Other Confucian traditional concepts such as filial piety and loyalty which still exist today also show that there are clear hierarchies both in business and in families, showing the acceptance of inequality in Chinese society.

Pertaining to the Individualism versus Collectivism dimension, the Chinese are a highly collectivistic culture (Hofstede, 2009) with the focus falling on the group and not on the individual. In China, it can therefore be said that an “individual’s status in society is determined by his/her relationship with others in the family, in the social group, or in the society as a whole” (Pan & Vanhonacker, 1993:224). This is also true of the Chinese way of life and traditional values such as 'guanxi' (gwan-shee) which are still in use today. ‘Guanxi’ literally means 'connections' or ‘relationships’ which is a concept that is deeply rooted in Confucian practice. It can be described as “a network of personal relationships emerging from the fundamentals of Chinese culture, traditions and social organisation” (Anderson & Lee, 2008:776). Concepts such as ‘guanxi’ which promote the mutual assistance within groups of people show the importance of collectivism in Chinese culture and in Chinese society.

Hofstede’s study (2009) shows Chinese culture to be highly masculine with a rating of 66 on the Masculinity versus Femininity scale (Hofstede, 2009). Highly masculine societies are driven by competition, achievement and success (Hofstede, 2009). Succeeding in something, whether it be in an education environment or in a work environment is very important to members of a Chinese society.

In terms of the Long-term Orientation versus Short-term Orientation dimension, the Chinese score very high which indicates that the Chinese are a pragmatic culture that believes that the truth depends on a situation or a specific place and a specific time (Hofstede, 2009). This high



rating also indicates that the Chinese persevere in achieving their goals and that they see education to prepare for a successful future (Hofstede, 2009).

It is evident that Hofstede's (2009) classification and analysis of the Chinese culture show a significant divide between Western culture and Chinese culture. As culture forms a large part of society and the operations within a society, it can also influence language education and the way in which language education is perceived and engaged with.

## **2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed perceptions and attitudes in general and within a linguistic field, defining and discussing the importance of the concepts. It also provides an overview of existing literature pertaining to prior research and studies within a language acquisition framework with regards to perceptions and attitudes. The research into perceptions and attitudes in language acquisition in general is vast, with several significant findings. However, the lack of research into native Mandarin speaking learners who are learning English in South Africa has shown a serious need for further research in this domain. Along with the need for investigation into the perceptions and attitudes of native Mandarin speakers who are learning English in South Africa, the cultural differences must be considered. This chapter discussed Hofstede's cultural dimensions and explored the complex Chinese culture.

Furthermore, it discussed the history of English and the general perceptions of English in China, Taiwan and South Africa. It is evident that the perceptions of the English language that exist in South Africa, China and Taiwan are similar in that English is seen as a way of providing better job prospects and obtaining easier access to education.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design and methodology, the research instruments employed and the procedure for obtaining the research data for this study. Furthermore, it explains how the methodology and instruments employed in this study aided in achieving the objectives set out in section 1.4.

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The spread of the English language across the world and the steady increase in Chinese and Taiwanese natives learning English in South Africa has given rise to the need for further investigation into language acquisition and pedagogy in this specific context. Given the unique cultural contexts and vastly different learning and living environments that Chinese and Taiwanese students learning English in South Africa experience, this study's main focus is on understanding and ascertaining what perceptions and attitudes are held by these Mandarin speakers. Through the research into these perceptions and attitudes, one can streamline and allow for a better understanding of these students' unique language acquisition process. Furthermore, further sociolinguistic research into Mandarin-speaking students' perceptions and attitudes towards learning English is carried out by conducting this research.

To achieve these aims and aid in directing this research, the study focuses on the investigation of four main aspects of perceptions and attitudes as mentioned in section 1.3. These four aspects are the perceptions of English, the attitudes towards learning English, the integration/contact attitudes and the attitude to successfully acquire English. In order to carry out this research, data was collected through enlisting two research instruments, contributing both quantitative and qualitative data. It was envisaged that the chosen instruments and the questions presented in these instruments would aid in collecting accurate and significant findings to allow for a better understanding of the language acquisition process.

## 3.2 METHODOLOGY

To carry out this research, several different methods were employed. The most important and vital part of which was the data collection process. Following full consent being granted by the owner and manager of the language institute to conduct the research, the data collection process commenced in July 2016 and was completed by the end of August 2016.

It was decided that a total of twenty participants would take part in the research. Each participant was provided with a modified Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) questionnaire (see Appendix D) and five selected participants took part in short follow-up interviews. The modified questionnaire and the interview (see Appendix D and Appendix E) contained specific and general questions which elicited reasons for learning English, desired outcomes of learning English as well as the participants' perceptions of and attitudes towards the English language and its speakers.

Along with the questionnaire, participants were requested to read, complete and sign the informed consent form (see Appendix A). The consent form fully explained the study and its purpose and requested participants to formally agree to take part in the study. During the dissemination process, the questionnaire, the interview and the study were fully explained to the participants and full consent was given on their part to participate in the study. After participants had read through the explanation of the study, they were given ample opportunities to ask any questions or clarify any misunderstandings. All participants were made fully aware that their questionnaire responses could be linked to their test or level scores at the language school for this research but that this would only be presented anonymously in this paper. This personal information would be stored on a password locked computer and only be available to researchers for research purposes.

Before completion of the questionnaires, participants were requested to complete a biographical information sheet (see Appendix B). The information sheet required participants to provide information such as age, family background, gender, marital status, education level, their home language(s) and those of their parents.

Finally, all twenty participants who were requested to participate in the study agreed to take part and all participants successfully completed the questionnaires. All Mandarin-speaking students attending the language school at the time of the research were requested to take part. Following the completion of these documents and the questionnaires, informal interviews with five participants were conducted, therefore combining both quantitative and qualitative data. Given that after collection of the questionnaire data there were no questionnaire responses which appeared to be out of the norm or vastly different from other questionnaire responses, a range of students with differing language levels were chosen for the interview process to give a broad demographic of interview participants.

### **3.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

The two main instruments employed in this study were a self-report questionnaire, the AMTB, and a follow-up interview. It was decided that these two research instruments would be best suited for the requirements and objectives of the study and therefore allow for the collection of data that would enable the investigation into the perceptions and attitudes of English held by Mandarin speakers who are learning English in South Africa.

#### **QUESTIONNAIRES**

The questionnaire employed (see Appendix D) for this study was a modified version of the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (1985) as designed by Robert Gardner (see section 2.4). The questionnaire consisted of two main sections with a total of twenty-eight questions. The questions appeared in the form of statements pertaining the perceptions and attitudes of English.

The first section consisted of twenty questions presented in random order with a 6-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (6) to strongly disagree (1). Participants were requested to circle the number on the Likert scale which they thought most accurately reflected how they felt about the statements which were presented to them. The second section consisted of an additional eight questions with a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strong (7) to weak (1), favourable (7) to unfavourable (1), very high (7) to very low (1) and very much (7) to very little (1) depending on the nature of each statement. Again, participants were requested to circle the number which most accurately represented their ideas or opinions on the statement. Both sections contained positively and negatively phrased questions, which would aid in determining whether the participants had carefully read and understood the questions as well as allowing the participants to look at statements from different perspectives while being unbiased.

As with every research instrument, there are advantages and disadvantages, however given the prior success and extensive use of the AMTB questionnaire in several research studies (Köpke, Schmid, Dostert & Dostert, 2007), it was decided that enlisting an adapted version of AMTB would be beneficial and could aid in accurately determining perceptions and attitudes of language learners and would therefore be successful and beneficial for this study. The modified AMTB questionnaire was therefore employed for this research, as previously presented in section 3.2. Given the extensive nature of the original Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) questionnaire, the age of the students for whom it was originally designed and the learning and surrounding environments of Gardner's study, it was imperative to adapt the questionnaire to better suit this study and the participants. The original version of the AMTB questionnaire was aimed at English speaking students who were learning French at a Canadian university, which meant that the English level of the questionnaire was fairly high. This resulted in the need for

several adjustments, not only in the language usage but also in terms of the length of the questionnaire.

Firstly, the original AMTB contained one hundred questions of which twenty-eight questions were selected for this study. Some of these questions were altered and rephrased. The modified AMTB questions were selected on the basis that they could be easily understood, non-evasive to Chinese and Taiwanese culture and could elicit the data required for investigation into perceptions and attitudes. In addition, several questions required rephrasing, either to avoid ambiguity or to be better understood by second language English speakers or English language learners. For example, question 17 in the AMTB questionnaire which states *'I think that learning English is dull'* would most probably be misunderstood by second language English speakers and therefore required the addition of the word 'boring' to make the meaning clear.

The questionnaire was administered to participants in English. Although all the participants are non-native English speakers who originate from Chinese linguistic and cultural backgrounds, most of the participants' levels of English are pre-intermediate and above, thereby indicating that they could successfully understand and complete the questionnaire without the need for translations. A further justification for the use of English in the dissemination of the questionnaire is the fact that these participants are in fact in South Africa to learn English and therefore use English as lingua franca daily. Participants who were unsure of the meaning of any questions, could however ask for confirmation at any time should they have required assistance or further explanation.

## INTERVIEWS

Follow-up interviews (see Appendix E) were employed in conjunction with the questionnaires to add depth and provide qualitative data to the study. The follow-up interviews were carried out with two main objectives. Firstly, given the small research group available, more detailed

personal interviews would provide extensive qualitative data thereby increasing the validity of the study. Secondly, personal interviews would also allow participants to give more background to the study and allow them the opportunity to provide a more detailed account of their perceptions and attitudes towards English, thereby achieving the depth needed to support the findings of this research. The interviews were between 2 and 5 minutes long. All the interviews were recorded and later transcribed to elicit data and findings at a later stage.

### **3.4 THE PARTICIPANTS**

The participants of this study consisted of twenty native Mandarin speaking language students who were solicited from a language institute in Cape Town, South Africa where they are currently learning English. All English students attending the language school are taught by trained South African native English speaking teachers, either with language teaching degrees or certificates in English language courses such as CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults), DELTA (Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults), TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language).

All participants have come to South Africa to learn English for a wide range of reasons including better job prospects and/or fulfilling study requirements. Their English proficiency levels range from elementary level to advanced level. The difference in proficiency levels is because several younger students had prior English language learning before arriving in South Africa. Among the twenty participants, two students were elementary level, while five participants were pre-intermediate, twelve were intermediate and one student was advanced level. The English language level of students at the language institute is determined by means of an oral interview on arrival at the language center should they have prior English education or through written examinations at the end of each level of English class (elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, upper-intermediate and advanced). This is the English language

level indicated in the research data (see Appendix C). The majority of the native Mandarin speakers typically arrive in South Africa with minimal language skills, as do most Chinese native speakers in many parts of the world. Most the participants arrived having no prior knowledge of English and very basic language skills. Many of the native Mandarin speaking participants in this study self-selected to do the English course, while a small number were sent by family members, mostly parents.

To maintain confidentiality and protect the students' identities, each of these participants in this study was assigned a pseudonym. They were labeled 'S' (for student) and given a corresponding number. Throughout this paper individual participants will be referred to using this pseudonym.

### **3.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

As with many studies, there were several limitations which became evident during the research and investigation process. These include time limitations and participant limitations.

Firstly, the stringent time constraints involved in the data collection for this study and limited time availability in terms of the completion of this study presented several challenges. These challenges included the viability of only a small number of participants who were available to take part in the study. For the study to be completed in a timely manner, only twenty participants took part in the questionnaire and five participants took part in the follow-up interviews. This was limiting in that only a certain number of the demographic could be investigated in this study but this did however aid in the timely completion of the research.

A further limitation in this study was the rather small and limited Chinese community of learners living and learning English in South Africa. Given this small Chinese community, it was imperative that this study not be confined solely to mainland Chinese nationals but also extended to Taiwanese nationals. Although this is not a limitation in that a wider range of



participants was investigated, it could take away from the accuracy of the study in that it would be difficult to determine whether the differences that exist between participants' responses are because of their background and nationality or whether they are in fact as a result of their attitudes and perceptions of the English language. This could however be overcome by comparing the two groups to determine what differences exist between the two.

A further limitation in terms of the conducting of the interviews was an unforeseen practical limitation. Given that the language levels of the participants were high enough to conduct interviews which would provide further background for the study it was envisaged that the interviews would be able to provide substantial information. However, in practice this was more difficult than envisioned. The language level of some of the participants and the fact that they are still learning the language hindered them in giving more qualitative data in that they were more focused on using accurate language than freely expressing their ideas and opinions. This became evident during the interview process when several participants chose to speak less thereby ensuring that they made less inaccuracies. This limitation however, is most probably specific to Chinese and Taiwanese learners and participants in that they often lack confidence when speaking English and/or are afraid of 'losing face' and being seen as making mistakes. The only way however to counteract this would be to conduct interviews in their mother tongue, this however would have involved having a Mandarin speaker conduct the conduct, transcribe and then translate each interview, which would in turn have time consuming and would have had financial implications. In addition, some information could still be lost or altered through translation.

### **3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed the study, the procedures and methodology employed in the research into perceptions and attitudes held by native Mandarin speakers who are learning English in South Africa. This was carried out by obtaining data from the dissemination of a modified

AMTB questionnaire and follow-up interviews. The final questionnaires, which were disseminated in English, consisted of two sections, containing twenty-eight questions in total which were successfully completed by twenty participants. The interviews were conducted in English and were successfully completed by five participants.

The following chapter will present the findings and the outcomes of the data collected from the questionnaires and the interviews in further detail.

## CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF DATA AND FINDINGS

This chapter presents the data and findings of the twenty self-report questionnaires and the five follow-up interviews conducted in English, which were completed by the participants in accordance with the objectives and aims set out in the first chapter. This study aims to determine the perceptions and attitudes towards English held by native Mandarin speaking students who are learning English in South Africa. This is approached by investigating four different factors, namely the perceptions of English, the attitudes towards learning English, the integration/contact attitudes and the attitude to successfully acquire English. This research was conducted to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data pertaining to perceptions and attitudes.

Data was collected from native Mandarin speakers originating from both mainland China and the Republic of China (Taiwan) who are currently learning English in Cape Town, South Africa. Both male and female adults took part in the study. The questionnaires were disseminated in one single session and subsequently analysed using the predictive analytics software IBM SPSS. Follow-up interviews were conducted individually with participants at a suitable time for both researcher and participant, these were transcribed and attached as an appendix (see Appendix F).

It should be assumed, other than when explicitly stated, that all the participants are represented in the data and figures below. This section will commence by presenting some of the biographical data of the participants as provided on the biographical information cover sheet which will be followed by the presentation of data in accordance with the four factors of research. The section thereafter will commence by discussing the data pertaining to the perceptions of English, followed by the attitudes towards learning English, the

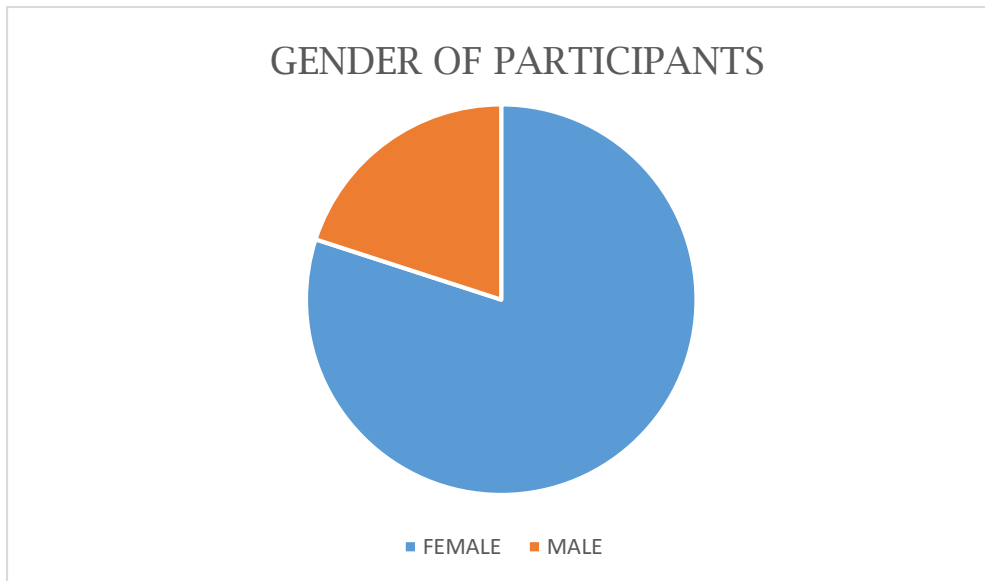
integration/contact attitudes and lastly the attitude to successfully acquire English. Lastly, the results of the interviews will be discussed before concluding this chapter.

