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IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING: THE CASE OF CHINESE GRADUATES FROM UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

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IDENTITY, INVESTMENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING:

THE CASE OF CHINESE GRADUATES FROM UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

by

Cong Wang

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
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Identity, Investment and Language Learning:

The Case of Chinese Graduates from University of Windsor

by

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Abstract

Among the fast-growing population of international students in Canada, China has been the leading source country. While existing studies give us a bright idea of obstacles faced by international students in transition to permanent residents, there is little information from the perspective of international students. Therefore, we know far less from their perspective as well as how they interpret and negotiate with these experiences. Language barriers are identified as among the most prominent obstacles affecting international students' academic, social and economic integration. I seek to understand the social impacts of the language barrier and the process of overcoming it. By examining the transition of Chinese graduates from a Canadian University – University of Windsor, this study investigates (a) graduates' experiences of ESL (English as the second language) in their daily life and (b) their social and career experience as part of their integration into Canadian society. Based on the qualitative data collected, the significant finding is: (a) The ESL learning experience has both negative and positive impacts on integration process and the use of English proficiency as investment resources in social integration is much slower than that in academic integration and economic integration. (b) The motivation of ESL learning is interrelated with highly valued resources, like reliable positions and work environments, interethnic friendship, positive self-identification, and attachment to linguistic community membership. Moreover, the acquisition of the second language and the use of the first language co-construct the new identity in the host society.

Keywords: Integration Process, Immigration Candidates, English as Second Language, Social Connections, Identity

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations Used

CBIE   Canadian Bureau for International Education

CEC   Canadian Experience Class

CIC   Citizenship and Immigration Canada

CMA   Canadian Multiculturalism Act

ESL   English as second language

HSBC   The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation

ICEF   International Consultants for Education and Fairs

IELTS   International English Language Testing System

OECD   The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

PI   Primary Investigator

PR   Permanent Residency

SICMISE Social Interaction Continuum Model of the International Student Experience

Introduction

With the rapid rise of the number of international students in Canada in recent decades, international graduates trained in Canada have become a significant source of immigrants under economic class. To analyze the shift of international student mobility and its impacts on Canadian society, a series of studies examine economic and social characteristics of students as immigrant candidates (Belkhodja & Esses, 2013; Lu & Zong, 2017). How immigrants integrate into Canadian society is also of keen interest. The language barrier is identified as among the most prominent obstacles affecting immigrant candidates' academic, social and economic integration. The reduced capability of English as the second language (ESL) learners is embodied in challenges to cultural adaptation and proficiency in English.

With a focus on ESL learning experiences within one community of users, Chinese who arrived in Windsor to pursue post-secondary education and then worked in Windsor for one to two years, I seek to understand the social impacts of the language barrier and the process of overcoming it. By conducting interviews at the start of 2018, it has become clear to me that the ESL experience is deeply tied to the pursuit of postsecondary education, development of social networks, acquiring permanent residence status and attachment to Canada, and these factors in turn jointly shape opportunities for and limitation on learning trajectories of ESL.

Moreover, how individuals communicate with others connects with how individuals view the social world and themselves. Language as an essential aspect of communication constitutes the boundary between self and other. In this study, I focus on how participants negotiate their sense of self and sense of belonging through their learning or use of English as a second language. I study the motivation of second language learning that is intimately connected to the ongoing production of the learner's identities and the desire for the future, by borrowing Norton's (2013)

concept of investment, to emphasize the contextual nature of language. I propose to explore not only second language learning as an investment but also as an identity formation period in education-work transition in the host environment (Bourdieu, 1977; Hall, 1997).

This thesis is composed of four main chapters. The first chapter is a literature review and theoretical framework. In the first half of the chapter, a brief historical overview of Canadian immigration policy and multicultural policy is provided to illustrate the Canadian context in which international students integrate. The second half outlines a theoretical framework. The core concepts of investment, capital, and imagined community are described and applied to the study discussed here. The second chapter delineates research questions and research method, including data collection, sampling, and data analysis. The third chapter explores how ESL experience serves as an essential aspect of participants' integration process. The fourth chapter examines the reasons why ESL learners invest in language learning as a means to valued resources and community membership. The final chapter includes both the conclusion and an overview of original findings.

CHAPTER 1 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Literature Review

   The Canadian immigration policy and immigrants Candidates. In Canada, the majority of Canada's population is constituted by continuous waves of immigrants, mainly from Europe and recently from Asia and Africa (Abu-Laban, & Gabriel, 2002; Li, & Gibson Library Connections Inc., 2003). After the Second World War, globalization and competition among industrial countries increased the global mobility of capital and professional expertise. Modern European nations competed for technology and skilled immigrants to meet the needs of national economic development. By 1967, Canada reformulated its immigration policy to move away from the racial origin as admission criteria and emphasized new rules in favor of immigrants with technical and professional skills (Li, & Gibson Library Connections Inc., 2003). In other words, to cope with changes in the global labor market, Canada opened her door to the world, including non-traditional areas, such as Africa and Asia. Since then, immigrants can enter Canada because of professional and technical skills, which contributed to the growth of "visible minorities" in Canada. In 2001, to keep its competitiveness in the global labor market, the government of Canada passed a new immigration bill: The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Bill C-11). The first two objectives for immigration program in the bill are "to permit Canada to pursue the maximum social, cultural and economic benefits of immigration" and "to enrich and strengthen the social and cultural fabric of Canadian society" (Bill C-11, 2001, C. 27, S.3.1). The other eight objectives of Bill C-11 for the refugee program stress the importance of fulfilling international obligations and humanitarian tradition (Bill C-11, 2001, C. 27, S.3.2). The objectives for immigration program indicate an emphasis on the use of immigration to benefit Canada. The importance of economic class immigrants to the Canadian economy is also expressed in Citizenship and Immigration

Canada documents as follows: "Canada needs young, dynamic, well-educated skilled people. It needs innovation, ideas, and talents. Immigration legislation must be adapted to enhance Canada's advantage in the global competition for skilled workers" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC], 2001a:1). In current immigration system, the government of Canada grants immigration status under three classes: economic, family and refugee. Statistics in recent years indicate that there is an emphasis on admitting a more significant portion of immigrants under economic class. Between 1980 and 2000, Canada admitted about 3.7 million immigrants, 46 percent of whom were admitted under the economic class (Li, 2003). In 2013, the portion of immigrants admitted economic class rose to 62%. Li (2003) argued that assessment of the value of immigrants mainly by their ability to benefit native-born Canadian well-being reflects a utilitarian perspective, which ignores other objectives, such as humanitarian ideas, expressed in Bill C-11.

The international student category is one of the stable sources of immigrants under economic class. Many studies provided empirical data that demonstrate international students' significant contribution to Canadian labor market and knowledge development (Belkhodja & Esses, 2013). The number of students traveling abroad for education worldwide is increasing, 5 million in 2015 and estimated to be 7 million in 2020 (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2015). Several factors influence this mobility, such as worldwide economic development, internationalization of education and evolution of the immigration policy encouraging two-step immigration process, from international student to permanent resident. In a survey conducted by The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), Canada is in the 5th place among the key destinations of choice (HSBC, 2013), attracting students from more than 200 countries. The number of international students increased 23% from 2011 to 2013 in Canada (International Consultants for Education and Fairs [ICEF], 2015). The top ten source is

the People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, United States, France, India, Japan, Saudi

Arabia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Mexico (CIC, 2009). Within the last two decades, the number

of Chinese students has reached 17,934, the most prominent ethnic group on campus (CIC, 2011).

According to the data of Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) of 2013, the portion

of Chinese students of all international students in the post-secondary education sector in Canada

is 30.45% (CBIE, 2013). The impact of increasing number of international students on the

enrolment of education institutions located in the small and medium-sized city in Ontario is visible.

For example, at University of Windsor, graduate enrolment rose from 1658 to 3044 in 2010 and

2016, and international students constitute nearly 90% of the growth (Public Addresses of the

President of University of Windsor, 2017).

Canadian immigration policy and public discourse are openly favorable to international

students, aiming at facilitating the international student-permanent resident transition. In the early

2000s, the government of Canada stated the importance of immigration for economic prosperity

and recognized the "social and economic benefits that international students bring to Canada" (CIC,

2003a). The federal government makes efforts to build a state that is "a destination of choice for

talented international students" (CIC, 2004a). To facilitate post-graduation transition, the Canadian

government progressively allowed international students to work off-campus during their studies.

The purpose is stated, "to experience Canadian labor market and gain a deeper understanding of

Canadian society" (CIC, 2005). To maximize the value of Canadian work experience, including

on campus and off campus, The Canadian government launched the Canadian Experience Class

(CEC) program in 2008 that grants international students with at least one year full time work

experience after graduation. The shifting of Chinese students from the largest ethnic group on

campus to the highest proportion of permanent residents exemplifies the positive impact of

changes as mentioned above in immigration policy. In 2001, the percentage of Chinese students was about 15% of all international students who experience the transition from student to permanent residents. Since then, the number had risen to 24% in 2010. During the period from 1994 to 2010, Chinese student constitutes the highest percentage of permanent residents who were international students (Lu & Zong, 2017, p. 197).

Migration research studies on international students examined economic and social characteristics of students as immigrants candidates (Belkhodja & Esses, 2013; Liu, 2015). The recruitment of young international students is seen as a solution to demographic and economic problems resulting from low rate birth and aging in Canada. Moreover, compared with offshore economic immigrants, international students are familiar with Canadian workplace culture and society, which contributes to integration into the labor market. Some studies (Baas, 2006; Kim, D., Bankart, C. A., & Isdell, L., 2011) have demonstrated that the possibility of applying for permanent residency after graduation has been an essential motivating consideration in destination selection among international students. The study conducted by Baas (2006) examined the relationship between Indian student migration and Australia immigration policy. In this article, the university recruiters are aware of "highly PR (permanent residency) oriented" Indian student market and consequently view the Australian university as a "PR factory," "Indian overseas students are migrants. Their concerns, motivation, hope, and ideas about the future are focused on the goal of migration" (p. 13). The purpose of studying abroad for Indian students is acquiring permanent residency status because the positive impact of Australian credential on professional development is limited once they return to India. The longitudinal study conducted by Kim et al. (2011) covered the period from the 1980s to 2000s examine the actual intention of international students with a Ph.D. degree in the United States. The intention rate of staying in the United States increased from

49.5% to 66.1% within the thirty-year-period. The researchers analyzed the increase by changes in immigration policy and employment opportunities.

Canadian identity and integration into Canada. In the first decade of 21st century, the most substantial number of international students came from China, India, and Korea (Liu, 2016). According to the Canadian government's working definition, visible minority population refers to "Persons, other than Aboriginal Peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in color" (Statistics Canada, 2013). In the census of 2013, Statistics Canada defines visible minorities to include ten origins: Chinese, South Asian, Black, Arab, West Asian, Filipino, Southeast Asian, Latin American, Japanese, and Korean (Statistics Canada, 2013). Therefore, most international students can be categorized into "visible minorities."

The change of original composition of international students is a relatively recent phenomenon, but the emergence of visible minorities in Canada resulted mainly from changes in immigration policy after the Second World War. Moreover, since the beginning of Canada as a nation, the racial topic has entered into the political community discourse with differing historical manifestations, like the debate surrounding First Nations, equal rights of use of English and French, the recognition of visible minorities. Therefore, Canada's national identity is viewed as a settler society and defined by immigration and integration (Bauder, 2011). To increase intergroup harmony and mutual acceptance, the federal government adopted multiculturalism as policy in the 1970s and declared Canadian Multiculturalism Act (CMA) in 1988. In 1997, the federal Liberal government announced three goals of multiculturalism "identity, participation, and justice." The working definition of identity is "fostering a society that recognizes, respects, and reflects a diversity of cultures such that people of all backgrounds feel a sense of belonging and attachment to Canada" (Department of Canadian Heritage, 1996). We can see that the multiculturalism policy

intends to express a new version of "Canadian identity" that includes aboriginal people, "founding people" (English and French) and visible minorities. Compared to this formal expression, there is a social expectation produced by folk versions of immigrants: immigrants should become more similar to native-born Canadian to reduce "immigration problems": the erosion of traditional Canadian value, social stress, and tension. Li (2003) argued that such a narrow understanding treats integration solely the degree to which immigrants converge to native-born Canadians' behavioral standards, rather than a two-way process. In doing so, the process of integration is investigated by academia through the lens of economic and social aspects.

Studies have shown that integration into Canada has not been a natural process, and international students face challenges and barriers in an environment that is different from their country of origin (Belkhodja & Esses, 2013; Lee, 1986; Yang, 2005; Zhang & Zhou, 2010). I conceptualize the process of integration for international students as two phases: the first phase, academic and social integration occurs in Canadian education institution; the second phase, economic and social integration occurs in the transition to the labor market. Concerning the first phase, Yang (2005) found that the experience of cultural conflicts plays a vital role in achieving academic success among Chinese international students at a Canadian University -- University of Windsor. Lee (1986) found how subjective states of Chinese international students, such as typification, reality construction, and communicative and interactive strategies, are created, maintained and changed. Concerning the second phase, even though the adoption of the policy of multiculturalism recognizes Canada's culturally diverse society, students' ethnoracial and national backgrounds make a difference to the employment opportunities available to them. And employer's preference for applicants with Canadian work experience increases the potential for discrimination. There are also issues of applicant's limited approach to social network, employer's

prejudice towards applicants from non-traditional source countries in hiring and promotion, and Islama-phobia since 9/11 (Guliz, 2016, p. 8). After graduate one to two years, international students who decide to stay in Canada inevitably experience the long process of obtaining permanent residency. Belkhodja and Esses (2013) remind us of the negative impact of this transition on participants' mental health. The uncertainty of the permanent residency application outcome is highly stressful during a transition period in which many have to work at low paying jobs with little educational requirements and "socially negotiate unfamiliar class and cultural dynamics. […] The social positioning as a low skilled worker was often difficult to accept, especially for those participants who had just achieved higher degrees" (p. 16). According to Gates-Gasse (2012), Canadian Experience Class indicates "a shift towards immigrants who are self-funded regarding education, skills development, and integration" (p. 273). Before acquiring permanent residency, international students and their dependents are ineligible for settlement services funded by federal government, which can take up to ten years because they arrived in Canada as temporary immigrants.

