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Research Article / *Araştırma Makalesi*

Program of College Students' Language Attitudes Research

Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Dil Tutumları Araştırması

Yu LIU[1]

[1]Shanghai International Studies University, Institute of Linguistics, Shanghai, China

ORCID: Y.L. 0000-0003-3382-4033

Corresponding author/Sorumlu yazar:
Yu LIU (Associate Professor),
Shanghai International Studies University, Institute of Linguistics, Shanghai, China
E-mail: liuyu_26@163.com

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the language attitudes of undergraduates, masters and doctoral students at Shanghai International Studies University (SISU) regarding British English, American English, Chinese English and Mandarin through a questionnaire, interview and verbal guise technique. This study included 400 students, including 260 undergraduates, 120 master's students, and 20 doctoral students. The questionnaire and interview refer to Chen's language attitudes of Chinese in Singapore and its impact on language ability and language use and measures students' language attitudes regarding British English, American English, Chinese English, and Mandarin using 10 scales of language characteristics. The verbal guise technique refers to the work by Gao. The material included four language variants, British English, American English, Chinese English, and Mandarin. This study employed quantitative statistics and analyzed the emotional identity, social status, and utility of the questionnaire results using Excel. The factor analysis used SPSS statistical software and combined 12 evaluation items for undergraduate, master's degree and doctoral students. We concluded that the questionnaire, interview, and matching guise technique could research language variant attitudes from the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects, respectively. The results revealed that students with different degrees (undergraduate, master's and doctoral) at SISU display similarities and differences in their views of different languages or language variants.

Keywords: Questionnaire, Interview, Verbal guise technique, Language attitude, Shanghai International Studies University

ÖZ

Bu çalışmada Şanghay Uluslararası Çalışmalar Üniversitesi›ndeki (SISU) lisans, yüksek lisans ve doktora öğrencilerinin İngiliz İngilizcesi, Amerikan İngilizcesi, Çin İngilizcesi ve Mandarin'e ilişkin dil tutumları anket, görüşme ve sözlü kayıt tekniği kullanılarak incelenmiştir. Bu çalışmaya 260 lisans, 120 yüksek lisans ve 20 doktora öğrencisi olmak üzere 400 öğrenci katılmıştır. Anket ve röportaj, Chen'in Singapur'daki Çince dil tutumlarına, bunun dil kullanımı üzerindeki etkisine atıfta bulunmuştur ve on dil özelliği ölçeğini kullanarak öğrencilerin İngiliz İngilizcesi, Amerikan İngilizcesi, Çin İngilizcesi ve Mandarin ile ilgili

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tutumlarını ölçmüştür. Sözlü kayıt tekniği Gao'nun çalışmasına atıfta bulunmuştur. Materyal dört dil çeşidini içermiştir. Bu diller; İngiliz İngilizcesi, Amerikan İngilizcesi, Çin İngilizcesi ve Mandarin'dir. Bu çalışmada nicel istatistikler kullanılmıştır ve excel kullanılarak anket sonuçlarında duygusal kimlik, sosyal durum ve faydası analiz edilmiştir. Faktör analizi, SPSS istatistik yazılımını ve lisans, yüksek lisans ve doktora öğrencileri için 12 değerlendirme maddesini bir araya getirmiştir. Ankette görüşme ve eşleştirme tekniğinin sırasıyla bilişsel, duygusal ve davranışsal yönlerden dil değişkeni tutumlarını araştırabileceği sonucuna varılmıştır. Sonuçlar, SISU'da farklı derecelere (lisans, yüksek lisans ve doktora) sahip öğrencilerin farklı dillere veya dil çeşitlerine ilişkin görüşlerinde benzerlikler ve farklılıklar sergilediklerini ortaya koymuştur.
Anahtar Sözcükler: Anket, Görüşme, Sözlü kayıt tekniği, Dil tutumu, Şanghay Uluslararası Çalışmalar Üniversitesi

Introduction

International research on language attitudes began in the 1930s, whereas China's research began in the 1990s. The research primarily included the connotation and components of language attitudes and empirical research based on investigation methods. Thurstone emphasized the positive and negative emotional reactions reflected by attitudes.[1] Allport defined language attitude as thinking about feelings and behaviors in people (or objects) in a specific way.[2] Language attitude is an inner part of psychological life through stereotypes, beliefs, oral statements and reactions, thoughts and opinions, selective reminiscence, angriness, satisfaction, or other emotions and other aspects.[3]

A Chinese scholar WANG indicated that people in bilingual and multilingual societies form a certain understanding of a language or social value or make a certain evaluation due to social or national identity, emotion, purpose, motivation, or behavioral tendency, which is usually called language attitude.[4] The language attitude refers to the positive or negative evaluation of a certain language variant, including cognitive, emotional, and behavioral orientation.[5]

The methods of language attitude research generally study variants of English and other national languages using direct, indirect, and social methods. The direct method includes the questionnaire and interview. The indirect method includes the verbal guise technique and subjective projection method, and the social method includes content analysis or discourse analysis.