## **4.1 PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES**

### **BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

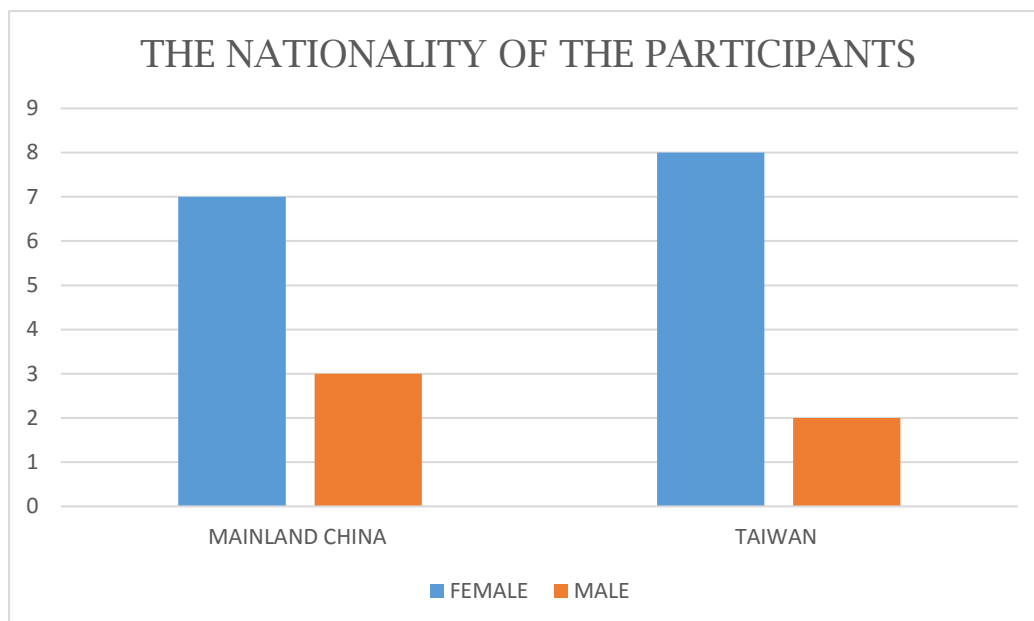
The following section presents the biographical data of the participants in accordance with the information provided by the participants. This biographical data is vital to understanding the target market of Mandarin-speaking learners of English in South Africa. Their background information which includes age, mother tongue and other languages spoken, marital status and level of education is recorded in Appendix C. For easy reference, all twenty participants who met the eligibility requirements are represented in table format in the appendices. There were only two eligibility requirements, namely that participants had to be native Mandarin speakers who were learning English in South Africa and that they had to be over the age of 18 years if consent had to be given to take part in the study. Each of the participants is represented in this paper by their pseudonym S and their given number to protect the participants' identities.

**THE GENDER OF THE PARTICIPANTS:** The pie chart on the following page, Figure 4.1 depicts the gender ratio of the twenty participants which clearly shows a majority of female participants. The final tally of the participants was five male participants (20% of the participants) and fifteen female participants (80%) making a final ratio of 4:1.



**FIGURE 4.1 THE GENDER OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

THE NATIONALITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO GENDER: Figure 4.2, on the following page depicts the nationalities of the participants according to gender. The questionnaire participants are divided equally between China (50%) and the Republic of China (Taiwan) (50%). Participants from mainland China consisted of three male participants (15%) and seven female participants (35%) and participants from Taiwan consisted of two male participants (10%) and eight female participants (40%).



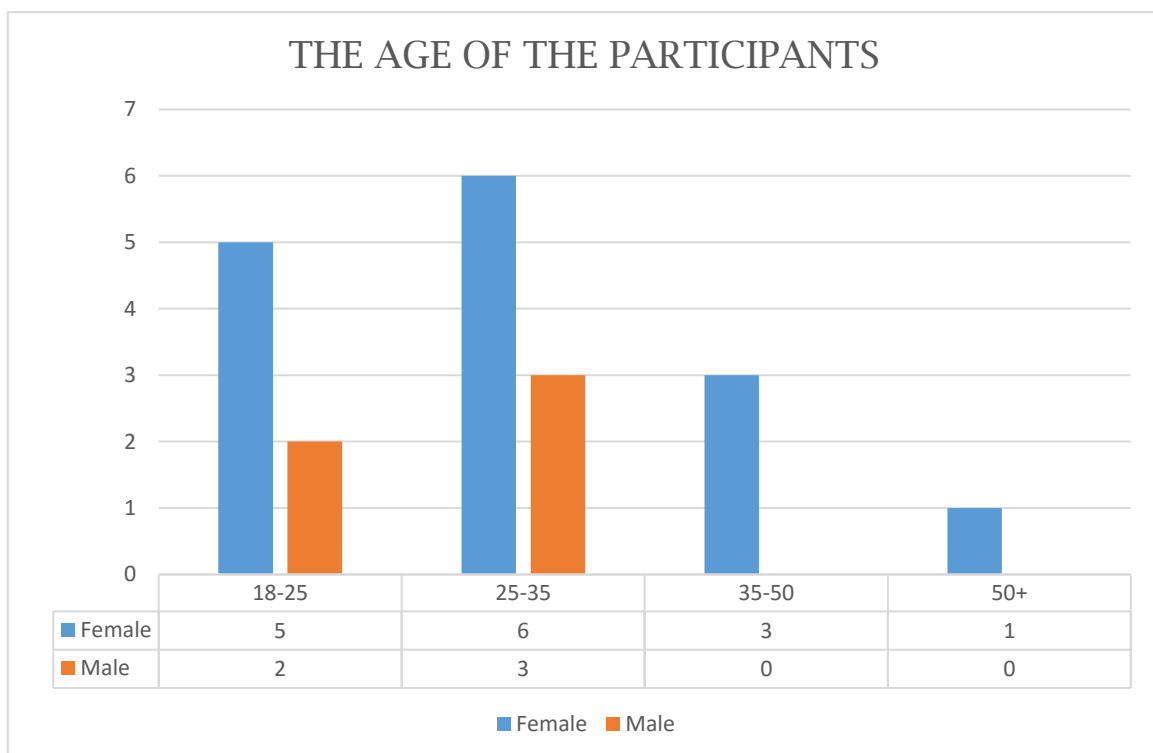
**FIGURE 4.2 THE NATIONALITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO GENDER**

THE MARITAL STATUS OF PARTICIPANTS: The table below, Table 4.1, presents the marital status of the participants according to gender and nationality. Across both nationalities (75%) of participants were unmarried with only one married man originating from mainland China (5%) and two men from Taiwan (10%). There were seven unmarried female participants (35%) originating from mainland China and four unmarried female participants (20%) originating from Taiwan.

PLACE OF ORIGIN	MARRIED				UNMARRIED			
	MALE	%	FEMALE	%	MALE	%	FEMALE	%
MAINLAND CHINA	1	5%			2	10%	7	35%
TAIWAN (ROC)			4	20%	2	10%	4	20%

**TABLE 4.1 THE MARITAL STATUS OF THE PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO GENDER AND NATIONALITY**

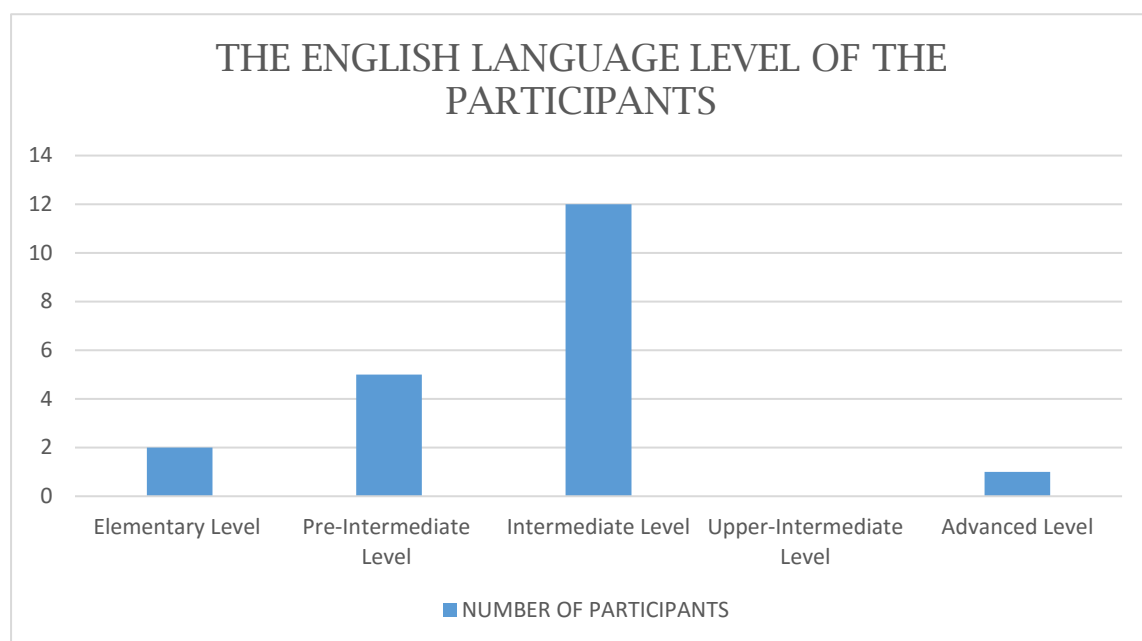
**THE AGE OF THE PARTICIPANTS:** Figure 4.3 below represents the age of the participants according to gender. All participants were adult learners with their ages ranging from 18 years being the lowest to 53 years being the highest. The largest age group falls into the 25-35 age category with (30%) of the twenty participants being female and aged between 25-35 and (15%) of the participants being male in this age group. The smallest age group is the 50+ age category with only one female participant.



**FIGURE 4.3 THE AGE OF THE PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO GENDER**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEVELS OF THE PARTICIPANTS:** In the figure on the following page, Figure 4.4, the English language levels of all participants are depicted. At the language institute there are six English language levels, which are namely beginner, elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, upper-intermediate and advanced level (see section 3.4). At the time of this investigation, only elementary, intermediate, upper-intermediate and advanced level language students were available to take part in the study. Among the twenty participants, two

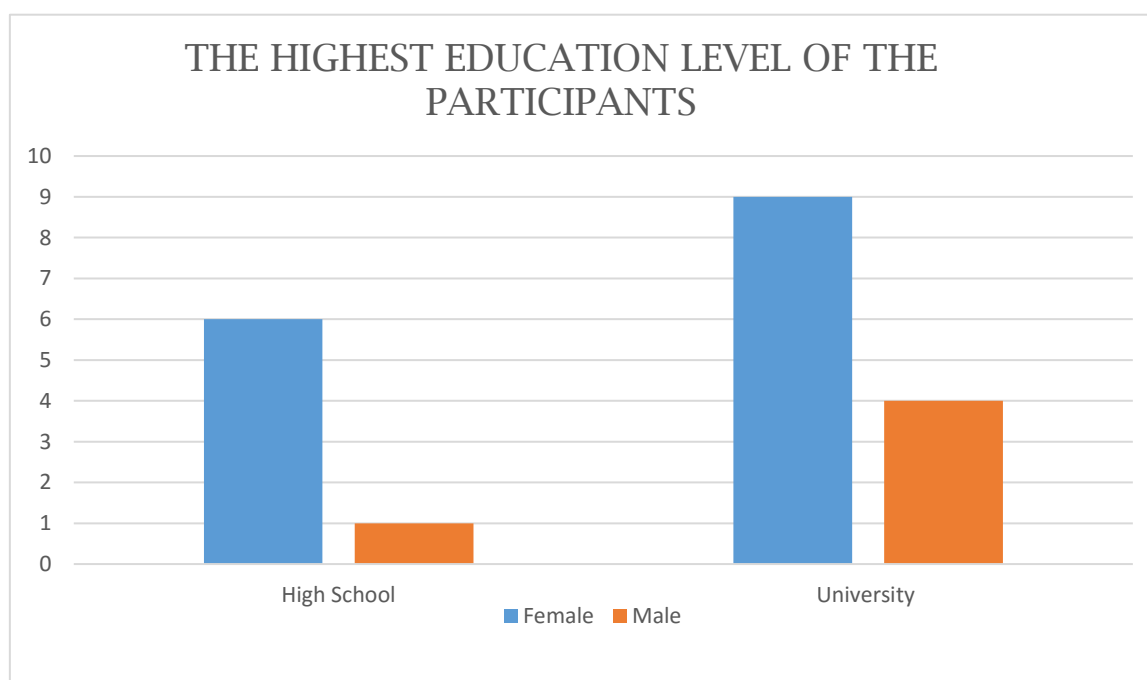
participants were elementary level, five participants were pre-intermediate level, twelve participants were intermediate level, and only one participant was taking an advanced English language level course. The biggest group is the intermediate level group which consisted of (60%) of the total participants in this study. The levels represented throughout this paper are the English language levels (per the language institute) of the participants at the time of the dissemination of the self-report questionnaires and the conducting of the follow-up interviews.



**FIGURE 4.4 THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEVEL OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

**HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVELS:** Finally, the figure on the following page presents the last of the biographical information. Figure 4.5 presents the highest education level of the participants according to gender. Most the participants had attended university with (45%) of the female participants and (20%) of the male participants having studied at tertiary level while (30%) of the female participants and (5%) of the male participants had finished high school.





**FIGURE 4.5 HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL OF THE PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO GENDER**

## 4.2 THE PARTICIPANTS' QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

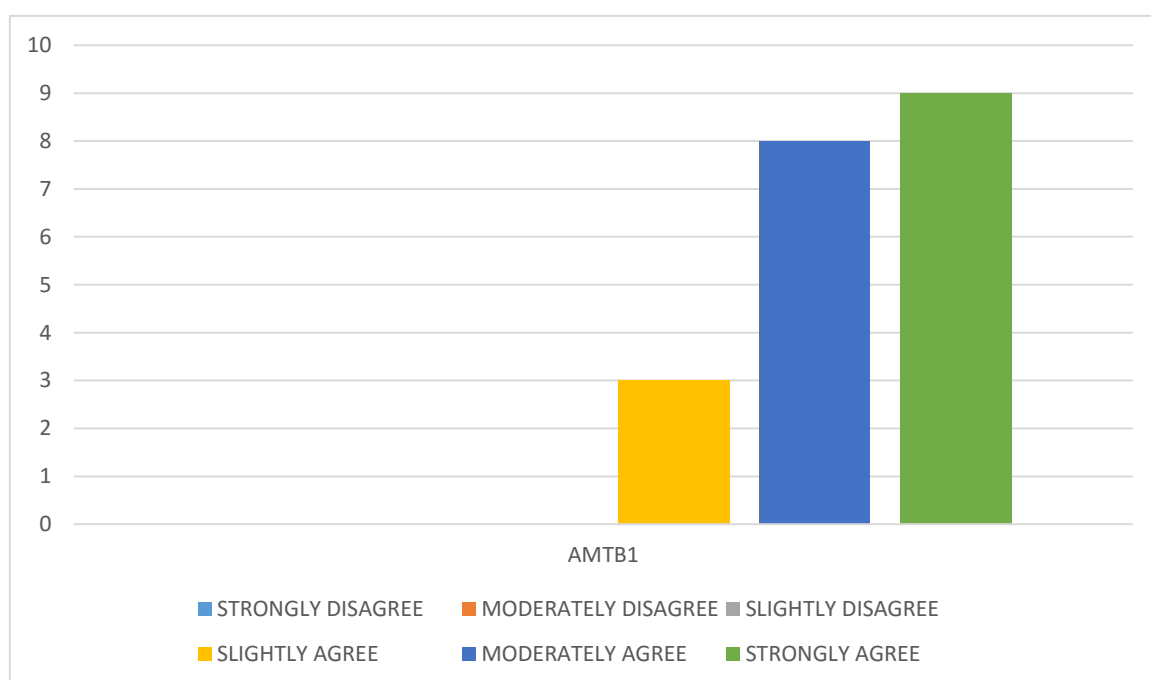
This section will discuss the questionnaire responses as obtained through the dissemination of the altered AMTB questionnaire. These will be presented in order of the factors of investigation as mentioned in section 1.4. Firstly, data which highlights the perceptions of the English language will be discussed which will be followed by the attitudes towards learning English, the integration/contact attitudes and lastly the attitude to successfully acquire English.

### THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, it is argued that the best way to understand the minds of the language learners is by investigating their beliefs and perceptions (Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013:63). Four main statements in the questionnaire were aimed specifically at

investigating these beliefs and perceptions of the native Mandarin speakers, the findings of which will be presented here along with visual representations.