The reduced capability of ESL learners is embedded in challenges to cultural adaptation and proficiency of English (Belkhodja & Esses, 2013). Social psychologists focus on the link between language proficiency and level of stress experienced by international students. Thomson and Esses (2016) developed a program that paired newcomer international students with Canadian students mentors and found a reduction in acculturative stress over time. Reynolds and Constantine (2007) linked proficiency in the English language with international students' career aspirations. Some of them only choose fields, such as math, science, and engineering that they perceive not to necessitate mastery of high level English in speaking or writing. Similarly, Guliz (2016) suggested that development of external ethnic, social networks through English for Turkish immigrants is

associated with their sense of being Canadian and involvement in organizations. On the one hand, this study suggested that the increased proficiency of language leads to greater participation in the receiving society. On the other hand, many studies have demonstrated that learner's willingness and interest in interaction has a positive impact on second language acquisition (Cl´ement, Noels & Deneault, 2001). According to this view, second language acquisition provides international students with the means to interact with the social world and has been shown to facilitate the building of an interpersonal relationship. Consequently, students can draw on more than just the score of language test from their second language learning.

However, empirical research also found the broader impact of failure to fulfill the language requirement on international students. For example, Zhang (2014) investigated the experiences of Chinese international students preparing for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) tests by comparing three participants' learning before and after coming to Vancouver. A gap between aspiration and newly acquired identity hurts their learning trajectories. Considering the importance of identity, sense of self and sense of belonging, in the construction of integration experience of international students, I will conclude this section with the conceptualization of identity in general and the intersection of identity and the second language acquisition in particular.

More specifically, issues involved in identity function of language have been researched in various ways. Traditionally, identity is interpreted as one's connection (value of membership and attached emotional tie) to the particular social group (Tajfel, 1978). Recent studies describe identity as "a dynamic and shifting nexus of multiple subject positions, or identity options, such as mother, accountant, heterosexual, or ethnoracial" (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 35). Here, the researcher emphasizes how subjective positions are represented in and through interaction with the social world. According to Hall (1997), identity is "a positioning" in a particular cultural

context. The process of integration may be viewed as the process of newcomer's searching for his specific position in a new cultural context. Second language learning, as an aspect of interaction, is key to the continuous reproduction of identity. Individual behavior can be interpreted as speaking and acting from a position within discourses (Baxter, 2016). However, contradictions between multiple subjective views are inevitable. To tell a coherent story about selves to ourselves or others, we have to find a cohesive storyline. The construction of authentic person or consistent identity reflects the efforts.

Poststructuralist thinkers utilize "discursive construction of identity" to frame regulatory forces of language. Weedon (1997) signaled language as a setting for positioning, "Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. It is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed" (p. 21). In the area of second language acquisition, Ibrahim's study (1999) of African youth in Canada illustrated that racial identity is negotiated through cultural practice, and Black English is "a discursive space in which they are positioned...as Blacks" (p. 353). For example, Gauthier et al. (1993) found that native speakers of Canadian French who were bilingual in French and English expressed that they would ideally prefer to integrate Francophone and Anglophone cultures and identities. But when asked about their identity in daily lives, those who regularly used French endorsed a stronger Francophone than Anglophone identity. Moreover, inconsistent or incoherent identity reflects contradictions induced by the adoption of the second language in the process of integration. It is reasonable to say that second language learning plays an important role in the socialization of international students because of its useful function of the "positioning" in a new linguistic context.

Considering complexities of identity function of the second language revealed by

scholarship mentioned above, it is essential to choose an appropriate approach to investigate the way in which Chinese graduates individually negotiate an integration path in Canadian society. I further elaborate this theoretical framework in the next section.

Theoretical Framework

In the first section, I drew extensively on theories of language and identity whereby I understand identity is deeply implicated in second language acquisition in the integration process. To illustrate it clearly, I will analyze proficiency of the second language as a kind of capital, and then use the metaphor of investment to show that this kind of capital combined with other individualized resources may produce a valuable output, including new identity. Through the lens of investment, we can see that second language learner may have "instrumental motivations," but these desires are changeable and intertwined with the social context. Hence, here this description of investment is different from economist's definition, which is based on self-interest and instrumental motivation (Coyle, 2002).

Capital. Bourdieu (1986) expanded Marx's economic definition of capital into the realm of nonmaterial resources (education credentials, social networks, and religious beliefs, etc.). He conceptualized capital as forms of power that shape individual's social positioning in the particular social context (Guliz, 2016). Bourdieu (1986) categorized capital into three types: economic, social and cultural. Economic capital is "immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights" (p. 47). Social capital refers to resources by group and family membership. Cultural capital includes "verbal facility, general cultural awareness, aesthetic preferences, information about the school system, and educational credentials" (Swartz, 1997, p. 75). Cultural capital is the outcome of the process of socialization. Enhancement of the value of cultural capital requires investment in self-improvement through learning (Bourdieu,

1986), such as second language acquisition. The relationship among three forms of capital is: economic capital serves as the basis of three types of capital; non-economic capital, including social capital and cultural capital, can be converted into economic capital. Similar to Marx's analysis, Bourdieu's concept of capital is by social relation. When a resource serves as a social relation to maintaining or to improve an individual's position in social order, the resource can be viewed as capital. What agents need to do is to accumulate economic capital and convert non-economic capital into economic capital, and vice versa (Gulize, 2016; Swartz, 2013). On the one hand, non-economic capital is the product of social inequality, and on the other hand, the reproduction of social capital and cultural capital reinforce the structural opportunity.

The work of Bourdieu (1986) redressed the overlooked importance of non-economic capital as resources for a future working career. Recent scholarship on the aspiration to study abroad and the post-graduate migration decision shows the influence of familial relationships, experiences of friendship, romantic relationships and broader social networks. Water (2006) investigated the phenomenon that some families relocate abroad temporarily for overseas higher education as an investment strategy to gain social capital that benefits academic performance. Thus, international student mobility patterns reflect differential combinations of "investment strategies, individually or collectively" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 249).

Bourdieu's conceptualization of capital is different from human capital theory (Schultz, 1961). Because the former is based on structural power analysis and the assumption of latter is an open market in which individuals compete for earnings according to the level of human capital.

The metaphor of investment. English language requirement is a mandatory criterion for admission to Canadian education institution and as Canadian Experience Class (CEC) candidate. However, for international students, reaching high levels of proficiency of English is an informed

decision on whether to initiate a long-term process of learning -- memorizing and practicing words, phrases, expressions, and grammar rules. Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) argued that "ultimate attainment in second language learning relies on one's agency...While the first language and subjectivities are an indisputable given, the new ones are arrived at by choice" (pp.169-170). Here, agency refers to socially mediated capacity (Ahearn, 2001) to make a choice, and act to pursue individual goals.

Within integration discourse, the sense of agency enables learners to control their learning life, to take up new identities (Duff, 2012), which reflects the view that integration is an active self-empowerment process, rather than a passive reaction process. During the process international students acquire capital, including economic capital and non-economic capital, available to them, such as educational credentials, second language proficiency, and monetary compensation, to produce valuable output for enhancement of value in the labor market and host society. Inspired by the concept as mentioned above of capital, to operationalize capital-output analysis, I draw upon the metaphor of investment to reveal the indispensable relationship between individualized capital and valuable output. The meaning of the concept of investment in this study is to offer a perspective to investigate how the ESL experience is deeply tied to different aspects of the process of integration. For Norton (2000), the metaphor of "investment" is an extended concept of motivation, which emphasizes the social and cultural context rather than seeing desires and practices as independent individual characteristics. The motivation of learning focuses on individual psychology, whereas investment of learning is a sociological approach emphasizing social relations. Moreover, for Norton (2002) the applied linguistic notion of motivation in second language learning is insufficient to explain the complicated motivation of learners in real life. Norton explains, "When we invest in a second language, we desire a wider range of identities and

an expanded set of possibilities in the future... ... To invest in a language is to invest in an identity" (2002, p. 4) where identity is a strategic decision and practice, psychological and social, echoing Hall (1997).

Here, I conceptualize investment as the use of capital (second language proficiency, personal histories, religious affiliation, career aspiration, social background and existing social network) available to individual to produce valuable output: a better work performance, a more significant and diverse social network, more interaction opportunities with different social groups, belonging and membership in host population group, and a unique self-identification. In the following data analysis chapters, the use of linguistic investment emphasizes language learning as valued capital for the achievement of the aforementioned desired output in the education work transition. This perspective has two advantages. Firstly, within this definition of investment, the emphasis of intersubjective nature of product offers possibilities for human agency. It is an individualized path that reflects their complex experience and ambivalent desire as a consequence of the adoption of the second language. Secondly, this definition can foreground a social world that enables and constrains international students' investment in education-work transition. We can see how individuals acquire the capital required for investment and then how the social context surrounding the investor shapes the particular production pattern.

From this perspective, language learning stories can be interpreted as the process of learner's self-development in which sense of self is constructed, maintained and changed through negotiating with different social relations, especially for international students in a culturally and geographically distant society.

Investment in the imagined community. Since Anderson (1991) coined the term "imagined community," it is widely recognized that the role of imagination in building the concrete

relationship in community practice because imagination can "create new images of the world and ourselves" (Wenger, 1998, p.176). In other words, individual investment in imagined community strengthens his ties with a possible world, and thereby reinforces an imagined identity. Similarly, when second language learners devote their energy and resources to speak a particular language rather than their mother tongue, it is to build the potential connection between themselves and the linguistic community. Thus, Kanno and Norton (2003) extended the notion of imagined community in applied linguistic research and argue that "[second language] learning … is part of changing participation patterns in various communities with shared practices" (p. 242). Here, individual interaction itself works to shape an imagined community. The reconceptualization of imagined communities refers to not only solid relationships in real life but also future relationships that only exist in the learner's imagination, and both of them do have profound impacts on learner's learning trajectories and feelings of belonging. Imagined communities include national community, local community, religious community and professional community. For instance, Norton (2000) described an adult second language learner's nonparticipation experiences in ESL classroom in Canada. The adult learner is Katarina, who was a teacher in Poland before immigrating to Canada. She dropped her ESL course because the ESL teacher said that her English is not "good enough" to learn professional courses. Norton analyzes the nonparticipation resulting from the disjuncture that ESL teacher denied Katarina's access to an imagined community of professionals. Thus, for second language learners, acquiring membership in a desired and imagined target language community is a part of the valued output produced by their investment strategies. Consequently, examining construction or participation in the imagined community offers a way to explore the identity dimension of linguistic investment.

After examining the reconceptualization of imagined community, we may turn to reflect

on how the metaphor of investment offers an alternative thought on discussions of integration. It reveals that the nature of integration is a choice, the empowerment process, rather than a pressure-reaction passive process. It is through this metaphor that we appreciate how Chinese international students position themselves as an investor for the enhancement of cultural capital and their career future in the host society. This will allow a better understanding of the relationship between second language acquisition and identity formation.

CHAPTER 2 Research Questions and Research Method

Study Objectives and Research Questions

This study is centrally concerned with analyzing integration experiences of international students who migrated from a non-western cultural context, China, and who have been employed in different groups, such as financial institution, the manufacturing sector, medical laboratory and IT company, of the labor market in Windsor. The primary purpose of this study is to contribute to the scholarship on international students. I first seek to examine how international students develop their social network and language ability, and how the differential relationship between them affects their personalized experiences of the integration process. So this is a question of asking what kind of investment they are putting in. Secondly, I aim to examine the way in which international students as ESL learners integrate into university, labor market and Canadian society. So this is a question of investment return. Last, I seek to provide a discussion on how being a bilingual affects experience of education-work transition. This part allows me to look at the relationship between input and output, thereby evaluating the usefulness of the concept of investment. Before presenting research questions guiding this dissertation, I will briefly state the importance of researching their integration experiences.

While the studies as mentioned above give us a bright idea of the reciprocal relationship between obstacles, especially limited second language (English) ability, faced by international students and limited access to social network, there is little information from the perspective of international students. Consequently, we know far less from their perspective as well as how they interpret and negotiate with these experiences. Furthermore, while preceding scholarship has studied the importance of language ability for international students, the role of second language acquisition in identity formation during a period of integration and how the character intersects

with other factors, such as ethnicity, education, gender, initial English proficiency, have not been adequately explored. Besides, much of existing scholarship on international students have focused on cultural adaptation occurred in the first phase of transition, but has paid little attention to challenges regarding language and identity faced in the second phase (education-work phase) of development (Noels & Berry, 2016). Given that international graduates trained in Canada seem to be immigrant candidates, rather than transitional, the necessity of expanding on the little knowledge of the second phase is particularly relevant to Canadian society or imagined Canadian community. Therefore I seek to fill the gaps in the scholarship through this thesis.

In light of these objectives, the primary research question on this study is as follows: How do language learning and identity formation intersect and shape integration trajectories of international students from China to Canada? I examine this question by formulating the following sub-questions:

1. What is the motivation behind participants' decision to acquire English as a second language on campus and off campus?

2. How is the ESL learning experience influenced by or influences the process of academic, social and economic integration in host society?

3. To what extent do the participants view second language learning as a kind of investment for the career future, a larger social network or membership of an imagined community?

4. What's the role of the first language in the process of integrating into a second language dominant society?

Research Methods and Design

  Methodological considerations. From the beginning of my research design, the critical methodological question is: what kind of research enables me to investigate the relationship between second language learner and social world in which language practices perform. Since the concept of identity is defined as multidimensional and fluid, a quantitative paradigm based on positivism or post-positivism may be less helpful. Moreover, the strength of qualitative research lies in researcher's self-reflexivity and thick description, which is sensitive to the complexity and subjectivity of the scene (Tracy, 2013). For these reasons, methods employed in my research tend to be qualitative, rather than quantitative, and draw on cultural studies and international student mobility research.

  Research method. In this research, I adopted semi-structured interview as the method to collect data, which was conducted between January and February of 2018 in Windsor. These interviews sought the participants' reflection on three areas of the study: (a) the initial newcomer experience; (b) graduates' adoption of and experiences of ESL in their daily life; (c) their social and career experience as part of their integration into Canadian society. To situate participants' experiences in a broader context, they were asked to reflect on their ESL experience in China, future career plan and their attitudes towards bilingualism and multiculturalism (see Appendix A). According to Holstein and Gubrium's (1995), the term of "active interview" emphasizes that interviews are reality-constructing, meaning making occasions, i.e., social constructionist approach. Regarding interview procedures, the active interview might be appropriate to the topics that relate to subjective interpretation. Therefore, my research method applies to active interview.

