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CHINESE FEMALE GRADUATE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC SOCIALIZATION ACROSS

DISCIPLINES - PERSPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND GENDER

A Thesis
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of Modern Languages
The University of Mississippi

by

SHENG BI

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ABSTRACT

From the mid-1950s, international education in the United States has witnessed

stupendous growth. China boasts the largest number of English language learners in the world,

and contributes to an increasingly large share of the global international student market. Being

informed by a community of practice perspective and poststructuralist conceptualization of

identity, the present study aims to explore the academic socialization experience of three female

Chinese graduate students in the United States. The ethnographic case study collected data from

various sources such as classroom observations, open-ended questionnaires, interviews with

participants and with their course instructors, and written documents. The findings revealed

different degrees of similarities and variations in relation to the construction and negotiation of

their linguistic, cultural and gendered identities across disciplines. Participants' immediate and

imagined communities significantly influenced their learning investment. Instead of being

marginalized, all three female Chinese learners were able to participate legitimately, competently,

and strategically in their academic disciplines.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Since the implementation of its Open Door Policy and free market reforms in mid-1970s, China has experienced unprecedented rates of economic growth. Its recent membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as successfully hosting the 2008 Olympic Games and the World Exposition in 2010 have foregrounded the country as an emerging power in the international arena. Economic success has stimulated not only reconfiguration of a global role for China as an economy and military power, but has also built tremendous momentum for learning English among Chinese learners. To this day, China boasts the largest number of English language learners in the world, and contributes to an increasingly large share of the global international student market.

International students constitute a special group of second language learners, precisely because English language is the means to access, produce, and disseminate knowledge in academic communities (Chang & Kanno, 2010). International education in the United States has witnessed stupendous growth in recent years. According to Institute of International Education (2013), the year of 2013 marks the seventh consecutive year of expansion in the total number of international students in U.S. higher education. There are 40 percent more international students studying at U.S. colleges and universities than there were a decade ago. Particularly, China has maintained the leading place of origin for international students for the past four years, taking 29

percent of total enrollments in 2012/13. That means out of every three international students in the United States, one is from China.

Rapid economic development in China has been creating a global diaspora of Chinese students to various English-speaking countries in the world. Today, Chinese students are among the most significant groups in terms of numbers in the present and potential international education market (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006). More and more Chinese students have chosen to broaden their education and life experience in the United States, and China has become one of the top three countries of origins for international graduate students. As Norton and Gao (2008) have suggested, as Chinese learners of English continue to take greater ownership of the English language and develop unique forms of intercultural competence, it is of significance to investigate the social, academic and linguistic impacts of their interactions with English-medium contexts.

Statement of Purpose

In recent years, a growing body of research has explored how students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds participate in and become socialized into the discursive practices of various academic disciplines in their second language (Morita & Kobayashi, 2008). Grounded in Wenger (1998)'s conceptualization of communities of practice, some researchers have particularly focused on international graduate students' process of academic socialization in North American academia (Morita, 2004; Chang & Kanno, 2010), and examined how these L2 learners negotiated their identity, participation, and membership in academic communities. L2 academic socialization is viewed as a dynamic and socially situated process, during which

learners' differences in language, culture, and gender constructed within local communities will significantly impact their participation and selection of investment.

Although previous studies have investigated the academic socialization of international students from East Asia, they rarely focused on students from Mainland China. The present study aims to contribute to the field by closely examining the lived experience of three female Chinese graduate students in the United States. The participants, who grew up in Mainland China and are receiving advanced education in the United States, are immersed in a new linguistic, academic and cultural environment. In this sense, it is worthwhile to explore their educational experiences highlighted by their distinctive identities and efforts to improve English and academic competence.

Understanding and exploring how differences in participation in different disciplinary communities impact the construction and negotiation of the identities of female mainland Chinese students, and vice versa, constitutes the primary purpose of the study. Specifically, I focus on how Chinese L2 learners mediate their linguistic, cultural and gendered identities within their particular learning contexts, and how their multiple identities and imagined communities shape and are shaped by their participation and investments. Through examining such a complex, situated process, the study hopes to shed light on how international graduate students' identities are constructed, mediated and transformed as they venture through new academic environments in the United States.

Research Questions

In an attempt to capture the richness, contradictions, and transformations involved in Chinese learners' unique academic journeys in the United States, the primary research questions the present study aims to answer are:

1. Within their respective academic disciplines, how did participants construct and negotiate their linguistic, cultural, and gendered identities?

2. How did participants' multiple identities and their academic participation mutually impact each other?

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of literatures in an effort to establish the relevance for the present study. The first section introduces the notion of communities of practice as the theoretical framework under which all future inquiries will be grounded. In this context, language learners' legitimate peripheral participation and differentiated modes of community belonging are explicated. In the next section, second language socialization is discussed within a particular type of community of practice, the academic community, where learners' individual agencies are highlighted. I then move on to outline the focal variables that the present study will be closely examining: identity, investment and imagined communities. Their intrinsic relationship with each other is discussed in details. The following two sections present more recent research findings regarding the depiction of the Chinese learner and gendered identities.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study draws on Wenger's (1998) conceptualization of "communities of practice". Learning is seen not simply a cognitive process of individuals, but a socialization process in which newcomers gradually gain fuller participation in the activities of a community. Newcomers start at the periphery with limited participation in the community practices. By interacting with other community members and apprenticing with more

experienced old-timers, they gradually develop their linguistic and academic competence. Such process of learners' socialization in a given community is called "legitimate peripheral participation". The newcomers need to gain peripherality and legitimacy to make actual participation possible. In the meantime, their imaginations about future life, which are constructed through the combined impact of past experiences, will further direct their way of participation in the communities.

Wenger (1998) presents three modes of community belonging: engagement, imagination and alignment. Engagement is "a source of identity" (Wenger, 1998, p. 174), which has time and space limitations since one can only be in one place at a specific period of time. Imagination refers to "a process of expanding our self by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves" (Wenger, 1998, p. 176). So imagination is capable of extending our experiences beyond the boundary of mutual engagement. Alignment means "coordinating our energy and activities in order to fit within structures and contribute to broader enterprises" (Wenger, 1998, p. 174). Through alignment, people coordinate their action with a certain community and become part of it. Wenger (1998, p. 197) illustrates that alignment is not "inherent in engagement or in imagination" because people may engage in a community but not manage to align their actions, and people may imagine connecting to others without really knowing how to do it.

Developed from the above theoretical framework, the present study understands the academic experiences of Chinese learners in their particular disciplinary communities as a socialization process during which newcomers gradually develop their linguistic and academic competence and establish their memberships as they participate peripherally and legitimately in their local communities of practice. Particularly, the experiences of graduate students in US

academia closely mirror this apprenticeship model of learning (Chang & Kanno, 2010), where explicit teaching may or may not happen (Lave, 1996). Rather, a more crucial condition for learning than explicit teaching is the learner's engagement in shared practices (Wenger, 1998). Although they take courses and receive explicit guidance from their professors, they have to manage to align their engagement along with other members of the same community, if they are to achieve legitimate participation in the communities. In other words, if their aligned activities develop over time, graduate students become less of a novice and more of a full member, for learning is "itself an evolving form of membership" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 53). In the meantime, in order to find a position for themselves in the broader society in the future, whether it may be in China or in the United States, they must imagine a picture of their individual future lives and see themselves as connected to the social requirements and activities that lie beyond mere engagement with their current communities of practice. The three modes of belonging, engagement, imagination and alignment thus allow us to explore multiple dimensions of learners' academic socialization process.

L2 Academic Socialization

As an area of study, language socialization represents an orientation to language development in particular communities and settings that is informed by anthropology, sociology, (socio)linguistics, and education (Duff & Hornberger, 2008). Drawing on cultural psychology and especially neo-Vygotskyan sociocultural theory (Duff, 2007a), the core theoretical premise of language socialization is that language is learned through interactions with others who are more proficient in the language and its cultural practices and who provide novices explicit and

(or) implicit mentoring or evidence about normative, appropriate uses of the language, and of the world views, ideologies, values, and identities of community members (Duff, 2002; Willett, 1995). In other words, Language socialization research highlights the central role of language in the socialization of new comers in a particular community. As learners gain knowledge of language and an ability to participate in their new communities by using language appropriately, they gain various other kinds of information or cultural knowledge about ideologies, identities or subjectivities, affective orientations, linguistic and nonlinguistic content and practices valued by the local community (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986).

Particularly, to examine how L2 learners are socialized into academic communities, researchers have shown that language learning is a fundamentally social, cultural, and temporal activity (Duff, 2002; Harklau, 2000; Toohey, 2000). It is a locally and temporally situated process with a range of possible pathways and outcomes, especially in multilingual educational settings. As such, Duff (2003) calls for a renewed understanding of language socialization that takes into account its idiosyncratic nature as well as tensions and contradictions involved in its process. Simultaneously, L2 academic socialization is also seen as a complex and dynamic process by which students not only attempt to acquire specialized knowledge and sets of skills in a given discipline, but also negotiate their multiple identities, cultural beliefs, and power relations in order to gain memberships within their new academic communities (Canagarajah, 1999; Duff, 2002; Harklau, 2000).

Furthermore, newcomer's socialization into academic communities is far more complex than their unproblematically appropriating established knowledge and skills (Morita, 2004). It is likely to involve struggles over access to resources, conflicts and negotiations between differing viewpoints, as well as transformation of the learners' identities. This process is highlighted by

learners exercising their individual agencies to construct and negotiate multiple identities actively rather than passively (Ochs, 1993). Lave and Wenger (1991) contend that legitimate peripheral participation is never a matter of peaceful transmission and assimilation, but a conflictive process of negotiation and transformation, because legitimate peripherality is always implicated in social structures involving power relations. In other words, although having access to a wide range of resources is crucial for newcomers, power relations in the communities of practice can organize access in a way either to promote or prevent their participation.

