# A STUDY OF CHINESE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD LEARNING AN ONLINE ENGLISH COURSE AT A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY IN BEIJING

BY

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION
IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION
SURYADHEP TEACHERS COLLEGE

GRADUATE SCHOOL, RANGSIT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2022

Thesis entitled

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was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of Master of Education in Bilingual Education

Rangsit University

Academic Year 2022

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July 27, 2022

# Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my advisor, Dr. N Tananuraksakul for her assistance at every stage of this research. I would like to thank Dr. N Sritrakarn and Dr. A Chayanuvat for their insightful comments and suggestions. I also thank the students who participated in the questionnaire and interviews and the lecturer who provided information in Gengdan Institute of Beijing University of Technology in Beijing. Lastly, my appreciation goes out to my parents and my friends for their encouragement and support all through this special period.

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| 6205019 | : | Ruimeng Zhang |
| Thesis Title | : | A Study of Chinese Undergraduate Students' Attitudes toward Learning an Online English Course at a Private University in Beijing |
| Program | : | Master of Education in Bilingual Education |
| Thesis Advisor | : | Asst. Prof. Noparat Tananuraksakul, Ph.D. |

## Abstract

The study investigated Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes towards online learning in an English course in affective, behavioral and cognitive aspects on the hypothesis that they would possess positive attitudes as well as impact of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and Chinese cultural values on their positive attitudes. The subjects were Chinese students at a private university in Beijing selected through stratified random sampling, and 380 of them completed a questionnaire constructed based on the research framework, and 18 of them voluntarily participated in in-depth interviews to provide qualitative data. IBM SPSS Statistics 24 and NVivo 11 were used to analyze quantitative and qualitative data, respectively.

The quantitative results revealed that the students had positive attitudes towards online learning in the English course at a high level. MOOC features and Chinese cultural values were found to influence their positive attitudes at a high level. The qualitative findings supported the hypotheses that the students preferred studying English on asynchronous and synchronous platforms, which provided them with their own learning space, non-face-to-face communication with the lecturer, and a cultural sense of face keeping, concurrently allowing them to learn online English actively. Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, a supplemented finding, indicated an extraneous variable that influenced their positive attitudes. Replicated studies in different contexts were recommended for future research.

(Total 121 pages)

Keywords: Attitudes, Online Learning, English Learning, Chinese Undergraduate Students, MOOCs, Chinese Cultural Values

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**Symbol**                                    **Meaning**

$\bar{\text{X}}$                                       Mean

# Chapter 1

# Introduction

This chapter focuses on the background and significance of the problem, the objectives, research questions, conceptual framework, definitions of terms and the significance of the study.

## 1.1 Background and Significance of the Problem

With the influence of the Internet on various fields, online education has attracted much attention in recent years. Since the end of 2019, educators and students across the world have experienced a massive academic disaster resulting from the pandemic, especially in low and middle-income countries (Chandrasiri & Weerakoon, 2021) and a great change in teaching and learning. Students in many countries were forced to transition from face-to-face learning to an online learning environment in the middle of the semester (Aguilera-Hermida, 2020). In addition, 172 countries temporarily closed kindergartens, schools, and universities at the national or municipal level, affecting approximately 98.5% of the global student population (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2020).

To solve the mentioned problem, some universities provided asynchronous online courses where lecturers prepare assignments or record lectures so that students can learn at their own pace at anytime and anywhere. Synchronous online courses are also available at several universities, which take place at a specified time through a specific medium (Aguilera-Hermida, 2020), it means, students and lectures interact at the same time. The sudden change in online learning poses challenges for students, including the learning environment and their emotions. Maqableh and Alia (2021) found that learning the online courses was difficult for students to concentrate on study as they were unable to properly control their study time and lack computer skills, which in turn

made them feel anxious about the quality of their study. China has also experienced the teaching and learning challenges influenced by the COVID-19 epidemic in 2019. The use rate of online learning in China has reached 100% in 2020. In early February 2020, China's Ministry of Education ordered all schools and universities to discontinue face-to-face instruction in favor of allowing students to use and study online learning courses provided by the Internet platforms to continue their education (Dong, Cao & Li, 2020). Therefore, educators and students must pay all their attention to online learning because it is the only way that allows the process of teaching and learning in special learning environments and conditions, and they must know how to operate the online platform used for each school.

Major platforms for online courses include Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), and they can all support synchronous classroom learning and create meeting classrooms of more than one hundred people and share documents and screens for real-time reporting. In China, Chinese University MOOC is a leading online course provider which has huge open online courses that allow learners to access educational tools, exchange learning experiences and receive certification (Luo, Zhou, Li & Xiao, 2018). In 2014, Chinese university MOOC programs were launched (Liu, 2015) to provide free online courses, teaching services and learning data support for universities. MOOC has had a huge impact on higher education in this country. More than 150 Chinese mainland higher education institutions have provided MOOC courses (Wang, Chen, Fan & Zhang, 2018) to support both synchronous and asynchronous courses for students.

In online synchronous courses, when teachers presented content knowledge and asked questions online, the level of interaction between teachers and students was relatively high (Li, 2016). The students thought that because of the live contact, synchronous interactions allowed them to "get to know each other much better" (Liu, Liu, Lee & Magjuka, 2010). The two key reasons for students to prefer synchronous online courses over traditional classes are comfort and good price (Li, 2016). The online synchronized classes can also effectively reduce the sense of familiarity between

teachers and students, improve the communication between them, promote the daily feelings, and then make students recognize and support the teachers' teaching work, so that they may have the courage to make interactive communication with teachers.

In online asynchronous courses, learners' communication depends more on reading and writing (Thompson & Ku, 2005). Due to the asynchronism, learners have more freedom to choose the way to learn knowledge. Online courses are diverse at several levels: information is obtained in a number of formats and at various times (Song, Singleton, Hill & Koh, 2004). While online learning can reduce barriers to listening and communicating, it may increase barriers to reading and writing (Thompson & Ku, 2005). The delayed text-based correspondence of the asynchronous conversation did not express the complexities of human interaction, and thus the students found that it was impossible for them to understand the motives of the other students during group work due to their diverse working styles and cultures (Liu et al., 2010). When learners are used to learning in more static, real-time environments, this may contribute to major time management problems (Song et al., 2004). It can be said that MOOC provides special features that can encourage Chinese students to like learning online courses.

Effective online courses also require careful instructional design and planning by teachers (Aguilera-Hermida, 2020). Teaching online course is also a challenge for teachers because they have undergone a shift in roles and behavior while teaching on the MOOC. One difference is that the teacher has evolved from an indoctrinator of emotions to a motivator of emotions. Students gain knowledge, exercise their abilities, and enrich their emotions during the learning process (Marimuthu, Chone, Heng, Nah & Fen, 2013). Students' emotional achievement is no longer instilled by teachers in a one-way fashion in MOOC learning, but rather allows students to experience emotional shifts during the process of independent learning (Chen et al., 2020). Another difference is the transition of the teacher from a knowledge disseminator to a curriculum creator (Ouyang, Li, Sun, Jiao & Yao, 2020). Teachers upload various resources they have created to the MOOC platform to provide space for students' independent learning. MOOC must be factual and intellectual, as well as adhere to instructional requirements

and suit students' learning needs (Zhang & Chen, 2018). Therefore, teachers, as the creators of curriculum, are faced with greater challenges and need to constantly improve their knowledge reserve and ability so as to better complete the creation of curriculum content (Wang et al., 2018).

The teaching methods in China have long been culturally influenced by the teacher-centered ideology (Chen & Yu, 2019), which first appeared in Comenius' Great Didactic of Comenius in the 17th century (Polka, 2010). This means during the process of study, students are less focused and ignored to maintain a passive state, while teacher authority is more emphasized. In China, English is one of major subjects that Chinese students begin to learn from the primary school and continue to work. Thus, for the past 30 years, teaching English has been driven by teacher-centered techniques in this country, concentrating on teaching grammar and reciting terms (Cai, 2012). Students' enthusiasm and effort are difficult to occur in the classroom (Yang & Yuen, 2014) difficult for them to develop English learning skills because they are the audience and the supporting role that they seldom have their own thinking. Culturally speaking, it can imply that Chinese students may enjoy learning English online through MOOC platform that provides both synchronous and asynchronous modes as compared to learning face-to-face in the classroom.

Since students' attitudes toward learning online play a vital role in learning activities (Elfaki, Abdulraheem & Abdulrahim, 2019) because students' personal attitude will affect their learning (Husseın, Demirok & Uzunboylu, 2009), teachers need to understand their students' attitudes so as to find suitable ways to encourage them to learn online better. The degree to which students' own cultural context relates to the cultural background behind a second language learning influences their attitudes to the second language (Ghazvini & Khajehpour, 2011). In general, language learning attitudes include attitudes towards the language, the target language population and also the learning condition, which, in fact, points to the learner's approach to something related to the current learning environment (Lai & Aksornjarung, 2018). Attitudes play a significant role in language learning because they seem to influence students' learning

success or failure (Rahimi & Hassani, 2012). Abu-Melhim (2009) pointed out that those learners who have the right attitude can achieve better learning in the language lessons. Language learning is inseparable from the learner's attitude (Abu-Snoubar, 2017). Students' attitudes toward educational technology also have a direct impact on their learning process (Aguilera-Hermida, 2020). When learners have positive attitudes, they will be positive and encouraging. When learners have a negative attitude, they will be negative and may not be able to complete their learning.

The role of attitude factors in second language learning has been a significant source of concern for second or foreign language researchers (Ghazvini & Khajehpour, 2011). For example, the research of Ahmed (2015) shows that attitudes towards a language may also reflect what people feel towards the speakers of the target language, meaning that language attitudes can have an effect on the learning of a second language or a foreign language. Since attitude can influence second language acquisition and second language effectiveness (Rasool & Winke, 2019), students who have positive attitudes about learning English will demonstrate their interest in the language and are eager to learn more (Lai & Aksornjarung, 2018). A positive attitude helps a language learner, while a negative attitude will lead to a reduction in motivation, feedback, and engagement (Rahimi & Hassani, 2012). However, language attitude does not translate into behavior, but it can lead a person to do some behaviors (Hussein et al., 2009).

As a result, understanding language learning attitude allows teachers to gain a more realistic insight into their students' mind, fears, sources of anxiety, and preferences (Abu-Snoubar, 2017). It is significant for them to have positive attitudes toward the target language while learning a second language because the high degree of attitude they hold will lead them to a high degree of motivation (Rahimi & Hassani, 2012). Whatever teaching approach is used by teachers, its effectiveness may be impaired, if their students come to the class with negative attitudes and low motivation (Lai & Aksornjarung, 2018). The importance of attitudes in the field of education is due to the fact that students' personal attitudes will influence their performance in their future academic life (Hussein et al., 2009).

This study focuses on attitudes toward learning an online English course in Chinese undergraduate students studying in all programs at Gengdan Institute of Beijing University of Technology, a private university in Beijing, where it adopts the MOOC platform. In addition, some relevant researches (e.g., Krish & Wong, 2009; Cinkara & Bagceci, 2013; Chomphchart, 2017; Asrifan, Zita, Vargheese, Syamsu & Amir, 2020) had been conducted with students in different countries. Some of these studies also put forward that computer skill is one of the factors that affect students' attitudes toward online English learning (Chomphuchart, 2017; Aerifan et al., 2020), with Li and Lee's (2016) research findings that the computer skill also influences Chinese students' attitudes toward learning online courses in their study.

Other related studies which focused on Chinese students (e.g., Thompson & Ku, 2005; Zhao & McDougall, 2008) had only explored the influence of Chinese students' culture on their online learning. Moreover, there were a few research studies into Chinese students' attitudes towards learning online English courses. Three studies into Chinese university students' attitudes toward learning online English courses were found positive findings. Two of them employed quantitative research methods (Hsu & Sheu, 2008; Nan, 2019); another one used mixed methods research (Ku & Lohr, 2003). Other studies found that Chinese university students with negative attitudes were affected by a lack of both computer skills and the ability to study independently (Tang, Wong & Wong, 2015; Li & Lee, 2016). All of these studies did not pay attention to the different dimensions of attitude. Therefore, it can be significant to study the way in which Chinese undergraduate students at the target university hold their attitudes toward learning the online English course on the MOOC platform and explore whether MOOC features and Chinese cultural values will influence their attitudes toward learning the online English course.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

This study aims to examine the following:

1) Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning an online English course; and

2) factors that influence Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning an online English course.

## 1.3 Research Questions

1) What are the attitudes of Chinese undergraduate students toward learning an online English course?

2) What are the factors that influence undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning an online English course?

## 1.4 Hypotheses

H1: Chinese undergraduate students will have positive attitudes toward learning the online English course at a high level.

H2: MOOC features influence Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning the online English course at a high level.

H3: Chinese cultural values influence Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning the online English course at a high level.

## 1.5 Conceptual Framework

It is argued that language learners' personal attitude will affect their learning ability (Hussein et al., 2009), and attitude towards learning a language is an important factor contributing to language learning achievement (Lai & Aksornjarung, 2018). Chinese undergraduate students who have already taken the online English course in this study may have positive or negative attitudes toward learning the online English course through MOOC platform. They may like or dislike learning the English course online (affective dimension), have a tendency to be active or passive in learning the online English course (behavioral dimension), and think they gain knowledge or learn

nothing from the online English course (cognitive dimension). MOOC features and the Chinese students' cultural values (independent variables) would be factors that influence their attitudes toward learning the online English course. The framework is shown in Figure 1.1 below:
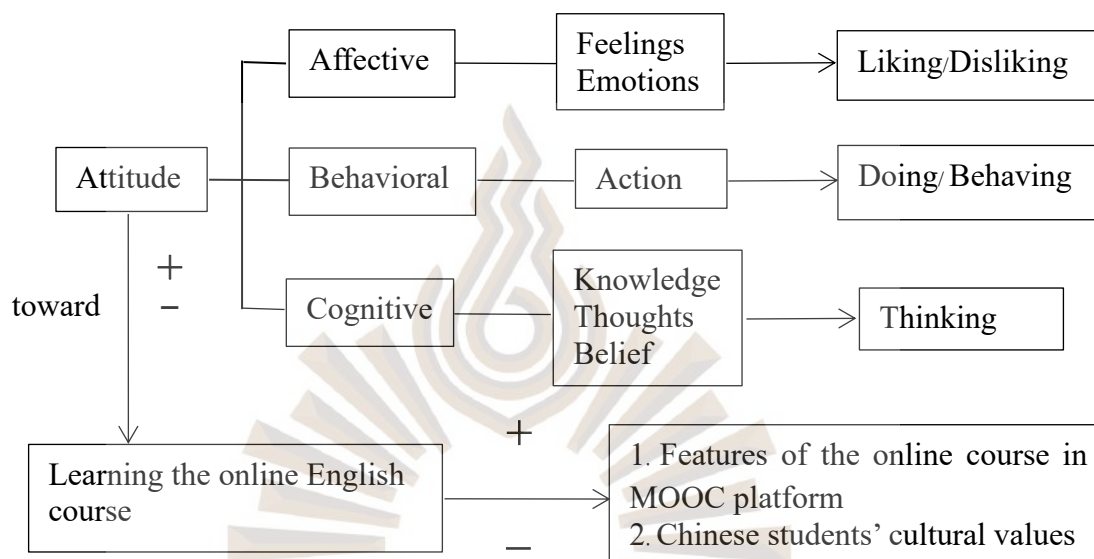


Figure 1.1 The conceptual framework

## 1.6 Definition of Terms

### 1.6.1 Learning an Online English Course

Learning an online English course refers to students' learning an English class online named English for College Students. This online English course is available in both synchronous and asynchronous formats in the MOOC platform that provide different features attracting the students, including its web page design and management function. The teacher choosing the appropriate forms of instructions of the online English course, in the MOOC platform can satisfy students' needs for rich learning resources and independent learning space. All learning activities of students are completed on the platform, including class discussions and direct online submission and completion of tests assigned by the teacher.

**1.6.2 Attitude**

Attitude is a learner's response to anything relevant to the current English language environment (Ghazvini & Khajehpour, 2011), and it comprises affective, behavioral and cognitive dimensions (Netzer, Gutentag, Kim, Solak & Tamir, 2018).

1.6.2.1 Attitude toward Learning an Online English Course

Attitude toward learning an online English course is Chinese undergraduate students' responses or opinions about learning the online English course in three dimensions. Affective attitude is related to their feelings and emotions, indicating their liking or disliking of the online English course as well as the extent to which one likes or dislikes it. Behavioral attitude is related to the intention or tendency to take specific actions against the online English course, such as attend or miss it. Cognitive attitude is related to knowledge, thoughts and beliefs about the online English course, and it reflects the fact that their associations with the course's positive or negative features that drive them to have different attitudes.

**1.6.3 Chinese Undergraduate Students**

Chinese undergraduate students are Chinese students who are studying an undergraduate program at Gengdan Institute of Beijing University of Technology in Beijing. They have already taken the online English course when they were first-year students in academic year 2020. Their Chinese cultural values appear to affect their learning behaviors in online learning as they can become active and independent learners.

**1.6.4 A Private University in Beijing**

A Private University in Beijing refers to the Gengdan Institute of Beijing University of Technology in Beijing.

## 1.7 Significance of the Study

The study can help lecturers to understand Chinese college students' attitudes toward learning online English courses on MOOC platform and the factors that affect their attitudes. Lecturers teaching online through MOOC can be encouraged to reflect on the form and structure of individual online courses and reasonably improve the teaching content, so that they can help students learn English better. The study also provides administrators of MOOC with the data on the use of the platform to help them adjust reasonably and develop better online course platform for learners.

# Chapter 2

# Literature Review

This chapter focuses on online learning in general, factors that affect students' attitudes, related theories and previous studies on students' attitudes toward learning online English courses.

## 2.1 Online Learning in General

Nowadays online learning usually refers to a kind of learning activity carried out through the computer Internet (Alabbasi, 2017). While online learning originally refers to a teaching and learning approach that requires the use of Internet technology that teachers use online learning environments not only to access knowledge and course material, but also to connect and interact with other participants in the same course (Kris & Wong, 2009). Online learning focuses not only on online contexts, but also encompasses a wide range of computer-based learning tools and delivery mechanisms, genres, formats and media such as digital, instructional programming, simulations, gaming and the use of emerging media on fixed and mobile platforms in all disciplines (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). Online learning has become possible due to the Internet, and there is a growing demand for online courses from students from all fields of life (Nguyen, 2015).