  Sampling. Creswell (1994) argued, "the idea of qualitative research is to purposefully select informants that will best answer the research question" (p. 148). Considering the purpose of

this study, investigation of integration experience of Chinese graduates from a Canadian University -- University of Windsor who are employed, I used snowball sampling to recruit participants. The criteria for inclusion are as follows:

1. Being born and raised in China

2. Graduate from a Canadian University -- University of Windsor with any degree.

3. Being currently employed in Windsor and/or having had not more than two year of employment experience in Windsor after graduation.

The nature of active interview reminds me that sampling is an ongoing process, so during the process of data collection I ask myself the question continuously "how many participants I should recruit to carry out this project". Harry Wolcott (2012) provided an answer of "how many" "you keep asking as long as you are getting different answers, and that is a reminder that with our little samples we can't establish frequencies but we should be able to find the RANGE of responses" (as cited in Baker & Edwards, 2012, p. 4). Therefore, for Wolcott and many research method experts, saturation is the key for qualitative research. After combining data collection and data analysis, rather than separating them in a linear process, I found the answers offered by six respondents can cover the main point of this project, and consequently the number of participant is determined as six, which is also in line with practical consideration, like resource and timeline.

Data collection and recruitment strategies. To recruit the participants, I used passive snowball sampling: the primary investigator (PI) approached individuals in Chinese community who are not themselves eligible to participate in this project but to distribute business card (see Appendix C) for snowball sampling. Interested participants contacted the PI to ask any question and scheduled an interview. Upon completion of the interview, participants were given additional

business cards to distribute to other potential participants. Interviews were scheduled at the participants' convenience and in a location of their choice. All interviews were conducted in Mandarin based on their language preference.

During the process of interview, the PI made the audio recordings to capture the content of five interviews accurately. One participant did not agree to be audio recorded, so PI took extensive note and wrote the notes up in descriptive language, which was accomplished within 6 hours after the interview. The content of the writing includes: describing the details of setting, recording the researcher's impression, detailing the questions inspired by the interview. The aim of adoption of electronic instruments and ethnographic writing is to permit the production of thick description.

Research participants. The target population of my research is Chinese international students who arrive in Windsor to pursue post-secondary education and then live in Windsor. In other words, participants include Chinese students once registered in a Canadian University -- University of Windsor and then worked in Windsor for one-two years. The aim of recruiting graduates is to explore the second phase, education-work transition.

During my fieldwork, I conducted six interviews with Chinese international graduates from a Canadian University -- University of Windsor. At the time of the interview, four of the participants self-identified as fluent English speakers and the remaining two self-identified as non-fluent English speakers for whom language barrier exists in their daily life.

Table 1 provides an overview of the six participants, in terms of their gender, age, profession, current occupation, residence time, education level, self-identified proficiency in English. The detailed description of every participant is in the following paragraphs.

Table 1

The Description of Participant Characteristics

	Fluent English Speaker	Non Fluent English Speaker
Gender		
Female	3	2
Male	1	
Age		
Between 20-25	2	2
Between 26-30	2	
Education Level		
Undergraduate	4	
Graduate		2
Major		
Arts	1	
Business	2	
Engineer	1	1
Science		1
Current Occupation		
Accountant	1	
Customer Manager	1	
Front desk	1	
Dealer	1	
Sale		1
Software developer		1
Residence time in Canada		
3 years		2
5 years	1	
6 years	3	

The personal histories and ESL learning experience of six participants are briefly

introduced in two groups with different English proficiency.

The group one in which those who self-identified as a non-fluent English speaker at the time of interview consists of two participants:

Amelia (female, 26) chose to continue her engineer graduate program at a Canadian University as a substitute for career plan after finishing the undergraduate program in China. She recognized the value of formal local ESL learning experience allowing her to know her fiancé, and she was the only participant who built the romantic relationship with ESL classmate till the time of interview. Although she had no interest in her graduate program, she acquired her Master Degree in 2016. After graduation, she worked as a sale person and enjoyed the bilingual work environment and flexible work plan that let her keep a connection with her local Chinese friends. Fabia (female, 25) majored in computer science at the undergraduate level in China and graduate level in Canada. The composition of her local friends was classmates mainly from China and one from Japan. She did not have English speaking friends on campus because she could not remember the differences between "their faces." After graduation, she worked as a software engineer in Windsor. Colleagues mainly communicate with each other in computer language, code, through email or presentation. She attributes her unsatisfactory English proficiency to the limited usage of English in her professional learning and workplace. She has found a position in Toronto, so she enjoyed her online social life with Chinese friends in Toronto and had no interest in developing friends in the local community through English.

Group two is made up of four participants who self-identified as a fluent English speaker at the time of interview:

Although Beth (female, 24) is the only participant who has relatives living in Windsor, who offered the emotional support for her initial adaptation, she still found that making with

English speaking friends was difficult. With the improvement of English ability, Beth achieved excellent academic performance as an undergraduate student in the science department and outstanding work performance as a customer manager in a local bank. She emphasizes her achievement in the workplace is related to her interethnic friendship with colleagues and clients, which is different from the way of her academic performance which is built on loose connection with other classmates. Her boyfriend comes from Taiwan shared with the same first language, so Beth enjoys the bilingual (Chinese and English) in personal life.

After receiving one of her family member's financial support, Christina (female, 27) resigned her job as an ESL teacher in Southeast Asia and registered in undergraduate courses in Faculty of Arts at A Canadian University. Christina has been confident in her English ability except for her accent and intercultural communication ability because her English instructors didn't have a learning experience in English speaking country. She broadened her social network through personal ways of interaction, like posting language advertisement on Kijiji, so the composition of her friends is diverse. After arriving in Canada five years ago, she views herself as a successful immigrant because she is a fluent English speaker. On the day of acquiring PR (permanent residence) status, she held two parties to celebrate her success in the advancement of citizenship and development of the social network in two linguistic communities. Christina worked as an accountant in the manufacturing sector, in which English is the working language.

On the one hand, Daniel (male, 25) envies individuals who have formal local ESL learning experiences that make more opportunities for him/her to make friends on campus. On the other hand, Daniel is proud of his rich social and career experience after graduation, so he prefers to be seen as "a different Daniel in Windsor," rather than an "average Chinese." His feelings of "being unique" come from his successful economic integration and strategic combination of professional

English in three workplaces, sushi bar, pawn shop and car dealer, after graduation. He emphasizes that because of his rich experience in language and interpersonal relationships, he is not afraid of any change regarding future work life.

Emily (female, 24) entered a Canadian University as an exchange undergraduate student majoring Business. After graduation, she relied on her friend within one religious community to find a front desk position at a clinic, which is also her current job. She is the only one who expressed her religious affiliation and its impact on her learning, work and social life in the process of interview. She emphasizes that one of her purposes of ESL learning is to read English version of Bible and attend English speaking religious activities. Emily has nearly two-years of ESL learning experience in ESL school in China and Canada, but she acknowledges her improvement of English mainly occurred in the religious community and workplace after graduation.

Research ethics. This study was reviewed and approved by University of Windsor Research Ethics Board. Four risks associated with group vulnerability and methods used in this research are (see Appendix B): firstly, there may be some psychological risk related to methods used in this research. The participants may recall the obstacles encountered in the process of learning English and education-work transition. Some of the interview questions (see Appendix A) may provoke situations in which they feel uncomfortable. Secondly, regarding social risk, there exists the possibility of loss of reputation resulting from disclosure of the obstacles participants encountered. Thirdly, regarding dual relationships identified, the risks include being a colleague or acquaintance of the PI or supervisor. Fourthly, regarding data security, there may be risk associated with loss of data collection device (digital recorder) by accident.

To manage each of the potential risks described above, four strategies are adopted: firstly, Interview procedure is explained to participant in advance, and they are informed of their right to

refuse to answer any specific questions, and they can terminate the interview at any time. The potential risk provoked by the issues may be minimal. In other words, the strict following of procedure of methods adopted can minimize the potential risk. Secondly, to avoid social risk, when the PI recruits participant, he introduced the project briefly and avoided negative words such as obstacles, problems. When the PI did the interview, he used the individual room in the university library to conduct interviews to maintain privacy during the interview. Thirdly, to manage the risks associated with dual roles, researchers adopted strategies as follow: the PI approached individuals who are not eligible for participation but can conduct snowball sampling by distributing business cards. Interested potential participants contacted the PI. Then the potential participants can decide whether to participate in this project voluntarily. Fourthly, the PI uses the same digital recorder until the data is deleted in this device. There is no real name or contact information contained in the audio document, so the accident of loss of digital recorder has no impact on the privacy of participants.

Data analysis. Given the unconventional nature of the method adopted in this research, it requires me to be sensitive to both process and content. Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) concept of "active interview" reminded me that analyzing data concerning active interview is more "artful" than "scientific." I understand the utterance as a claiming emphasizing the importance of artful capacity to put the pieces available together. In qualitative data analysis toolbox, it is called "bricolage approach" (Kincheloe, 2001; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In the approach, the subject is foregrounded which is consistent with my theoretical framework.

In an identity approach to second language learning, there has been a robust methodological focus on narratives (Norton, 2013). Many scholars view the focus as a part of "social turn" in applied linguistics because it excels in revealing the complicated relationship between subjective

sense and objective relationship. I support Pavlenko's (2001) position and consider utilizing thematic analysis and narrative analysis in my research, which offers a new understanding of social-psychological dynamics (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013) of second language experiences.

CHAPTER 3 ESL Experience as an Essential Aspect of Integration Process

Analysis of data shows that English learning and usage is an essential aspect of integration process when participants arrive in Canada. The ESL experience is deeply tied to the pursuit of postsecondary education, development of social networks, acquiring permanent residence status and attachment to Canada, as the negative factor (language barrier) or decisive factor (adequate English proficiency) mediating the opportunities and limitation on the process of integration. In the first subsection, I overview ESL experience as an essential part of three aspects of integration experience. In the second subsection, I focus upon the relationship between ESL experience and social connections and participation. As indicated earlier, in the substantial research on international students and their college experience. The language barrier is identified as among the most prominent obstacles affecting international students' integration on campus. This chapter tries to depict when and how the connection between language proficiency and integration processes becomes positive both in academic and nonacademic settings.

Within the investment framework, English proficiency as well as other resources available to individuals jointly produce the desired output. Considering the complexity of social conditions, the participants adopt different investment strategies to navigate themselves in the process of academic integration, economic integration and social integration. If their investment strategies prove successful, the positive result in turn contributes to the improvement of proficiency in English. Otherwise, the language ability and the process of integration remain the same until new resources are available. Therefore, investment is an indicator of an ongoing negotiation with the changing social world. And graduates' transition from education to work exemplifies that integration into host society is a long term personalized process.

Participants' English Fluency and Attitudes

An overview of the enhancement of participants' English proficiency and the change of their attitudes towards adoption of English is offered for an understanding of ESL learner's perspective of three aspects of integration (academic, social and economic).

Firstly, the increase of the number of participants (self-assessed English fluency) from initial move to Canada reflects the enhancement of participants' English speaking experiences. Among six participants involved in this project, four of them (Amelia, Beth, Emily, Fabia) describe their English ability upon arrival as unqualified for the admission requirement for undergraduate/graduate program at A Canadian University, so they had to attend ESL school to learn English course prior to professional university study. And two of them (Christina and Daniel) are qualified for the admission requirement, so they didn't have local formal ESL school learning experience. After four to six years' learning and work in English speaking environment, four participants--Christina, Daniel, Emily and Beth-- describe themselves as fluent English speakers, the remaining two participants with ESL experience--Amelia and Fabia-- do not identify themselves as such because of residence time in Canada and work environment, and consequently acknowledge the language barrier still exists in their life.

Secondly, all of the participants state that they know the importance of English ability in Canadian public settings or formal situation, but some of them question the essential role of English in personal life. In the formal situation, for example, the importance is embedded in the approval of study permit from CIC (Citizenship and Immigration Canada) which is based on qualified English proficiency test result or admission letter from ESL school. It not only contains the required documents for arriving Canada qualified English test score but also for staying in Canada, such as applying for permanent resident status, citizenship. Therefore, Christina views

proficiency in English as an indicator of a successful immigrant. However, English does not always serve as an essential part of participant's personal life. For Amelia, she acknowledges that "Only when I meet a foreign colleague, I say hello to him/her in English. Otherwise I communicate with others in Chinese". So she questions the possibility for her to become a fluent English speaker in the near future.

Participants' different attitudes reflect that the importance of adoption of English in public settings (educational institutional, workplace) reaches a consensus among them, but the role of English in private sphere (personal life) is ambivalent, which cause different impacts on three aspects of integration. For all the participants, there are prominent advances in academic integration (public sphere), which is related to considerable linguistic investment or development of communicative competence. The progression of economic integration (public setting) reflects the investment made by participants with adequate English proficiency and alternative strategies adopted by the remaining participants. The degree to which the participant involved in the local network (private sphere) is mediated by the form of ESL learning, proficiency of English, social background and residence of time in the host society, which will be examined through four types of social integration patterns.

Three Aspects of Integration into Host Society

To analyze how the ESL experience serves as an essential part of integration experience, I focus on the relationship between ESL experience and academic integration, economic integration and social integration respectively.

Academic integration. As for academic integration, all the participants, with adequate or inadequate English proficiency, invest considerably to integrate into the new academic environment as they met the challenges of getting Canadian credentials at the undergraduate

level or graduate level. For example, Emily vividly describes her anxiety of language incapacity

when there was an oral presentation in her sophomore class.

> When it was my study group's turn, I prayed that the instructor never asked me to
>
> introduce the group's opinion on an issue of human resource management. If my prayer
>
> did work, I would feel secure. Otherwise, I had to take a deep breath before saying
>
> something.