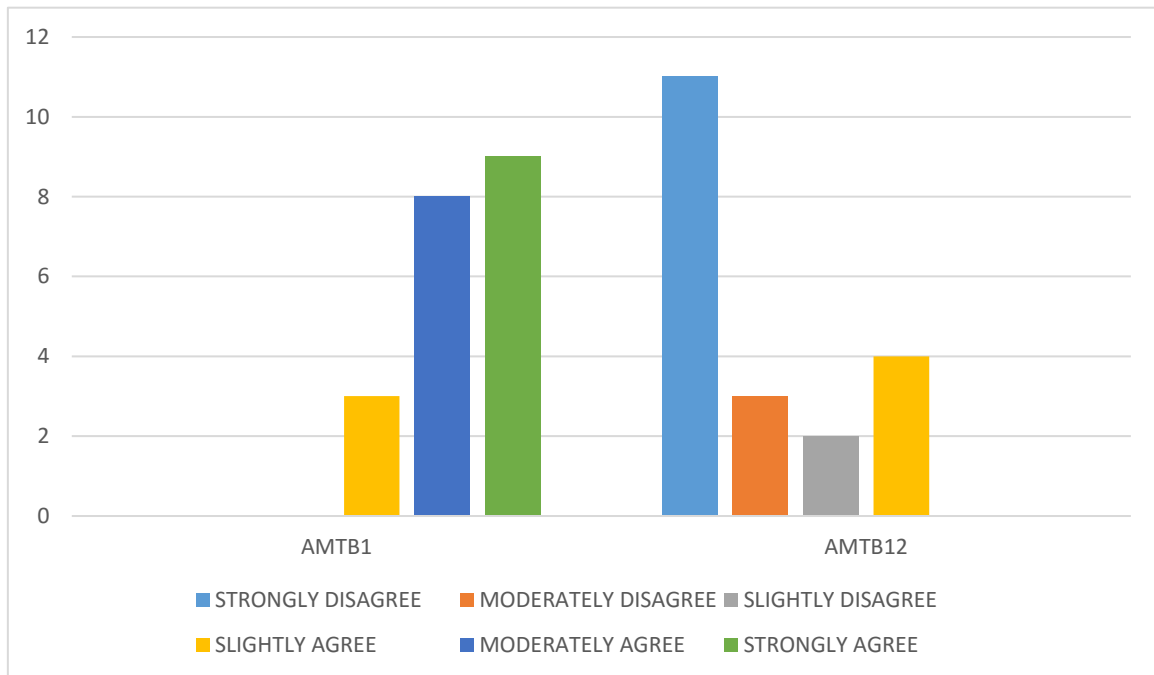
Firstly, Figure 4.6 below presents the participants' perceptions of the English language obtained from the results of the first statement of the questionnaire, AMTB 1. This is a positively phrased statement requesting participants to rate whether they agree or disagree on the Likert scale with the statement, 'Learning English is really great.' All twenty respondents responded positively to this statement, with (45%) opting for 'strongly agree', (40%) opting for 'moderately agree' and (15%) opting for 'slightly agree'.



**FIGURE 4.6 THE POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH IN AMTB 1**

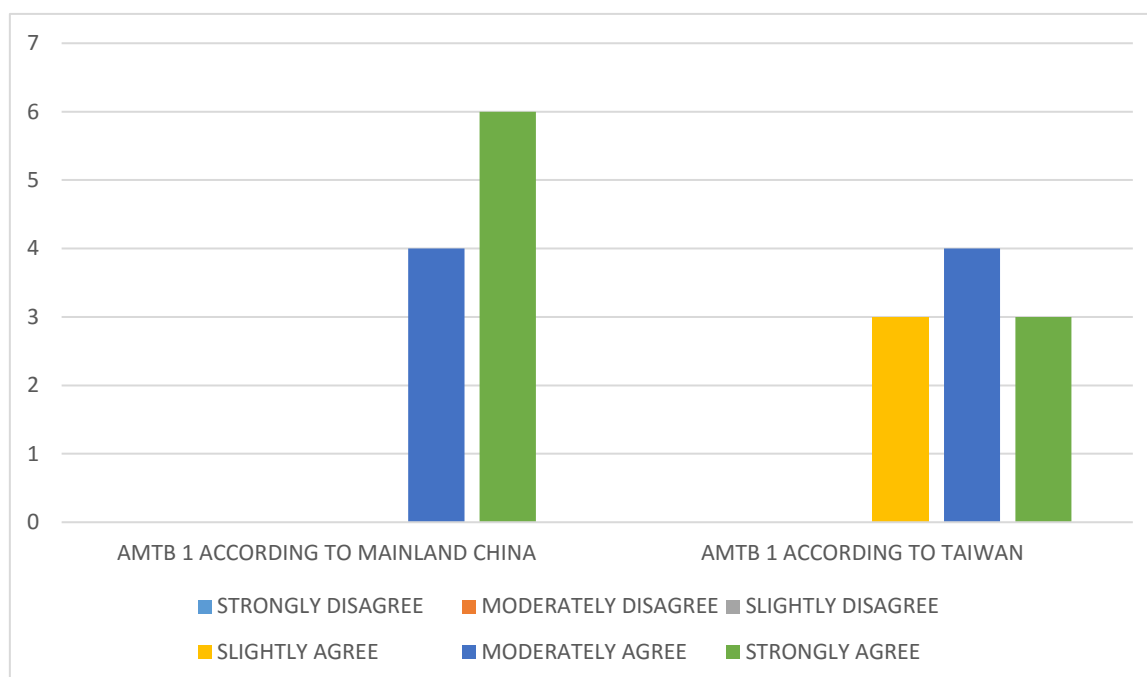
In Figure 4.7 below, the results of AMTB 1 are compared with the contrasting results of AMTB 12. AMTB 1 is positively phrased while AMTB 12 is negatively phrased. The latter asks participants to select on the Likert scale if they agree or disagree with the statement 'I hate

English'. (55%) of participants chose to 'strongly disagree' with the statement 'I hate English' while, (15%) moderately disagreed, (10%) slightly disagreed and (20%) slightly agreed.



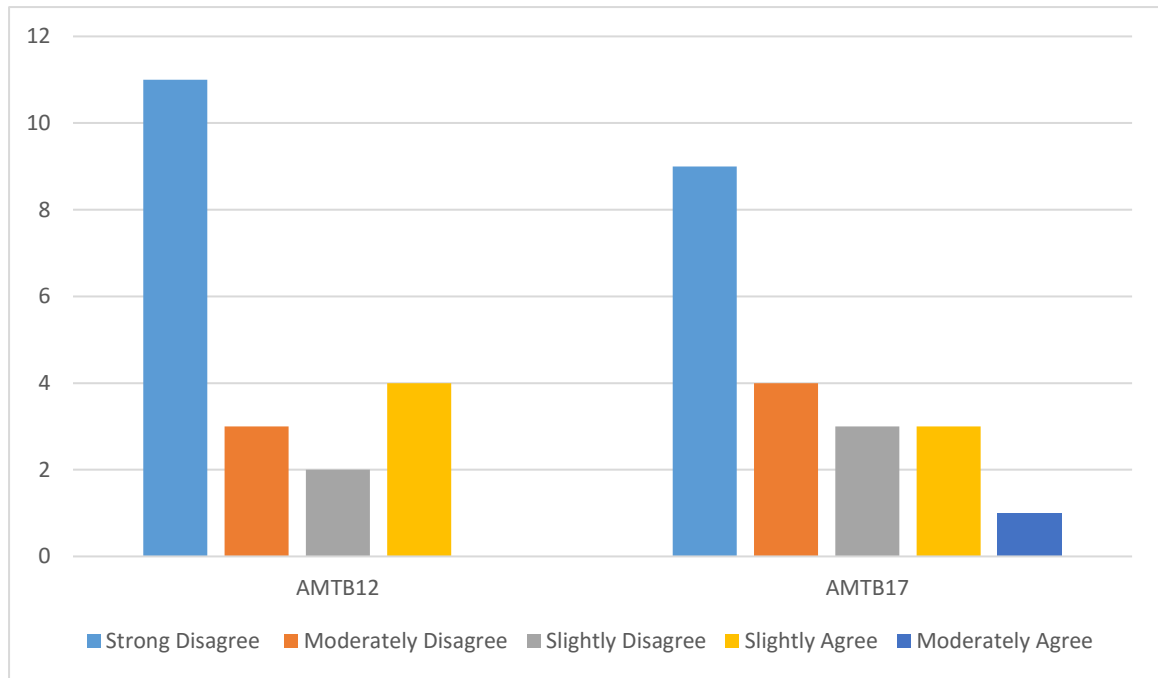
**FIGURE 4.7 THE COMPARISON OF NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH IN AMTB 1 AND AMTB 12**

Figure 4.8 on the following page shows the comparison of the responses to AMTB 1 according to nationality. (60%) of the participants from mainland China chose to strongly agree and (40%) decided to moderately agree. In terms of the participants from Taiwan, (30%) chose to strongly agree, (40%) of participants moderately agreed and (30%) slightly agreed.



**FIGURE 4.8 POSITIVE ATTITUDES BETWEEN MAINLAND CHINA AND TAIWAN IN AMTB 1**

Secondly, in Figure 4.9 on the following page, the correlation between participants who strongly agreed with AMTB 12 which states, ‘I hate English’ and AMTB 17 which states, ‘I think that learning English is dull/boring’. Questionnaire statements AMTB 12 and AMTB 17 are both negatively phrased statements. In terms of AMTB 12, (55%) of participants chose to strongly disagree, (15%) chose to moderately disagree, (5%) chose to slightly disagree and (20%) chose to slightly agree. While with AMTB 17, (45%) decided to strongly disagree, (20%) decided to moderately agree, (15%) decided to slightly disagree and (15%) chose to slightly agree, leaving (5%) to moderately agree.

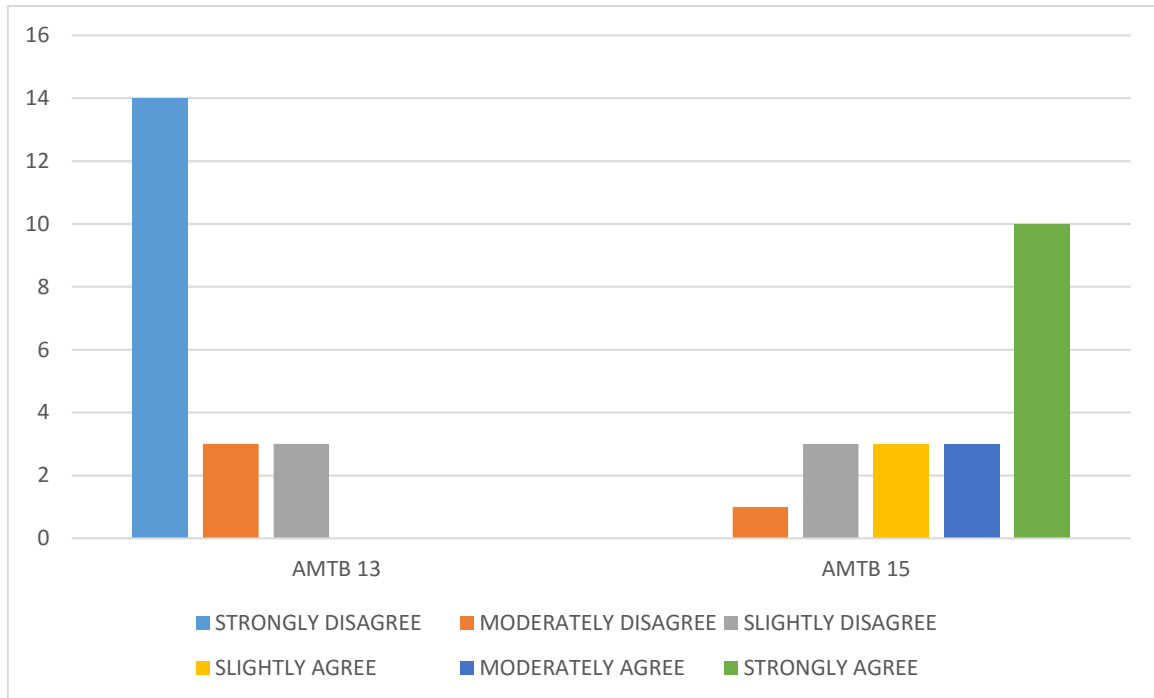


**FIGURE 4.9 THE NEGATIVELY PHRASED PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH IN AMTB 12 AND AMTB 17**

## THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH

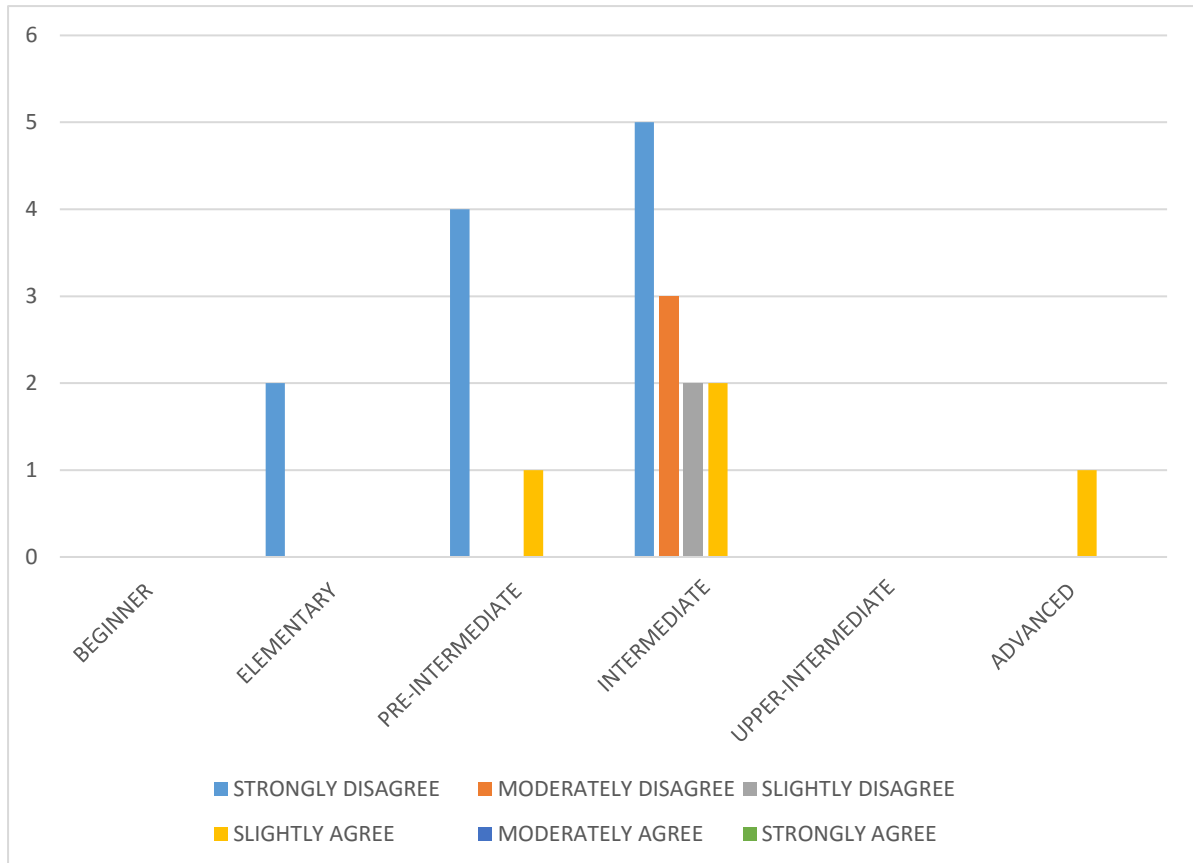
This section presents data which pertains to questions surrounding the participants' attitudes towards learning English. The questionnaire contained questions which were linked to attitudes to learning the language, these will be discussed in this section.

Figure 4.10 on the following page, presents the contrast of the attitudes towards learning English. Questionnaire statement AMTB 13 which asks participants to agree or disagree with the statement 'Learning English is a waste of time' and AMTB 15 which states 'I look forward to the time I spend learning English' are depicted in the graph. Most the participants (70%) strongly disagreed with the fact that learning English is a waste of time, while (15%) moderately disagreed and (15%) slightly disagreed. (50%) of the participants agreed that they look forward to the time they spend learning English while (15%) moderately agreed, (15%) slightly agreed, another (15%) slightly disagreed, and (5%) moderately disagreed.



**FIGURE 4.10: THE COMPARISON OF AMTB 13 AND AMTB 15**

Figure 4.11 on the following page depicts the comparison between the participants' English language level and their attitude towards English. Elementary language level students strongly disagreed with the statement 'I hate English'. This was increased in the responses for the pre-intermediate English language level participants who also strongly disagreed with this statement. Intermediate English language level participants also showed an even stronger disagreement with the statement 'I hate English'. The only advanced student however chose to slightly agree.