Online learning is one of the most popular learning tools now (Omar, Hassan & Atan, 2012) due to the expansion of educational resources and rich interactivity. Nowadays, quality teachers are scarce. In particular, users in remote areas have a higher demand for high-quality online learning resources than users in developed areas (Huang et al., 2020). Online learning provides learners with a variety of knowledge information and communication platforms, so that the resources of different education platforms are common and learners can choose the knowledge content to learn according to their own

needs (Fang et al., 2008). Online learning can give students the opportunity to work with more learners, teachers and subject matter experts outside of a limited geographic area (Cinkara & Bagceci, 2013). The interaction of online learning can be between teachers and students, or between students and students. Interaction between teachers and students can be guided by teachers, and interaction between students can lead to collaborative learning (Mbati & Minnaar, 2015). Such two-way interaction enables students to obtain teaching information through audio-visual means and enhances students' interest in learning. In the online course, students can learn about their progress and shortcomings through interaction, so that they can adjust their learning as soon as possible, thus greatly improving the learning quality and efficiency (Delen & Liew, 2016).

Online learning brings convenience to students (Richardson & Swan, 2019). It can convey the sound and picture of the teacher's lecture, and students feel as if they are in the school. Online learning also made it convenient for students to continue to learn and review. Geng (2019) rightly points out that when learning on platform, it can effectively record the students' learning progress by making full use of big data technology. If a student is interrupted in the process of learning, big data can record the interruption at the first time, so that the student can directly locate the previous learning progress next time. Students are allowed to watch the course videos again at any time through an online learning platform, both as a way to check for leaks and as a way to review and understand the lecture more deeply (Song et al., 2004).

There are two forms of online learning: synchronous and asynchronous. Online learning is most widely characterized as any class offering its entire curriculum in the delivery mode of the online course, allowing students to participate irrespective of geographical area, regardless of time and location (Richardson & Swan, 2019). Internet-based communication becomes flexible, which means that learning online courses can no longer be limited by the geographical location of learners and teachers. And the form of online learning also makes the learning time no longer depends on teachers to decide, but also allows students to arrange their own.

Online synchronous course gives students a positive sense of ownership (Peterson, Beymer & Putnam, 2018) and reinforce group projects in the classroom (Lowenthal, Dunlap & Snelson, 2017) but cannot satisfy more students (Lin & Gao, 2019) because of the timeliness. Online synchronous course takes place at the same time, so that students can keep in touch with their classmates and teachers and build connections with each other. Students do not feel lonely from learning on the electronic screen. When students work in groups, they can also communicate with their group members in real-time. With the help of online resources, they can obtain and discuss more information and gain more thoughts. However, synchronous courses require both students and teachers to be online at the same time, thus the learning schedule is not flexible enough for students to have fewer choices and still not be able to decide on their own learning activities. And students do not have enough time to think (Brierton, Wilson, Kistler, Flowers & Jones, 2016). However, people's information processing capacity is limited, and the continuous and compact learning process can lead to cognitive overload, which limits the ability to fully learn new information (Aguilera-Hermida, 2020). In a fixed time, because each student's ability and thinking are different, some students may have a deep understanding, while some students' thinking is only in superficial levels.

Online asynchronous courses, by contrast, address problems existing in online synchronous courses, which strengthen students' autonomous learning (Lin & Gao, 2019) and give students plenty of time to think and respond (Brierton et al., 2016) but interferes with students' collaborative projects (Peterson et al., 2018). Asynchronous courses do not need to be online at the same time, allowing students to study at their own schedule in their own time, without being influenced by others, and will not be under great pressure from the environment (Lin & Gao, 2019). Asynchronous courses have no time restriction, the initiative of learning activities is given to the students themselves, and the supervision role originally belongs to the teachers is also changed to the students. Students can diverge their thinking through consulting information, think about the problems they encounter from multiple perspectives or at multiple levels, and finally complete their corresponding course tasks. Nevertheless, asynchronous courses lack

real time, resulting in slow communication frequency and lack of response from students, which creates obstacles to cooperation between them.

Both synchronous and asynchronous online courses require the online learning platform because platform has many learning tools, including picture search, composition search, voice search and other search engines. Through the search engine, students only need to input keywords in the system to find the corresponding learning content (Huang et al., 2020). In this way, not only can they search for the more learning resources quickly, but also can effectively improve the learning efficiency of students (Geng, 2019). Online learning platforms are designed to support teaching and learning that goes beyond the regular classrooms taught by schools and universities (Pal & Vanijja, 2020). For the convenience of scholars, those online platforms were usually supported on Android, IOS and Windows.

One of the common forms of online learning is through live meetings. Live synchronous meetings can help clarify issues quickly and reduce feelings of isolation (Lowenthal, Borup, West & Archambault, 2020) that lead students to feel like they are learning in a traditional classroom. There is also a small part of online learning that takes the form of asynchronous because asynchronous video communication allows students to have more thinking, have a fair chance to participate, and have fewer technical problems to promote students' active learning (Lowenthal et al., 2020).

More commonly used platforms to provide online synchronous meetings include Zoom, Skype, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams and Voov Meeting. These all realize the online classroom by building conference rooms and screen sharing. Sharing a presentation screen improves communication and learning just as much as face-to-face instruction (Dharma, Asmarani & Dewi, 2017). However, different platforms have different limits on the number of students who can participate. Skype is developed by Microsoft for up to 25 people participating in one meeting. Zoom is capable of accommodating up to 200 participants as well as up to 3000 passive watchers (Dharma

et al., 2017). Google Meet can provide meeting space for 100 users (Singh & Awasthi, 2020). Voov Meeting also offers free conference collaboration for up to 300 people.

Among those platforms, more versatile platforms are Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Zoom has a variety of functions, including polling, whiteboard and breakout rooms (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2020). Using Zoom, Teachers can integrate polls and surveys to engage students and collect answers, thoughts, and ideas from the classroom; teachers can make notes on the shared screen to achieve the function of writing on the board in the classroom; teachers can divide students into smaller classes, complete tasks and then return to the larger class (Dharma et al., 2017). Microsoft Teams provides students with a complete learning experience (Pal & Vanijja, 2020), which includes "Calendars" for reminding students of class times, "Assignment" for submitting assignments and viewing scores, "Team" for joining in different classes, "Call" for communicating with classmates and teachers and "File" for sharing documents (Barry, Kanematsu, Ogawa & McGrath, 2021).

Another wide range of online courses consists of some course videos for students to choose and study, among which the most obvious is MOOC. MOOC is a platform combining information technology, network technology and quality education which sent educational resources to every corner of the world. It not only provides free high-quality resources, but also provides a complete learning experience (Malliga, 2013).

Online course videos in MOOC offer three categories to study. First, it depends on the requirements of teachers. In this case, teachers usually combine MOOC with teaching, and the learning quality of the course will be determined by the requirements of teachers themselves. Second, students take elective courses and study on their own via MOOC to earn credits. This has higher requirements for students' autonomous learning ability and consciousness of autonomous management (Yu, 2021). Third, students take a course via MOOC due to their own interest (Wang et al., 2018).

Relatively, they do not necessarily pursue credits, but whether they can persist in finishing a course is another question.

At the same time, the MOOC platform can assess students' academic performance in the form of giving a score when finishing the course. It also ranks the scores of the students in the class, so that students can understand their learning situation and help them adjust their learning attitude and improve their learning ability. There will also be online learning forums on the platform, which will help users of the same courses interact online (Liu, 2015).

MOOC has been a revolution in traditional education in recent years (Luo et al., 2018), which are used in many countries, including China. Since COVID-19 exploded in 2019, MOOC can still help students and teachers learn and communicate and participation in MOOC has increased dramatically (Yu, 2021). Chinese University MOOC, the platform for online learning in many Chinese universities, offers two types of online courses: unstructured online courses and structured online courses. Unstructured online courses involve a wide range of learning and a wide variety of types which are organized by some educational institutions or subject professionals (Chai & Yang, 2014). These courses are not coherent and provide an opportunity for interested students to come together on their own and communicate their learning. Organized online courses are initiated by Chinese universities, which display a complete course overview, course objectives, and completion requirements on their web pages (Chai & Yang, 2014). In order to receive the certificate, students must complete all the tasks and requirements of the course during the opening period of the course. The Chinese University MOOC platform is divided into two parts: web page display and background instructional management. Zhang and Chen (2018) pointed out:

> *The web page displays announcements, scoring standards, courseware, quizzes and assignments, exams, instructional content arrangements, discussion areas, and more. Background management includes functions of management for such as course, student, notice, teaching content, test and more, as well as the scoring rule development.*

It can be concluded that online learning breaks down the time and geographic boundaries of students' learning, creates a better learning environment and provides help on learning resources and activities for students. Synchronous and asynchronous online courses can be applied on many platforms, among which Zoom, Microsoft Teams and MOOC have more functions. In this study, teachers' understanding of students' attitudes toward learning online courses and influencing factors is conducive to teachers combining the features of online learning and different online platforms, and reasonably designing online courses to ensure that students can get help in online learning, so as to learn online courses smoothly.

## 2.2 Factors that Affect Students' Attitudes toward Online Language Learning

This study explores the Chinese students' attitudes toward learning an online English course on MOOC platform, thus the influencing factors are centered on this online course's features and Chinese students' cultural values.

### 2.2.1 Factors from Features of the Online Course in the MOOC Platform

Language learning is a process of information ingestion (Li, 2016). When much information is scattered around people, they try to categorize it. MOOC are designed to meet the challenges facing all disciplines in the age of information explosion (Kuo, Tsai & Wang, 2021). In the MOOC platform, learners take on the role of active participants, deepening their understanding of the content through interaction with others on the platform and with online tools such as text, images, audio, and video. MOOC online course provides students with open space and free development, and its own features are also the factors influencing students' learning attitudes. First of all, MOOC has a clear web page where students can see the course schedule and requirements, and contents of the course and examination clearly (Zhang & Chen, 2018).

Secondly, MOOC online course meets to students' individualized learning needs because they can choose to study at anytime and anywhere that suits them. Traditional classroom courses have great limitations on students' quality and classroom capacity, but MOOC platform opens 24 hours a day for everyone. All courses in MOOC are conducted through open online platforms, and students can manage their own time to study MOOC online courses (Chen & Oakley, 2020). At the same time, students can conduct the online courses on any mobile terminal, such as smartphone, iPad, computer (Malliga, 2013), which is no longer fixed in the classroom and students can learn the online course anywhere. It can be said that Chinese undergraduate students may have positive attitudes toward learning the online English course because they can:

1) choose the time that is convenient for them to learn; and

2) use any mobile terminal they like to learn.

Thirdly, MOOC online course opens up students' language environment because all learners can consult or share information with their classmates and lecturers virtually. People from all over the world are free of charge to register in MOOC at any time, regardless of age or region, and whether they are students or not (Wang & Chen, 2016). In this case, language learning becomes more diversified. For example, English reading is more difficult for non-native speakers than for native speakers, and non-native speakers need to take more time to process the reading content (Zhang & Kenny, 2010). All learners from native and non-native English-speaking backgrounds can share information and leave their questions online, and anyone who sees the post can share their views in order to help each other. Rodrigues and Vethamani (2015) found that learners can benefit from the guidance they give each other in an implicit way, especially when there is contact between native speakers and non-native speakers or learners. Similarly, Wu, Hsieh and Yang (2017) pointed out that online learning improves language learning environment and at the same time enables students to improve their language learning ability. It can be said that Chinese undergraduate students may have positive attitudes toward learning the online English course because they can:

1) share information online with their classmates and lecturer;

2) ask any related questions online;

3) receive more answers online;

4) learn English better.

Finally, MOOC online course provides students a greater sense of autonomous learning because students can choose their own learning style and control their own learning speed (Wang & Chen, 2016). MOOC is different from ordinary online courses, which covers the whole teaching process, including students' pre-class preparation, in-class learning, and in-class assessment and testing online. In the online course, students are the masters of learning activities. They can upload their own audio or video to share on the platform at any time. Besides, learners can anonymously evaluate their peers and act as teachers' evaluators while learning about other perspectives (Wang, 2017). Liu et al. (2010) mentioned that when it comes to mutual evaluation among students, more objective results can be obtained to maintain a healthy competitive relationship, and promote the progress of English learning. After students complete all learning tasks, MOOC will provide students with a complete learning experience in the form of course completion certificate. It can be said that Chinese undergraduate students may have positive attitudes toward learning the online English course because they can:

1) control their own learning progress;

2) participate in the evaluation process;

3) show more ideas in their personal learning space;

4) receive an online certificate for successful completion of the course.

In conclusion, MOOC, which not only has a clear web page, but also allows students to learn anytime and anywhere, to share their ideas and ask questions in the course, and to choose their own learning style. MOOC offers full courses to allow students to replace some of the things teachers have to do in traditional learning, provides students the role of assessment, so that students become the main body of the course. MOOC provides students more space to learn knowledge and develop learning abilities. These are the features of MOOC that may positively affect Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning the online English course at a high level, which will be used in the questionnaire of this study.

### 2.2.2 Factors from Chinese Cultural Values

Culture is one of the factors that affect students' behavior in online learning. Turning to Zhao and McDougall (2008), it was found that culture has a major influence on online learning for students. They argued that Chinese students who are influenced by their culture are more likely to play a submissive role in learning. Chinese students are accustomed to copy the teaching materials of the teacher, and seldom share their own thoughts if those were contrary to their teacher's thoughts in their assignments.

Nevertheless, because of the influence of culture, Chinese students also have the characteristic suitable for online learning. In fact, Liu et al. (2010) pointed out that the differences in culture are potential factors that contribute to more culturally rich learning experience. Thompson and Ku (2005) have also drawn attention to the fact that most Chinese students are neither outspoken nor excessively involved in traditional learning discussions, but prefer to express their ideas on online discussion boards. Students are sometimes ashamed to use English because they are afraid to make errors while speaking in front of other students, so they remain quiet and often refuse to chat (Wang, 2014). Culturally speaking, Chinese students also do not want to lose face in public, so they need time to think and reflect before answering questions and sharing ideas. Learning online language courses is therefore more suitable for them.

In addition, Chinese students' self-perception of learning environment is also a factor that affects their online learning behaviors. Zhu, Valcke, Schellens and Li (2009) pointed out that students' learning performance is closely related to their perception of the learning environment, which includes students' perceptions on discussion, critical thinking, peer cooperation, problem-based learning, interaction, and offering help. Junior, Botelho, Rego, Faiad and Ramos (2019) also considered that students' perception of the online course environment may affect their performance in learning the online course. When students are exposed to a specific learning environment, their perception of the learning environment differs, resulting in different responses to the learning environment (Jiang & Zhang, 2019).

The study of Zhu et al. (2009) showed that compared with the traditional learning environment, Chinese students have fewer positive perceptions about the online learning environment, in particular, they had a less positive view of the level of interaction and offering help. Teacher-centered teaching has always been the cultural dominance of teaching in China, and teachers are often seen as experts on what students should learn and what they need to pass the final exam of the course (Wang, 2015), so that students have less critical thinking. Secondly, competition is prevalent in the Chinese education system. Chinese students always attach more importance to exam results, and most students have to go through the highly competitive college entrance examination, which affects students' peer cooperation (Zhu et al., 2009).

Also influenced by Confucian culture, the teacher-student relationship tends to awe for authorities and respect for teachers in Chinese society (Dong et al., 2020). Chinese students feel the need to have a formal relationship with teachers to show respect. Western students are more likely to regard teachers as friends, believing that good teachers can explain, use teaching methods and arouse students' interest, while Chinese students regard teachers as equal to their parents, believing that teachers are knowledgeable and can answer questions (Zhu et al., 2009). Once in the same space as teachers, Chinese students are often afraid to express their ideas. Guo, Yang and Shi (2017) proposed that students' perception of learning environment plays an important role in learning. When teachers create a positive learning environment that encourages peer cooperation and discussion, they help students develop a positive perception of the learning environment.

In conclusion, although there are few studies focusing on Chinese students' learning online English courses, it can be argued that culture plays a vital role in their learning behaviors. In previous studies, Chinese students were seen to be passive learners in traditional classes; however, this cannot lead to a conclusion that they have no potential to perform actively in the classroom. In fact, their culture dictates how to behave in the classroom to show their submission to teacher authority. However, when it comes to learning the online English course, Chinese undergraduate students will

become active to express their opinions in the virtual classroom at a high level because they

       1) have time to think before posting their questions and answers; and

       2) feel more comfortable and more confident to post their questions and ideas to everyone.

In addition, due to the influence of culture, Chinese students usually pay more attention to the results of study, and competition is an important activity in the learning of Chinese students, so they are used to fighting for the ranking when they cooperate with others. However, when students are in a positive learning environment that encourages peer cooperation and discussion, and help students improve their learning ability, Chinese students are willing to actively attend the online course and learning activities at a high level because they

       1) get more help not only from teachers but also from classmates;

       2) have more time to think for sharing their ideas or discussion; and

       3) learn to work as a team rather than competing with others.

Based on the above conclusion, the researcher hypothesizes that arguments: Chinese cultural values influence Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning the online English course at a high level.

## 2.3 Related Theories of the Study

### 2.3.1 Attitude

Attitude is a double-edged sword that can make a person better or worse (Skitka & Morgan, 2009). As time passes, so does the definition of attitude. For example, Ghazvini and Khajehpour (2011) defined attitude as an individual's response to anything related to the current environment, while in the work of Ahmed (2015), attitude was defined as a series of feelings about the use of language and its status in society. Another

definition is from Asrifan et al. (2020) who points out that attitude is an emotional term that is usually explained by how much a person likes or dislikes something.

In this study, attitude refers to someone's responses to anything relevant to the current environment, comprising affective, behavioral and cognitive dimensions (e.g., Garcia-Santillan, Moreno-Garcia, Carlos-Castro, Zamudio-Abdala & Garduno-Trejo, 2012; Netzer et al., 2018; Svenningsson, Höst, Hultén & Hallström, 2021). Based on Netzer et al. (2018), affective dimension refers to one's feelings and emotions about target objects, including likes and dislikes, which is considered a core dimension of attitude. The behavioral dimension refers to the intention or tendency to take specific actions against the target object (Rahimi & Hassani, 2012). The cognitive dimension refers to the belief, knowledge, and thought to the target object, that is, the knowledge acquired by students and understanding of the learning process. It means, people have different attitudes because of the different thinking they have. The dimensions of attitude and their explanations can be illustrated in Figure 2.1.
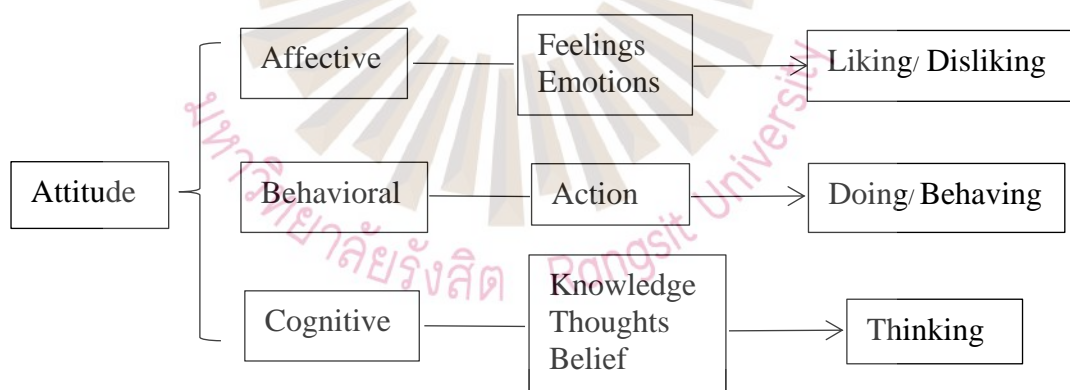


Figure 2.1 Attitude's dimensions and their explanations
Source: adapted from Netzer et al., 2018

Through the process of learning, emotions and behaviors and thoughts are expressed; then attitudes are formed (Li & Lee, 2016). Attitudes are influenced by the relationships between affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions (Clore & Schnall, 2005). One person's learning attitude can be distinguished from that of another by the

scope or content of each dimension (Gregory & Noto, 2018). For example, two students have the same affective dimension, but the cognitive dimension and the behavioral dimension can be completely different.