Daniel expresses similar pressure when he describes his first-semester- course experience

because of unfamiliar academic environment and communication way. In other words, language

barrier or the fear of language barrier has an impact on all the participants' academic learning in

the period of adaptation. Because of the differential level of English ability, every participant's

ESL learning trajectories are different. Emily spent half a year in ESL school to get a qualified

English test score to meet the admission requirement of the undergraduate program. Before

attending Windsor's ESL course, she spent nearly a year learning ESL in China. Regardless of

Canadian ESL course or Chinese ESL course, the learning task is similar for her. Her concern is

how to grasp the grammar to organize her sentences correctly, so she feels "it's like learning the

same thing in different places with different classmates." Fabia expresses a similar opinion; she

tried to overcome the language barrier in ESL school like doing her math assignments with

different formulas. Christina had been confident in her English ability except for her accent and

intercultural communication ability because she learned her English from non-native instructors

with no experience in English-speaking cultural context. There are some stories regarding

misunderstanding the cultural meaning of certain words in English that embarrassed her for nearly

the whole first month after arriving in Windsor. Such embarrassing events pushed her to solve the

communication problems one by one through getting advice or feedback from friends or

acquaintance.

Through continuous efforts, the participants' academic performance caught up with their Canadian peers after the initial adaptation period. Beth served as a teaching assistant for two instructors because of her excellent performance as an undergraduate student. Christina got an A or A+ in all the courses she registered for and good comment in volunteer activities from organizers since the second academic year. The participants' success in Canadian academic integration is in line with the investigation of international student, especially from Asia, in an American context (Mamiseishvili, 2012). Mamiseishvili attributed their performance to the longer study time compared to their American peers, which contributed to their first-year adjustment to the American university and culture. For Mamiseishvili (2012), the definition of academic integration includes four aspects: participation in study groups, informal meeting with faculty, interaction with faculty outside of class and meeting with academic advisors.

There is the interview data from Daniel to support a broader definition of successful integration into academic institutions including not only the four aspects mentioned above but also successful communicative competence with faculty and staff in the formal setting. Daniel was confident of his grades and GPA. But he failed in the two courses he disliked in the third year. The issue was more severe than he assumed initially and he had to appeal to the department and the university to remain in the program. However, he prepared himself thoroughly by providing acceptable justifications and had an academic target and study plan. He was thus able to persuade the appeals committee consisting of five to seven members, including the vice dean of his academic department, faculty, counsel from judicial office to give him another opportunity to continue his study.

Economic integration. Integrating into the local labor market is the most severe issue for

international students after graduation. All participants recount that the nexus between postsecondary education and employment has been a primary concern. The barriers affecting the opportunities of employment post-graduation have been attributed to a range of reasons, including lacking Canadian work experience, cultural differences, and proficiency in English and communication skills. Blackmore et al. (2014) interviewed 107 Australian international students and found that poor communication ability and a lack of understanding of Australian cultures, such as human resource rules, disadvantaging most participants from securing employment. As for communication area, weak aspects included oral and written English ability and understanding of technical terminology.

For participants involved in this project, those who developed both the technical and non-technical skills, including adequate proficiency in English, for enhancing employability before graduation, overcame the high barrier. Two of them (Beth and Christina) who describe themselves as fluent English speakers found the professional positions related to their major by relying on their Canadian credential supplemented by successful interview skill and resume writing. For Daniel, his current job is his favorite position, and his professional knowledge contributes to his work performance as well. Amelia, Emily, and Fabia, who do not think their English is good enough, adopt different strategies to overcome language barrier in the workplace. Amelia uses Chinese as the primary work language and English as secondary work language. Emily is employed by her English speaking friend who would like to teach her how to communicate with patients and colleagues through English in the workplace. Fabia assumes her poor English language ability doesn't have the noticeable impact on her job, a software developer, because her primary work language is computer language, rather than spoken language, like English.

All of the participants acknowledge the positive relationship between proficiency in

English and job opportunities and work performance. For Daniel,

> The first job was being a part-time waiter at a sushi bar. Every Friday, Saturday and
>
> Sunday, it was my busiest time. This job offered an opportunity to practice my oral
>
> English, and let me know how to handle the situation where I meet the angry guests.

After graduation, Emily regretted the lack of part-time job work experience, thus the opportunity

to learn and practice English, and fears that it impacts not only her competitiveness in labor

market but also her academic performance on campus

> I didn't do any part-time job because of study pressure in the first year and second year.
>
> When I wanted to do a part-time job, it was near graduation. When I drafted my resume
>
> without any work experience I felt pressure...After graduation, sometimes I think If I got
>
> a part-time job earlier and exercised my oral English earlier, I might do better in my
>
> presentation in class.

From the excerpts listed above, we can see that the value of the first part-time job they

appreciate is mainly about gaining Canadian work experience and improvement of their English

ability, which contributes to their economic integration after graduation.

Therefore, the impact of English proficiency on most participants' first job is prominent,

which is recognized both by the employers and employees, or is at least perceived to be

significant. Participants as potential employees develop their strategies listed above to cope with

language requirements before and after graduation, sometimes which are not a language

improvement plan. In other words, although all participants acknowledge the importance of

adoption of English in the workplace, their investment strategies do not necessarily contain

linguistic considerations, if participants find a substitute resource for English proficiency.

   Initial social integration. Compared with the two forms mentioned above of

incorporation, the role of English in first social integration is not consistent because the construction of local networks is not necessarily occurred in English speaking community. The development of the first local network is mediated by social conditions, formal or informal ESL learning settings, which makes the participants adopt different investment strategies. Initial social integration stage in this thesis refers to the period of from arriving in Windsor to the completion of ESL school courses, which usually lasts for one month to half a year.

The importance of local networks for international students is embedded in not only helping students settle by providing settlement services but also help them feel at home through interacting with a core circle. In general, the local network among Chinese international students include ethno cultural associations (e.g., The Chinese Association of Greater Windsor), professional associations (e.g., professional development seminar) or religious associations (e.g., Windsor Alliance Church). But most of the participants did not mention his/her connection with any of these associations. Only Emily described her experience "There (a Chinese religious organization) are many people, but I cannot find the person with the similar age whom I can chat with." So she did not attend the organization's activities again. Therefore, the local network presented in this part are Chinese relatives and friends which facilitate participants' adaptation and integration. To be precise, a truly Windsor-based network was formed upon arrival by only two participants, Daniel and Fabia. Four other participants, Amelia, Beth, Christina, and Emily, were part of a social network built in China directing them to Windsor. Therefore, Chinese, rather than English, serves as the main communication language among most participants' network at the initial stage of social integration.

Firstly, Chinese friends facilitate participants' adaptation. Christina and Emily had friends living in Windsor before they came to Windsor. For Christina, the loose connection between her

and her friends through a Chinese version of Facebook offered the opportunities of learning some firsthand information about Canadian education reputation, public health system, approachable Canadian people and the possibility of applying for permanent residence after graduation. After receiving one of her family member's financial support, she resigned her job as an ESL teacher in Southeast Asia and registered as an undergraduate student in Windsor. For Emily, one of her main motivations of carrying out her study plan as an exchange student in Windsor, rather than in the United States, was the local Chinese friend's promise of living together in the same rented house, which made her feel at home. She recounted that she received her local friend's help including being picked up at the airport, being driven around to appreciate the city view, being advised how to communicate with local people and how to cross the road under Canadian road rules, etc..

Secondly, Chinese relatives facilitate participants' adaptation. At first, Beth lived with her uncle's family for one semester of ESL school. After finding that she had no problem with the required readings and writings, Beth tried to rely on her local network, his uncle's family, to find an English speaking friend, but it was unsuccessful. "My uncle brought me to the church, where attendants are all Chinese." Compared with Beth, Emily's relative was far away(she lived in Montreal) so she only had a regular online connection with her relatives through Chinese. Two years ago, it was her relative's advice that prompted Amelia to decide to study in Canada. Though her Montreal study plan failed, she still arrived in Windsor, with the idea that after graduation she could find a job in Montreal and lived with her relative.

In the development of the initial local network, the role of English serving as communication tool becomes prominent, which is mediated by two kinds of ESL experience: formally organized face to face interaction in ESL school and informal interaction outside of class. In other words, participants with local formal ESL experience have close connections with ESL

classmates because of the curriculum, which lets them know each other well, so they have interest in hanging out together on a regular basis. But two other participants (Christina and Daniel) didn't have such a close connection in the university's academic learning environment and therefore had to make friends outside of class one by one.

For example, Amelia could adopt formally organized face to face interaction in ESL school, so she had more opportunities for communication with her classmates. This period of interaction experience offered long-term emotional support for Amelia, and a chance to constitute her close circle before and after graduation to meet her fiancé.

> Right now (at the time of the interview), the composition of my friends is the ESL school classmates and university classmates. Among these friends, the closest friend is one classmate of ESL school who recommends the house where we live. After moving into the house, we often meet, and play billiards or mahjong. My fiancé and I are classmates of ESL school when we know each other... After graduation, we get engaged and settle down in Windsor.

This case is supported by the concept of propinquity (Quillian & Campbell, 2003). People tend to build friendships with people around them. There is a positive relationship between the time people spend together and the possibility of making friends between them.

For other participants who do not have formally organized face to face interaction opportunities, like Christina, they have to broaden the social network through informal ways of interaction. In other words, they have to find the people who would like to talk with them one by one. Before making local friends, Christina had been isolated from society, "feeling lonely and unhappy" for three months as a new comer. After she started to get in touch with an English speaking friend and tried to understand other people's ideas, she felt that the people around her

were kind to her, so she becomes happy again.

> To find a language tutor, I posted an English-Chinese exchange advertisement on kijiji. I received more than 30 emails, I randomly picked two people to start this plan. One of the two guys, an Indian, became my good friend... Since then, if I found some unknown words and he would teach me in a relaxed way. This learning experience gave me a deeper understanding of Canadian culture and Canadian people.

Through the two episodes listed above, we can see that participants in the first situation have more friends and much closer friendship than that in the second situation. The first situation offers not only the opportunities of interaction with each other but also a group to be involved in. The finding that people with local formal ESL experience have more interaction opportunities than those with informal ESL experience is supported by the concept of network elasticity (Lazer, 2001). Network elasticity is formed through interdependence structure, which assigns tasks to people and pushes people into a place where she/he has to interact with others for the mission. Kokkonen et al. (2014) compared the workplace as the typical site with interdependence structure with neighborhoods without formal interdependence structure. Because the former is a place with low network elasticity in which employee will be fired if he/she refuses to follow orders and work with the assigned colleague, and the latter is a place without authority to force people to cooperate with others. The workplace tends to offer more opportunities than neighborhood for people to interact with others. Consequently, frequent interactions develop into friendly relations.

Similarly, for some reasons, ESL school has more interaction possibilities than a university. Firstly, the courses designed in ESL school are highly structured, which mean there is little space for students to choose learning tasks or classmates. Secondly, the nature of learning language makes cooperation inevitable. Students must learn to work with an assigned classmate to finish

the learning tasks, such as a conversation. Thirdly, and relatedly, compared with university instructors, ESL school teachers assign more marks for cooperation. Together these factors suggest interdependence structures exist in both places, but the ESL school's network elasticity is much lower than that of the university and, consequently, participants in ESL school are more likely than those in university to have personal interactions.

Therefore, Daniel envies those who have ESL learning experience because this period offers learner more opportunities to make friends than in university. He assumed that the level of his English ability exempted him from ESL courses and also lost chances of making several potential friends. Therefore, Daniel questions the positive relationship between his proficiency in English and development of social networks. From the investment perspective, he is a fluent English speaker, which only reflects his language ability and communicative competence through English in public sphere, but it does not mean that he can create communication opportunities in private domain for himself without structural engagement. So the advancement of Daniel's academic integration was fast because of his English proficiency, but in the following two years, his close circle of friends was only Chinese international students because of his willingness to disinvest in English.

From the construction of local networks, we can see that students' crossing national boundaries into a dominant English society does not mean their personal life will involve an English speaking community at the initial stage of social integration. As the development of the local network, the role of English serving as communication tool becomes prominent, and investing in English is mediated by social conditions.

The implications brought by the analysis of initial social integration also include that language barrier is not necessarily a negative factor for integration into the host society. When it

becomes a connection between individuals, like a task shared with others, a scenario in which involved with each other, it plays a decisive role in the construction of interpersonal relationships. In other words, infrastructure for ESL learning mobilizes lack of proficiency as a resource for facilitating integration. This point will get additional support from the following analysis of the relationship between social connections and social participation and ability in English.

ESL Learners' Social Connections and Social Participations

Before analyzing participants' social connection and social participation experiences, it is necessary to point out that the definition of social integration is operationalized in two different ways in scholarship on international students. According to Mamiseishvili (2012), social integration within education systems includes three aspects: participation in school clubs, participation in school sports and participation in fine arts activities. Hutteman et al. (2015) rated participants' social inclusion on six items:

1. All in all there are not many people here that really like me.

2. On the weekends I am frequently out with friends.

3. I have people outside of my host family I can rely on.

4. I have friends around me.

5. Other people invite me to leisure time activities.

6. Getting to know peers is difficult for me.

The former perspective pays attention to the western culture oriented activities or organized activities, and the latter perspective focuses on the interactions on the individual's basis. None of my participants expressed his/her interest or experience in the western culture oriented or organized social activities on campus, and only Emily provided an answer to this question, "I don't

know why, but they (organized social activities) did not attract my attention." But some of the participants participated in such activities after graduation. The meaning of non-institutional social connections in the subsection without ESL school structural engagement lies in recognizing resources and social capital offered by non-institutional social networks (Rose-Redwood, CindyAnn R., & Rose-Redwood, Reuben S., 2013). Therefore, I adopt the second non-institutional perspective for analysis of social connection data before graduation but after the initial stage and take both institutional and non-institutional aspects for analysis of graduates' social connection and participation data.

Various conceptual toolkits have been developed to describe social interaction pattern and stages among international students (Jacobson, 1963; Lambert & Bressler, 1956; Lysgaard, 1955). According to Rose-Redwood et al. (2013), to broaden a narrowly defined social capital from an internationalist perspective, the Social Interaction Continuum Model of the International Student Experience (SICMISE) was developed to emphasize the meaningful friendship between international students and co-nationals and students from various countries. Rose-Redwood et al. (2013) argued that the SICMISE model reflects a diverse array of interaction patterns commonly encountered in higher education institutions. The SICMISE model is made up of four categories: type oneself -- segregators, type two -- exclusive global mixers, type three -- inclusive global mixers, and type four -- host interactors (Figure 1). 38% of participants involved in Rose-Redwood et al.'s study can be categorized as type two exclusive global mixers, the highest percentage among four categories, and type four host interactors is the lowest type, 7%.