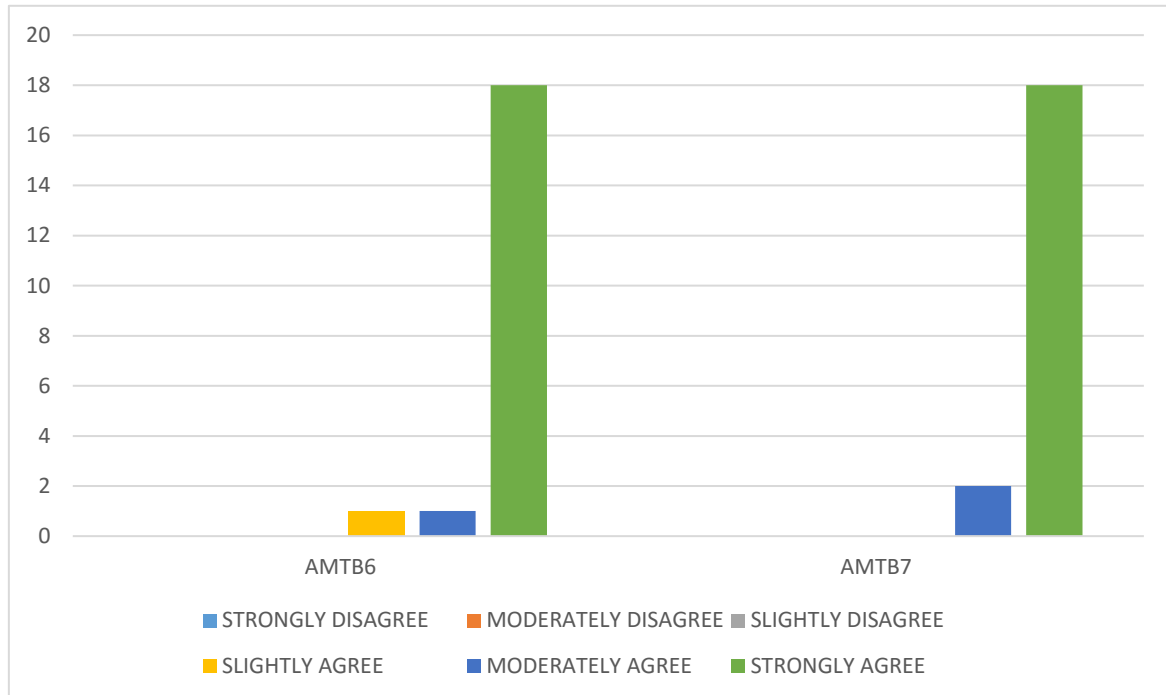
**FIGURE 4.11: ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEVEL AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENGLISH IN AMTB 12**

## THE INTEGRATION OR CONTACT ATTITUDES

This section presents data pertaining to questions surrounding the integration or contact attitudes with external influences, particularly the influence of the family and other speakers of the English language as well as influences on a national level.

Figure 4.12 on the following page, depicts the two AMTB statements which discuss contact with native English language speakers. Both AMTB 6 and AMTB 7 are positively phrased and request participants to rate whether they agree or disagree. AMTB 6 states ‘If China/Taiwan had no contact with English-speaking countries, it would be a great loss’ and AMTB 7 states, ‘Studying English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people’. In terms of AMTB 6, (90%) of participants decided that they strongly agreed

that it would be a loss if China/Taiwan had no contact with English speaking countries. Another (5%) moderately agree with this statement and (5%) also said that they slightly agree. In terms of AMTB 7, 90% of participants chose ‘strongly agree’ and the remaining (10%) moderately agreed.

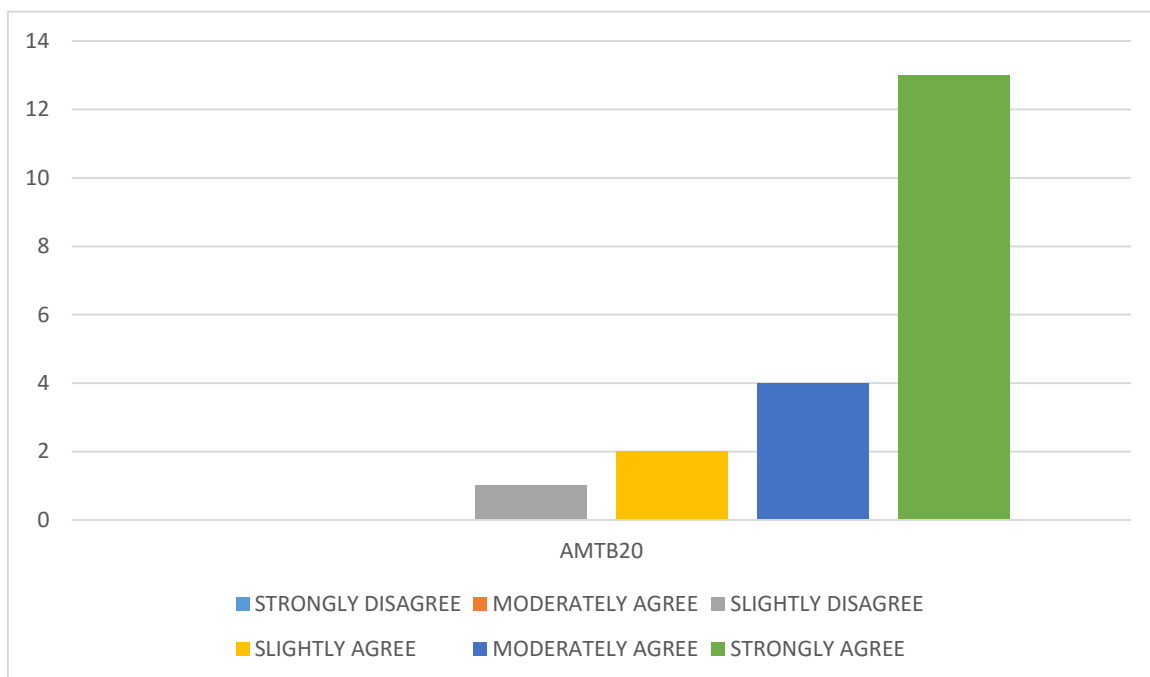


**FIGURE 4.12: CONTACT ATTITUDES AS RECORDED IN AMTB 7 AND AMTB 7**

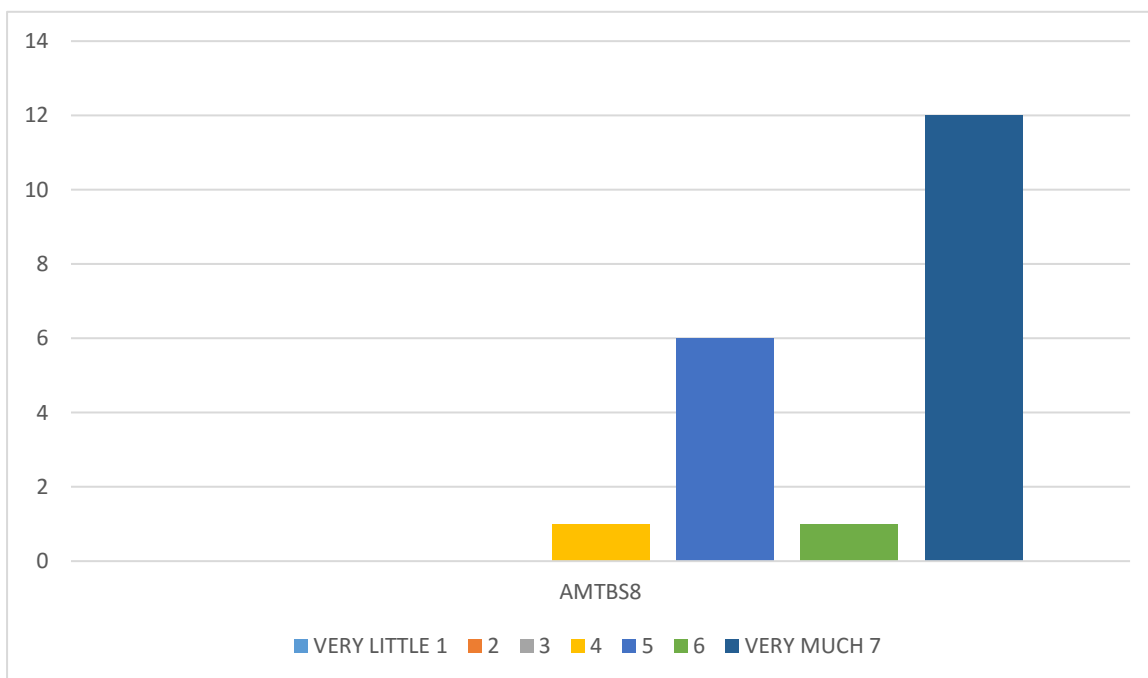
Figure 4.13 and Figure 4.14 on the following page present the influence family has on language learning. In AMTB 20, respondents were requested to mark on the Likert scale how important learning English is to their family members. AMTB S8 in the second section of the questionnaire also reiterates the idea of the family influence which requests participants to rate how strongly they feel that their family encourages them to learn English. Here they are presented separately given the different Likert scales. In the first chart, (5%) slightly disagreed, (10%) agreed, (20%) slightly agreed and (70%) strongly agreed. In AMTB S8, which asks participants to select on a scale from 1 – 7 how much they think their ‘family encourages them



to learn English’, (5%) selected 4, (20%) selected 5, (5%) selected 6 and (60%) selected 7 on a scale from 1 (very little) to 7 (very much).

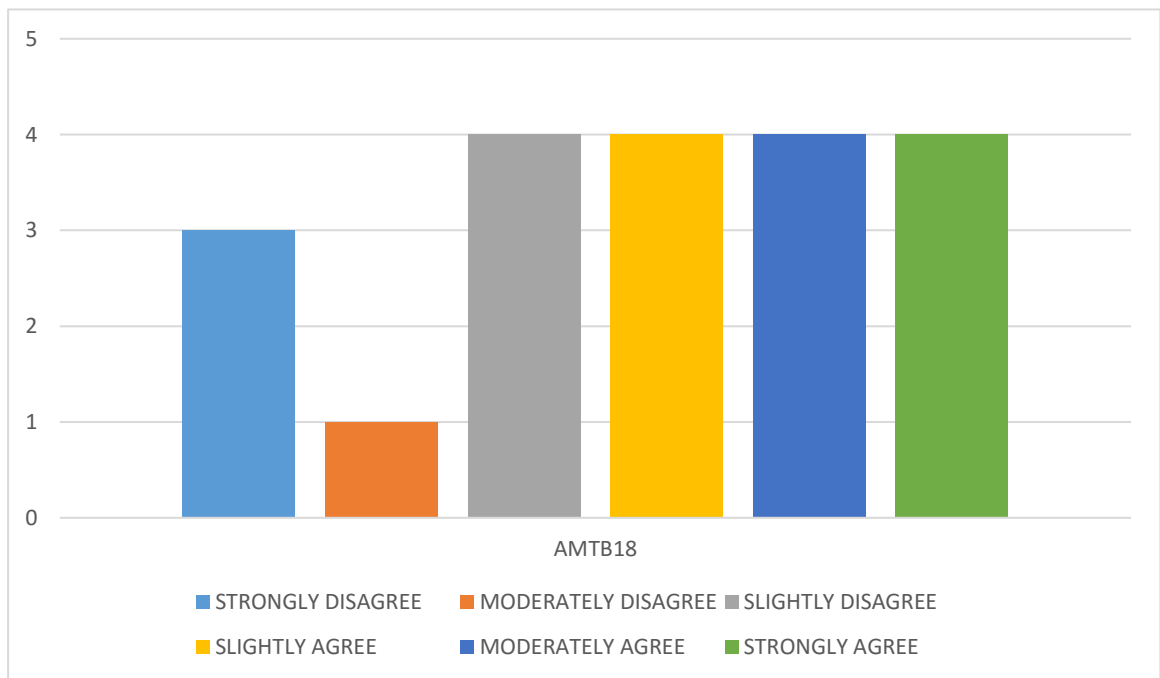


**FIGURE 4.13 THE FAMILY INFLUENCES ON LANGUAGE LEARNING IN AMTB 20**



**FIGURE 4.14 THE FAMILY ENCOURAGEMENT INFLUENCES IN AMTB S8**

Figure 4.15 depicts the response to AMTB 18 which discusses integration attitudes towards Mandarin and English speakers. AMTB 18 states that ‘I would feel comfortable speaking English where both Chinese/Taiwanese and English speakers were present’. The participants employed a wide range of responses to this statement which were divided across all points on the Likert scale. The responses are divided as follows: (20%) of participants chose ‘strongly agree’, (20%) of participants chose ‘moderately agree’, another (20%) of participants chose ‘slightly agree’ and (20%) chose ‘slightly disagree’. Additionally, (5%) chose to ‘moderately disagree’ while another (15%) chose to ‘strongly disagree’.

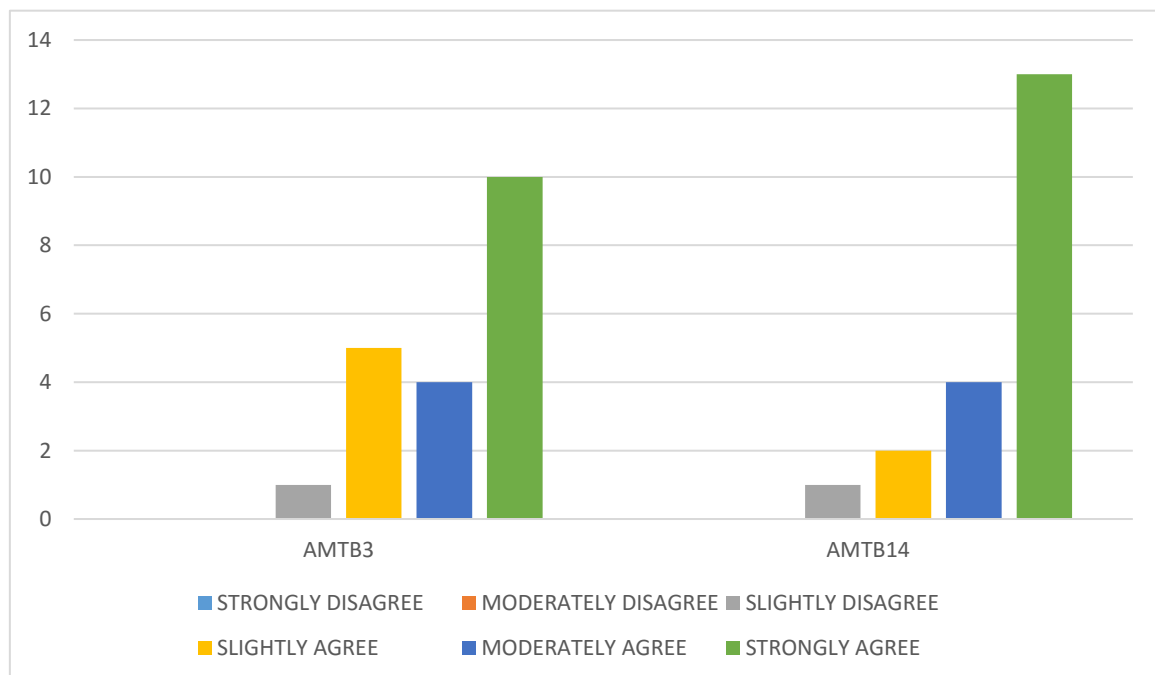


**FIGURE 4.15: ENGLISH/MANDARIN CONTACT ATTITUDES IN AMTB 18**

## THE ATTITUDE TO SUCCESSFULLY ACQUIRE ENGLISH

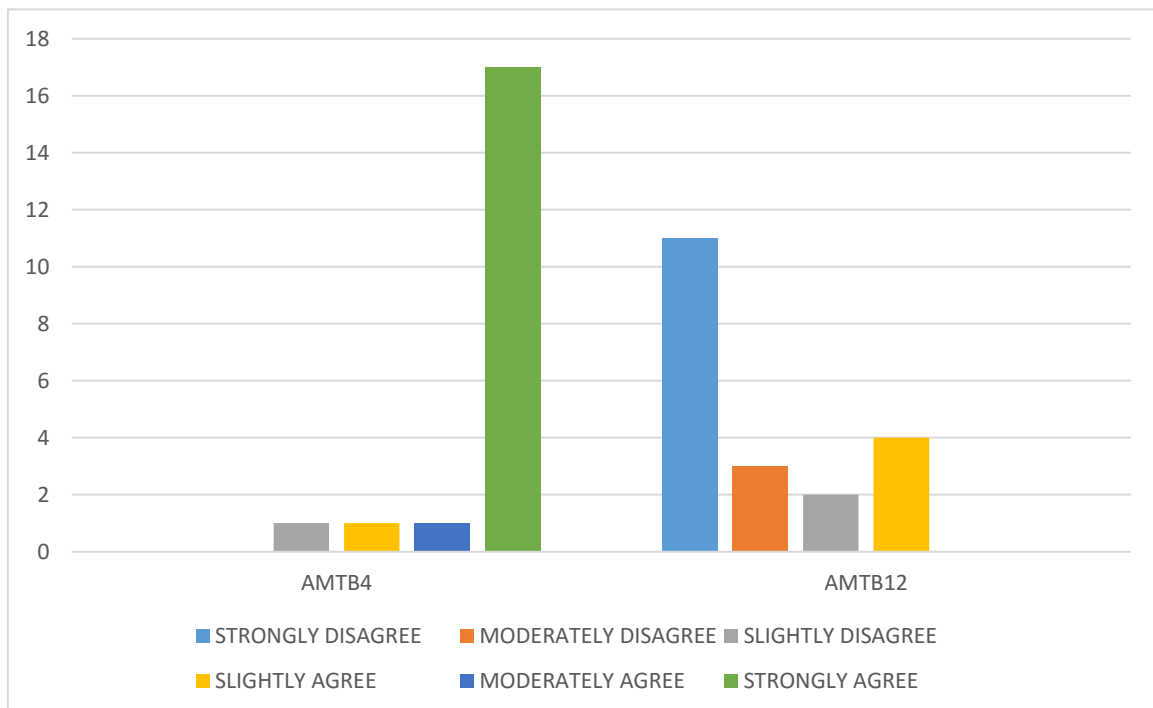
This section discusses questions which pertain to the attitude to successfully master and acquire English, the statements which relate to successfully acquiring English are visually represented on the following pages.

