

# ATTITUDES OF CHINESE-MAJOR STUDENTS TOWARD NON-MAJOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AT THU DAU MOT UNIVERSITY

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## Abstract

The study aims to investigate the learning attitude of Chinese-major students who are studying non-major English at Thu Dau Mot University toward non-major English language learning. By surveying 95 randomly selected Chinese language students from Courses D21TQ and D22TQ, it was found that the majority of students had a normal attitude towards learning non-major English, accounting for 76%, while students had a normal interest in learning, accounting for 75.8%, and the biggest difficulty was learning English vocabulary, accounting for 70.8%. The article proposes solutions such as innovating teaching methods, enhancing vocabulary practice, enhancing communication skills and supporting students to learn proactively, and also contributes useful suggestions to improve the quality of teaching and learning non-major English at Thu Dau Mot University.

**Keywords:** Chinese language students, learning attitude, motivation to learn foreign languages, non-major English, teaching methods

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## 1. Introduction

In the context of increasingly deep international integration, proficiency in many foreign languages becomes an important advantage to help students improve their career opportunities and competitiveness in the labor market. For students majoring in Chinese Language, in addition to Chinese as their main major, English also plays an important role not only in meeting graduation standards but also in accessing knowledge, international communication and career development. According to Dang et al. (2024), along with other skills such as reading, writing and listening, English speaking skills play an important role in helping students achieve their goals. Therefore, speaking English is an important skill not only for majored English students, but also for non-English majors.

However, in reality, many Chinese major students of D21 and D22 courses are not really interested, or do not see the importance of learning non-major English, that leads

to difficulties in learning non-major English faced by Chinese major students at Thu Dau Mot University. According to Allan (2015), "attitude" can promote understanding of leadership perceptions and how they affect work-related outcomes. According to Tripp and Sherrill (1991), attitudes in adaptive physical education must increasingly be oriented towards theory. Research on English learning motivation Du & Anh (2023) analyzed negative attitudes towards blended learning from learners' perspectives. English ability of students related to blended learning mode in English courses. In other areas, there are also unfavorable attitudes, mainly about cheating, lack of interaction between lecturers and students, and slow internet connections.

Combining the above research papers and practical needs, within the scope of the research, the author investigates the attitudes of Chinese major students towards learning non-major English. The goal is not only to help determine the current attitudes towards learning non-major English of Chinese major students, but also to know the difficulties of non-major English language students. from which schools and teachers can support in improving the curriculum to meet the needs of students.

## 2. Literature Review

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines the word "attitude" as follows: "a feeling or opinion about something or someone, or a way of behaving that is caused by this": a feeling or opinion about something or someone, or a way of behaving that is caused by this. In wikipedia, the definition is: "In psychology, attitude is a psychological concept, a feeling and mental outlook that exists or characterizes a person, with regard to the way they approach a problem or their personal views about it."

In the book "Attitudes and Attitude Change" by Tobias Vogel, Michaela Wanke defines that: "according to this attitudes-as-constructions perspective, people do not retrieve any previously stored attitude from memory, but instead generate an evaluative judgment at the time it is needed, based on the information that comes to mind in the situation".

Attitude is the tendency to respond in a particular way to stimuli (Anastasi, 1957). It is a dynamic entity that can be changed. It is a determinant of teacher performance. Attitude is defined as a state of readiness that is formed through experience and influences the individual's response to stimuli. It is the precursor of behavior and varies from favorable to unfavorable to neutral. Attitude consists of three components affective, behavioral and cognitive thus serving as a measure of individual behavior (Feldman, 1985). Factors that influence teachers' attitudes are family environment, family circumstances, socio-economic circumstances, beliefs and educational institutions, etc.

Motivation is the driving force that drives people to make choices, take actions, make efforts and persevere in actions to achieve desired goals. In the 1970s of the 20th century, Gardner and Lambert (1972) conducted the first study on instrumental motivation and integration motivation. Opportunity motivation is related to the learner's personal desires, namely "a positive attitude towards the target language community and the ability to integrate into that community" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972); meanwhile, instrumental motivation is related to functional reasons such as seeking better career opportunities, getting a raise or simply passing a test. Integration motivation and instrumental motivation are both fundamental factors that help learners succeed in the process of learning a foreign language. Gardner and Lambert (1972) suggested that

students who have a warm attitude towards a language and want to integrate into the culture of the people who speak that language will be more motivated. As a result, they are more successful than those who learn a language only to have better job opportunities.