1 Louis Leon Thurstone, "The measurement of social attitudes," *Journal of abnormal and social psychology*. no.3 (1931): 249–269. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0070363

2 Gordon Allport, "Attitudes", in *A handbook of social psychology (vol. II)*, ed. *C. Murchison* (Worcester, MA: Clark University Press, 1935), 798-844.

3 Bram Oppenheim, "An exercise in attitude measurement", in *Social Psychology*, ed. Glynis Breakwell, Hugh Foot and Robin Gilmour (London: Palgrave, 1982), 38–56. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-16794-4_3

4 Wang Yuanxin, *Zhongguo Minzu Yuyanxue Lilun yu Shijian*. (Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe, 2020), (王远新，中国民族语言学—理论与实践，北京：民族出版社，2020), 89.

5 Gao Yihong ve Xu Hongchen, "Yingyu Bianti Taidu Yanjiu Zongshu," *Waiyu Jiaoxue yu Yanjiu* (高一虹，许宏晨，英语变体态度研究综述，外语教学与研究，2015), no.6 (2015): 850-960.

1. Research on the Language Attitudes of Chinese College Students

1.1 Repeated Surveys on English, Mandarin, and Dialect

Since the 1990s, research on the language attitudes of college students has been conducted in China. Gao compared the language attitudes of students in Hong Kong using the matched guise technique to those in Guangzhou and mainland China, except Guangdong. The variants included British English, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Mandarin with a Cantonese accent. The results showed that social and economic status consciousness are two independent factors in Beijing and Guangzhou, while social and economic factors are integrated in Hong Kong. The good personality appeared in both Beijing and Hong Kong, but not in Guangzhou.[6] Gao repeated a matching guise survey of college students in Hong Kong, Beijing, and Guangzhou and examined the attitudes of 372 college students from three places towards Mandarin, English, the Cantonese dialect, and Cantonese dialect accents.[7]

Mann and Wong surveyed the language attitudes of 72 Macao college students on their return to Macao. It discussed the findings of a questionnaire- and interview-based mini-survey on language use, language preference, and language attitudes.[8] Young re-examined the attitudes of Macao college students towards English using a questionnaire. The results revealed students' strong motivation to learn English and readiness to use English as a medium of instruction. Mean comparisons using t-tests indicated that the Macao-born students were, compared to their Mainland-born counterparts, less comfortable in speaking English and less certain of whether Portuguese is superior to English.[9]

Li investigated the attitudes of 102 young students in Wuhan towards the Wuhan dialect, Mandarin, and English using paired speech and a semantic differential scale.[10] Li found that the evaluation of the three varieties was very different in status values but was not as expected in the affinity level. Moreover, gender and culture did not display obvious differences.

1.2 Investigation of English Variants and Mandarin

The English variant and mandarin investigation related methods covered the matched guise technique, subjective reflection test, questionnaire etc. in China. Wang used the matched guise

6 Gao Yihong, Su Xinchun, and Zhou Lei, "Huiguiqian Xianggang, Beijing, Guangzhou de Yuyan Taidu," *Waiyu Jiaoxue yu Yanjiu* (高一虹，苏新春，周雷，回归前香港、北京、广州的语言态度，外语教学与研究，1998), no.2 (1998): 21-34.

7 Gao Yihong, "Huigui 20 Nianhou Xianggang yu Guangzhou, Beijing de Yuyan Taidu Bijiao," *Yunyan Wenzi Yingyong* (高一虹，回归 20 年后香港与广州、北京的语言态度比较. 语言文字应用，2019), no. 2 (2019): 39-50.

8 Charles Mann, Gabriella Wong, "Issues in Language Planning and Language Education: A Survey from Macao on its Return to Chinese Sovereignty," *Language Problems and Language planning*, no.23 (1999): 17-36.

9 Carrissa Young, "Macao student attitudes towards English: A post-1999 survey," *World Englishes*, no. 25 (2006): 479-490.

10 Li Lahua, "Lun Wuhan Qingnian Xuesheng dui Wuhan Fangyan, Putonghua he Yingyu de Taidu," *Ligong Gaojiao Yanjiu* (李腊花，论武汉青年学生对武汉方言、普通话和英语的态度，理工高教研究，2007), no.6 (2007): 122-125.

technique to investigate 634 students at eight universities.[11] Wang assessed variants including British English, American English, Chinese English, and Chinese Mandarin.

Zhou examined the attitude and identity of 101 college students toward British English.[12] Zhou found that the identity, power, language affinity, and language performance of American English were better than that of British English.

Liu investigated 1,000 students in a newly built local higher Normal University in southeast Chongqing. Liu found that students had a high evaluation of the status and value of Putonghua and English and a low evaluation of the status and value of dialects.[13]

Liu investigated the language attitude of college students towards Mandarin, the Sichuan dialect, and English through the subjective reflection test.[14] Students of Southwest Jiaotong University recognized the prominent position of Mandarin; however, Sichuan college students still maintained their language loyalty to the Sichuan dialect, and all students held a vague attitude towards English.

