

A Glimpse of the Participants

Participant's Pseudonym	Gender	Year	Major	Prior Living/Learning Experiences in English-speaking Countries
Chen	Female	Freshman	CS	< 6 months
Li	Female	Freshman	Psychology	< 6 months
Ma	Male	Freshman	Sociology	< 6 months
Wang	Female	Freshman	Applied Math	< 6 months
Xu	Female	Freshman	CS	< 6 months
Song	Female	Freshman	Psychology	> 2 years
Hao	Male	Sophomore	Math & CS	< 6 months
Wei	Male	Sophomore	Math & Physics	< 6 months
Wu	Female	Sophomore	Statistics	< 6 months
Zhang	Male	Sophomore	Math & Economics	< 6 months
Zhou	Female	Sophomore	Psychology	< 6 months
Tian	Male	Sophomore	Philosophy	< 1 year
Liu	Female	Sophomore	Psychology	< 2 years
Pan	Male	Sophomore	Psychology & Math	< 2 years
Cheng	Female	Junior	Political Science	> 2 years

Notes: All the interviews were conducted in Mandarin and translated by the researcher into English. In the following transcript:

- The *italicized* words represented those that were highlighted in the presentation.
- The **bolded** and underlined words referred to the exact ENGLISH terms used by the participants during the interviews.

Theme 1: The Subject-in-Process: Sedimentation

1) Ma's Story: "I'm from Shanghai, China"

Shanghainese (Before): "I would say that it was a very inaccurate symbol, because it cannot define who I am as a person. I mean, given I also didn't have a good grasp of Shanghainese. When I was in Shanghai, I remembered that when I talked to native Shanghainese speakers, especially those belonged to the older generation, they told me that I spoke broken Shanghainese".

Shanghainese (After): "As for Shanghainese, I would say that it has become a sweet memory, since I don't often use it nowadays, except when joking around with my Shanghainese friends who are either here or back in China...But there are some differences. I mean, when I was in Shanghai, although I identified myself as a Shanghainese, and I was proud of it, sometimes I felt that I was not a real Shanghainese, or at least not a hundred percent Shanghainese, I mean, I could not even speak satisfactory Shanghainese. So... anyway, now in the U.S., if someone asks me where I am from, I would say "Shanghai, China", also in a proud way. So I think this sense of pride hasn't changed. But I can talk about it with more ease and confidence".

Mandarin (Before): "When I was in China, Mandarin was indeed a daily necessity for me. But I did feel its existence. I believe it involved power-related considerations. I mean, I was dependent on this kind of power relations, which became internalized as a part of myself. Let me draw an analogy. This analogy may sound rather inappropriate to some of you, please take it with a grain of salt. So...I would say it was like the struggle for independence in South America, which eventually led to the end of the Spanish colonial period. After having gained independence from Spain, people in South America scolded the Spanish colonizers in their national anthems. But they had to use Spanish to express such kind of feelings. As I said, it may not be an accurate analogy, but I hope it makes some sense".

Mandarin (After): "After I came to the U.S., Mandarin has become a very useful tool for me. Its power-related considerations have been mitigated, since I do need to use it to communicate with other Chinese international students on a daily basis".

2) Liu's Story: "It feels Chinese"

*Mandarin (Before): "Because when I was in China, I felt myself inferior. I had first entered an art school in Jinan, and then transferred to an international school in Qingdao. As a result, I didn't receive **traditional** Chinese education. I didn't understand literary Chinese, and I felt that my language was always informal. So...I thought I was not very Chinese you know, because I mean, language carried culture, but I felt that I could not even express myself clearly in that language. Also, since I had been in an international school for quite a while, I had participated in a few study abroad programs. I had spent three semesters in Canada, Korea, and Russia, respectively. So...during my adolescent years, which I thought was one of the most important stages in my life, I had been abroad for a considerable amount of time".*

Mandarin (After): “Honestly, I don’t have many Chinese friends here. But when I go to Chinatown with my English-speaking friends, I read the street signs to them, they are amazed by my Mandarin and I am so happy about that. So you know, I feel very proud when I use Mandarin here. Also, when we go to parties, I tell them how drink games are played by Chinese people in Mandarin, and they all find it interesting...Let’s see, so, I also have a lot of Chinese calligraphy paintings in my room. I brought them with me from China. Some of them were made by my best friend, and the rest were made by my grandpa. So whenever I enter my room, I always have a strong feeling that it is different from anywhere else. It feels Chinese”.

3) Wang’s Story: “Liberating my true self”

“Because when I was in China, I was always disciplined by my head teacher for misbehaving. You know, she was like...“Wang, you are a girl, so you should behave like a girl, you should not sit on the floor. Or...you should not eat in class, particularly because you’ve been selected as one of the class leaders”. All these kinds of things, you know, I didn’t want to bear such heavy **burdens**. So after I started my schooling in the U.S., my first impression was that every cell in my body seemed to be able to enjoy that breath of fresh air”.

*W: I mean, Chinese identity is a part of myself, so what got liberated as a result of my travelling to the U.S. was not my Chinese identity, but my **true self**. As for my **true self**, it involved both my Chinese identity, and an awareness of **free soul** existing in the U.S.*

PY: What does Chinese identity mean to you?