Based on the situated view of language socialization, the present study focuses on the academic socialization experience of female Chinese graduate students as a special group of L2 learners within a given academic community. In particular, I attempt to emphasize the roles of language, culture, and gender, and demonstrate how unique identities embodied in each learner are constructed locally and interactively under the dynamic power structure of their particular academic disciplines. Furthermore, I examine the critical role played by learners' agency in shaping their socialization process, that is, how female Chinese graduate students take initiatives and employ various strategies in an effort to tackle various linguistic and academic barriers, as well as gendered differences during their unique journeys into new academic communities.

Identity, Investment & Imagined Communities

Researchers working from the poststructuralist perspective have introduced the concepts of identity, investment, and imagined communities (Norton, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1997; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). In poststructuralist theory, identity and language are usually constitutive (Norton, 2000). As Weedon (1997) points out, "language is the place where our

sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed" (p. 21). Thus, "because learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity" (Wenger, 1998). Norton defines identity as "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future". In other words, the process of language socialization also entails the negotiation of ways of being a person in particular learning contexts. Essentially, identity is viewed as a multiple, dynamic, and fluid construct, which is enacted, shaped, and negotiated through learners' constant interaction with the social world.

In order to capture the complex relationship between power, identity, and language learning, Norton (1995) introduced the notion of "investment", which seeks to integrate poststructuralist conceptions of identity and human agency. It signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and practice it. Investment is best understood with reference to the economic metaphors of cultural capital, which has differential exchange value in varied social fields (Bourdieu, 1977). 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 will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital. As the value of their cultural capital increases, so learners' sense of themselves, their identities, and their opportunities for the future are reevaluated. Hence there is an integral relationship between investment and identity. Further, unlike the notion of instrumental motivation, which conceives of the language learner as having a unitary, fixed, and ahistorical personality, the notion of investment conceives of the language learner as having a complex identity, changing across time and space, situated and reproduced in social interaction. An investment in the target language is in fact an investment in the learner's own identity.

An extension of interest in identity and investment concerns the "imagined communities" that language learners aspire to when they learn a new language (Norton, 2001; Kanno & Norton, 2003; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). Such a desired community offers possibilities for an enhanced range of identity options across space and time, and significantly affects their current self-positioning and choices of investment. In other words, to gain fuller memberships and get closer to their imagined communities, newcomers create new opportunities to interact with old-timers by activating their multiple as well as potential identities (Norton, 2001). In essence, learners' experiences are understood in terms of their multiple identities, including their imagined identities and their selections of investment in both the real and the imagined worlds (Norton, 2001; Kanno & Norton, 2003).

Drawing on the above theoretical conceptualizations, then, the primary purpose of the present study is to delineate and analyze female Chinese graduate students' multiple identities and their investment in the target academic community, in an effort to connect individual learners with their particular learning contexts. In achieving this, it is necessary to explore their immediate learning contexts as well as future imagined communities that will influence their multiple identities and investment. In the journey of second language acquisition and academic endeavors, the study aims to explore the construction of Chinese learners' identities and their unique ways of getting involved in the academic communities in the United States.

The Chinese Learner

As Qu (2005) has noted, "when identity change involves a second language, it signifies confrontations between two cultures, or two sets of values derived from the two cultures." The

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Confucian tradition, especially its education ideals, is deeply ingrained in Chinese culture.

Meanwhile, along with the rapid economic development in recent decades, western ideologies

and culture have increasingly penetrated Chinese people's lives, especially the younger

generations. English, as the vehicle for western culture, tends to be perceived as the language of

modernity, democracy, science and technology. Chinese learners of English are therefore faced

with a potential conflict between traditional western cultural values and ideologies. As an

important group of international students in academic communities in the United States, Chinese

students are faced with contrastive differences in approaches to teaching and learning, and

difficulties in using the English language to express their opinions freely in their studies (Gu &

Schweisfurth, 2006).

A body of research has thus attempted to capture the unique characteristics of the

"Chinese learner". One branch of studies has taken a "large culture" approach (Clark & Gieve,

2006) to construct the "Chinese learner" in education and applied linguistics, which involves

describing the values, attitudes and learning practices of individuals in terms of fixed,

homogeneous, reified national cultures. A shared Confucian cultural heritage is offered as one

way of explanation for supposedly consistent behaviors displayed by Chinese students in western

classrooms (Hu, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Nelson, 1995; Oxford, 1995). Chinese learners

are portrayed as passive in class, obedient to teacher authority, teacher-dependent, reliant on

simplistic rote memorization, lacking in critical thinking, unwilling to participate in classroom

discussions. Some researchers, on the other hand, have argued against such deficit model of

representation. They contend that the differences between Chinese learners and western learners

are subtle rather than polar (Cheng, 2002; Lee, 1996; Watkins & Biggs, 2001). Chinese learners

actually value active and reflexive thinking, constantly monitor their studies and learn from their

mistakes and past experiences, are open-minded with high spirit of inquiry in their field of studies. Although it is rare for them to express their disagreements explicitly to their teachers, they do not accept teachers' information blindly.

Approach based on poststructuralist and critical pedagogy offers alternative insight into the representation of L2 learners in academic communities. Instead of characterizing them monolithically as linguistic or cultural minorities, the situated nature of identity construction is highlighted. The influence of national culture on individual identities and behavior is mediated across different levels of learning contexts.

Particularly, in academic communities, learners' understanding of disciplinary culture, departmental culture, and classroom culture is closely related to the construction and negotiation of their own beliefs and expectations. Further, learners themselves exercise individual agencies in an attempt to negotiate their linguistic competence, multiple identities, and power relations so that they could participate and be recognized as legitimate members of a given disciplinary community. Based on a multiple case study, Morita (2004) has shown that a seemingly homogeneous group of Japanese learners responded to and participated in their L2 classrooms variously. Particularly, she explicated the voices behind students' passive participation in the classroom, and discovered the complexity and variability of their relative silence that was socially constructed. Behind their reticence were multiple, interrelated issues of culture, identity, curriculum, pedagogy, and power. She further suggests the dynamic co-constructed and fluid nature of identity and language. As an important part of learners' L2 socialization process, their identities in a given classroom simultaneously shaped and are shaped by their class participation, and the same learner can enact different identities and participate variously across different contexts.

Contrary to the assumed disadvantages of international students in their academic pursuits because of their lack of cultural and linguistic capital compared with native speaker peers, recent study conducted by Chang and Kanno (2010) examined the role linguistic competence plays in Taiwanese doctoral students' participation in three different disciplines. The authors argue that the cultural capital of individual student does not carry the same value across disciplines, and may not always be critical to international students' academic success. On the other hand, they carry other forms of cultural capital, which permits them to achieve legitimate participation in their disciplinary communities. In other words, international students possess other forms strengths that can be utilized to claim legitimate membership within their academic communities.

While Morita and Chang & Kanno's works have focused on L2 learners from East Asia, namely Japan and Taiwan, the present study attempts to extend the existing literature by examining international graduate students from Mainland China. It is hoped to discover more idiosyncrasies of the participants in terms of their multi-faced identities and particular selections of investment.

Gendered L2 Socialization

The process of second language socialization has also been approached from the perspective of gendered identity. As previously discussed, the examination of identity integrates the language learner and the social context of language acquisition. In this sense, gender is not assumed as a dichotomous distinction between men and women just because of their biological makeup or elusive social roles, instead, it emerges as one of many important facets of social

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identity that interact with race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, and social status (Norton &

Pavlenko, 2004). In essence, gender is a complex system of social relations constructed in local

context.

Researchers have investigated L2 learners' gendered identities in relations to their

opportunities for language socialization (Norton & Pavlenko, 2004). Some focus on the role that

gender identity plays in enhancing or limiting access to linguistic resources (Gordon, 2004;

Pavlenko, 2001; Warriner, 2007). In English-dominant contexts, a number of gatekeeping

practices may constrain immigrant and minority women's opportunities and mobility in

education and workplace. In particular relation to the academic community, relevant studies have

investigated the ways in which gender identity influences interactional dynamics for male and

female learners of different ages, classes, or ethnic backgrounds (Losey, 1995; Norton & Toohey,

2001; Willett, 1995). In some contexts, immigrant and minority women may get significantly

less classroom interaction time than men. Meanwhile, gendered ideologies about a second

language have great potential to influence a learner's investment in or resistance to learning

(Kobayashi, 2002; McMahill, 2001; Pavlenko, 2001). Particularly, learners' images of

themselves, as well as their aspiration of future social and educational opportunities are

intrinsically related to their gendered identities and behaviors.

Morita's (2002, 2004) studies examined the interactional language learning behavior

embedded in local context of academic community. Specifically, she analyzed six Japanese

women's discourse socialization by focusing on variable levels and forms of in class discussions,

including their silent participation. She cautions researchers to be aware that women are not

static, homogeneous categories. A commonly held stereotype that Asian women tend to be quiet,

passive, timid, or indirect, did not always apply to the participants in her studies. Instead, they

were often very creative, proactive, and critical about dealing with the challenges they faced in the classroom.

The same author's research (Morita, 2009) on one male Japanese graduate student also illustrated how gendered identities can be produced and negotiated in complex and sometimes unpredictable ways in academic contexts. Different from previous works that typically portrayed woman as being disadvantaged or oppressed by the male-oriented academic community (Belcher 1997; Jackson 2002; Luke 2001), she has showed how a male student could also feel alienated for different reasons. One of them has to do with the participant's certain theoretical perspective that did not align with what he saw as the feminist-oriented discourse of his local disciplinary community.

As Duff (2010) has suggested, although much research has examined gender in relation to first and second language socialization in everyday, mostly oral, language contexts, particularly from a poststructuralist perspective, relatively few studies have examined it explicitly in relation to academic discourse socialization. Drawing on works in this vein, the present study contributes to the field by looking into female Chinese graduate students' gendered identity in relation to L2 learning practice in their academic communities. On the other hand, as Morita (2004) has appropriately pointed out, although gender may interact with other aspects of identity in complex ways, such as ethnicity, culture, age, personal history and interest etc., researchers should exercise caution as to determine the extent to which gender alone impacts interaction, participation, or learning.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter is devoted to the research methodology and data collection process. I first provide an account of the rationale of employing an ethnographic case study research design, followed by description of the research context, the participants, data collection sources and procedure, as well as the analysis process.