Schiefele (2001) argues that intrinsic learning motivation, which comes from the learner's sincere desire for the language, plays a decisive role in the process of achieving language achievement. However, external factors including the social environment and the conditions of the foreign language learning environment such as teachers, learning materials, classmates, etc. also have an influence on inspiring and motivating students as well as shaping their attitudes. In particular, the role of the teacher is very comprehensive, especially if the foreign language learning environment is not in an English-speaking country but mainly in the classroom under the guidance of the teacher. Therefore, the teacher plays a major role in stimulating students' learning motivation. Learning materials can encourage and promote learners' reasons for learning and understanding. Learning materials can reduce students' motivation if they find their content and tasks too difficult or, on the contrary, too easy for their language level or rigid, rarely updated or changed. In particular, the compilers of teaching materials need to pay attention to the needs, desires and levels of learners so that the materials can effectively promote their spiritual values. According to Gardner's 2005 socio-educational model, motivation to learn a foreign language is formed by one of three factors: Learning a foreign language as a tool to achieve personal goals, learning a foreign language due to the need to integrate into the native or language community outside the classroom, learning a foreign language by having a positive attitude towards the learning environment.

These factors are linked together by solid and dashed lines showing the different roles of personal identity factors that influence the language acquisition environment and thus shape learning outcomes. In the process of teaching, we find that students have different learning motivations and the learning effectiveness of students is also different.

### ***2.1. Research problem and scope***

Survey to see the attitudes of students about learning non-major English in terms of interest, purpose and difficulties. Explore the challenges they face when learning English. Identify the factors affecting their learning attitudes. From the above objectives, the article will see the attitudes of non-major English learners in terms of satisfaction with choosing to learn non-major English, find out the motivational attitudes for learning non-major English with what purposes.

Scope of research: Students majoring in Chinese Language of 2 courses D21TQ and D22TQ of Thu Dau Mot University. Time of semester II, academic year 2024-2025.

### ***2.2. Research questions***

What are the attitudes of students majoring in Chinese in courses D21 and D22 towards learning non-major English?

What difficulties do Chinese major students in D21 and D22 encounter when learning non-major English?

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Quantitative research method

To facilitate data collection and accurate feedback from students, we used Vietnamese (mother tongue) to construct the questionnaire. The questionnaire included the following contents: personal information, attitudes toward non-major English, current status of non-major English learning, solutions to improve non-major English learning.

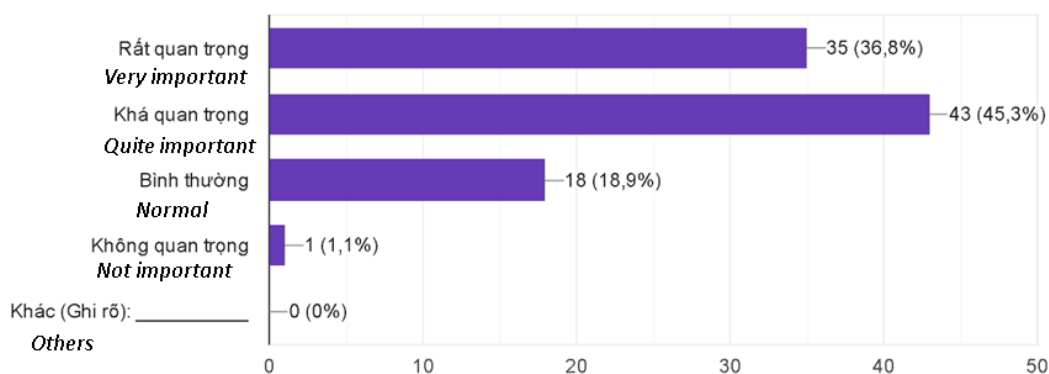
We used Google Form to construct the questionnaire and as a survey tool. The questionnaire was constructed based on the author Nguyen (2023) on attitudes towards learning non-major English, then distributed to Chinese Language major students to collect data on concepts, learning methods, difficulties and needs of learning non-major English. 95 Chinese Language major students at Thu Dau Mot University were surveyed by randomly sampling from 2 courses D21 and D22 in the 2024-2025 academic year at Thu Dau Mot University. The selection of 2 different courses was to ensure that the survey subjects had diversity in terms of academic year, non-major English proficiency and learning attitudes to see the research results were highly representative.

#### 3.2. Synthesis method and proposed solutions

Based on the results of quantitative analysis to know the attitude of non-major English language learning, from there synthesize the problems students encounter when learning non-major English, from there propose practical and feasible solutions to improve the quality of teaching and learning non-major English at Thu Dau Mot University.