### 2.3.2 Cognitive Response Theory

Cognitive response refers to the fact that when people react to information, they always produce some positive or negative explanatory thoughts (Greenwald, 1968). Cognitive response determines whether people accept information and change their attitudes. The gist of this theory lies in that people are automatic information processors who generate their own cognitive responses to information, and such cognitive responses influence the attitudes taken (Petty, 2014). Cognitive response theory is easy to explain the reaction of information. When an individual's cognitive response to the information supports the extraneous information, the expected attitude change may occur; when the individual's cognitive response to the extraneous information is contrary to the extraneous information, the reaction may occur (Greenwald, 1968).

Cognitive response theory influence students' cognitive attitudes. When students are faced with a learning activity, the teacher tells the students in advance that the activity is difficult. If students feel that they cannot complete such a difficult activity and need help from teachers or classmates, such a negative cognitive response may lead to a negative attitude towards this learning activity. If the students listen to the thought, challenge difficulty can improve their ability, let their progress. This positive cognitive response may elevate the student's attitude.

### 2.3.3 Constructivism Theory

Online learning has witnessed the heavy influence of constructivist learning philosophy in recent years (Zhang & Kenny, 2010). Constructivist views are about the human knowledge-building process and the individual engagement with the world in order to create their knowledge (Kala, Isaramalai & Pohthong, 2010). Constructivism

relies on the regulation of learning processes by learners and eliminates the distance between the world of classrooms and real-life culture (Huang, 2002). It emphasizes the role of "situation" in meaning construction and holds that learning is always related to a certain context. Constructivism promotes student-centered activities under the supervision of teachers which is in line with the characteristics of online courses. Not only does this stress the cognitive role of learners, but also does not ignore the guiding role of teachers. Constructivism is argued that current knowledge and experience of learners should be seen as the growth point of new knowledge and lead learners to "grow" new knowledge and experience from their original knowledge and experience.

The evaluation of constructivism theory in the environment of network learning is double-sided. The advantage of constructivism is that network technology of online learning can create vivid, intuitive, image, close to the actual teaching situation, can stimulate learners' creativity effectively, so that learners can use their original cognitive framework and experience of knowledge to absorb current new knowledge, facilitate learners are more likely to accept learning way to deal with and accept the new knowledge. The shortcoming of constructivism is that it is fundamentally influenced by the original knowledge of learners, and students' basic knowledge level and ability determine the learning effect of learners. Moreover, constructivism also lays too much emphasis on the situational nature of knowledge and weakens the logic and systematization of knowledge. When students explore and study independently in the situation, it means that students are required to process the knowledge, which is something very few learners can do at present.

In summary, attitude consists of three dimensions (affective, cognitive and behavioral) so as to measure Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning the online English course. Affective attitude is the simplest and obvious to understand because a person's feelings or emotions can be expressed directly. Cognitive attitude is based on cognitive response theory and students' learning behavior mainly influenced by constructivism theory. When students receive new knowledge, they will have a series of active thinking, which will further determine the students' thoughts on knowledge,

also affecting students' attitude and learning behavior. If students have positive thoughts about new knowledge, they can absorb the current new knowledge with their own existing knowledge cognitive framework and experience, and then they will deal with and accept the new knowledge more actively for learning. One's attitude is influenced by three dimensions which interact with each other. In this study, if Chinese undergraduate students like learning the online English course, it means they have positive attitudes toward learning it. On the other hand, if they dislike learning the online English course, they have negative attitudes toward it. Their positive attitudes will lead them to attend the online English course actively and independently and then they will think they learn new knowledge.

## 2.4 Previous Studies on Students' Attitudes toward Learning Online English Courses

Because of the COVID-19 foray, online learning has become a top priority for the students and research on attitudes towards it has followed. The results of the study of attitude can be obtained basically from one's own experience and environmental observation (Asrifan et al., 2020). Through the investigation of learners' attitude toward online courses, it is found that there have been more studies into online learning and English learning, but fewer focused on online English learning. In addition, researchers from various countries had obtained two kinds of findings: students' positive attitudes toward learning online English courses and students' negative attitudes toward learning online English courses.

### 2.4.1 Students' Positive Attitudes toward Learning Online English Courses

In China, some researchers studied Chinese students' attitudes toward learning Online English courses through quantitative methods or mixed methods, but there has not been an attempt to study their attitudes toward learning an online English course on MOOC platform. As early as two decades ago, Ku and Lohr (2003) studied the

experience of Chinese students' first online learning and understood their cognition and attitude towards online learning for the first time with a mixed method. They used Likert scales for 23 graduate students, 18 American and 5 Chinese, and a focus group interview for 5 Chinese students. Finally, it was found that five Chinese students are active in online learning because of the high degree of participation in online learning, the ability to learn independently and the flexibility.

The study of Hsu and Sheu (2008) found that students were very sensitive to the problems existing in online English learning through setting up a website. The researchers asked the students to use the website to learn English. Then they used a questionnaire to investigate Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes towards online English learning. Their website was created for the first time, but it contained all the resources available for speaking, reading, and writing, as well as online activities related to English course content, such as vocabulary pronunciation, vocabulary matching, grammar tests and reading comprehension, which can help low English proficiency students learn English better. However, the research results showed that only 66% students are willing to study online, and the remaining 34% students who are not willing to study online said that they are not interested in the form of online learning, and they will encounter technical problems that they cannot deal with in the process of online learning.

Nan (2019) used a questionnaire to investigate the online learning attitudes of China's ethnic minority college students and analyzed the existing problems. The results showed that students have a positive attitude towards online learning. Nonetheless, the students pay less attention to the online learning process, 64% would visit other websites, 52% would read news, 46% would chat and 37% would play games. At the same time, 33.3% students were willing to use online learning to improve their abilities in other aspects, 27.6% students preferred to learn professional courses, and 16% students were interested in learning knowledge. The researcher had also found that students are active in submitting assignments in online courses and maintain a good attitude towards

solving problems. They were also willing to consult online resources and discuss with classmates.

Not only in China, but in other countries, some researchers used quantitative method to explore students' attitudes about online English learning. Farooq and Javid's (2012) study explored the attitudes of Saudi Arabian learners toward online learning for learning English language. The researchers adopted a questionnaire for 100 students and found out that those students have positive attitudes because they thought online learning strengthens their knowledge of English learning and helps them improve their comprehension skills. The researchers also proposed that the combination of online technology and learning materials can provide a beneficial learning environment for learners.

Erarslan and Topkaya (2017) used a questionnaire which contained 25 items to investigate Turkish students' attitudes toward online courses from the aspects of task-orientation, academic efficacy, information design and appeal, enjoyment, and anxiety. The results showed that students' attitudes towards learning online English courses are partly positive, but students' attitudes might be influenced by the difficulty of the course or the complexity of the program. The study found that although the students think that the design materials and multimedia of the online course are suitable for them, they are negative to the activities in the online course, and the difficulty and time limitation of the activity tasks will make them feel nervous about the online course. It can be concluded that students do not attach much importance to online courses because they do not benefit much from those courses. Students' attitude towards online courses was positive to a certain extent, but online courses did not help students achieve overall success in English learning.

Indriani and Widiastuti (2021) studied Indonesian students' attitudes toward online English learning through the LMS Moodle by inviting 112 students to fill in the questionnaire which containing 30 items. The results showed those students have positive attitudes toward online English learning. Students had technical difficulties

when learning English through Moodle for the first time, but after frequent using, students gained enough information from it. They also found that the more positive student's attitudes were during the learning process, the better their learning outcome were.

Some researchers also used tests to study students' attitudes toward online English learning. Cinkara and Bagceci (2013) invited 7000 students to learn the online English course, however, only 3,516 students volunteered to learn, and 1,783 of them completed the test. The research results showed that students had a positive attitude towards online English courses, with more than 50% of learners having a positive attitude and only 11% being negative. Researchers also proposed a positive correlation between a positive attitude and online English learning through experiments, that means, their more positive attitudes would lead their better grades.

In addition, researchers also used mixed methods to explore students' attitudes about online English learning. Krish and Wong (2009) used the mixed method to explore the attitudes of Malaysian students who participated in an online English course organized by a virtual university towards the online English course and the factors affecting the online English course. Above all, the researchers collected personal information from 200 students of their nationalities, ages and majors through a questionnaire. Then, learners were asked to use a 4-point Likert scale to answer a statement about the teaching technology and management of an online English course. The results showed that the students are satisfied with the online course mode because they can get better improvement of English ability from the online course learning. However, learners did not attach much importance to the interaction with peers in the course, with 71.5% of respondents disagreeing that online learning may become boring due to insufficient interaction with other learners.

Chomphuchart (2017) used a survey and a semi-structured interview to investigate 480 Thai college students, in order to explore their attitudes towards using the Internet in English learning and the factors affecting their use of the Internet in

English learning. Its results showed that students have a positive attitude towards using the Internet to learn English and other related activities. Students said the Internet brings more space to study, and the Internet speeds up learning in English learning and improves students' ability to study independently. At the same time, the study also confirmed that the ability to use the Internet also affects students' learning results.

It can be concluded that most learners from different social contexts have positive attitudes towards online English language learning. As long as the course content and form meet the development needs of learners, technical problems are no longer intractable, learners will be more convenient and efficient in their online English language learning.

### 2.4.2 Students' Negative Attitudes toward Learning Online English Courses

In China, there was only one study found by Tang et al. (2015) who studied online English courses in the field of medicine. They used a focus group interviews to evaluate the learning experience of Chinese nursing students participating in an online clinical English course. In the end, only 20% of the 100 participants completed all the online English courses, indicating that online courses are suitable for students with high autonomy and attitude. Meanwhile, it is also found that online English courses are helpful to improve clinical English proficiency.

Also, researchers had studied other areas about online learning and English learning. Rahimi and Hassani (2012) proposed that Iranian learners' attitudes towards English textbooks are related to their attitudes towards English learning. Their survey of 244 students using forms and questionnaires shows that most students understand the purpose of learning English and adapt to its role as an international language. However, the textbooks in Iran cannot meet the needs of students at present. They attach too much importance to vocabulary and sentences, and students have a negative attitude towards

their textbooks. Only materials in textbooks that conform to students' needs can help students improve their attitude towards English learning.

Because of COVID-19, the study of online learning has become a new research craze. In the University of Jordan, Mahfouz and Salam (2021) conducted a survey of college students' attitudes towards online learning during COVID-19, and the results showed that the overall attitude was negative. For the economic situation, students do not have learning tools, so most students only have mobile phones for online learning, but mobile phones are not as effective as computers. While girls are more active than boys because they are better at using mobile phones, their writing skills and typing speed is better, and their online learning process is smoother.

With the development of Internet technology, the research on online learning in recent years no longer focuses solely on students' attitudes toward online learning, but scholars broaden their vision. Li and Lee (2016) not only explored Chinese students' attitudes toward online learning, but also explored students' computer literacy and the relationship between them. They set Likert type choice to get the score of students' attitudes towards online learning, and the result showed that students have a weak attitude towards online learning and are resistant to its concept. Nearly half of the students said they felt very lonely because of online learning. And it was also found that students believe that the lack of computer technology greatly affects the learning effect of online courses and their attitude towards online English courses. This also confirmed that attitudes towards online course learning stem from attitudes towards computer use (Li & Lee, 2016). Later, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 10 students and found that they agreed that computer technology, initiative and communication feedback all affect the learning effect in the online English course environment.

In Malaysia, Omar et al. (2012) also studied learners' attitudes towards e-tutoring when participating in online learning through a questionnaire. The results showed that students can rely on computer-aided technology to control their

autonomous learning, and when students are willing to communicate with teachers, their learning effect will be better.

In summary, there is not much research on online English course learning in China, and no study investigate Chinese college students' attitudes toward learning online courses through MOOC platform from three dimensions. More research is centered on online learning and traditional English courses. Although more of their attitudes towards online English courses were positive, all those studies had limitations which were specific to their own countries or selected special groups of people, a few studies of online English course in China were only found. The findings of the relevant studies in other countries cannot be used as a reference to understand the attitude of Chinese students towards online English courses. Therefore, it is worth to investigate whether Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes towards an online English course through MOOC platform will be negative or positive. Since the researcher argues that both MOOC features and Chinese cultural values will influence their positive attitudes at a high level, it can be hypothesized that they will have positive attitudes at a high level.

# Chapter 3

# Research Methodology

This chapter focuses on the research design, population and sample, research instrument, data collection and data analysis.

## 3.1 Research Design

Aiming to understand Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning an online English course and influencing factors, this research adopted a mixed method, consisting of quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Mixed method research provides for greater understanding of research problems and complex data that may not be numerically quantifiable (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007). Quantitative research was used for overall comparison of large amounts of data, while qualitative research approach was used for the specific understanding and supplement of the research problem (Li & Lee, 2016). The 380 first-year Chinese undergraduate students at Gengdan Institute of Beijing University of Technology in Beijing in China were randomly selected to complete the questionnaire and provide quantitative data. Further, 18 students were invited to participate in the interview to provide qualitative data through convenient sampling technique. Finally, SPSS and NVIVO were used to analyze quantitative data and qualitative data respectively to obtain the research results about Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning an online English course and the factors that affect their attitudes.

## 3.2 Population and Sample

### 3.2.1 Population

There were 950 first-year undergraduate students enrolled in 2020 at Gengdan Institute of Beijing University of Technology in Beijing in China, which offered 18 majors for these students. These first-year students had just finished the online English course in the second semester in March, 2021. The detailed population composition is shown in the Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1 The population of undergraduate students and their majors

| Department | Major | Population |
|---|---|---|
| Economics | Economy and Trade | 100 |
| Law | Social Work | 60 |
| Literature | Chinese Language International Education | 30 |
| | English | 50 |
| Management | Engineering Management | 42 |
| | Financial Management | 56 |
| | Marketing | 52 |
| Engineering | Communication Engineering | 100 |
| | Computer Science and Technology | 110 |
| | Electronic Information Engineering | 60 |
| | Industrial Design | 45 |
| | Mechanical Automation | 35 |
| Arts | Cartoon | 30 |
| | Drama and Film Design | 25 |
| | Digital Media Art | 50 |
| | Environment Design | 40 |
| | Product Design | 30 |
| | Visual Communication Design | 35 |
| | **Total** | **950** |

**3.2.2 Sample**

3.2.2.1 Quantitative Study Sample

Stratified random sampling method was adopted for quantitative research, which ensures the representativeness of all samples in the required population (Acharya,

Prakash, Saxena & Nigam, 2013). In order to determine the number of sample size and ensure to achieve a 95% confidence level that the real value is within ±5% of the surveyed value (Fox, Hunn & Mathers, 2009). The researcher used the sample size calculation formula to calculate in Figure 3.1 and gained that a minimum of 274 (about 28% of the overall). Then the researcher considered that the sample size was also often increased by 10% to compensate for invalid data collected (Israel, 1992). Therefore, 380 students-40% of the target population would be the number that represent the quantitative study sample in this study.

The researcher asked the lecturer who instructed the online English course for the name list of all the target population. Then the researcher divided students into eighteen groups according to their majors. In each group, all students were numbered starting with 01 or 001, and then by using a random numbers table to randomly select 40% of the students in this group. And the researcher did the same method for all groups until all 380 students were selected. After that, the researcher created a WeChat group, and asked the lecturer to invite those 380 sample students to join the group.

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{\dfrac{z^2 \times p\,(1-p)}{e^2}}{1 + (\dfrac{z^2 \times p\,(1-p)}{e^2 N})}$$

**z** is z-score corresponding to the confidence level
**p** is the population proportion
**e** is the margin of error
**N** is population size

Figure 3.1 The formula to calculate the sample size
Source: derived in the article of Israel, 1992

3.2.2.2 Qualitative Study Sample

Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended 12 to 20 participants in interview studies. Bernard (2013) proposed that 10 to 20 participants with appropriate knowledge in their own profession or field of study can uncover and understand the research's core question based on their experience. Based on Cinkara and Bagceci (2013), if students

do well in their academic performance, they will have a good feeling and enough understanding of learning. These students are considered to be able to understand, evaluate and provide valuable information about the online English course because the most significant criterion for selecting participants is whether the data gathered is useful (Etikan, 2016).

Therefore, the participants in this study were the same group of those participants who had completed the questionnaire. With the use of the convenience sampling method, a sort of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling in which individuals of the target population meet specific practical criteria such as ease of access, availability at a specific time, or desire to engage in the study (Etikan, 2016), the researcher contacted the lecturer who taught the online English course and requested her to invite students from all majors who completed her course online in March, 2021. Finally, a number of 18 students from different 18 majors were recommended and voluntarily participated in the in-depth interviews, and they turned out to be top students as they all earned grade A. Their nicknames were used for the purpose of research ethics and personal information were shown in Table 3.2 below:

Table 3.2 Participants' nicknames and personal information

| No. | Student | Major | Age | Gender | Grade |
|-----|---------|-------|-----|--------|-------|
| 1 | Jen | Economy and Trade | 18 | Female | A |
| 2 | Daly | Social Work | 18 | Male | A |
| 3 | Liu | Chinese Language International Education | 18 | Female | A |
| 4 | Amy | English | 19 | Female | A |
| 5 | Woody | Engineering Management | 19 | Male | A |
| 6 | Reyna | Financial Management | 18 | Female | A |
| 7 | YQ | Marketing | 19 | Female | A |
| 8 | Chris | Communication Engineering | 18 | Female | A |
| 9 | Shuo | Computer Science and Technology | 19 | Male | A |
| 10 | Xin | Electronic Information Engineering | 18 | Male | A |
| 11 | Lin | Industrial Design | 18 | Female | A |
| 12 | Jia | Mechanical Automation | 19 | Male | A |

Table 3.2 Participants' nicknames and personal information (cont.)

| No. | Student | Major | Age | Gender | Grade |
|-----|---------|-------|-----|--------|-------|
| 13 | Xuan | Cartoon | 18 | Male | A |
| 14 | Tong | Drama and Film Design | 19 | Female | A |
| 15 | Joy | Digital Media Art | 19 | Male | A |
| 16 | Mandy | Environment Design | 19 | Female | A |
| 17 | CoCo | Product Design | 18 | Female | A |
| 18 | Yuan | Visual Communication Design | 19 | Male | A |

## 3.3 Research Instrument

This study used two kinds of research instruments, questionnaire and interview. Quantitative research used a questionnaire. Qualitative research was conducted in the form of semi-structured interviews which were individual in-depth explorations to crosscheck and supplement the quantitative data.