Research Design

The purpose of the present study is to understand Chinese graduate students' academic socialization experience. The research questions primarily focus on participants' linguistic, cultural, and gendered identities in academic communities, and how their multiple identities and participation mutually constitute each other. To answer these research questions, I employed an ethnographic case study approach.

Creswell (1998) defines ethnography as a "description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system" (p. 58). Ethnographers "study the lived experiences, daily activities, and social context of everyday life from the perspectives of those being studied to gain an understanding of their life world" (Buch & Staller, 2007, p. 188). In this sense, ethnographic methods allowed me to closely examine participants' lived experiences and socialization process.

Ethnographic approach is qualitative in nature. According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research explores issues that relate to human beings and intends to give voice to certain groups of people. It embraces the idea that multiple realities exist among different individuals. The present study targets on female international graduate students from Mainland China, and attempts to develop a detailed understanding of their academic experiences in relation to their identities. By doing this, it is expected to provide an insight into lived experiences of international students in the United States in general, and capture the individual and disciplinary differences among female Chinese graduate students in particular.

Case studies focus on the understanding of the context and the meanings for participants in the contexts (Merriam, 1998). This basic assumption aligns with qualitative research design that pursues a complex and detailed understanding of the issues and pays close attention to contexts and settings where participants are situated (Creswell, 1998). Academic socialization, which is conceptualized as a dynamic and situated process in the present study, cannot be understood outside of its actual learning context. As such, it can be approached most appropriately using qualitative case study approach. By engaging in particular local disciplinary communities, the researcher is able to "get as close as possible to the participants being studied" (Creswell, 2007, p. 18), and obtain first-hand data regarding participants academic experiences from naturalistic settings. Further, despite of small sample size, case studies contribute to larger theoretical and practical issues of language learning and instruction (Chapelle & Duff, 2003).

Establishment of the case and its boundaries are major concerns of case study approach. The case is defined as "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The cases in the present study are three female Chinese graduate students. Each individual is treated as a single unit. The boundaries are determined within their respective

local academic departments in the same university. The present study explores interactions between participants' multiple identities and participation within their learning contexts. Cross-case analysis was later conducted to look for commonalities and differences across disciplines.

Contexts

The study was conducted in a public research university located in the Southern region of the United States, with a total enrollment over 20,000 for the 2011-2012 academic year. The University is an increasingly multicultural community, with students from diverse linguistic and ethnic backgrounds.

Since the primary research question of the present study is concerned with academic socialization and identity construction across different disciplines, participants were recruited from both social sciences/humanities and sciences programs. Specifically, three participants in the present study were recruited from School of Business Administration, School of Journalism, and School of Engineering. All of these academic programs have a multicultural environment.

Participants

To recruit key student participants for this study, I set the following selection criteria: (1) they are female Chinese students who are enrolled full-time at the master's or doctoral levels; (2) their previous academic experiences include nine-year compulsory education and undergraduate education in Mainland China; (3) their first language is Chinese, and they have met university's

English proficiency requirements for international students; (4) their course instructors agree to participate in the study.

Purposeful sampling technique (Bogden & Biklen, 2003) was used for this study in an attempt to locate participants. I started the initial search for prospective participants by approaching academic acquaintances at the same university who are female graduate students from Mainland China. I described general ideas and rough scheme of my research, and see if they were interested to participate. Next, I contacted the President of Friendship Association of Chinese Students and Scholars (FACSS), and he was able to give me access to an online Instant Messaging (IM) group of Chinese students, who were mostly admitted during the academic year between 2011 and 2012. The group profile includes most members' gender, full name, academic program, enrollment year, and their IM Identification Number. This allowed me to reach prospective participants individually via online Instant Messages. Further, more accurate students' population information was obtained from university's Office of International Programs with its consent. The Office provided me with a list of all currently-enrolled Chinese graduate students with information regarding their gender, academic department, degree level, and email address. I then contacted students individually who meet the first three selection criteria, in an attempt to broaden the pool of prospective participants.

This process has allowed me to recruit a total of three participants who agreed to participate in the study (See Table 1). I then contacted their course instructors, who were able to provide additional perspectives for my research. After getting the IRB approval, all student participants signed consent form (See Appendix A) and all course instructors were provided with a copy of information sheet (See Appendix B).

Because I share very similar educational and cultural background with participants, I hope to establish a close rapport with them. As a participant observer, I was able to immerse myself in the case to accumulate information, and at the same time keep constant reflections to ensure analytical description and interpretation of the data.

Table 1: Student participants' profiles

Participants	Academic Program	Degree Level	Age
Cathy	Marketing	Doctoral	Mid-20s
Sylvia	Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)	Master's	Mid-20s
Emma	Computational Hydroscience and Engineering	Master's	Early 20s

Data Collection

Date collection for the study took place from late March to early September. In order to address the research questions from various facets and to triangulate evidence, I attempted to gather data from a variety of sources including classroom observations, open-ended questionnaires, interviews with participants and their course instructors, and written documents.

Classroom Observations

The benefit of classroom observation is that it allowed me to gather direct information regarding participants' classroom performance and enactment of their identities. For each

participant, I observed one to two courses, of which the instructor(s) agreed to participate. Guided by the research questions and theoretical frameworks, detailed fieldnotes were taken. I particularly focused on the classroom contexts, how and what participants contributed or did not contribute to the discussions and their instructors' responses, what kinds of identities they enacted, and the roles of language, culture, and gender might have played. In the fieldnotes, I tried to describe what I heard and saw in the classroom, and include my comments as well as reflections. To minimize intrusion, classroom interaction was not recorded.

Open-ended Questionnaires

Classroom observation was followed by participants' response to an open-ended questionnaire (See Appendix C). This allowed me to elicit most immediate recapitulation from the participants themselves about their classroom performance and their positions and opinions, and thus was able to better supplement my own observation. The questionnaire was adapted from Morita (2009) in her study with a Japanese male student. The items in the questionnaire include: (1) summary of classroom activities, (2) reflection of participant's academic performance, (3) participants' observation about instructor and classmates' response, and (4) any additional thoughts and comments on their recent studies in general and that day's class in particular. The questionnaire was answered in the form of email attachment.

Interviews

Each participant was interviewed once individually (See Appendix D). While open-ended questionnaire recorded participants' "'here and now' experiences in an ongoing manner" (Morita, 2009, p. 447), interviews were able to give them opportunities to talk about their thoughts, feelings, experiences and reflections in form of interactive conversation. Each interview lasted from one to one and half hours, and was audiotaped and later transcribed. Participants were able to speak either Chinese or English at their preference. Meanwhile, I also interviewed a total of four instructors of their graduate course once in order to gain more insights from an additional perspective (See Appendix E).

The interviews were semi-structured, conducted in a private but relaxed location participants preferred. While the prepared questions provided a framework of themes to be explored, I would follow up with new questions to allow participants' narrative flow.

Written Documents

Finally, relevant documents, such as course handouts, program brochures, program website information etc., were collected in order to achieve more contextual understanding.

Data collection methods, timeline, and data sources are summarized in Table 2. To ensure the anonymity of the research settings, pseudonyms were used for all participants and course instructors.

Table 2: Summary of database

Method	Timeline (March– September 2013)	Data
Classroom observations	• Ongoing • Once every week for all participants	• Fieldnotes on 16 lessons of 4 courses total • Approximately 35 hours total
Open-ended questionnaires	• Ongoing • After classroom observation	• 6 reports total • Questionnaire responses via email • Follow up questions and comments via email, online Instant Messages, face-to-face or telephone conversations
Interviews with participants	• Once at the availability of participant	• 1-1.5 hours each, 3 interviews total • Audiotaped, face-to-face interviews • Fully transcribed and selectively translated
Interviews with instructors	• Once at the availability of participant	• 1-1.5 hours each, 4 interviews total • Audiotaped, face-to-face interviews • Fully transcribed
Written documents	• Ongoing	• Course handouts, program brochures, website information.

Data Analysis

Data collected for the present study was analyzed in an ongoing and inductive manner. Emerging themes and categories, as well as results and implications, were extracted to construct each student's academic experiences as the research progressed. In other words, "the abstractions are built as the particulars that have been gathered are grouped together" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 6). Data collected from different sources were examined recursively, and interpreted through meaningful words, phrases, and sentences tied to research questions. I analyzed descriptive data "with their richness as closely as possible to the form in which they were recorded or transcribed" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 5). Focus was placed on students' self-perception in relation to language, culture and gender, as well as their academic participation and investments. The analysis of course instructors' data emphasize their perceptions in terms of the role language, culture and gender play in their disciplines, as well as their observation and experience working with international students. Data collected from multiple sources and viewpoints not only enabled researcher to triangulate findings, but also "make cross-participant and cross-disciplinary comparisons" (Chang & Kanno, 2010, p. 678).

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

In this chapter, I answer the two research questions in an attempt to understand and explore Chinese L2 learners' multiple identities in relation to their academic participation. Data collected from classroom observations, open-ended questionnaires, interviews, and written documents are presented and analyzed in three sections, corresponding to the three student participants and their academic disciplines. In each section, I first provide a brief description of participant's typical academic practices and interactions in which they engaged. In what follows, I discuss their academic socialization and participation through three lenses – linguistic, cultural, and gendered identities. Findings are reported by incorporating participants' and instructors' voices, as well as my observations.

Cathy

At the time of data collection, Cathy was a first year doctoral student in the Department of Marketing at the School of Business Administration. Although in her mid-twenties, Cathy already held two bachelor's degrees in Computer Science and English, as well as a master's degree in Marketing in China. Prior to joining the Ph.D. program, she has also obtained another master's degree in Supply Chain and Info System Management in the United States.