### 4. Results

5. Bạn nghĩ việc học tiếng Anh có quan trọng đối với sinh viên ngành Ngôn ngữ Trung Quốc không?  
95 câu trả lời Do you think learning English is important for students majoring in Chinese Language?

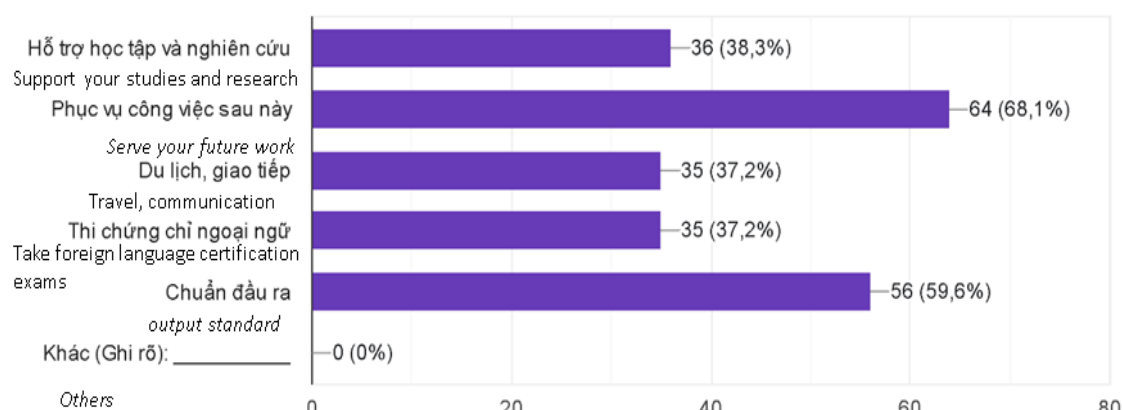


**Figure 1.** Attitude towards learning non-major English

The above results in figure 1 show that the proportion of students who think that learning non-major English is very important is 36.8% with 35 students, who think that it is quite important is 45.3% with 43 students, who think that it is normal is 18.9% with 18 students, and who think that it is unimportant is 1.1% with 1 student. From the results, it can be seen that the attitude towards learning non-major English for students majoring in Chinese Language is only quite positive.

### 6. Bạn học tiếng Anh với mục đích gì? (Có thể chọn nhiều đáp án)

94 câu trả lời *What is your purpose of learning English? (Multiple answers are possible?)*

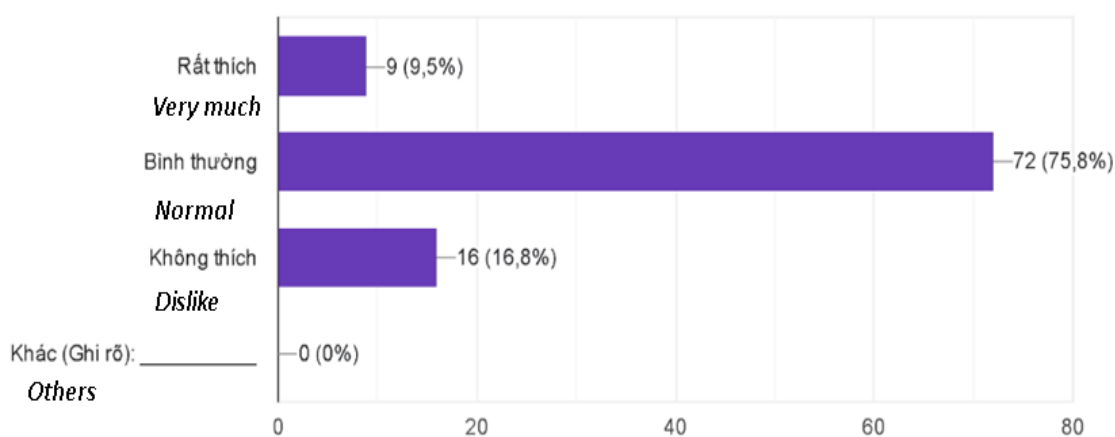


**Figure 2.** Purpose of learning English for non-majors

The purpose of learning foreign languages of two Chinese majors classes through the survey shows that the purpose of studying and researching has 36 students, accounting for 38.3%. The purpose of supporting future work has the highest percentage of 68.1%, with 64 students. The purpose of traveling and communicating has 35 students, accounting for 37.2%, the purpose of taking foreign language certificate exams has 35 students, accounting for 37.2%. The purpose of meeting output standards has 56 students, accounting for 59.6%. From the above survey data, it can be seen that the main purpose is to support future work, accounting for the highest percentage.