### 3.3.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix A) in this study was constructed based on the conceptual framework, consisting of three parts to find out Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning the online English course and the influencing factors. The first part is personal data which includes their genders, ages, majors, final grade and whether they have experiences in learning other online courses and computer skills to learn online or not. The second part consists of thirteen items, by using the Likert scale to measure students' attitudes toward learning the online English course. The Likert scale contains 1-5 score values for students to choose. 5 means strongly agree, 4 means agree, 3 means not sure, 2 means disagree, and 1 means strongly disagree. Items 1-3 reflect students' affective attitudes toward learning the online English course. Items 4-7 reflect students' behavioral attitudes toward learning the online English course. Items 8-13 reflect students' cognitive attitudes toward the online English course. The third part used two Likert scales to measure the factors influencing their attitudes toward learning the online English course: one is about factors influenced by MOOC features,

which has eleven items, the other is about factors influenced by Chinese cultural values which has nine items.

### 3.3.2 Interview questions

All the interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions. The semi-structured format allows participants to use their own answers and allows researchers to explore new ideas in the minds of participants (Thompson & Ku, 2005). The interview questions in the following Table 3.3 were translated to Chinese for the semi-structured interviews:

Table 3.3 Interview questions

| Interview Questions | Aim to answer: |
|---|---|
| 1) How did you feel about the online English course? <br> 3) How often did you attend the online course? <br> 5) Did you improve your English ability through the online English course? <br> 6) What English ability did you improve through the online English course? | Research Question 1 |
| 2) Why did you feel that way? <br> 4) Why did you attend the online course with that frequency? <br> 7) How did the online English course help you improve your English ability? | Research Question 2 |

### 3.3.3 Validation and Reliability of Research Instruments

3.3.3.1 Validation

Item-objective congruence (IOC) method was used to evaluate the validity of the questionnaire by three experts (Appendix B). Based on the scoring scale from -1 to +1, three experts evaluate all the items in the questionnaire and give a rating of 1 (agree

on item measures the objective), -1 (item cannot measure the objective) or 0 (unclear whether to measure objective). Finally, the average ratings of the three experts were taken as the result. The results in Table 3.4 shown that items with scores between 0.5 and 1 in the questionnaire are retained, and items with scores below 0.5 are revised or deleted.

Table 3.4 IOC decision result

| IOC rating range | Interpretation | Decision |
|---|---|---|
| 0.5 to 1.00 | Acceptable | Item to be retained to measure intended objective. |
| Less than 0.5 | Not Acceptable | Item should be reviewed or removed. |

Source: adopted in Jusoh, Zubairi & Badrasawi, 2018

For the questionnaire in this study, three experts rated both Items 1-7, Items 12-13, sub-Items 3.1-3.11 and sub-Items 7.1-7.9 in the original questionnaire on average between 0.5 to 1 so these items have been retained. The sub-item originally under Item 13 was deleted because the average score of three experts was less than 0.5. Meanwhile, Item 8 was expanded and the English learning ability was added into specific English listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities. In addition, the researcher divided the original twenty sub-items into two separate tables to make the questionnaire easier to fill in and understand. Therefore, the final questionnaire consisted of three tables which contained 13 items, 11 items and 9 items, respectively.

For the interview questions in this study, some original questions (e.g., Were you enthusiastic to learn the online English course? Why were/weren't you enthusiastic to learn the online English course? Why do/don't you think the online English course helps you learn English?) had been removed because their IOC scores were less than 0.5. The Question 1 for interview was reviewed from the original question (Do you like to learn the online English course?) which IOC score was less than 0.5. Question 2 still adopted the method of asking on the original question because this score given by experts was between 0.5 to 1. However, Question 2 is related to Question 1, thus it was adjusted according to Question 1. Questions 3 and 4 were modified from the original

ones (Did you attend the online course frequently? Why did/didn't you attend the online course frequently?). Questions 5-7 remained because the IOC scores were between 0.5 and 1.

3.3.3.2 Reliability

Johanson and Brooks (2010) pointed out that 30 is recognized as a reasonable minimum sample size for bootstrapped confidence intervals in a pilot study. Viechtbauer et al. (2015) showed a formula to calculate the required sample size for a pilot study (Figure 3.2) and they also pointed out those 59 participants could detect the problem with a high confidence level (with 95% confidence) in a pilot study. Therefore, in this study, 60 participants were selected as the sample size of the pilot study.

$$n = \frac{\ln(1 - \gamma)}{\ln(1 - \pi)}.$$

n= sample size

$\pi$=the problem probability

$\gamma$=levels of confidence

Figure 3.2 Calculation of sample size in pilot studies

Cronbach's alpha is used to calculate the reliability of the items of the questionnaire, which sets the alpha value at least ≥0.70 (Arafat, Chowdhury, Qusar & Hafez, 2016). Questionnaire with an alpha value ≥0.70 is included in the valid questionnaire of this study, while that with an Alpha value ≤0.50 is treated as invalid one. Cronbach's alpha of the valid questionnaire in this study was in Table 3.5 below:

Table 3.5 Cronbach's alpha

| Reliability Statistics | |
|---|---|
| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
| .966 | 33 |

## 3.4 Data collection

Before data were collected, the researcher applied for the research ethics approval from the Rangsit university. It was approved to collect data from Chinese undergraduate students in Gengdan Institute of Beijing University of Technology in Beijing on 26/08/2021 (Appendix C).

### 3.4.1 Quantitative Data Collection

On September 3rd, 2021, the researcher started inviting those 380 sample students who were already the WeChat group members to complete the online questionnaire through this link: https://www.wjx.cn/vm/hPn4Yzi.aspx. All of them completed the questionnaire online.

### 3.4.2 Qualitative Data Collection

In terms of interview, the researcher contacted the lecturer of the online English course, who recommended one participant from each major. Then the researcher made appointments with all the 18 participants in advance and conducted an online interview of about fifteen minutes for each participant. All the interview contents were recorded. During the interview, all participants answered the questions in Chinese.

## 3.5 Data Analysis

### 3.5.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used for quantitative data analysis by SPSS 24 version. The descriptive statistics include the mean and standard deviation of students' attitudes toward learning the online English course and influencing factors. And these data were interpreted based on 5-rating scales is shown in Table 3.6. The Rating scale was calculated by N-1 / N formula (Erarslan & Topkaya, 2017). After calculation, the
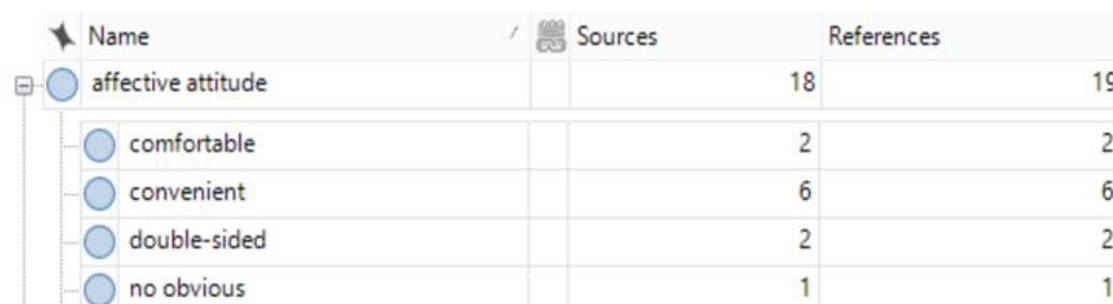
interval scale is 5-1/5= 0.80, and a score above 3.40 is considered positive attitude, whereas a score 3.40 and below is considered students' negative attitudes toward online learning.

Table 3.6 Interval scale of the options in the questionnaire

| 5-rating scale | Descriptive Rating |
|---|---|
| 4.21 — 5.00 | Strongly agree/ Highest degree of positive attitude |
| 3.41 — 4.20 | Agree/ High degree of positive attitude |
| 2.61 — 3.40 | Not sure/ Moderate degree of positive attitude |
| 1.81 — 2.60 | Disagree/ Low degree of positive attitude |
| 1.00 — 1.80 | Strongly disagree/ Lowest degree of positive attitude |

### 3.5.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

The researcher translated the interviewees' Chinese responds to English, transcribed them and saved them into 18 different files (Appendix D) at the end of the interview. The researcher classified and managed these data through NVIVO 11 version. In doing so, the researcher firstly uploaded those 18 files to the software program. Then, encoded all the data with these key codes (i.e., online course, ability, English learning, improve) to search for the similarities of the participants' responses in the program. After that, the researcher herself created several new codes for checking the accuracy about those codes created by the program. Finally, the researcher classified similar or identical codes to gain the categories of qualitative data. The final codes of the data were shown in Figure 3.3 below.

| Name | Sources | References |
|---|---|---|
| affective attitude | 18 | 19 |
| comfortable | 2 | 2 |
| convenient | 6 | 6 |
| double-sided | 2 | 2 |
| no obvious | 1 | 1 |

Figure 3.3 Codes of the qualitative data in NVIVO

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| perfer | 6 | 6 |
| suitable | 2 | 2 |
| behavioral attitude | 18 | 18 |
| twice | 18 | 18 |
| cognitive attitude | 18 | 62 |
| improved | 13 | 14 |
| listening skills | 17 | 17 |
| reading skills | 13 | 13 |
| speaking skills | 10 | 10 |
| writing skills | 8 | 8 |
| factors | 18 | 81 |
| chinese cultural values | 5 | 7 |
| face to face | 5 | 5 |
| responsibility | 2 | 2 |
| mooc features | 18 | 54 |
| anytime anywhere | 13 | 27 |
| repeated watch | 13 | 16 |
| save time | 3 | 3 |
| control progress | 4 | 4 |
| discussion board | 4 | 4 |
| learn better | 5 | 6 |
| learning space | 8 | 10 |
| web page | 3 | 3 |
| motivation | 16 | 20 |
| grade | 14 | 14 |
| learn successfully | 3 | 3 |
| learning form | 3 | 3 |

Figure 3.3 Codes of the qualitative data in NVIVO (cont.)

# Chapter 4

# Research Results

This chapter focuses on the findings of this study, including the quantitative data results and qualitative data results.

## 4.1 Quantitative Data Results

### 4.1.1 Students' Personal Information

Based on Table 4.1 below, it can be seen that the gender distribution is average, with 47% male and 53% female, so the results of this study can be applied to both males and females.

Table 4.1 Gender of first-year undergraduate students

| Variable | | Number | Percent |
|----------|--------|--------|---------|
| Gender | male | 180 | 47% |
| | female | 200 | 53% |

For the students' age, more than 50% of the sample were 18 years old, 10% were 17 years old and 26% were 19 years old, and no students were 20 years old or older.

Table 4.2 Age of first-year undergraduate students

| Variable | | Number | Percent |
|----------|----|--------|---------|
| | 17 | 38 | 10% |
| Age | 18 | 243 | 64% |
| | 19 | 99 | 26% |

In addition, more than half of the students received B level (Good) grades for the online English course, while 14% students received the highest A level (Excellent) grades, 22% students received C level (Common) grades and 14% students received D level (Pass) grades, indicating that all the students who participated in completing this questionnaire got corresponding grades in the online English course, and no students failed the course.

Table 4.3 Final grade of first-year undergraduate students

| Variable | | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Final Grade | A (100-90) Excellent | 52 | 14% |
| | B (89-80) Good | 194 | 51% |
| | C (79-70) Common | 82 | 22% |
| | D (69-60) Pass | 52 | 14% |

There are 18 majors for the first-year undergraduate students to participate in this survey. It can be seen from below Table 4.4 those students of "Computer Science and Technology" are the most, accounting for 12% of the total sample. Next are the students of "Economy and Trade" and "Communication Engineering" both account for 11% of the total. And students of the remaining majors are relatively few, both accounting for less than 10% of the total.

Table 4.4 The majors of the first-year undergraduate students

| Major | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Economy and Trade | 40 | 11% |
| Social Work | 24 | 6% |
| Chinese Language International Education | 12 | 3% |
| English | 20 | 5% |
| Engineering Management | 17 | 5% |
| Financial Management | 23 | 6% |
| Marketing | 20 | 5% |
| Communication Engineering | 40 | 11% |
| Computer Science and Technology | 44 | 12% |
| Electronic Information Engineering | 24 | 6% |

Table 4.4 The majors of the first-year undergraduate students (cont.)

| Major | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Industrial Design | 18 | 5% |
| Mechanical Automation | 14 | 4% |
| Cartoon | 12 | 3% |
| Drama and Film Design | 10 | 3% |
| Digital Media Art | 20 | 5% |
| Environment Design | 16 | 4% |
| Product Design | 12 | 3% |
| Visual Communication Design | 14 | 4% |

According to Table 4.5 below, 79% of these undergraduate students have had experiences in learning some other online English courses before, and 21% students learned the online English course for the first time. It can be seen that the vast majority of students have some understanding of online courses. In addition, 82% of these students thought that they have the computer skills to learn the online English course, but 18% of students thought that they do not have the corresponding computer abilities. Therefore, it shows that students still need correct guidance and help when they learn online courses.

Table 4.5 Other online learning situations of the first-year undergraduate students

| Item | Reply | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q5. I have had experiences in learning other online courses before. | yes | 301 | 79% |
| | no | 79 | 21% |
| Q6. I have computer skills to learn the online English course. | yes | 311 | 82% |
| | no | 69 | 18% |

**4.1.2 Chinese Undergraduate Students' Attitudes toward Learning the Online English Course**

The results in Table 4.6 showed that the overall mean of Items 1-3 was at a high level ($\bar{x}$ = 3.76), as they all had similar mean, higher than 3.40, indicating that the students did not like learning English in the traditional classroom ($\bar{x}$ = 3.75), but they

liked learning the online English course ($\bar{x}$ = 3.76) and preferred to learn the online English course ($\bar{x}$ = 3.76). These three items reflected the affective dimension of their attitudes toward learning the online English course, which was positive at a high level.

Similar to the affective dimension, the overall mean of Items 4-7 that was about the behavioral dimension was at a high level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.13), indicating they had enthusiasm to learn the online English course ($\bar{x}$ = 3.88) and actively expressed their opinions in the discussion board ($\bar{x}$ = 3.81). At the highest level ($\bar{x}$ > 4.21), however, they attended all the required lectures by the lecturer every week ($\bar{x}$ = 4.54) and finished all other activities assigned by the lecturer ($\bar{x}$ = 4.28), indicating that they had positive attitudes toward learning the online English course at a high level.

For the cognitive dimension, the overall mean of Items 8-13 was higher than 3.40, indicating that those students thought the online course had improved their English skills in listening ($\bar{x}$ = 3.99), reading ($\bar{x}$ = 3.84) and writing ($\bar{x}$ = 3.86) at a high level. They also thought that learning the online English course was convenient ($\bar{x}$ = 3.91) and suitable for them ($\bar{x}$ = 3.82). However, they did not think learning the online course had improved their English speaking skills ($\bar{x}$ = 3.40). These items showed that the students had positive attitudes toward learning the online English course at a high level.

Finally, the overall mean of Items 1-13 was 3.89, higher than 3.40, indicating that Chinese undergraduate students had high degree of positive attitudes toward learning the online English course. However, when looking at the three dimensions, the overall mean of behavioral dimension was the highest and the mean of cognitive dimension was the lowest.

Table 4.6 Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning the online English course

| Item | N | Mean | Std. | Meaning |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I dislike learning English in the traditional classroom. | 380 | 3.75 | 0.744 | High degree of positive attitude |

Table 4.6 Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning the online English course (cont.)

| Item | N | Mean | Std. | Meaning |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. I like learning the online English course. | 380 | 3.76 | 0.805 | High degree of positive attitude |
| 3. I prefer to learn the online English course. | 380 | 3.76 | 0.808 | High degree of positive attitude |
| **Overall Mean (Affective dimension)** | | **3.76** | | **High degree of positive attitude** |
| 4. I expressed my opinions in the discussion board actively. | 380 | 3.81 | 0.738 | High degree of positive attitude |
| 5. I attended all the required lectures by the lecturer every week. | 380 | 4.54 | 0.499 | **Highest degree of positive attitude** |
| 6. I attended and finished all other activities assigned by the lecturer. | 380 | 4.28 | 0.687 | **Highest degree of positive attitude** |
| 7. I am enthusiastic to learn the online English course | 380 | 3.88 | 0.76 | High degree of positive attitude |
| **Overall Mean (Behavioral dimension)** | | **4.13** | | **High degree of positive attitude** |
| 8. I think the online course has improved my English listening ability. | 380 | 3.99 | 0.782 | High degree of positive attitude |
| 9. I think the online course has improved my English speaking ability. | 380 | 3.40 | 0.771 | **Moderate degree of positive attitude** |
| 10. I think the online course has improved my English reading ability. | 380 | 3.84 | 0.788 | High degree of positive attitude |
| 11. I think the online course has improved my English writing ability. | 380 | 3.86 | 0.749 | High degree of positive attitude |
| 12. I think learning online course is convenient for me. | 380 | 3.91 | 0.772 | High degree of positive attitude |
| 13. I think the online English course is suitable for me. | 380 | 3.82 | 0.784 | High degree of positive attitude |
| **Overall Mean (Cognitive dimension)** | | **3.80** | | **High degree of positive attitude** |
| **Overall Mean (Attitude)** | | **3.89** | | **High degree of positive attitude** |

### 4.1.3 Factors Influencing Students' Attitudes

Based on Table 4.7 below, the mean of Items 1-11 was all higher than 3.40,

which means that they preferred to learn the online English course because of these eleven items which reflected features of the online English course on MOOC platform. Features of the online English course on MOOC platform are factors that influenced their positive attitudes toward learning the online English course.

