

Non-investment, the Lack of English Fluency of Well-educated Professional Chinese Immigrants in Anglophone Canada

Submitted by Fan Zhang to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Education in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, June 2014.

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(Signature)

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Abstract

The Chinese are the largest ethnic minority in Canada. As a group, they are well-known for not being able to speak fluent English, including those well-educated individuals who immigrated to Canada mainly in the 2000s. There is a rich literature in applied linguistics about immigrants' second language learning. Nevertheless, studies on second language practice of this particular group of well-educated Chinese immigrants are lacking. This enquiry is aimed at exploring the reasons why well-educated professional Chinese immigrants, who constitute a large portion of the Chinese population in Canada, do not put more effort into improving their English after settling down there, even though a better level of proficiency can bring apparent benefits to their economic and social success in the new host country.

Nineteen well-educated professional Chinese immigrants took part in in-depth interviews, the sole method of data collection of this exploratory study which has a conceptual framework capitalizing on such concepts as *motivation/demotivation, value, capital, investment, community and identity*. The findings reveal that the principal reason for a dearth of efforts is that they do not deem such efforts very necessary and worthwhile.

The contribution of this study to knowledge lies in the conceptualization of *non-investment*, which complements the existing notion of *investment* by incorporating into it motivational/demotivational factors that the latter dismisses, and which addresses the issue as to what resources an individual depends on when making investment decisions. In addition, this concept is also a contribution to the under-researched area of demotivation.

The immigration of well-educated Chinese professionals to Canada is one of the trends in human migration on the global scale which is a part of globalization. Therefore, the comprehension of the rationale behind their second language practice is significant to the applied linguists who work in the realm of globalization.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

By 2013, the Chinese population in Canada had become the first largest ethnic minority group (Statistics Canada, 2013a). As a group, not least those well-educated, their fluency in English is famously dissatisfactory, which is evidenced by the following two excerpts:

... Putting more emphasis on English and French proficiency could mean taking in fewer immigrants from areas that tend to show solid multi-generational success. More than 62 per cent of second-generation immigrants with parents born in China have a university degree, for example, compared to just 24 per cent of those with Canadian-born parents. But Chinese immigrants as a whole haven't typically had the best English or French language skills (Macleans, 2012).

... Women switch to accounting, men switch to computers, because there are plenty of jobs in these two fields, besides we Chinese speak lousy English and these jobs require much less interaction (Han, 2007: 66).

The first is the voice of a mainstream weekly magazine named Macleans, and the second is the opinion of a Chinese immigrant. This study was initiated by my fascination with the question as to why oral proficiency in English has been an issue for well-educated professional Chinese immigrants to Canada for years. In this opening chapter, I will first explain the rationale for the study, including my personal experience and the academic *raison d'être* for this study. After that, the significance of the study will be delineated. I will conclude this chapter by sketching the structure of this thesis.

1.1 Rationale for the Study

The reasons for conducting this study were the result of my life trajectory in conjunction with academic curiosity. The former refers to my travel and immigration experience, while the latter is connected with my professional development.

1.1.1 Personal Experience

In the summer of 2005, I had a chance to travel in Canada for a short period. It was the first time I had been to North America. Compared with humid and hot, hustling and bustling Shanghai – a concrete jungle with a population of more than 15 million, I was greatly impressed by Canada's stunningly beautiful landscape, well-protected environment, mild summer weather, and orderly and peaceful society. When I was leaving, I found myself in love with Canada. At that time, immigration to Canada was a trend in China among those who were well-educated professionals, which was manifested in my extended family. Three of my cousins had already developed a relationship with Canada of some kind: Fang (All the names hereinafter are pseudonyms) had already been in Canada with her family whom I visited when I was in Montreal; Lee was waiting for her immigration visa; and Chen was preparing his application materials. All of them had been successful in their respective careers in China. Longing to live in the beautiful country, my wife and I also sent in our application to the Canadian embassy in late 2005.

However, during the 2-year period of waiting for our visa, we came to know more stories about hardship well-educated professional Chinese immigrants had experienced in Canada, not least the difficulty in finding professional jobs. By the time we obtained the visa in late 2007, we had decided not to give up our present jobs in China to make this risky adventure. As regards my cousins, during these years, Fang's husband flew back and forth between the two countries while she and their two children lived in Montreal since he did not want to resign himself to menial jobs in Canada and had to earn money in China to support the family. The family finally decided to re-emigrate back to China permanently in 2010 in order to stop this cycle of separation and reunion. Lee, who had held an executive position before landing in Canada in 2007, found an entry-level accountancy job at a Hong Kong-run firm in Vancouver. She later came back to China to take an executive position in Shanghai and worked two years there before finally flying to Vancouver in January 2012 to reunite with her husband. And Chen, a former chief financial officer, after landing in Vancouver, had lived alone in Canada for two years while his wife worked in Shanghai; the couple finally decided to settle down in Vancouver

after their child was born in 2010 because Canada was considered to be a better place for their child to grow up. One thing my cousins had in common was, as they told me, their ambivalence towards Canada: on the one hand, they liked its political system, well-protected environment, social welfare, and high-level education system; on the other, they could not find a job there that matched their expertise, with the major reasons being the lack of recognition of foreign work experience and their unsatisfactory command of English.

I went to England in late 2008 to undertake my doctoral studies in TESOL while keeping in close touch with my cousins. Out of professional interest, I became increasingly intrigued by their language issue, conceiving a plan to make it the topic of research in the final stage of the doctoral programme. In mid 2009, I decided to go to Toronto from England. One reason was that I had to earn money to support my doctoral studies. I could not go back to Shanghai since libraries there did not possess adequate resources I needed for my academic pursuit, and with the student visa I was not allowed to work in the UK. On the other hand, my Canadian immigrant visa had not expired, so I could work part-time in Toronto which offers some of the best university libraries in the world. Another reason for choosing Toronto was that it would be a good chance for me to live in the beautiful Canada for a prolonged period of time while at the same time studying the language issue of Chinese immigrants.

1.1.2 Academic Raison D'être

I flew across the Atlantic Ocean to Toronto, and settled in the home of an immigrant couple in a large Chinese community. In the following two years, I changed my residence five times and lived with five immigrant families. One thing those households had in common was, from my observation, that they did not subscribe to any local TV plans and local newspapers, nor did they listen to local radio programmes. They watched Chinese TV programmes; every Friday, they collected a bunch of free Chinese newspapers from nearby Chinese supermarkets – practices not uncommon among Chinese immigrants I knew about. My observation was in line with that of Derwing, Munro and Thomson (2007) who

carried out a seven-year longitudinal study of language proficiency of Slavic-speaking and Mandarin-speaking immigrants in Canada. They also found that fluency in English of the well-educated Chinese immigrants did not improve over time, that they seldom listened to English talk radio (ibid: 369), that they rarely watched TV and read newspaper (ibid: 371), and that they had a dearth of contact with native speakers in their daily lives (ibid: 368).

Spolsky (1989: 148) argues that one of the necessary conditions to improve proficiency of an L2 is exposure condition, which means that more time an L2 learner spends learning any aspect of an L2, the more progress he/she will make. Apart from the aforementioned lack of exposure to English, none of the immigrants in the five families took any English courses when I lived in their house, be they employed or unemployed. As such, it can be argued that, for well-educated professional Chinese immigrants who have a strong learning capacity, the dearth of efforts to learn is a major factor that leads to their low level of oral proficiency in the English language which is vital to their social and economic success in Canada. As I have cited above, Chinese immigrants acknowledge that they do not speak fluent English, but why do they appear to make no efforts to improve it?

There is no lack of research on Chinese immigrants in Canada. For example, Zong (2004) claims that there are three main factors thwarting international transference of human capital of well-educated professional Chinese immigrants: low level of fluency in English, lack of the Canadian experience, and non-recognition or devaluation of foreign credentials and work experience. Li (2001), from another perspective, investigated the market value of immigrants' foreign credentials and their relation to gender, ethnicity and language, pointing out that proficiency in English is positively correlated with the salary levels of credential holders, with those who spoke neither official languages earning about \$10,000 below the mean (ibid: 31). And Wang and Lo (2004), apart from confirming the above positive correlations between language proficiency and earning power, argue that it 'would take more than 20 years for Chinese immigrants to close the earning gap with the general population' (ibid: 35). While the previous studies were conducted in the field of sociology, Han (2007), and Dewing and Waugh (2012) probed Chinese

immigrants' integration into Canadian society in the realm of applied linguistics. The former claim that religion features prominently in some immigrants' efforts to integrate into society, and that, due to immigrants' low level of oral proficiency, they ended up in Churches providing services in the Chinese languages; and the latter, by comparing language practices of Chinese immigrants and their Slavic counterparts, maintain that low fluency in English of Chinese immigrants lies, apart from aforementioned limited exposure to English in their daily lives, also in their unwillingness to communicate in the workplace.

The existing studies of Chinese immigrants in Canada point to the fact that imperfect proficiency in English plays a negative role in immigrants' efforts at social and economic integration, and ascribe such imperfectness to the lack of exposure to or practice of English in Chinese immigrants' daily lives. As regards the reasons why they do not seek opportunities to practise or why they are unwilling to communicate in English, in other words, why efforts are not made to improve English, answers are not provided. Inasmuch as there is a lack of published studies on this topic, and given the considerable size of the Chinese population in Canada, this is an uncharted terrain which warrants an exploration.

Not dissimilar to any other human behaviour, the fact that well-educated professional Chinese immigrants do not endeavour to improve English, despite the fact that such efforts can bring apparent benefits, is a complicated social phenomenon. It is related to the issue of motivation, which is about why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity, and how hard they are going to pursue it (Dörnyei, 2001: 8). Apparently, these Chinese immigrants are not motivated. In second language (referred to as L2 hereafter) motivation research, there is a subfield – demotivation – which specifically examines the factors that have a negative impact on people's motivation to learn a second language. However, compared with motivation, demotivation is an under-researched area (Dörnyei, 2011: 142) where there are only a limited amount of empirical studies, which were in the main conducted in classroom settings (ibid: 142-153). This study attempts to explore factors obtaining in and outside of the

classroom that render well-educated professional Chinese immigrants demotivated to learn English.

Learning an L2 is also considered as an investment targeted, according to Norton Pierce (1995: 17-18), at an increment of one's cultural capital and access to hitherto unattainable resources. However, this notion of investment does not specify what kinds of resources, for example, cultural, social and economic capital, an individual capitalizes on for such an investment (Menard-Warwick, 2005: 168), which does not do full justice to this economic term. To address this issue, this study investigates different forms of capital available to these Chinese immigrants when they make investment decisions.

Investment in an L2 does not only concern capital, it is also connected to identity which is people's sense of themselves and their ways of understanding their relations in the world (Weedon, 1997: 32). Immigration entails, inter alia, radical changes of one's milieu, which has a significant impact on one's sense of self and one's social relationships, which profoundly affects one's behaviour, including learning an L2. Norton Pierce (1995) claimed that learning an L2 is an investment in one's identity; this study aims, conversely, at examining the influences of Chinese immigrants' newly formed identity in Canada on their decision to invest in English.

1.2 Significance of the Study

Immigration is a part of global human migration, which is, according to Appadurai (1996), one trend in globalization. For this reason, anything related to immigrants' second language learning can be deemed as being associated with globalization. Against this backdrop, the findings of this study are beneficial to applied linguists working in the broad field of globalization in three aspects. Firstly, this study highlights the economic dimension of globalization, an area which has not been adequately studied by applied linguists who are mostly concerned with the cultural aspect of globalization (Block, Gray and Holborow, 2012: 61). The development of the notion of investment by incorporating such economic terms as capital, cost and

value, and the featuring of an economic-related identity in the analysis are a response to the call for the L2 learning research to bring the economic perspective to the fore (Block, 2012: 189), which otherwise would substantially limit the contribution of applied linguistics to key contemporary debates on globalization (Bruthiaux in Block, Gray and Holborow, 2012: 62).

Secondly, this study examines the role English learning plays in globalization. Undoubtedly, English facilitates the flow of people on a global scale and immigrants' integration into such host countries as Canada and the US. It is a necessary condition for such integration; however, it is not a sufficient one. This study proffers perspectives of immigrants themselves on the role of English learning in their integration into Canadian society, which is the resultant issue of their international migration – they come from a non-English-speaking country and their English proficiency is not satisfactory. And thirdly, this study keys into the current debates about the profound effects of globalization: is the world becoming more homogenized or more heterogenized? The findings imply that there is not a clear-cut answer to this issue: though globalization transpires on an unprecedented scale, the resistance of the local is substantial.

1.3 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is comprised of seven chapters. Chapter 2 provides the contextual information about the research, which is set against the backdrop of this era of globalization, of which international human migration is a principal part. I first make salient the economic dimension of human migration by introducing the economic objective of Canadian immigration policy and the economic status of well-educated professional Chinese immigrants. Then I highlight the role English plays in globalization by a description of how it facilitated the immigration of well-educated Chinese professionals, a depiction of an integration programme sponsored by the Canadian government, and an explanation of why English is a necessity instead of a sufficiency. Finally I bring forward the conflict between the local and the global by an introduction of what is so-called 'the Canadian experience' which is vital for foreign professionals to find a job commensurate with their expertise, and by a

depiction of Canadian multiculturalism which is dubbed as cultural mosaic. Chapter 3 is aimed at building a conceptual framework, which is predicated on three sets of sensitizing concepts, namely motivation and demotivation, investment and capital, and identity and community. This framework is a lens through which to examine the research question. Chapter 4 is about the research design and the conduction of this study. I first put forward my anti-positivist perspective on conducting social research, which forms the basis of the exploratory methodology of this enquiry. I then delineate the exploratory research design before elaborating on how data were collected and analyzed. Chapter 5 enumerates the major findings which answer the research question from two major dimensions. Chapter 6 is focused on theorizing with reference to the two aforementioned aspects presented in Chapter 5, which is where my claimed contributions to knowledge come from. This thesis ends at Chapter 7 where I specify the limitations of this exploratory research, suggest the directions of further research, and point out the implications of this study. The final thought provides some personal reflection on the impact of this study on my career development.

Chapter 2 Research Context – A Trend of Globalization

The phenomenon that well-educated professional Chinese immigrants do not put more effort into improving their oral English is related to their immigration to Canada, a part of human migration on a global scale in this era of globalization. Globalization is deemed, according to Block, Gray and Holborow (2012: 58), as a process in which economic, political, cultural and technological activities of mankind are increasingly interconnected and interdependent. It is also a process in which time and space feature prominently: temporally, what transpired or evolved over long periods of time in the past now happens or develops within much shorter time spans – time is compressed, as it were; spatially, what happens locally has an impact on what happens globally, and vice versa – space is compacted, so to speak. This process is manifested by, inter alia, the flows of people including migrants, asylum seekers and tourists; the flows of technology, for example technical know-how; and the flows of money, for instance, foreign exchange (Appadurai in Block, Gray and Holborow, 2012: 58). Against this backdrop and to assist the comprehension of the phenomenon under investigation, I will first describe the economic dimension of Chinese immigration by an examination of Canada's immigration policy and the socio-economic status of Chinese immigrants in China. I will then look into the role English plays in the immigration of the Chinese including how it facilitated their immigration and free English lessons sponsored by the Canadian government to help their integration into the Canadian society. I will end this chapter by a discussion of the force of globalization.

2.1 Economic Dimension of Chinese Immigration

Block, Gray and Holborow (2012: 61) argue that when studying groups, processes, or activities as a result of human migration, applied linguists are predisposed to focus exclusively on culture, which does not do full justice to human movements in which myriad of elements including, inter alia, economic factors, play out. Their view is parallel to that of Bruthiaux (2008: 20) who claims that without taking consideration of the economic dimension of human migration, applied linguistics' contributions to the debates of globalization will be significantly diminished. For that

reason, it warrants depicting a clearer background picture highlighting some of the economic ingredients that feature prominently in the immigration of well-educated professional Chinese immigrants to Canada.

2.1.1 Economic Objective of Canada's Immigration Policy

When accepting immigrants, Canada – one of the major immigrant countries in the world – has always been prioritizing its economy by endeavouring to absorb and keep intellectuals and skilled workers from all parts of the world. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (abbreviated as CIC henceforth), immigrants coming to Canada are classified into three major categories, namely the family class, the humanitarian class and the economic class (CIC, 2012a). The economic class consists of two programmes on the federal level: the Skilled Workers Class programme and the Business Class programme. The former is to support Canada's economic growth by 'selecting immigrants with essential and transferable skills that contribute to success and adaptability in the Canadian labour market' (ibid); while the latter is targeted at entrepreneurs, self-employed persons and investors 'on the basis of their ability to create jobs for themselves and Canadian citizens or permanent residents, contribute capital to the Canadian economy, and stimulate economic activity' (ibid). As such, those who are granted an immigration visa in the economic classes are supposed to contribute to the economy of the country (CIC, 2010a). Among all the classes of immigrants admitted into Canada, skilled workers always constitute the majority, and they accounted for 62% and 60% of the total immigrants admitted in 2011 and 2012 respectively (CIC, 2012b).

The skilled workers are selected by CIC through the points system initiated in 1967, with the objective of selecting immigrants from around the globe on the basis of merit instead of ethnicity (Canadian Geographic, 2001). It assesses applicants' language skills (24 points out of 100), educational level (25 points), work experience (21 points), age (10 points), adaptability (10 points) and arranged employment in Canada (10 points), and the current pass mark is 67 (CIC, 2010b). The problem with the points system is that, when selecting applicants, it is language proficiency, education and work experience that count instead of pre-

arranged employment; therefore, most immigrants are unemployed when they land in Canada. The advantage of the points system lies, however, in its flexibility: the pass mark and the grading criteria can be re-adjusted by the government to ensure that the immigrants who it believes best meet Canada's economic needs are chosen. In September 2003, for example, the pass mark reduced from 75 to 67, which greatly encouraged applicants with higher educational backgrounds to come into Canada. On the other hand, in November 2008, in order to reduce the number of applications given the weak Canadian economy under the shadow of world economic crisis, CIC substantially shrank the number of occupations that were eligible for applying for immigration as skilled workers from 300 to 38, which effectively discouraged submissions of application worldwide. Such policy changes determine what kinds of immigrants are allowed and when they are allowed to come into Canada, which has significant impacts on the number of people immigrating from China.

2.1.2 Middle-class Chinese Immigrants

In the 1990s, Hong Kong ranked first in the immigrants source countries to Canada, which was, to a large extent, due to the Hong Kong Return. In 1984 the UK and China signed an agreement and declared Hong Kong's handover in 1997. Out of fear of communist rule, a large-scale exodus took place from Hong Kong, and most of those who were able to leave were well-to-do and middle-class professional people. Canada was the most preferred destination since, almost at the same time Canada, also a former British colony, readjusted its immigration policy in 1985 to allow more investors, entrepreneurs and self-employed persons to immigrate to Canada (Wang and Lo, 2004: 1), which substantially energized this trend of influx lasting for more than a decade, peaking in 1994 with 43,300 arrivals that year (ibid: 8); and according to CIC, between 1980 and 2000, 360,277 people from Hong Kong landed (ibid: 44). However, this inflow decreased sharply after the 1997 handover, and had been waning throughout the first decade of the new century with the total number being only 13,176 between 2001 and 2009 (CIC, 2010b). Despite that, large-scale Chinese communities have formed in such cities as

Vancouver and Toronto, which were about to absorb the forthcoming immigrants from mainland China.

Following the first peak of immigration from Hong Kong, mainland China became the number one immigrant source country to Canada in the decade of the 2000s. According to CIC, the annual number of landing immigrants from mainland China spiralled from 18,526 in 1997 to the peak of 42,292 in 2005 and totalled 411,033 between the period of 1997 and 2009 (CIC, 2010b). The influx dwindled in the 2010s in the light of the institution of new accepting criteria by CIC mentioned in the previous section, and the first half of 2012 witnessed a 65% decrease in the number of applicants compared with that of the previous year (People's Net, 2012).