### 8. Bạn có thích học tiếng Anh không?

95 câu trả lời *Do you like learning English?*

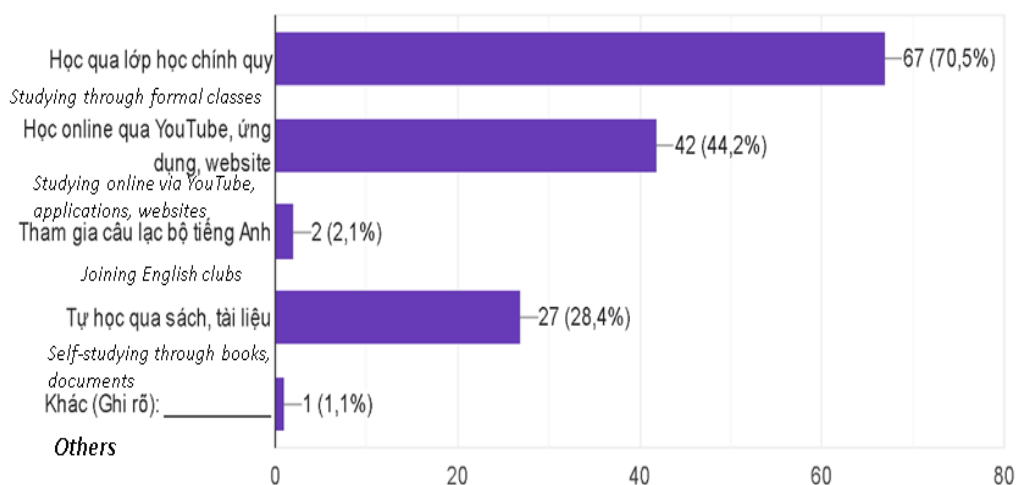


**Figure 3.** Attitude and level of interest in learning English of non-major students

Survey on the interest of non-major English language students as follows: 72 students, accounting for 75.8%, think that learning non-major English is normal. 16 students, accounting for 16.8%, do not like it, only 9 students, accounting for 9.5%, are really interested in learning non-major English. Thus, through the survey, we can see that students think learning non-major English is normal, and are not interested in learning non-major English.

### 10. Hình thức học tiếng Anh mà bạn thường áp dụng? (Có thể chọn nhiều đáp án)

95 câu trả lời *What form of English learning do you usually apply? (You can choose multiple answers)*

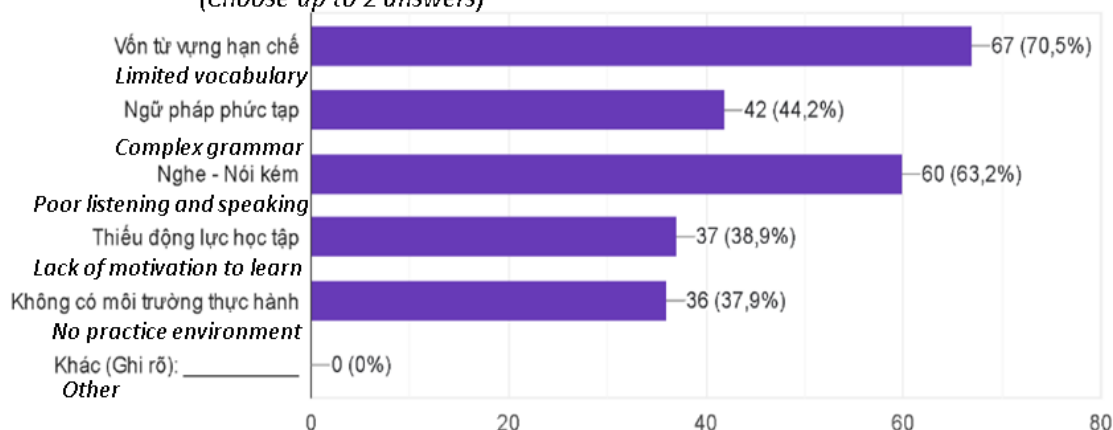


**Figure 4.** Learning forms of students

The main form of learning of students through the survey shows that: students mainly study in class with 67 students accounting for 70.5%. There are 42 students accounting for 44.2% of students who think that learning English online through youtube, through applications, websites. There are 2 students accounting for 2.1% of students participating in English clubs, there are 27 students accounting for 28.4% self-studying through books and documents. Thus, we can see that the way non-professional students learn English only focuses on formal classes in the classroom, without the environmental conditions to participate in English speaking activities in class or activities such as clubs.