Figure 4.16 on the following page shows the comparison between two AMTB statements which refer to the attitude to successfully acquire English. These are namely AMTB 14 which states, ‘I would like to learn as much English as possible’ and AMTB 3 which states, ‘I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English’. There is a clear indication that most participants felt they strongly agree with the positively phrased statement in AMTB 3 with 50% of participants strongly agreeing. Along with this, 20% moderately agreed with the statement, (25%) slightly agreed and (5%) slightly disagreed. In terms of AMTB 14, (65%) of participants strongly agreed, while (20%) moderately agreed, (10%) slightly agreed and (5%) slightly disagreed.



**FIGURE 4.16: THE ATTITUDE TO LEARNING ENGLISH IN AMTB 3 AND AMTB 14**

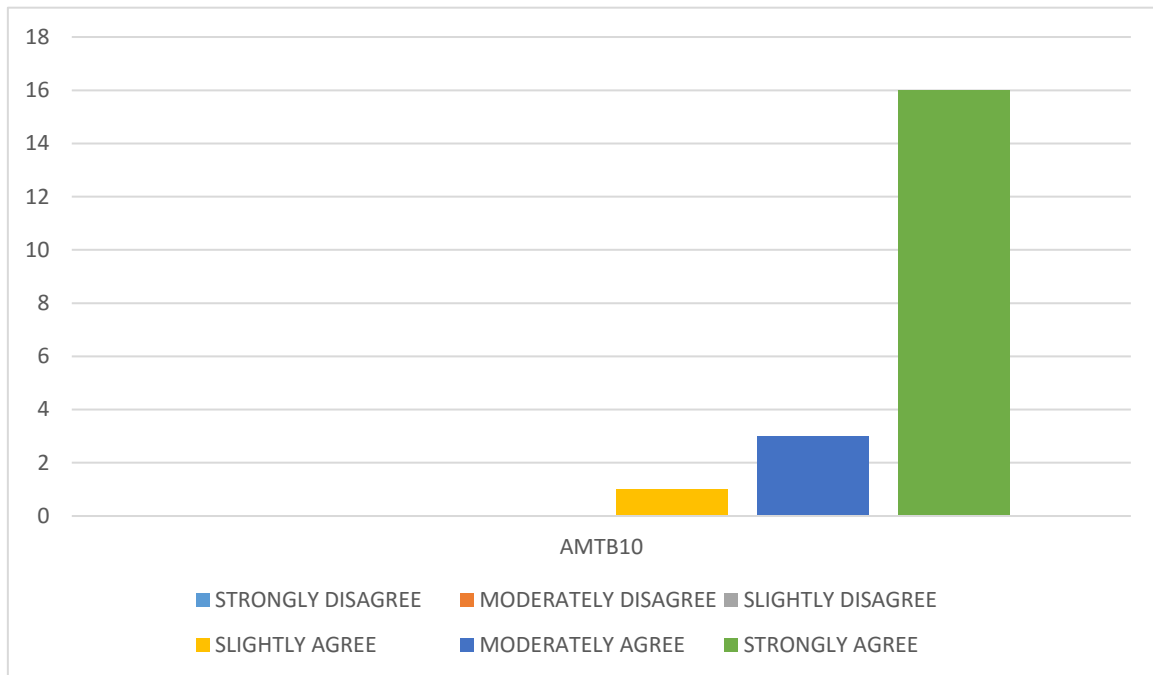
Figure 4.17, on the following page compares two opposing statements in the questionnaire. AMTB 4 asks participants to agree or disagree on the 6-point Likert scale with the statement ‘Studying English is important because I will need it for my career’. The results of which were, (85%) of participants who chose to strongly agree and (5%) moderately agreed, another (5%) slightly agreed and (5%) slightly disagreed. While, AMTB 12 states ‘I hate English’, (55%) of participants strongly disagree with this statement, (15%) moderately disagree, (10%) slightly disagree and (20%) slightly agree.



**FIGURE 4.17 REASONS TO SUCCESSFULLY ACQUIRE ENGLISH IN AMTB 4 AND AMTB 12**

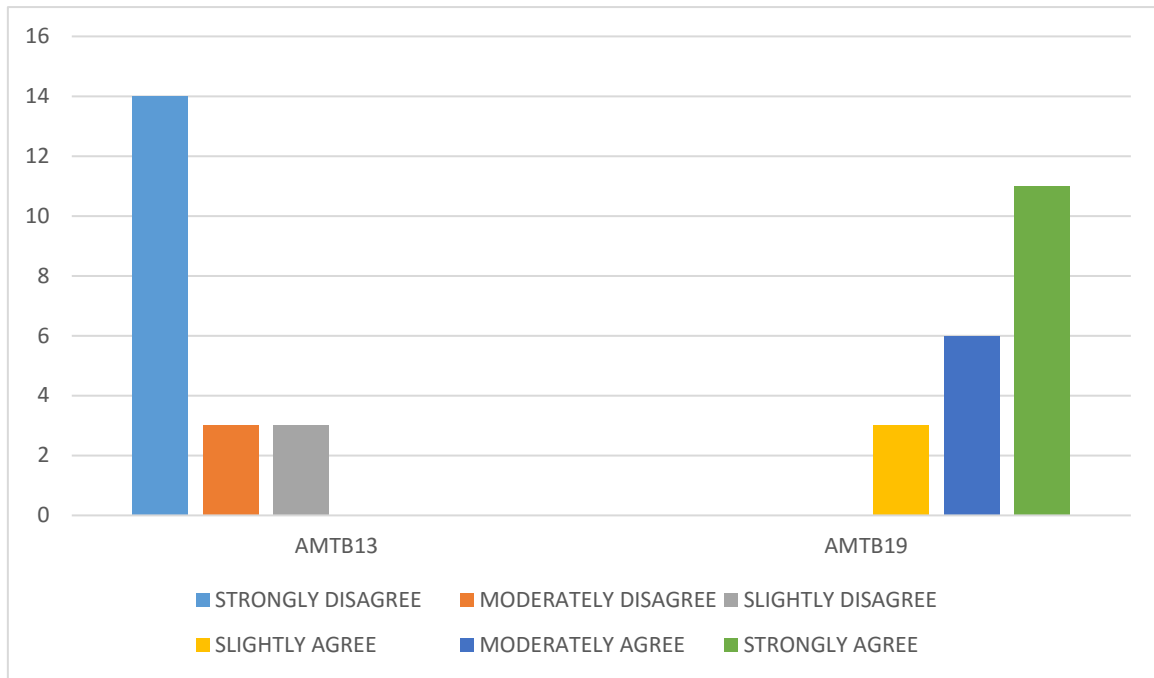
Figure 4.18 on the following page depicts the value of English for employment. Several of the questionnaire participants responded positively to questions which discussed the pragmatic value of English, for example AMTB 10 requested participants to say whether they thought English would aid them in gaining employment. (80%) of the participants strongly agreed with

this statement, with (15%) moderately agreeing and (5%) slightly agreeing. This is represented in Figure 4.18 on the following page.



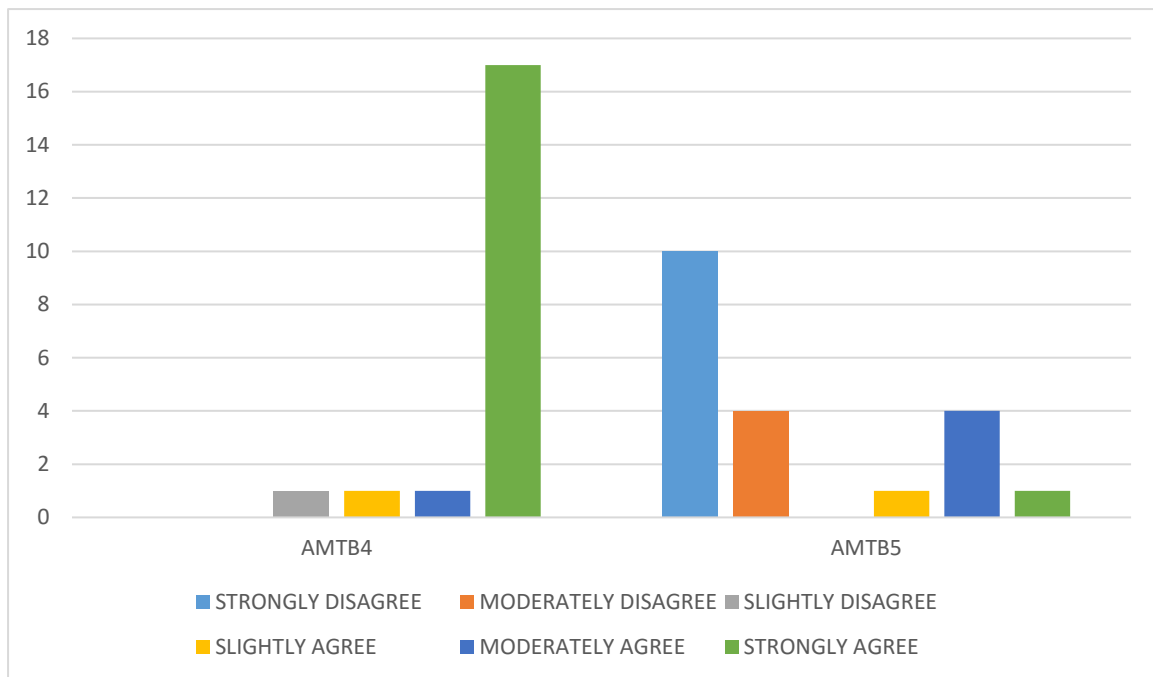
**FIGURE 4.18: THE PRAGMATIC VALUE OF ENGLISH IN AMTB 10**

In Figure 4.19 on the following page, the attitude to successfully acquire English is shown through responses to questionnaire statements AMTB 13 and AMTB 19. AMTB 13 requests participants to agree or disagree with the statement ‘Learning English is a waste of time’ and AMTB 19 states ‘I make a point of trying to understand all the English I see and hear’. (70%) of participants strongly disagreed with AMTB 13, (15%) moderately disagreed and another (15%) slightly disagreed. While (55%) strongly agreed with AMTB 19, additionally (30%) moderately agreed and (15%) slightly agreed.



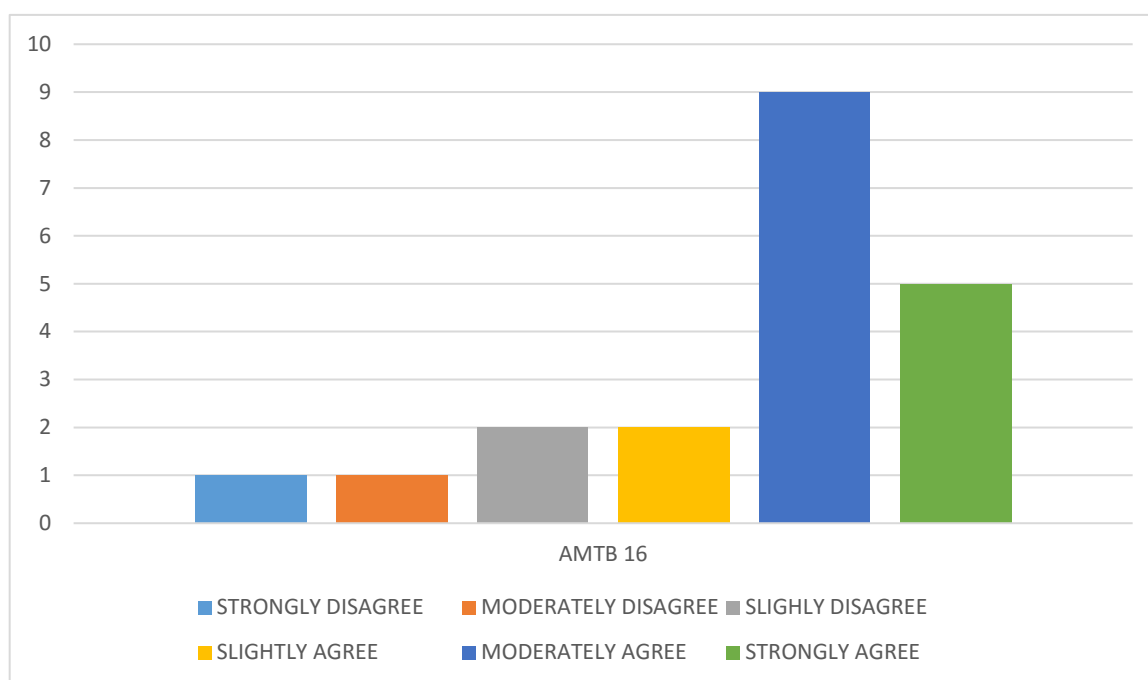
**FIGURE 4.19: ATTITUDE TO SUCCESSFULLY ACQUIRE ENGLISH IN AMTB 13 AND AMTB 19**

In Figure 4.20 on the following page, the responses to AMTB 4 and AMTB 5 are depicted. These two statements in the questionnaire represent the reasons behind successfully acquiring English. AMTB 4 which states ‘Studying English is important because I will need it for my career’ was strongly agreed with by (85%) with an additional (5%) choosing ‘moderately agree’, (5%) choosing ‘slightly agree’ and another (5%) choosing ‘slightly disagree’. AMTB 5 which requests participants to agree or disagree with the statement ‘Knowing English isn’t a really important goal in my life’ was strongly disagreed with by half of the twenty participants and (20%) of participants chose to moderately disagree, (5%) chose to slightly agree, (20%) chose to moderately agree and (5%) to strongly agree.



**FIGURE 4.20: ENGLISH LEARNING: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN AMTB 4 AND AMTB 5**

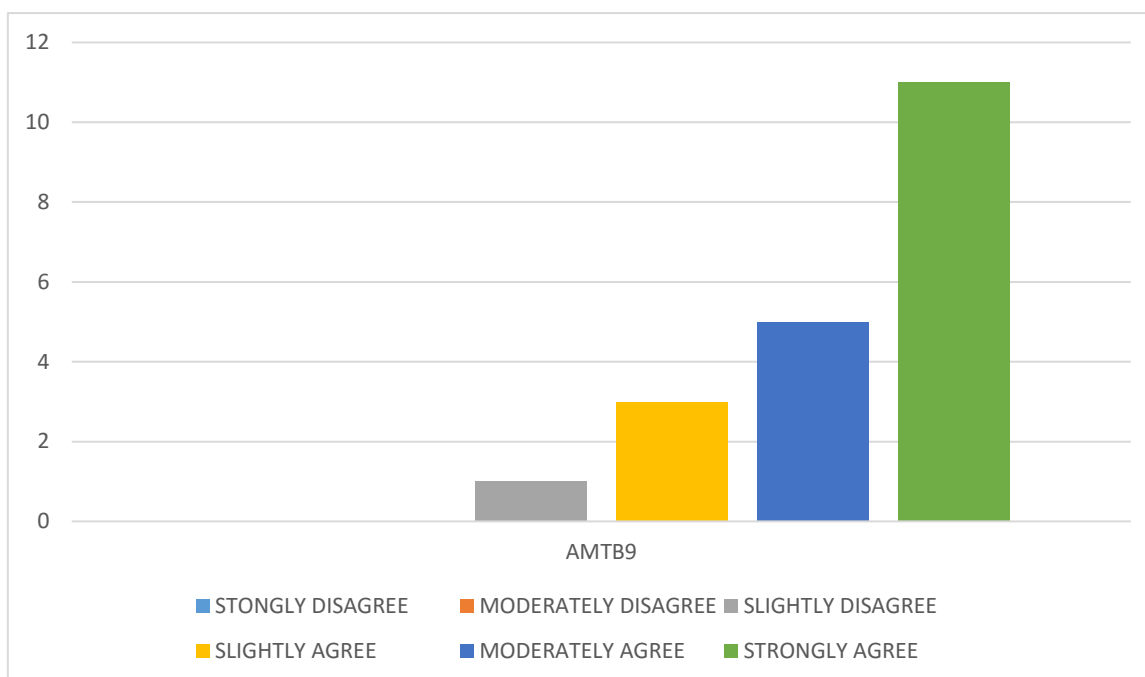
Figure 4.21 on the following page presents the findings of the questionnaire statement AMTB 16 which requested participants to disagree or agree with the statement ‘Studying English is important because other people will respect me more if I can speak English’. The breakdown of these findings is that every point on the Likert scale is represented, (25%) of participants chose to strongly agree, while (45%) chose to moderately agree, (10%) chose to slightly agree, another (10%) chose to slightly disagree, (5%) chose to moderately disagree and the last (5%) chose to strongly disagree.



**FIGURE 4.21: PERCEPTIONS SURROUNDING RESPECT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING  
IN AMTB 16**

Figure 4.22 on the following page depicts the responses to AMTB 9 which states ‘Studying English is important because it will allow me appreciate the English way of life’. (55%) of participants strongly agreed with this statement, while (25%) moderately agreed, (15%) slightly agreed and (5%) slightly disagreed.