People from mainland China surged into Canada for manifold reasons. Ever since the 'opening-up' in the late 1970s – a policy of economic reform aimed at marketizing China's crippling economy and opening the markets to foreign investors – the Chinese economy has been soaring for almost three decades, and by the year 2010 it had become the second largest economy in the world. Meanwhile, the strict ban on travelling abroad was gradually eased, and by 1995, ordinary citizens were allowed to apply for a passport. On the other hand, though the economy has been substantially marketized, China is still an authoritarian state, and violations of human rights have not been uncommon in society in the light of the fact that fairness gives way to efficiency. The annual government budget for keeping the society stable has been daunting, and has exceeded the military budget in 2011 (Reuters, 2011), which invites worries about political instability. Besides, development is highly unbalanced with coastal provinces developing much faster than the hinterland; and people across the country do not share equitable employment opportunities due to their HuKou, a resident registry system allowing people to work and enjoy social welfare – if there is any – only in the place where they were born, which makes people who were not born in such large cities as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou very difficult to obtain a work permit to be employed by government enterprises and institutions there – the government owns almost all the major corporations and is the major stakeholder of large joint-ventures with multinational corporations. In addition, the environment is becoming

increasingly polluted, giving rise to doubts about whether economic development is sustainable. Furthermore, considering the enormous population and limited educational resources, to receive higher education has always been highly competitive. All these factors taken together, an increasing number of well-educated Chinese choose to leave China, and Canada is a preferred country thanks to its democratic political system, well-protected natural environment, advanced social welfare system, and educational system of high standard (Financial Times Chinese, 2013).

While a large proportion of the immigrants from Hong Kong belonged to the Business Class category (Wang and Lo, 2004: 1), those from mainland China in their wake were in the main on the Skilled Worker visa (CIC, 2010b). Given that they were selected via the points system, they have something in common: they have a university education, normally in engineering or information technology (IT) with about 10 years of work experience; and most of them have already established themselves socially and professionally in China (Zhu, 2005: 35) holding a senior technical or managerial position.

They are middle-class people in China. Class, according to Bradley's definition, is a

social category which refers to lived relationships surrounding social arrangements of production, exchange, distribution and consumption. While these may narrowly be conceived as economic relationships, to do with money, wealth and property, ... class should be seen as referring to a much broader web of social relationships, including, for example, lifestyle, educational experiences and patterns of residence. Class, therefore, affects many aspects of our material lives. (Bradley, 1996: 19 in Block: 2012: 189)

Considering that Chinese society has been undergoing profound changes since the late 1970s and that development in different parts of China is extremely unbalanced, it has always been an academic challenge to give a clear definition of classes in present China, including the middle class, which is a relatively new construct there compared with such western countries as the US and Canada, and

which only came into existence in the 1990s when the Chinese economy began to take off (Rocca, 2009: 69). There are various methods that scholars employ to identify the middle class (e.g. Lei, 2011; Li and Zhang, 2009; Li, 2009); however, whatever criteria they adopt, they tend to be in parallel with the above definition by Bradley, and those who are well-educated professionals are, without exception, subsumed in the middle class. Take Li (2009) for example. She capitalizes on Lu's (2002; 2004) classification which divides Chinese society into ten stratifications, and claims that the newly-formed middle class is made up of people both in and out of the government system. The former encompass administrators in state-owned enterprises, professionals (e.g. doctors, engineers, accountants) in state-owned enterprises and institutions, and clerks in government agencies, state-owned institutions, and organizations of the communist party; and the latter comprise managers in private and foreign enterprises, professionals in non-government enterprises, and self-employed business owners. Judged by this criterion, these Chinese immigrants to Canada from mainland China are undoubtedly middle-class people. Block (2007: 188) claims that 'the experiences of unskilled labour migrants differ markedly from the experiences of middle class migrants'; for that reason, middle-class identity of well-educated professional Chinese immigrants (referred to as Chinese immigrants hereafter) should be taken into account when investigating their practices in Canada, including learning the English language.

2.2 Role of English in Chinese Immigration

English plays a pivotal role in the current trends in globalization: it is the language of Internet and worldwide media; it is the language of international exchange of science and technology; it is the language of international aviation in the air and on the water, to name but a few. It is a lingua franca in its true sense: it is spoken at various levels of proficiency by about two billion people around the world, substantially outnumbering native speakers of English whose population is around 380 million. As a lingua franca, English facilitates international human migration, not least because the major immigrant countries such as the US, Canada and Australia are English-speaking ones. On the other hand, to what extent English, or

learning English, assists immigrants in integrating themselves into local English-speaking communities is open to question because, as Norton Pierce (1995) claims, opportunities of immigrants to practise English should not be taken for granted, which implies that channels of communication between immigrants and the locals are not always open. These are the two aspects of English that should be taken into consideration when describing the role it plays in the immigration of well-educated professional Chinese to Canada.

2.2.1 Role of English in Immigration of the Chinese

That English is a facilitator for international migration of human beings is evidenced by the fact that the majority of Chinese immigrants chose to settle in Anglophone Canada instead of Francophone Canada. According to statistics, the population of people who speak Chinese languages at home is around one million (Statistics Canada, 2013a), among whom 340,000 live in Vancouver (Statistics Canada, 2013b) and 443,050 live in Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2013c), not counting yet those who live in such cities as Calgary, Manitoba and London, Ontario. The major reason behind this choice is connected with the fact that most Chinese immigrants have at least 8 years of English education. They received their secondary education after China opened up to the outside world in the late 1970s when English became a compulsory course in junior and senior high schools and a core subject in the highly competitive university entrance exams. At university, English is compulsory for first and second year students who also have to pass as a requisite to graduation the nation-wide Band-4 College English Test (CET-4), which tested in the main grammar and reading skills in the 1990s; they were supposed to grasp most rules of English grammar with a vocabulary of around 4000 words before graduation.

Concerning their listening and speaking skills, before the 2000s, English language teaching in China had been dominated by the traditional grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods (Ouyang, 2000: 399), and students had limited opportunities to practice spoken English in the classroom. After graduation, those who work in multinational corporations have more exposure to English than those who work in

local companies and government institutions where opportunities for practising English are few. In general, as a group, oral and aural skills of Chinese immigrants are not satisfactory, and are much weaker than their reading and writing skills (Derwing et al., 2011: 1).

However, such an imbalance in their proficiency in English did not prevent them from immigrating to Canada. As mentioned above, the points system adopted by CIC is a selection grid in which language proficiency accounts for 24 points out of a total of 100 points; and within the 24 points, reading, writing, listening and speaking skills all account for 6 points respectively. Before November 2008, applicants were not required to take such standard English language tests as IELTS (International English Language Test System) to prove their proficiency in English, which was subjectively assessed by immigrant officials only on the basis of a written sample in English or French by the applicant attached to the application materials. On some occasions an immigrant official would interview an applicant to assess his/her language proficiency, which, due to the huge volume of applications, took place rarely. For that reason, it can be argued that Chinese immigrants' writing skill is a significant contributor to their success in reaching the pass mark and obtaining the immigration visa.

2.2.2 Role of English Learning in the Integration of the Chinese

After landing in Canada, integration into the host society is an unavoidable issue facing Chinese immigrants because, in order to be socially and economically successful, one has to be part of the society where he/she lives, which entails the capability to communicate effectively in the language of that society. As such, English is a necessity for integration in the mainstream of Canadian society. To assist new immigrants to integrate, the Canadian government employs diverse methods. One major means is sponsoring them to take part in the programme of Language Instruction to Newcomers to Canada (LINC) because it believes that the programme is closely aligned with the priority of CIC, which is the 'successful integration of newcomers into society and promotion of Canadian citizenship' (CIC, 2011a). The programme is operated by third party service providing organizations

who claim funds from CIC on the basis of enrolment, and every new immigrant, as long as he/she has not obtained Canadian citizenship, is entitled to the programme free of charge. There are language assessment centres where learners are tested and placed on a particular level; and to take the LINC courses, one only needs to register with a service providing organization by showing the assessment result and the permanent resident card. In the Chinese communities in Toronto, there are LINC schools providing courses on different levels, and classes are available in the daytime, in the evening, and at the weekend.

On the part of immigrants from China, most of them, economic immigrants and non-economic immigrants alike, take advantage of this free programme, not least in their first days in Canada when they are unemployed. However, despite the fact that they admit that their spoken English is far from satisfactory (Han, 2007:66), many well-educated immigrants do not stay in the LINC classroom for long. This may be because the LINC courses do not satisfy their needs; however, the fact that many of them do not engage in other forms of English programmes implies that there are factors that discourage English learning – a sine qua non for integrating into the host country. Undeniably, they hope to be more integrated; their not making efforts to improve English proficiency suggests that, logically, these discouraging factors are so powerful that such a hope seems remote, which renders learning English for integration unnecessary: English is only a necessity, but not an adequate element for integration.

2.3 The Local versus the Global

People's lives in this era have been profoundly changed by globalization whose influences reach every community insofar as it is not isolated from the rest of the world. However, there are debates about whether this world has become increasingly homogenized in terms of economic, social, political and cultural phenomena or the local remains largely intact without being swallowed by the global (Block, Gray and Holborow, 2012: 58-59). As regards the case of

immigration of well-educated Chinese professionals as a part of globalization, some of the factors that thwart their integration originate from the local.

2.3.1 The Canadian Experience

One major piece of evidence of the local resisting the global is so called 'the Canadian experience', that is, work experience in the related profession in Canada required by employers. For Chinese immigrants, it is natural for them to wish to work in the profession where they are experienced, and finding employment at a local company is a fast and major approach to integrating into a society. The irony is that though the Canadian government granted skilled worker visas mainly on the basis of educational and work experience, international educational and work experience, not least those from such developing countries as China and India, are not recognized in the Canadian job market.

Most Chinese immigrants have an engineering background, which was the principal reason why they were granted the skilled worker visa since engineering was on the list of the occupations that Canada needed at the time of their application. However, engineering is a strictly regulated profession in Canada, and in order to work as an engineer, one has to be licensed by Engineers Canada, a nation-wide, non-governmental regulatory body that regulates 'the profession of engineering in Canada and licenses the country's more than 250,000 members of the engineering profession' (Engineers Canada, n.d.a). In other words, internationally trained engineers have to be re-licensed, and the process of re-licensing is, according to what is admitted by the organization, 'complex and lengthy and uneasy to understand' (ibid). Besides, appropriate English skills, relevant education and work experiences in Canada are prerequisites. Considering the non-recognition of foreign educational credentials and professional experience by employers, it is difficult for immigrants to find employment to accumulate relevant Canadian work experience, which is tantamount to being disqualified from being licensed. For that reason, most Chinese immigrants with an engineering background switched their career (Han, 2009:66). In fact, such switches are not uncommon amongst immigrants from other countries to the extent that, within CIC,

there is a call for stopping this practice of bringing into Canada highly trained people who, upon arriving, find their qualifications are not recognized, their experience is not valued and their prospect of success in the labour market is bleak (Macleans, 2012).

2.3.2 Cultural Mosaic

Another manifestation of the local not being overwhelmed by the global is Canada's multiculturalism. In 1971, Canada became the first country in the world to declare multiculturalism as its national policy, and in 1988 the Canadian Multiculturalism Act was passed. Unlike the U.S. which is generally regarded as a cultural 'melting pot', Canada's multiculturalism presents itself in the form of cultural mosaic (Statistics Canada, 2008), which implies that people of different ethnic backgrounds coexist peacefully while keeping their own customs, practices and languages. They are small colourful patches of the mosaic, as it were, decorating the two biggest patches – Anglophone and francophone communities. Mosaic connotes, however, clear demarcations between patches, so to speak, which is an indication of a dearth of meaningful contact between ethnic communities. Multiculturalism has become festivalized, superficially equated with exotic foods, dances and dresses in such annual festival as Toronto Caribana, with which people of distinctive ethnic backgrounds are all satisfied without having to learn in-depth the history, geography and language of other ethnic groups (Canada Free Press, 2004). For that reason, it can be argued that multiculturalism encourages as much separation as diversity.

This separation is most evident in the Chinese communities in Toronto. Take the city of Scarborough in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) for example. According to statistics, in an area of 187.70 km², the city had 593,297 residents in 2001 with a Chinese population of 105,000 (Statistics Canada, 2007). Other adjacent GTA cities such as Markham and North York also have large populations of Chinese. In these Chinese communities, restaurants, supermarkets, and other kinds of businesses run by the Chinese are heavily concentrated; the Chinese have their own newspapers, TV and radio stations, and internet service providers. Branches

of Toronto Public Library have a large volume of Chinese books; churches provide services in Chinese; and bank clerks have to be able to speak Mandarin or Cantonese. As such, Chinese communities provide not only a Chinese way of living in Canada, but also considerable job opportunities. They are cultural enclaves in the true sense: people who do not speak English are able to live and work there without having to contact the outside English-speaking world.

Summary

This chapter has provided the context for this study against the backdrop of globalization. It has highlighted three aspects of global migration that need taking into consideration when investigating the phenomenon of Chinese immigrants' not making efforts to improve English in Canada. One is the economic dimension of human migration, which is manifested by the fact that the major objective of Canada's immigration policy is to support the economy of the country, which results in the situation that immigrants chosen from China are in the main well-educated middle-class professionals. Two is that English as a lingua franca facilitates global migration, but is not a sole factor influencing the integration of migrants. The experience of learning English as a foreign language helped Chinese professionals immigrate to Canada; however, their not making efforts to learn the language in Canada suggests that integration is a complicated issue with English, far from being a sufficient condition, being only one of the necessary factors. Three is the role the local plays in the process of globalization: instead of being overwhelmed by the global, much of the local keeps intact, which is evidenced by 'the Canadian experience' upon which local employers insist and by the dearth of meaningful communication between distinct ethnic groups due to Canada's multiculturalism. In the next chapter, I am going to build a conceptual framework, a lens through which the phenomenon in question will be examined.

Chapter 3 Conceptual Framework and Research Question: Motivation, Investment and Identify

The previous chapter has provided the contextual information about this exploratory enquiry into the phenomenon of Chinese immigrants' not making efforts to improve English after settling in Canada. Rationale behind human behaviour is usually complicated, not least that of learning a second language, which is a task entailing prolonged and sustained efforts and most often characterised by learning failure (Dörnyei, 2001: 146). For that reason, the study of second language learning is 'a true conundrum' (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991), which also applies to the study of Chinese immigrants' not making apparent efforts to learn when such learning will bring about apparent benefits. This is an exploratory study, which indicates that not much is known about this particular phenomenon. I will first examine some sensitizing concepts and theories in such disciplines as psychology, sociology, cultural studies and economics, which may assist the comprehension of the phenomenon under investigation; and then formulate a conceptual framework through which to comprehend the research question, which is to be put forward afterwards.

However, prior to these tasks, I need to make three points about learning English in the opening section of this chapter. The first is that learning English in this study involves both formal and informal learning. In Anglophone Canada, the English language permeates every part of society where opportunities of informal learning obtain. On the other hand, considering that there are large Chinese communities in Toronto where the languages of working and living are Chinese languages including Mandarin and Cantonese, and where many do not have much direct contact with members of Anglophone community, one has to resort to formal English courses in order to substantially improve proficiency. For that reason, in the continuum of informal and formal, learning in this study is situated closer to the formal end. The second is related to the difference between the notions of ESL (English as a second language) and EFL (English as a foreign language), which is mainly concerned with the location of learning: the former references learning a language that is other than the native language of the learner in a community that

speaks the learned language; while the latter pertains to learning a non-native language in a context where there are no immediate local users or speakers. However, such demarcation is not always clear-cut, not least in the case of this study where, as mentioned earlier, the learning environment of some Chinese immigrants in Canada resembles more that of EFL learning than that of ESL learning. Given that the discussion of the distinction between the two concepts is beyond the scope of this study, and that the concepts and theories to be examined are connected to either, or both, of them, unless otherwise specified, L2 will be used in the rest of the thesis. And the third is concerned with proficiency. Though skills of a language, listening, speaking, reading and writing, are inextricably intertwined, given the relative strength of Chinese immigrants in English reading and writing skills, the challenges they face in Anglophone Canada are associated with listening and speaking skills. Therefore, unless otherwise specified, learning English in this study references learning to improve oral and aural proficiency in English.

3.1 Motivation and Demotivation

The phenomenon that Chinese immigrants do not put more effort into improving English may be comprehended with reference to motivation. Motivation, according to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011: 4), is responsible for why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it; and a lack of it leads to people's inaction. The phenomenon in question may also be understood in relation to demotivation, a concept that is specifically regarding 'negative' motives, which compensates the notion of motivation. In the following subsections, the two opposing concepts will be examined.

3.1.1 L2 Motivation

There is a rich literature on motivation to learn an L2, and the value theory may be helpful in understanding the phenomenon in question: value is an economic term, and the well-educated Chinese are economic immigrants; besides, the

incorporation of the theory into the conceptual framework echoes what is mentioned in Chapter 2 regarding the call for applied linguistics to bring to the fore the economic aspect of globalization. Also relevant is Dörnyei and Ottó's Process Model (1998), which proffers knowledge about how L2 motivation is formed, and which provides a hint about how L2 motivation is diminished.

3.1.1.1 Task Value

Thanks to its being a bilingual society where English and French are two official languages, Canada has contributed several of the founders of the field of L2 motivation research, including Robert Gardner (1985) who proposed the socio-educational model of language learning, in which motivation to learn a second language is the effect of two causal variables, namely *integrativeness* and *attitudes towards the learning situation*. *Integrativeness* includes interest in the L2, attitudes to the L2 community, and integrative orientation, which refers to the reasons for an individual to learn a second language being his/her identification with speakers of that language: he/she wishes to 'learn about, interact with, or become closer to, the second language community' (Gardner, 1985: 54). And *attitudes towards the learning situation* concerns attitudes towards the language teacher and the language course. Later, in response to the call for L2 motivation research to widen its theoretical perspective by bringing in the cognitive approach from mainstream motivation psychology, Tremblay and Gardner (1995) modified the constructs of motivation in the original socio-educational model by incorporating concepts from expectancy-value and goal theories, as shown in Figure 1:

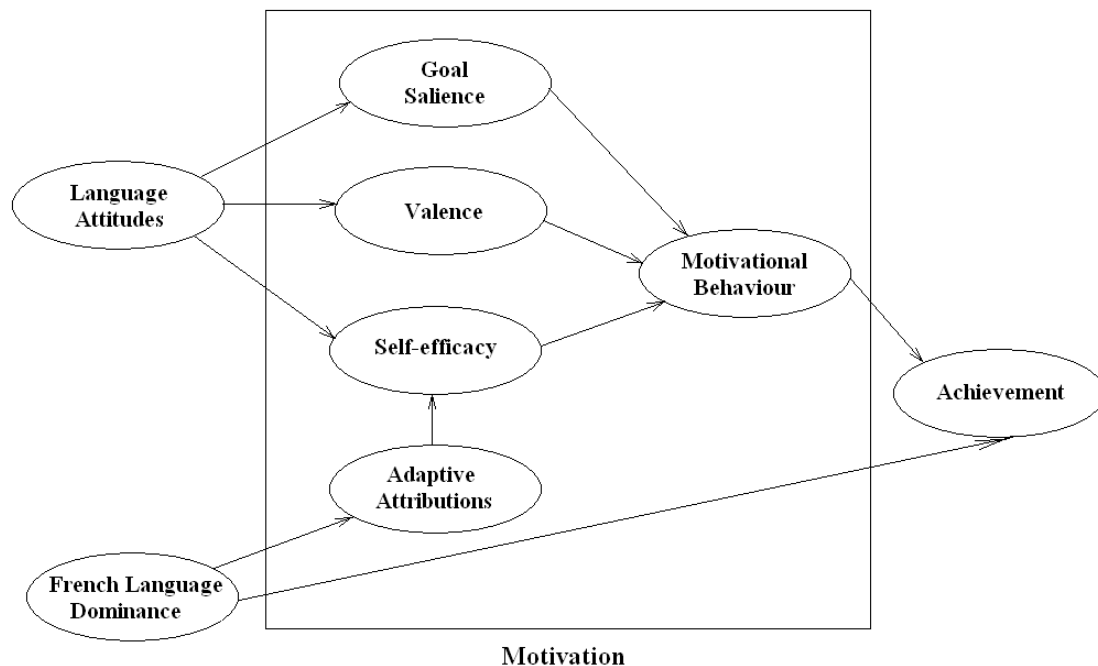


Figure 1 Tremblay and Gardner's (1995: 510) modified constructs of motivation

According to the revised model, *Achievement* in French as an L2 is directly influenced by *Motivational Behavior* and *French Language Dominance* which measures the dominance of French in a student's daily life. Between *Motivational Behaviour* and *Language Attitudes* which comes from the original model and consists of *integrativeness* and *attitudes towards the learning situation*, there are three mediating variables: *Goal Saliency*, which indicates the specificity of the goal and the frequency with which an individual employs goal strategies; *Valence*, which is normally defined as the subjective value that a person links with a particular outcome; and *Self-efficacy* denoting people's belief that they have the capability to make achievements or reach their goal, which is connected with *Adaptive Attribution*, a variable related with how people attribute their successes and failures. In this connection, adequate integrativeness and positive attitudes towards the leaning situation do not necessarily lead to a high level of motivation to learn French because *Motivational Behaviour* is the direct result of the three causal cognitive variables. A higher level of motivation results when learning is valued, the goal is specific and the learner is confident (Tremblay and Gardner, 1995: 515).