### 11. Khó khăn lớn nhất của bạn khi học tiếng Anh không chuyên? (Chọn tối đa 2 đáp án)

95 câu trả lời *What is your biggest difficulty when studying non-specialized English? (Choose up to 2 answers)*

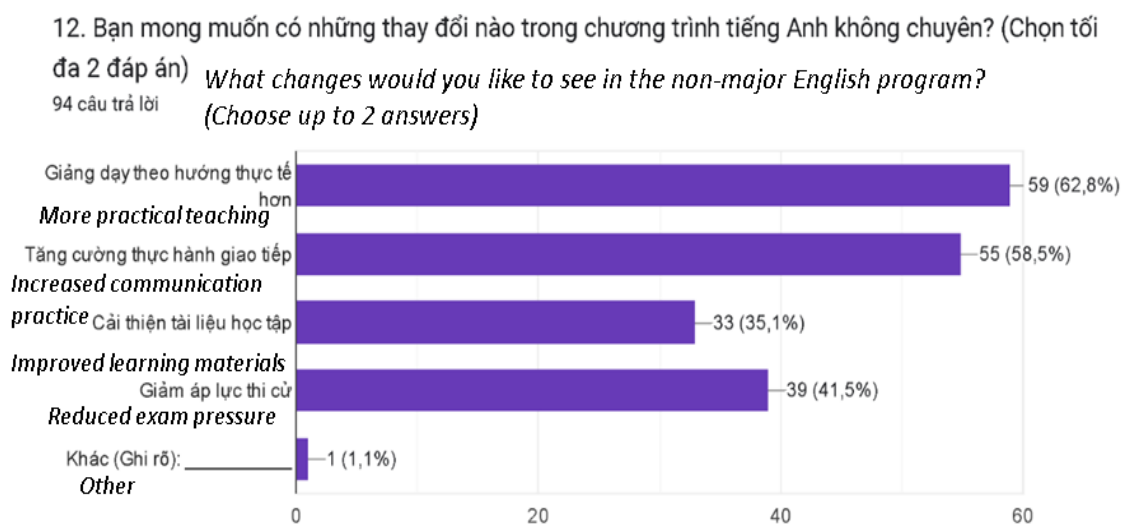


**Figure 5.** Difficulties in learning non-specialized English

Difficulties students encounter when learning non-major English: 67 students, accounting for 78.5% of students, have difficulty learning vocabulary, 42 students, accounting for 44.25%, think that grammar is difficult, 60 students, accounting for 63.2%, have difficulty listening and speaking, 37 students, accounting for 38.9%, lack motivation to learn, 36 students, accounting for 37.9%, lack a practice environment, and 0 students, accounting for 0%, have other difficulties.



63.2%, have poor listening and speaking skills, 37 students, accounting for 38.9%, lack of motivation to study, and 38 students, accounting for 37.9%, have difficulty with the learning environment. Thus, the two most important problems for non-major English students are lack of motivation to study and no environment to practice speaking English.



**Figure 6.** Proposed solutions to improve the effectiveness of non-specialized English learning

The survey showed that 59 students (62.8%) wanted more practical teaching, 55 students (58.5%) wanted more communication practice, 33 students (35.1%) wanted improved learning materials, and 39 students (41.5%) wanted less exam pressure. This shows that the desire of non-English major students is for teachers to teach more practically, accounting for the highest percentage.

Based on the findings from the research survey, we propose some proposed solutions to improve the quality of non-major English learning for Chinese language students:

The difficulties students encounter when learning English mainly come from two basic issues: learning attitude and teaching environment. To improve learning attitude, teachers and families must create motivation for learning, schools must create a favorable environment, combined with adjusting the teaching curriculum to suit the actual needs of Chinese language students.

**Innovate teaching methods:** Increase listening and speaking practice activities, instead of focusing only on reading comprehension and grammar. Apply technology and multimedia materials to help students have a more dynamic English learning environment.

**Develop learning motivation:** Provide extracurricular activities and English clubs to help students practice the language more. Combine non-specialized English teaching with Chinese majors to increase the level of practical application. **Support students with difficulties:** Provide supplementary courses in listening and speaking skills for students with weak English. Guide students on how to study effectively on their own through English learning applications, online documents, and active learning methods.

## 5. Conclusion

The research results show that students majoring in Chinese Language at Thu Dau Mot University do not consider English as the most important subject, but students do see the importance of learning non-major English for their future work. Students do not have the right learning attitude, are not interested in learning non-major English, and still encounter many difficulties in the learning process.

In summary, the article proposes solutions for teachers and schools to create a learning environment for students by combining changes in content and teaching methods to create interest in learning for students, increase new vocabulary by applying teaching technology software, create conditions for students to communicate in a teacher-student interaction, in pairs, in discussion groups.

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