With solid academic training, Cathy already embarked on three research projects in areas she was truly passionate about. Her research was primarily focused on consumer behavior, specifically, how consumers process and digest online information. Cathy was collaborating with Dr. Young, a new faculty member in the Department who attended the same university Cathy got her second master's degree from. The research process was mainly involved with designing and carrying out experiments with undergraduate business students as her participants. Cathy has been expecting satisfactory results from these experiments. However, the cycle of the experiments was difficult to predict, because she often had to manipulate design details and start over with the data collection.

Besides her original research projects, intensive coursework was another essential component of Cathy's academic life. I observed two of the three courses Cathy was taking: a lecture-based intermediate applied statistics course and a seminar on consumer behavior. The statistics class met twice a week at an auditorium at the School of Pharmacy, and was mainly aimed to introduce analytical tools to process data. Students came from various academic backgrounds such as Pharmacy, Exercises Science, Psychology, and Marketing. There were about twenty-five students, with about equal numbers of American and international students. The seminar on consumer behavior met once a week at a conference room at the School of Business Administration, and was taught by Dr. Young. It was a survey class that covered various topics in the field, and was directly related to Cathy's own research interests. Among ten doctoral students, half were from Cathy's own Marketing department, and half from the Department of Pharmacy Administration. Except for four Indian pharmacy students, Cathy was the only international student from East Asia.

The department provided graduate students with an open office space that could hold around ten people. Besides attending classes, Cathy spent majority of her time studying in the office. More often than not, she would engage in discussions on academic topics with senior officemates. Cathy met with Dr. Young regularly to report on findings and discuss their research project. She also gave presentations on her research progress in department seminars several times throughout the semester.

Language

In this section, I report on Cathy's perception on various facets of her linguistic competence, her selections of investment in terms of academic participation, and how she utilized various strategies to compensate and increase her linguistic capital.

For Cathy, the two classes she was taking placed different weight on English requirements. The statistics class primarily emphasized on analytical techniques and computer software skills to process data, and thus did not require a high level of English proficiency. "This class is easy for me. There are a lot of jargons, and the emphasis is not on output. I'll be all right as long as I understand the formulas, and do well in homework assignments and tests." Correspondingly, in this "traditional, didactic, lecture-based course" (interview, Dr. Collins, course instructor), Cathy mainly chose to pay attention to in-class lectures to absorb new knowledge, and spend less time after class except for working on homework assignments and take-home exams. During my classroom observations, Cathy rarely expressed her thoughts or raised questions during class, unless being called on.

As for the seminar on consumer behavior, however, "you have to put your heart in it." For Cathy, being a business student, "language was not supposed to constitute any problem.

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Input and output are both key factors. If your English is not good, you will neither understand others nor express yourself." In this class, Cathy had to read large amount of journal articles, submit a list of questions to discussion leaders before each class, and lead discussion with a partner twice throughout the semester. An advanced level of reading proficiency allowed Cathy to process reading materials at native-like speed. However, the amount of the articles always made it impossible for her to attend to all the details. In order to reach maximum understanding and prepare for questions before class, Cathy's strategy was to "get to the point" by assigning herself limited time on each article, focusing on abstract, picking one or two from a set of experiments and places of her interest to understand. When it was her turn to lead the discussion, she would then spend more time reading the articles in-depth.

Different from the statistics class, classroom participation in this seminar took up to 15% of the final grade. Cathy was the only non-native speaker in the class. I observed the enactment of Cathy's conflictive identities in her participation. Among quite active Indian and American students, Cathy was at disadvantage of spontaneity as well as accuracy in her oral expression. In order to impress professor by speaking up as much as possible, Cathy gradually developed her own coping strategies. In her words, grabbing every opportunity to speak is "a technical problem". She would always sit next to Dr. Young to maintain eye contact, and encouraged herself to take the initiative to participate in discussions whenever she had something to say. In this way, she could avoid the awkwardness of being called on and didn't know how to respond. Cathy knew not to wait until the previous student was finished. Instead, she paid attention to and utilized some connection words such as "and then", "but then", or "yeah I also think" to quickly grab the floor. Sometimes, Cathy would get involved in the conversation battle when she and another student started talking at the same time and neither would yield another. For her, even

though she has a Chinese accent and was not able to take turns naturally like native speakers, saying something was better than remain silent in class, because it was about "impression management" and she wanted her voice to be heard.

On the other hand, however, Cathy was seldom the first one to participate. She mentioned that normally she would evaluate her thoughts before speaking up. Compared with other classmates' more spontaneous participation, Cathy said she would focus more on quality, instead of "using lots of filler words and appearing to know without a real point". This corresponded with Dr. Young's observation:

[Cathy] seemed to participate a little less than other students in class . . . but looking back I wouldn't say she didn't participate enough, she just focuses on quality over quantity in her contribution . . . She doesn't think through her ideas out-loud. She seems to think about them to herself, and then only say something when she really knows exactly what she wants to say.

Another disadvantage caused by language barrier had to do with writing output. While Cathy considered herself proficient in producing organized and logical academic texts, it was extremely difficult for her to be concise and "express complex meaning clearly within one or two sentences". For example, to condense a research paper into less than 750 or 1000-word report, or to write an abstract under 200 words, was a challenge. Another instance that being a non-native English speaker has hindered her academic competence was designing experiments for her original research projects. She had to create intriguing prompts using authentic everyday language, but there were not many prior examples she could borrow. On the other hand, however,

just like other aspects of her linguistic competence, Cathy had a holistic and rational view on her writing skill, which was not deemed as a "fatal wound". She said, "I could always turn to others to check grammar and authenticity, and polish my paper with the help of editor. Even native speakers would need that."

To summarize, language carries different weight in different areas of Cathy's academic program, and she had a clear understanding of different aspects of her linguistic capital. This has allowed Cathy to choose her investment wisely and employ various strategies in her participation as a competent member in the program.

Culture

Different from hard scientific disciplines, in which international scholars constitute a large percentage, the marketing profession has been traditionally dominated by Americans. As an international student from China, Cathy realized it was essential to have a precise understanding of her own advantages and disadvantages, shared values of the marketing academe, and the political culture of the local department. Combined with the passion for the subject and aspiration for the future, Cathy has demonstrated a significant degree of seriousness and devotion towards her current education.

Prior academic training had gradually nurtured Cathy's passion in the field of marketing and determination to get a doctoral degree. She entered the Ph.D. program with mature perception for herself and her decision. She explained:

As a Chinese, if I want to survive in the United States, the best option for me is to enter the academic world, because I don't have "core competence" in other places. I have

talked to a lot of professors, classmates, and international students, and made a clear

evaluation of myself. I'm not good at seeking opportunities. I'm more of a

"down-to-earth" person, and I need to resort to my own competence to succeed . . . In

academic communities, as long as I put in hard work, I can expect good return . . .

Marketing is my passion. Besides, potential financial return in the job market is not so

bad either.

When asked how she felt being an international student, Cathy's participation was

influenced by her own identities as well as those ascribed by others. She said:

As a non-native speaker here, I was "born" with disadvantages. People surrounding me

are all Americans, and they will not lower their standards just because I'm a foreigner.

They don't treat me like one. I have to constantly remind myself what kind of filed I'm in,

and that I'm different from them. I have to work extra hard to be outstanding

academically, and that way people will be more willing to work with me.

In order to secure a faculty job in the future, Cathy set a firm goal to have publications

upon graduation. For her, the only thing that would make her more competitive than native

speakers would be the publication on her resume. She entered the program with several

promising research ideas, and has been working hard to develop such "core competence". She

has been designing and carrying out experiments independently, actively collaborating with Dr.

Young, and seeking conference opportunities as often as possible. Specifically, Cathy considered

designing experiments as her strong suit of the whole research process, and has been aiming to become an expert by accumulating more experiences.

As shown above, Cathy's imagined communities for future career have significantly boosted her investment in the current stage of academic endeavor. In her own words, "I am at the bottom now, but I clearly knew my path." Cathy has the diligent working style of a typical Chinese student. More importantly, she has been actively excising individual agencies to position herself and participate as a legitimate member of the community.

In terms of communication with professor and classmates, Cathy said she paid more attention to getting the meaning across rather than accuracy. As a new member of the community, she has maintained frequent interactions with other older members. She would often engage in intellectual discussions with senior officemates, sometimes joke with classmates, and appear to be "funny, bubbly, and outgoing" (interview, Dr. Young) during department social gatherings. In this way, even with Chinese accent, people around Cathy, especially native speakers, have gradually got used to the way she spoke, and can quickly "get her point". During classroom discussions, Dr. Young would often polish and repeat Cathy's points in a more authentic way immediately after she spoke. Cathy described this process a more "one-dimensional" one. While she appreciated other people's accommodation during interactions, it was difficult for her to improve the accuracy of her speech significantly, or to accommodate others herself. However, Cathy tried to compensate this by other forms of communication. For instance, she would prepare for detailed written notes before meeting with Dr. Young each time, and maintain frequent email correspondence with professors and classmates.

Another site of Cathy's identity construction lied within the political culture of her local academic community. For Cathy, the power relationship among new and older members of the

department was evident, in terms of student and teacher evaluation, funding, tenureship, etc. Within such context, Cathy had to constantly negotiate her own positions. As the only international student in her department, Cathy often felt herself being marginalized and isolated. Therefore, she was anxious to align herself with the mainstream community and at the same time actively attempt to build professional relationships with older members.

For her, to observe and understand American way of thinking and living was the first step to "fit in". "In a professional community, people wouldn't care which culture you come from or what language you speak. You need to pay more attention to what's happening around you." Because of her research interest on consumer behavior, Cathy would watch a lot of TV commercials in her spare time to "closely observe American people's life and keep updated".

Moreover, Cathy has paid extra attention on forging professional relationships with senior members of the department. For her, a good impression and reputation is an indispensible part of her academic participation. "It is a quite small circle. I don't have many opportunities to socialize with professors outside school, and our major doesn't have a strong advisor-student relationship like other science disciplines. I have to take initiative and impress them academically." She considered presentations at departmental seminars rare opportunities to make her voice heard, and started preparation as early as possible. In another class Cathy was taking that I didn't get a chance to observe, the professor was very likely to be in her dissertation committee. Cathy mentioned there was one time she was not able to provide satisfactory comments in class, and for the rest of the semester, she was especially eager to participate, wanting to "mend the broken relationship".