1.3 Investigative Studies on English Variants

The investigative studies on English variants refer to World English, such as Chinese English, Indian English, Black American English, American English, and British English. Gao and Lin used a subjective projection test to investigate 200 Olympic volunteers according to 200 college students regarding the variants of World English before the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.[15] Moreover, Lin and Gao comprehensively investigated the changes in volunteers' attitudes and multicultural consciousness towards different English variants of the world in the year after the Olympics through subjective projection methods and interviews.[16] In addition, Liu and Deng adopted the subjective projection test method implemented by Gao and Lin before the Olympics to explore the identification ability and attitude of student volunteers towards English variants before university.[17]

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11 Wang Zhixin ve Wang Jing, "Daxuesheng dui Sizhong Yuyan Bianti de Taidu". in *Zhongguo Daxuesheng Yingyu Xuexi Shehui Xinli: Xuexi Dongji yu Ziwo Rentong Yanjiu*, ed. Gao Yihong et al. (Beijing: Waiyu Jiaoxue yu Yanjiu Chubanshe, 2004) (王志欣，王京，大学生对四种语言变体的态度，高一虹等（编），中国大学生英语学习社会心理：学习动机与自我认同研究，北京：外语教学与研究出版社，2004), 125-148.

12 Zhou Rong, Chen Guohua, "Yingyu Zhuanye Daxuesheng Yingmei Yingyu Pianhao yu shiji Kouyin Tedian Yanjiu," *Xiandai Waiyu* (周榕，陈国华，英语专业大学生英美英语偏好与实际口音特点研究，现代外语，2008), no.1 (2008): 49-57.

13 Liu Xiangtao, "Difang Gaoxiao Yuanxiao Xuesheng de Yuyan Taidu Fenxi," *Jiaoyu Pinglun* (刘湘涛，地方高师院校学生的语言态度分析，教育评论，2010), no.2 (2010): 47-49.

14 Liu Yan, "Gaoxiao Xuesheng Yuyan Taidu Yanjiu," *Chifeng Xueyuan Xuebao* (刘艳，高校学生语言态度研究，赤峰学院学报，2011), no.7 (2011): 208-210.

15 Gao Yihong, Lin Mengqian, "Daxuesheng Aoyun Zhiyuanzhe dui Shijie Yingyu de Taidu—Aoyun qian de Yixiang Zhuguan Toushe Ceshi Yanjiu," *Xinjiang Daxue Xuebao (Zhexue Shehui Kexueban)* (高一虹，林梦茜，大学生奥运志愿者对世界英语的态度——奥运前的一项主观投射测试研究，新疆师范大学学报（哲学社会科学版），2008), no.4 (2008): 241-250.

16 Lin Mengqian, Gao Yinhong, "Daxuesheng Aoyun Zhiyuanzhe dui Shijie Yingyu de Taidu: Aoyun hou de Fansi," *Zhongguo Waiyu Jiaoyu* (林梦茜，高一虹，大学生奥运志愿者对世界英语的态度：奥运后的反思，中国外语教育，2010), no.1 (2010): 3-10.

17 Liu Yi, Deng Tingting, "Shenzhen Dayunhui Xuesheng Zhinyuanzhe dui Shijie Yingyu de Taidu: yu Aoyun qian Zhuguantoushe Ceshi Jieguo de Bijiao," *Yuyanxue Yanjiu* (刘毅，邓婷婷，深圳大运会学生志愿者对世界英语的态度：与奥运前主观投射测试结果的比较，语言学研究，2013), no.1 (2013): 212-223.

Chen used the subjective projection test method to study the identification ability and attitudes of 267 college volunteers on English variants before and after the Shanghai World Expo.[18] Additionally, Xu and Gao compared the identification and evaluation of more than 750 volunteers at the Beijing Olympic Games, Shanghai World Expo, Guangzhou Asian Games, and Shenzhen University from 2008 to 2011.[19]

Ding empirically analyzed the recognition of 250 students majoring in a higher vocational college in Suzhou and the current situation and causes of English language attitude.[20] In addition, You investigated 16 English college student volunteers from Hainan Normal University regarding the World English variants before the Bo'ao Forum for Asia in 2015 using the subjective projection method.[21]

As we consider the above mentioned studies, the survey of college students' language attitudes in China mainly included questionnaires, the verbal guise technique or the subjective test, but few articles combined these methods. The variants of the language attitude survey generally included three variants of World English or two variants of Chinese, with fewer articles combining the two languages and variants. The objects were generally for comprehensive level college students or specific groups (such as volunteers), and little research was conducted at international language professional universities.

This study takes undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students as the survey object at Shanghai International Studies University (SISU) and takes British English, American English, Chinese English, and Mandarin as the language material. This study compared international level college students' current language attitudes using a questionnaire, interview, and verbal guise technique.