Table 4.7 Factors influenced by MOOC features

| Item | N | Mean | Std. | Meaning |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I prefer to learn the online English course because... | | | | |
| 1. I like the web page design. | 380 | 3.77 | 0.757 | Agree |
| 2. I can learn English at any time convenient for me. | 380 | 4.03 | 0.760 | Agree |
| 3. I can learn English at any place that suits me. | 380 | 4.01 | 0.734 | Agree |
| 4. I can share information online with my classmates and lecturer. | 380 | 3.95 | 0.776 | Agree |
| 5. I can ask any related questions online. | 380 | 3.95 | 0.725 | Agree |
| 6. I can receive answers online from both my lecturer and classmates. | 380 | 3.97 | 0.735 | Agree |
| 7. I can learn English better. | 380 | 3.91 | 0.746 | Agree |
| 8. I can control my own learning progress. | 380 | 3.94 | 0.813 | Agree |
| 9. I can participate in the evaluation process (giving my own score to my classmates' assignments and lecturer's teaching). | 380 | 3.87 | 0.726 | Agree |
| 10. I can show more ideas in my personal learning space. | 380 | 3.94 | 0.747 | Agree |
| 11. I can receive an online certificate for successful completion of the course. | 380 | 3.94 | 0.749 | Agree |

The results in Table 4.8 below showed that the mean of Items 1-9 was all higher than 3.40, which indicated that the students were enthusiastic to learn the online English course because these nine items reflected their Chinese cultural values. Therefore, students' behaviors in learning the online English course were influenced by Chinese cultural values, which led them to have positive actions when they learn the online English course. It can be said that Chinese cultural values influence their positive attitudes toward learning the online English course.

Table 4.8 Factors influenced by Chinese cultural values

| Item | N | Mean | Std. | Meaning |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All in all, I am enthusiastic to learn the online English course because… | | | | |
| 1. I don't need to interact face-to-face with the lecturer. | 380 | 3.83 | 0.783 | Agree |
| 2. I don't need to interact with the lecturer spontaneously. | 380 | 3.87 | 0.786 | Agree |
| 3. I don't lose face in the public when posting my questions and answers in discussion board. | 380 | 3.91 | 0.748 | Agree |
| 4. I don't need to compete with my classmates. | 380 | 3.84 | 0.814 | Agree |
| 5. I have time to think before posting my questions and answers in discussion board. | 380 | 4.01 | 0.786 | Agree |
| 6. I feel more comfortable and confident to post my questions and answers in discussion board. | 380 | 3.87 | 0.753 | Agree |
| 7. I get more help not only from teachers but also from classmates. | 380 | 4.03 | 0.782 | Agree |
| 8. I learn to work as a team rather than competing with others. | 380 | 3.91 | 0.759 | Agree |
| 9. I can learn English on my own. | 380 | 3.95 | 0.839 | Agree |

## 4.2 Qualitative Data Results

### 4.2.1 Students' Attitudes toward Learning the Online English Course

4.2.1.1 Students' Affective Attitudes

The interview findings from 18 participants indicated that most of them had positive attitudes toward learning the online English course since 14 of them mentioned their preference in learning through this channel. Three participants (YQ, Xuan, Joy) directly pointed out that they preferred traditional English class. One participant (Shuo) had no obvious feeling for both online English learning and traditional English learning.

Among the 14 participants with positive attitudes, four participants (Liu, Woody, Chris, Mandy) particularly stated that they "prefer to learn the online English course" and the rest of the participants expressed their positive attitudes for they have

offered that online course made them feel comfortable to learn English:

"I think online course makes me feel comfortable to learn English and I don't feel trapped in the classroom." (Jen, personal communication, September 27, 2021)

"I feel comfortable to learn the online English course and I can concentrate more on learning English." (Amy, personal communication, September 27, 2021)

Two participants have suggested that learning the online English course is suitable for them:

"Compared with the traditional course, learning the online English course is more suitable for me." (Reyna, personal communication, September 30, 2021)

"I think the online course is suitable for me... I can completely choose a posture and space I like to learn English." (Yuan, personal communication, October 5, 2021)

And the most popular response from these participants was that online course is more convenient for learning English:

"I think the online course is very convenient for me to learn English." (Daly, personal communication, September 24, 2021)

"Online course is more convenient and efficient for me to learn." (Reyna, personal communication, September 30, 2021)

"The online course is very convenient for me because it saves me the time to change classrooms in the university." (Jia, personal communication, October 9, 2021)

"I think online English course is more convenient for my study and bring convenience to my study." (Tong, personal communication, October 12, 2021)

"I think this is a very meaningful course because I can learn more knowledge, and the online English course is very convenient for me."

(Mandy, personal communication, September 28, 2021)

"I think online English course is convenient for my learning and easy to operate." (CoCo, personal communication, September 28, 2021)

However, three of the fourteen participants expressed their double-sided responses on learning the online English course:

"In general, I feel that the sense of learning experience of the online course is not as good as that of a traditional class, but the relevant learning materials in the online English course are more abundant and online course can consolidate my learning." (Xin, personal communication, October 11, 2021)

"Compared with traditional English class, online English course is more likely to feel tired and not easy to adhere to. But online English course can make me use a shorter time to learn more English knowledge points." (Lin, personal communication, October 9, 2021)

"I think online English course is convenient for my learning and easy to operate, but after learning for a long time, I often feel visually tired." (Coco, personal communication, September 28, 2021)

4.2.1.2 Students' Behavioral Attitudes

The interview results showed that all the 18 participants never missed the online English course as they said they "always attended the online English classes twice a week", meaning every week they joined one synchronous class and one asynchronous class. Full classroom attendances reflected their active learning behaviors.

"Twice a week, one on Monday and the other at no fixed time." (Liu, personal communication, September 26, 2021)

"Twice a week: one synchronous class is on Monday and the other asynchronous class is on my own schedule every week." (Chris, personal communication, September 27, 2021)

"I attended the course twice a week." (Tong, personal communication, October 12, 2021)

### 4.2.1.3 Students' Cognitive Attitudes

All the 18 participants thought that the online English course had improved their English ability, especially listening skills because 17 students said that they all "have improved their English listening skills". Only one person (Shuo) stated that he "learned English by himself after the class and it was the best way for me to learn English". Fourteen participants (Jen, Daly, Amy, Woody, Reyna, YQ, Chris, Shuo, Xin, Lin, Jia, Joy, Mandy, Yuan) thought that the online English course had improved their English reading skills. Nine participants (Jen, Daly, Amy, Reyna, Xin, Jia, Joy, Mandy) mentioned that the online English course had improved their English writing skills. Eight participants (Jen, Liu, Amy, Woody, Reyna, Chris, Tong, Mandy) said that the online English course had improved their English speaking skills.

"Yes, I have improved. My listening, speaking, reading and writing skills all have improved." (Jen, personal communication, September 27, 2021)

"I think my English listening, reading and writing skills have improved." (Daly, personal communication, September 24, 2021)

"Yes, I think there has been some improvement. I have improved my English listening and speaking skills." (Liu, personal communication, September 26, 2021)

"My English listening, speaking and reading skills have improved." (Woody, personal communication, September 29, 2021)

"My listening ability has been improved that I feel that my English listening is better than before. My reading ability has been improved as well." (YQ, personal communication, September 29, 2021)

"There are some improvements on reading." (Shuo, personal communication, September 30, 2021)

"Yes, I think my English listening skill has improved." (CoCo, personal communication, September 28, 2021)

### 4.2.2 Factors Influencing Students' Attitudes

4.2.2.1 Features of the Online Course

Participants gave a variety of responses to factors from features of the online English course in the MOOC platform that influenced their positive attitudes. The first reason cited by these participants was that they can learn the online English course anytime and anywhere. Five participants (Daly, Chris, Tong, Mandy, CoCo) directly mentioned this as the reason why they like learning the online course.

"Because I can learn English anytime and anywhere without going to the classroom." (Daly, personal communication, September 24, 2021)

"I can learn the online course anywhere I have an Internet connection. When I learn English in a traditional class, I have to go out in advance or occupy a seat in the classroom. Sometimes, I feel troublesome and tired, and I don't want to run around anymore." (Chris, personal communication, September 27, 2021)

"There is no limit to where I can learn the online course, I can study at home, in the library, in a coffee shop, I can study anywhere." (Tong, personal communication, October 12, 2021)

"I can learn the online English course anywhere I want." (Mandy, personal communication, September 28, 2021)

"As long as I have the Internet, I can learn the course anywhere. I can also choose to study one of my weekly classes at any time." (CoCo, personal communication, September 28, 2021)

Two participants (Jen, Woody) attended the course with that frequency because the time and place of learning the online English course were flexible.

"The time of the online English course is relatively flexible. And the location for learning the online course is flexible, so I can finish the course at home or in the library." (Jen, personal communication, September 27, 2021)

"The time and place of learning the online English course are very flexible." (Woody, personal communication, September 29, 2021)

Three participants (Woody, Jia, Reyna) gave details that they like learning the online course because the online course can save their time;

"I can join the course even when I am not in school, I am not limited by the location. Meanwhile, compared to studying in school, I can spend the time on the road to rest or prepare learning materials. I have never been late for the online course, but I may be late for a traditional class." (Woody, personal communication, September 29, 2021)

"Because I saved the time of changing classroom." (Jia, personal communication, October 9, 2021)

"Because online English courses don't limit where I can study, I save the time I used to have to travel to a traditional classroom." (Reyna, personal communication, September 30, 2021)

Four participants (Jia, Xin, Reyna, Tong) said that they like learning the online English course because they can learn the course again and again.

"I learned English better by going back to the course and repeating what I didn't understand to consolidate the English knowledge." (Jia, personal communication, October 9, 2021)

"The teacher's explanation process is often the worthiest of recording. In MOOC, I can watch the course content repeatedly to help consolidate the learning content." (Xin, personal communication, October 11, 2021)

"This online English course also has playback to help me recall knowledge points in the future." (Reyna, personal communication, September 30, 2021)

"The online English course can be played over and over again, making it easy for me to review and consolidate what I have learned." (Tong, personal communication, October 12, 2021)

Twelve participants (Jen, Daly, Liu, Woody, Reyna, YQ, Chris, Lin, Jia, Tong, Mandy, CoCo) also thought that the improvements in their English abilities as they said "the online course can be repeated watched to help me consolidate knowledge", that is, students could learn the online English course as much as they want at anytime and anywhere.

The second factor influencing students' attitudes was the online English course provides more personal learning space. Three participants (Jen, Jia, Yuan) said that was why they like learning the online course.

"Online English course make me feel relaxed and give students and teachers their own private space, I won't feel nervous to learn the online course." (Jen, personal communication, September 27, 2021)

"Online course provides me a private learning space that I can type on the discussion board and communicate with my classmates and teacher without worrying about others' eyes." (Jia, personal communication, October 9, 2021)

"Online English course has provided me with a more private learning space and changed my learning state. In front of the screen, I can speak English daringly without considering whether I will be noticed." (Yuan, personal communication, October 5, 2021)

One participant (Liu) proposed that she never miss the class because the online English course is more autonomous for learning.

"For half of this online course, I can plan my own course time and master my own learning progress in time without any pressure or sense of urgency." (Liu, personal communication, September 26, 2021)

Nearly half of them thought that their English learning abilities had improved because they have own personal learning space in the online course.

"Learning the online course can hear the teacher more clearly, because everyone is in their own learning space, the environmental noise is relatively small, and they can listen to the teacher more carefully without being disturbed by others." (Jia, personal communication, October 9, 2021)

"I have my own learning space. In the online course, I listen to the teacher in a quieter environment, which reduces the impact of some noise in the traditional classroom." (Xin, personal communication, October 11, 2021)

"The online course provided me with my own learning space, where I can concentrate, grasp the key information and understand the knowledge taught by my teacher." (Reyna, personal communication, September 30, 2021)

"Online courses provide personal learning space that I can listen to the teacher's English pronunciation closely to improve my recognition of word pronunciation." (Lin, personal communication, October 9, 2021)

"I have a large personal learning space in learning the online English course, so that I can listen clearer." (Xuan, personal communication, October 12, 2021)

"Online course gives me a lot of personal learning space, so I will listen more carefully and gradually improve my listening ability." (Joy, personal communication, October 15, 2021)

"Online course had given me more personal learning space and made me not care about other people's eyes." (Yuan, personal communication, October 5, 2021)

"I can study in a private study space without being afraid that others will laugh at my pronunciation." (Liu, personal communication, September 26, 2021)

The third reason caused their positive attitudes said by participants was that

they can control their own learning progress. Two participants (Liu, Mandy) said that they like learning the online course because of this.

"In the traditional English class, I always pay attention to whether others will pay attention to my English pronunciation. But in the online course, I can learn according to my own level and progress and can also practice pronunciation by myself without nervous." (Liu, personal communication, September 26, 2021)

"I can learn at my own pace in the online course, which makes me more motivated to learn English. Instead of being forced to learn and instill knowledge, my learning process became enjoyable and I was willing to learn and explore more Knowledge of English." (Mandy, personal communication, September 28, 2021)

Two participants (Lin, Tong) thought their English learning abilities had improved because they can control their own learning progress.

"Online course allowed me to control my own learning speed. When I read my teacher's PPT and some articles, I practiced slowly to improve my reading speed, from slowly reading word by word to quickly reading now, I can know the meaning directly." (Lin, personal communication, October 9, 2021)

"I can follow my own learning habits and speed, insist on attending the course on time every week, listen to lectures and take notes carefully, complete every task assigned by the teacher, and think about things I don't understand by consulting materials and listening repeatedly." (Tong, personal communication, October 12, 2021)

The fourth factor given by the participants was that they can learn English better, which was the reason given by one participant that she liked learning the online course.

"In the online course, the teacher does not need to maintain the class order so that she spends all her time lecturing. I can search for expanded

learning knowledge at any time. Therefore, I can learn more knowledge in
the online English course which means I can learn English better." (Lin,
personal communication, October 9, 2021)

Five participants (Amy, Lin, Xuan, Joy, Mandy) attended the online course
with that frequency because they can learn English better.

"Nowadays, English is a necessary skill in both job hunting and daily
life. The external environment forced me to improve my English skills, and
learning the online course helped me improve my English, so I attended all
the courses." (Amy, personal communication, September 27, 2021)

"The online English course can help me improve my English." (Lin,
personal communication, October 9, 2021)

"I don't think my English is very good, so taking all the courses can
improve my English." (Xuan, personal communication, October 12, 2021)

"Online course is very helpful to me, which can improve my
professional knowledge and English learning ability." (Joy, personal
communication, October 15, 2021)

"Learning these online English courses can help me improve my
English." (Mandy, personal communication, September 28, 2021)

Finally, some other factors from features of the online in MOOC platform were
pointed out by five participants. They thought that their English abilities had improved
because MOOC has an intuitive web page;

"The content of online courses in MOOC platform is intuitive where I
can observe the teacher's oral words and repeatedly listen to the teacher's
explanation." (Amy, personal communication, September 27, 2021)

"The web page of the online course is simple and clear, and it is more
convenient to display the course content, which is conducive to my
concentrated studies." (Reyna, personal communication, September 30,
2021)

"The teacher shows the courseware intuitively on the MOOC web page, so I can see it clearly." (Shuo, personal communication, September 30, 2021)

"The online course is very intuitive, just facing a screen, which is convenient for me to observe the teacher's interpretation of the articles in class." (Joy, personal communication, October 15, 2021)

And they can ask and answer on the discussion board.

"I can discuss the article with my classmates and teachers by leaving messages on the discussion board and I can get help from others." (Jen, personal communication, September 27, 2021)

"I improved my writing ability by posting my questions and answers on the discussion board during my daily study." (Joy, personal communication, October 15, 2021)

"I can post on the discussion board that made my writing ability better and better, and also the language organization is better." (Reyna, personal communication, September 30, 2021)

"The main way of communication in online course is to post opinions on the discussion board, whether is a question or a reply.... I need to pay more attention to the spelling of words, the form of sentences, grammar and so on." (Daly, personal communication, September 24, 2021)

4.2.2.2 Chinese Cultural Values

Some participants pointed out that factors from Chinese cultural values influenced not only their positive but also their negative affective attitudes. One of the factors was that they don't have to communicate with their teacher face to face. One participant (Woody) said that he liked learning the online course and never miss the class because of this.

"Online English courses don't require me to answer questions face-to-face with the teacher or in front of a crowd, which makes me more willing to learn and ask questions, reduces my nervousness and increases my

confidence...I would like to participate in the online English course, because I don't have to face to face with my teacher, which makes me feel less nervous and freer to learn English." (Woody, personal communication, September 29, 2021)

However, four participants (YQ, Xuan, Joy, Xin) did not like to learn the online English course because they prefer to learn English in the traditional classroom where they can communicate face-to-face with the teacher and classmates.

"Face-to-face communication is more effective than Internet communication. Communication with the teacher in an online course can only be through the discussion board. Sometimes the teacher doesn't see all the messages, so I can't get enough communication." (YQ, personal communication, September 29, 2021)

"I can't have direct and timely oral communication like the traditional class, which weakens my desire for communication and makes me reluctant to take the initiative to learn communication sometimes." (Xuan, personal communication, October 12, 2021)

"In the traditional classes, I can more easily participate in class discussions and directly communicate with each other when completing teamwork tasks. Face to face can express oneself better and communicate better." (Joy, personal communication, October 15, 2021)

"In learning the online English course, I lacked direct communication and interaction with the teacher, such as eyes and body movements, resulting in a weak sense of participation in class." (Xin, personal communication, October 11, 2021)

And the other factor was the sense of responsibility as a student, which was pointed out by two participants (Xin, Xuan) as the reason why they attended the online English course with that frequency.

"Student, whose duty is to attend class and study. Except in special cases, full attendance is what every student should do." (Xin, personal communication, October 11, 2021)

"Because I am a college student, full attendance is the basic requirement for me." (Xuan, personal communication, October 12, 2021)

### 4.2.3 Additional Factors Influencing Students' Attitudes

Some students gave some additional factors influenced their positive attitudes that did not appear in the questionnaire. Fourteen participants (Daly, Liu, Amy, Woody, Reyna, YQ, Chris, Shuo, Xin, Jia, Xuan, Joy, Mandy, CoCo) attended all the online English classes because they said they wanted to "earn a good final grade" for this online course, which was motivated extrinsically. Three participants (Joy, CoCo, Lin) pointed out that they attend all the courses because they want to make sure that they would learn the subject successfully.

"Once I miss one course, it may cause pressure on my later study because the content of the course is continuous. If I don't listen to one class, I may have some things I can't understand in the next class. Also, avoid causing my learning pressure." (Joy, personal communication, October 15, 2021)

"The content of each class has its key points. If I miss the class, I will not be able to keep up with it, so I need to spend more time to catch up on my learning progress." (CoCo, personal communication, September 28, 2021)

"The knowledge points taught by the teacher are consistent, and I will have problems after one class is missed." (Lin, personal communication, October 9, 2021)

Three participants (Chris, Tong, Reyna) gave the reason why they attended all the classes was that they like the learning form of the online English course. These two factors were intrinsic motivation of students.