Overall, as someone with international background, Cathy demonstrated mature understanding of different levels of the academic cultures in her discipline. Her future imagined

communities and constant self-reflection provided valuable momentum and produced persistent efforts to advance her education journey.

Gender

The issue of gender also seemed to influence Cathy's academic socialization in terms of her decision for potential teaching areas. This has more to do with the nature of her discipline. As Cathy put it, "the business culture is white male culture." Most of the faculty members in her department are male. Female faculties had limited opportunities to obtain tenureship. Such disadvantage was particular evident in terms of teaching. Cathy considered her position in a predicament:

> For business classes such as consumer behavior, everyone has something to say because we are all consumers. If you are not a white male, students will not see you as a tough businessman, and will not trust you when you stand in front of class. If you are a female teacher and you have an Asian face, you are even less likely to be trusted.

Speaking of teaching in the future, although outlook seemed quite unfavorable to her, Cathy did know how to play her strength. With solid training in "technical areas" such as statistics and microeconomics, Cathy decided to teach those "hard" courses instead of "soft" ones. Although she did not have to start teaching soon, Cathy has already started equipping herself with opportunities to practice her academic speaking skills. She has taken a challenging professional speaking class from previous school, and was enrolled in another academic

presentation skills class on campus. She has attended several workshops for graduate instructors, and has been an active member of the university's Toastmasters club.

Within Cathy's academic discipline, the role gender played did seem to have an impact on her teaching choices, and has made her invest correspondingly in an effort to earn her place as a competent member of the community.

Sylvia

Sylvia was a first year master student in Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) at the School of Journalism. Also in her mid-twenties, Sylvia had a bachelor's degree Journalism in China, and had study abroad experience in Singapore. Although housed under School of Journalism, the IMC was a fairly new interdisciplinary program that was both research and application-oriented. According to the program website, IMC is an approach to marketing communications that focuses on integration of all related disciplines and how they work together, such as such as advertising, public relations, direct marketing, brand management, event planning, and utilization of various kinds of media.

As a first year student, intensive coursework constituted a major part of Sylvia's academic life. All three classes she was taking met once a week in the evenings, and they were all compressed video classes that allowed students from regional campuses to attend live classroom interactions. I observed one of Sylvia's courses, a traditional lecture-based research methodology class that introduced specific methods for generating and acquiring information and data useful for IMC applications. There were 13 students in the class, most of who were from the same IMC cohort. Sylvia and two exchange students from Korea were the only international students in the class. Compared with this research-oriented class, the other two

classes placed more emphasis on applications. Topics included online consumer behavior, online public relations applications, mobile marketing, IMC creative development and management, etc.

Besides reading course materials, attending classes and preparing for exams, another component of Sylvia's classes was various individual and group projects. Sylvia usually spent most of her daytime preparing for her evening classes. Often times, she met classmates on campus to discuss group projects. Meanwhile, Sylvia also worked as a teaching assistant for senior students in the Chinese Department.

Language

According to Sylvia, the IMC program placed very high language requirements for both American and international students alike. Language was an indispensable part of her area of study. According to Dr. White, the program director and also the instructor of Sylvia's research methodology class, the program emphasized on integrated language skills to develop insights and achieve better communication:

> [Various aspects of the language] are all alike to me. They are all one skill . . . Listening and absorbing information and doing that well is as important as . . . In fact it's the key to successful communication that you initiate on your own. All those skills go together, and I hope we encourage everyone to develop each one, because in order to have good messages, you have to know your audience, and you have to have a good idea of all kinds of things so you know what to put in those messages . . . and that just comes from exposure to various aspects of the business and lots of people.

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In Sylvia's words, "the language requirements exceed nationality. Even native speakers find reading materials and academic content difficult." As a newcomer to the IMC graduate program, the first challenge Sylvia was faced with was the high language demands. At the same time, due to lack of prior training in the field of marketing, she also found herself struggling with discipline-specific knowledge. She was at disadvantage in term of both language and academic competence. Therefore, in an effort to keep up with her studies, Sylvia said she had to split her time "half and half" on both English and subject matter.

In terms of classroom participation, Sylvia reported that she was very eager to get involved, but her participation was limited because of the language barrier, especially in the first semester. Her contribution would also vary in different classes. The research methodology class I observed was lecture-based. Besides lecturing, the professor would raise questions throughout class, and Sylvia seldom initiated participation unless being called on. Towards the end of the semester, a portion of time was assigned for each student to report on the progress of their final projects, and Sylvia had the chance to talk about hers in class. The atmosphere of the other two classes, on the other hand, was more "lively and warm". Students would sit in a circle, and professors would encourage creative thinking through brainstorming and other forms of class activities. Sylvia found herself participate more often in these two classes.

Sylvia employed various strategies to help herself achieve better understanding of the lectures in class. For all the classes she was taking, she would let the instructors know in advance that she would check her cell phone in class, not because she was distracted, but she would look up new words or concepts immediately after encountering them, so that she was able to catch up with the flow of the class. To compensate contents she missed or did not understand in class,

Sylvia would record lectures and listen to the recordings after class to digest information. She would always discuss with her classmates or ask them questions during breaks. If there were places that needed clarification, she always tried to "solve them on site" by approaching professors after class, and sending follow-up emails if she still had questions afterwards. Also, Sylvia maintained frequent contact outside the classroom with Dr. White. She set up routine appointments with the professor and met with him in person every week.

In the meantime, Sylvia tried to expose herself to the language environment as much as possible. "I would force myself to watch the news without subtitles and communicate with others, so that my listening and speaking proficiency can improve quickly." Claiming to be a slow reader, Sylvia spent a large amount of time on reading course materials. Instead of dwelling on details, she would pay more attention on summaries and outlines. She bought marketing textbooks written in Chinese and spent several months on reading them in order to make up for prerequisite knowledge.

In terms of writing, the IMC program had a different orientation compared with other disciplines. The program valued logical and creative thinking more than placing rigid requirements on academic writing. Dr. White explained:

[The program] has a strong subjective and interpretive element to it, because the skill you develop in doing these things comes from experience, and there's a lot more variability maybe in your activity and the judgments you make about your activities than perhaps exists in science.

Accordingly, even though she had to work on heavy writing assignments for her classes, Sylvia reported less pressure on producing written texts. Sometimes she could even use colloquial language for her various projects. Such subjective orientation also manifested in different academic tasks. While Sylvia had to come up with creative ideas for the group and her own projects, she found herself at an unique advantage when it came to answering objective questions in her exams, where her American classmates found particularly difficult.

Culture

Besides creative thinking, another unique component of the IMC program was to develop students' communicative skills. As was evident from the program's name, the disciplinary culture of IMC had a strong multicultural orientation to facilitate and deepen communication. In Sylvia's words, creativity and communication were "key elements for professional career". The newly established program, in its second year at the time of data collection, warmly welcomed international students. Dr. White said:

> Right now, it's a minority part, but we would like to expand it as the program grows I hope we are going to have more international students . . . because business is global and marketing is global, and we would learn from them, and them from us, it's a complementary process . . . We are enriched by having international students among us . . . To me it's just a wonderful part of the program, and we can be, as we get to know them better, the program can work even better.

Sylvia was the only international student in the cohort, and her viewpoints were often treated as valuable sources of information during classroom discussions. In the research methods class, Dr. White would always ask her opinions from the Chinese perspective. For her final project, Sylvia investigated the successful operation of Starbucks in China, and was able to contribute to the class by providing Sino-US comparisons on several interesting issues, such as Chinese tea culture versus western coffee culture, different marketing strategies, target consumers, etc.

Additionally, Sylvia paid plenty of attention on different ways of thinking in her classes. She reported that Dr. White's class has helped her develop logical thinking skills to conduct marketing research. In other classes, lack of familiarity with American culture has motivated her to actively "absorb how others think". While her American classmates had shared knowledge of cultural background and connotations, Sylvia had to make extra effort to figure out what was behind certain names, brands, TV commercials, etc.

She described a rather awkward instance in a class activity. The instructor showed a poster of an overflowing plate of spaghetti, and asked the class to come up with a headline. Almost all American classmates expressed their feelings of nostalgia for American food, American culture, or their complaint about Italian food. Sylvia's first reaction, however, was the word "greedy", because there was too much food in the plate, and therefore the headline she gave was: "how much can you swallow?" The entire class immediately burst into laughter. Sylvia's understanding of the word "swallow" was only limited to its literal meaning of food, and she was not aware of its entire sexual connotation. Although she seemed to make fun of herself in class, her classmates did further let her know that sometimes merchants would intentionally send messages with sexual innuendos to consumers in order to attract eyeballs.

Such interactions not only allowed Sylvia to get to know more about the American culture, but also facilitated the entire class to deepen understanding and bring inspirations to each other.

In terms of communication with her classmates, Sylvia reported significant improvement. At first, she had difficulties picking up the messages in conversations and was afraid of being judged because of her accent. Gradually, she tried to expose herself to more opportunities to talk with her classmates. On the other hand, as her classmates got more familiar with the only international students in the program, they were able to kindly provide her with various accommodations. Sylvia's earlier overseas experience in Singapore has also taught her that problems occurred during intercultural communications can be solved quickly as long as people were willing to accommodate each other.

In the beginning, I didn't have many friends. When I approach them with questions, I was not familiar with people's accent and was not able to express myself clearly. Gradually, I got to know more about my classmates and everybody in the class knew about me with my Chinese accent. When I took a step to open myself, I found a lot of nice people around me. They didn't care about problems caused by lack of language proficiency. Actually, when they realized I had difficulties, they were very willing to help and support me. They would slow down their speech, and sometimes were even able to pick up my needs just from eye contact.