2. Method

2.1 Subjects

After 1949, the first international language institution established in China was Shanghai International Studies University. There are 47 undergraduate majors, 7 master's degree programs in first-level disciplines, and 3 doctoral programs in first-level disciplines. Currently, there are 5,966 Chinese undergraduates (64.7%), 2,803 master's students (30.9%), and 452 doctoral students (4.9%).

18 Chen Xu Yan Jinglan, Jiang Yefei. "Shanghai Shibohui Qianhou Daxuesheng Zhiyuanzhe dui Shijie Yingyu de Taidu Diaocha," *Yuyanxue Yanjiu* (陈叙，颜静兰，姜叶飞，上海世博会前后大学生志愿者对世界英语的态度调查，语言学研究，2013), no.2 (2014): 168-180.

19 Xu Hongchen, Gao Yihong, "Sici Daxing Guoji Huodong Qianhou Daxuesheng Zhiyuanzhe dui Shijie Yingyu de Taidu," *Waiyu Jiaoxue* (许宏晨，高一虹，四次大型国际活动前后大学生志愿者对世界英语的态度，外语教学，2014), no.1 (2014): 43-48.

20 Ding Jinzhu, "Gaozhi Shangwu Yingyu Zhuanye Xuesheng Yuyantaidu Shizheng Yanjiu," *Changchun Daxue Xuebao* (丁金珠，高职商务英语专业学生语言态度实证研究[J].长春大学学报，2016), no. 6 (2016): 86-102.

21 You Qidongmeng, "Bo'ao Yazhou Luntan Zhiyuanzhe dui Shijie Yingyu de Taidu ji Duoyuan Wenhua Yishi," *Hainan Guangbo Dianshi Daxue Xuebao* (游戚东梦，博鳌亚洲论坛志愿者对世界英语的态度及多元文化意识，海南广播电视大学学报，2016), no. 2 (2016): 39-44.

According to the above proportion, this study surveyed 400 students, including 260 undergraduates, 120 master's students, and 20 doctoral students between 18 and 41 years old. The overview is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of the Subjects

Degree	Total	Male	Female	Age
Undergraduate	260	58	202	18-22
Master's	120	29	91	22-28
Doctor	20	5	15	26-41
Total	400	92	308	

2.2 Instruments

2.2.1 Questionnaire and Interview

This study refers to Chen's language attitudes of Chinese in Singapore and its impact on language ability and language use and measures students' language attitudes regarding British English, American English, Chinese English, and Mandarin using 10 scales of language characteristics. It included niceness, usefulness, identity, accurateness, elegance, warmness, authorization, kindness, ease, and convenience. Among them, niceness, kindness, and warmness are the subjective feelings of the listener or speaker, with strong emotional color, which belongs to the emotional identity dimension. Usefulness, elegance, authorization, identity, and accurateness depend on the language function, which belongs to the social evaluation dimension. Convenience and ease are the language ability of the speaker and listener, which belongs to the utility.

2.2.2 Verbal Guise Technique

The recording material and evaluation scale refer to the work by Gao. The material included four language variants, British English, American English, Chinese English, and Mandarin. The content was a television manual recorded by three speakers for about 30 seconds.

It was difficult to find the same reader; thus, the material was read by two native speakers in British English and American English. In addition, a Chinese person read the materials in Mandarin and Chinese English. These three people are graduate students at the university.

The scale is based on 12 adjectives or phrases developed by Gao, which are 'trustworthy-untrustworthy', 'respected-disrespectful', 'high education-low education', 'equal treatment-snobbish attitude', 'high income-low income', 'rich investment-money deposit bank', 'rich life-poor living', 'travel abroad-at home', 'warm-cool', 'open-closed', 'idealistic-pragmatic', and 'polite-informal'. These words are used as evaluation items to create a seven-level semantic discrimination scale.

2.3 Process

This study was conducted between November and December 2021, and the results were collected and analyzed in January 2022. The questionnaire was distributed to students and was divided into two parts. The first part collected the personal information of the college students, including gender, age, and grade. The second part investigated the language attitudes of college students towards British English, American English, Chinese English, and Mandarin.

In addition, 400 questionnaires were distributed, and 400 were returned. During the interview, 30 undergraduates, 15 master's and 2 doctoral students were selected in proportion to the students at these three levels. In addition, the matching guise was conducted.

Subjects were told that this was a test to judge people's characteristics based on their voices and that they should score the evaluation items on the scale after listening to each recording. Each recording was played twice. Then, the researcher informed the subjects of the true purpose of the study.

2.4 Data Analysis

This study employed quantitative statistics and analyzed the emotional identity, social status, and utility of the questionnaire results using Excel. The factor analysis using SPSS statistical software combined 12 evaluation items for undergraduate, master's degree and doctoral students. The similarities and interactions of students at various levels and ages and for different languages were analyzed in the evaluation items using the analysis of variance.

3. Results and Findings

The results indicate that the questionnaire, interview and matching guise technique can research language variant attitudes from the cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects, respectively. These two methods have different advantages, and the analysis and comparison of language attitude results from multiple dimensions can complement each other.