Type 1: Self-Segregators	Type 2: Exclusive Global Mixers		Type 3: Inclusive Global Mixers	Type 4: Host Interactors
27%	38%		28%	7%
Socially interact only with conationals, excluding other internationals and host nationals	Socially interact only with conationals and other internationals, excluding host nationals		Socially interact with a mix of conationals, other internationals and host nationals	Socially interact only with conationals and host nationals, excluding other internationals
	Ethnic Global Mixers	**International Global Mixers**		
	Socially interact only with conationals and ethnically similar internationals, excluding other internationals and host nationals	Socially interact only with conationals and a range of other internationals, excluding host nationals		

FIGURE 1. A Social Interaction Continuum Model of the International Student

Experience (SICMISE) Showing Distribution of International Graduate Students at a

Mid-Atlantic University. Adapted from *Self-Segregation or Global Mixing?: Social Interactions*

and the International Student Experience, by Rose-Redwood et al. (2013). *Journal of College*

Student Development, 54(4), 419. Copyright [2013] by American College Personnel Association

Journal. Adapted with permission.

        Based on the interview data collected, the SICMISE model was adopted to explore the

big picture of participants' social connections and participation and in which proficiency in

English was a factor. In the application of SICMISE model (Figure 2), stage one, upon arrival,

refers to the period of from arriving in Windsor to the completion of academic integration, which

usually lasts for one to two years. The aforementioned initial social integration stage is the

beginning of stage one. Stage two refers to the period of from completion of stage one to

graduation from university. Stage three refers to the period of from commencement until the time of interview.

According to the data filled into the Figure 2, we can see all of the participants belonged to type oneself-segregators at stage one, regardless of their English proficiency. Only Daniel and Christina as the fluent English speakers switched into type two exclusive global mixers at stage two. After graduation, entering into stage three, all of the participants no longer belonged to the type oneself-segregators, but the participants, Beth, Daniel and Christina, who demonstrate their English proficiency switched into type three inclusive global mixers, and the others switch into type two exclusive global mixers. There is no data supported participants in accord with characteristics of class four.

After a review of the changes in different stages, we can see that the building of mutual relationship between English proficiency and integration type starts from stage two. The maintenance of this relationship contributes to the shift of participants from type two exclusive global mixers to type three inclusive global mixers and from type oneself-segregators to type two select global mixers respectively at stage three.

Based on these findings, I conclude that the participants with adequate English proficiency in academic and professional settings have switch types more quickly. Participants with language barriers advance much slower, and some of them may be trapped into the first or second type.

FIGURE 2. *The Social Interaction Continuum Model of the International Student Experience*

*(SICMISE) showing participants involved in this projec*t

	Type 1 Self-Segregators	Type 2: Exclusive Global Mixers		Type 3: Inclusive Global Mixers	Type 4: Host Interactors
Numbers of participants	6	0		0	0
Stage1: Upon arrival	Amelia Beth Christina Daniel Emily Fabia	**Ethnic Global Mixers**	**International Global Mixers**		
Numbers of participants	3	3		0	0
Stage2: On campus/ at higher education settings	Amelia Emily Fabia	**Ethnic Global Mixers**	**International Global Mixers**		
		Beth	Daniel Christina		
Numbers of participants	0	3		3	0
Stage3: after graduation/ at non higher education settings		**Ethnic Global Mixers**	**International Global Mixers**	Beth Christina Daniel	
		Amelia Fabia	Emily		

Type 1: self-segregator. All the participants as newcomers can be categorized as type one

self-segregator under the working definition of SICMISE model. When asked about their first impression of Windsor, they describe their feelings with negative words. Most participants (Amelia, Daniel, Emily, and Fabia) had limited international travel experience before registering at the university. They expressed concern over negative impressions of circumstance, such as a dull city, disappointed in cultural life and ethnic food choice, inconvenient public transport. For Beth who had travel experience outside of China, her concern was with unhappy interactional experiences with local people on campus, which was related to language barriers and cultural background.

> Several years ago, Beth witnessed a scenario that she can not forget,
>
> I registered for a course at the university. The instructor divided the students of different races into a group, but something unpleasant happened. In one group, a white boy told the instructor that he doesn't want to be in the group with another Chinese girl, because he cannot understand her, which will affect the group's performance. The Chinese girl in that group felt wronged. The instructor immediately dealt with the contradiction and switched the boy to another group of English-speaking members.

At the time of the interview, Beth had graduated from a Canadian University two years before but she can still remember her feelings at that moment "seeing the scenario, I thought that living here is more difficult than I expected," when she was a first-year student at the university. It had a negative impact on her interaction with local students. She was afraid of becoming the target in the similar scenario because of her English ability. So she didn't go to local bars that are assumed to be the leisure place for White people until she thought she had adequate proficiency in English. From this case, we can see that anticipation of a negative response to her English proficiency shaped how she invested in interaction on campus which in turn limited the diversity of her

learning activities and extracurricular activities. Consequently, she didn't have any close friends who were local students until graduation. An example raised by Rose-Redwood et al. (2013) also depicted similar scenario, "Yen-Hsin, a Taiwanese graduate student, described one specific case in which a verbal misunderstanding resulted in an uncomfortable interaction with an American graduate student."

When participants reflected on the composition of their friends on campus, they assumed that their friends are nationals. As for the reasons, the participants list some factors, including shared linguistic and cultural background. Emily's concern is similar economic status based on shared linguistic and cultural foundation:

> For convenience of communication, we (Emily and her Chinese friends) were always together for studying or leisure. I often went out to travel, mainly with Chinese students, because the Chinese students are dependent on parents' financial support, including the travel cost. But the local students are economically independent. They have to work to pay for their expenses. If they don't have a budget or a period of free time, they won't travel.

Two factors shared linguistic and cultural background, indicate the principles of building a core circle of friends are similarity and familiarity. Therefore, their network consists of Mandarin speakers, without an English speaker. In other words, they enter into a familiar world to the newcomers in a host environment. The ethnically homogenous friendship network (classmates, roommates, relatives) is described as "ethnic bubble," which offers a "linguistic and cultural shock absorber for newcomers" (Colic-Peisker, 2002, p. 156).

Type 2: exclusive global mixer. From an institutional perspective, all the participants did not integrate into Canadian university at stage two because of their isolation from mainstream

Canadian society. But from an international perspective, some of these participants who excluded

Canadian students from their social network did interact with other international students from

various countries. According to the SICMISE model, participants with characteristics mentioned

above can be termed a global mixer. Compared with stage one, participants with a high level of

English ability, Christina, and Daniel, become global mixers. This change can be supported by the

investigation conducted by Rose-Redwood et al. (2013) "More of them (global mixer) were men

(57%), and although they each had distinct accents, they all spoke English relatively well and thus

had fewer language barriers than the self-segregators" (p. 421).

    Ethnic global mixer. Since witnessing the discrimination issue occurred in the classroom,

Beth's interaction with Canadian peers limited communication to the level of saying hello on

campus or academic discussion in the study group.

> The guys in my study group are accommodating. They understand the difference
>
> regarding communication between native speaker and ESL learners, so they will say
>
> twice or explain it from another perspective if I cannot get the point during the discussion

When talking about the romantic relationship on campus, she acknowledges that there did exist

the potential English candidate for dating with:

> I have a lot of opportunities to choose, for example, to date with foreigners, but after
>
> thinking twice, I cannot endure spending the rest of my life living in an environment
>
> without Chinese. I will feel very painful. So I don't want to fall in love with foreigners or
>
> get married to one of them.

For Beth, her belief of love and romance is rooted in "comprehensive understanding occurring

between two people shared similar language and culture". She assumes that countries in east

Asia, such as Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan, share a similar culture in writing system, the

way of expressing feelings, food preference, life style etc.. But western culture is completely different, for example, Beth does not find any interest in college party and alcohol consumption that are favored by her Canadian cohort. Finally, she is in a romantic relationship with a Taiwanese man she met here. Rose-Redwood et al. (2013) summarized the behavior pattern of ethnic global mixer as cultural essentialist that forms the bounded social networks of ethnic solidarity. And Rose-Redwood et al. raised Taiwanese graduate student Tse-Chuan's saying as evidence, "I'm not really, you know, fit in this [American] culture, nor do I want to change my original culture, my style. . . .This is cultural, I respect you, but I have my own culture" (p. 422).

International global mixer. Compared with ethnic global mixers, the composition of international global mixer's friend is much more diverse, including people from countries of both with ethnic similarity and without similarity, but still excludes the host population. Unlike ethnic global mixers, international global mixers would like to embrace different cultures based on individualistic value. Christina describes her affinity with a retired professor, a second-generation immigrant, by noting that:

> When I studied on campus one afternoon, I met an old professor, who is a second-generation immigrant from Yugoslavia, and his wife is a Chinese, so he had a special understanding of the experience as a newcomer in Canada. He offered lots of help, such as English writing help, recommendation for a part-time job, advice on workplace culture, to me in the following months and I called him my grandpa.

Arriving in Canada with a clear immigrant plan, Christina developed close friendships with people with a shared immigrant experience. She points out that she has a good relationship with international students from Egypt and Saudi Arabia because they also have the desire to improve proficiency in English for the purpose of integration into Canadian society. She assumes that the

shared experience is the foundation of understanding to each other, so she would like to make friends with students, faculty and immigrants shared integration experience from various countries.

> Interviewer: I think his (the retired professor) help to you is not only about introducing part-time work, it is equivalent to a private English teacher.
>
> Christina: I treat him as my life instructor. The grandfather is almost 65 years old. When he saw a little girl from a foreign country studying here, he tried his best to help her in almost all aspects. At the same time, he provided some insights and guidance on life planning. He would advise me to seek the help of others if he encounters problems that he cannot provide, such as workplace culture. After getting suggestions from others, he and I will analyze the suggestions.

For Daniel, his principle of making friends is to target people of similar social class and academic performance. He doesn't have any friends from the local population because of their poor math ability. When he describes one of his close friends, an Indian international student, what he describes is only the Indian friend's economic and social background and academic performance. There were no interaction details revealed.

Type 3: inclusive global mixer. After graduation, half of the participants (Beth, Christina, Daniel) develop their social connections and social participation into the type three inclusive global mixer, which is related to their adequate English ability. For the remaining three participants, after negotiating with different social backgrounds and personal histories, they did not switch to type three. For Emily, her primary concern was the work environment where she has to keep a distance from other clients or colleagues in case of uncomfortable interaction experiences, such as complaints, or discrimination, which limits the possibility of construction of interethnic friendship

in the workplace. For Fabia, she has found the prospective position in Toronto, so she enjoys her online social life with Chinese and Japanese friends living in Toronto and has no interest in developing friends in the local community through English. For Amelia, her manager, clients, and close friends are all Chinese speakers living in Windsor, and the communication way between them is WeChat, a Chinese version of Facebook, and she enjoys living with co-nationals and similar ethnic friends, so there is little possibility for her to become an inclusive global mixer.

The main difference between type three inclusive global mixers and type two international global mixers is that the former includes the host population in their social network. For example, Daniel describes the composition of his new friends as clients and colleagues with whom he has the proper relationship in the workplace and outside of work,

> There are few colleagues in the same dealers become my friends. They are two white
>
> people, an Indian and an African. As for communication with these new friends, there is
>
> no problem for me.

Daniel thinks that the relationship between him and his colleagues is so close that they can make fun of each other by bad words, even "These words include the nickname of the Asians or the black or the white, but all of us can accept this." The only problem for them is food preference when they decide to eat the lunch together.

The main reason why inclusive global mixers have more interaction with host populations is that the composition of people in their workplace is diverse, including visible minorities and the host population. They have to cooperate with colleagues with a different ethnic background, which contributes to the construction of inter-ethnic friendships. Ethnic niches, by contrast, offer fewer opportunities for interacting with people with the different ethnic background than in such a diverse workplace. Daniel describes how he gives up his principle of

making friends and adopts a practical way of communication:

> My manager is an Indian, who has good leadership skills. I study sales skills and
>
> interpersonal skills under my manager's supervision… Our concern is sale performance.
>
> For us, there are only clients or potential clients, no other categories, such as
>
> foreigner/local people, middle class/lower class etc.. The way to communicate with a
>
> potential client who is white is the same as that of a Chinese guy… Now, there are three
>
> neighbors with different ethnic background become my clients.

Empirical studies support Daniel's description of interethnic friendship in the workplace. For example, Wagner et al. (2006) found a positive relationship between the frequency of contact with immigrants in the workplace and the rate of making immigrants as friends in Germany. Kokkonen et al. (2014) focused on the diverse workplaces and interethnic friendship formation by conducting a multilevel comparison across 21 OECD countries and concluded that "workplaces are important arenas for the integration between native- and foreign-born populations" (p, 301).

As one of the top 35 customer Managers in Ontario, Beth confirms the importance of cooperation of work in the maintenance of relationships in the workplace. She contributes her excellent work performance to her efforts and a good work culture in which she gets lots of help from colleagues.

> I am a new person here, and sometimes I have a problem to ask others how to solve it. I
>
> know that other colleagues have no obligation to help me, so I will invite colleagues to eat
>
> together, or drink milk tea together. As a customer manager, I have a cooperative
>
> relationship with the front desk. The front desk has the right to send drop-in customers to
>
> one among four customer managers. Because I have a good relationship with the front desk,
>
> I can get more customers from her, and finish the sales target ahead of time. L also help

the front desk to solve her problem. There is a common interest between us.

Beth is good at handling the interest oriented relationship which offers a solid foundation for her developing friendship with colleagues or clients in the workplace. To maintain the excellent connection for the work performance, she would like to solve any problems regarding communication. When she found that she had no idea of the content of the conversation that occurred among colleagues during the lunch break, she felt embarrassed and then began to view the mainstream movies and favorite leisure topics and use colleagues' favorite social software, "trying to blend into their culture." It is important to point out the importance of interest oriented relationship for participants' economic integration. Among six participants, only two people found their first job through their friends or social network. Both Canadian born people and immigrants usually find their job through loose connection or recommendation by a friend (Shields, 2010). One is Emily, who has the religious affiliation with the referee. Another one is Daniel, who spent four years to build a friendship with a sales manager. During the period, he brought at least ten friends to buy the car from the manager. The manager gave him the advice to prepare for some necessary professional certificates to enhance his resume. After graduation, when there was a position available in one dealership, the manager recommended Daniel to the employer. After the interview, Daniel got the position.