**FIGURE 4.22 APPRECIATING THE ENGLISH WAY OF LIFE IN AMTB 9**

This section discussed the data collected from the questionnaires in detail representing them visually in graph and table format. The following section will now shift focus to the results of the follow-up interviews.

### 4.3 RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

The interviews, along with the questionnaires give rise to some key findings. The full transcriptions of the interviews can be found in Appendix F. This section will take a closer look into the results of the interviews and will present findings in accordance with the four factors of investigation. This section therefore commences by discussing the perceptions of the English language, followed by attitudes towards learning English, integration/contact attitudes and the attitude to successfully acquire English. Interviewees will be referred to in this section using the order in which they were transcribed in, for example, S1 is the first transcribed interview in the appendices and so forth.

## THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

There are several questions in the interview script that prompt interviewees to talk about their perceptions of English and the perceptions of people who speak English. The interviewees present some interesting insights into these perceptions which will now be discussed further.

When asked what the interviewees thought of English there were several different responses. S1 responded by saying that she thinks of 'its uses, like making friends and getting jobs' which highlights the pragmatic value of the English language, showing that English is often seen not only as a way to communicate but also as a means to making friends and obtaining employment. This participant (S1) also chose to agree strongly to the questionnaire statements which discussed the use of language for specific purposes. For example, 'Studying English is important because I will need it for my career' (AMTB 4). She also chose to strongly disagree with statements that were negatively phrased which pertain to the use of English, for example 'Knowing English isn't a really important goal in my life' (AMTB 5).

While S1 saw English for its uses, S15 mentions that English is a world language, '[English is a] first language for this world' and that many countries use English also adding that she needs to learn English 'because English have a lot of countries can speak' (There are a lot of English speaking countries).

Additionally, S14 also responded positively saying that the 'English language [is] good', describing English native speakers as speaking 'nice English'.

## THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH

Several of the prompting questions in the interview also requested participants to talk about their attitudes towards learning English. Several interviewees brought up the idea that English is a difficult language. There were however contrasting views on this, S1 commented saying

that her attitude toward English at the beginning was that ‘it was very boring’ because she could not understand anything. She however finds that English is now ‘interesting’. S15 mentions that English is very difficult noting that ‘for me very difficult’. S18 originally states that English ‘is a difficult language’ but later notes that after she had attempted to learn Arabic she felt that ‘English is one of the easier languages’ also stating that she finds the grammar quite simple, saying that ‘when you understand it, you just get it’.

S18 also comments that she was ‘forced to learn English at school’. The choice of the word ‘forced’ is interesting. Being an advanced level English student she now looks back at her days of learning English in China as somewhat compulsory, something she did not enjoy doing but rather something she was required to do. Besides indicating that she did not enjoy the process of learning English as a young child, it also shows her previous attitude towards learning English in China, which was a fairly negative one. She does however later add that overall the experience of learning English was a positive one, saying that learning English ‘gets better and better’.

S20 also mentions that English is difficult. He states that he thinks ‘English is difficult’ and adds that ‘the grammar is difficult to learn’. It can therefore be concluded from the responses of the participants that an overarching attitude to learning English is that it is a difficult language to learn.

## THE INTEGRATION/CONTACT ATTITUDES

Interviewees had different opinions pertaining to integration and contact attitudes. When asked what they would speak if they were together with both Mandarin and English speakers, S1 stated that she would speak ‘both so that everyone can understand’ while S15 would rather choose to speak Chinese saying that ‘because they are not speak English’ (because they do not speak English) when referring to the Chinese people she imagined would be part of the

conversation. This remark is interesting in that she believes the Chinese people would not desire to speak English because they do not really speak English well. Given that she is also a lower level English student, this may be because of her not being sure enough of her own English to engage in conversation with English speakers in English. S14 agreed with S15 in that she felt she would also prefer to speak Chinese, saying that it ‘is more friendly’ to speak Chinese. S18 contradicted these views by saying that she would prefer to speak English because it is widely understood. While S20 states that ‘I prefer to speak Mandarin’.

Most of the interview participants also agreed that they would recommend learning English to other Chinese or Taiwanese people. S1 remarked that she would tell other people to learn English ‘so that they can have an extra language to add on CV’. S15 however was not entirely sure, saying that she would tell them but only ‘sometimes’. However, she did add that she would aid people in telling them where and how they could learn English. S14 agreed that she would recommend learning English, which was seconded by S18 who said she would recommend learning English, adding that she herself had taught English in China. While S20 also concurs that he would advise others to learn English adding that it is necessary to advise others to learn so that they can ‘adjust [to] the environment’ in South Africa.

## THE ATTITUDE TO SUCCESSFULLY ACQUIRE ENGLISH

Although there were not specific questions that related to the attitude to successfully acquiring English in the interview questions, several participants did mention successfully learning English and the reasons for learning English. In particular, the language usage when talking about the reasons for successfully acquiring English was particularly interesting in that there was a clear common trend when it came to the choice of words. Several interviewees used words like ‘have to’ (S1), ‘need to’ (S15), ‘must’ (S14 and S20) to explain the reasons behind learning English, showing a clear necessity for learning English but also an obligation to learn

English. Participants chose to use these words as opposed to using words that would show less necessity such as 'want to' or 'desire to'. These interviewees indicate that although they are determined to learn English, often noting the usefulness of the language not only in their lives but across the world, they feel that they are required to learn it, that they are in some way forced to acquire English.

#### **4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presented the data and findings of the research obtained from the dissemination of self-report questionnaires and the conducting of follow-up interviews. The data obtained from these research instruments was discussed in terms of the factors mentioned in section 1.3. These are namely the perceptions of English, the attitudes towards learning English, the integration/contact attitudes and the attitude to successfully acquire English.

The following and final chapter will discuss the key findings, significance and implications of these findings and conclude on the study by providing a short summary of each of the chapters in this paper and suggesting further research in the field of SLA.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

While the previous chapter presented the data and findings of the research obtained through the dissemination of questionnaires and the conducting of follow-up interviews, this chapter will summarize the data collected and discuss its significance and its implications in the field of second language acquisition, thereby providing answers to the research questions as presented in section 1.3 of this paper. Furthermore, this chapter suggests recommendations for further research within this field. And, lastly the final section of this chapter will conclude on the study as a whole.

### 5.1 DISCUSSION ON THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE FINDINGS

The data collection process was carried out as accurately as possible and it is assumed that the participants' responses to the questionnaire statements are a clear and accurate reflection of their ideas, perceptions and attitudes. This can be assumed for several reasons. Firstly, since the participants voluntarily took part in the questionnaires and the follow-up interviews and that they were willing to answer the questions of their own accord. Secondly, the influencing factors were reduced to a minimum by making it clear to the participants that their responses would not affect their grades or future learning experiences at the language institute. This was noted in the informed consent form and later reiterated at the time of dissemination of the questionnaires. Additionally, the researcher's influence did not hinder the data collection process in any way in that the questions did not have any relation to the teaching style or the teacher's involvement but rather focused on the language and the perceptions and attitudes surrounding the language learning process. The following section discusses the findings of the data collected from the questionnaire responses.

## 5.2 KEY FINDINGS

This section commences by discussing the observations derived from the data collected from the questionnaires and the interviews. This discussion will then be followed by a presentation of the findings pertaining to the research questions set out in section 1.3.

### OBSERVATIONS PERTAINING TO THE PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH

**OBSERVATION ONE:** Native Mandarin speakers in South Africa see English as having pragmatic value.

The questionnaire data and results of the interviews give rise to an interesting observation pertaining to the perceptions of English. The results presented in Figure 4.9, Figure 4.17 and Figure 4.18 all highlight the importance and value that English has in the lives of the native Mandarin speaking participants

Firstly, participants see English as having a value in finding employment and bettering themselves in their chosen career paths. When participants were requested to agree or disagree with the statement which reads ‘Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job’ (see Figure 4.18) an overwhelming majority of participants strongly agreed. This is further reiterated in Figure 4.17 which mentions the necessity of English for careers, which resulted in (85%) of participants strongly agreeing.

Secondly, there is a clear consensus from the questionnaire responses that learning English is useful and not a waste of time as shown in Figure 4.9. Even though, participants did not present overwhelmingly positively responses when asked whether they look forward to the time they spend learning English (see Figure 4.10) they still see English as being useful to them. This is also evident in the interviews with several interviewees using words such as ‘forced to’, ‘have to’ and ‘must’ to describe the reasons for learning English, yet they still describe English as ‘important’ and as having many uses ‘like making friends and jobs’. These findings therefore

suggest evidence for the fact that even though participants do not always feel favourable towards learning English, all participants see the use and pragmatic value of the English language in their lives. These findings agree with the view of Anwei Feng (2011) who states that the Taiwanese in particular see English, for its pragmatic value. The findings are also in line with the findings of Hofstede's dimensional model which indicated a high rating in terms of the Long-term Orientation versus Short-term Orientation dimension indicating that Chinese culture is a pragmatic culture, which focuses on education as a way of bettering one's future (Hofstede, 2009).

Following the opening of China at the end of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in 1976 and the diverse range of new opportunities which became available to the Chinese in terms of employment and travel, the younger generations have begun to take advantage of these opportunities and travel to English speaking countries to learn English. Thus, the pragmatic value of English in their lives has become increasingly more important.

## OBSERVATIONS PERTAINING TO THE ATTITUDE TO SUCCESSFULLY ACQUIRE ENGLISH

OBSERVATION TWO: Native Mandarin speakers who are learning English in South Africa have a strong desire to learn English.

Native Mandarin speakers, despite the difficulties of learning English really do want to learn to speak English. Figure 4.16 depicts the responses to AMTB 14 which enquires whether participants would like to learn as much English as possible. An overwhelming number of participants (65%) responded saying that they strongly agreed with this statement. This is also evident in the interviews where several interviewees attach importance to learning English for different reasons, including relocating to a new country and finding employment although several of them point out that learning English is difficult.



This strong desire to learn English is also furthered by support from governments who are promoting the use of English as a language in the country, for example Taiwan which has recently made English ‘a quasi-official language’ (Feng, 2011:9) is promoting the use and study of the language across the country. The increase in focus on English language education at school and at university level in mainland China also contributes to this strong desire to learn English amongst native Mandarin speakers.

Furthermore, this can be closely linked to observation one in that participants see the pragmatic value of English and are therefore motivated to learn and desire to successfully acquire English. Hofstede’s findings also suggest that a high rating on the Long-term Orientation versus Short-term Orientation dimension show a perseverance to achieve goals (Hofstede, 2009) also suggesting that the Chinese culture plays a role in this strong desire to learn English.

**OBSERVATION THREE:** English proficiency levels affect attitudes towards learning English.

Given the difficulty of the English language grammar and the number of exceptions to the grammatical rules, it could be said that the higher the level of English the more learners would struggle and therefore feel demotivated in continuing learning. However, many of the native Mandarin speakers believe that the more they learn, the more they enjoy and appreciate learning English. Figure 4.11 indicates the correlations between the English language level and the attitude towards English, showing that as the English language level increases the more the language learners’ attitudes toward learning English increases.

This is further evident in the interviews. S18, who is the only advanced English language student participating in this study (S18), mentioned how learning English ‘gets better and better’. As a child, she felt ‘forced to learn English’ but in the end, she believes her experience of learning is overall a positive experience. The English proficiency levels of native Mandarin

speakers who are learning English therefore affect the attitudes they have towards learning English and the attitudes they have towards the English language.

## OBSERVATIONS PERTAINING TO INTEGRATION/CONTACT ATTITUDES

OBSERVATION FOUR: Contact with English speaking countries and English speaking people is of utmost importance.

Participants were requested to choose a point on the Likert scale for statements pertaining to contact with English speaking countries. Figure 4.12 revealed that (90%) of participants strongly agreed with two statements which both positively discuss the value of contact with English speaking countries and English speaking people.

The collectivistic culture of Chinese and Taiwanese nationals (Hofstede, 2009) places a focus on the group and therefore also on the connections between people and in-groups. Traditional Chinese way of life and the deeply rooted Confucian ideals such as ‘guanxi’ which require the mutual exchange between groups, affect the approach to contact with English speaking countries and English speaking people. In turn this also influences English language acquisition in that it encourages the successful attainment of English to communicate and engage with English speaking countries and English speaking people.

This communication and the maintaining of connections with native English speakers is therefore seen as a way for countries such as China and Taiwan to better themselves and in turn improve their relations which shows the importance of connections with English speaking people and English speaking countries.

OBSERVATION FIVE: The family encouragement and support plays a vital role in the language acquisition process for Chinese and Taiwanese nationals.

Figures 4.13 and 4.14 show an overwhelming agreement with statements that suggest family

encouragement is important in the English language learning process. The collectivistic cultures of mainland China and Taiwan which place a great deal of focus on the in-groups, as determined by Hofstede (see section 2.8), value others' opinions and their families highly (Hofstede, 2009). In China, there is a focus on the group, the family and seldom the individual. Given that the results show a majority of the participants feel that their families encourage them to learn English, many of these native Mandarin speakers who are learning English will engage in learning, trying their best to please those who are important and close to them. The opinions that their families have about them learning English is also closely linked to their reasons for learning and their achievements in studying English.

**OBSERVATION SIX:** There is no direct correlation between being able to speak English and thereby gaining respect for native Mandarin speakers in South Africa.

The findings indicate that there is no inextricable correlation between successfully learning English and gaining respect for native Mandarin speakers in South Africa. The wide range of answers provided in Figure 4.21 which requested participants to rate if they agree or disagree with the statement 'Studying English is important because other people will respect me more if I can speak English' show that there was no clear consensus among the individuals as to agreeing or disagreeing. These findings therefore show no clear correlation between successfully learning English and being respected for learning the language.

The different opinions surrounding respect in China, Taiwan and Western countries such as South Africa can clearly be seen as having an impact on language acquisition. The way in which the Chinese view respect, which is derived from deep rooted Confucian ideals would differ greatly from the Western view of respect. Chinese societies respect those in a higher position and their elders, whereas in Western society many are respected for their actions or achievements. Hence, the culture and ideals surrounding respect suggest that the Chinese do

not respect others simply because they can speak English.

OBSERVATION SEVEN: There is no clear consensus on language choice when integrating with both English and Mandarin speakers.

Figure 4.15 presents the findings of AMTB 18 which asks participants to indicate whether they feel comfortable speaking English where both Chinese/Taiwanese and English speakers are present. The responses to this statement employed every point on the Likert scale showing no clear consensus. These varied responses to this question could depend on several variables. The first and most obvious is that the question is subjective and depends on the individuals own opinions of their ability to speak English.

The second of which is the role of respect in Chinese culture. Chinese culture is very respectful and collective which would mean that Chinese natives would feel it is important to include both the Mandarin speakers and English speakers and thereby not choose one language to speak as this would seem disrespectful to speakers of the other language. Although the focus of the statement is on how comfortable one is when speaking English, the Chinese could view this question from a respect standpoint, completely ignoring the fact that the sentence was actually requesting their personal opinion of their ability to speak English. However, given that the majority of the interviewees agreed on speaking Mandarin in this situation this would most probably not be the case.

Nevertheless, these findings are interesting and provides insight both into language abilities and language differences as well as the differences between Western culture and Chinese culture.

## OBSERVATIONS PERTAINING TO THE ATTITUDE TOWARD LEARNING ENGLISH

OBSERVATION EIGHT: According to the native Mandarin speakers in South Africa English

language education is on the rise in China and Taiwan.

Naturally, as China opens to the world following the end of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in 1976, and the Chinese become more aware of the importance of English in today's world, the more focus will be put on English language education. The rapid spread of English varieties as indicated in the models of World Englishes also shows an increase of English language education across the world.

As already mentioned, China has already begun to put immense emphasis on English language education, which has brought about an interesting change in that more and more language students are now arriving in the West with pre-existing knowledge of the English language. Moreover, more and more Chinese and Taiwanese natives are travelling to South Africa to learn English. This can be seen through the sheer number of Chinese native students originating from China and Taiwan that are studying in South Africa. This is also evident in the increase in the number of English language teachers in China and abroad who are teaching English to Chinese and Taiwanese natives.

This is further evident in the responses to the interview questions. Interviewees also agreed that many Asians can speak English, S1 for example says 'most of Asians can speak English very well'. S14 also added 'yes all of people speak English' when referring to the Chinese.

**OBSERVATION NINE:** English language education is highly valued.

The Chinese traditional views that link education to bettering oneself and improving one's social class (Huang & Gove 2012:10) is evident in the findings of the questionnaire responses. Additionally, Hofstede's research (2009) also suggests that the Chinese see education as a way of securing or planning for a successful future (Hofstede, 2009). Figure 4.5 shows (65%) of the participants had already attended university which would ultimately be closely linked to English language studies given that many universities in China and Taiwan require university

students to take English language courses or classes. Additionally, several of the interviewees responded positively when asked what they thought about other Chinese or Taiwanese people who spoke English.