3.1 Questionnaire

3.1.1 Emotional Identity

The results revealed that students with different degrees (undergraduate, master's and doctoral) at SISU display similarities and differences in their views of different languages or language variants. The emotional identity of language is derived from the three language advantages of pleasantness, warmness, and kindness.

Table 2. The Attitudes Towards Emotional Identity

Variety	Degree	Pleasantness		Kindness		Warmness	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
British English	Undergraduate	60	23	54	21	62	24
	Master's	28	23	23	19	30	25
	Doctoral	7	35	5	25	5	25
American English	Undergraduate	68	26	57	22	61	23
	Master's	35	29	26	22	30	25
	Doctoral	5	25	2	10	4	20
Chinese English	Undergraduate	74	28	70	27	72	28
	Master's	25	21	33	28	33	28
	Doctoral	4	20	3	15	6	30
Mandarin	Undergraduate	58	22	79	30	65	25
	Master's	32	27	38	32	27	23
	Doctoral	4	20	10	50	5	25

In Table 2, students at three levels consider Mandarin to have the most kindness and Chinese English to have the most pleasantness. The difference is the emotional attitude towards listening. Undergraduates believe that Chinese English is best (28%) because of convenience and easiness. Master's degree students prefer American English (29%), and doctoral students chose British English (35%) because of pleasantness.

3.1.2 Social Status

The social status identity of language addresses five advantages: usefulness, elegance, authorization, identity, and accuracy. As presented in Table 3, students at the three levels considered Mandarin the most accurate. The difference is that undergraduates (41%) and master's degree students (33%) stated that Mandarin is the most useful, whereas doctoral students (60%) chose Chinese English.

Table 3. College Students' Attitudes Towards the Social Status of Language

Variety	Degree	Usefulness		Elegance		Authorization		Identity		Accuracy	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
British English	Undergraduate	33	13	68	26	77	30	69	27	47	18
	Master's	19	16	32	27	33	28	30	25	19	16
	Doctoral	2	10	9	45	2	10	11	55	3	15

American English	Undergraduate	52	20	40	15	72	28	79	30	72	28
	Master's	29	24	36	30	42	35	34	28	13	11
	Doctoral	4	20	4	20	9	45	6	30	2	10
Chinese English	Undergraduate	68	26	60	23	55	21	60	23	59	23
	Master's	32	27	18	15	14	12	27	23	32	27
	Doctoral	12	60	2	10	6	30	1	5	2	10
Mandarin	Undergraduate	107	41	92	35	56	22	52	20	82	32
	Master's	40	33	34	28	31	26	29	24	56	47
	Doctoral	2	10	5	25	3	15	2	10	13	65

In terms of elegance, undergraduate students (35%) still chose Mandarin, master's degree students (30%) preferred American English, and doctoral students (45%) preferred British English. In terms of authorization, undergraduates (30%) chose British English the most, whereas master's degree (35%) and doctoral students (45%) both chose American English. In terms of identity, undergraduate (30%) and master's degree (28%) students chose American English, and doctoral students chose (55%) British English.

From the perspective of identity, the undergraduate and master's students believed that American English represents a higher identity because British English is derived from the birthplace of English. Whereas doctoral students proposed that people who speak British English have a higher identity because the international status of the United States is higher than the UK, resulting in greater authority. Students at all three levels chose Mandarin as the most accurate because of their native tongue.

3.1.3 Utility

The utility of language relates to convenience and ease. The findings are presented in Table 4. Table 4 illustrates that students at the three levels agreed that Mandarin is the easiest, accounting for 68%, 56% and 50% of the responses, respectively. As for convenience, undergraduates (59%) considered Mandarin to be the most convenient, whereas master's (35%) and doctoral students (45%) chose Chinese English.

Table 4. The Attitudes of College Students Regarding Language Utility

Variety	Degree	Convenience		Ease	
		No.	%	No.	%
British English	Undergraduate	16	6	15	6
	Master's	18	15	4	3
	Doctoral	2	10	1	5

American English	Undergraduate	27	10	21	8
	Master's	21	18	11	9
	Doctoral	3	15	3	15
Chinese English	Undergraduate	63	24	47	18
	Master's	42	35	38	32
	Doctoral	9	45	6	30
Mandarin	Undergraduate	154	59	177	68
	Master's	39	33	67	56
	Doctoral	6	30	10	50

3.2 Interview

3.2.1 Emotional Identity

Students considered Mandarin the most intimate because Mandarin is their mother tongue. Although Chinese English is not as standard as American English and British English pronunciation, it is the easiest to understand, so it is the friendliest. Because of more contact with English in the learning process, master's and doctoral degree students considered the two variants (British and American) of English more pleasant than the others.

3.2.2 Social Status

Undergraduate and master's students believed that Mandarin is the most useful in daily study and life, and doctoral students found Chinese English the most useful for English communication. Undergraduate students considered Mandarin the most elegant because of the preference for the mother tongue, whereas the master's degree students stated that American English is the most elegant, and doctoral students proposed that British English is the most elegant. British English is derived from the birthplace of English; therefore, undergraduates thought that British English was the most authoritative, whereas the master's and doctoral students claimed that the international status of the United States was higher than the UK, resulting in greater authority.