In short, Sylvia's position of herself as a legitimate member of the program, her initiation to seek more opportunities to interact with other community members, as well as their accommodations to her has facilitated better mutual understanding. Sylvia's

non-native-English-speaking background did put her at various disadvantages. Such position, however, also made her more salient in the community, and she was able to contribute with her unique international perspective and receive assistance around her. Additionally, being a native-Chinese-speaking teaching assistant, Sylvia was able to provide help to American students of Chinese, and at the same time practice her English. Sylvia said their interactions would always sparkle creative ideas and inspirations that were helpful for her own studies.

Possibly because of the multicultural orientation of the IMC program and Sylvia's new membership in the academic community, she has not yet set a firm objective in terms of future plans. "I might either look for a job or apply for another master program. I think it's more important to spend more time to be exposed to the American culture and improve myself." At the time of data collection, Sylvia was planning to apply for summer internship at a broadcast institution in Washington D.C. On off-campus occasions, she also devoted fair amount of time every week working as a volunteer at local church to help technical personnel's with their video projects.

This was not to say that Sylvia was not serious about her future. Quite contrary, all her efforts to immerse herself in the new culture have gradually equipped her with linguistic and professional knowledge and skills that were essential for her present academic participation as well as future professional career. Compared with American students, Dr. White said international students demonstrated a higher level of seriousness.

> I think they are more ambitious . . . I think we have an image that, particularly the Asian
> students who come here, they are highly motivated. The study hard . . . [They] are the top

group . . . [and they] are achievers in many universities . . . so we are very happy that they choose to come to study with us.

Therefore, it was not difficult to imagine that Sylvia's primary emphasis was placed on her academic performance. Her motivation was less intrinsic compared with American classmates.

I think American students don't really care about the study per se. Although they were concerned about grades and competition, they have their own perspectives on things we learn. Especially if there is something they are interested in, they would devote a lot of time and effort to further explore them. Whereas for Chinese students, it doesn't matter whether you like it or not. As long as I'm learning something, I will have to learn it well and get good grades.

Sylvia's academic pursuit in the IMC program has also received considerable support from senior members of the community of different administrative levels. She reported that Dr. White was always approachable whenever she had questions, and the Dean of the School of Journalism had regular meetings with students every week. Sylvia had opportunities to further practice her listening and oral expression, sometimes even engaged in intellectual debates with the Dean, who showed great appreciation of conflicting viewpoints, and was even able to help her with the accuracy of oral expressions. School's Dean and assistant Dean also visited their final group project presentation. Students utilized a variety of media to present their original ideas to promote a recycling system, such as video, musical instrument, song, sculpture, poem,

etc. Sylvia described the experience as 'unexpectedly impressed'. Their performance received

positive feedback and encouragement from the Deans.

Being a new international student, Sylvia's socialization process was characterized by her

own efforts to improve her linguistic skills, cultural understanding, and achieve better academic

performance. A multicultural orientation of the IMC discipline and amicable environment of the

program as well as the Journalism School has also provided Sylvia with multiple channels of

communicative opportunities, academic and administrative support.

Gender

The issue of gender also seemed to influence Sylvia's academic experience. The

discipline itself has witnessed noticeable changes in terms of gender roles in recent decades. Dr.

White mentioned:

> Journalism and marketing in general have more female students. I don't know exactly
>
> what the mix is, but it's a complete reversal of the way it was many years ago. For
>
> example, majority of public relations employees and workers are female. In journalism
>
> that's the case too. I'm not quite so sure in marketing and advertising, but in IMC,
>
> certainly many more now than before, and I wouldn't doubt it if they outnumber the men.
>
> So it's a very major development over the last 20 or 30 years.

As a fairly new program, the first year IMC cohort had only five students, among which

there was one female Chinese student. Before joining the program, Sylvia has already

established contacts with her with the help of Dr. White. She was able to share her experience

and provide various forms of assistance for Sylvia in academic as well as in daily life. "For me, she's family. She was like older sister to me." Evidently, such close relationship was able to serve as another part of support network for both of them. Moreover, the fact that they were the only two international students in the program and were both female students has placed them in a respected and protected position.

Emma

Emma was a second year master student in Computational Hydroscience and Engineering at the School of Engineering. In her early twenties, Emma joined the graduate program right after getting her bachelor's degree in Hydrogeology in China. Emma's academic program was offered by a federally funded research center, which was focused on the developing research and engineering tools, computational simulation models to conduct scientific research, engineering analysis and design, and environmental and ecological impact assessments in the area of natural resources conservation. Emma was classified as a master student, but she has been following the path of obtaining the doctoral degree from the beginning. At the time of data collection, Emma's advisor was leaving for another university, and he decided to take Emma with him so that she can continue her academic pursuit for a Ph.D. degree.

Emma's academic life was primarily divided into three parts. She was taking two independent study classes with her advisor to work on her areas of research, one small-size lecture-based class, and she was working as a research assistant for her advisor. I observed several lectures on Basic Wave Mechanics, an area not directly related to Emma's own research topic but was meant to equip students with necessary knowledge in the field. The instructor, Dr. Lee, was a male professor from China. There were only four students in the class, three of which

are center's graduate students from China, and another American student from a different program of Engineering School. Emma was the only female student in the class. Like most traditional lecture-based class, Emma was required to read chapters from the course pack and finish homework assignments. As a research assistant, Emma helped her advisor look up and collect research literature, assist academic correspondence, and digitalize information using office automation software. Majority of Emma's on-campus time was devoted to independent studies with her advisor. No explicit teaching was provided. Emma met with his advisor, also a male Chinese professor, on regular basis to ask questions and discuss her research assignments.

The center had its independent location on the top floor of the Engineering School. The entire floor was particularly quiet whenever I visited. Graduate students each had a cubicle. Besides attending lectures and meeting with her advisor, Emma's academic life was quite solitary. She spent enormous hours, day and night, studying in her cubicle independently. At the time, she was working on her first formal research project as a part of the requirements for her master's degree. She has been developing dam breach simulation models through organizing database, analyzing and evaluating existing parameters and formulas. She gave a progress report at center's seminar during the spring semester and was preparing to present her final results by the end of the summer. Besides students' presentations, the center regularly invited guest speakers to give talks and held workshops to broaden and deepen academic exchange.

Language

Students in Emma's program came from a variety of academic backgrounds, such as civil engineering, mechanical engineering, environmental science, or physics, etc. The center's specialized research focus placed fairly high requirements for students to have adequate

understanding of abstract mathematical models, solid training in physical science, as well as ability to develop computational software. For Emma, the improvement of academic competence relied more on disciplinary knowledge and research experience, instead of English proficiency. She explained:

> For us, language is only the shell. Knowledge was primarily expressed in forms of numbers, formulas, graphs, models, etc. The focus of my earlier study was placed more on understanding concepts and content. I didn't have to deal with large amount of readings, and we didn't use complicated expressions in writing. Sometimes long sentences would interfere with clear delivery of the content.

Still a new member of the community, Emma's academic participation was at a stage of exploring and accumulating preliminary knowledge, so that she could locate specific research area of her interest in later stage of the study. In other words, she spent more time and energy on absorbing content input, because it was still "not adequate or systemic enough to be able to produce output". As was reflected in her classroom participation, Emma rarely initiated discussion or raised questions in class. It was not because she did not have her own opinion or questions, but she was more used to "play the role of an audience", instead of sharing her own ideas proactively. Her classroom interaction was limited to answering professor's questions when she was called upon.

I'm not good at oral expressions. Others will not be able to understand me, so a lot of times I'd rather not say anything. This has significantly limited my opportunities to communicate with other people.

Meanwhile, most of her schoolwork did not involve writing tasks, and therefore Emma had limited opportunities to improve her academic speaking and writing skills. When she was faced with presenting her first research projects to other members of the program and writing a coherent research paper, Emma encountered substantial challenges.

It was first time for me to work on an independent research project. I had to collect, organize, and analyze information systemically. When I was preparing for the progress report, I had to think about a lot of things such as how to organize information on a PowerPoint slide, how to make connections between slides in my presentation. I even had to come up with a proper opening. I didn't have to deal with these kinds of tasks in my regular studies.

On the other hand, although presentation skill was an indispensible part of Emma's program like other academic discipline, the demand for high level of oral proficiency seemed not to be very strong. Dr. Lee explained:

You have to be fluent . . . Definitely we encourage all the students to get any chance on campus to improve their presentation skill, to improve their speaking skill, even writing skill. Ourselves also need to do so, but . . . we are working in this technical area. We wish

they have excellent English [skills], but if they can present their research, their scientific finding clearly, I think that'll be pretty good.

This is not to say technical knowledge itself was adequate for professional development, the program also intended to prepare students with sufficient writing proficiency for future publication. Additionally, to pursue careers in fields such as industry, academe, engineering research, public or government service, Dr. Lee pointed to the importance of communication skills.

In the beginning, we prepare them with precise scientific language or terminology to define, describe and derive things. Without doubt, such ability is [important for] professional training. On the other hand, another kind of ability is to use plain language or easy-to-understand expressions to tell your seemingly complex [research] process . . . There is so such course to teach you how to easily communicate with people with little knowledge of your area . . . That means you need communication [skills]. You need to learn how to talk to different kinds of people . . . During such interactive process, you will find most appropriate way to describe your stuff and achieve mutual understanding.

In short, Emma's academic program placed heavier weight on disciplinary-specific knowledge. High level of English proficiency, especially in terms of output, seemed not to be essential for novice member of the community like Emma. Early stage of her learning was characterized with building professional knowledge necessary for conducting and presenting independent research in later stage of her study.

Culture

Even though the center was a research unit in an American university, majority of its faculty members and researchers are non-native speakers of English, including a number of Chinese professors and visiting scholars from other countries. For Emma, such disciplinary culture was a double-edged sword.

