



**An Investigation of University Students' Views about Teaching and Learning English through Their Own Experiences in High Schools and University of Mainland China**

**By**

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## Declaration of originality

I, Jinjin Lu, am the author of the thesis titled ‘An Investigation of University Students' Views about Teaching and Learning English through Their Own Experiences in High Schools and University of Mainland China’ submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. I declare that the material is original, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis, nor does the thesis contain any material that infringes copyright. The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution.

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## Statement of ethical conduct

The research associated with this thesis abides by the international and Australian codes on human and animal experimentation, as approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network – Health and Medical/Social Sciences, Ethics Reference No. H12633.

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## Abstract

English has become one of the most important subjects after the restoration of the College Entrance Examination in 1978 in mainland China. With the development of the Chinese economy and technology, Chinese students and graduates are provided with more opportunities to study and work collaboratively with the world community. Consequently, their English proficiency is closely related to their study and career plans. Therefore, it is important to investigate how students perceive their English learning and their teachers' teaching as this could both benefit students and teachers in an emerging discourse of English education.

The aim of this study was to investigate university students' perceptions about their teachers' teaching and their learning English through their own experiences in high schools and a university in mainland China. The investigation focused on the following key areas: the participants' perceptions of their English learning and teachers' teaching in high schools; the perceptions of their English learning and their teachers' teaching in the university; a comparative examination of these two learning discourses from the views of the students; and the participants' preferred learning and teaching models in the Chinese context.

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative research approaches for data collection and analysis. It included two phases: the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The statistical data were analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) software version 21. The textual data collected from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using the NVivo software version 10. Thematic analysis was used in the qualitative data analysis.

The results of this study indicated that huge differences of English teaching models utilized between high schools and universities existed in mainland China. This huge gap could create problems for Chinese students' learning transition and individual learning. The findings suggested that the current English assessments for both high schools students and university students should be improved, particularly, the English test in the College Entrance Examination. Meanwhile, transitional guidance was strongly suggested by university students, particularly, to take a shift from a perception of traditional classrooms in high schools to a 'student-centered' classroom in the university. Based on the findings, policy implications, implications for practice and directions for further research were also addressed.

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