3.2.3 Utility

The interviewees stated that it was most convenient to express their thoughts in Chinese English because master's and doctoral degree students have a certain level of English ability, but undergraduates still found it most convenient to communicate in Mandarin. All students chose Mandarin in the ease dimension.

3.3 Verbal Guise Technique

3.3.1 Factors and Weight for Evaluation Dimensions

Table 5 lists the factor analysis results and weight for each evaluation item by factor. Differences in factors were influenced by age, academic background, work experience, and

history. Similarities and differences exist between undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students for various factors. Social and economic statuses are two separate considerations for undergraduate and master's students, which are two independent factors, whereas these statuses are combined as one for doctoral students.

Table 5. Factors and Weight

Undergraduate		**Master's**		**Doctoral**	
Factors	**Weight**	**Factors**	**Weight**	**Factors**	**Weight**
Social status					
equal treatment	.67	respected	.58	rich	.77
idealistic	.65	trustworthy	.57	rich investment	.76
respected	.63	equal treatment	.57	polite	.76
high education	.62	travel abroad	.53	high education	.72
rich investment	.62	rich investment	.52	high income	.71
trustworthy	.53			travel abroad	.69
				trustworthy	.63
				equal treatment	.53
				idealistic	.46
Economic status					
polite	.75	rich	.76		
travel abroad	.74	high education	.74		
high income	.74	high income	.71		
rich	.69				
open	.68				
warm	.62				
		Good quality			
		polite	.68	open	.69
		idealistic	.65	trustworthy	.67
		open	.62	warm	.66
		warm	.58		

This table was designed based on the work by Gao (2019).

A possible explanation is that most doctoral students are students with substantial working experience who tend to consider economic status to be the embodiment of social status. In contrast, undergraduate and master's students have little work experience or less work

experience. Therefore, they do not consider social and economic status to be completely linked.

The results for undergraduate students were all regarding social and economic status, and no other factors were considered. Therefore, undergraduate students tended to focus on social and economic status. Master's and doctoral students had independent personality characteristics, such as 'openness' and 'enthusiasm', reflecting the similarities and differences of the subjects.

3.3.2 Variations

Due to the diverse structures of factors, it was inconvenient to compare the differences between diverse regions and languages in terms of factors. The following figure compares various words by subject students with specific evaluation items.

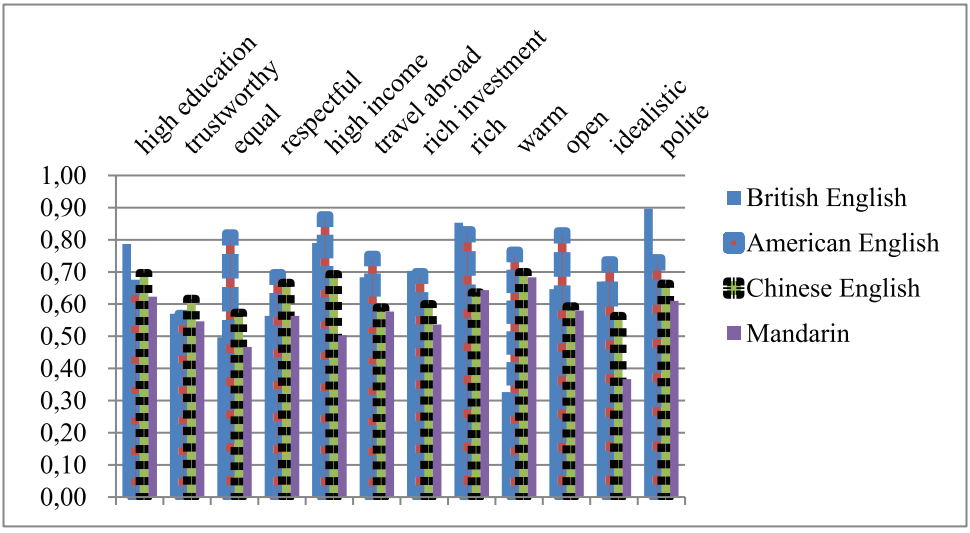


Figure 4. Overall evaluation differences between the four variables.

Figure 4 illustrates the difference in the overall evaluation of the four variables. 'High education' and 'respected' indicate social status, and 'high income' and 'rich' indicate economic status. 'Enthusiasm' and 'polite' relate to a good personality. American English has the highest overall rating, including 'equal', 'high income' and 'open'. British and Chinese English are in the middle. British English was rated as the most 'rich' and 'polite', whereas for 'enthusiastic', students rated it the lowest. Between the four languages, the biggest gap is for 'high income' and 'enthusiasm', and the smallest gap is for 'trustworthy'.