Tremblay and Gardner's (1995) model of L2 motivation is a starting point to understand the lack of efforts of Chinese immigrants to improve English because of the notion *value* implied. Considering that they are the immigrants of economic classes according to the categorization of the Canadian government, they migrated to Canada not only for making contributions to the Canadian economy, but also for their own economic success; and their practices, including learning English, should be comprehended with reference to the perceived value in achieving their objectives. For that reason, it warrants a further investigation of the theories about task value. After checking the extensive reviews of L2 motivation theories by Dörnyei (2001) and Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), it seems that there lacks real value theories in L2 motivation research, which necessitates resorting to the value-expectancy theories in mainstream psychology.

Theories within the value-expectancy framework in mainstream psychology generally posit that an individual's motivation to perform a task is influenced by two key factors: expectancy of success in the task and perceived value of the task. If the probability of success is considered high and the value of the task is deemed great, the individual's motivation to perform the task is strong. On the other hand, if any of the two factors is missing, that is, no possibility of achieving the task or no value attached to the task, that individual would not be motivated to carry out the task (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 13).

Most researchers working within the value-expectancy framework place their emphasis on expectancy, only a few focus on the value component; Jacquelynne Eccles and Allan Wigfield (e.g. Eccles, 2007; Eccles, 2009; Eccles and Wigfield, 1995; Wigfield and Eccles, 2000) are two of the latter. They postulate (Eccles, 2007: 109) that an individual's perception of the value of a particular task consists of four parts: (1) the attainment value, which is related to the importance of doing well on a task in terms of self-image; (2) the intrinsic value, which indicates that performing a task is out of enjoyment and pleasure; (3) the utility value, which pertains to the instrumentality of the task, such as facilitating passing an exam, leading to a better career prospect; and (4) the cost of engaging in the task, which is a negative value component encompassing such factors as the loss of time and

energy for other activities, what the individual has to give up to do the task, and anticipated effort the individual needs to put into task completion (ibid: 113). Among the four components, the utility value and the cost are more relevant to this study in that they are more connected to the 'economic' aspect of the task value.

3.1.1.2 Dörnyei and Ottó's Process Model

Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) process model is an attempt to distil from existing L2 motivation theories to form a comprehensive model of L2 motivation, the temporal dimension of which is their focus. They divide motivated behaviour of L2 learning into three discrete phases, namely the preactional phase, the actional phase and the postactional phase, with each phase consisting of several actions and being subject to distinctive motivational influences (Dörnyei, 2001: 85-100). For the purpose of illustrating how these actions take place in sequence, take the preactional phase for example. It comprises three actions, that is, goal setting, intention formation and initiation of intention enactment. The action of goal setting is the result of a series of antecedents (Figure 2), such as *Wishes and Hopes*, *Desires* and *Opportunities*, which are subject to the corresponding *Motivational Influences on Goal Setting*, such as language-related subjective values and norms, incentive values associated with L2 learning/proficiency, perceived potency of potential goal, and environmental effects (ibid: 95).

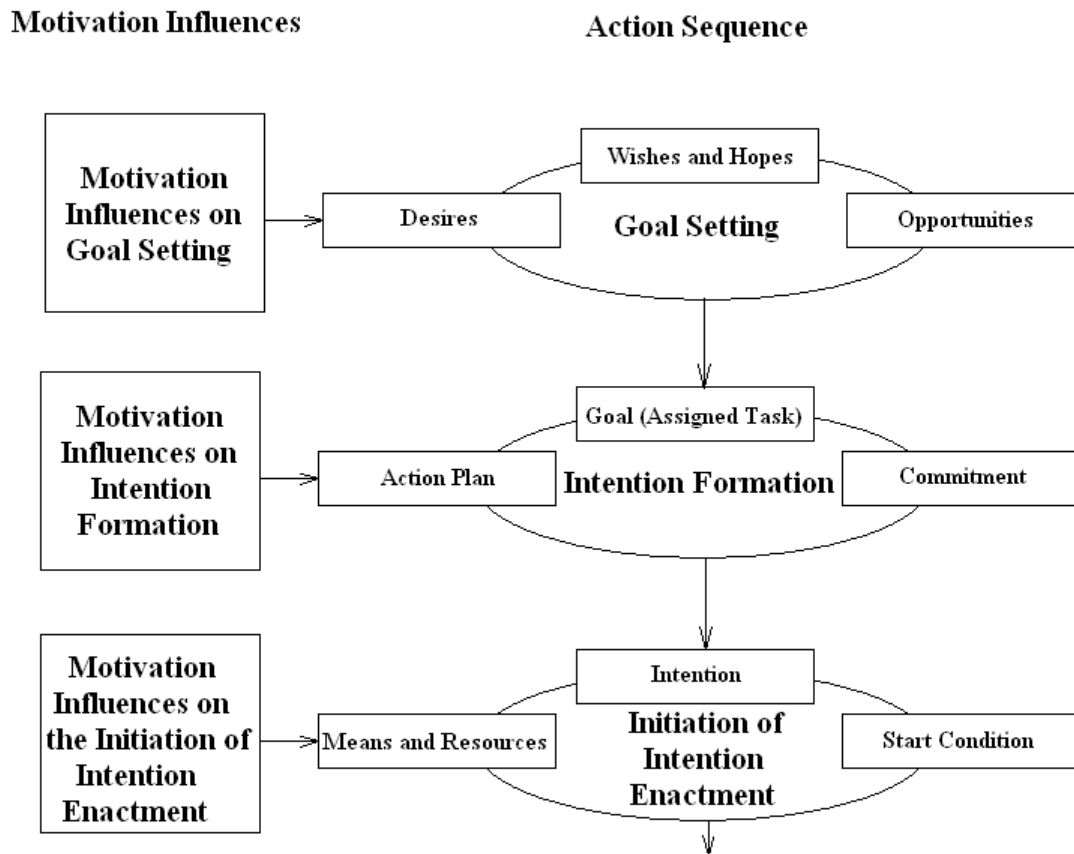


Figure 2 Dörnyei and Ottó's process model (1998 in Dörnyei, 2001: 93)

The unwillingness of Chinese immigrants to improve English might be understood in relation to a lack of motivation. Although Dörnyei and Ottó's model is a model of motivated action, its relevance to this study lies in its temporal dimension. These separate phases, processes and subprocesses sometimes transpire, according to Dörnyei and Ottó, one after another very rapidly, almost simultaneously; but mostly, there are perceivable intervals between them. I take the position that, if such temporality applies to the formation of motivation, it also applies to the loss of motivation, or demotivation which is to be discussed next.

3.1.2 L2 Demotivation

Most research in the area of L2 motivation treats motivation as an incentive whose driving force runs from zero to strong along a continuum (Dörnyei, 2001: 141). To paint a fuller picture of motivation, there warrants an examination of demotivation, a concept specifically concerning the 'deterrents' causing a dearth of motivation.

According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011: 139), demotivation is related to ‘specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action’. From this standpoint, a demotivated English learner is the one who was once motivated, and his/her motivation dwindles away to zero at a later stage.

Compared with studies on L2 motivation, the number of empirical studies on L2 demotivation is limited (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 138). Most of the available studies (e.g. Chambers, 1999; Dörnyei, 1998; Falout and Maruyama, 2004; Oxford, 1998; Sakai and Kikuchi, 2009; Ushioda, 1998) were conducted in foreign language learning contexts and found that the salient demotivating factors were institution-related, not least those related to the teacher. Take Dörnyei’s (in Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011) study for example. The participants were 50 Hungarian secondary school pupils who studied English or German as a foreign language, and they were chosen because they were identified by their teachers or classmates as demotivated learners. Results from interview data showed that the mostly mentioned demotivating factor was the teacher, including his/her personality, commitment, competence and teaching method (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 148), followed by inadequate school facilities and the compulsory nature of L2 study. In this study, as discussed in Chapter 2, most Chinese immigrants registered with the LINC programme in their first days in Canada, which is a sign of their being once motivated to learn English; they do not make more efforts to improve English only at a later stage. In this connection, there may be demotivating factors – institutional or non-institutional – that reduce the original motivation base to learn English.

3.2 Investment and Capital

There are concerns about motivation theories among some scholars who argue that these theories treat L2 learners as ‘idealized abstractions or bundles of variables behaving and responding in theoretically predictable ways’ (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 76), that they depict language learners as ahistorical, fixed and unidimensional (Norton Pierce, 1995: 9), and that they do not ‘do full justice to the unique individuality, agency, intentionality and reflexive capacities of human beings

as they engage in the process of language learning' (Bandura in Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 76). An alternative approach to motivation is conceiving it as investment, a process by which people expend available resources, such as time, energy and money, in learning an L2 from which a return or profit is expected. Investment suggests speculation, an act characterized by agency, flexibility and changeability; while the available resources connote accumulation, a history-related notion. Norton Pierce (1995: 17-18), for example, argues that when an individual learns an L2, he/she is investing in cultural capital (a concept borrowed from Bourdieu) with a hope that the latter will bring about a return leading to access to hitherto unattainable resources. These ideas have gained wide currency in the L2 learning research literature (e.g. Gu, 2008; Ibrahim, 1999; McKay and Wong, 1996; Palfreyman, 2011) over the past two decades. Briefly, investment is for more capital, but also hinges upon the amount of available capital. For that reason, to fully comprehend the notion of investment, there needs an examination of the concept of capital.

3.2.1 Forms of Capital

Capital is an economic term. It is a traditional index of class and personal material wealth (the income of an individual, as well as all property and assets) relative to the society where one lives (Block, 2012: 79). Bourdieu (1986: 242), however, argues that it is impossible to give a full account of the structure and functioning of the social world only in terms of the traditional notion of capital, or economic capital; and that other forms of capital, not least cultural and social capital, should also be taken into consideration.

3.2.1.1 Cultural Capital

Bourdieu is credited with the notion of cultural capital. It has three states. The first is the embodied state, related to the 'proficiency in and familiarity with dominant cultural codes and practices – for example, linguistic styles, aesthetic preferences, styles of interaction' (Aschaffenburg and Maas in Kilbride, 2000: 5). As the word 'embodied' suggests, such a state is the result of a process of internalization,

which entails long-term learning that is not commensurate with formal schooling: domestic education plays a critical role. One example is language practices of people of different social classes, in which Bourdieu (1993: 78-85) showed particular interest. The capacity to speak the official language – the language of the dominant – felicitously in accordance with the situation is the result of long-term conditioning in which children of the dominant classes are inculcated with the official language explicitly and implicitly, consciously and unconsciously, in school and out of school, so that the official language becomes second nature, and they feel at ease using it across situations, not least the official ones, which gains advantage for them over people of the dominated classes who speak the vernacular. By employing this concept, Bourdieu's original intention was to differentiate the power of distinctive styles of speech of the same language, for example, the French language. The relevance of the concept to this study is that, in Canada, the apt employment of the English language is definitely a kind of cultural capital; if the command of English of an individual is on an average level, the value of cultural capital is moderate; if, however, one cannot achieve this average level, as many Chinese immigrants do, he/she does not possess this form of cultural capital and is substantially disadvantaged in Canadian society, not least in the job market.

The second state of cultural capital is the objectified state, referring to cultural objects such as books, writings, and paintings, which can be passed on from one person to another, one generation to another. And the third state is the institutionalized state, related to certain institutions, such as academic credentials, accredited trainings and recognized work experience. In Canada, most professions, such as medicine and engineering, are regulated by professional organizations. As such, work experience and certifications in such professions can be regarded as cultural capital in its institutionalized state.

3.2.1.2 Social Capital

Social capital is the amount of resources, including economic and cultural capital, one can mobilize from a network of connections that one has developed. It is an aggregate of membership of different groups, ethnic, professional or gender, and it is a kind of collectively owned capital, the ownership of which presupposes purposeful, long-term and ever-lasting cultivation and accumulation. In addition, it functions as a multiplier: with the widening of one's network connections and increase in the volume of social capital accordingly, the material or symbolic profits one can secure augment exponentially. What needs pointing out is the fact that every group has its boundary, the entry of which entails specific competence in such elements as the language the group speaks and knowledge of the genealogical relationships of the group, without which the unceasing and continuous efforts of developing and cultivating a relationship are not profitable and even conceivable (Bourdieu, 1986:250). The pertinence of the notion to this study lies in the fact that if a new immigrant to Canada wishes to develop a social network in which the majority are Anglophone Canadians, he/she needs at least the capability to speak English fluently.

3.2.2 Conversion of Capital

Different forms of capital can be converted into each other since they have something in common: Bourdieu (1986: 252) claims that at the root of all forms of capital, including cultural and social, is economic capital – they are from and for economic capital. Money can buy resources to accumulate cultural capital with the ultimate objective being the augmentation of economic capital, one example being that people invest time and money in learning English – a form of cultural capital – in order to gain an edge in the job market. Economic capital can also be employed in the accumulation of social capital: buying gifts for exchange in order to establish a closer personal relationship, purchasing membership cards of elite clubs, to name but a few. And cultural capital can be transformed into social capital: for example, people taking MBA programmes in order to establish a network of elites.

More significantly, underneath the convertibility between different forms of capital is the belief that capital, in all its forms, is accumulated labour-time (Bourdieu,

1986:253). The accumulation of economic capital, for example, material wealth, presupposes time and energy; acquiring cultural capital, for instance, pursuing educational credentials and learning a foreign language, entails time and energy; and procuring social capital, a useful and valuable network, for example, necessitates endless effort (ibid: 249). It is the labour-time that is the universal measure of the values of all forms of capital.

The notion of capital conversion is not uncommon in L2 learning research though it is not termed as such. Norton Pierce (1995) calls it investment in her study on immigrant women's second language learning. One of her informants, Eva, learned English in order to go to university in the future to study business and find a good job after graduation (2000: 61). Her investment in English – at the cost of time and energy – was to acquire more cultural capital, that is, a university degree, which would lead to more economic capital: landing a remunerative job. It is a process of accumulating cultural capital and transforming it into economic capital. Norton's theorization of investment, however, is challenged by Menard-Warwick (2005: 168) who contends that it does not specify what kinds of resources the learner – the investor – capitalizes on when making the investment.

Palfreyman's (2011) study of a group of female Arab learners of English in the United Arab Emirates provides an answer to this question, though implicitly. He found that his informants drew on resources of their social network – e. g. siblings whose command of English was better and encouraging parents who sought on their behalf learning materials such as books and television programmes – to improve their English skills, and that better English proficiency became in turn a family resource (ibid: 32) benefiting the family members in such ways as translating English medical instructions to elderly parents and communicating for them with the outside world where English was a means of communication. He employs the notion of social capital as part of explanatory framework, maintaining that an understanding of social networks and their properties helps to 'get an overall picture of how a learner is interacting in and about the target language' (ibid: 33). It is evident that the Arab women exercised a successful conversion strategy to accumulate their overall family capital, that is, taking advantage of social capital to

invest in English in order to augment cultural capital – a better command of English, which in turn gave rise to increased prestige (ibid: 30) – more social capital – and more material capital, that is, the enhanced employability.

Norton's (Norton Pierce, 1995; Norton, 2000) theorization of investment also involves the notion of return. She claims that the investment return 'must be seen as commensurate with the effort expended on learning the second language' (Norton Pierce, 1995: 17). But it is not clear in her study how the learners measured the return and how the measurement informed their learning act. Gao, Cheng, and Kelly's (2008) study of English learning of a group of Chinese research students studying at a Hong Kong university touches upon the issue. Contrary to the students' original expectation that they would have more opportunities to practise English in Hong Kong, a previous British colony, they found chances of speaking English were limited in their daily lives. In order to improve, or not to forget, English (ibid: 21), they formed a weekly English corner where they could practise English with each other. Most of them were, however, rather practical in that they understood an eight-minute speech for each member every week at the corner would not bring about dramatic improvement in English, and the reason for their keeping attending was due to their awareness that they were socializing with a group of well-educated, English-speaking Chinese elites (ibid: 24). For the students, they were investing not so much in cultural capital in the form of the English language as in social capital in the form of an elite circle, as they were in the knowledge that the return of attending weekly English corner was limited in terms of improving their English skills; their continued investment was due to their belief that such limited return can be compensated by the social capital, a more valuable return (ibid).

As regards this study, the fact that Chinese immigrants are well-educated professionals signifies that they have successfully obtained, via accumulation or via conversion, a certain amount of capital, economic, cultural and social, in China. Their striving in Canadian society can also be understood with reference to investment in diverse forms of capital and to the notion of capital conversion. Investment presupposes a calculation of available resources for investment against

a possible return, which has an impact on an individual's willingness to invest; for that reason, the available resources of Chinese immigrants for investment and their expectation of investment return should also be considered.

3.3 Identity and Communities

Norton Pierce (1995: 18) contends that, learning an L2 as an investment is not only for augmenting the overall amount of capital, but also for the L2 learner's identity, which means that the learner aspires to be a person with a particular desired attribute. Identity, according to Campell (2000: 67), is

a multi-faceted, dynamic construal that contains beliefs about one's attributes as well as episodic and semantic memories about the self. It operates as a schema, controlling the processing of self-relevant information.

What is salient in this definition is that identity is changeable, a viewpoint that is widely espoused in the social sciences, including applied linguistics. Memories are the accumulated past; people's sense of self lives in the present; and what they aspire to be awaits in the future. Therefore, identity is the result of constant negotiations between the three; and consequently, it is conflictual. Rejecting the traditional notion of identity as something fixed, unique and coherent, scholars such as Weeden (1997) who embrace post-structuralism even abandoned the concept of identity and prefer the notion of subjectivity, which is 'the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation in the world' (ibid: 32).

Such a post-structuralist perspective on identity, though well-received, does not go unchallenged. Bendle, for instance, argues that this view on identity fails to address 'upon what psychological substrate such a transient construction rests and how it mobilizes the energies that are observably necessary to maintain an integrated personality in dynamic conditions of social change (Bendle in Block, 2007:41). What he advocates is, in fact, more attention to be paid to the relatively stable core of identity. In the case of immigrants, however, I believe that more

weight should be given to the malleability of identity since 'it is in the adult migrant experience that identity and one's sense of self are most put on the line, not least because most or all previous support systems in terms of history, culture and language have been removed and must rapidly be replaced by new ones' (Block, 2007: 75).