One of the reasons behind the increase of native Mandarin speakers learning English in South Africa or abroad in English speaking countries could be because of the higher standard of English language education abroad as opposed to the standard of English teaching in China or Taiwan. Another reason could be because of the encouraging learning environment that is created for them in South Africa, in that they are constantly encouraged to speak English and can use what they are learning daily.

**OBSERVATION TEN:** The target group of participants in this study are generally young adults which is an indication of the age group of Chinese/Taiwanese nationals studying English in South Africa.

Younger generations, particularly those under the age of 35 are the target group of learners of English originating from China and Taiwan in South Africa. Most participants in this study fall into the 25-35 age category as depicted in Figure 4.3 while the 35+ and 50+ age categories only contain a few participants. This shows that as new generations begin to travel abroad as well as receive English language education in China the more they will influence others to do the same. Apart from it being due to the rise in English language education this could also be due to China's opening to the rest of world following the end of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. This also gives rise to the fact that younger generations are more willing to relocate and travel to other countries while older generations tend to stay in China or Taiwan and do not really desire to learn English abroad. Younger generations of Chinese and Taiwanese people are now taking advantage of the many job opportunities and study opportunities abroad.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Following these observations and the discussions of the findings we can now proceed to discussing the research questions set out in section 1.4 of this paper. First the secondary research questions will be discussed leaving the main research question, which is the most important question, for last. The research questions are restated below for easy reference.

- (i) In what way do different levels of proficiency affect the native Mandarin speakers' perceptions and attitudes towards learning English?

The data indicates that there is a clear influence of language proficiency on perceptions and attitudes and vice-versa. It can clearly be seen that the more proficient a language learner becomes, the more they agree that learning English is positive. Interviewees themselves described the process of learning languages as getting better over time. The higher the level of language skills native Mandarin speakers achieve the better they are able to appreciate the English way of life and to understand English speaking people which in turn positively and can also negatively affect their perceptions and attitudes of the English language.

- (ii) What do the perceptions and attitudes say about the way in which English is presented and taught in South Africa?

It can be agreed that the perceptions and attitudes towards English in South Africa are mostly positive. The perceptions pertaining to the English language, in particular those of the Outer Circle South African English variety are positive. Participants' responses presented varying degrees of agreement with the largest contingency opting for 'strongly agree' when rating the statement 'Learning English is great'. This is further indicated by responses to the statement 'I hate English' which had a (55%) rate of participants strongly disagreeing. The participants' attitudes towards learning English in South Africa, given the substantial evidence for their strong desires to learn English for its pragmatic value show very positive attitudes towards learning English in South Africa. The increasing number of native Mandarin speakers who are

learning English in South Africa and the data collected during this research show that the perceptions and attitudes towards English in South Africa of these Chinese/Taiwanese natives are positive and favourable and thereby indicating that the way in which English is presented and taught in South Africa is favourable and will continue to grow because of these favourable opinions surrounding the English language education.

Having carried out research into the perceptions and attitudes held by native Mandarin speaking students in South Africa, the main research question which has directed the study will be discussed.

- (iii) What are the perceptions and attitudes towards English of native Mandarin speakers who are acquiring English as a second or foreign language?

Firstly, the perceptions pertaining to English are positive as a result of the fact that English is seen as having pragmatic value and use for the native Mandarin speakers. Native Mandarin speakers, despite the challenges and difficulties of learning English, have a strong desire and therefore positive outlook and positive attitudes towards learning English because it will allow them more opportunities in terms of employment, careers, studies and travel.

Moreover, the attitudes towards English of native Mandarin speakers in South Africa are for the most part also positive and there is a strong desire amongst these language learners to successfully acquire English, which is driven by their desire and their determination to succeed as individuals, the strong competition they face and their incredible work ethic. They view the English language as important and key to bettering their lives for many reasons including employment, making friends and understanding or appreciating the English way of life. The attitudes toward integration and contact with English language speakers and English language speaking countries is of utmost importance and links closely to their desire to learn English to maintain contact and to be able to communicate with English speakers all over the world. Given



that the attitudes toward the target speakers and target culture are overwhelmingly positive the attitude to the English language itself is equally as positive.

It can therefore be concluded that native Mandarin speakers who are learning English in South Africa have positive perceptions and attitudes of the English language, in that they recognise its value in gaining employment and in communicating with English speakers and therefore in many ways bettering their lives.

### **5.3 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS**

This section presents some of the key findings obtained through the observations that the data and findings presented.

#### **5.3.1 English language education is highly valued.**

Native Mandarin speakers in South Africa view English language education highly in that it can positively contribute to their lives, providing work, study and travel opportunities.

#### **5.3.2 Chinese natives have a strong desire to learn English.**

Cultural factors as well as the strong desire to learn English for pragmatic purposes result in a strong desire amongst native Mandarin speakers to learn English.

#### **5.3.3 Family involvement is important and influences language learning.**

Family involvement and encouragement is important to native Mandarin speaking students who are learning English as it gives students a reason for learning and successfully acquiring English.

#### **5.3.4 The target group of native Mandarin speakers who are learning English in South Africa are generally young adults.**

The target group, following extensive growth in China after the Chinese Cultural Revolution and more recently hard economic times all over the world have resulted in many of the younger generation travelling abroad to places like South Africa to learn English.

5.3.5 There is no correlation between successfully acquiring English and being respected for native Mandarin speakers.

For native Mandarin speakers, the different cultural ideologies surrounding respect which branch from the Confucian ideals result in differences surrounding being respected for learning English thereby indicating that there is no correlation between successfully acquiring English and being respected.

#### **5.4 THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE KEY FINDINGS**

The findings reveal insight into the perceptions and attitudes of Mandarin native speakers who are learning English in South Africa, indicating their desire to successfully acquire English for its value in their lives, careers and in society, showing that their family ties and connections with English speaking countries and people are of utmost importance. These findings also suggest that they view their English language learning process as positive and their perceptions of English equally as positive.

These findings and observations are important as a starting point for the better understanding of the needs and requirements of English language learners in this particular setting to provide them with a beneficial language learning environment given the understanding of their perceptions and attitudes towards learning English. A better understanding of the perceptions and attitudes of learning English as an L2 of native Mandarin speakers, along with the spread of English and Mandarin leads to more increased trade between the China and South Africa thereby also increasing the interactions between the two nations. Language is the base of all communication, which begins in the SLA classroom and extends much further.

Even though this is a small target group and the findings cannot be extended to be the norm or universal for Mandarin native speakers in South Africa, these findings are nevertheless significant and should be seen as the starting point for further research to ultimately provide a deeper understanding of the English language acquisition process with specific focus on Chinese and Taiwanese learners. The following section will highlight suggestions for further research in this field.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

### **EXTENDED RESEARCH STUDY**

Conducting a similar investigation to the one presented in this paper, on a larger scale with a bigger budget, across different parts of South Africa could aid in extending the investigation by increasing the target research group with a view toward increasing the understanding of perceptions and attitudes from the perspective of native Mandarin speakers in a wider range of areas in South Africa.

### **A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MANDARIN SPEAKERS LEARNING**

#### **ENGLISH IN CHINA**

Conducting a comparative study in China or Taiwan into the English language learners and by drawing on a bigger sample group could provide interesting insight into the cultural and educational differences that exist in language learning classrooms and the subsequent effect this has on language acquisition across nations.

## **5.6 FINAL WORD**

This study set out to investigate the perceptions and attitudes of native Mandarin speaking students who are learning English in South Africa, focusing on the effects that these have on language acquisition and education in South Africa.

It has achieved its aims and objectives in that it is evident that the perceptions and attitudes that exist are widespread and held by several of participants in the study. Furthermore, the perceptions and attitudes are positive and can therefore have an impact on the language acquisition process in several different ways. Furthermore, the study has provided interesting insight into the language acquisition process and the influencing factors that affect native Mandarin speakers' language learning.

Despite the limitations and shortcomings, it is hoped that this study has given a starting point for further research into a highly topical, new and fast growing field of English language acquisition. The better understanding of the perceptions and attitudes that these native Mandarin speakers hold will also encourage language learning in South Africa, and in many ways, aid the language teachers and facilitators in providing the highest quality of English language education for the benefit of these students. Understanding the minds of these language learners is the beginning of a long-standing relationship between South Africa and the East, one that can only be beneficial.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM**



Dear Student

You are hereby cordially invited to participate in the following research study: **Mandarin Native Speakers' Perceptions and Attitudes towards learning English as a Foreign Language (L2).**

The study is conducted by Ms. Lauren Gibello at Stellenbosch University for partial fulfilment for the requirements for the degree of MA Second Language Studies. It specifically investigates the attitudes and perceptions of English held by native Chinese speakers who are learning English in South Africa, of which you form part of.

Participation in this study will require you to complete a **questionnaire** which contains questions pertaining to your attitude and perception of the English language, the speakers and the target culture. This will be followed up by **short interviews** with some candidates who are chosen on basis of their answers to the questionnaires. Other than that, you will be required to provide **demographical and language details**, such as your language of preference at home and details on other languages you speak. No other effort will be required on your part.

Participation in this study is **voluntary**, which means that you can choose whether or not you want to participate and that there will be no negative consequences should you decide not to participate. If you do decide to participate, you may terminate your participation at any time without having to provide reasons for doing so. You are not waiving any legal claims or rights because of your participation in this study. You may also refuse to answer any question you do not want to answer. Participation is **free of charge**, and you will receive **no monetary payment or course credits** for participating. There are no identifiable risks or discomforts associated with participation in this study. There is **no direct benefit** to participating, but your involvement will assist the researcher in obtaining a better understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of students studying English in South Africa, which could ultimately lead to the implementation of better teaching methods in second language classrooms.



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Faculty Arts and Social Sciences



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Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain **confidential** and will be disclosed only with your written permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of (i) limited access to your data, by only the researcher and her supervisor and (ii) safe storage, on the university premises, of hard copy versions of the response record forms and other raw data. Each participant who is willing to engage in a follow-up interview with the researcher necessarily needs to disclose his/her name and contact details on the questionnaire in order for the researcher to contact them. These students will be assigned a **participation number** at the commencement of the research project that will serve as reference throughout the period of participation. This is to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. When the findings of this study are reported in the form of a thesis and/or journal article, any reference to you will be made in such a manner that **you will not be identifiable** to the readers.

Should you have any **queries** regarding this study, please contact the researcher, Lauren Gibello at 0826421887 or e-mail: 16719115@sun.ac.za or the supervisor of this project, Ms. Erica George, at +27 (0)21 8082052 (during office hours) or e-mail: egeorge@sun.ac.za

**Consent:**

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read the above-mentioned and understand the nature of my participation in this research project. I hereby consent

- (i) to participate in that part of the study entailing the completion of a language profile and a language background questionnaire,
- (ii) to participate in the discussion/interview, should I be selected to form part of the above-mentioned group of students,
- (iii) to Lauren Gibello accessing my student record and marks, should that be deemed necessary.

I was given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and all questions asked were answered to my satisfaction in a language in which I am sufficiently proficient.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## **APPENDIX B: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SHEET**



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### **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

---

1. SURNAME: \_\_\_\_\_
2. INITIALS \_\_\_\_\_
3. AGE \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS
4. MOTHER TONGUE \_\_\_\_\_
5. OTHER LANGUAGES USED AT HOME \_\_\_\_\_
6. MALE  FEMALE  (MARK WITH AN X)
7. UNMARRIED  MARRIED  DIVORCED
8. WHAT IS YOUR HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

### **FAMILY LANGUAGE BACKGROUND**

---

9. WHAT WAS YOUR MOTHER'S MOTHER TONGUE? \_\_\_\_\_
10. WHAT WAS YOUR FATHER'S MOTHER TONGUE? \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX C: TABLE OF BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

PARTICIPANTS: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION									
	ENGLISH LEVEL	EDUCATION LEVEL	OTHER LANGUAGES	HOME LANGUAGE	MARITAL STATUS	NATIONALITY	GENDER	AGE	
S1	INTERMEDIATE	HIGH SCHOOL		CHINESE MANDARIN	UNMARRIED	CHINA	F	26	
S2	INTERMEDIATE	UNIVERSITY		MANDARIN	UNMARRIED	CHINA	F	25	
S3	INTERMEDIATE	UNIVERSITY		MANDARIN	UNMARRIED	CHINA	F	31	
S4	INTERMEDIATE	UNIVERSITY		MANDARIN	UNMARRIED	TAIWAN	F	26	
S5	INTERMEDIATE	HIGH SCHOOL	ENGLISH	MANDARIN	UNMARRIED	TAIWAN	M	20	
S6	PRE-INTERMEDIATE	HIGH SCHOOL		MANDARIN	UNMARRIED	TAIWAN	F	18	
S7	INTERMEDIATE	UNIVERSITY	TAIWANESE ENGLISH	MANDARIN	UNMARRIED	TAIWAN	M	22	
S8	INTERMEDIATE	UNIVERSITY		MANDARIN	UNMARRIED	CHINA	M	30	
S9	PRE-INTERMEDIATE	UNIVERSITY	ENGLISH	MANDARIN	MARRIED	TAIWAN	F	49	
S10	ELEMENTARY	HIGH SCHOOL	TAIWANESE	CHINESE MANDARIN	MARRIED	TAIWAN	F	53	
S11	INTERMEDIATE	HIGH SCHOOL	TAIWANESE	MANDARIN	UNMARRIED	TAIWAN	F	20	
S12	INTERMEDIATE	UNIVERSITY	TAIWANESE	MANDARIN	MARRIED	TAIWAN	F	30	
S13	PRE-INTERMEDIATE	UNIVERSITY	ENGLISH	CANTONESE MANDARIN	UNMARRIED	CHINA	F	22	
S14	ELEMENTARY	HIGH SCHOOL		MANDARIN	UNMARRIED	CHINA	F	35	
S15	PRE-INTERMEDIATE	HIGH SCHOOL		MANDARIN	UNMARRIED	CHINA	F	32	
S16	INTERMEDIATE	UNIVERSITY		MANDARIN	MARRIED	TAIWAN	F	50	
S17	PRE-INTERMEDIATE	UNIVERSITY		MANDARIN	UNMARRIED	TAIWAN	F	25	
S18	ADVANCED	UNIVERSITY		MANDARIN	UNMARRIED	CHINA	F	45	
S19	INTERMEDIATE	UNIVERSITY		MANDARIN TAIWANESE	MARRIED	CHINA	M	30	
S20	INTERMEDIATE	UNIVERSITY		MANDARIN	UNMARRIED	CHINA	M	26	



## **APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE**

Attitude/Motivation Test Battery:  
International AMTB Research Project  
(*English version*)

**\*\*Note: This is the English-language version of the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) for use with secondary school students studying English as a foreign language. The items comprising each scale are presented in the ‘AMTB item-key’ document. The AMTB has been translated and used in our research in Brazil, Croatia, Japan, Poland, Romania, and Spain (Catalonia). Some findings from this research are presented in the document ‘Integrative Motivation and Second Language Acquisition’ (CAAL Talk, 2005). All of the documents mentioned above are available on this website. Copies of the AMTB in the other languages can be obtained from R. C. Gardner.**

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R. C. Gardner, Ph.D.

The University of Western Ontario, Canada

Following are a number of statements with which some people agree and others disagree. Please circle one alternative below each statement according to the amount of your agreement or disagreement with that item. The following sample item will serve to illustrate the basic procedure.

Chinese food is much better than South African food.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Moderately Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------

In answering this question, you should have circled one alternative. Some people would have circled Strongly Disagree, others would have circled Strongly Agree, while others would have circled any of the alternatives in between. Which one you choose would indicate your own feeling based on everything you know and have heard. Note: there is no right or wrong answer.

1. Learning English is really great.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Moderately Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------

2. Studying English is important because it will allow me to be more at ease with people who speak English.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Moderately Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------

3. I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Moderately Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------

4. Studying English is important because I will need it for my career.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Moderately Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------

5. Knowing English isn't a really important goal in my life.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Moderately Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------

6. If China/Taiwan had no contact with English-speaking countries, it would be a great loss.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Moderately Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------

7. Studying English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Moderately Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------

8. Studying English is important because it will make me more educated.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Moderately Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------

9. Studying English is important because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate the English way of life.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Moderately Disagree**      **Slightly Disagree**      **Slightly Agree**      **Moderately Agree**      **Strongly Agree**

10. Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Moderately Disagree**      **Slightly Disagree**      **Slightly Agree**      **Moderately Agree**      **Strongly Agree**

11. I'm losing all interest in learning English.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Moderately Disagree**      **Slightly Disagree**      **Slightly Agree**      **Moderately Agree**      **Strongly Agree**

12. I hate English.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Moderately Disagree**      **Slightly Disagree**      **Slightly Agree**      **Moderately Agree**      **Strongly Agree**

13. Learning English is a waste of time.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Moderately Disagree**      **Slightly Disagree**      **Slightly Agree**      **Moderately Agree**      **Strongly Agree**

14. I would like to learn as much English as possible.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Moderately Disagree**      **Slightly Disagree**      **Slightly Agree**      **Moderately Agree**      **Strongly Agree**

15. I look forward to the time I spend learning English.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Moderately Disagree**      **Slightly Disagree**      **Slightly Agree**      **Moderately Agree**      **Strongly Agree**

16. Studying English is important because other people will respect me more if I can speak English.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Moderately Disagree**      **Slightly Disagree**      **Slightly Agree**      **Moderately Agree**      **Strongly Agree**

17. I think that learning English is dull/boring.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Moderately Disagree**      **Slightly Disagree**      **Slightly Agree**      **Moderately Agree**      **Strongly Agree**

18. I would feel comfortable speaking English where both Chinese/Taiwanese and English speakers were present.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Moderately Disagree**      **Slightly Disagree**      **Slightly Agree**      **Moderately Agree**      **Strongly Agree**

19. I make a point of trying to understand all the English I see and hear.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Moderately Disagree**      **Slightly Disagree**      **Slightly Agree**      **Moderately Agree**      **Strongly Agree**

20. My family feels it is important for me to learn English.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Moderately Disagree**      **Slightly Disagree**      **Slightly Agree**      **Moderately Agree**      **Strongly Agree**

The purpose of this part of the questionnaire is to determine your feelings about a number of things. We want you to rate each of the following items in terms of how you feel about it. Each item is followed by a scale that has a label on the left and another on the right, and the numbers 1 to 7 between the two ends. For each item, please circle any one of the numbers from 1 to 7 that best describes you.