"There's a lot of group discussion topics in the course, where I can discuss problems with group members and read online and share ideas and make suggestions, which I think is very convenient and interesting." (Chris, personal communication, September 27, 2021)

"The online English course adopts a novel, modern multimedia format, which can give full play to my enthusiasm for learning." (Tong, personal communication, October 12, 2021)

"The online course uses different information technology and attract my attention more. At the same time, compared with the traditional class, only one or several students can participate in the activities, but now all students can participate at the same time, which makes me feel more involved in learning." (Reyna, personal communication, September 30, 2021)

## 4.3 Conclusion

In this study, most of the students were 18 years old, and 65% gained B-level grades or A level grades. More than 80% of the students were confident in their computer skills. The participants who completed the questionnaire and took part in the interview had a high level of positive attitudes toward learning the online English course from three dimensions. Among them, students had the highest degree of attending the online course and learning activities. However, their recognition about the online course in improving their oral English skill was the lowest. The students agreed that features of the online English course on MOOC platform and Chinese cultural values influenced their attitudes. Through interviews, the students also said that motivation influenced their attitudes toward learning the online course, including intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation.

# Chapter 5

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter focuses on discussion, conclusion, limitations and recommendations of this study.

## 5.1 Discussion

This study aims to investigate Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning an online English course and factors that influence Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning the online English course by using a questionnaire and in-depth interviews. It aims to test these hypotheses: 1) Chinese undergraduate students will have positive attitudes toward learning the online English course at a high level; 2) MOOC features influence Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning the online English course at a high level; and 3) Chinese cultural values influence Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning the online English course at a high level.

### 5.1.1 H1: Chinese Undergraduate Students' Positive Attitudes toward Learning the Online English Course at a High Level

The quantitative results from the 380 Chinese undergraduate students confirmed the first hypothesis, for they agreed that they preferred learning the English course online to learning in the traditional classroom (affective dimension), they were active learners in this virtual classroom (behavioral dimension) and they thought

learning online course was convenient for them and suitable for them and they gained knowledge in English skills in listening, reading and writing (cognitive dimension) at a high level. These three dimensions reflect the attitudes defined in this study based on Ghazvini and Khajehpour (2011) and Netzer et al. (2018). The interview results also confirmed these quantitative findings since 14 participants showed positive feelings about learning the online English course. All the participants who joined the interviews attended all the online English classes and more than half of them thought their English skills in listening, reading and writing improved due to their active learning behaviors in the online English classes - both synchronous and asynchronous. These findings can imply that the affective, behavioral and cognitive dimensions are interrelated. Once the students had the preference to learn the online English course, they were encouraged to be active in their studies and at the same time they perceived their English skills to be improved.

However, the quantitative results showed that Chinese undergraduate students in this study were not sure if learning English through online improved their English speaking skills, which was also verified in the qualitative results, for less than half of the participants thought that they gained knowledge in English skill in speaking. This indicated that students may not be confident to speak in English when they studied the online English course. Since language skills require practice (Ahmed, 2015), maybe the students were not given much chance to speak in English.

In addition, good computer skills could also affect students' positive attitudes toward learning the online course. The lack of computer technology has greatly affected the learning behaviors and led to negative attitudes toward learning online English courses (Li & Lee, 2016). In this study, 82% of students from quantitative data believed that they have computer skills to learn the online English course. The possible

explanation for the majority of students' confidence in their computer skills might be Computer Science and Technology majors had the largest number of sample (n=44) and the online English course provided them with more opportunities to use computers for learning.

The positive results of this study using a mixed research method were the same results as related studies by Ku and Lohr (2003), Hsu and Sheu (2008) and Nan (2019). The results also indicated that the target group of Chinese undergraduate students were more likely to accept the change of learning mode.

### 5.1.2 H2: MOOC Features Influencing Chinese Undergraduate Students' Attitudes toward Learning the Online English Course at a High Level

The quantitative results from 380 students confirmed the second hypothesis, for they preferred to learn the online English course because they liked the web page design of the MOOC platform, which provided synchronous and asynchronous learning modes suitable for them and allowed them to share information online with their classmates and lecturer, ask any related questions online, receive answers online from both their lecturer and classmates, learn English better, control their own learning progress, participate in the evaluation process, show more ideas in their personal learning space and receive an online certificate for successful completion of the course. The qualitative findings also support the quantitative results, partly similar to the studies by Ku and Lohr (2003) and Lin and Gao (2019) who found that Chinese college students were active in online learning because of the high degree of the ability to learn independently and the flexibility of the online course providing their own learning space.

**5.1.3 H3: Chinese Cultural Values Influencing Chinese Undergraduate Students' Attitudes toward Learning the Online English Course at a High Level**

The quantitative results from 380 Chinese undergraduate students confirmed the third hypothesis, for they felt enthusiastic to learn the online learning course unlike the traditional classroom where the teacher played an authoritative role and the students copied the teaching materials. In line with Thompson and Ku (2005), their Chinese cultural values embedded in themselves as submissive learners influenced their learning behavior. As a result, Chinese students seldom shared their own thoughts if those were contrary to their lecturers (Zhao & McDougall, 2008), they always awed for authority and respect for lecturers (Dong et al., 2020), and they were afraid to express their ideas in the same space with lecturers. In addition, Chinese undergraduate students could keep face in learning the online English course, which provided them with more personal learning space and non-face-to-face interaction with their lecturer. The qualitative findings also confirm these quantitative results, consistent with Nan's (2019) study that Chinese students were willing to discuss with their classmates and ask teachers for help online, non-face-to-face.

**5.1.4 Chinese Undergraduate Students' Motivation Influencing Their Attitudes toward Learning the Online English Course**

Through the in-depth interviews with 18 participants, motivation is an additional factor influencing their attitudes. Fourteen had extrinsic motivation because they wanted to earn a good final grade and they were able to get an A. This aspect can reflect Chinese cultural values that Chinese people always keep face (Wei & Li, 2013), that is, earning good grades is honorable. They also had intrinsic motivation because some of them liked the form of the online English course and wanted to learn the subject

successfully. This positive finding was contrary to the study of Hsu and Sheu (2008) which proposed that some Chinese students were unwilling to learn online because they were not interested in the online learning mode.

The above findings confirmed Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3, in those the students' cultural values and attitudes toward learning the online English course were variables that could positively influenced their learning motivation, another extraneous variable in this study. It can imply that the students were both extrinsically and intrinsically motivated in learning the online English course. Parallel with Abou El-Seoud, Taj-Eddin, Seddiek, El-Khouly and Nosseir (2014), motivation is the key factor that can keep them learning.

## 5.2 Conclusion

This study aims to test three hypotheses about Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward learning an online English course from three dimensions and factors influencing their attitudes, by using a mixed method - questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The quantitative results from 380 students showed that they had a high level of positive attitudes with confidence in their computer skills and that the features of the online course on the MOOC platform and Chinese cultural values positively influenced their attitudes at a high level. The quantitative results were also supported by the qualitative findings, which indicated that the target group in this study accepted learning the online English course and their active behaviors in learning were positively influenced by their cultural values. It appeared that they were both extrinsically and intrinsically motivated to learn the online English course due to the influence of their cultural values. However, the features of MOOC make it impossible for them to practice and improve their oral English. This study provides the Chinese lecturers of English

with evidence to prove that understanding attitudes is significant for learning and teaching and that they should teach online English courses combine the features of the online course with cultural values to help students learn English online better.

## 5.3 Limitations

There are three limitations of this study. First, the students who were invited to participate in the in-depth interview were all A-level students; therefore, the result in this study may not reflect the attitudes and influencing factors of all different levels students. Second, the participants were Chinese undergraduate students at a university in Beijing, China. The selection of participants is geographically and culturally specific, so the findings may not apply to students in other regions of China. Finally, the online English course of this study was on the MOOC platform. Online courses can be implemented on many learning platforms, and each platform has different functions. Therefore, this result cannot be applied to online courses on other platforms.

## 5.4 Recommendations

To overcome the limitations of this study, future qualitative research should include participants with different levels of learning achievements. Replicated studies in different Chinese contexts and on other online platforms are also highly recommended.

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**APPENDIX**

**APPENDIX A**


**QUESTIONNAIRE OF CHINESE UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD LEARNING THE ONLINE
ENGLISH COURSE IN MOOC PLATFORM AND ITS
INFLUENCING FACTORS**

Hello, my name is Ruimeng Zhang and I am a third-year graduate student in M.Ed. in Bilingual Education Program at Rangsit University, Thailand. The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore your attitudes towards learning English for College Students, a course offered online in academic year 2020 to all first-year students, and factors affecting your attitudes. If you are one of those students who have already taken this English course in 2020, please kindly help me fill in this questionnaire, which contains some basic personal information and some statements about attitudes from three components. I promise that your responses will be kept confidential. Thank you very much for your kind assistance.

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Part 1: Personal Information**

**Please tick (√) in the box according to your personal information.**

1. Gender: Male () Female ()

Age: 17 ()    18 ()    19 ()    20 ()    over 20 ()

2. Major:

Economy and Trade ()        Social Work ()

Chinese Language International Education ()        English ()

Engineering Management ()        Financial Management ()        Marketing ()

Communication Engineering ()        Computer Science and Technology ()

Electronic Information Engineering ()        Industrial Design ()

Mechanical Automation ()        Cartoon ()        Drama and Film Design ()

Digital Media Art ()        Environment Design ()        Product Design ()

Visual Communication Design ()

3. Final Grade: 100-90 ()    89-80 ()    79-70 ()    69-60 ()    lower than 60 ()

4. I have had experiences in learning other online courses before.

                    Yes ()                    No ()

5. I have computer skills to learn the online English course.

                    Yes ()                    No ()

**Part 2: Your Attitudes toward Learning the Online Course "English for College Students" and Factors Influencing the Attitudes**.
**Please tick (√) the given statements that correspond to your situations according to the scale:** 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 =not sure, 2 =disagree, 1 =strongly disagree.

| NO. | Statement | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I dislike learning English in the traditional classroom. | | | | | |
| 2 | I like learning the online English course. | | | | | |
| 3 | I prefer to learn the online English course because… | | | | | |
| 4 | I expressed my opinions in the discussion board actively. | | | | | |
| 5 | I attended all the required lectures by the lecturer every week. | | | | | |
| 6 | I attended and finished all other activities assigned by the lecturer. | | | | | |
| 7 | All in all, I am enthusiastic to learn the online English course because… | | | | | |
| 8 | I think the online course has improved my English listening ability. | | | | | |
| 9 | I think the online course has improved my English speaking ability. | | | | | |
| 10 | I think the online course has improved my English reading ability. | | | | | |
| 11 | I think the online course has improved my English writing ability. | | | | | |
| 12 | I think learning online course is convenient for me. | | | | | |
| 13 | I think the online English course is suitable for me. | | | | | |

**Part 3: Factors Influencing Your Attitudes toward Learning the Online Course
"English for College Students"**
**Please tick (√) the given statements that correspond to your situations according to
these scales:** 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 =not sure, 2 =disagree, 1 =strongly disagree.

**Factors Influenced by MOOC Features**

| NO. | Statement | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|-----|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|
| | I prefer to learn the online English course because… | | | | | |
| 1 | I like the web page design. | | | | | |
| 2 | I can learn English at any time convenient for me. | | | | | |
| 3 | I can learn English at any place that suits me. | | | | | |
| 4 | I can share information online with my classmates and lecturer. | | | | | |
| 5 | I can ask any related questions online. | | | | | |
| 6 | I can receive answers online from both my lecturer and classmates. | | | | | |
| 7 | I can learn English better. | | | | | |
| 8 | I can control my own learning progress. | | | | | |
| 9 | I can participate in the evaluation process (giving my own score to my classmates' assignments and lecturer's teaching). | | | | | |
| 10 | I can show more ideas in my personal learning space. | | | | | |
| 11 | I can receive an online certificate for successful completion of the course. | | | | | |

**Factors Influenced by Chinese Cultural Values**

| NO. | Statement | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All in all, I am enthusiastic to learn the online English course because… | | | | | | |
| 1 | I don't need to interact face-to-face with the lecturer. | | | | | |
| 2 | I don't need to interact with the lecturer spontaneously. | | | | | |
| 3 | I don't lose face in the public when posting my questions and answers in the discussion board. | | | | | |
| 4 | I don't need to compete with my classmates. | | | | | |
| 5 | I have time to think before posting my questions and answers in discussion board. | | | | | |
| 6 | I feel more comfortable and confident to post my questions and answers in the discussion board. | | | | | |
| 7 | I get more help not only from teachers but also from classmates. | | | | | |
| 8 | I learn to work as a team rather than competing with others. | | | | | |
| 9 | I can learn English on my own. | | | | | |

**APPENDIX B**

**IOC (ITEM OBJECTIVE CONGRUENCE)**

# Memorandum

STC/4800/1333                                              5 August 2021

Ref: Invitation for you to be our IOC (Item Objective Congruence) expert

Dear Asst. Prof. Dr. Pattama Patpong,

    Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University

    Our student, Miss Ruimeng Zhang 6205019, who is studying in the second year of Bilingual Education, has now completed her Thesis Proposal Defense on 30 April 2021. The research title is "A Study of Chinese Undergraduate Students' Attitudes toward Learning an Online English Course at a Private University in Beijing". Currently, she is in the middle of the instrument design phase and has come up with the instrument for her study.

    Thus, I would like to invite you to be our IOC (Item-Objective Congruence) expert in assessing the validity of the instruments. The package has been attached herewith.

    I truly appreciate your kind support in this matter and hope that you will accept my invitation.

Sincerely yours,

(Dr. Malivan Praditteera)
Dean
Suryadhep Teachers College
Rangsit University

# Memorandum

STC/4800/1334 5 August 2021

Ref: Invitation for you to be our IOC (Item Objective Congruence) expert

Dear Dr. Somruedee Khongput,

Graduate School, Prince of Songkla University

Our student, Miss Ruimeng Zhang 6205019, who is studying in the second year of Bilingual Education, has now completed her Thesis Proposal Defense on 30 April 2021. The research title is "A Study of Chinese Undergraduate Students' Attitudes toward Learning an Online English Course at a Private University in Beijing". Currently, she is in the middle of the instrument design phase and has come up with the instrument for her study.

Thus, I would like to invite you to be our IOC (Item-Objective Congruence) expert in assessing the validity of the instruments. The package has been attached herewith.

I truly appreciate your kind support in this matter and hope that you will accept my invitation.

Sincerely yours,

(Dr. Malivan Praditteera)
Dean
Suryadhep Teachers College
Rangsit University

# Memorandum

STC/4800/1335                                                    5 August 2021

Ref: Invitation for you to be our IOC (Item Objective Congruence) expert

Dear Dr. Suthida Soontornwipat,

Faculty of Liberal Arts, Huachiew Chalermprakiet University

Our student, Miss Ruimeng Zhang 6205019, who is studying in the second year of Bilingual Education, has now completed her Thesis Proposal Defense on 30 April 2021. The research title is "A Study of Chinese Undergraduate Students' Attitudes toward Learning an Online English Course at a Private University in Beijing". Currently, she is in the middle of the instrument design phase and has come up with the instrument for her study.

Thus, I would like to invite you to be our IOC (Item-Objective Congruence) expert in assessing the validity of the instruments. The package has been attached herewith.

I truly appreciate your kind support in this matter and hope that you will accept my invitation.

Sincerely yours,

(Dr. Malivan Praditteera)
Dean
Suryadhep Teachers College
Rangsit University

**APPENDIX C**

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL BY ETHICS REVIEW BOARD
OF RANGSIT UNIVERSITY**

COA. No. RSUERB2021-073

**Certificate of Approval**
**By**
**Ethics Review Board of Rangsit University**

| | |
|---|---|
| COA. No. | COA. No. RSUERB2021-073 |
| Protocol Title | A STUDY OF CHINESE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD LEARNING AN ONLINE ENGLISH COURSE AT A PRIVATE UNIIVERSITY IN BEIJING |
| Principle Investigator | Ruimeng Zhang |
| Affiliation | Suryadhep Teachers College, Rangsit University |
| How to review | Expedited Review |
| Approval includes | 1. Project proposal |
| | 2. Information sheet |
| | 3. Informed consent form |
| | 4. Data collection form/Program or Activity plan |
| Date of Approval: | 26 / 08 / 2021 |
| Date of Expiration: | 26 / 08 / 2023 |

The prior mentioned documents have been reviewed and approved by Ethics Review Board of Rangsit University based Declaration of Helsinki, The Belmont Report, CIOMS Guideline and International Conference on Harmonization in Good Clinical Practice or ICH-GCP

Signature..............................................
(Assistant Professor Dr. Panan Kanchanaphum)
Chairman, Ethics Review Board for Human Research

**APPENDIX D**

**INTERVIEW RECORD**

# Interviewee 1

Jen 18 Female
Major: Economy and Trade
She had experiences in learning other online courses before.
She had computer skills to learn the online English course.
Final grade: A

**The researcher**: First I would like to know how did you feel about the online English course?

**Jen**: I think online course makes me feel comfortable to learn English and I don't feel trapped in the classroom.

**The researcher**: Why did you feel this way?

**Jen**: Traditional classes are taught and listened to in the classroom, and the relationship between teachers and students is distinct. But online English course make me feel relaxed and give students and teachers their own private space, I won't feel nervous to learn the online course.

**The researcher**: OK. Then can you tell me how often did you attend the online course?

**Jen**: Twice a week.

**The researcher**: What keeps you attend the online course twice a week? Or why you attend in this frequency?

**Jen**: Above all, the time of the online English course is relatively flexible. There are two courses every week, one of which is fixed on Monday morning, and the other is free to study. I can choose to listen to the course when I am not busy. And the location for learning the online course is flexible, so I can finish the course at home or in the library. Because I like the freeway of class, I am willing to take the initiative to learn.

**The researcher**: Did you improve your English ability through the online English course?

**Jen**: Yes, I have improved.

**The researcher**: Can you give some detail about what English learning ability did you improve through the online English course?

**Jen**: My listening, speaking, reading and writing skills all have improved.

**The researcher**: The last question: How did the online English course help you improve your English ability?

**Jen**: First, in terms of listening, I can play the course repeatedly and repeat the previous content when I do not hear clearly, to get familiar with the pronunciation of each word. Second, in terms of oral English, there are more opportunities for group cooperation because face-to-face classes are not possible. I need to communicate with my classmates online when I finish the assignments or group tasks. In this process, I will hear different spoken English, some students speak very well, I will learn, and occasionally students will correct each other's wrong pronunciation. I communicate with people more often and my spoken English has improved a little. Third, in terms of reading, I can discuss the article with my classmates and teachers by leaving messages on discussion board and I can get help from others. I can see more comments on it. I may miss some certain points of the article when I read it by myself, but they can enlighten me when I discuss with them. Finally, in terms of writing, I need to organize sentences to be posted on the platform because we communicate by leaving messages, which will also improve my writing ability. In fact, online course will improve our English ability in every link, which is the biggest difference from traditional class.