Brewer and Gardner (1996:84) point out that three distinctive levels of identity should be differentiated: the individual level, the interpersonal level and the group level. The first is related to the personalized and unique self; the second is connected with the perception of self resulted from interactions with significant others; and the third is linked with the 'collective self' derived from relationships with important group members. However, whatever level one is interested in, they are all social in nature, including the individual level because the individuated concept of self is the consequence of interpersonal comparison (ibid), which is echoed by Wenger (1998) who claims that the formation of identity results from the interactions between an individual and varied communities to which he/she is related.

The world is complex, which consists of diverse communities with which the learner is associated, and so are the relations of the learner with these distinctive communities; therefore, the learner's identity is complicated. Such complexity manifests itself in three dimensions. Firstly, an individual has multiple identities because of his/her relationships with multiple communities. She can, for example, be both a mother of a young child in a family community and an L2 learner in a learning community of ESL students. Secondly, given this multiplicity, identities of an individual sometimes contradict each other due to the conflicting nature of the communities he/she belongs to. For instance, being a mother who takes responsibility for childcare may run counter to being an L2 learner in terms of learning English. And finally, considering that an individual inevitably encounters new people and new communities in his/her lifetime, his/her relations with the outside world keep changing; as a result, identity also has a changing nature: it is in a state of flux.

Due to the intertwined relations between identity and community, I am going to examine three kinds of communities in the following subsections where diverse types of people's relationships with the communities are subsumed, which all contribute in their own way to the comprehension of the phenomenon under investigation.

3.3.1 Community of Practice

In his personal website, Wenger (2006) defines the community of practice as a group of people who 'share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly'. It possesses three characteristics, namely mutual engagement, joint enterprise and a shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998: 73). Mutual engagement indicates a tight net of interpersonal relations within a community, though not necessarily everybody believing the same thing or agreeing with everything; and in order to fully participate in a community of practice in the workplace, it is 'as important to know and understand the latest gossip as it is to know and understand the latest memo' (ibid: 74). The joint enterprise, in its literal sense, signifies that members of a community of practice work together for a common cause. In the workplace, such a cause is related to fulfilling job responsibilities and, equally importantly, to communally making the work life bearable, which involves, *inter alia*, having fun, being personable and dealing with boredom (ibid: 78). With regard to the shared repertoire, it is the product of mutual engagement and joint enterprise and also the resource for re-engagement in new situations (ibid: 82-83). In the light of the fact that the process of mutual engagement and joint enterprise encompass elements more than those work-related, the repertoire shared by its members is much more heterogeneous than professional jargon; it is concerned with, among other things, personal set of events, references and memories. What is common to the three characteristics is the implied close interpersonal relations which can be viewed as an indicator of any community of practice.

Wenger's (1998) notion of community of practice was predicated on his investigation into the work life of a group of claims processors at an insurance

company. Wenger found that the job of claims processing was repetitious and did not encourage initiative; that the salaries of the claim processors were meagre; and that they did not enjoy much status at the company. However, the claims processors took their job seriously, helping each other fulfil the daily quota set by the company and answer phone calls of difficult customers. Wenger also found that the claims processors tried their best to make their boring work life liveable, such as treating others with snacks, talking about stories in their personal lives, and holding brief birthday parties at work. Though his notion of community of practice was not developed in relation to L2 learning, the concept has gained increasing currency in the field of L2 learning research for the past two decades since workplaces where many L2 learners work with native speakers of the target language can be deemed as communities of practice, which is also relevant to this study because workplace communities in Canadian companies where many Chinese immigrants work can also be considered as such.

An individual's relationship with a community of practice determines his/her relative position in that community, which influences how that individual views him/herself and how others look at him/her, or, in other words, his/her identity. In a community of practice, an individual's relations with it can be participation, or non-participation, or a mix of the two. Wenger argues:

We not only produce our identities through the practices we engage in, but we also define ourselves through the practices we do not engage in. Our identities are constituted not only by what we are but also by what we are not. To the extent that we can come in contact with other ways of being, what we are not can even become a large part of how we define ourselves... Our relations to communities of practice thus involve both participation and non-participation, and our identities are shaped by combination of the two. (Wenger, 1998: 164)

He goes on to depict four scenarios as regards one's position and trajectory, that is, change of positions, in a community of practice depending on the extent of his/her non-participation in the community and relations between his/her participation and non-participation, as illustrated in Figure 3:

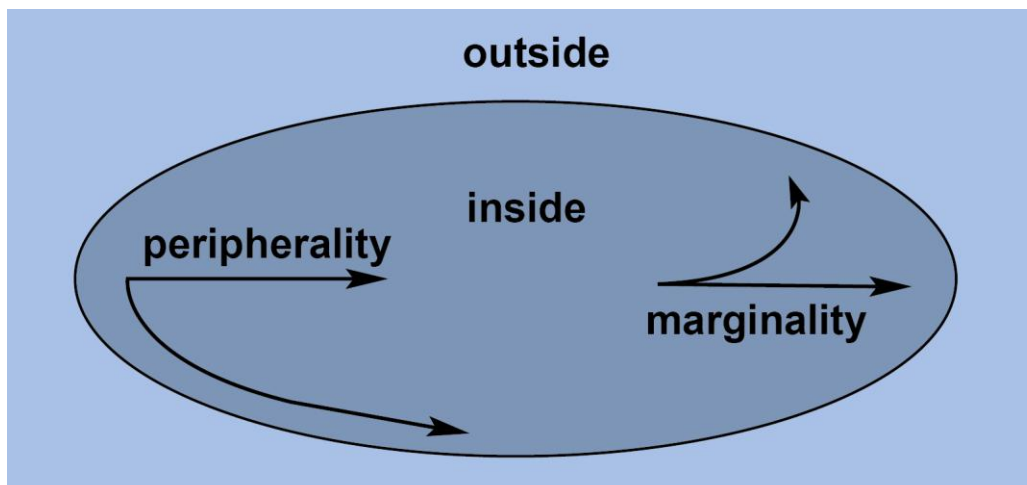


Figure 3 Wenger's (1998: 167) insider and outsider

The first is full participation in the community, an insider status and full membership. The second is full non-participation, an outsider status and non-membership. The third is where a newcomer is on an inbound trajectory and every full member in the community deems that he/she will be a full participant in the future even though he/she might remain peripheral for the time being; this is the situation where temporary non-participation, or non-full participation, is an enabling factor that facilitates learning to be a full participant, an insider, and where participation is a determinant in its relationship with non-participation. The last is the state where a long-standing member is on an outbound trajectory since he/she is not treated by the full members of the community as an insider, at the present and in the future. In such an occasion, non-participation features prominently in the individual's relationship with the community of practice and is the defining factor in the relations between his/her participation and non-participation in the community; as a result, that individual either remains marginal or leaves the community permanently to be an outsider.

The relations between many L2 learners, including Chinese immigrants, and their colleagues in the English speaking-workplace can be understood with reference to participation and non-participation. Such relations may, on the one hand, be shaped by L2 learners' existing identities; and on the other hand, they may give rise to L2 learners' new identities, which may in turn have an impact on their

willingness to invest in the L2. One example is Block's (2007, 2012) investigation into L2 fossilization of a former Colombian university lecturer Carlos who worked as an unskilled low-level service provider in London. His middle class identity related to his former occupation made him interested in relatively serious socio-political issues, and a gentle person in speech and manner, which was in sharp contrast with the atmosphere of his workplace consisting of working class white Londoners. In the light of a lack of common ground between Carlos and his colleagues, he did not actively participate in their conversations; besides, he avoided using colloquial English, which distinguished him from the rest of the staff. As such, he did not regard himself as a part of them, and they did not treat him as one of their circle (Block, 2007: 108-109; 2012: 201-202). For that reason, Carlos's relationship with the community can be termed as non-participation in the main. On the other hand, considering that Carlos was one of the employees, there had to be a certain extent of co-operation between him and his colleagues in order to fulfil job responsibilities; so there was some degree of participation on his side in the community of practice. In the relationship between Carlos's non-participation and participation, the former dominated the latter; therefore his membership of the community was not full, and his position in it was a marginal one. And he did not have any incentive to improve his English to 'any significant degree' (Block, 2007: 109) in order to be part of them and engage in their conversations at work; his English was the English to get the job done (ibid). For Carlos, his middle class identity gave rise to his non-participation, which in turn led to his sense of being marginalized, or marginality, which 'affected his long-term prospects of developing as a competent and confident speaker of English' (Block, 2012: 202).

In fact, applied linguistics in the past two decades has witnessed a considerable amount of empirical studies on the relations between identity and immigrants' L2 learning; and the community of practice, though not explicitly referred to, are perceptible in many of them. Take the oft-cited study conducted by McKay and Wong (1996) on four Chinese-speaking adolescent immigrant students in California, USA, for example. Michael Lee, dissimilar to the other three focal students who socialized exclusively with Chinese immigrant students at their high school, integrated himself successfully into local students thanks to a match

between his sporting skills and ‘the gender expectation of American school subculture’ (ibid: 592), and to his selective investment in the oral/aural skills rather than the writing skill crucial to his academic success; and such investment can be construed as his endeavour to be a fully functioning member of his school which, similar to other US high schools, attached heavy weight to spoken English (ibid). Though not alluded to by the authors, the local students whom were befriended by Michael can be regarded as a community of practice as such; and his efforts to be an accepted member of, or his identification with, the community by way of improving his oral English can be considered as participation in the community.

While Carlos’s colleagues in London, UK (Block, 2007) and Michael’s schoolmates in California, US (McKay and Wong, 1996) were English-speaking communities of practice, the workplace community of the immigrant women in Goldstein’s (1997, 2001) study was a company in Toronto, Canada where the working language was, however, Portuguese. The workers used the language not only to fulfil job requirements of the company run by a Portuguese family, but also to carry out phatic conversations with topics centering on their husband, child, boyfriend, cooking and other family issues. The relationships between the co-workers were so close that “sisterhood” was crucial to keep the assembly lines going (Goldstein, 2001:84) – everybody helped everybody when she had to leave the line or when her work was piling up. 26 out of 27 participants did not attend government-sponsored English courses, and their Portuguese identity, or their identification with the workplace community, played a major role in their decision not to invest in the English language. In fact, if one spoke English to another fellow worker, she was risking losing the sisterhood, which would in turn risk her job security since what she said might be regarded as “talking bad” about the interlocutor. From the perspective of community of practice, speaking English was a sign of non-participation in the community of practice, which would result in the alienation from, instead of integration into, it.

Another type of relationship, which can be employed to understand relations between the L2 learner and the community of practice in the workplace but has not

received much attention in the L2 learning research literature, is negotiability. Wenger (1998:197) argues that one's negotiability within a community also plays an important role in shaping his/her identity. Negotiability is 'the ability, facility and legitimacy to contribute to, take responsibility for, and shape the meanings that matter within a social configuration' (ibid), and the social configuration references a milieu, the workplace, for instance, where there are unequal power relations between the actors – meanings made by some are better valued than those by others and the interpretations of meanings by some have more currency than those by others. Negotiability does not just allow us to make sense of events and make meanings applicable to new circumstances; more importantly, it allows us to enlist the collaboration of others and assert our membership (ibid). If one always holds sway over another in terms of how to perform job duties, the two have distinct negotiability in that community of practice, which has distinct bearing on how they perceive who they are: the former becomes dominant; the latter, due to his/her inability to assert membership, becomes marginalized. In the workplace, if the English learner does not have a satisfactory oral and aural proficiency in English, his/her capability is weak to make sense and negotiate meanings, and he/she lacks the means to assert membership and becomes marginalized. And marginality can, as discussed in the case of Carlos, have repercussions for the language development of the English learner.

3.3.2 Imagined Community

In contrast to the community of practice with which the L2 learner engages on a daily basis, an imagined community is one that the learner does not have much direct contact with; it exists in the learner's mind. Wenger (1998: 176) claims that imagination is 'a process of expanding oneself by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves': there are numerous communities with which an individual cannot, temporarily or permanently, engage in person, and what he/she can do is only imagine what is going on there. This concept was first introduced by the historian Benedict Anderson (1983; 2006) when he studied nationalism. He believes that a nation can be construed as an imagined community because 'the members of even the smallest nation will never know

most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion' (Anderson, 2006: 22). He argues that a driving force of the formation of such imagined communities is 'print capitalism' (ibid: 29): when capitalist entrepreneurs in the incipient newspaper industry were seeking to expand their markets, they constructed production and distribution systems which facilitated dispatching reading materials to readers in different parts of a nation, thus making it possible for the readers to relate themselves, via reading, to others and forming communities on the basis of imagination (Wenger, 1998:294).

Though the term was coined in relation to the history of nationalism, the imagined community has been adopted by other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, including applied linguistics. For most foreign language learners in the world, native speakers of the language they learn, or target language communities, form imagined communities. For a large proportion of second language learners, not least those new immigrants to a host country, one reason for their investment in the second language lies in their wish to integrate into the target language community with whose members the newcomers do not yet have much contact. In this connection, the target language community can also be construed as an imagined community.

As regards an individual's relations with imagined communities, they can also be understood with reference to the twins of participation and non-participation. Not being a member of an imagined community might have little impact on an individual's identity because there are a myriad of communities in the world that have nothing to do with the individual. However, when that individual hopes to become a member of a particular imagined community, imagination 'engages' him/herself with it in his/her mind, which gives rise to an imagined identity (Norton, 2001:166). If the nature of such engagement in the mind is participation, it leads to the identity of identification and belonging; if non-participation, it results in the identity of dissociation (Wenger, 1998: 195), that is, an imagined marginality. In addition, the individual's existing identities also play a significant role in shaping the twin relations. One example is Norton's (1995, 2001, 2003) study of English learning of a group of immigrant women in Toronto. Katarina, one of her informants,

was a veteran teacher in Poland before immigrating to Canada. Though she could not find a teaching position in the new host country, she 'continued to view herself as having legitimate claim to professional status' (Norton, 2003: 243). As such, the identity of teacher was still an important part of her in Canada. In the ESL classroom, she told her teacher that she wished to take a computer course but was discouraged since the latter deemed that her English was not good enough. Norton (2001:164) argues that the reason why Katarina studied English and wanted to take the computer course was that she hoped to be a member of the imagined community of professionals, which can be construed as her imagined participation resulted from her existing identity of teacher; and the discouragement of the ESL teacher, who was deemed a member of that community, can be regarded as a denial of access to, or imagined non-participation in, that imagined community of professionals. In the light of the fact that the ESL teacher was the significant other to Katarina, the imagined non-participation outweighs the imagined participation, leading to her feeling of being marginalized (Norton, 2001: 165), or the identity of marginality.

The relevance of the notion of imagined community lies in the fact that Chinese immigrants are well-educated professional. Though many of them cannot work in their previous field in Canada, it is reasonable to say that in their minds there exists a professional community similar to that in Katarina's. In addition, given that many of them live and work in the Chinese community without much direct contact with the mainstream of Canadian society, the target language community can also be perceived as an imagined community.

One concept that is connected with the imagined community and has not received much attention in the field of L2 learning research is institutional non-participation. Wenger (1998: 169) argues that, in many cases, non-participation is not a direct relationship between people and communities of practice; rather, it is a relationship mediated by institutional arrangements. He illustrated this concept by the practices of the claims processors he studied in the insurance company. The work of claims processors was only a fraction of the whole operation of the insurance company which consisted of such departments as underwriting offices, sales teams and

technical teams (Wenger, 1998: 127). Except for their own department, the claims processors did not have much direct engagement with the rest of the company. For that reason, similar to Benedict Anderson's (1983; 2006) imagined 'national community', the whole insurance company was to a large extent an imagined entity in the claims processors' minds. At the company their job was, as mentioned earlier, of low status, which entailed the pervasive use of standardized forms to connect the outside world and the company by means of narrow procedures (ibid: 169), and which were, to a large extent, the result of the arrangements of the company. Such arrangements gave rise to the 'I just work here' syndrome (ibid: 171) in the claims processors in response to the company's attitudes towards them, which was that 'you give me your time and I'll give you money; you don't invest yourself in me and I don't invest myself in you' (ibid: 170). Therefore, to a large extent, the claims processors did not identify themselves with the company, and the relationship between them and their company was dominantly that of non-participation. Such non-participation was not the consequence of direct interactions between people; rather, it was mediated by institutional arrangement out of claims processors' control, which led to their marginality at the company (ibid: 171). The usefulness of the concept in this study lies in that in the imagined communities of the Chinese immigrants, there are diverse institutions including those regulatory professional organizations and, more importantly, the Canadian society; and their relations with such institutions can be comprehended with reference to institutional participation or non-participation.

3.3.3 Small Culture Community

A small culture community is not a community small in size; rather, it is a community with a small culture. By small culture, I refer to

the composite of cohesive behaviour within any social grouping, and not to the differentiating features of prescribed ethnic, national and international entities. Distant from the large culture approach, which takes ethnic, national, and international groupings as the default, small cultures can be any social grouping from a neighbourhood to a work group (Beales, Spindler and Spindler in Holliday, Hyde and Kullman, 2004: 64)

For that reason, a small culture community can consist of a dozen people, such as a class of ESL students; or a group of people of considerable size, such as all the students of a large university. It can be a community of practice (Wenger, 1998: 137), such as the students at a cram school preparing for IELTS (International English Language Testing System); or an imagined community, such as all the loyal customers of luxury brand. Given that people who live in a foreign country are prone to forming small culture communities where group cohesion features prominently (Holliday, 2011: 147), it may also be the case for the Chinese immigrants in Canada.

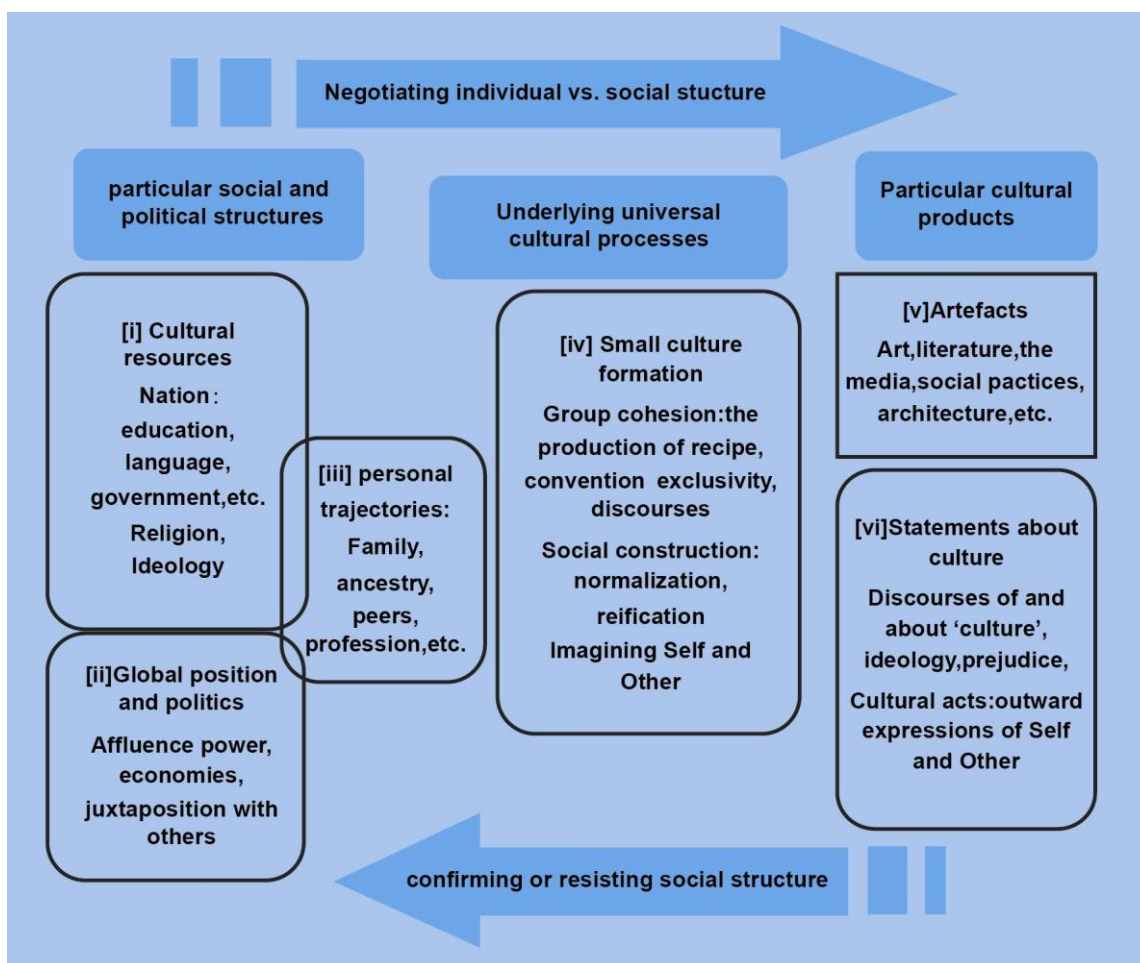


Figure 4 Holliday (2011: 131) Small culture formation

Despite the fact that small culture communities present themselves in seemingly infinite forms, they share a common denominator, that is, the similar process of formation, which is, according to Holliday (2011: 121-150), the grammar of culture.