The center had a rigorous academic atmosphere. Communication was conducted in English in both public and private occasions. Both Emma's advisor and course instructor were from China. Because of the shared cultural background, even though she had to speak English, Emma had little anxiety when communicating with them. Therefore, she did not have to overcome barriers caused by cultural differences in her everyday academic studies. On the other hand, however, the non-native environment was not conducive to improving Emma's oral output because they were used to each other's languages. When there was something she was not able to express clearly in English, she could always resort to other forms of communication such as eye contact or body language. Sometimes by only mentioning certain the key words or pointing to the formulas, her professors would understand what she was saying. In this sense, what was underlying the smooth intellectual communication was the absence of authentic linguistic context.

As mentioned earlier, explicit instruction was not an essential component of Emma's routine academic life. Her focus was placed on developing independent learning and research skills under the guidance of her advisor. For her independent study classes, Emma would meet with her advisor regularly to discuss reading materials, solve problems she came across and receive further assignments. Then, she would dive into large amount of solitary studying hours in

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her cubicle until their next meeting. Dr. Lee called this an "interactive teaching" process, during which both instructor and students were able to exchange and deepen their knowledge in the field.

Such apprenticeship model of learning allowed Emma to establish a strong professional relationship with her advisor. Emma decided to focus on the same research field as her advisor, so that she could directly benefit from his area of expertise. When her advisor was about to take position at another university, he decided to take Emma with him. Especially during the process of conducting her research project, she was engaged in intensive communication with her advisor, took advice from him, and was able to proceed in organized steps through completing mini-objectives along the way.

Besides her advisor, Emma would sometimes seek answers from other students in the office. Instead of junior members like herself, however, Emma said she trusted senior members more with their expertise, so she always placed herself in a position of learning from them. She described:

> There was an ancient saying from the Confucian Analects: Do not feel ashamed to ask and learn from one's inferiors. Well, I am already in an inferior position, so there is more room for me to learn from others above me. Let me make an analogy. Academically, my professors are at level 10, and I'm at level 0. If they have a level 0 question, they might be hesitant to ask. For me, however, even if I have a level -2 question, I wouldn't feel much pressure to voice them because I'm at the bottom anyhow.

As shown above, even as a novice member of her community, Emma has found herself the right niche to advance her academic pursuit by learning from other senior members. Such humble position was also derived from Emma's flexible vision for the future. Instead of a fixed career goal, to obtain the Ph.D. degree became more immediate objective. For Emma, receiving overseas education was a valuable experience for her personal growth. Therefore, she always tried to enjoy the intellectual excitement, and treated various obstacles in her studies as necessary steps to experience in order to achieve excellence. She described herself as a "pessimistic optimist", in that she would not start out with positive outlook on things, but would never be defeated by adversities either. She believed there was a silver lining in everything. Emma gave an example:

When I came across a problem in my studies, I would always spend a lot of time trying to figure out by myself even though it might only take a few minutes if I just go ahead and ask my professor. This is probably not the best approach, but I enjoyed the thinking process. For me, a little detour was worthwhile because eventually it will help me improve. As long as I make effort to pursue academic excellence, it doesn't matter if I can find a job in the States after getting my Ph.D. degree. I would never regret my experience whenever I leave the United States.

Emma's socialization process was nevertheless one-way assimilation. While she admired American students' courage to openly and directly express their opinions, she did not force herself to blend in mainstream. Further, the non-native environment of her academic program did not produce such demands.

Gender

In Emma's case, the role gender played also seemed to impact her self-positioning as well as ways of participation. Most of her classmates were already in their thirties or forties, and Emma was the youngest students in the center. There were only two female students, and the other one was much older than her and with more educational experiences. Considerable age and gender differences has influenced Emma's own identities as well as those ascribed by others. She said:

> Everyone treats me as the little girl from China. They don't have very high expectation for me. I'm in a position where I am allowed to make mistakes and ask immature questions.

Just like Sylvia, when Emma joined the program, there was one female Chinese student with whom Emma has established close relations from the very beginning. She was able to provide Emma with tremendous academic and social support. "For me, she was like family. We can communicate in our mother tongue, and all her help has given me a great sense of security and intimacy." On the other hand, however, Emma's initial engagement with her academic community was narrowed because of this. When her "older sister" relocated to another city, Emma felt she was greatly isolated. She had "no other options" but renegotiate her position in the program by attempting to seek help from another male Chinese student when she had questions. Gradually, she was able to overcome the initial discomfort, and became at ease in their communications.

In terms women's status in Emma's field, being female has its unique advantages, and sometimes might bring additional benefits. Dr. Lee explained:

Our work environment is primarily in-house . . . There is no extensive fieldwork or traveling . . . I feel our field is particularly suitable for female scholars. Plus, places such as mathematics or computer science especially require meticulous and detailed thinking, as well as ability to organize complicated materials. I think women has their natural advantages . . . In profession such as our engineering area, generally there is a lack of female scholars. Personally I think someone from such minority group actually have more chances to stand out. They are easily to be noticed, and would sometimes even become our bosses.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

In examining Chinese female graduate students' academic socialization experience, I focused on three interrelated themes: language, culture and gender. In this section, I interpret research findings through cross-case analysis, and discuss commonalities and differences of participants' multiple identities and participation across three academic disciplines.

Language

Instead of assumed disadvantages of non-native-English-speaking students in the academic community, the findings of this study revealed a much more complex picture. When participants' linguistic identities intersected with different disciplinary requirements, emphasis of their academic endeavors indicated noticeable variations.

In three academic disciplines, the importance of English competence carried different weight. Further, the extent of language dependence also varied in different areas even within the same discipline. In other words, linguistic competence was not always direct proportional to academic competence in different disciplines and even subdisciplines. There was an obvious contrast between Sylvia and Emma's programs. In Sylvia's case, language was a crucial part of the IMC program, because the discipline itself put heavy emphasis on effective communication. For Emma, however, language only served as a carrier of disciplinary-specific knowledge.

Mastering of abstract concepts and computational models was more fundamental to improve academic competence. As a marketing major, the degree of language dependence varied among subdisciplines of Cathy's field. Her statistics class emphasized more on analytical techniques, whereas the consumer behavior class required much higher level of English proficiency to be able to conduct independent research.

Secondly, participants' academic practices in different disciplinary communities were conditioned by their linguistic identities. In other words, their participation was influenced by perceptions of various aspects of linguistic competence. Each participant brought with them different prior educational background and possess different forms of linguistic capital. For example, for Cathy, the marketing program requires a fairly high level of academic reading and writing proficiency, as well as presentation skills. With a strong academic background, she was able to process language input without much effort in terms of understanding lectures and reading academic journals. Instead, she made efforts to proactively participate in classroom discussions, improve experiment design using authentic expressions, and practice her academic speaking skills. On the other hand, without prior training at graduate level, Sylvia and Emma appeared to be more novice members in their academic communities. Sylvia had to overcome the initial listening barrier to understand lectures and make up for marketing background knowledge. Her limited oral proficiency has constituted a barrier for competent participation in classroom discussions. Sylvia's program's emphasis on creative thinking and utilization of various media forms for expression, however, has outweighed the demands for rigid academic writing skills. In Emma's case, more effort was placed on building up scientific knowledge, and lower demands for linguistic output for novice members has limited her opportunities for English improvement, as was revealed from the difficulties she encountered to product and present her research project.

Thirdly, disadvantages of being non-native English speakers did not always hinder new members' participation. They were able to utilize various strategies to tackle the language barrier and nevertheless participate legitimately in their local communities of practice. Over time, through learner's engagement in shared practices, their membership in the community also evolved. For instance, Cathy chose to participate differently in different classrooms, Sylvia actively sought exposure to communicative opportunities, and they both resorted to email correspondence and in-person appointments with senior members of the community. For Emma, language was largely independent of academic competence, especially in early stage of her academic participation. Not surprisingly, they all reported different degrees of improvement in their academic practices.

Culture

The study also revealed interesting yet intricate interplay of participants' national culture, disciplinary culture, and local departmental culture within their respective academic communities, where three Chinese students displayed, constructed, and negotiated different identities. They engaged in different ways in terms of communication with other members of the community. Moreover, as a special group of international students, their immediate and imagined communities have significantly influenced their decisions of investment.

Firstly, through examining the disciplinary of three participants' academic programs, the situated nature of identity construction was highlighted. In other words, shared values and beliefs of participants' learning context greatly impacted their self-positioning. The marketing academe has been traditionally dominated by American scholars, and therefore Cathy made extra effort to develop her "core competence" in conducting independent research so that she could compete

with American counterparts. The IMC program's multicultural orientation has made Sylvia's Chinese perspective particularly valuable. For both of them, familiarity with mainstream cultural practices was evidently necessary in the field of marketing, so they both demonstrated a great level of sensitivity to notice what was different in American culture. On the contrary, such demands in Emma's learning environment was much less salient. Because of the international background of community members, Emma actually belonged to the majority group.

Secondly, local departmental culture has shaped three participants' engagement with other members of the community in different ways. Through varied forms of communication, they constructed and were ascribed with different identities. Cathy did not view herself as a member of the community any less legitimate compared with her classmates, who indicated more accommodation to her in their interactions. She also paid additional attention to negotiating her identities in order to establish professional relationships with senior members of the department, where power dynamics was in play. Sylvia's communication with her classmates and professors was mediated in a much more amicable environment, and she was able to receive various forms of assistance and administrative support. In Emma's case, despite of being a novice member of her community, she has found herself the right niche by humbly learning from other senior members. At the same time, she was able to maintain smooth communication with her non-native professors, and establish a close relationship to apprentice with her academic advisor.

Last but not least, participants' selections of investment were shaped by their immediate and imagined communities. They exerted different levels of individual agencies and invested strategically in their academic endeavors. As a Ph.D. student, in order to secure a faculty job after graduation, Cathy chose to heavily invest in conducting original research and getting ready

for publication. Still working towards her master's degree, Sylvia decided to seek more opportunities to expose herself in academic as well as social culture in the United States. Emma's effort, on the other hand, was driven by a more immediate objective to obtain her doctoral degree, and her courage to experience adversities in order to achieve intellectual and personal growth. Additionally, compared with American students, all three participants demonstrated a great level of seriousness towards their academic pursuit in the United States, and their motivations were more instrumental and less intrinsic. Their academic aspirations were primarily based on stability and possible financial returns of future professions.