Another reason for more interaction between inclusive global mixers and the host population than other types of international students is that they would like to attend western cultural oriented activities, such as a party or a local bar. Rose-Redwood et al. (2013) raised an example of a Turkish graduate student who has an active social life involved in soccer playing on a regular basis with American and many international students from Latin America. For Daniel, the construction and maintenance of friendship with English-speaking bosses and colleagues also

include involvement of local bar culture.

> My foreign friends and I usually go to the bar. During the week between Christmas and
> New Year, my boss and I go out to drink after work every day. I find that the drinking
> method of foreigners is different from that of Chinese people. Varieties of wine are served
> together, beer, red wine, and spirit.

This excerpt indicates that the inclusive global mixer can find a cultural difference, and the difference doesn't have a negative impact on their interaction. Daniel can recognize the difference and enjoy it. For example, when asked the effects on his life being a fluent English speaker, Daniel adds "my boss always points out that my pronunciation of some words is not accurate. Sometimes I'd like to correct it, but sometimes it's just a kind of communication way, and we treat it as a joke." Here, the accent is not part of a language barrier which prevents Daniel from developing a friendship with his colleagues, but a part of a topic for daily communication between Daniel and his colleague which contributes to the maintenance of their friendship. For Beth, she also can recognize the difference and use it to make a comfortable conversation for excellent work performance. When she faces her client, she will choose the appropriate topic to talk with based on their cultural backgrounds. For example, Beth would like to select the subject of the wig with a female client from Nigeria. When she faces Indian customers, she will talk to them on issues of interest to them such as Indian movies, dancing or high-interest saving accounts. In the workplace, Beth also met one colleague whom she felt discriminates against Chinese, similar to the discrimination scenario that occurred on campus. However, as a fluent English speaker and an inclusive global mixer, Beth has the confidence to evaluate the bad attitudes of the colleague resulting from his mental health. Beth's belief is based on the emotional support provided by other colleagues with diverse ethnic background after discussing the uncomfortable issue with them. In

other words, she has found the coping mechanism through social connections to insulate herself against racism.

To sum up, for ESL learners, the mutual relationship between social connections and language proficiency starts after the initial stage and then gradually strengthens the bond between members of local networks. The meaning of the switch from self-segregator to a global ethnic mixer for the ESL learner is that language barriers serve as a connection between people with similar backgrounds, which contributes to the diversity of participants' social connection. It's also a combination of both of what they experience and how they respond to these experiences. However, the unfortunate communication experiences or discrimination issues have negative impacts on the learner's social connections, which causes the unwillingness of interacting with native English speakers. Therefore, the adoption of English and the use of English proficiency as investment resources in the private domain is much slower than that in public settings.

After graduation, as network elasticity decreases, participants with adequate English ability broaden their social connections and participation within English community, so they are labeled as inclusive global mixers. Whereas, for other participants, after negotiating with different social background and personal histories, they do not embrace the diversity of social connections. Therefore, English proficiency serves as both an indicator and mediating factor of the variety of social bonds and social participation.

CHAPTER 4 Linguistic Investment as an Access to Valued Resources and Community

Membership

In the context of debates around immigrant candidacy, language barriers and integration, Canadian identity and the value of bilingualism (including English/Chinese bilingualism), this chapter explores the identity function of ESL learning among Chinese graduates from A Canadian University. Within the linguistic investment framework, the ESL learning experiences contain individual's efforts to acquire the access to valued resources and community members in the host society. In this chapter, my starting point is the economic and non-economic value of English embedded in academic settings and the labor market, which offers highly valued resources to participants' economic and social integration.

At the same time, the opportunities and constraints produced by linguistic investment on the construction of identities reflect the nature of language learning as social practice, rather than only cognitive development. Therefore, the focus of the second part in this chapter is situated on the intersection of linguistic investment/disinvestment and acceptance/resistance of social identities, like workplace identity, ethnic identity, religious identity, in different interaction scenarios. The complexity of construction of social identity revealed here indicates that integration is a personalized process full of struggle. Interestingly, most of the participants take a similar stance, adopting bilingualism (English and Chinese) and being Chinese Canadian, for navigating the unsettling process.

While ESL investment links the participants together, their experience explanation of integration is diverse. In the following analysis, I will take into account their different socioeconomic, gender and professional backgrounds, and their initial fluency and its impact on self-identification to explore how investing in ESL are meaningful for their navigation in the host

society.

English as a Valued Resource

To look at the learning trajectories of ESL and how they link to the construction of social identity, it is necessary to learn about how ESL learners position themselves around the value of English. As the interviewer, I ask two questions regarding the motivation of learning English before and after arriving in Windsor. Firstly, I wondered what was the purpose of acquiring English in the country of origin, and most answers were about the academic dimension, like a required course, one subject of Gao Kao (Chinese college entrance examination) and secondary and postsecondary diploma requirements. Some of them mentioned viewing English as a communication tool for traveling and a skill for watching English movie or playing video games. When I asked the participants how important English is in their daily life in Windsor, all of them unanimously shifted their answers to say that adequate proficiency in English would offer them more job opportunities and more access to increased social and economic integration. Comparing responses provided in the Chinese context and Canadian context, the difference is the former only acknowledged the practical value and the latter recognizes the practical value and symbolic value that gives qualified learners access to individual resources.

Here is Christina's opinion of the importance of English in Windsor:

If one company has the international business or foreign clients, the bilingual ability may be viewed as a kind of asset by the employer. For example, in Windsor, there are more Chinese residents than ever, so almost every bank recruits one to two Chinese speakers, to offer more competitive service for potential Chinese customers. But for most industries without foreign clients, like accounting and other local industries, there is no advantage for bilingual. The working language is only English and being a fluent English speaker is one

of the core qualifications for this position. No one has interest in your Chinese ability in

the job interview.

From participant's perspective, English is not only a valued commodity, but also provides access

to other resource, like local labor market, space, information and people and in daily life. Christina

assumes that "making local friends through English is beneficial for my problem-solving ability

in my work life, such as the communication tips with the seniors, the safety tips in Windsor's daily

life, which cannot get from the interaction with Chinese speakers."

On the other hand, Chinese and other languages are viewed as a kind of additional language,

and their value depends on the circumstance. For Beth, a customer manager in a local bank in

Windsor, the critical factor of her interview is her confidence, professional knowledge and

adequate proficiency in English. After one year, when she wanted to get a promotion, she finally

finds the value of Chinese as a part of her promotion strategies,

The manager said that if I want to be promoted, I can only go to a branch located in a

Chinese community. I asked the manager that if it was because my English was very poor.

He said he didn't mean it. In a Chinese community, the bilingual capacity would be more

helpful for my performance than in an English-speaking community.

The finding is in line with the investigation of French language learning experience of nine

Canadian Youth with Italian origin conducted by Clark (2009) in Toronto. During the two-year

ethnographic study process, Clark (2009) examined the beliefs of the symbolic value of French as

an official language in the labor market. On the other hand, "Italian is positioned as an additional

language, not assigned as high a value in the linguistic market as Italian programs continue to be

phased out from local school boards" (p.118).

Inspired by the promotion mentioned above advice, in the time of interview Beth is also

aware of the additional value attached to several nonofficial languages, so she would like to promote her child's linguistic investment for the economic success in the future. "As for multilingual ability, I do not think that learning Chinese is important for living in Canada. I would say learning Arabic or Spanish is more helpful for knowing more people, acquiring more opportunities". In this case, not only Chinese but also Arabic and Spanish are positioned as supplementary to English. In other words, they are viewed as useful but not as valuable objectively or symbolically.

Among six participants, Amelia is an exceptional one because her main work language is Chinese as her clients and manager are all Chinese. English is the additional language to communicate with colleagues. Amelia describes the adoption of English in her daily life,

> I use English occasionally. Only when I meet a foreign colleague, I will say hello to him/her in English, or we discuss business in English. Otherwise, I communicate with people surrounding myself in Chinese.

When she describes her communication experiences through English in the workplace, she summarizes as "not going well." She proposed advice for a customer to get the new customer discount. But she is disappointed in the outcome of communication with her foreign colleague. Relying on her manager, a fluent English speaker, for negotiation with other departments, her proposal is finally adopted by the company. Amelia believes that the origin of her excellent idea was in Chinese language and culture, whereas the objection from her colleagues is the result of thinking pattern of an English speaker.

Although Amelia does not mention any positive communication experiences through English in the workplace, she expresses her preference of being employed by the company using English as the primary work language, because "English is the official language in Canada. If I

work in such an English dominant company, I feel that it's more reliable, which means a better work environment and more salary than in a Chinese environment."

Here, the keyword, reliable, is another version of access to valued resources. Amelia's preference highlights the symbolic value of English in Windsor local job market and reflects the social reality of how the employer perpetuates the importance of official language, English ability, through recruitment and promotion requirement. However, we still don't know how to measure the value of language. In other words, from all ESL learner's perspective, what's the required level of this marketable communication tool to be qualified for certain positions.

The value of English listed above, including practical value and symbolic value, offers the highly valued resources or access to valued resources both in public sphere and private domain. Moreover, the accumulation and transformation of the importance of linguistic resources contribute to the formation of new identities in English speaking environment.

ESL Learners' Identity Negotiation

Participants in this project demonstrate their willingness and efforts to invest in linguistic repertoires and cultural characteristics that are different from that in their country of origin, which relate to an understanding of how they self-identify and how they rebuild sense of self and the relationship with others.

Symbolic value: identity, belonging and membership. The value of English is embedded not only in economic value but also symbolic value: belonging and membership in host population group, more interaction opportunities with different social groups, a diverse social network, a better work performance, and a different self-identification. The description of identity function constituted in and through official Canadian languages can be found in one example about French raised by Clark (2009): Monica relates her French learning motivation to her conception

of being a real Canadian "it is very important to teach French..; It's very valuable, right? Especially because we're Canadian...if, you go overseas people think you should speak English and French" (p.120).

Christina positions herself as a bilingual Canadian because she is proud of her Chinese background and successful integration process into English speaking community. From her perspective, a Canadian must invest in the official language. So when Christina reflects on her integration process since her arrival in Windsor five years ago, she emphasizes the importance of being a fluent English speaker on campus and in the workplace,

> Since a person chooses to live in an English-speaking country, from being an international student without PR (permanent residence) to being a person with PR in Canada, the key of the change is that he/she must master English well. Otherwise, he/she should go back to China, where he/she can get more social support through his/her mother tongue Chinese.

In this excerpt, Christina demonstrates an affinity for being a member of English speaking community. Therefore, what Christina counts as a qualified Canadian--first and foremost to be a fluent English speaker. Christina's discourse reflects the impact of language ideologies--people who want to integrate into culture must master the language. English, for her, is not only a valuable linguistic investment that she relies upon to find a satisfying job and maintain her daily life, but it means "a door for entering another community."

What is particularly interesting here is the comparison of imagined unsuccessful and successful newcomer was a belief rooted in her mind since arrival. When she sees the friendship between Chinese international students constructed by interaction through Chinese, she links the phenomenon to the image of an "unsuccessful new-comer." To become a "successful newcomer" in host society where she wants to live permanently, she started to control the frequency of

interaction with other Chinese international students and develop her ways of interacting with English speakers. Finally, on the day of acquiring PR (permanent residence) status, she held two parties, one for English speakers and another for Chinese speakers, to celebrate her success. In one instance, we can see the pull and push factor affecting her behaviors, detaching from linguistic minority and affinity for being a member of linguistic majority at the same time. On the other hand, her comparison reflects the ideology of how language is tied to group membership and Canadian identity.

> Looking back the past few years, I feel amazed. Why are the people around me so lovely? I never felt being discriminated against not only in this company but any place in Canada. So I feel pleased to live here. I think somebody who has trouble communicating with others in English. His ability lets others misunderstand him, and that is the reason for discrimination. For example, a foreigner tries to chat with you in Chinese, but he doesn't have enough words and correct grammar to express what he wants to say. I assume that the listener will become impatient because of confusion. I think it is a regular phenomenon. It is not discrimination at all. So I guess if someone doesn't have adequate communication skills, others are not willing to talk to him. This is not discrimination.

Christina's expression is filled with language ideology regarding the homogenous linguistic community, which is based on a fact that she can more easily cross Chinese and English community boundaries without discrimination. Her experience is thus not comparable to those people who do not have equal learning resources and opportunities to become a fluent English speaker and those people who have similar language ability without access to the English speaking community. Christina's acceptance into a linguistic community also arises from having more symbolic capital to begin with, including English fluency upon arrival, pre-established network

ties here, and a chance meeting with a Canadian who seemed to have taken her under his wings. From Christina's case, we can see the investment of second language learning is an index of her embrace of the desired identity as a successful immigrant. And her investment strategies prove beneficial to her integration.

A resistance of ethnic identity: labeling of an illegitimate speaker. Not only in countries in which English is not the primary language, but also in English-speaking countries, like Canada, U.S, there exists stereotype about who is the "legitimate speaker" of English. David Mura (1991), a Japanese American, described how in "the world of tradition, he was unimagined" (p. 77). His classmates or colleagues question his "ownership of English" because of his physical appearance. From this perspective, an ESL learner can be viewed as a label that is equivalent to the deprivation of ownership of English. In the South African context, speaking a second language connotes the meaning of second class (Thesen, 1997). In a multicultural context, Norton asked the question "Who owns English?" (Norton, 1997). The following case of Beth demonstrates that ESL learners start to rebel at being labeled as an ESL learner as they became progressively integrated into the linguistic understanding of what being an ESL learner means.

At first, Beth is viewed as an exceptional Chinese ESL learner in the labor market. In a group interview for a front desk position in a bank in Windsor, she has preferred over 28 other interviewees, most of whom were native English speakers, by presenting her professional knowledge and confidence to eight interviewers and became one of the only two people employed. After a while, when she encountered one of the interviewers, she got the opportunity to ask the question "why you chose me." The answer from the interviewer is as following,

> You expressed yourself in a high-pressure situation. You changed the image of Asian
> people in the eyes of interviewers. Considering your performance, we believed that you

would have the similar fantastic return in the future workplace, so you were hired. Since then, Beth doesn't see English as the barrier in her career development and rarely recalls her ethnic identity in the inter-ethnic workplace because of her sensitivity to the label ESL learner. She builds interethnic friendships among her colleagues and clients, including an Indian immigrant, Canadian, African Canadian. She learned how to make a joke to ease tension with her colleagues.