He argues that the formation of small cultures is an ongoing process, and that it is an interactive and dialogic operation between the universal and the particular (Figure 4). The universal refers to the underlying universal cultural processes in Box [iv] in the figure, including, inter alia, the formation of group cohesion, which can be construed as participation in a community of practice, and imagining self and other, which can be deemed as imagined participation or non-participation in a community. The particular refers to particular social and political structures in Boxes [i] and [ii], encompassing such elements as educational tradition and ideology. After the negotiation between [i], [ii] and [iv], such particular cultural products as discourses about culture and cultural acts in Boxes [v] and [vi] come into being. Besides, he claims that the process of formation is, instead of being linear, a back-and-forth procedure, which is indicated by the two arrows on the top and at the bottom of the figure: particular cultural products are the result of the negotiation between the particular social and political structures and the underlying universal cultural processes and, simultaneously, have a return effect, confirming or resisting the particular and social structures. The confirming effect will be illustrated by an example in the following paragraphs, and the resisting one can be best demonstrated by the feminist movement which can be regarded as resistance to the social structure that gave rise to the movement. Furthermore, Holliday contends that comprehending the formation process should also take into consideration the personal trajectories of the members of the small culture community (Box [iii]).

Holliday's theory about small culture formation is predicated upon his research data (ibid: vi-vii), part of which was from a multinational Master of Arts (MA) group with which he was once associated. The group was a class of English teachers from several countries who were taking a 12-month full-time MA program. A visible feature of the group was that the students held birthday parties for each of its members during which the tutors were invited. When the members were with other students, they usually made statements about the openness and friendship of the group, made explicit reference to the birthday parties, and called the tutors by their first names, suggesting intimate relations with the latter. A newcomer joined the MA group halfway through the programme, and felt alienated. One reason for her

perceived alienation was that she could not play a role in organizing the parties: the parties had become a routine to such an extent that there was no need to specifically plan and discuss in advance whether or not and how the party would be held, and people took on respective roles to carry out organizing tasks as tacitly agreed. Another reason was due to the insider's language building around the parties, such as dates of the previous parties, the guests invited and the shopping of party foods without an explanation of what they meant (Holliday, 2011: 137-147).

Holliday (ibid) argues that there was a visible small culture in that MA group, that is, holding birthday parties and inviting the tutors, and that its formation was the result of the interaction between the universal and the particular. The universal refers to the process of the formation of group cohesion (Box [iv] in Figure 4) among this class of students, which is, in essence, participation in a community of practice; while the particular pertains to the ideology of democracy and socialism brought in by the students as particular cultural resources in Box [i], manifesting itself in particular forms of close-knit studentship and professional bond: though from different countries with diverse national experience, they had something in common in which identity played a significant role – their educational, collegial and peer experience as language teachers. This particularity formed the basis of the small culture in question that existed for 12 months and in the particular context of MA courses held in a fixed classroom, which can be construed as the trajectory (Box [iii]) of the students. As the result of the negotiation between the particular and the universal, the particular small culture materialized, presenting itself by, apart from birth parties, the ideology (Box [vi]) of friendliness and inclusivity in the minds and discourse of the members, which expressed and strengthened the group identity. Considering that the formation of small cultures is an ongoing and non-linear process, this ideology had a reinforcing return effect on the ideology of democracy and socialism as particular cultural resources in Box [i] that had given rise to the small culture in question.

The universal also includes the group exclusivity resulting in the feeling of alienation of the newcomer, and leading to another product of the culture: a particular discourse which was the insider's language such as calling the tutors by

their first names and setting the dates of the parties, which was difficult for an outsider to comprehend and, again, reinforced the very small culture by strengthening the exclusivity. As such, the small culture of holding birthday parties and inviting the tutors was, for the insiders, a culture of group cohesion and a culture of participation; and for the outsiders, a culture of exclusivity and a culture of non-participation.

3.4 Conceptual Framework

Predicated on the sensitizing concepts and theories examined, a conceptual framework can be formulated as Figure 5. In the middle is an individual's decision as to whether or not to invest in an L2; as such, in this study, learning English is regarded as an act of investment. It is related to identity in two ways: on the one hand, one's identity might have an impact on one's decision to invest in an L2; and on the other, investment in an L2 can also be regarded as investment in an identity. As regards identity, it is the result of an individual's relations with diverse communities, which sometimes overlap. Three types of community have been discussed, namely the community of practice, the imagined community and the small culture community. An individual's relations with them can be participation or non-participation; and if the community is an imagined one, then the relations can be imagined participation or imagined non-participation.

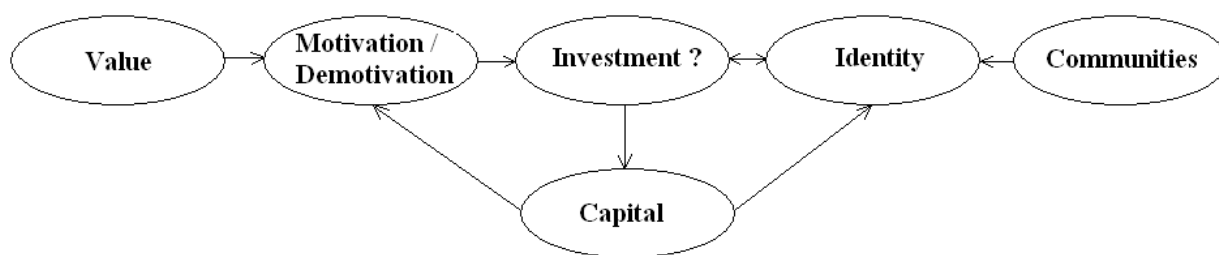


Figure 5 Conceptual framework

Human behaviour is complicated. Identity is only one factor that is connected with one's decision to take action to learn an L2. Motivation is another part of the story, which is where I differ from Norton Pierce (1995) who replaces motivation with investment all together. For me, investment is only one type of human act which,

according to Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) process model, is also under the sway of particular motivational/demotivational factors that are, in turn, under the influence of an individual's judgment of the value of learning an L2, which includes the attainment value, intrinsic value, utility value and cost of learning an L2.

One objective of an individual's investment in an L2 is to acquire more capital, economic, social or cultural. Conversely, the amount of available capital has an impact on one's motivation/demotivation to invest, since there are cases where investment is abandoned because the cost is too high while the available capital is inadequate. The amount of capital an individual possesses is also connected with his/her identity. For example, middle-class identity is related to an individual's amount of economic, social and cultural capital which is more than that of a working-class people and less than that of a well-to-do people.

3.5 Research Question

As stated in Section 1.1.2, for Chinese immigrants, a major factor that results in their low fluency in English is the dearth of efforts to learn the language. Therefore, the research question of this study is:

Why do many well-educated professional Chinese immigrants to Canada make no apparent efforts to improve their proficiency in English after settling down in Anglophone Canada?

Summary

In this chapter, several sensitizing concepts and theories were examined, which will help comprehend the phenomenon of Chinese immigrants' not making apparent efforts to improve their fluency in English. I first reviewed the theories in motivation/demotivation research; then I examined the concept of investment which is, in the L2 learning research literature, a preferred concept in lieu of motivation by many scholars. Considering that investment is a concept related to economics, the notion of capital was also reviewed, including social and cultural

capital. Given that an investment in an L2 can be considered as an investment in an individual's identity, I then investigated the relationship between identity and communities, including the community of practice, imagined community and small culture community. On the basis of this review, a conceptual framework was formulated, which is a lens through which the phenomenon in question will be looked at. And finally, a research question of this exploratory study was put forward. In the following chapter, I am going to elucidate how the study was conducted, including my theoretical perspective that influenced my choice of methodology, which in turn had an impact on my research method.

Chapter 4 Research Design and Methodology: An Exploration

In the previous chapter, I have built a conceptual framework which assisted me to comprehend the phenomenon under investigation, and which informed this exploratory study whose research question was formulated afterward. In this chapter, I am going to elaborate on how the study was conducted. It consists of two parts. The first part is concerned with the research design. I will discuss my theoretical perspective on social research, including my stance on ontology and epistemology, to justify why this is a qualitative exploratory research design. The research method, how informants were chosen, the ethical issues, and the veracity of the study will also be explicated. The second part is regarding how the field work was conducted, including the data collection and the data analysis.

4.1 Theoretical Perspective

Whatever method(s) a researcher selects to conduct a piece of research, the choice is influenced by the methodology on which he/she decided, which, in turn, is under the sway of his/her theoretical perspective. Two related elements constitute one's theoretical perspective, that is, his/her view on existence and on how existence can be comprehended: the former is his/her ontology, the theory of being; while the latter is his/her epistemology, the theory of knowledge. There are three major types of theoretical perspectives in social research, namely positivism, interpretivism and critical theory. People in the positivist camp believe that the social world is similar to the natural world, and that social reality, such as social groups, processes, activities, or situations, exists independent of human consciousness. For that reason, in their view, knowledge about social existence is hard, tangible and absolute. Such theoretical perspective has a profound impact on their research methodology: by employing such traditional means as survey and experiment, they act as an observer when studying social phenomena – in the same way as they do with natural phenomena – with the aim of discovering the generalizable truth about the phenomena under investigation and making predictions about the similar phenomena in the future (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 7-11). What this positivist view of the social world implies is that

human beings, like natural objects, are regulated and determined by universal laws and they only respond mechanically to their environment.

Researchers in the interpretive bloc hold a disparate viewpoint. They are convinced that the social world is dissimilar to the natural world, that it is the result of human cognition and exists only in the minds of people, and that 'there is no independently accessible thing constituting the meaning of a word' (ibid: 7). For them, knowledge, or truth, about the social world is subjective, personal to each individual, and therefore multiple. From this theoretical perspective, to comprehend the meaning in people's minds of a particular social phenomenon, in lieu of being a bystander, the researcher has to be involved in the phenomenon in question and obtain subjective experiences of the researched via such means as in-depth interview and participant observation. As such, interpretivism deems that it is understanding and explanation, instead of generalization and prediction, that matter in social research. What this interpretivist view of the social world suggests is that human beings, dissimilar to natural objects, have agency: they have free will and creativity, producing their own environment (ibid: 8).

The third theoretical perspective bears some resemblance to interpretivism (Ernest, 1994: 28), but with a noticeably distinctive research objective: apart from understanding and interpretation, its paramount concern is social critique and transforming the social world where injustice and unequal power relations obtain. With this political agenda in mind, followers of the critical theory seek to 'emancipate the disempowered, to redress inequality and to promote individual freedoms within a democratic society' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 26).

I am anti-positivist in terms of social research because I reject its assumption that the natural world and the social world are the same. I do not believe that life can be defined in measurable terms because it is inextricably linked with inner experience which cannot be measured objectively. In addition, I disagree with positivism regarding its reductionist and deterministic view of human beings: people have choices, freedom, idiosyncrasy, and moral responsibility (ibid: 17), and they are not slaves of general and universal laws – they have agency. Furthermore, every

individual's knowledge of the social world around him/her, or truth, is distinct, and this is the reason why there are numerous conflicts in this world between people – including even the interpretations of a same written text: the truths in people' minds are distinct.

Nor do I take the perspective of critical theory because the objective of my research is to understand why the Chinese immigrants do not make apparent efforts to improve their low level of oral proficiency in English. It is an exploratory study without an ambition to change and transform their status quo. As such, my theoretical perspective on social research – this study included – is interpretivist: I believe that people constitute the social world, and social reality is the product of their consciousness; and that knowledge is subjective, personal and distinctive. Interpretivism believes that, for the purpose of understanding fully a social phenomenon under investigation, the research needs to be grounded in the subjective experience of the researched; and that in order to achieve this, the researcher has to put him/herself in the place of the researched and probe the phenomenon via personal experience, and weight should be given to the interpretation of the researcher and, equally important, that of the researched. The researcher must commence the study with an open mind, and, in that sense, an interpretivist perspective is also an exploratory perspective (Gray, 2009: 22).

4.2 Research Design

In accordance with my theoretical perspective, the methodology of this study, the overall approaches to and perspectives on the research process (Collis and Hussey, 2003:55), is exploratory, which is manifested not only in the conception of this project as discussed in Chapter 1, the formation of the conceptual framework, but also in the scope and aim of this project: as an exploratory study, it aims not at providing a final and conclusive answer to the research question as to why well-educated professional Chinese immigrants to Canada do not make apparent efforts to improve their English proficiency, but at offering some insightful understanding of the phenomenon in question and a tentative theory of it, which is,

given the qualitative and exploratory nature of the study, not intended for generalization to a wider population.

Furthermore, exploratory methodology of this study presents itself in the timeframe of conducting the research. Stebbins (2001) introduced the notion of concatenated exploration, denoting a chain of field studies linked together leading from a tentative theory to a fully-fledged one, with the studies in the early stages of concatenation being wholly or predominantly exploratory and inductive while the later studies become increasingly confirmatory and deductive. This concept is distinct from a longitudinal study in that the latter investigates a social phenomenon for an extended period of time with a fixed method of data collection which also prolongs; while the former stands for a 'continuous inter-study comparison' (ibid: 28) of a social phenomenon, and each study in the concatenation is usually cross-sectional and the methods of data collection may be distinct from those of other studies along the continuum. I take Stebbins' position, believing that this study is at the very early stage of concatenated exploration, inviting follow-up exploration to develop my tentative theorization. This is a cross-sectional study.

Still, the exploratory nature of this study is evidenced in the research design, data collection and analysis to be discussed in the remaining part of the chapter.

4.2.1 Research Method

The method of research of this study was the interview, which originated from both of my theoretical perspective and methodological choice. When trying to understand and interpret a social phenomenon, an interpretivist perspective focuses on human experience of the 'life-world' with the unit of analysis being the individual, which is usually achieved by the interview (Gray, 2009: 23) because it is an instrument to 'understand the world from the subject's point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences, to cover their lived world' (Kvale 2007:9). As regards its connection with my methodology, the interview is a popular means of data collection in exploratory research because it is an approach of direct verbal

interaction between individuals whereby insight is gained into everyday life (Bloch, 1996: 322 in Goulding, 2002: 59).

There are various types of interviews. For example, the closed quantitative interview where the interviewee is required to choose from predetermined options for each question asked; the standardized open-ended interview where every participant is asked the same questions of the exact wording in the same order; the interview with a guide in which the interviewer decides the sequence and wording of the questions prepared in advance; and the informal and conversational interview where the interviewer has no predetermined questions and decides what questions to be asked depending on the situation. Kvale (in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 353) classifies these diverse types of interviews along several related continua, such as the openness of interview purpose, the degree of structure, and the extent to which they are exploratory or confirmatory. The less structured an interview is, the more open its purpose is, which means the more the interviewer wishes to acquire unique, non-standardized, personalized information about how the interviewee views the world; and therefore the closer the interview is to the exploratory end. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, which entails 'flexibility in looking for data and open-mindedness about where to find them' (Stebbins, 2001: 20), the form of interview chosen for this study was closer to the open-ended and conversational type: the interview of this kind has more freedom and flexibility in matching the interview with the interviewee and the circumstance and less anxiety in the interview process, which encourages more uncertainty of the responses and more responsiveness to what emerges. On the other hand, the interviews were not completely unstructured. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985: 269 in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 354), the structured interview is effective when the researcher is conscious of what he/she does not know and therefore formulates interview questions to fill the knowledge gap, whilst the unstructured interview is efficacious when the researcher is not aware of what he/she does not know and, for that reason, counts on the interviewee to inform him/her. Though this is an exploratory study with little knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation, the literature in the related fields provides, as manifested in the conceptual framework, sensitizing thoughts. For that reason, I

adopted the semi-structured interview as the method of data collection for this study.

Therefore I brought a set of questions to the interviews (see Appendix 1), keeping in mind the several areas of interest in relation to the research question. Questions in Group A ask about English learning experiences in China and in Canada; Group B deals with informants' relations with members of Chinese community and Anglophone community; and questions in Group C explore the informants' educational and work experience in China and in Canada. Questions were asked depending on the individual and situation, and ad hoc questions were raised when the informant spoke of an unexpected subject which was deemed valuable to the study.

4.2.2 Informants

Miles and Huberman (1994: 28 in Richards, 2003: 249) argue that qualitative studies tend to focus on small samples of people, the selection of whom is usually purposeful rather than random, theory driven and evolutionary once the fieldwork begins, which is echoed by Nargundkar (2003: 41) who claims that sample sizes in exploratory studies tend to be small. As regards generalization to a wider population, it is the issue of concern in quantitative studies, but not in qualitative ones: because, on the one hand, it is not possible in qualitative studies, since questions asked in interviews, not least in semi- or unstructured interviews, vary considerably from interviewee to interviewee; and on the other, neither is it desirable because the goal of qualitative studies is an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question in lieu of prediction.

In this connection, as an exploratory study, the process of finding suitable informants who were willing to be interviewed was a snowballing and purposive process with targeted members being well-educated Chinese immigrants in Canada. My first informants were my landlord couple who were both university graduates and who later introduced some of their friends to me. Apart from finding informants by convenience and snowballing, I also purposefully sought potential

interviewees. In my residential area, there were several tennis courts. Because I am fond of tennis, I joined several groups of Chinese tennis fans, not only for physical health, but also for integration. Through these acquaintances with whom I shortly established rapport, I increasingly integrated myself into the Chinese community. According to Bourdieu (1993: 129), different people have distinctive tastes in sports, and sports such as tennis tend to be more popular among those who are better educated, including my newly-made friends. Among them, Liang Ming and Fan Jin were particularly sociable with an extensive circle of immigrant friends, and supportively introduced to me informants who were in distinct occupations, for example, real estate agents, book keepers and IT programmers. In addition, in order to get more information about immigrants' English learning, I went to LINC schools to find Canadian-born ESL teachers to participate in my study. My intention was that, apart from the accounts of the Chinese informants, I also needed teachers' perspectives. In the end, as the following table shows, a total number of twenty one people were interviewed, including two Canadian-born LINC teachers.