3.3.3 Subjects

According to the results, the objects are significantly different. The specific content analysis follows. Figure 5 demonstrates that 'good personality' is consistent, and some differences exist in social and economic status. Master's students scored 'high education' higher, and

undergraduates scored it lower. Doctoral students evaluated ‘trustworthy’ highly, whereas undergraduates did not.

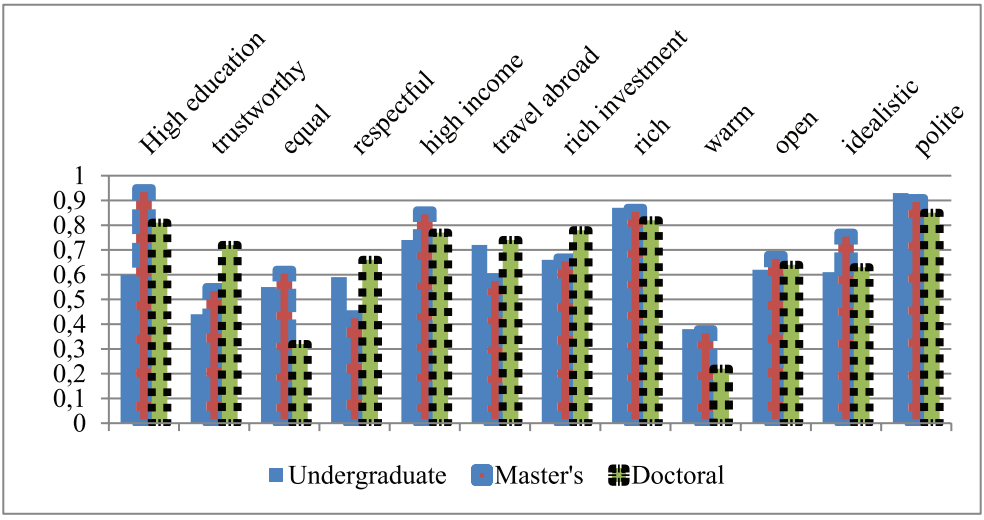


Figure 5. Evaluation of students regarding British English.

Figure 6 indicates that students at the three levels consistently evaluated economic and social statuses, whereas some differences exist for ‘good personality’. Doctoral students preferred ‘enthusiasm’, but undergraduate and master’s students were the opposite. As for ‘idealism’, master’s students rated it high, but undergraduate and doctoral students rated it low.

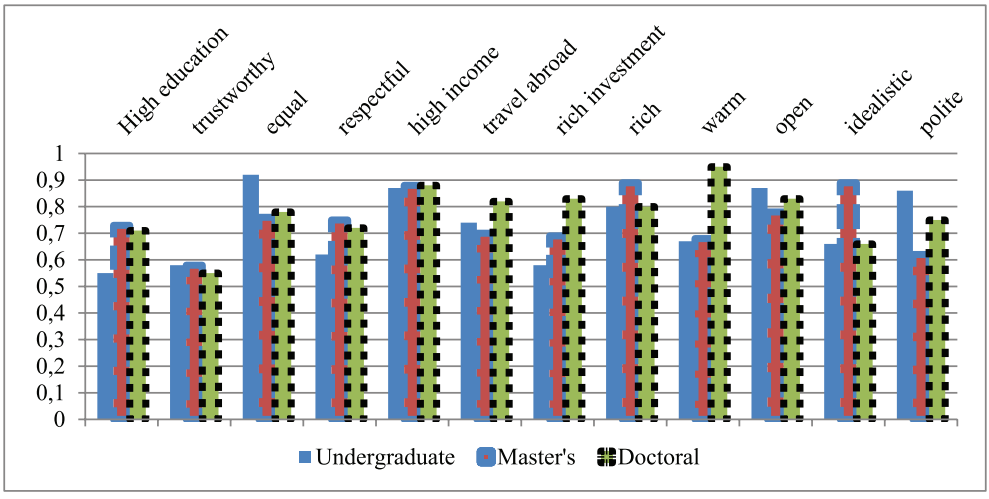


Figure 6. Evaluation of the three levels of students for American English.

The results in Figure 7 demonstrate that students evaluated economic status consistently, but the results for social status and 'good personality' are different. Undergraduates have the highest ratings for 'travel abroad', whereas master's students rated this the lowest. Master's students preferred 'idealism', whereas doctoral students provided the lowest ratings for this option.