So when she got the promotion advice concerning choosing a branch located in Chinese community from her manager, her response was to be offended by the opinion that implies her inadequate proficiency in English, or ownership of English, for a senior position. From Beth's perspective, there is only one standard for the employee--qualified or unqualified, which means no distinction between native English speaker and ESL learner in the workplace. From lacking confidence and competence to interact with English speaking cohort on campus to defending her ownership of English, and consequently being qualified for the career promotion, Beth's case indicates a positive relationship between improvement of language ability including the ability to own the language and progressive integration into dominant English society. English proficiency is the sign of an identity that belongs more readily to Canada. Ku et al. (2018) argued that the communication skills developed by immigrants reflect the dominance of Canadian cultural norms (whiteness) in the workplace.

Ongoing negotiation of workplace identity: feelings of being unique. A similar position, exceptionality or uniqueness derived from English proficiency, is claimed by Daniel, who prefers to be seen as "a different Daniel in Windsor," rather than an "average Chinese." His feelings of "being unique" come from the fact that "I am one of the best Chinese people to communicate with foreigners and integrate into their groups," which is based on his confidence in his proficiency in English. While Daniel creates a different image by stating that "my learning and career

development process is a unique path that cannot be followed by anyone including myself with the second chance to start again." His integration process is embedded in successful economic integration and strategic combination of professional English in three workplaces after graduation.

The first job is a part-time waiter at a sushi bar, where what he did included greeting customers and to see them out. If issues were raised, he was prepared to present his welcoming and polite attitude towards angry customers through his smile and limited English expression, like "How's everything," "I'm sorry for any inconvenience," "enjoy your drink/ dinner," "my pleasure." During the period of being a waiter, he understood that the experience of "living at the bottom of the society" meant not only earning the lowest wage but also having the limited interaction with customers and others because "what you need to do is to listen to customer's needs and finish the order quickly. You don't deserve talking".

His second job was the clerk at a pawn shop, where his duties included offering receipts to customers and retrieving items back for customers who repaid the money. During the period, he learned how to control some customer's expectation of the valued their items through strategic expressions, and in some odd occasions, how to manage outrageous customers and calm them down by warning them.

His third job is his current position, a dealer in an Asian brand of the car dealer. He believes the sale strategies are consistent with the waiter's strategy and clerk's strategies. To be precise, you should please anyone in the dealers who is your potential customer, as a waiter in the Sushi Bar, and persuade the person who has interest in the car, like a clerk at the pawn shop. Daniel attributes his excellent work performance to his unique work experience and related communication strategy, allowing him to become a professional dealer within a year. He is proud of being one of the best dealers in Windsor, notably the only one who can manage customer

relationships by gradually combining professional English acquire earlier to meet customer's needs in one workplace. In one workplace, he reveals in his appreciation of his high IQ and the ability to cross boundaries into different groups. His linguistic investment is not just an economic value or the access to a particular linguistic community; instead, the investment provides him the basis he needs to position himself as "a different Daniel in Windsor."

What I find interesting here is Daniel's reference to professional English in the workplace as a valued possession, something different from other Chinese and his colleagues, which can be extended to the idea that linguistic investment empowers himself to access an achievement that no other Chinese and his colleagues have, at least in his estimation.

This extended understanding echoes Norton's (2000) argument "I take the position that if learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which in turn will increase the value of their cultural capital" (p. 444). In Daniel's case, increased symbolic and material capital includes more interaction opportunities with different social groups, a diverse social network, a better work performance, and a separate self-identification. And as such, linguistic investment empowers him, giving him the confidence and competence in acquiring the access to the socially valued resource, such as any potential job in the labor market.

> Interviewer: How does your job contribute to your personal development?
>
> Daniel: Right now I don't have any career plan except for the daily plan for sale performance. I enjoy my situation with the dealers including the annual sale task, the interpersonal relationship with colleagues and clients and my personal life after work. Actually, I am not afraid of any change concerning employment, including sudden bankruptcy that causes me unemployment. The excellent work performance that gives me

many chances to get a new position in Windsor, and also because of my unique

experience: I used to live at the bottom of the society and witness many terrible things at

the pawn shop, so I am not afraid of any unexpected change.

Attachment to a bilingual religious community: feeling at home. Among six

participants, Emily is the only one who expresses her religious affiliation and its impact on her

learning, work and social life in the process of her interview. What I want to explore here is how

her connection with English-speaking Christian group affects not only her improvement in English

but also her integration process and identities. From the beginning of the interview, Emily

emphasizes that one of her purposes for ESL learning was to read an English version of the Bible

and attending English speaking religious activities when she started her university life and

Christian life at the same time in China. Her learning trajectory reflects the impact of teaching

English as a missionary language. "The learning of which (English) would bring people closer to

God" (Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003, p. 4). But she neither learned English well nor read the

Bible through in the following two years because

It is hard to find an appropriate Christian organization to fulfill my two wishes, English

learning, and Christian spiritual life, at the same time near my university in China.

Moreover, there are so many distractions, such as food, shopping, makeup, to draw you

from what you want to do. When I reflect on this point, I think I am not a real believer or

good English student.

Considering the unsatisfying aspects of language learning, she separated her two wishes apart. She

learned English in ESL school in China and Canada respectively and finally got the required score

on her English test for the admission to an undergraduate program at a Canadian University. As

for another wish, her pocket Bible became a bilingual version (Chinese and English) for a better

understanding of the text. Emily acknowledges the success of her new strategy, but the success is limited because her proficiency in English is inadequate for the daily conversation with local people and she does not have the connection with other Christian believers. She did not attend any religious group or organization until one small bilingual Christian community attracted her attention before her graduation from university.

> The community consists of four to six families, some of which are Chinese families and the rest are English families. The activities, like worship service, Sunday school, and fellowship, are hosted by different families in their house. In these activities, participants can communicate with other believers through English or Chinese.

After learning the community's information in a tea shop, Emily immediately went to one of the families. After a short conversation, she decided to join them and move with one family as her homestay. At the time of the interview, Emily described her passion for joining them "because I feel I find my home in Windsor. It's like I find my relatives in a strange place. It's a surprise". After joining the Christian community, Emily attended the religious activities on a weekly basis for nearly three years. Sometimes, she served as a volunteer to assist organizers to schedule the location and time of certain religious activities. It's a big change for her because Christina didn't have any interest in attending student' union and extracurricular activities. When asked the reason behind the change, Emily points out the key of the difference is the "spiritual connection" between attendants in the community, which gives her the sense of being one member of the community, so she would like to take some responsibilities for such activities. Such participation is helpful for Emily to navigate her social integration, and similar cases have been identified in studies on faith-based settlement service provider organization in different countries (Tastsoglou and Miedema, 2003).

One of Emily's favorite activities in the community is a reading meeting for students. In the sitting, attendants read English versions of classical religious readings and share their ideas after reading. And the attendants also discuss their daily life from a Christian perspective. She describes her feeling about the meeting:

> It's like a family meeting, in which you can talk about your confusion, your happiness and anything you want to share. And others would like to hear your saying. I appreciate the valuable opportunity to know myself. However, my English is not good enough to express what I want to say, so sometimes I have to cut it short or let other bilingual help me to explain it. Anyway, it's a beautiful meeting during my weekend.

Emily acknowledges that the Christian identity not only enriches her personal life, also offers her the opportunity of reflecting on her thought and experience. Compared with other attendants, Emily assumes that she is not a real Christian because she cannot accept all the ideas in the religious readings. For example, Christian belief emphasizes that real happiness is rooted in one's heart rather than the wealth one owns, Emily can accept the idea to a certain degree because she did enjoy the pleasure brought by the spiritual connection with the religious activities and attendants. On the other hand, the Christian discourse is contradictory to her dream about being a wealthy businesswoman, owning several companies, rather than being an antimaterialist in the future.

There is a similar case regarding an ESL learner faced with the discourse of Christianity raised by Gu Mingyue (2008). One of the participants, Pauline, finds the conflict between her newly acquired Christian belief and her false identities "a person who can live like the actresses in movies," which leads to Pauline's doubt her religious conversion. Gu Mingyue (2008) analyzed the construction and maintenance of participant's overlapping identities are impacted by changing

contextual and social factor. Pauline's doubt reflects her motivation for ESL is high, but the ESL learning-oriented activities she chose to engage were varied. The difference between Pauline and Emily is that the former's main purpose, ESL learning, does not necessarily occur in a religious setting and the latter's main concern, "feeling at home," can only be satisfied through participation in this bilingual religious community.

Apart from aforementioned emotional support, her connection with the religious community offers practical support, a position of the front desk in a clinic, which sustains her in Windsor after graduation. In the interview, Emily describes how the job was offered by one of the religious community's members, and then how the part-time job became a full-time job after graduation because of the recognition of her work performance by her boss, the community member. Unlike other members of the community who think Emily's luck reflects her fate arranged by the God, Emily attributes the smooth transition from education to work to her unique social network. She said "Every time, when someone asks my situation, I will tell them that I work in a clinic owned by my friend. I can not say the God introduces my work. If so, I will be viewed a mad woman". At the same time, Emily's close friends went to different places to work or study after graduation; only she stayed in Windsor. The composition of her close friends became the roommates living in the same Christian homestay, so her connection with the community became closer than ever. The case of Emily is in accord with the emphasis of the nature of religious connection includes community participation "religion may also come in the form of spirituality and faith sustained by ritual and symbol as well as in the form of community of people" (Tastsoglou, 2006).

Managing anxiety and discomfort in English professional community. For Emily to be qualified as a front desk in the clinic, a professional community, her new boss instructed her on

how to improve her professional skills, communication strategies, and proficiency in English for the workplace:

> As a novice, I do not know how to communicate with the patient. The boss tells me the main point of the first conversation with the patient and lets me write them down. I take the note every day to practice the communication...He knows I welcome others to correct my accent, so once he hears my pronunciation or expression problem, he will tell me the correct one immediately. If he has no time to fix it, he asks me to write down the problem, and he will say to me when he is free. In such a relaxed environment, my English level improves a lot.

Compared with the case of Beth or Daniel, like "other colleagues have no obligation to help you" or "there is a common interest between us," the excerpt listed above indicates that Emily is not worried about the help she received from the boss in the workplace. The confidence in the construction and maintenance of giver-receiver relationship may be interpreted as an extension of the close relationship built in the religious community. It is like the title acquired in the religious activities, brother Thomas or sister Emily can be applied to the daily encounter with each other. From another perspective, both Daniel's and Beth's case reflect the impacts of neoliberal thought embedded in Canadian workplace, and Emily's case is related to Christian salvation. But the analysis of this perspective exceeds the scope of this thesis.

The friendliness comforts Emily a lot in the clinic, a professional community, but Emily's interaction experiences with other colleagues and patients are much more difficult than that of her boss. They don't have high expectation of Emily's English ability, so that makes Emily relaxed, but Emily has to avoid making mistakes on any issue they focus on. Otherwise, they will complain to the boss. Moreover, one colleague told Emily that she had a discrimination experience in another

clinic. One of the clients said to the colleague "you should go back to your home country. I don't need your service". After hearing the colleague's experience, Emily became more alert to such rejection. Her construction of a close connection in the religious community fails her when she perpetually managing the feeling of anxiety to protect herself from such discomforting experiences or being alert to potential discrimination. Her strategy is to avoid unnecessary interaction with others to avoid unexpected issues.

> Some of my colleagues invited me to go out for the weekend, but I like to stay at home.
> The difference on the interest means few chances to communicate with each other. When
> I reject their invitation, I know that I will less likely be invited again.

Emily's primary concern becomes how to be professional as soon as possible in the professional community. After one year, Emily became a professional first clinic desk clerk and started to serve as the trainer of two students. When Emily summarizes her feeling of working as a front desk clerk, she says, "It seems easy, but you have to make an effort to finish it perfectly every day". In other words, Emily carefully maintains the interpersonal relationship while attempting to perfectly perform an identity of "a professional front desk" to lay claim to the English speaking professional community.

To summarize, at the time of the interview, Emily had gained legitimate membership in both bilingual religious community and English speaking professional community. Emily practices different identities and develops the different interpersonal relationship in each respective community. In the bilingual religious community, Emily perceives herself as a believer and ESL learner who is a Chinese international student. She is open to the surroundings and enjoys participating this community and gaining religious and linguistic knowledge at the same time. In the English speaking professional community, Emily self-identified as a novice and later a

professional clinic front desk, and a Chinese whose native language is English. Her Christian community gave her a sense of purpose and comfort coinciding with her desire for closer relationship with and reading the Bible in English to become a member in Canadian society, but the English speaking professional community places her in an unfavorable position in relation to her colleagues and clients in the clinic. Hence, she holds a greater sense of attachment to the bilingual religious community than to the English speaking professional community, which leads to differential participation in the community and varying degree of linguistic investment. The case of Emily is in accord with Jane's example raised by Gu Mingyue (2008), in which Jane's different connections with two communities have a noticeable impact on her identity formation and ESL learning. The difference between Jane and Emily is the former gets symbolic resources through ESL learning, and the latter has an unexpected, uncomfortable experience in the English speaking community.

The analysis suggests that the construction of multiple identities in host society is an unsettling process but can be mobilized to carve out discomfort in different spaces and communities unevenly; hence Emily's Christian community orientation helps protect her from the perpetual undermining of her sense of being a competent professional in the workplace. To be recognized as a legitimate member, an individual devotes his/her resources, like personal histories, career aspirations and personality to a constant negotiation with the changing social context. During the process, social interaction patterns and ESL learning trajectories interrelate with each other, shaping and transforming the learner's linguistic investment in a given community. This indicates that language learning is not only a cognitive development process but also a social practice, which supports Pavlenko and Norton's (2007) adoption of "imagined community" to emphasize how the community participation influences formation of identities and English

motivation. The case of Emily shows that in different social context, the ESL learning experience, in turn, has impacts on community participation and identity formation. Moreover, in a given community, the relationship between ESL learning and an individual's overlapping identity has different facets, like the positive relationship between work-based identity (as a professional front desk) and English oral practice, and the negative correlation between ethnic identity (a member of the visible minority) and limited interaction opportunity. This complexity of relationship reflects the integration process, including the process of overcoming language barriers, is not a natural process, which requires individual's ongoing negotiation with the social world.