Name	Year of birth	Gender	Occupation before immigration	Current occupation	Years in Canada	Remarks
Chen Qing	1977	F	Accountant	Book keeper	3	Once worked on the assembly line of a manufacturing company
Fan Jin	1974	F	Department manager of a multi-national company	Clerk of a small local Canadian company	2	
Jim	1972	M	Business analyst	programmer	7	MBA from a prestigious university in China
Liang Tian		M	Chemical engineer	Laboratory technician	6	
Dom	1964	M	Programmer	Programmer	6	
Zhou Min	1966	F	Senior engineer in microwave measurement	Mobile phone repairer	8	
Zhu Lang	1973	M	Department manager of a health-care products company	Part-time food preparer of a fast food restaurant	3	His wife works in China. He would go back to China after submitting his

						application for citizenship
Linda	1967	F	Accountant	Seasonal worker at a hotel	8	
Hu Fei	1959	M	Established photographer	Self employed, teaching photography to Chinese students	5	
John	1964	M	Senior employee at an international trade firm	Self-employed, working as a real estate agent	8	An engineering major.
Lin Tao	1966	F	Senior engineer	Self-employed, working as real estate agent	8	An mechanical engineering major
David	1971	M		Self-employed, working with his wife in direct-selling business	10	He goes back to China to help his family business for several months every year
Silvia	1970	F	Employee of a local government	Self-employed, in direct-selling	10	David's wife; once worked on the assembly line

				business. Once worked as a clerk at a local company		of a manufacturing company in Canada
Chen Lin	1966	M	Executive of a health-care products company	Unemployed	8	A chemistry major. In Canada, he has worked different labouring jobs.
Li Fang	Around 1970	F	Senior employee of a government agency	Unemployed	4	Her husband works in China, providing financial support for life of her and her child.
Lu Jun	1966	F	General manager of an investment firm	Unemployed	4	Once took part in a short-term training programme on accountancy.
Liang Ming	1973	F	Senior manager at an international	Sociology Student	3	In Canada, she once worked as an assistant

			chain hotel			manager at a local hotel before going back to school for further education
Shen Ping	1968	F	Senior engineer	Student at a local college, studying Child health care	6	
Yang Ye	1968	F	Accounting manager	Unemployed	3	Her husband works in China, providing financial support for life of her and her child.
Mary		F		Canadian-born LINC Teacher		Three years of teaching experience at a LINC school in the Chinese community
Jenny		F		Canadian-born LINC Teacher		Manager of a LINC school in the Chinese

						community
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Table 1 Bio-data of the informants

4.2.3 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues implicated in this study refer in the main to informed consent, that is, the potential interviewees need to be fully informed of the project before making the decision to take part in the interview. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007: 52) point out that different cultures may have distinct attitudes towards the protocols of informed consent: some are less stringent while others are more strict about it. As regards the Chinese people, from my own experience, they tend to feel easier about something with less formality, not least among acquaintances or friends due to the face issue. As referred to in the previous subsection, the finding of the interviewees was a snowballing process, and the informants were friends, acquaintances, or those recommended by them, which made it more necessary to make it clear to them in advance, in person or by telephone, the ethical issues involved in the interview, including the purpose of this study, the protection of their privacy, their rights in the interview, and, in particular, that the interview would be recorded.

Before the interview commenced, an e-mail attached with a consent form (see Appendix 2) was sent to the interviewees recapitulating the above ethical issues in more detail, encompassing that: 1) to ensure anonymity, pseudonyms will be used in the report and future possible publications so that the identity of the interviewee cannot be traced; 2) to guarantee confidentiality, safety measures would be taken to protect the data, including recorded audio files; 3) the interview questions would be harmless without containing any elements that would threaten their job or other forms of security and intrude into their personal life; 4) in the process of interview they can refuse to answer any question they would feel uncomfortable; 5) the interview would be recorded; and 6) a hard copy of consent form would be signed by them before the interview began. The overall wording of the email was a mixture of friendliness and professionalism, suggesting the informal manner of the interview and the seriousness involved in the research. I was fortunate because everyone

was happy to take part in the interview even though they were informed that they were not likely to benefit from this research.

4.2.4 Veracity of the Study

Veracity is about whether the researcher is able to 'gain an accurate or true impression of the group, process, or activity under study' (Stebbins, 2001: 67). One of the concerns of the researcher in a qualitative study is whether he/she is able to obtain reliable data. Bourdieu (1993:83), when reflecting on how his status influenced collecting trustworthy data during a survey, admitted that

From the start of the survey, I had been aware that the legitimacy effect which also plays a major role in matters of language, caused members of the working class, when questioned about their culture, to tend, consciously or unconsciously, in the survey situation, to select what seemed to them to correspond best to the image they had of the dominant culture, so that it was impossible to get them to say simply what they really liked.

What he was talking about is the negative impact of unequal power relations between the researcher and the researched on the veracity of the study. As regards my status in this study, my informants and I shared the same first language, similar cultural and educational backgrounds and immigration experience. Besides, I was roughly within the same age range of the informants, which was 35-45. Furthermore, I even had the similar work experience in Canada as most of the participants did: my part-time job at a car rental company was a menial one – I spent most of work time behind the wheel, which I did not forget to mention before each interview. Therefore, I can claim that the informants and I were on the same footing in terms of power relationship. As such, there is no reason to doubt that the informants would intentionally provide false data.

In addition, thanks to the aforementioned shared attributes, I could also claim, in this study, with relation to the informants, a status of insider whose perspective serves to depict and understand accurately social situations and behaviours and is at the heart of most qualitative research (Fetterman, 1998: 20). However, accurate

depiction and understanding cannot be guaranteed by an insider's perspective only, not least in exploratory research where heavy subjective elements are implicated when a solitary researcher interviews and observes (Stebbins, 2001: 67). To avoid identifying too much with my informants which may compromise the impartiality of interpretation, I constantly reminded me that, though I had common ground with them, I was the researcher instead of being part of the researched, and that I was in Toronto for the research project instead of permanent settlement. Therefore, the insider's status was partial, and I was also an outsider, to some measure, to the researched, which, to some extent, added objective elements to the study and improved its veracity.

In addition, diverse measures were employed to enhance the veracity. The first was member checking, that is, 'checking with the people who are being studied, and who gave the data' (Punch, 2005: 255). In my study, it took two forms: one is asking for interviewee's clarification of the meanings of the sentences that I did not understand and for their comments on my written summary of the interview; the other is that I chose two informants whom I constantly conferred with during the process of data analysis. Liang Ming was once an assistant manager at a Canadian company before going back to school to study sociology at a local university and, as mentioned above, especially sociable in her circle; and Zhu Lang was a senior manager before immigration. The reason why they were chosen was due to closer rapport with them and their availability. Both of them provided me with invaluable and illuminating comments that contribute to my data analysis. For example, when I was discussing with Zhu Lang the differences between learning and acquisition of the informants (I did not mention the actual names of the people being discussed for the sake of anonymity), he mentioned the importance of the relationship between life experience and culture, which had not been adequately weighted, and which led to my review of the concept of small culture and incorporating it into my conceptual framework.

The second was taking advantage of people whose profiles ran counter to those who had been interviewed (Stebbins, 2001: 67). Liang Ming had recommended several informants to me; she claimed that she herself was not the type I was

looking for and suggested that I should not waste time on her. However, I finally interviewed her as the result of my introduction of the concept of member checking to her. Unlike the engineering backgrounds of the most informants, her work experience in the hotel industry helped her find a relevant position shortly after she landed in Canada; though she was an immigrant of the economic class, she belonged to a subcategory – entrepreneurs and investors, which implies that she was much better off than other informants, which afforded her ample resources – time and money – for further education in Canada after quitting her hotel job. And more importantly, she believed that she had made substantial improvement in her English language skills, including listening and speaking, after having lived in Canada for three years. All this contradicted what had been found from most of the informants, which, while offering an alternative viewpoint, provided an excellent chance of comparing her data with and checking the properties of the existing categories.

The third was observation. It was not the observation in the ethnographic sense; instead, it was an approach to checking the veracity of the data collected from the interviewees, which was connected with their daily lives. For example, I noticed that many immigrants preferred going to Chinese speaking churches, reading Chinese books borrowed from the libraries, and being served by Chinese speaking bank clerks, which attested to what they informed me of as regards their unwillingness to speak English. This kind of observation also included searching for archival sources such as newspaper articles, blog articles posted onto the Internet by Chinese immigrants and studies on the similar topic. For example, there are a large number of online discussions about immigrants' lives in Canada, including their predicaments in finding professional jobs and language issues they face; and in Han's (2007) and Zhu's (2005) unpublished PhD theses, there are several case studies of new Chinese immigrants to Canada, involving stories of distinct aspects of their daily lives such as in the workplace, in church and at home. Though such information can be treated as data in exploratory studies, in this study it mainly served as a means of checking the interview data. And the last method was interviewing Canadian-born ESL teachers in order to listen to their

perspectives on Chinese immigrants' English learning in the classroom, which also functioned as verifying the data collected from the Chinese informants.

4.3 Data Collection

The time span of the interviews covered 10 months, from August 2011 to March 2012. The first three interviews functioned as pilot ones, which helped revising the questions in the interview guide and, more importantly, served the purpose of training my interview techniques. The original plan was to send a questionnaire to the informants in advance for such bibliographic information as their age, current position, and length of time in Canada, which I later considered intrusive to some extent, not least because some of them might not be satisfied with their current employment status in Canada. I decided to abandon the questionnaire, and tried to get such information during the face-to-face interactions.

The Chinese are sensitive to face which is, according to Brown and Levinson (1987:61), 'the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself'. Face is closely connected to positively valued attributes in a particular society. And for the Chinese, face sensitivity does not only arise in inter-personal interactions, but also in non-face-to-face situations. It

may be defined in terms of the more enduring, publicly perceived attributes that function to locate a person's position in his/her social network. Thus defined, a person's face is largely consistent over time and across situations, unless there is a significant change in public perceptions of his/her conduct, performance, or social status (Ho, 1994:274).

If a well-educated Chinese, for example, holds a position that does not match his educational background and/or his work experience, he is likely to consider the under-employment face-threatening since under-employment is a negative attribute perceived by the public. Face is a vulnerable phenomenon, and is connected with emotional reaction (Spencer-Oatey, 2007: 644); therefore, in order to ensure that the interviews went smoothly, I paid extra attention to it by avoiding asking questions that might be deemed face-threatening by the informant. For

example, I knew one informant who was unemployed was engaged in direct selling business which is not regarded as a decent job in China by the well-educated. I did not bluntly ask why she was in such business until she told me her life story and introduced to me what her business was about.

Since the informants were, except for the two Canadian language teachers, friends, acquaintances and those who were introduced by them, rapport was easily established before the interview commenced. Despite that, diverse measures were employed to make the interviews run as smoothly as possible. Most of the interviews were conducted in cafes; several were in the informants' home; and one in the informant's office. In that sense, the milieu of the interviews was relatively relaxing. Except for the two teachers, the interviews were conducted in Chinese because, apparently, it was more natural to express oneself in one's native language. And three interviews were carried out in the Shanghai dialect considering that these informants and I are all from Shanghai and a closer relationship may be easily established by speaking in this dialect. The interviews lasted from an hour to an hour and a half, and all the interviews were recorded with the informants' prior consent. Since all of them had never taken part in research interviews, to ease the possible nervousness in the presence of the recorder, there was usually an unrecorded free chat in advance, and I would also casually inform the participant that, during the interview, if they felt any questions uncomfortable they did not have to answer them.

My role in the interviews remained mostly as a quiet listener, posing questions and asking for confirmation occasionally when I did not understand what the participant meant. Sometimes the informant raised an unexpected issue that was considered relevant to the study, and I would encourage him/her to expand on it by asking more related questions.

When processing the data, if I had any difficulty understanding the meaning of particular sentences, I would contact the informant for clarification. After analyzing each interview, a summary was sent to the informant for their comments. A second interview would be conducted when there was a need to examine a particular issue

in more depth. Sometimes later interviews gave rise to a new pattern that had not been found in the previous interviews and which was deemed important for theorization, then previous interviewees would be contacted for asking the questions related to the new pattern. Altogether eight participants were interviewed twice through telephone, skype or face-to-face, which lasted from twenty minutes to one hour.

After each interview, the audio file was transferred to my password-protected computer, and the original file in the recorder was deleted considering that there was no safety measure to protect it lest the recorder was lost. After the data collection process finished, all the audio files were burned onto a CD which was secured in my locked drawer.

4.4 Data Analysis

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the theoretical perspective of this study is interpretivist, which informed the method of data analysis of this study. The analysis is 'neither a distinct stage nor a discrete process' (Richards, 2003: 268); it is an integral part of the whole process of data collection (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1992; Strauss and Corbin, 1998), including even the interview itself because sometimes data from the later interviews are checked against or compared with the data from earlier ones. In this study, after an interview was conducted, the first step of data analysis was to listen to the recording several times in order to grasp the general ideas the interviewee made, and write down notes in a memo for that particular informant. The next step was full transcription, which was conducted for the first three pilot interviews. After the transcription was coding, parsing the words into manageable and logical segments and labelling them with meaningful and recognizable codes such as 'Linda024_AccentDiff2Change', in which 'Linda' stands for the name of the informant, '024' for the sequence number of a particular data chunk, and 'AccentDiff2Change' for the meaning of the data chunk (accent being difficult to change). From the fourth interview onwards, I changed the way of dealing with the raw data. Instead of full transcription, I availed myself of a piece of software called Mp3 Sound Cutter which is able to cut an mp3 format recording into pieces of any length. Since every interview was recorded by the mp3 recorder,

I cut the recorded interview – the large mp3 audio file – into manageable and logical pieces – smaller mp3 files, naming each small audio file by the same coding system discussed above, which is exactly the same parsing and coding process as transcribing the written texts.

The reasons why I switched to working with audio files from transcription were fourfold. First, since the names of the cut audio files were in fact labels, I grouped all the smaller audio files and the original large file in one folder named after the informant, which was neat and straightforward to view all the labels under that particular interviewee (See Appendix 3). Second, the audio files were more readily manageable by the Windows Explorer since they could be later copied and pasted to the related category folders. Thirdly, when there was a need to access the raw data, the information contained in the audio files was more vivid than transcribed texts. And finally, such a method of managing the data was more time-efficient than the full transcription without compromising the fidelity to the raw material because, in the final analysis, after repeated listening to and labelling the raw data, I only needed to work with the labels and categories. I only had to transcribe a particular piece of data when I decided to display it in the report.

With more interviews being conducted and more data flowing in, through comparing the data sets of different interviewees, it was found that some codes were related. For example, the following three data chunks ‘Jonathen023_Shorter-course certificate 4 family needed income’ (“I only took a short-term course for a certificate in order to enter the job market earlier because the family needed money to carry on”), ‘Chen Qing019_Taking care of kids occupying much of the time’ (“I didn’t learn English because I had to take care of the newborn baby”), and ‘ChenMo006_10HrsWorkNoTimeLearningEng’ (“after working for ten hours a day I simply had no time learning English”) connote one common theme, that is, constraints on learning English, which gave rise to the category *Constraint*, and a folder named *Constraint* (See Appendix 4). Then a memo was written delineating the meaning of the category, and the related labelled codes – parsed audio files of distinct informants – were copied and pasted into the folder *Constraint*. The labelling and categorizing were not distinct stages of data analysis; instead, they

were a back-and-forth procedure running throughout the whole data collection process. The incoming new data would be labelled and categorized simultaneously if they matched an existing category; they might, however, lead to new categories against which existing codes, that is, the parsed audio files, would be re-examined, categorised or re-categorized. As such, constant comparison had been the major tool in the whole process of data collection and analysis; it is the way of comparing the new data with existing data and categories, so that the categories are able to accommodate both the old and new data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2008: 493).

I not only compared the data sets of different interviewees, but also the categories. As the number of interviews increased, so did that of the categories. By comparing the categories, relationships and patterns surfaced. For instance, the categories *Unsatisfactory Aural skills*, *Unsatisfactory Oral Skills*, and *Lack of Cultural Knowledge of Canadian Society* are all concerned with the informants' lack of capability of verbal interaction with members of Anglophone community, so they were all included in the super-ordinate category *Lack of English Communicative Skills*; on the other hand, the categories *Lack of Access to Opportunity of Practicing Oral English* and *Lack of Necessity to Learn English* appeared to have a condition/consequence relationship. I did not stop finding informants for interview until no categories and patterns came up when new data were added. At that time, I believed I reached 'saturation', the point where the incoming new data will not cause the theory that has been generated to be modified' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 116). The major categories and their relationships are to be discussed in Chapter 5.

Summary

My stance on social research is that human beings in the social world are not the same as objects in the natural world, and should not be treated in ways that objects are treated. My anti-positivist position had an impact on my theoretical perspective on this study: it was interpretivist, which resulted in adopting an exploratory methodology for this study. In this connection, this study had an

exploratory research design with the in-depth semi-structured interview being its method of data collection. Informants were chosen in a purposeful and snowballing manner, and a total of 21 people took part in the interviews including two local English teachers. The data analysis was conducted in an ongoing manner, and did not stop until saturation was reached. The principal themes and categories found will be reported in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 Findings: Lack of Necessity and Lack of Worth

In the previous chapter, I elucidated the details about how the research was conducted, including the rationale for adopting a qualitative exploratory research design, and how data were collected and analyzed. This chapter is aimed at the presentation of the principal findings. It was found that, as Figure 6 illustrates, there were two major aspects to answer the research question as to why many Chinese immigrants do not make apparent efforts to improve English after settling in Canada – *Lack of Necessity* and *Lack of Worth*, with each aspect being the title of each of the two sections of this chapter. In the first section, I will begin with a depiction of the weaknesses of the informants (WiC – *Weaknesses in Competitiveness*¹) facing the Canadian job market. Then I will describe the employment status (UaU – *Under-employment and Unemployment*) of them followed by a major subsection on their lack of opportunities to practise oral English in their daily lives (LoAtOoPOE – *Lack of Access to Opportunities of Practicing Oral English*). This section will end with a delineation of the consequences of such a lack, that is, the informants' perception that there is no immediate necessity (LoN – *Lack of Necessity*) to endeavour to improve oral English. The second section will start from an elaboration on informants' views that improving English was a costly endeavour (HCoMEtLE – *High Cost of Making Efforts to Learn English*), which entailed time and energy, and sacrifices of family responsibilities and leisure pursuits. I will then give an account of why they considered making efforts to improve English lack of noticeable effects (LoEoLE – *Lack of Effects of Learning English*), including limited help of the courses they had taken and dubious benefits that English learning in general would bring about. This section will conclude with the informants' perception that it was not worthwhile (LoW – *Lack of Worth*) to put more effort into improving English.

It should be noted that the titles of the two sections are two important data categories, and these two categories are not, however, super-ordinate categories that encompass other subcategories. Rather, they are the resultant categories from

¹ The abbreviations and definitions of the categories can be found at the end of this opening section.

other interacting ones. In addition, considering that human behaviour, not least such complicated human acts as L2 learning, is under the sway of intricate factors that intertwine with each other, and the relations between the factors sometimes are circular instead of linear. For example, in Figure 6, Making No Apparent Efforts to Improve Oral English has a returning effect on the *Weaknesses in Competitiveness* (WiC); and the latter has an influence on the *Lack of Effects of Learning English* (LoEoLE), to name but two. Still, there are relations that are not included in Figure 6 which only demonstrates the most significant relationships that lead to the answer of the research question; therefore, Figure 6 is intended as a simplified model to provide a structure for the following discussion, and a more detailed and refined figure will be presented at the end of this chapter.