*W: I would say...some indelible imprints left on me by my **background** and **culture**.*

PY: Can you give me one or two examples of those indelible imprints?

W: “Zhongyongzhidao¹” and “Wuweierzhi²”.

PY: What does “Zhongyongzhidao” mean to you?

W: Well, I mean, for me, it means to maintain an equilibrium state. It just makes you feel mellow, you know

PY: Hum...then how about “Wuweierzhi”?

W: For me, it means following your heart. So if you combine them together, you can imagine (laughter)...it just likes a metal ball, which is floating around in the air.

PY: Then how would you describe your living and learning experiences in the U.S. vis-à-vis this metal ball? Do you think those experiences have added some other layers of paint to the ball?

¹ Confucianism: The Doctrine of the Mean (中庸之道)

² Taoism: To govern by doing nothing that goes against nature (无为而治)

*W: Well, no, actually I think those experiences have contributed to removing some layers of paint that previously covered the ball. So now we can see its original color. Because in the past, you needed to cover yourself with some layers of paint, for the purpose of **self-protection**. And now, you've started to peel off those layers of paint, and you know, you just feel like you start breathing".*

Theme 2: The Subject-in-Process: Pivoting

4) Tian's Story: "Cultivating a bystander's viewpoint"

PY: How would you describe your living/learning experiences as an international student in the U.S.?

T: Well, you know, I think it's like in a rabbit hole.

PY: Hum...a rabbit hole? You mean like Alice's Adventures in Wonderland?

*T: Yeah, exactly. Because those kinds of experiences have opened up a wide range of possibilities for me in terms of my future life trajectory. I mean, so if I want, I can stay in the U.S. after I get my degree, but I can also go to Europe or go back to China. Well, I am not sure if it is the correct way to understand the concept of sense of belonging. But if a strong sense of belonging means that I have to spend my entire life in China, I think the experiences as an international student in the U.S. have made me become less likely to echo with that entailment. Another thing is that as you've got to know more about China while studying abroad, I don't think it necessarily means that you will **identify** more with this country. I mean, but they do prompt you to look at things from a more objective perspective. That's usually the case when you look at things from a distance...So for me, I really think I am looking at things happening in China, like President Xi's 3.5-hour speech before the 19th CPC National Congress, from a bystander's viewpoint.*

PY: A bystander's viewpoint? That's interesting. Then how about things happening in the U.S., so do you think you look at them from an insider's viewpoint?

T: No, not at all. Well, that's a good question. I think I also look at them from a bystander's viewpoint.

PY: Ok. So...but are there any differences between them? I mean, although both of them are related to a bystander's stance.

T: Well, I think for things happening in the U.S., I am kind of like a passer-by, you know, just to look at things around, because I find it interesting to do so. And then I pass by...But for things happening in China, I think they involve some affective accompaniment. Like...so the summer break after my graduation from high school in Beijing, you know, right before my travelling to the U.S., I went to visit the place where I had lived before my kindergarten years. So I was born and raised in Beijing, but we once moved to another district when I started my kindergarten. So I had literally no memory of that place, and I didn't know what it looked like nowadays. I just

wanted to go there and take a look at it. You know, that's the kind of feelings I've had when looking at things happening in China as an international student in another country. It's like visiting a place where you lived when you were very young. You don't live there anymore, and you don't know its current conditions. So like, you may wonder, Oh, what has happened to that particular building (in that place) over these years? And you just want to go there and to see what it looks like...I've never thought about it before. But it just comes to my mind that these two kinds of feelings are extremely similar. But if you ask me, would going back to take look at that place tend to have any influence on my current life? I don't think so. I mean, but you just really want to go there and take a look at that place.

5) Pan's Story: "Having my feet in two boats"

PY: I remember that in our previous focus group interview, you mentioned that after you came to the U.S., you felt that English had become your second mother tongue. What did you mean by that?

P: Well, I think what's most important to me is that, I've become a global citizen, you know, which means I can perceive things from a global perspective. Like, to transcend certain restrictions.

PY: Being a global citizen sounds to me an intriguing topic. Could you tell me a little bit more about it, particularly how it is related to your attitudes towards Mandarin and English?

P: So....Ok, you can think of me like a slug, before I came to the U.S., I had been glued to a board, which represented Mandarin and Chinese culture. You know, just like a slug, who had tried to reach out a little bit to explore the world, but had nonetheless been glued to that board. After I came to the U.S. and developed this belief of English as my second mother tongue, I felt that English became another board, which served to extract me from the previous board. I think now I am able to float above these two boards and to view the world in a more comprehensive way. So English does give me a boost. But of course, it is not the language per se, but because of its status as a global language, in addition to the cultural experiences I've had in the U.S., so multiple factors have been involved in this process. Also, as for the "Chinese" board in particular, it doesn't get vague or incomplete, I mean, what I want to say is that this process allows me to consider my self-identity from a different angle.

PY: So would you say that you are not on either of those boards?

P: (laughter) I think you can say that. But I mean, I think you can also say that I'm actually on both of them. Like what we say in Chinese, "I've stepped my feet into two boats"³.

³ "I've stepped my feet into two boats" is a literal translation of the Chinese idiom "脚踏两只船".