## Interviewee 2

Daly 18 Male
Major: Social Work
He had experiences in learning other online courses before.
He had computer skills to learn the online English course.
Final grade: A

**The researcher**: How did you feel about the online English course?

**Daly**: I think online English course is very convenient for me to learn English.

**The researcher**: Why did you feel it is convenient?

**Daly**: Because I can learn English anytime and anywhere without going to the classroom and I don't need to take many books as well.

**The researcher**: OK so how often did you attend the online course?

**Daly**: Twice a week.

**The researcher**: Why did you attend the online course twice a week?

**Daly**: Firstly, because I like English subject. Secondly, I want to get a high final score, so I need to get all the marks for attendance.

**The researcher**: Do you think the online English course improved your English learning ability?

**Daly**: Yes. I think my English listening, reading and writing skills have improved.

**The researcher**: can you share that how did this online English course improve your listening, reading and writing skills?

**Daly**: Yes. In terms of listening, I can listen to what I did not hear clearly several times, because the online course allows me to pause, I can understand the content, so that I listen more times, I used to have difficulty in difficult sentences, and there will be mistakes in understanding, but now I have improved. As for reading, the teacher will increase the amount of reading from a large number of articles in class, including the teacher will analyze the structure of the article, the online course resources are many and convenient, the teacher's operation is very intuitive on the screen, and we have some assignments and in-class activities for intensive reading and analysis of articles. I can definitely feel my reading speed getting faster now. In terms of writing, the main way of communication in online course is to post opinions on the discussion board, whether is a question or a reply. This has a replacement with the traditional class, which means that the opportunity of "speaking" is greatly changed to "writing", so I need to pay more attention to the spelling of words, the form of sentences, grammar and so on. It's much smoother to organize sentences now.

**Interviewee 3**

Liu 18 Female
Major: Chinese Language International Education
She had experiences in learning other online courses before.
She had computer skills to learn the online English course.
Final grade: A

**The researcher**: Above all, I want to ask how did you feel about the online English course?

**Liu**: I prefer to learn the online English course because I don't have to communicate with the teacher face to face, which alleviates my tension in oral English and makes me more interested in learning about the course content. In the traditional English class, I always pay attention to whether others will pay attention to my English pronunciation. But in the online course, I can learn according to my own level and

progress and can also practice pronunciation by myself without nervous. I will not be concerned by others, and I will not have the tension of learning in the traditional class.

**The researcher**: How often did you attend the online course?

**Liu**: Twice a week, one on Monday and the other at no fixed time.

**The researcher**: Why did you attend the online course twice a week?

**Liu**: Because it's related to my grades, full attendance is the easiest part of the grade to get. In addition, learning this online English course is very flexible for me. I can plan my own learning time for half of this online course, I can plan my own course time and master my own learning progress in time without any pressure or sense of urgency. I have more confident to learn English.

**The researcher**: Did you improve your English ability through the online English course?

**Liu**: Yes, I think there has been some improvement. I have improved my English listening and speaking skills.

**The researcher**: So can you say something about how did the online English course help you improve your English ability?

**Liu**: This online English course has reduced my tension for the teachers to ask questions about pronunciation in the traditional class, and I can concentrate more on the learning content in the class. I can pause or replay what I don't understand, which has increased my English listening time. Online course also allowed me to carry out relevant English listening exercises according to my own learning needs, and replay the listening exercises repeatedly if I do not understand. In the online English course, I can read aloud freely. For uncertain pronunciation, I can replay the course repeatedly and correct my English pronunciation according to the class content. I have gained some confidence in my English reading ability because I can study in a private study space that I can practice English repeatedly according to the course content without being afraid that others will laugh at my pronunciation. I can speak and figure it out as much as I want. However, the assignments submitted for online English course are not handwritten, and I sometimes translate them with translators when I am lazy, so my English writing ability has not been improved.

**Interviewee 4**
　　　　Amy 19 Female
　　　　Major: English

He had experiences in learning other online courses before.
He had computer skills to learn the online English course.
Final grade： A

**The researcher**：First I want to know how did you feel about the online English course?

**Amy**：The online English course gives me two feelings. First, I think I have gained a lot from the online English course, which can help me improve my English ability. Second, compared with the traditional class, I can learn knowledge more safely and conveniently through online during the epidemic. In addition, for me who was afraid to speak English, the teacher of the online English course did not force me to answer questions or show assignment, which made me feel comfortable and able to concentrate more on learning English.

**The researcher**：And how often did you attend this online English course?

**Amy**：I attended the course twice a week.

**The researcher**：Why did you attend the online course with this frequency?

**Amy**：Because I gained something from the online English course, it helped me improve my English ability. I like the way of learning online. Learning at any time and anywhere makes me more interested in learning English, and the twice-a-week courses are easier. In addition, nowadays, English is a necessary skill in both job hunting and daily life. The external environment forced me to improve my English skills, and learning the online course helped me improve my English, so I attended all the courses, and the course attendance was also part of my final grade.

**The researcher**：Did you improve your English learning ability through the online English course?

**Interviewee**：Yes. The online English course not only improved my English score, but also made me communicate with foreigner smoother.

**The researcher**：In addition to communication, are there any other improvements on your learning ability?

**Amy**：I think my listening, speaking, reading and writing skills all were improved. From the aspect of listening, I think the online English course has trained my ability to distinguish the pronunciation of English words. Because the courses can be repeated watching, I am correcting my own English pronunciation problems while listening to the teacher. In terms of oral English, although I did not have a real-time

conversation with the teacher in the course, but the content of online courses in MOOC platform is intuitive where I can observe the teacher's oral words and repeatedly listen to the teacher's explanation so that I understood and mastered the authentic oral pronunciation and the use of some slang words, which made me more confident when communicating with foreigners. In terms of reading, the interface of online English course is very intuitive and convenient. Teacher explained articles and sentence structure and operate directly on PPT, which makes me more intuitive and easier to observe and experience the writing rules of English articles. For example, argumentative articles all follow the overall structure of the total score and so on, as well as language problems, which enhanced my understanding of the details of the article and the overall grasp. In addition, parsing sentence structure is helpful to my grammar, which also improves my writing ability. A clear understanding of sentence structure enables me to have a more accurate understanding of the content of the article, and also enables me to use a variety of sentence patterns to add color to the article when writing English articles. And the English course teacher increased my interest in Learning English through vivid examples and interesting anecdotes from foreign countries, which made me feel that learning English is not only about memorizing words, but also about understanding the use of words and sentences in real life. Only in this way can I master English more firmly.

## Interviewee 5

Woody 19 Male
Major: Engineering Management
He had experiences in learning other online courses before.
He had computer skills to learn the online English course.
Final grade: A

**The researcher**: How did you feel about this online English course?

**Woody**: I like learning online English course very much. Because compared with traditional English class, online English course are very flexible and convenient, which can save me a lot of time on the road, I can use the time on the road to rest or prepare materials, and I'm never late for online course. At the same time, I can take the course even when I am not in school. Online courses are not limited by location. Secondly, compared with the traditional English class, online English course do not need to answer questions face to face or under the eyes of the public, which makes me more willing to participate in class Q&A and reduces the tension. The number of times I communicated with teachers or classmates in class increased significantly, and the communication became more and more fluent, which gave me a lot of confidence. Finally, during the epidemic, online course can reduce the close contact between people as much as possible and reduce the possibility of infection.

**The researcher**: So how often did you attend this course?

**Woody**: Twice a week.

**The researcher**: I want to know why can you attend the online course twice a week?

**Woody**: From an objective point of view, I think it depends on my final grade. Then, the time and place of learning the online English course are very flexible. I can take course anytime and anywhere with a mobile phone. Moreover, the platform will give me calendar reminders before class, which makes it easier for me to know when courses are due. From a subjective point of view, I am willing to participate in online English course, because I do not have to face to face with my teacher, which makes me feel less nervous and can study more freely.

**The researcher**: Did you think learning this online course improved your English ability?

**Woody**: Yes, I think my English listening, speaking and reading skills have improved.

**The researcher**: OK. At last, can you share that how did the online English course help you improve your listening, speaking and reading skills?

**Woody**: Of course. For listening, it is important for both online course and traditional class, but what is special about online course is that can be repeated and replayed. Sometimes I can listen to some knowledge points several times until I understand them, so I become more sensitive to listening to English during this process. At the end of the course, I can catch the key points of the teacher even if she speaks very quickly. For reading, in the online course, due to the unlimited internet, there will be a lot of reading materials in the task assigned by the teacher, so it is most important to learn to grasp the key points of reading quickly, so as to save time and improve my learning speed. At the beginning, I could not find the key point of the article quickly, but after the teacher's demonstration in class and my own practice, I read more and practiced more, so I could grasp the key points of reading and improve my reading speed. For speaking, discussion skills are important in academic communication. Compared with traditional class, teacher of the online course can more easily assign students to different groups and match them with different students. At the same time, online discussion will not affect each other as face-to-face discussion due to spatial reasons. Therefore, I better practiced how to express my own views, how to listen to others' explanations, and then refute or expand my views. Meanwhile, I also exercised my organizational ability in the discussion group.

## Interviewee 6

Reyna 18 Female

Major: Financial Management

She had experiences in learning other online courses before.

She had computer skills to learn the online English course.

Final grade： A

**The researcher**: Can you talk about your feelings about learning this online English course?

**Reyna**: Compared with the traditional course, learning the online English course is more suitable for me. There is no denying the advantages of traditional classes, but the online English course made it more convenient and effective for me to learn.

**The researcher**: Why did you feel this way?

**Reyna**: Because online English course don't limit where I can study, I save the time I used to have to travel to a traditional classroom. And not affected by the weather, especially in the epidemic, I can finish my study without leaving home. At the same time, the online course also has playback to help me recall knowledge points in the future, which helps me to consolidate knowledge. In the process of learning the online English course, I can fully think and organize my speech. Compared with the gaze of people in the classroom, the environment at home makes me more relaxed and confident to answer.

**The researcher**: How often did you attend the online course?

**Reyna**: Twice a week. One of the courses is not fixed time every week.

**The researcher**: Why did you can attend all the online course?

**Reyna**: First of all, for my grades, I can get a good score by attending all classes, and only after finishing each class can I master all knowledge points. Secondly, I also like this online course very much. The content of this course is very helpful to me, and the content is interesting and the interface is intuitive and simple. Finally, I can gain a full sense of participation. The online course uses different information technologies to attract my attention. For example, the online interaction allows me to participate in the class at the same time, which makes me feel more involved in learning.

**The researcher**: Did this online course improved some English learning ability of you?

**Reyna**: Yes. I have improved my listening, speaking, writing and reading skills.

**The researcher**: Can you say that specific?

**Reyna**: The first one is my English listening ability. In the process of learning the online course, I will concentrate on what teacher says, because the online course provided me with my own learning space, where I can concentrate, grasp the key information and understand the knowledge taught by my teacher. Secondly, my oral English has also improved. When I learn the online course at home, I would recite and repeat the teacher's words, because I did not disturb others in my own learning space and dared to speak myself. Through constant imitation practice, my oral English has certainly improved. Also, my writing ability is improving. I can post on the discussion board that made my writing ability better and better, and also the language organization is better. Finally, my reading ability has also improved, because the interface of the online course is simple and clear, and it is more convenient to display the course content, which is conducive to my concentrated study. Every time I read others' opinions and courseware, I try to understand what they express, and consider whether I agree with their opinions.

## Interviewee 7

YQ 19 Female
Major: Marketing
She had experiences in learning other online courses before.
She had computer skills to learn the online English course.
Final grade：   A

**The researcher**: First I would want to know your feelings about the online English course?

**YQ**: I feel that learning the online English course has more strict requirements on me. There are two aspects: firstly, I need to have enough self-control to ensure that I can finish the MOOC course on time and effectively; Secondly, I have a strong need for English learning, so I will insist on learning Online English courses to improve my English ability. Otherwise, without both of these two aspects, I think online English course are just an illusion to create "I am learning a English course", or a shell floating on the surface, rather than an effective teaching channel for learners to improve the English ability. In addition, online English course is very popular, especially in the current serious epidemic period, but it is still difficult to replace the effects brought by traditional class. I think as a linguistics course, direct communication is more straightforward and effective than communication through the Internet. It can also improve learners' language learning ability and mutual understanding between teachers and learners. The learning experience of different online English teaching modes is also different. I have one class at a fixed time every week, and the teacher teaches online. The

communication with the teacher can only be through the discussion board, the teacher sometimes did not see all the messages, not enough interaction. In this class, there was no communication with the teacher. We passively received knowledge throughout the course and could not ask the teacher questions in real time as the course went on. After class, the teacher could not understand each learner's learning status of the course. To sum up, I think the learning the online English course is the least efficient.

**The researcher**: Then how often did you attend the online course?

**YQ**: Twice a week.

**The researcher**: Why do you attend all the course when you don't like it?

**YQ**: Only by taking all the course can I get the corresponding credits and a good final grade.

**The researcher**: OK. Did you think this course gave you some help on improving your English ability?

**YQ**: Yes. My listening skill has been improved, but there is no special training. I feel that my English listening is better than before. Because the final course evaluation is in the form of final assessment, the result may show whether my listening has improved to a certain extent, but there is a lack of process evaluation. There are reading modules in both activities and assignments. Therefore, in order to complete them, I will make great efforts to learn by myself after class, so my reading skill has been improved as well. The ability to say basically did not improve, not sure whether regressive. Online English course did not need to pay attention to the classroom and the teacher's language interaction, so I have no chance to open my mouth to speak English. I am not sure whether I have improved my writing skill, because the teacher has talked about the ways and methods of writing, but after handing in the writing paper, the teacher has no time to correct the writing skill one by one.

**The researcher**: Can you share that how did this course help you improve your English ability?

**YQ**: MOOC allows me to replay the course and listen to the teacher and some English materials every time, I may not be able to remember anything at one time, but I will become better and better at listening to English through repeated learning after class. In addition, my teacher taught in English, so I immersed myself in the environment of English and kept listening to English frequently, which helped me improve my English listening skill. The internet contains a large number of reading materials, I can easily click the mouse to change the page, no longer need to search and read a book, accelerate the speed of reading and learning online courses is reading, no matter

courseware or other materials, practice makes perfect, reading speed and efficiency have been improved.

## Interviewee 8

Chris 18 Female

Major: Communication Engineering

She had experiences in learning other online courses before.

She had computer skills to learn the online English course.

Final grade: A

**Th researcher**: How did you feel about learning this online English course?

**Chris**: I like learning the online English course.

**The researcher**: Why did you like learning this online course?

**Chris**: Because learning the online English course is a very convenient way for me to learn, as long as there is a Internet. Traditional English class required students to study in the classroom, I have to go out in advance or occupy a seat in the classroom. Sometimes I feel troublesome and tired, and I don't want to run around any more. Therefore, I naturally prefer to learning the online English course. Moreover, the resources of online English course will be more abundant, which will make it easier for me to find some materials and help me learn English.

**The researcher**: How often did you attend the online English course?

**Chris**: Twice a week, one regular course is on Monday and the other is on my own schedule every week.

**The researcher**: Why did you attend the online course with this frequency?

**Chris**: Because the online English course is closely related with my credits and academic performance. Twice a week is a reasonable time to study, and there are a lot of group discussion for several topics in the course, where I can discuss problems with different groups, share own ideas after reading and put forward suggestions for some questions, which I think are very convenient and interesting.

**The researcher**: Did you improve your English ability through the online English course?

**Chris**: Yes, I have improved my English listening, speaking, reading skills.

**The researcher**: How did the online English course improved your listening, speaking, reading skills?

**Chris**: Before the course, I will preview the content of the course, and then listen and take notes with questions. Ask questions when appropriate. If I do not understand, the online English course can be played back, and I can listen to it repeatedly to cultivate my ability to quickly capture information and improve my listening ability. In online English course, I don't need to meet with my classmates. In the process of communicating with other students in groups, I will be more relaxed, and I can search for some content to help me express my ideas as much as possible. In this process, I will listen to their pronunciation and learn good English pronunciation and intonation to exercise my oral English skill. In terms of reading, the platform of the online course no longer relies on books. I can read the courseware of the teacher in the online course, and open the extended content recommended by the teacher at the same time. I can easily refer to and learn new words when reading, so as to help me analyze the structure of the article and constantly practice to improve my reading speed. In addition to finishing some after-class writing assigned by teachers, I will also write some experiences or opinions on the extra-curricular articles I have read, so as to exercise my ability of analysis, summary and organization, and help me read and understand the articles.

## Interviewee 9

Shuo 19 Male
Major: Computer Science and Technology
He had experiences in learning other online courses before.
He had computer skills to learn the online English course.
Final grade： A

**The researcher**: What is your feelings about learning this online English course?

**Shuo**: I have no obvious feeling. Online course and traditional class are all the same to me.

**The researcher**: Can you tell me the reason or the detail about your feeling?

**Shuo**: Because I think both online and traditional English courses have the same effect on my English learning, and my personal learning habit requires more after-class practice, which I think is more important. But to be honest, the teacher doesn't seem to pay much attention to the after-class exercises of this course. Maybe because there are too many students, she is not able to manage and review them, so sometimes the

assignment is not of high quality, not strong targeted, and not enough extended exercises. Therefore, I will find more extension materials after class to consolidate and learn. Actually, learning the online course does not help me much.

> **The researcher**: So how often did you attend the online course?

> **Shuo**: Twice a week.

> **The researcher**: Why did you attend all the online course?

> **Shuo**: I will get a good grade for completing the course.

> **The researcher**: Didn't the online course help you at all? Your learning ability?

> **Shuo**: There are some improvements on reading.

> **The researcher**: How did it improve your reading?

> **Shuo**: The online course is still useful for English reading. In the MOOC web page, the teacher shows the courseware intuitively, so I can see it clearly. Unlike in the traditional classroom, where I can't see clearly because sitting in the back of the room. The online course helps me to clarify the context of the article and learn how to read correctly. And by reading a large number of articles or materials provided by the Internet, my reading speed has also been improved. And nothing about the other learning abilities. The improvement of listening is not obvious, because my teacher's oral English is too standard, the intonation is clear, and even reading is less, sometimes even reading can not hear the correct reading, so the improvement of English listening is limited. Speaking did not be improved, because there was no opportunity to speak in online course, without the teacher's online guidance. But I record myself and listen to my own pronunciation so I can have more time to practice speaking. I think spoken English will become better as long as you speak more. Maybe a little improve for writing. I think writing also needs a lot of practice, and it is best to have a teacher's guidance. In fact, I had few opportunities to write. I had several writing exercises and homework, but I didn't think I made much progress. I didn't keep up with the after-class exercises, and the teacher's suggestions were not very specific.