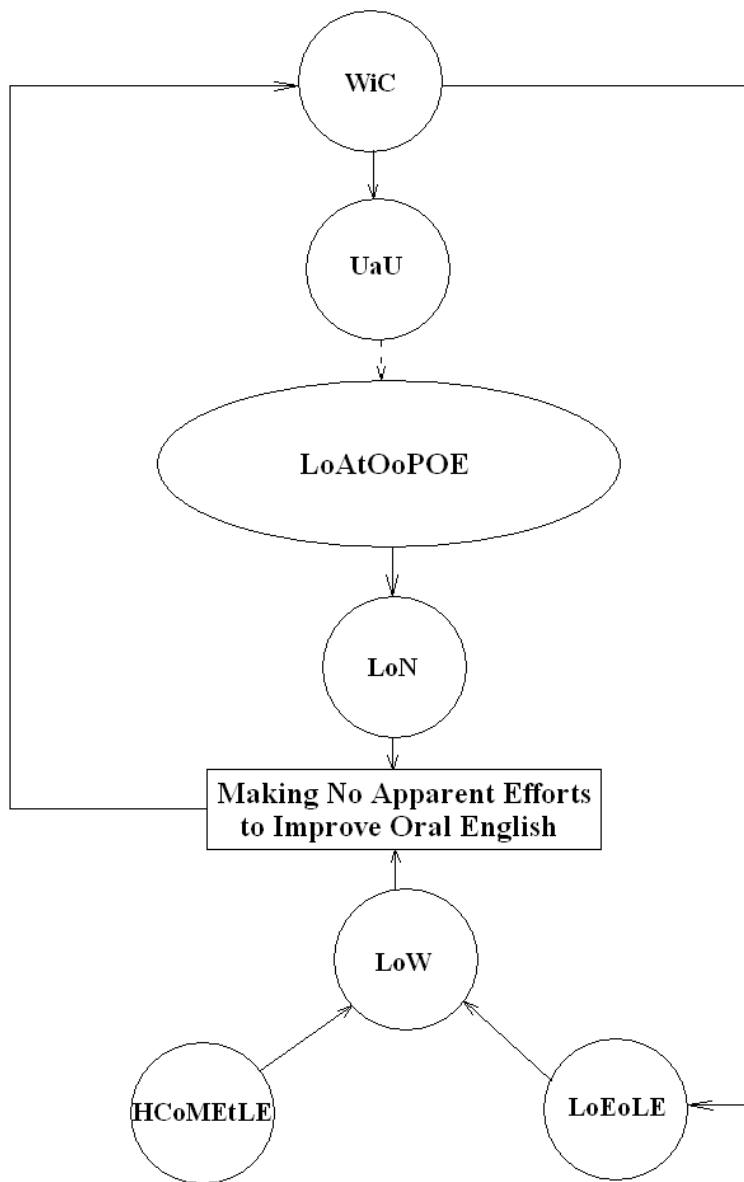


Figure 6 Major findings – Lack of Necessity and Lack of Worth

HCoMEtLE – High Cost of Making Efforts to Learn English
 LoAtOoPOE – Lack of Access to Opportunity of Practicing Oral English
 LoEoLE – Lack of Effects of Learning English

LoN – Lack of Necessity
 LoW – Lack of Worth
 UaU – Under-employment and Unemployment
 WIC – Weaknesses in Competitiveness

Abbreviation	Category Name	Description
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CoLE	Constraints on Learning English	They include the pressure of making ends meet to support the family, wish to relax one's mind because of aging, and parental responsibilities, all standing in the way of learning English.
DBoLEiG	Dubious Benefits of English Learning Efforts	The informants were not convinced of what future learning efforts can definitely bring about in terms of finding a professional job.
DiliMC	Difficulty in Integrating into Mainstream Canada	The informants did not consider that they belonged to the mainstream society.
DilwC	Difficulty in Integrating with Colleagues	It consists of three interconnected subcategories: lack of common ground is the main reason causing the informants' difficulty in integration, which is exacerbated by 'eating technical rice' and associated with their lack of prospect of promotion.
ECB	Ethno-Cultural Boundary	The informants believed that there is a boundary between them and local Canadians that cannot be crossed due to ethnic and cultural differences.
EE	Entailed Efforts	Perceived time and labour entailed to make substantial improvement in English.
ETR	Eating Technical Rice	In order to increase job security, the informants preferred investing time enhancing their technical skills rather than communicative skills, which de factor alienated them from their colleagues.
HCoMEtLE	High Cost of Making Efforts to Learn English	It refers to what stands in the way, or is a competing concern, of learning English as well as the expected effort one needs to make substantial improvement in it.
LCC	Large Chinese Communities	It refers to a community large in size and where there is a large Chinese population; it is a self-contained cultural enclave, as it were, offering such conveniences of life as restaurants, supermarkets, libraries, post-offices, and banks – all providing services in Chinese and English; and one does not have to speak English in order to survive there.
LHoLC	Limited Help of LINC Courses	The informants deemed the courses too easy and impractical, that there were not many opportunities for practicing oral English, and not helpful for the informants to find a professional job.

LoAtOoPOE	Lack of Access to Opportunity of Practicing Oral English	It has two aspects: on the one hand, they could not make use of opportunities available in their workplace, which is tantamount to their non-existence; on the other, there were not many opportunities to use English in the Chinese community.
LoCGwC	Lack of Common Ground with Colleagues	The informants lacked shared interests and concerns with Canadian-born colleagues
LoECS	Lack of English Communicative Skills	It concerns the lack of capability of verbal interaction with members of Anglophone community, which is connected with <i>Unsatisfactory Aural skills, Unsatisfactory Oral Skills, and a Lack of Cultural Knowledge of Canadian Society.</i>
LoEoLE	Lack of Effects of Learning English	They pertain to two aspects: on the one hand, they refer to whether or not the LINC courses are helpful in improving English skills; and on the other hand, they also reference whether or not English learning in general is instrumental in finding a professional job.
LoN	Lack of Necessity	Given the lack of access to opportunity of practicing oral English, a common attitude among the informants was that learning English was unnecessary. It was evidenced in three dimensions: their limited English vocabulary was enough for carry out daily routine; they did not take part in interactional conversations with local colleagues in the workplace; and there was no need to speak English in the Chinese communities.
LoRoCWE	Lack of Recognition of Chinese Work Experience	It manifests in two dimensions: employers' inability to identify the skills of the informants since the latter could not exhibit what they could do through a strong command of English; and employers' refusal to accept immigrants' work experiences accumulated in China.
LoVSN	Lack of Valuable Social Networks	It refers to the fact that the informants tended to socialize with Chinese immigrants without the capability to establish social networks among local Canadians, which might otherwise give rise to better employment opportunities.
LoW	Lack of Worth	Calculating the effects of learning to improve English against what such efforts cost, the informants drew a conclusion that learning English is not a worthwhile endeavour

LPoP	Limited Prospect of Promotion	It is related, on the one hand, to their lack of communicative skills which disqualified them from senior positions that entail strong communicative skills; and on the other, to their inability to integrate themselves into the workplace.
QJ	Quiet Jobs	It refers to the nature of the informants' jobs which usually do not involve much oral communication.
RtC	Reluctance to Communicate	Due to the fear of losing face, lack of confidence and fear of being discriminated, the informants did not want to communicate with members of Anglophone community.
WiC	Weaknesses in Competitiveness	It refers to the factors that lead to the informants' being disadvantaged in the job market to compete with their Canadian counterparts, which resulted in their difficulty in finding jobs commensurate with their work and educational experience.

Table 2 Descriptions of the Categories

5.1 Lack of Necessity

As is shown in Figure 6, The *Lack of Necessity* (LoN) is one of the major dimensions of the answer to the research question, which is directly connected to the informants' *Lack of Access to Opportunity of Practising Oral English* (LoAtOoPOE), which in turn is associated with informants' employment status – *Under-employment and Unemployment* (UaU). Such status originates from their *Weaknesses in Competitiveness* (WiC) in the Canadian job market, to which I now turn in the first place.

5.1.1 Weaknesses in Competitiveness (WiC)

Weaknesses in Competitiveness (WiC) refer to the factors that lead to the informants' being disadvantaged in the job market to compete with their Canadian counterparts, which resulted in their difficulty in finding jobs commensurate with their work and educational experience (*Under-employment and Unemployment – U a U*). Such factors encompass, as Figure 7 shows, the *Lack of English Communicative Skills* (LoECS), the *Lack of Recognition of Chinese Work Experience* (LoRoCWE), and the *Lack of Valuable Social Network* (LoVSN). It worth mentioning that the arrows in the figure represent causal relations instead of super- and sub- ordinate ones, because the three latter categories are not, in their nature, necessarily personal weaknesses; they became weaknesses only in the Canadian job market.

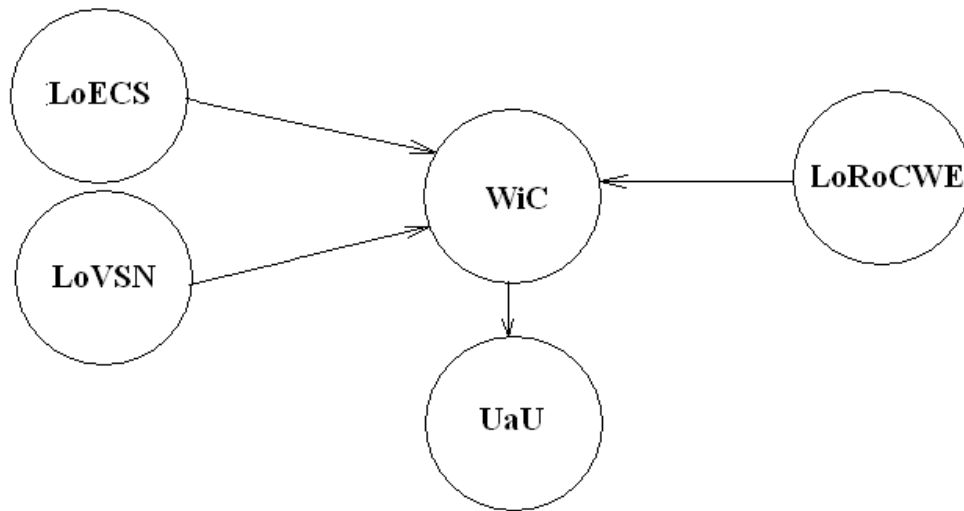


Figure 7 Weaknesses in Competitiveness

LoECS – Lack of English Communicative Skills
 LoRoCWE – Lack of Recognition of Chinese Work Experience
 LoVSN – Lack of Valuable Social Networks
 UaU – Under-employment and Unemployment
 WiC – Weaknesses in Competitiveness

5.1.1.1 Lack of English Communicative Skills (LoECS)

The lack of English communicative skills is in the main concerned with the lack of capability of verbal interaction with members of Anglophone community. Because such interaction entails comprehension of the remarks of the interlocutor, a certain level of aural skill and familiarity with the cultural knowledge implicated in remarks are prerequisites to successful communication, which the informants also lack. For that reason, this category consists of three subcategories that are displayed in Figure 8, namely the *Unsatisfactory Aural skill (UAS)*, the *Lack of Cultural Knowledge of the Canadian Society (LoCKotCS)* and the *Unsatisfactory Oral Skill (UOS)*.

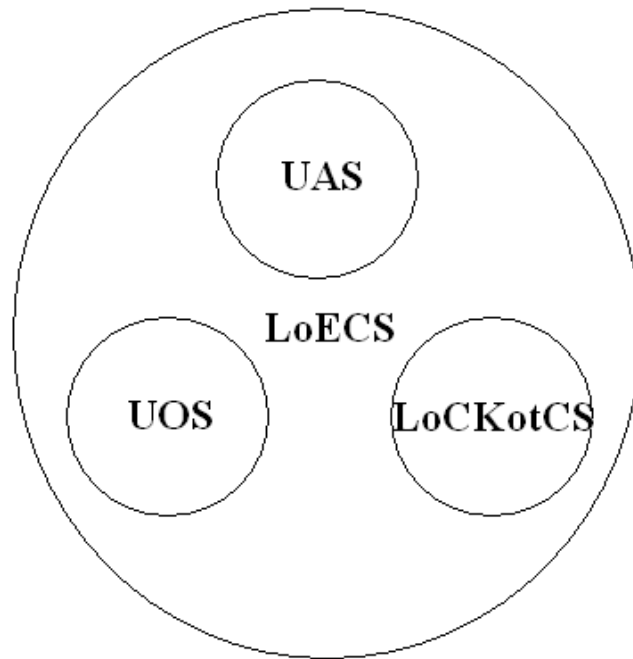


Figure 8 Lack of English Communicative Skills

LoECS – Lack of English Communicative Skills
 UAS – Unsatisfactory Aural skill
 LoCKotCS – Lack of Cultural Knowledge of the Canadian Society
 UOS – Unsatisfactory Oral Skill

5.1.1.1.1 Unsatisfactory Aural Skill (UOS)

In order to engage in a conversation with another person, an individual has to be able to understand what the remarks of his/her counterpart mean. All the informants admitted that their listening skill was not satisfactory, which manifests itself in three aspects. Firstly, it was difficult for them to understand fast speech of the locals, as Zhu Lang said:

Those local Torontonians, it's really difficult for me to understand what they say, they speak very fast ... (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Zhu Lang005)

Secondly, it posed a challenge for them to understand Englishes distinct from the standard English, that is, the English they heard in the classroom. Yang Ye, for example, told me that:

... at [LINC] school, I was able to speak simple English, but out of school, those Indians, black people, I just couldn't understand what they say, the accents ... (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Yang Ye013)

Canada is a multi-ethnic society; immigrants from different parts of the world speak Englishes with diverse accents. In this connection, in the informants' daily lives, they sometimes encounter people who speak English with an accent. For such informants as Yang Ye who have been taught with 'standard' English and only have limited oral and aural skills, accented English creates an additional obstacle.

And thirdly, given that the English the informants have learned in the classroom tends to be the formal form of the language, the non-formal English, not least slang, they heard outside the classroom caused an issue for them:

... I am poor at understanding slang, since I haven't lived in North America for a long time. When they use slang, I can't understand. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Fan Jin060)

Fan Jin senses that, to understand slang of a particular region, one has to live a prolonged period of time in that area. Considering that most informants have not lived in Canada for a long period, familiarity with the slang is a long way to go.

The predicament of unsatisfactory listening skill was exacerbated by the fact that conversations in some cases were carried out on the phone where the informants experienced anxiety and had not any non-verbal clues, such as body language, to assist comprehension:

... in my first days in Canada, there were phone interviews. As soon as I picked up the phone, I felt extremely nervous, I even couldn't tell which company the caller was from ... (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Lu Jun020)

... if you have to contact a government agency for something and make a phone call, you can't understand what they explain to you. If you go there in person, though you might not understand as well what they say, since at least they will show you something that you can read, [which assists your understanding] ... (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Chen Lin035)

Carrying on a conversation entails meaning negotiation where both parties contribute their own share, including such non-verbal clues as gestures and eye contact, which is devoid of in telephone conversations. Speaking to someone in a language that the informants are not good at, not least in official occasions, mounts the tension, which substantially worsens their listening comprehension.

5.1.1.1.2 Lack of Cultural Knowledge of the Canadian Society (LoCKotCS)

The informants moved from China, an eastern country, to Canada, a western country. The two countries differ substantially in numerous ways, which present themselves, among other things, in cultural knowledge involved in conversations. In most interviews, the informants expressed their deficiency in understanding cultural knowledge implicated in their local interlocutors' remarks. Jim, for example, said:

... language is not just about the grammar and the vocabulary, there is the whole culture. Culture is, sort of, for example, they grew up from their childhood playing hockey, and what interests them is to spend their holidays in a cottage somewhere, to travel, etc. all sorts of things. His meanings behind his words, the movies, that sort of things, just like, if you ask a LaoWai, you talk to him about the Chinese Four Great Novels, you speak of Zhang Fei, we immediately know that <category>² of people, a lot of such things, those implied meanings in the words, you don't know. (Transcript translation: IntTrans_Jim035)

'LaoWai' is a word commonly used by Chinese people to reference foreigners in China. It is neither derogatory nor laudatory. Zhang Fei was a prominent general

² < > Original words or sentences in English by the informants; meanings of the transcript symbols can be found in the transcript convention in Appendix 5

who lived in the era of The Three Kingdoms and died in 211 BC; in the historical novel 'The Three Kingdoms' he is characterized as a bold and quick-tempered general. According to Jim, 'their' culture amounts to the life experience shared by local Canadians and is related to the topics those LaoWai colleagues talk about at the office. Also included in the culture are popular great works of literature inculcated into the minds of people during their early schooling. In that sense, he believes that unless one shares the life and educational experience with people of another language, it is impossible to fully understand the language they speak. This finding echoes Derwing and Waugh's (2012: 3) study where they found that well-educated Chinese immigrants lacked adequate cultural knowledge of the Canadian society to effectively take part in conversations.

5.1.1.1.3 Unsatisfactory Oral Skill (UOS)

The problematic aural skill and the lack of cultural knowledge of Canadian society have repercussions for the informants to effectively carry out conversations with local Canadians, which is worsened by their unsatisfactory oral skill, which has a negative impact on their finding a professional job matching their expertise. Many of them could not even pass the first round telephone interview which is conducted by Canadian companies as an initial measure to screen out unqualified candidates. Zhu Lang, for instance, admitted:

If you want to find a job at a certain level here, one of the basic requirements is <communicating skill>. If you can't even express yourself clearly ..., I was doing rather bad in that telephone interview. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Zhu Lang021A)

He believes that the reason why he did not perform to his satisfaction in the telephone interview was due to his low level of oral proficiency in English which is not a match for the position of high level. As a result, he did not receive any follow-up calls from that company. For those who were able to be interviewed face-to-face in their search for jobs, unsatisfactory oral skills confined them to lower positions that did not require much verbal communication with colleagues. Take

Chen Qing, who was an accountant in China before immigration, for example. She was once interviewed for a position of assistant accountant. She said:

During the interview, my English was very poor..., you know, as an assistant, you don't have to talk a lot at work ..., the boss said, 'If we finally decide to hire you, you should improve your English.'
(Transcript translation: IntTrans-Chen Qing003)

She later successfully obtained that entry-level position thanks to its not involving much verbal interaction on the job. Compared with the position of accountant, the socio-economic status of an assistant accountant, however, is much lower.

5.1.1.2 Lack of Recognition of Chinese Work Experience (LoRoCWE)

The second category related to the *Weaknesses in Competitiveness* (figure 5.2) is the *Lack of Recognition of Chinese Work Experience* which presents itself in two dimensions. On the one hand, it was due to employers' inability to identify the skills of the informants since the latter could not exhibit what they could do through a strong command of English. Fan Jin, for example, claimed:

... to a large extent, I am only using half of my professional knowledge at most at work. Because the strong part of your work experience lies in your managerial skills and your skills of implementing systems, which is closely related to how to communicate with people and how to put your technical skills into implementing particular projects. (Transcript translation: IntTrans_Fan Jin032)

The biggest hurdle for us immigrants to clear, or the bottleneck to get around, must be language and culture. (Transcript translation: IntTrans_Fan Jin035)

Fan Jin senses that the obstacle she faces in her career advancement is language- and culture-related. Due to her lack of communicative skills to display and utilize her managerial expertise, part of her work experience is wasted, which was echoed by Silvia:

... that's why many with advanced degrees are doing labouring work here. It's not because his professional skills are not good enough, it's because he can't make people know of his professional skills. If they don't know your skills, how can they hire you? It's not discrimination, you have to be able to display your skills. The point is, you speak broken English, how can you do that? (Transcript translation: IntTrans_Silvia109)

On the other hand, the lack of recognition is because of employers' refusal to accept immigrants' work experience accumulated in China, not least in such strictly regulated professional fields as engineering and medicine. Shen Ping, a former engineer, complained:

I was in the field of telecommunication ..., I couldn't find a related job here, nobody thinks I am able to do it, nobody recognizes my credentials and my work experience, this is the problem everyone faces....(Transcript translation: IntTrans-Shen Ping126)

Engineers Canada is a national regulatory body responsible for licensing those who want to work as an engineer in Canada. In order to work in their professions, as mentioned in Section 2.3.1, internationally trained engineers have to go through a re-licensing process, which, according to its website, is complex and lengthy (Engineers Canada, n.d.b). And those who could not afford the time, energy and money to go through this process are virtually deprived of the possibility to be an engineer in Canada. This is an irony for the informants because, as discussed in Chapter 2, most of them were granted the immigrant visa on the basis of their engineering background by the Canadian government, which, in the minds of most Chinese people, represents Canadian society; and what they had expected is in sharp contrast to the reality after arriving in Canada: they found that their work experience is not recognized by Canadian society.

5.1.1.3 Lack of Valuable Social Networks (LoVSN)

The value here refers to whether an individuals' social network proffers potential employment opportunities matching his or her expertise. Due to the lack of communicative skills and relatively short period of time living in Canada, it was

difficult for the informants to establish social networks among local Canadians, which had a negative impact on their career success. Hu Fei, for instance, was a successful photographer in China; he was planning a project, the success of which depended on entering a substantial number of ordinary Canadian households. He told me:

For me the biggest difficulty here is language. The second is to establish relationships. I am a new immigrant anyway, without a good command of English, it is hard to find such relationships. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Hu Fei006)

His fame in China came from a series of photographs recording enormous changes in the lives of ordinary Chinese people for the past three decades, which entailed entering into a considerable number of ordinary families, a prerequisite of which was an extensive social network. He understands that in order to conduct a similar project in Canada, he also needs a sizable social network, which does not only hinge upon a good command of English which he lacks, but also entails a prolonged period of cultivation, which he is wanting.