Chinese-English bilingualism and Canadian identity

Based on 2002 Ethnic Diversity Study, Walters et al. (2006) found 23% respondents with immigrant backgrounds report at least two identities, including Canadian identity, 16% possess only Canadian identity and 61% report one ethnic identity that is not Canadian identity. The interesting things are some of them don't have a bright idea of Canadian identity, but they can feel Canadian. The complexity of social identity that arises from the possession of at least two identities: Chinese ethnic identity and Canadian identity within different realms of Canadian social contexts, like academic settings and workplace. The participants' ethnic identity was rooted in Chinese cultural background, where they were born and had grown up. After arriving in Windsor, some of their cultural characteristics changed as a result of negotiating with Canadian social context. Multicultural and bilingual Canada, feelings of belonging, economic and social inclusion, social network are the highlighted issues in constructing new identities.

Most participants of this study identified themselves as Chinese-Canadian or Asian depending on the circumstance. Some only acknowledge certain parts of themselves with specific ethnic characters, such as a Chinese tongue or a Canadian lifestyle. As the participants assume that

some elements of Chinese culture are better than that of Canadian culture, so they would like to choose which aspects to preserve in their daily life. When they find that some parts of the Canadian culture are more attractive, then they decide to adopt those parts. For example, In general, as for the way of communication between family members, Chinese is more convenient than that of English. However, sometimes the daily conversation naturally switches to English because of the authenticity of a particular cultural phenomenon. Beth, as a fluent English speaker, describes one scene in which she enjoys the pleasure brought by the combined cultural elements of Chinese and English:

> Last Valentine's Day, my Taiwanese boyfriend and I are separated because of his busy work schedule. On that day, I received a poem from him in English and Chinese respectively.
>
> I love three things in the world
>
> Sun, Moon and You
>
> Sun for morning
>
> Moon for night
>
> And you forever.
>
> 浮世三千
>
> 吾爱有三
>
> 日，月与卿
>
> 日为朝，月为暮，卿为朝朝暮暮。
>
> I was moved by my boyfriend's love and the excellent combination of Chinese and English. English version is warm, and Chinese version is beautiful and delicate. I hope such cultural mix can appear in my daily life everywhere and every day.

In contrast to Beth's stance, the following case of Amelia demonstrates the adoption of English by an ESL learner with low proficiency in English also contributes to the construction of combined social identity. Amelia positions herself as "mostly Chinese and a little bit Canadian," because of her limited interaction with English speakers. Since settling down in Windsor after graduation, she thinks herself a typical Chinese: communicating with family member and friends in Chinese, playing mahjong during the weekend, preparing and eating Chinese food every day. Until one day, she received a wedding invitation from a close friend in Windsor. After thinking twice, she felt "something wrong," if she adopts Chinese way of putting cash in a red envelope as the marriage gift to her friend's wedding. After browsing relevant information through Google and discussing the issue with English-speaking acquaintances on various occasions, she mixes Chinese way and Canadian style--Chinese red envelope and the number of Canadian dollars that is widely acknowledged as acceptable as a wedding gift in Windsor. Since then, she admits herself with a part of Canadian elements that are connected with the adoption of English in her personal life.

Studies on similar culture reveal immigrants' involvement in two culture at the same time, which leads to space for critical thinking and consequent deconstruction of two cultures at the individual's level (Aksoy & Robins, 2000). The critical thinking offers the possibility for individuals, like participants involved in this project, to construct a new identity. Although I did not ask the participants of this project directly what the boundaries are between the part behind considering themselves as Canadian and other parts they think related to Chinese or Asian. The critical element of feeling Canadian is what contributes to the formation of the sense of belonging and attachment, like the stance of bilingualism (Chinese and English) and being bilingual in personal life.

CHAPTER 5 Conclusion

The objective of this thesis is to critically investigate integration experiences of international students from China to Canada. The four chapters comprise this thesis is united by a concern about how the intersection of ESL learning and identity has shaped the integration experience of immigrants candidates. To this end, drawing upon interview data collected, I compared the experience of Chinese graduates with adequate English and with those with inadequate English proficiency who arrived in Windsor with different learning backgrounds. Integration of immigrants candidates into Canadian society is not a natural or automatic process, especially for ESL learners (Reynolds, & Constantine, 2007; Thomson & Esses, 2016).

Inspired by the application of Norton's use of Bourdieu's (1986) concept of investment in second language research, I explored the use of resources, like personal histories, proficiency in English and social conditions, available to Chinese graduates for desired output in a transition from education to work. The advantage of investment framing is the emphasis on both individual factors and social factors in affecting the process of integration. From this perspective, identity construction through second language acquisition reflects ESL learners' ambivalent desires resulting from an ongoing negotiation between a sense of self and a changing social world, and between maintenance of Chinese language and culture, and acquisition of new cultural and linguistic competence in English. In this sense, the linguistic investment/disinvestment is an index of socialization/re-socialization in the host society. The focus of linguistic investment/disinvestment in this study is mainly about the second language, rarely about the first language, because the former reflects the negotiation outcome between individual and society, and the latter is, from participants' perspective, something born and raised in, "The past could not disappear" (Sevgur, 2012, P. 124). In the following paragraphs, I will review the main findings of

this study in this framework.

Based on the qualitative data, the primary finding is two parts: firstly, ESL learning experience has both negative and positive impacts on three stages of integration process and development of social connections and participation; secondly, motivation in ESL learning is interrelated with highly valued resources, like reliable positions and work environments, interethnic friendship, positive self-identification, and attachment to linguistic community membership. Moreover, the adoption of second language and use of first language co-construct the new identity in the host society. To reveal social impacts of second language learning and use, I analyzed the effect of capital, investment and imagined community on the participants' ESL learning trajectories and integration experiences by focusing on such research questions: What is the motivation behind participants' decision to acquire English as a second language on campus and off campus? How is the ESL learning experience influenced by or influences the process of academic, social and economic integration in host society? To what extent do the participants view second language learning as a kind of investment for the career future, marketable commodities, symbolic capital or index of identity? What's the role of the first language in the process of integrating into a second language dominant society? My analysis of the data indicated that access to a local social network and highly valued resources are mainly dependent on participants' capital and action of linguistic investment. The integration experience of participants with adequate and inadequate English proficiency in this sense is distinctly different.

As for first finding, chapter three explores the integration experience of study participants as well as local network development. The impact of ESL learning experience is embedded in different aspects of integration, academic, social and economic integration. In general, language barriers as primary barriers has the negative impact in participants' involvement in academic and

professional settings, but as the improvement of English proficiency, the academic or work performance of participants catches up with peers whose first language is English. The interesting finding regarding social integration is the way acquiring local ESL learning experience has impacted on participants' way of integration. To be precise, the impact of ESL experience on social integration is embedded informally organized face to face interaction in ESL school and informal interaction outside of class. The finding that people with local formal ESL experience have more interaction opportunities than those without local formal ESL experience is supported by the concept of network elasticity (Lazer, 2001). As for economic integration, all of the participants acknowledge the positive relationship between proficiency in English and job opportunities and work performance. Another interesting finding regarding social integration is an interaction pattern interrelated with integration stages among international students. Upon arrival, participants experience three types of interaction patterns, self-segregation, exclusive global mixing and inclusive global mixing respectively. I argue that complex relationship between social connections and ESL learners' attitudes reflects the role of English in the private domain (personal life) as ambivalent, whereas the importance of adoption of English in public sphere (educational institutional, workplace) reached a consensus among participants. Therefore, the adoption of English and the use of English proficiency as an investment resource in the private domain is much slower than that in public sphere.

As for the second finding, chapter four explores how the linguistic investment be linked to individual's efforts to acquire access to valued resources and community members in the host society. The initial motivation of the linguistic investment is the economic/practical and noneconomic/symbolic value of English embedded in academic settings and the labor market. There is a shift of motivation for learning English from acknowledging the practical importance

in Chinese context to recognizing the practical value and symbolic value that gives qualified learners the access to specific resources in the Canadian context. Moreover, the opportunities and constraints produced by linguistic investment on the construction of identities reflect the nature of language learning as social practice, rather than only cognitive development. Therefore, the intersection of linguistic investment/disinvestment and acceptance/resistance of social identities, like workplace identity and English for workplace, ethnic identity and legitimate speakers, indicates that integration is an unsettling personalized process full of struggle but can be mobilized to carve out uneven integration into different communities. The finding is in line with the existing scholarship on the identity function of ESL learning (Clark, 2009; Norton, 1997, 2000). What I want to emphasize is that to be recognized as a legitimate member in a given community, like academic or professional community, an individual submits his resources, like personal histories, career aspirations and personality to a constant negotiation with the changing social context. During the process, social interaction patterns and ESL learning trajectories interrelate with each other, shaping and transforming the learner's linguistic investment in a given community in a host society. The identity function of language is also embedded in the intersection of first language and second language, i.e., the value of bilingualism (Chinese and English). Most participants self-identified as Chinese Canadian which is related to their acknowledging the primary benefit of English and additional value of Chinese in public sphere and vice versa in private field.

An overarching argument of the two findings is that obstacles faced in integration process and strategies adopted in response to the obstacles vary by personal histories, profession, current position and English proficiency. This suggests that various forms of experiencing the transition from university to a workplace and that understanding these experiences requires examining both negative and positive impacts of English proficiency as an essential part of the integration process.

In other words, the social effects are not only brought by language barrier but also a linguistic resource for facilitating integration.

Hence, for integrating into the second language dominant society, there is a clear starting point, but there is not a clear end.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

A. Introduction: (to situate participant, establish rapport and build stock of knowledge)

- What's your mother tongue? Cantonese or Mandarin?

- What's the purpose of learning English then?

- How would you describe your language skills (English) when you came Windsor?

B. Move to identified themes (Describing situations; Signposts; Indigenous Coding**):**

What's the ESL learners' experiences as the new comer?

1. What were your impressions when you first came Windsor?

2. How important English is in your Windsor life? (Compare first month with nowadays)

3. Whom do you interact with on campus?

4. When you are off campus, whom do you interact with?

How the language ability impact ESL learners' social life?

5. Describe your new friends after arriving Windsor?

6. Do you face challenges/opportunities in terms of communication?

7. Where (e.g. organizations) do you communicate with others through English?

Life after graduate

8. What do you do after university/college? (Questions specifically to respondent's career)

9. Has the job sustained you well? Have you found the job fulfilling?

10. Describe your communication experiences through English in the workplace. (when, whom, how)

11. Describe the most unforgettable moments after your graduate.

12. What do you think has kept you in this position/Windsor?

13. Any other idea about your work life?

14. How does your job contribute to your personal development?

C. Summary reflections (debate;balancing reflections;)

15. Can you image the impacts on your life being a fluent English speaker? Describe it.

16. If you have children, how important will it be for them to learn Chinese if you were to stay in

Canada?

17. What's the next step for you as a *** (specific to the respondent's career)?

Appendix B

Letter of Information for Consent to Participate In Research

Title of Study: Identity, Investment and Language Learning: The Case of Chinese Graduates From the University of Windsor

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Cong Wang for his Master's thesis and supervised by Dr. Jane Ku, from the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology at the University of Windsor.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact Cong Wang (wang1kb@uwindsor.ca) or Jane Ku (519-253-3000, ext. 2228)

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Among the fast-growing population of international students in Canada, China has been the leading source country. During the period from 1994 to 2010, Chinese international students constitute the highest percentage of permanent residents. While existing studies give us a clear idea of obstacles faced by international students in transition to permanent residents, we know far less about *how* they interpret their individualized experiences and *how* they address these obstacles.

Studies suggest that increased proficiency of language leads to greater participation in the receiving society, contributing to their economic and social integration. Researches suggest that experiences of and attitudes towards learning English as second language (ESL) has various impacts on newcomers' integration experiences. This study devote to explore (1) graduates' adoption of and experiences of ESL in their daily life and (2) their social and career experience as part of their integration into Canadian society.

PROCEDURES

You will be asked to participate in a interview that will last 1 to 1.5 hours.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The risks of participants in this study are low. You may feel uncomfortable talking about obstacles you faced, but you may refuse to answer any questions.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There are no direct benefits to you as participant. However, this project will contribute to a deeper understanding in terms of obstacles faced by Chinese students in transition to permanent residents in Windsor and efficient strategies adopted by students.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

There is no compensation for participating in this study

CONFIDENTIALITY

You may choose to be audio-recorded so that I can capture your words accurately. if you do not wish to be audio-recorded I will handwrite the notes. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Digital recordings of the interviews will be deleted once transcribed. I will delete contact information one month after the interview in case of follow-up to clarification. After one month, I will delete contact information. The digital recordings and

transcriptions will be only be accessed by Cong Wang and Dr. Jane Ku. Any written notes of the

interview will be stored in a secured drawer and destroyed once the project is complete.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You are free to withdraw from this study any time during the interview until the transcript is

completed on 2018/01/20. Just let me know if you wish to withdraw. During the interview process,

you can say that I want to withdraw from this interview. After the interview, you can email to the

researcher to express your desire to withdraw (before 2018/01/20). You may also refuse to respond

to any specific questions or ask for the audio-recorder to be paused or stopped altogether at any

time during the interview.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

You are encouraged to contact with Cong Wang (wang1kb@uwindsor.ca) or Dr. Jane Ku

(janeku@uwindsor.ca) to learn about the research result.

Web address: http://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd/

The research result will be also posted on the REB website:

http://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/

Date: 2018/04/30

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, in publications and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   Date

Appendix C

Business Card

University
of Windsor

Are you a Chinese?

--born and raised in China

--graduate from University of Windsor

--worked in Windsor for 1-2 years

If so, you're invited to participate in a study called **"**Identity, Investment and Language

Learning: The Case of Chinese graduates from University of Windsor" by Cong Wang, a master

student in Department of Sociology.

The interview will take place in Leddy library and last 1 to 1.5 hours.

Please contact Cong Wang at Email: wang1kb@uwindsor.ca

This research has been cleared by University of Windsor Research Ethics Board.

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