1. My motivation to learn English in order to communicate with English speaking people is:  
WEAK \_\_\_1:\_\_\_2:\_\_\_3:\_\_\_4:\_\_\_5:\_\_\_6:\_\_\_7 STRONG

2. My attitude toward English speaking people is:  
UNFAVOURABLE \_\_\_1:\_\_\_2:\_\_\_3:\_\_\_4:\_\_\_5:\_\_\_6:\_\_\_7 FAVOURABLE

3. My interest in foreign languages is:  
VERY LOW \_\_\_1:\_\_\_2:\_\_\_3:\_\_\_4:\_\_\_5:\_\_\_6:\_\_\_7 VERY HIGH

4. My desire to learn English is:  
WEAK \_\_\_1:\_\_\_2:\_\_\_3:\_\_\_4:\_\_\_5:\_\_\_6:\_\_\_7 STRONG

5. My attitude toward learning English is:  
UNFAVOURABLE \_\_\_1:\_\_\_2:\_\_\_3:\_\_\_4:\_\_\_5:\_\_\_6:\_\_\_7 FAVOURABLE

6. My motivation to learn English for practical purposes (e.g., to get a good job) is:  
WEAK \_\_\_1:\_\_\_2:\_\_\_3:\_\_\_4:\_\_\_5:\_\_\_6:\_\_\_7 STRONG

7. My attitude toward my English studies is:  
UNFAVOURABLE \_\_\_1:\_\_\_2:\_\_\_3:\_\_\_4:\_\_\_5:\_\_\_6:\_\_\_7 FAVOURABLE

8. My family encourages me to learn English:  
VERY LITTLE \_\_\_1:\_\_\_2:\_\_\_3:\_\_\_4:\_\_\_5:\_\_\_6:\_\_\_7 VERY MUCH

## **APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCRIPT**

## INTERVIEW: GUIDING QUESTIONS

### **BASIC BACKGROUND QUESTIONS:**

1. Why are you learning English?
2. Why did you decide to learn English in South Africa?

### **PERCEPTIONS:**

3. When you think of the English language, what do you think of?
4. How would you describe your experience of learning English in South Africa?
5. Do you think English is especially difficult, or one of the easier languages to learn? What makes English difficult to learn?
6. What do you think of other Chinese/Taiwanese people who can speak English?
7. Do Chinese/Taiwanese people think you are more educated if you can speak English? Why?
8. What do you think of English language speakers in South Africa?

### **ATTITUDES:**

9. What was your attitude toward learning English when you first started learning?
10. Has your attitude toward learning English changed?

### **ENGLISH LEARNING EXPERIENCES:**

11. What are the best things about learning English?
12. Is learning English a positive or negative experience? Why?

### **ENGLISH LEARNING INTERACTION EXPERIENCES:**

13. Would you advise other Mandarin speakers to learn English? If so why?
14. When you are with English speakers and Mandarin speakers which language do you prefer to speak? Does this depend on who you are speaking to?

## **APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS**



## TRANSCRIPTION 1:

*Length: 2 mins 35 seconds Date: 13 August 2016*

**Interviewer:** First question, why are you learning English?

**Interviewee:** To get a job.

**Interviewer:** Just to get a job? Ok, why... Why did you decide to learn English in South Africa?

**Interviewee:** Because I have to learn English.

**Interviewer:** Why do you have to learn English?

**Interviewee:** It's very important.

**Interviewer:** It's very important for a job...or?

**Interviewee:** Ja.

**Interviewer:** Ok and when you think of the English language, what do you think of?

**Interviewee:** I think of its uses, like making friends and getting jobs.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and how would you describe your experience of learning English in South Africa?

**Interviewee:** Tough.

**Interviewer:** Tough? Why?

**Interviewee:** English is a difficult language to learn.

**Interviewer:** Ok and question number 5, do you think English is especially difficult, or one of the easier languages to learn? What makes English difficult to learn?

**Interviewee:** Sometimes it is difficult but can be easy once you understand.

**Interviewer:** Ok and what do you think of other Chinese/Taiwanese people who can speak English?

**Interviewee:** Some people just can't speak [both], but I can speak both.

**Interviewer:** Ok and number 7, do Chinese/Taiwanese people think you are more educated if you can speak English?

**Interviewee:** No, because most of Asians can speak English very well.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and what do you think of English language speakers in South Africa?

**Interviewee:** They are very interesting but sometimes hard to understand.

**Interviewer:** And question number 9, what was your attitude toward learning English when you first started learning?

**Interviewee:** I thought it was very boring.

**Interviewer:** Boring? Why did you think it was boring?

**Interviewee:** I can't understand.

**Interviewer:** Ah, couldn't understand anything. Ok, and number 10, has your attitude toward learning English changed?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And what do you think about it now?

**Interviewee:** I find it, it's interesting.

**Interviewer:** Interesting? Ok, good and number 11, what are the best things about learning English?

**Interviewee:** So that to know what's going on. For example books and movies.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and number 12, is learning English a positive or negative experience?

**Interviewee:** Positive, because it's important and can get a job one day.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and number 13, would you advise other Mandarin speakers to learn English?

**Interviewee:** Yes, so they can have an extra language to add on CV.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and number 14, last question, when you are with English speakers and Mandarin speakers which language do you prefer to speak?

**Interviewee:** Both so that everyone can understand.

**Interviewer:** Ok, thank you very much.

## TRANSCRIPTION 2:

*Length: 3mins 27 seconds Date: 19 August 2016*

**Interviewer:** Ah, question one, why are you learning English?

**Interviewee:** Ah because I come South Africa. That's first, and the second one I need to stay here maybe longer. So, I must learn English and I also like English.

**Interviewer:** Ah ok, good and question number two, why did you decide to learn English? Why did you start to learn English?

**Interviewee:** Start? Ah because I need to come another country. Ja.

**Interviewer:** Ah because you need to come here?

**Interviewee:** Ja, I need to learn English because English have a lot of countries can speak. Ja that's nice language.

**Interviewer:** Ah okay good and when you think of English what do you think of?

**Interviewee:** Ah for me very difficult.

**Interviewer:** Difficult, ok. Why difficult?

**Interviewee:** Um, I think maybe... I'm small, for...I'm do the student, learn English not very good. Not good, so I'm come another country start learn, it's difficult.

**Interviewer:** Ah ok.

**Interviewee:** But now it's better.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and how do you think your experience of learning English is... good experience, or...?

**Interviewee:** Ja

**Interviewer:** It's good?

**Interviewee:** Ja, its good, very good.

**Interviewer:** Ah its good, you enjoyed it?

**Interviewee:** Ja, its good, very enjoy.

**Interviewer:** Ah and you think English is difficult, why is it difficult?

**Interviewee:** Hmm, maybe because I just can speak, if for me I must write down and read for me it's difficult. Ja.

**Interviewer:** Ah ok, and what do you think of other Chinese people who can speak English?

**Interviewee:** I think some people maybe learn very early, in the very small, their speak is nice because they are can read, write down and speak for more easy. But for me, just the first learn the speak... but if... just like this. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and what do you think of English language speakers in South Africa? Like me, who speaks English. What do you think of them?

**Interviewee:** I think it's very good.

**Interviewer:** Very good. Ok, perfect and what was your attitude toward learning English? What did you think of English, your attitude?

**Interviewee:** I think English very interesting for me.

**Interviewer:** Very interesting, ok and has it changed? Have you ever thought it was boring or...?

**Interviewee:** What's mean?

**Interviewer:** Have you ever thought English is boring? (\*translates 'boring' for interviewee)

**Interviewee:** No.

**Interviewer:** No, never. Ok, and what are the best things about learning English?

**Interviewee:** Best things? Can talking, talking a lot of people, interesting one. Yeah we can talking a lot.

**Interviewer:** Ok good.

**Interviewee:** Yeah for my life its easy now.

**Interviewer:** Ah okay perfect. And um, would you tell other Chinese people or Mandarin speaking people to learn English?

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** You would tell them?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, sometimes.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and why?

**Interviewee:** Because, I think English for them, for the first language for this world, so some people ask me I can teach, I can show where can learn. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Ah okay good, and when you are with Mandarin speakers and English people which language do you speak? Chinese...?

**Interviewee:** Chinese

**Interviewer:** Ok, why Chinese? Why not English?

**Interviewee:** Because they are not speak English.

**Interviewer:** Ok, because they don't speak English. Perfect, thank you so much.

**Interviewee:** You are welcome.

### TRANSCRIPTION 3:

*Length: 3mins 15 seconds Date: 19 August 2016*

**Interviewer:** Ok, the first question, why are you learning English?

**Interviewee:** Because coming Africa, learn talk people, must learn English.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and why did you decide to learn English in South Africa?

**Interviewee:** Because now I live in Africa so I must speak English.

**Interviewer:** Ah ok and what do you think of the English language?

**Interviewee:** English, English language good.

**Interviewer:** It's good, ok you like it?

**Interviewee:** Yes

**Interviewer:** Ok, and how would you describe your experience of learning English? Is it a good experience? What do you think your experience... how you learnt English... is it good?

**Interviewee:** Yes

**Interviewer:** Yes, ok. Do you think English is difficult?

**Interviewee:** Yes difficult language.

**Interviewer:** Ok, why difficult?

**Interviewee:** Because too much.... I always forgot.

**Interviewer:** You always forget ...what to say? Ah ok. And what do you think of Chinese people who can speak English?

**Interviewee:** Yes because China also learn English, children through school.

**Interviewer:** Ok and do you think they are good people? Or what...

**Interviewee:** Yes, good.

**Interviewer:** Ah good, well-educated and do Chinese people think you are well-educated if you speak English?

**Interviewee:** Yes all of people speak English.

**Interviewer:** Ah ok, and you think they've learnt a lot of they speak English?

**Interviewee:** Yes

**Interviewer:** Ok, and what do you think of people who speak English in South Africa? What do you think of people like me who can speak English?

**Interviewee:** Yes, you speak nice English.

**Interviewer:** Speak nice English, ok? Is it easy to understand them?

**Interviewee:** Some words easy.

**Interviewer:** Some words easy, some not ok and what did you think of English when you started learning? What was your attitude?

**Interviewee:** Before in the school so learn, now forgot something.

**Interviewer:** So you are still trying. Ok, and how has your attitude toward English changed? Do you think it now it's different? Easier to learn when you are older?

**Interviewee:** Older, more difficult.

**Interviewer:** More difficult.

**Interviewee:** Because always forgot something

**Interviewer:** Cause you always forget something. And do you like it more now that you are older?

**Interviewee:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah you like English more, ok... what are the best things about learning English?

**Interviewee:** Talk people, so you don't say to speak to people. You don't mind, you speak low, but you can go learn more.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and is learning English positive or negative? A good thing or bad thing?

**Interviewee:** Good thing, can speak people, talk people.

**Interviewer:** Ok good and would you tell other people, other Mandarin speakers to learn English?

**Interviewee:** Yes friend always talk, teach each another.

**Interviewer:** Ok, so you would tell your friends. And when you are with Mandarin speakers and English speakers which language do you speak?

**Interviewee:** Speak Chinese. Yeah because more like friendly?

**Interviewer:** Ok, more friendly, ok. Good, thank you so much.

## TRANSCRIPTION 4

*Length: 3mins 59 seconds Date: 28 August 2016*

**Interviewer:** So why are you learning English or why have you learnt English?

**Interviewee:** Well we were forced to learn English back to primary school, so basically every Chinese had to learn English.

**Interviewer:** Okay, and why did you continue learning in South Africa?

**Interviewee:** I was particularly interested in language when I was little so I just continued, I also studied Arabic.

**Interviewer:** Ok, very interesting. Good, and when you think of English what do you think of... what does it make you think of?

**Interviewee:** How do I feel about English?

**Interviewer:** Yes

**Interviewee:** Well at first I thought it's very difficult, because it's a second language and when I began to study Arabic I thought English is quite easily actually, because the whole grammar thing. Once you get it, you just understand it.

**Interviewer:** Ok, good. And how would you describe your experience of learning English?

**Interviewee:** Ah from the beginning it just gets better and it gets better.

**Interviewer:** Ok, so better and better, perfect. And do you think English is especially difficult or one of the easier languages to learn?

**Interviewee:** I think it's one of the easiest to learn.

**Interviewer:** Ok, why do you think it's one of the easier ones?

**Interviewee:** Because the grammar is really simple, you just need to know different words, the tenses are pretty simple.

**Interviewer:** Ah, and what do you think of other Chinese or Taiwanese people who can speak English?

**Interviewee:** I think it's very difficult for Chinese to learn English because it's a total different language. It's not like you can speak Spanish then it's more easy to learn English. Chinese is like a totally different language. Chinese won't help to learn English.

**Interviewer:** Ok, good. Do you think Chinese people or Taiwanese people are more educated if they can speak English?

**Interviewee:** Kind of, but it's not like if you major in art subjects then generally you will be better at English... but if you major in like science subjects it's very possible that you can't speak English properly.

**Interviewer:** Good, and what do you think are the best things about learning English?

**Interviewee:** The best thing about learning English is you understand some poetry of the language.

**Interviewer:** And overall do you think learning English is a positive or negative experience?

**Interviewee:** A positive experience for me.

**Interviewer:** And would you tell other Mandarin speakers or Chinese speakers to learn English? Would you advise them to learn English?

**Interviewee:** Yeah I would, actually I have been teaching English for a couple of months in China.

**Interviewer:** Ok, good and when you are with Mandarin and English speakers together, what language do you normally speak?

**Interviewee:** Normally, English. Yes because English speakers can understand many things.

**Interviewer:** And that's the end of my questions. Thank you so much.



## TRANSCRIPTION 5

*Length: 3 minutes 40 seconds Date: 30 August 2016*

**Interviewer:** Question one, why are you learning English?

**Interviewee:** Because I will communicate with others and have a better future.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and why did you decide to learn English in South Africa?

**Interviewee:** It has the English speaking circumstance in SA. So I need to speak English.

**Interviewer:** When you think of the English language, what do you think of?

**Interviewee:** I need spend more time to learn it.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and do you think it has been difficult or that you have enjoyed learning English?

**Interviewee:** I have definitely enjoy learning English.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and how would you describe your experience of learning English in South Africa?

**Interviewee:** I speak in English a lot, so it's good.

**Interviewer:** Do you think English is especially difficult, or one of the easier languages to learn? What makes English difficult to learn?

**Interviewee:** I think English is difficult. The grammar is difficult to learn.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and what do you think of other Chinese/Taiwanese people who can speak English?

**Interviewee:** Yes, of course, they are good.

**Interviewer:** Do Chinese/Taiwanese people think you are more educated if you can speak English? Why?

**Interviewee:** Yes, if you can speak English make it much easier to talk to the English native speakers.

**Interviewer:** Ok, perfect and what do you think of English language speakers in South Africa?

**Interviewee:** The majority of South African can speak English very good.

**Interviewer:** What was your attitude toward learning English when you first started learning?

**Interviewee:** I think it was very hard to learn.

**Interviewer:** And, has your attitude toward learning English changed?

**Interviewee:** Yes, it changes a lot, now I enjoy learning English.

**Interviewer:** Ok, what are the best things about learning English?

**Interviewee:** Circumstance is very important, now I'm here I can use English.

**Interviewer:** Is learning English a positive or negative experience? Why?

**Interviewee:** It is an absolutely positive thing to learn English, because it makes me easier to talk to the others.

**Interviewer:** Would you advise other Mandarin speakers to learn English? If so why?

**Interviewee:** Yes, because we live in SA we must learn English to adjust the environment here.

**Interviewer:** When you are with English speakers and Mandarin speakers which language do you prefer to speak? Does this depend on who you are speaking to?

**Interviewee:** I prefer to speak Mandarin.

**Interviewer:** Why do you prefer to speak Mandarin?

**Interviewee:** Because it is much easy for me.

**Interviewer:** Thank you.