Gender

Gendered identities provided another interesting angle to explore participants' academic socialization experience. There were primarily two contexts where gender issues came into play. Firstly, although Asian women were stereotypically portrayed as being passive and oppressed in their academic communities, Cathy has initiated tremendous effort to participate proactively in her program. Moreover, in male-dominated marketing discipline, she knew how to play her strength and make smart decisions in terms of potential teaching areas. Secondly, when incoming female and younger students constituted as minority group in certain communities, such gender roles seemed to put them in a salient position of being respected and protected, and somehow might lower the initial expectation and pressure coming from other senior members, as was shown in Sylvia and Emma's cases. Lastly, senior members of the community, who shared same gender and cultural background, was able to provide strong academic and social support for novice members like Sylvia and Emma. On the other hand, such close relationship might narrow their broader engagement with other community members, as was evident in Emma's case.

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CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

Through examining the lived experiences of three Chinese female graduate students in academic communities in the United States, this study attempted to provide a rich description and add another layer of understanding onto the existing work in the filed of language socialization, especially non-native-English-speaking students' academic socialization process. Through exploring three interrelated aspects of language participants' identity, namely language, culture and gender, findings in this study have revealed different degrees of similarities and variations in relation to their academic participation across disciplines. During such situated and dynamic process, their multiple identities and selections of investment indicated mutual influence with each other. Instead of being marginalized, all three female Chinese learners were able to participate competently and legitimately in their academic programs. Despite of various linguistic and cultural barriers they have encountered, Cathy, Sylvia and Emma all employed various coping strategies and were able to utilize linguistic and cultural resources to their advantages. Furthermore, with positive outlook for the future, their educational investments have produced great momentum to advance their journey to becoming full-fledged members of their academic communities.

Given the qualitative nature and time constrains of the study, several limitations should be noted. First, the case study approach employed only focused on three key participants. While it allowed me to examine their academic socialization experiences in depth, I did not attempt to

make generalized arguments regarding all female Chinese graduate students in the United States. Further, viewpoints from participants' peers would be helpful to better understand the situated nature of identity construction as well. Another limitation was the duration of the study. Ethnographic approach requires researchers to engage in the field for an extended period of time, so that they can accumulate richer and more thorough local knowledge. Longer period of study would allow me to better capture participants' identity construction and transformation over time. Last but not least, my own background and perspective might have also influenced the research process. As Seidman (2006) suggested, what one interviewer or observer can capture is always restricted by her/his background. Someone from another cultural and educational background might achieve different understandings of Chinese female graduate students' academic socialization compared with my own.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Title: Chinese Female Graduate Students' Academic Socialization across Disciplines
- Perspectives on Language, Culture, and Gender

Investigator
Sheng Bi
Department of Modern Languages
The University of Mississippi
662-259-0518
bisheng@olemiss.edu

Sponsor
Dr. Tamara Warhol
Department of Modern Languages
The University of Mississippi
662-915-5029
twarhol@olemiss.edu

Description
The purpose of this project is to investigate the academic socialization experience of female Chinese graduate students in the United States. I intend to describe and understand how graduate students participate in different academic disciplines, and what kinds of linguistic, cultural, and gendered identities are constructed and negotiated.

Procedures
The focus of this project is the identity construction in relation to academic socialization experience. The research will be conducted in Spring 2013 academic semester. You will be involved in the following procedures:

1. Classroom observations
I hope to observe classes you are taking once every week for the duration of the semester. Fieldnotes will be taken. To protect your anonymity, you will not be personally identified in the class as the object of my observation.

2. Open-ended questionnaires
After each observation, you will be asked to respond to a short open-ended questionnaire, which is prepared for you to reflect on your classroom performance that day. I may follow up your response with further questions or comments via email, online Instant Messages, face-to-face or telephone conversations.

3. Interviews
I hope to conduct an interview with you. The interview will take approximately one hour, and will be audiotaped. The time and location will be determined at your convenience, and you may speak either Chinese or English to answer the questions.

4. Written documents
I also hope to gather some written documents, such as course syllabuses, handouts, and your writing samples related to the course I observe.

Risks and Benefits
No risks are anticipated for this research. Your academic performance or language proficiency will not be evaluated. You may benefit from reflecting on your educational experience and expressing your self-identity as a graduate student in the United States.

Confidentiality

Your identity will be kept strictly confidential, and pseudonyms will be used in all data files. Electronic data kept in my personal computer will be protected with a secure password. Data will not be shared with anyone except you, my committee members, and I.

Right to Withdraw

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to decide to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. If you choose not to participate, please notify me or Dr. Tamara Warhol in person, by letter or by telephone.

IRB Approval

This study has been reviewed by The University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study fulfills the human research subject protections obligations required by state and federal law and University policies. If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a participant of research, please contact the IRB at 662- 915-7482.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have been given a copy of this form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions, and I have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature of Participant   Date

Signature of Investigator   Date

APPENDIX B: INFORMATION SHEET FOR COURSE INSTRUCTORS

Title: Chinese Female Graduate Students' Academic Socialization across Disciplines
- Perspectives on Language, Culture, and Gender

Investigator
Sheng Bi
Department of Modern Languages
The University of Mississippi
662-259-0518
bisheng@olemiss.edu

Sponsor
Dr. Tamara Warhol
Department of Modern Languages
The University of Mississippi
662-915-5029
twarhol@olemiss.edu

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The purpose of this project is to investigate the academic socialization experience of female Chinese graduate students in the United States. I intend to describe and understand how graduate students participate in different academic disciplines, and what kinds of linguistic, cultural, and gendered identities are constructed and negotiated.

Procedures
The focus of this project is the identity construction in relation to academic socialization experience. The research will be conducted in Spring 2013 academic semester. I hope to observe your class every other week for the duration of the course. Fieldnotes will be taken. I hope to conduct an interview with you. The interview will take approximately one hour, and will be audiotaped. The time and location will be determined at your convenience. I also hope to gather some written documents, such as class handouts, related to the course you are teaching.

Risks and Benefits
No risks are anticipated for this research. You may benefit from reflecting on your experience working with international students.

Confidentiality
Your identity will be kept strictly confidential, and pseudonyms will be used in all data files. Electronic data kept in my personal computer will be protected with a secure password. Data will not be shared with anyone except you, my committee members, and I.

Right to Withdraw
Your participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to decide to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. If you choose not to participate, please notify me or Dr. Tamara Warhol in person, by letter or by telephone.

IRB Approval
This study has been reviewed by The University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study fulfills the human research subject protections obligations required by state and federal law and University policies. If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a participant of research, please contact the IRB at 662- 915-7482.

APPENDIX C: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is prepared for you to reflect on your classroom performance in today's class. Please answer the following questions based on your honest experience, and return the file as an email attachment.

1. What and how do you feel you have learned from today's class?

2. How would you describe your classroom participation? What factors have affected your participation/non-participation (language, culture, gender, etc.)?

3. Have you received any responses from your instructor and classmates? Were they helpful/not helpful?

4. Would your participation be different in other classes? Why?

5. Any additional thoughts and comments on your recent studies in general and today's class in particular?

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH STUDENTS

1. Could you share with me your past experiences of learning English?

2. Could you tell me a little about your program and the focus of your study?

3. What is your plan after completing your degree?

4. How do you like studying in the United States? Compared to when you first came here/the beginning of this semester, how has anything changed or remained the same?

5. What types of academic skills or knowledge do you think are critical for graduate students in your field of study (independent thinking, problem solving, academic reading and writing, original research, effective communication, etc.)?

6. Could you talk about your typical day or typical week (class preparation, reading and writing assignments, classroom discussion, presentation, group work, communication with classmates and instructors, etc.)?

7. What are your strengths and weaknesses in participating in different types academic activities (including non-participation)?

8. Could you talk about your experience as a teaching assistant or research assistant (if apply)?

9. How would you describe your communication with your instructors and classmates? Have you experienced any problems?

10. Do you think English proficiency is important in your discipline? In what ways?

11. Are you comfortable using English in your academic and social life?

12. Has the fact that you are a non-native speaker of English had any positive/negative influence on you studies? In what ways?

13. Compared with your classmates from the United States or other countries, how would you perceive yourself as a Chinese student (educational background, cultural value, personality, classroom behavior, learning style, etc.)?

14. Has the fact that you are from Mainland China had any positive/negative influence on you studies? In what ways?

15. Compared with male students in your class, how would you perceive yourself as a female student?

16. Has the fact that you are a female student had any positive/negative influence on you studies? In what ways?

17. Have you come across any difficulties in your studies? How did you deal with them?

18. Did you do anything in order to improve your language proficiency, adjust your cultural beliefs, or strengthen your academic competence?

19. Compared with students in other disciplines (science, social science or humanities), do you think their experiences would be similar to or different from yours? In what ways?

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH COURSE INSTRUCTORS

1. Could you tell me a little about your academic area, your teaching and research experience?

2. What types of academic skills or knowledge do you think are critical for graduate students in your field of study (independent thinking, problem solving, academic reading and writing, original research, effective communication, etc.)?

3. Do you think English proficiency is important in your discipline? In what ways?

4. How would you describe the needs of international students in your class? How would you address them pedagogically?

5. What is your observation of Chinese students' strengths and weaknesses in participating in different types academic activities (including non-participation)?

6. What is your impression on your female Chinese students (educational background, cultural value, personality, classroom behavior, learning style, etc.)?

7. Do you think culture and gender had any positive/negative influence on their academic performance? In what ways?

8. How would you describe your communication with female Chinese students? Have you experienced any challenges, and how did you address them?

VITA

Sheng Bi was born on January 29, 1982, in Jinzhong, China. She received her Bachelor's degree in International Politics from the University of International Relations in Beijing in 2004. As she was pursuing her degree at the University of Mississippi, she worked as a graduate assistant for the Intensive English Program, Division of Outreach and Continuing Education, and School of Education.