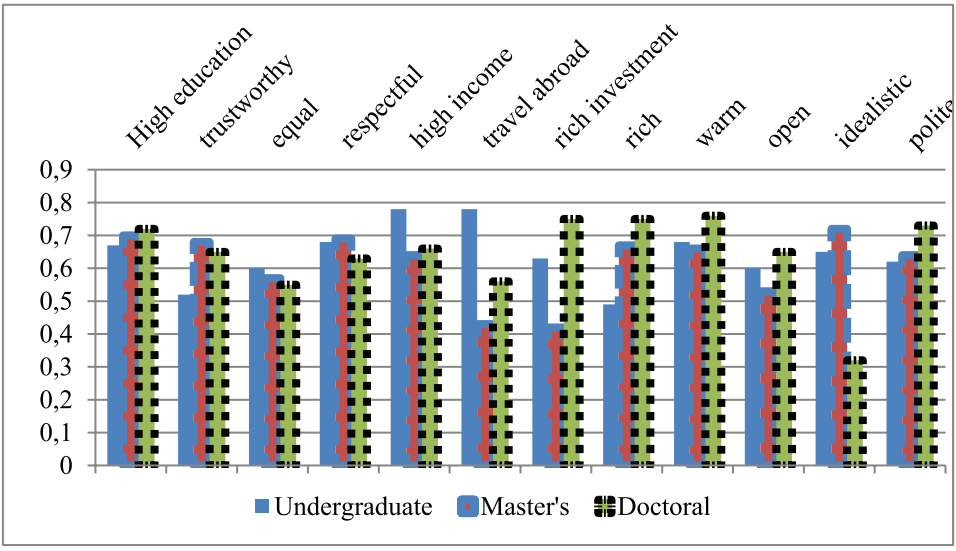


Figure 7. Evaluation of the three levels of students for Chinese English.

Figure 8 indicates that the three levels of students regarding Putonghua present obvious differences for all factors. Among these, eight factors (e.g., 'high education', 'trustworthy' and 'equality') were scored significantly lower than the scores for undergraduate and doctoral students, demonstrating that students with different degrees evaluate Mandarin quite differently.

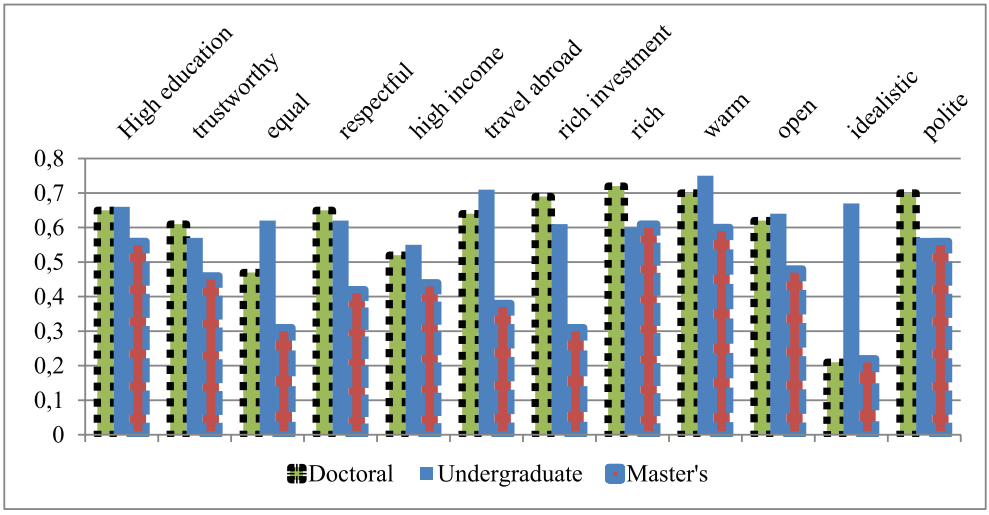


Figure 8. Evaluation of the three levels of students for Mandarin.

Conclusion

This research studied the language attitudes of 400 undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students at Shanghai International Studies Universities regarding British English, American English, Chinese English and Mandarin. The questionnaire and interview results found that, students were influenced by their mother tongue regarding emotional identity in language, generally scoring Mandarin as 'kind', although there were differences between 'good' and 'kindness'. For social status in language, their ages and learning and work experiences were quite different, except concerning the attitude regarding accuracy. For example, undergraduate and master's students believed that Mandarin was most useful in daily study and life, whereas doctoral students widely used Chinese English and proposed that British English was the most elegant. Master's students believed that American English has a high international status. Regarding the practicality of language, both master's and doctoral students have a certain English ability; therefore, they stated that it was more convenient to use Chinese English, but undergraduates still think it is the most convenient to communicate in Mandarin.

The verbal guise technique, an indirect evaluation method, tests four varieties. The statistical analysis of the results was the factor structure analysis of the difference in evaluation dimensions. The social and economic statuses for undergraduate and master's students were mutually independent factors, whereas doctoral students tended to combine these. Undergraduate students were apt to consider social and economic status and independent personality characteristics. According to the results of the four varieties, American English was the highest, British English and Chinese English were in the middle, and Mandarin was the lowest. There were also significant similarities between the students at the three levels, including the perception of excellent personality regarding British English, the perceptions regarding the social and

economic statuses of American English, and the perception of the economic status regarding Chinese English, whereas the other results indicated significant differences.

This study had many limitations, such as the small number of students. Currently, students at SISU number nearly ten thousand, whereas the subjects of this study accounted for less than 5% of the student population. The insufficient sample size may alter the overall results. Finally, the percentage of female respondents was higher than that of the population at more than 75%. These limitations should be addressed to improve future studies.

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