**Interviewee 10**
> Xin 18 Male
> Major: Electronic Information Engineering
> He had experiences in learning other online courses before.

He had computer skills to learn the online English course.

Final grade： A

**The researcher**：How did you feel about the online English course?

**Xin**：In general, I feel that the learning effect of online English course is not as good as traditional class. But the online course is more informative and can reinforce my English learning.

**The researcher**：Why did you feel this way?

**Xin**：Firstly, lacking direct communication and interaction with teachers when learning the online course, such as eye contact and body movements, so my sense of participation in class is not strong. Secondly, learning online course requires me to be more strict with myself, because I tend to be distracted in online course and my concentration is obviously lower than that of traditional class, which is the difficulty for me. Thirdly, it is possible for online course to be interrupted by unexpected situations. For example: Sharing PPT problems; internet failure and so on. Fourthly, I can easily search for more learning materials on the Internet to assist my study. The teacher's explanation process is often the worthiest of recording. In MOOC, I can watch the content of course repeatedly, which is of great help to consolidate my knowledge.

**The researcher**：How often did you attend the online course?

**Xin**：Twice a week.

**The researcher**：Why did you attend the online course twice a week?

**Xin**：There are two reasons. One is my need for high final grade. To be more specific, I am a college student. No matter I choose to take the postgraduate entrance examination, guarantee postgraduate study or study abroad in the future, the highest score of all courses is indispensable. Therefore, it is necessary to improve ordinary scores and test scores as much as possible. Full attendance and high-quality classes are the basis for improving scores, and full attendance is easier to obtain all ordinary scores. The other is students' sense of responsibility. As a student, my duty and should do is to attend the course and study. Except in special cases, full attendance is what every student should do.

**The researcher**：Did you think the online course improves your English ability?

**Xin**：Yes, some were improved. There was little improvement in speaking skill. Because I feel that only by using English for a long time can I improve my speaking

skill. A slight improvement in listening skill. Reading and writing have improved as well.

**The researcher**: How did the online English course help you improve these skills?

**Xin**: In terms of listening skill, I have my own learning space. In the online course, I listen to the teacher in a quieter environment, which reduces the impact of some noise in the traditional classroom. Therefore, when teacher used English to teach, I can concentrate on English listening, practicing listening, and correcting my pronunciation and grammar. The improvement of reading and writing skills are realized by computer in class, so course learning, assignments and tests are mainly based on reading and writing. In addition, the Internet provides a large number of reading materials. With intensive reading practice, my grammar level, vocabulary and sentence pattern application can be improved. By posting questions and responses on the discussion board for a long time, my writing has also improved.

## Interviewee 11

Lin 18 Female
Major: Industrial Design
She had experiences in learning other online courses before.
She had computer skills to learn the online English course.
Final grade: A

**The researcher**: I want to know your feelings about the online English course?

**Lin**: Compared with the traditional English classes, online English course is more likely to feel tired and not easy to adhere to. But the online English course can use a shorter time to learn more English knowledge points.

**The researcher**: Why did you have this feeling?

**Lin**: Using mobile devices and staring at electronic screens for a long time can be distracting and tiring for the eyes, and there is not much interaction between teachers and students. However, in the online English course, teacher did not need to maintain students order, she can teach all the time in the whole class, and I can search for expanded learning knowledge at any time, so I can learn more knowledge in one online course.

**The researcher**: And how often did you attend this online course?

**Lin**: Twice a week.

**The researcher**: Why did you attend the online course with this frequency?

**Lin**: Because attending all the online courses can help me improve my English, the knowledge points taught by the teacher are consistent, and problems will occur when I miss one course.

**The researcher**: Did you think your English ability have improved through this online English course?

**Lin**: Yes. Reading and listening skills have improved. It helps with writing but I don't know if it improves, because I don't know how to judge. Online courses provide personal learning space that I can listen to the teacher's English pronunciation closely to improve my recognition of word pronunciation, including linking and other oral forms. At the same time, the playback of the course also helped me to consolidate my understanding of the content of the course. I could play the parts I didn't understand repeatedly until I understood them. After listening more, my listening level gradually improved. Online course gives me more learning space and allow me control my own learning speed. When I read my teacher's PPT and some articles, I practiced slowly to improve my reading speed, from slowly reading word by word to quickly reading now, I can know the meaning directly. I also learned to analyze the structure of the article by learning the teacher's analysis of the article, and gradually understood the complex sentences.

## Interviewee 12

Jia 19 Male
Major: Mechanical Automation
He had experiences in learning other online courses before.
He had computer skills to learn the online English course.
Final grade:  A

**The researcher**: How did you feel about learning this online English course?

**Jia**: Above all, learning the online English course is convenient for me because I save the time to change classrooms. Then, the online English course provides me a private learning space. I can type on the discussion board and communicate with my classmate and teacher, without worrying about others' opinions. In this way, students who are unwilling or afraid to speak can communicate more. By reviewing the course and repeating what I don't understand to consolidate my knowledge, I can also learn English better at my own speed.

**The researcher**: How often did you attend the online course?

**Jia**: Twice a week.

**The researcher**: Why did you attend the online course twice a week?

**Jia**: Because I want to get a good final grade, so I have to get full marks for attendance. That's the easy part to get.

**The researcher**: Did you improve your English ability through learning this online English course?

**Jia**: I think I have improved listening, reading and writing skill a lot, because the online course uses discussion boards to communicate, so maybe there is no improvement in speaking.

**The researcher**: Why do you say that?

**Jia**: There is not much difference between learning the online course and traditional class in listening skill, but learning the online course can hear the teacher more clearly, because everyone is in their own learning space, the environmental noise is relatively small, and they can listen to the teacher more carefully without being disturbed by others. The teacher will release the course content on the MOOC platform in advance, and I will preview the course in advance, so that I will have one reading before class and at least one reading during the class. After class, I will replay the course and read the difficult or good sentences and paragraphs for several times. When I read more, my comprehension is better and my reading skill is improved. The combination of listening and watching can help you learn English better. As for writing skill, MOOC mainly relies on text communication. Posting questions, answering questions or communicating with teachers are all done through message boards in class. Frequent practice and posting questions or answers can improve my ability to organize English sentences.

## Interviewee 13

Xuan 18 Male
Major: Cartoon
He had no experiences in learning other online courses before.
He had computer skills to learn the online English course.
Final grade:  A

**The researcher**: I want to ask how did you feel about this online English course?

**Xuan**: Online English course gave me a not very real feeling. communication

in the online English course is not very convenient; If I had a choice, I would prefer to attend the traditional classes for learning, and online course cannot achieve the learning effect of face-to-face learning.

**The researcher**: Why did you feel that?

**Xuan**: Because English itself is both a language and a communication tool. The closer the communication, the more comfortable, but there is a sense of isolation. I cannot have direct and timely oral communication like in the traditional class, which weakens my desire to communicate and sometimes makes me unwilling to take the initiative to learn and communicate. Student's enthusiasm will have a series of influences on learning activities and behaviors.

**The researcher**: then how often did you attend this course?

**Xuan**: Twice a week.

**The researcher**: Why did you attend all the online course?

**Xuan**: Because I am a college student, full attendance is the basic requirement for me, and I need to get credits for this course. I usually prepare a course schedule, and I also mark the time for each course, and I mark the memo on my phone to avoid being late as well. Besides, I think my English level is not very good. Learning this online English course can improve my English level, so I will attend all courses on time.

**The researcher**: Did you improve your English ability through the online English course?

**Xuan**: Yes. I have improved my English listening and speaking skills, from the previous silent, now I will take the initiative to communicate in English.

**The researcher**: Can I know how did the online English course help you improve your English listening and speaking skills?

**Xuan**: As for my personal English foundation, learning English through the online course is a great help for me. When learning the online English course, it is essential for me to practice my English listening, because the language environment is very important. The teacher will teach in English throughout the whole class, which enables me to keep listening to English frequently and always in the English environment. In addition, I have a large personal learning space in learning the online English course, so that I can listen clearer. I also dare to speak English without feeling nervous. There were also many group cooperation activities in the online course, and I had to communicate with my group members. However, sometimes we were lazy to communicate in Chinese instead of English, so I felt that the improvement of oral

English was not very great.

## Interviewee 14

Tong 19 Female

Major：Drama and Film Design

She had experiences in learning other online courses before.

She had computer skills to learn the online English course.

Final grade： A

**The researcher**：How did you feel about the online English course?

**Tong**：I think the online course is more convenient for my study and bring convenience to my English learning.

**The researcher**：Why did you think that?

**Tong**：First of all, there is no limit to where I can study in the online English course. I can study at home, in the library, in a coffee shop, at anywhere. Secondly, in learning the online course, I can use the internet to find information whenever I encounter difficulties. In addition, online English course can be replayed over and over again, making it easy to review and consolidate the knowledge learned in the course. However, long-term online learning will affect eyesight, lack of interaction, easy to create a sense of boredom, make me feel tired.

**The researcher**：How often did you attend this online course?

**Tong**：I attended the course twice a week.

**The researcher**：Why did you attend the online course twice a week?

**Tong**：Because the content of online English course is very rich. In the teaching process, the teacher will explain the key and difficult points of the textbook in detail. Rich extra English content stimulates my English potential. Moreover, the Internet itself provides a multi-directional information exchange channel for English learning. Different learning resources can be compared on the Internet, brainstorming and learning with others. The breadth of learning knowledge has increased, and it is closely connected with society. The online English course also adopts modern multimedia teaching methods, which are novel and can give full play to my enthusiasm for learning. The content of the course is arranged on the basis of the key and difficult points of English knowledge, focusing on thinking, and setting up a specific and vivid learning

mode from the perspective of students, so that I can feel this knowledge wholeheartedly.

**The researcher**: Did you think this online course improved your English ability?

**Tong**: Yes. I have improved my speaking and listening skill through the online English course. I can express myself more fluently and I have learned many idiomatic expressions. More importantly, if I don't understand anything, I can replay the course and listen to it repeatedly, so it's easier to understand. In the online English course learning, I carry out independent learning activities according to my own actual situation. I can follow my own learning habits and speed, insist on attending the course on time every week, listen to lectures and take notes carefully, complete every task assigned by the teacher, and think about things I don't understand by consulting materials and listening repeatedly. At the same time, I would also discuss with my classmates the doubts I had recorded after class.

## Interviewee 15

Joy 19 Male
Major: Digital Media Art
He had experiences in learning other online courses before.
He had computer skills to learn the online English course.
Final grade: A

**The researcher**: How did you feel about the online English course?

**Joy**: There are pros and cons, but I prefer to learning traditional class.

**The researcher**: Why did you prefer to learning traditional class?

**Joy**: Because I like the feeling of face-to-face communication, its learning atmosphere is better. I always have a sense of distance between the screen on the Internet. In traditional classes, I can participate in class discussions more conveniently, and communicate directly when completing group cooperation tasks. Face to face can express oneself better, can communicate better. Although learning online course is convenient, I am not good at typing, which will cause trouble for my study, so I will only ask or answer questions occasionally.

**The researcher**: How often did you attend the online course?

**Joy**: I have attended all the courses. Twice a week.

**The researcher**: What keeps you going?

**Joy**: I don't want to miss any courses, because once I miss one course, it may cause pressure on my later study. What's more, the content of the online course is continuous. If I don't listen to one of the courses, I may find something difficult to understand in the next course. I think the online course is very helpful to me, which can improve my professional knowledge and English learning ability. In order to get good grades, I will ensure full attendance.

**The researcher**: So do you think online classes didn't help you at all?

**Joy**: No, I think my English listening, reading and writing skills have improved. In the online English course, I need to concentrate on listening so as not to miss the key information. Different from traditional class, I can ask my classmates and listen online by myself. Online course gives me a lot of personal learning space, so I will listen more carefully and gradually improve my listening ability. Then for reading ability, mainly on the courseware reading and some related articles reading. Of course, reading also needs some skills, such as understanding the meaning of the article, difficult sentence analysis and understanding, reading speed, intensive reading and extensive reading and so on. The online course is very intuitive, just facing a screen, which is convenient for me to observe the teacher's interpretation of the articles in class. I will learn the teacher's methods and find a reading method in line with my own learning style in the process of mastering proficiency. In terms of writing, there was no large-scale writing training, but I improved my writing ability by posting my questions and answers in the discussion board during my daily study.

## Interviewee 16

Mandy 19 Female
Major: Environment Design
She had experiences in learning other online courses before.
She had computer skills to learn the online English course.
Final grade: A

**The researcher**: How did you feel about the online English course?

**Mandy**: I think this is a very meaningful course, which allows me to learn more knowledge. Moreover, online English course is very convenient for me, and I like learning the online English course.

**The researcher**: Why did you think that?

**Mandy**: Because I like this online English course mode, it allows me to have my own learning speed. I can study anywhere I choose, which makes me more motivated to study instead of being forced and pumped. The process of learning the online English course is enjoyable, and I am willing to learn and explore more English knowledge.

**The researcher**: How often did you attend the online course?

**Mandy**: Twice a week.

**The researcher**: Why did you attend all the online course?

**Mandy**: First of all, learning this online English course can help me improve my English. Secondly, it is also to prepare for the final exam. I want to get a good score, so I listened to all the courses taught carefully.

**The researcher**: Did you improve your English ability through the online English course?

**Mandy**: Yes, I have improved my English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

**The researcher**: How did this online English course improve these skills?

**Mandy**: The online English course can improve my English ability comprehensively from many aspects. First of all, the most important improvement is listening ability. I listened to the teacher's lecture content and some English materials in class. Because MOOC can replay the course, I got familiar with the content of the article by listening to it repeatedly and cultivated my ability to understand long and difficult sentences. I will also listen to the teacher's tone and sound repeatedly to imitate and learn, so as to improve my pronunciation and improve my oral English. I also tried my best to communicate with my group in English. Although it was difficult for everyone to insist at the beginning, gradually I began to speak more and felt better about speaking English. And then the other thing besides listening is watching, which is reading. Because the course will have the PPT and the extension of some articles to supplement the content of the course, the teacher sometimes teach us intensive reading with good articles. I don't understand at the beginning, but through more looking, memorizing the new words and fixed collocation, practicing more, my reading skill is better than before, now still do not so good, but then I first began to make progress. Finally, I will copy down some sentences to analyze their sentence structure, try to imitate the sentence structure, try to write long sentences in homework, and make more speeches on the message board to improve my writing ability.

**Interviewee 17**

CoCo 18 Female

Major: Product Design

She had experiences in learning other online courses before.

She had computer skills to learn the online English course.

Final grade: A

**The researcher**: What are your feelings about learning online English course?

**CoCo**: I think learning the online English course is convenient to learn and easy to operate, but after a long time, I will feel visually tired.

**The researcher**: Why did you think this way?

**CoCo**: As long as I have the Internet, I can learn the online English course anywhere and have one course a week to study according to my personal preference. There is an autonomous choice of English learning. English knowledge will be displayed intuitively through software or video pictures, so that I can understand it more vividly. But due to the lack of supervision and the need to stare at the screen for a long time, I feel sleepy easily, and it's not good for my eyesight.

**The researcher**: How often did you attend the online course?

**CoCo**: Twice a week. I have attended all the online courses.

**The researcher**: Why can you attend all the online course?

**CoCo**: The teacher will call the name in each class. Attendance is an important part of the final grade assessment. In addition, the content of each class has its own focus. If I miss the class, I will not be able to keep up with it, so I need to spend more time to catch up with the learning progress.

**The researcher**: Did you think your English ability have improved through this online English course?

**CoCo**: Yes. I think my English listening skill have improved.

**The researcher**: How did your English listening skill improved?

**CoCo**: I think online course provided more space for learning. The teacher's voice is usually up and down, or another noise in the classroom, sometimes I can't hear the teacher clearly, and I feel embarrassed to interrupt the teacher. Now the learning

environment of the online English course is quiet, the teacher's words can be heard more clearly, like the usual listening questions are also better than in the classroom, there is a feeling of closer to the exam. What's more, I can control the learning speed. By reviewing the MOOC course, even if I didn't understand some knowledge in class, I could watch and listen again and again until understanding. The self-directed learning experience in online course is stronger.

## Interviewee 18

Yuan 19 Male
Major: Visual Communication Design
He had experiences in learning other online courses before.
He had computer skills to learn the online English course.
Final grade： A

**The researcher**: I want to ask how did you feel about this online English course?

**Yuan**: First of all, I think online courses are suitable for me. Online English course provided me with a more private learning space and also change my learning status. Online English teaching has changed the traditional way of teaching blindly. Instead of going to the classroom to learn, I can choose a posture and space I like to learn the online English course. In front of the screen, I can speak English boldly without considering the constraints of the class and the teacher, because I think learning English not only requires the ears to participate in it, but also requires the mouth to move to achieve the purpose of learning English. More importantly, it will be easier for me to learn the online course. I will actively participate in learning the course, thinking about the logic of English, and clean up the barriers between sentences and interact and communicate with others boldly, which gives me a unique sense of achievement.

**The researcher**: OK and how often did you attend this online course?

**Yuan**: Twice a week.

**The researcher**: Why did you attend the online course twice a week?

**Yuan**: The first reason is that I love learning English, "interest is the best teacher". I want to be able to watch English movies without watching subtitles. I like to enjoy the feeling of speaking freely in English. I hope to achieve a leap from quantitative change to qualitative change in English. In the learning process, I like the teaching method of my English teacher. She not only teaches English knowledge, but also analyze some produced by different social phenomena, such as: pointing out a topic "why open three one-child policy in China", then she will comparative analysis with the policies of

other countries. so this is also one of the factors that I can achieve full attendance of the online course every week.

**The researcher**: Did you improve your English ability through the online English course?

**Yuan**: Yes, I think my English ability has made great progress compared with the traditional class mode.

**The researcher**: Can you give some examples?

**Yuan**: I improved my English listening and reading skills. Because reading and listening more is what I think is very helpful to improve my English learning. First of all, online course had given me more personal learning space and made me not care about other people's eyes. When I answer questions in traditional class, I will always be watched by other students, so I will be very nervous and do not want to answer questions. The online English course had made me more confident and more interested in learning English. Therefore, I will actively participate in the class to think about the meaning of each word in the sentence and the meaning of each sentence in the whole paragraph, so as to improve listening skill. Questions and replies on the discussion board allow me to express freely, and in the form of online course, I can choose a comfortable way to study. I can read synchronously with the teacher, or I can suspend the class and read by myself. In this way, the purpose of reading more English is achieved.

# Biography

| | |
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