Therefore, the informants tend to weave their social networks among themselves, as Peter admitted:

... for the past ten years, I made friends for the sake of friendship. That's why I haven't made much progress in English, especially oral English... (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Peter032A)

Because he makes friends not for the sake of practising English, his friends are all Chinese, which has repercussions for improving his English skills, which in turn confines his choices of developing his social network. Many informants are trapped in such a vicious circle, which influences negatively their employment prospect considering that everyone in that network is immigrant on the same socio-economic level. Lu Jun, the former chief financial executive, said:

... friends aren't very helpful in finding a job, but they could provide some information... for example, the training course I took was thanks to the information from my friend, since when I first arrived, I didn't

She cannot obtain employment information that matches her work and educational experience from her friend circle since, in Canada, they are also newcomers. What her social network can provide is information about entry level accountancy training programs that are provided by the Canadian governments to assist new immigrants to find jobs.

5.1.2 Under-employment and Unemployment (UaU)

The lack of English communicative skills, recognition of Chinese work experience and valuable social network has repercussions for the informants' competitiveness in the Canadian job market: most of them were, as is shown in Table 1 in Section 4.2.2, under-employed, and some were unemployed. In the table, the first six informants were employed on a full time basis. Among them, five worked in office settings of local companies where the majority of staff were English speakers (hereafter referred to as Canadian companies to differentiate from Chinese-run businesses in Canada), and only Dom's job was at the same level in the same profession as his previous one in China. Zhou Ming worked as a cell-phone repairer at a company run by the Chinese, where all the staff were Chinese. Zhu Lang worked on the night shift as a part-timer at a fast-food restaurant; he decided to go back to China after fulfilling the 3-year residence requirement for Canadian citizenship. Linda, who used to be an accountant, worked at a hotel as a seasonal housekeeper; she did not work in winter when the business was slow.

Given their weaknesses in competitiveness, not least their unsatisfactory communicative skills in English, many immigrants switched their career to programming and accounting, because they believe that 'the Chinese speak lousy English and these jobs require much less interaction' (Han, 2009:66). Besides, these two professions are less strictly regulated than engineering in Canada and it takes much shorter periods of time to acquire related certificates for entry. Take the IT industry for example, Jim told me:

... when the market turns better, many people switch into this [IT] field. Besides, it is a bit different from other fields. There are diverse certificates in this field, for example, IBM, Cisco, Microsoft, they have different certificates. However, it takes a shorter period of time to get certified, and you can take an exam at any time when you are ready. Besides, it has no specified entry requirements like nursing, which requires not only schooling, but also a license. You have to get licensed before you can find employment. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Jim025)

The IT field does not require a license for entry. What it needs is a certificate of a relevant sub-field and work experience. Many immigrants with an engineering background take part in a short-term training programme in which they acquire a certificate and internship opportunities to accumulate Canadian work experience. If the economy is robust, they could be fortunate to find a job in a matter of months. So is accountancy whose level of entry is also relatively low and where many immigrants, not least women, found employment. There are government-sponsored short-term training programmes for immigrants run by privately-owned training institutions which many Chinese female immigrants, such as Lu Jun, choose to enrol. After a few months of training, students are certified on the entry level and enter into the field where employment opportunities are relatively plenty at a time of healthy economy. In fact, some small firms do not require any certificates for entry level accountancy, and Chen Qing, a bookkeeper, is a case in point: she did not take part in any training programmes in Canada.

Five informants were self-employed. Hu Fei is a famous photographer in China, working to establish himself in Canada. To support the life of his family, for the time being, he taught photography to Chinese students in the Chinese community. Jin and Lin Tao worked as real estate agents, an occupation popular among Chinese immigrants: it is flexible, self-employed with low entry barriers, and does not require fluent English – there is a large real estate market among the Chinese in Canada who are fervent believers in property investment. And David and Shirley are a couple, working in direct sales, which is not uncommon among the Chinese in Canada. The husband stays in China for several months every year, helping his family business there while earning money to supplement family income in Canada.

The commonality between real estate agents and direct sales persons is that their customers are exclusively Chinese.

The remaining six informants were unemployed. Shen Ping and Liang Ming were taking different programmes at university, hoping to find a better job after graduation. Lu Jun and Chen Lin were temporarily unemployed, looking for employment opportunities either in China or in Canada. And Li Fang and Yang Ye opted for staying at home, with their husband working in China to support their lives in Canada, which is not uncommon among the Chinese. These husbands are called 'flying men' by Chinese immigrants: because they do not want to resign themselves to non-professional jobs in Canada, they fly several times a year to Canada for a brief family reunion, and fly back to China to work in their professions with an income to support the life of their wife and child in Canada. For that reason, in Toronto and Vancouver, there are a considerable amount of such women as Li Fang and Yang Ye who live in a state of quasi-separation. They do not work; they take care of their child; and they do household chores.

Considering distinctive opportunities of contacting native speakers in their daily lives, I divide the informants into two groups: those who work at Canadian companies; and those who do not, including those working at Chinese-run businesses and those who are unemployed.

5.1.3 Lack of Access to Opportunities of Practicing Oral English (LoAtOoPOE)

It was found that most informants did not perceive a plenty of opportunities to speak English in their daily lives (*Lack of Access to Opportunities of Practicing Oral English*), which was manifested by two scenarios: *Difficulty in Integrating with Colleague* (DilwC) and *Difficulty in Integrating into Mainstream Canada* (DiliMC). The first applies to the informants who worked in Canadian companies: even if opportunities of speaking English were abundant during office hours, they cannot make use of them, which is tantamount to the non-existence of opportunities. The second is most salient among those who do not work in Canadian companies: they live and/or work in the Chinese cultural community where they have limited

exposure to the English language in their daily lives, and the Chinese language is their language of living and working. Such lack of access is, as is shown in Figure 9, partly caused by the *Under-employment and Unemployment* (UaU) which directly leads to *Quiet Jobs* (QJ) and the *Large Chinese Community* (LCC), and results in the *Lack of Necessity* (LoN).

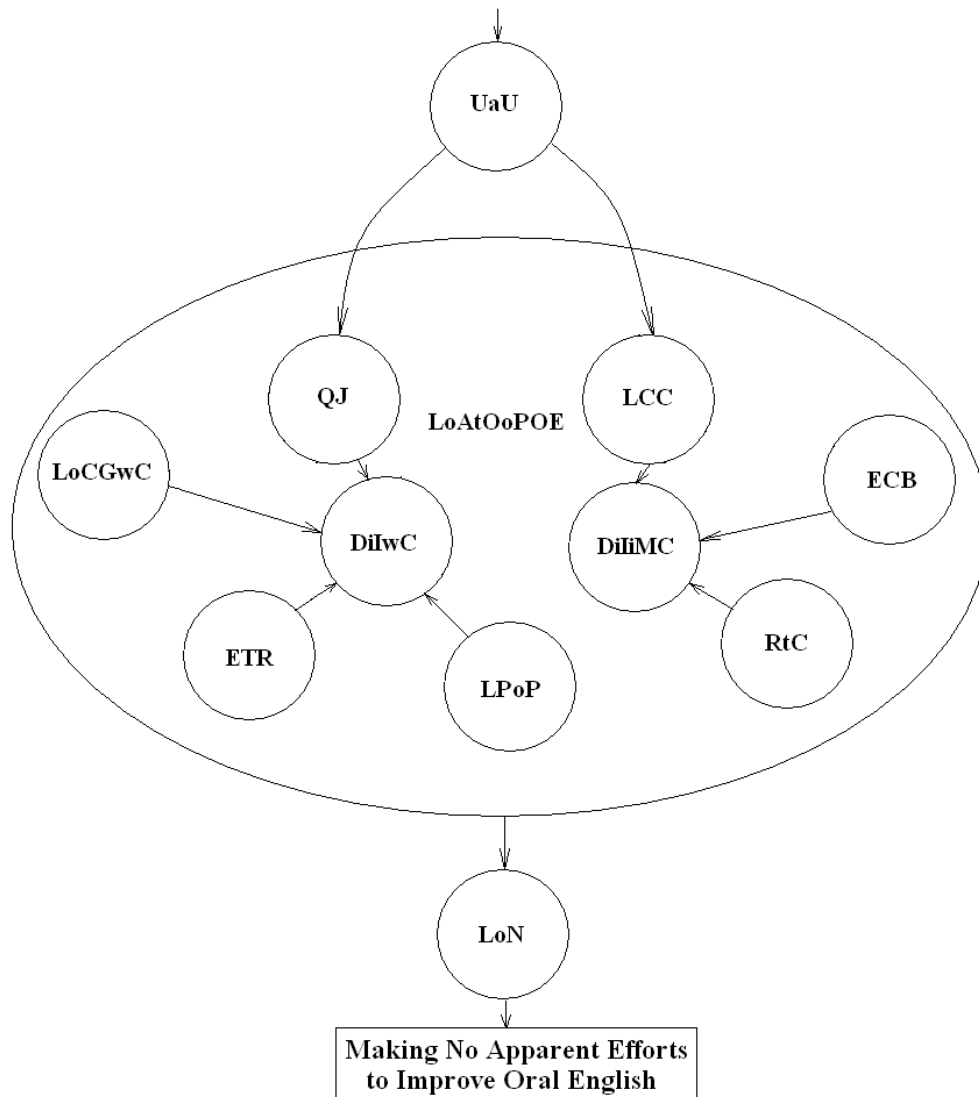


Figure 9 Lack of Access to Opportunity of Practicing Oral English (LoAtOoPOE)

DilIMC – Difficulty in Integrating into Mainstream Canada
 DilwC – Difficulty in Integrating with Colleagues
 ECB – Ethno-Cultural Boundary
 ETR – Eating Technical Rice
 LCC – Large Chinese Communities

LoAtOoPOE – Lack of Access to Opportunity of Practicing Oral English
 LoCGwC – Lack of Common Ground with Colleagues
 LoN – Lack of Necessity
 LPoP – Limited Prospect of Promotion
 QJ – Quiet Jobs
 RtC – Reluctance to Communicate
 UaU - Under-employment and Unemployment

5.1.3.1 Difficulty in Integrating with Colleagues (DilwC)

Difficulty in Integrating with Colleagues is connected with several factors. One is related to the nature of the informants' jobs, which usually do not involve much oral communication; they are *Quiet Jobs* (QJ), which would have otherwise forced the informants to speak English frequently to their native speaker colleagues, and which would have integrated the former more with the latter. Another factor is that there is a *Lack of Common Ground* between the informants and their local colleagues (LoCGwC) – they have little to contribute to interactional conversations taking place in the workplace. The third is associated with the informants' career planning. After taking stock of their weaknesses, the informants are predisposed to invest their time and energy on technical skills in lieu of communicative skills – they '*Eat Technical Rice*' (ETR), which has repercussions for their integration. And the fourth is linked to the prospect of their career advancement – given the informants' lack of communication with their colleagues, they have *Limited Prospect of Promotion* (LPoP), which also has a negative influence on their integration.

5.1.3.1.1 Quiet Jobs (QJ)

Because of the *Weaknesses in Competitiveness* in the job market discussed in Section 5.1.1, those who were able to find employment at Canadian companies either worked in their professions but at a lower level than the previous one in China, or switched to less regulated professions that are easy to enter after a relatively short period of training, such as accountancy and software programming. A common denominator between these jobs is that they entail dealing with computer systems most of the day without having to verbally communicate with the rest of the company – they are 'silent' jobs, as it were:

In IT, if you are on the coding <level>, you just need to <study the requirements> of the work that your <BA> or <Project Lead> <assigns a task> to you. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Jim 021)

In the IT field, BA stands for Business Analyst. Large software systems developed by such multinational software corporations as Oracle and SAP have standard modules. However, due to a myriad of business modes around the world, those software systems normally need substantial customization before they can be smoothly implemented in the companies who purchased them. A BA is responsible for understanding customers' particular modes of business and translates them into plans of system customization. In this connection, the BA has to be familiar with not only diverse business modes but also conventions of programming. As such, the BA is superior in the corporate hierarchy to the programmer whose job is implementing the plans by writing codes into the computer. In Canada, Jim readjusted his career expectation considering his weaknesses in competition, and went through a brief training programme before landing a programming job which was in sharp contrast to what he did in China:

[In China] I used to talk a lot at work, you know, since I was a BA. I talked to my <customers>, a lot of chat. I designed many questionnaires, to understand their needs, I wrote requirements for the programmers. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Jim 043)

Jim's complaint about wordlessness on the job was echoed by Chen Qing, the assistant accountant:

It is relatively boring at work. There aren't many opportunities to speak. Basically my work is punching the keys, keying invoices into the computer, keying all the stuff, like bills, data, etc, into it, that sort of thing. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Chen Qing016)

The work of programmer and assistant accountant does not provide the informants with opportunities to verbally communicate with the rest of company on a frequent basis, which would otherwise have forced them to speak English to their colleagues and made them more integrated into the latter.

5.1.3.1.2 Lack of Common Ground with Colleagues (LoCGwC)

In fact, similar to most office settings in the world, there is not a lack of interactional conversations in the informants' workplaces. The issue is that, apart from work, they lacked shared interests and concerns with Canadian-born colleagues. William, for example, described:

... when we Chinese are together, we have common topics, we chat about those gossips in China, we all know that stuff, for example, the little girl who was hit in China, we all cared about it. We as immigrants don't care much about what happens locally, they care, they care about it, and usually many of them have the same opinion ... just like, we cared about, for example, the little girl who was hit, we were angry, we had the same feelings... (Transcript translation: IntTrans-William037D, IntTrans-William 037E)

The small girl he was referencing was involved in a hit-and-run accident in China in which she was severely injured. A CCTV camera captured the accident and showed that 18 passers-by did not seem to come to her rescue until the nineteenth called the paramedics, which aroused nation-wide outrage. The girl died later in the hospital. William's description indicates that the informants do not care much about what happens around them in Canada; instead, they pay close attention to what happens in China. Given that a considerable proportion of workplace conversation is not work-related, ranging from sports to one's personal life (Block, 2007: 101), such a lack of common ground results in the fact that the informants cannot actively participate in what Brown and Yule (1983: 2-4) call 'interactional conversations' between Canadian-born workers. Ice-hockey is considered as a Canadian national sport, and is a popular topic in the workplace, not least among male workers. William admitted that:

... when they are talking [about the hockey], you either listen or go away, you can't do anything ... (Transcript translation: IntTrans-William039B)

In Derwing and Waugh's (2012: 10) study, they found that well-educated Chinese immigrants had very limited exposure to English in their daily lives including listening to the radio. In this connection, the informants neither share topics, nor have a common vocabulary and common ways of thinking and expressing with

their colleagues; and it is difficult for them to contribute to interactional conversations among local colleagues, just as Liang Tian said:

For example, I am now talking with you, it immediately brought us back to Shanghai, we have many topics, it's sort of a small circle. With them, when we meet, we only talk business. (Transcript translation, IntTrans-Liang Tian007)

Therefore, it is not so much a lack of opportunities to practise English in the workplace as an inability to take advantage of such opportunities. If they cannot make use of such opportunities, the opportunities are meaningless to them. And if one seldom takes part in such interactional conversations, his/her relationship with local colleague is not close, which gives rise to his/her feeling of not belonging to their circle.

Due to the lack of common ground with local colleagues, most informants working at Canadian companies expressed their difficulty in integrating with local colleagues. Silvia, for instance, said:

... anyway we came to Canada after we had grown up, so even if we accept their philosophy, it also depends on whether they are willing to accept us. So when you live in this society, it's difficult for you to integrate with them and for them to accept you. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Silvia103A)

This data extract indicates two points: on the one hand, we immigrants are adults, having our own values and attitudes towards life and work, but we also accept those of Canadians; on the other, since we were not schooled and educated in Canada, from local Canadians' perspective we are different from them, and it is not easy for them to accept us. Difficulty in integrating with colleagues is regarded by the informants as a weakness in their career advancement; William, for instance, when talking about his strengths and weaknesses, admitted:

... hockey, {sigh} I really don't like it, this is our shortcoming, because it affects your integration with the others. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-William039A)

It appears that he wants to be more integrated into the workplace. However, since nothing seems to be able to make him more interested in the sport, he feels helpless to overcome this weakness which results in the problem of integration.

5.1.3.1.3 'Eating Technical Rice' (ETR)

Aware of the aforementioned weaknesses, in order to enhance job security in a competitive job market, most informants working at Canadian companies opted for 'Eating Technical Rice'. This pidginized translation from a Chinese saying connotes that a technical or practical skill by which one earns a living is a guarantee of bringing rice onto the table, in contrast to another saying 'eating mouth-opening rice' which means making a living by engaging in a type of job that entails a substantial amount of talking to people. The informants are good at technical skills because, in the final analysis, they immigrated to Canada as skilled workers. When explaining why he preferred 'eating technical rice', William told me:

I believe we have a relative advantage in technical skills, and do not have advantages in management. This is so called 'making most of what you are good at' (Transcript translation: IntTrans-William034)

Doing the technical job is very stable. At our bank, if there are no major policy changes, you would work until you retire. On the contrary, those who are in administration, quite a number of them can't work through till retirement. They either leave by themselves or are kicked out. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-William036)

Throughout history, China has always been a densely populated society in which competition has been intense. Grasping a practical skill, such as carpentry or literacy, entailed prolonged period of training or learning, which the majority of the general public could not afford in ancient times. As such, practical skills were considered as a way to stand out from ordinary people and gain financial security. In modern China, the skill that makes one outstanding refers to particular

professional expertise which is also a guarantee of supporting oneself and family; therefore 'eating technical rice' has always been greatly valued and encouraged by Chinese parents. When talking about immigrants' lack of social and communicative skills, Jim said:

... at least for our generation, of course, for the cohort of 1980s, the educational system might have changed a lot, but for us, the cohort of 1970s, the education we received, there was a major defect in this respect [the lack of training in social and communicative skills] in our secondary and tertiary education. (..) Besides, it (..) had to do with family education, didn't it? Since generally speaking, of course there were exceptions where some families might cultivate social skills in their kids, but most families, when kids were in their school age, parents would tell them to learn hard, get good marks, and be good at school and in the workplace, and make a living by 'eating technical rice'. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Jim033)

Jim acknowledges that the lack of sociability is a defect when competing in the Canadian job market, and that the later generations in China might not embrace the same educational tradition of 'eating technical rice'. In fact, as the bio-data show in Chapter 4 (Table 1), Jim himself was a business analyst who had to converse intensively and extensively with customers, not 'eating technical rice' solely in China. When facing the adversities in integrating into Canadian society and taking stock of their strengths and weaknesses, they justify not spending time improving oral English by resorting to that Chinese educational tradition. William, for example, echoed:

... we Chinese would like to invest time in technical skills, and we have made great progress. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-William032)

To keep up with the development of technology, not least the fast-paced information technology, one has to invest plenty of time learning at and after work, which is at the expense of learning English since the amount of waking hours is limited. The consequence is that, though enhancing technical skills can achieve job security, it aggravates, to some extent, the informants' difficulty in integrating with colleagues; and it reduces their chances of practising English.

5.1.3.1 .4 Limited Prospect of Promotion (LPoP)

In the interviews, the informants perceived that their prospect of being promoted was limited, which was manifested in two dimensions. On the one hand, due to their lack of communicative skills, they did not believe that they would qualify any higher positions that entailed extensive verbal communication. Chen Qing, for example, acknowledged:

*... what I am doing currently is very basic, that is, assistant accountant. If you want to move up, you need to have a good command of English, since if you get promoted, you have to communicate with the boss, revenue agents, and deal with auditors, and you have to deal with the <vendors>, those suppliers. If your English is not good, it would be an issue, you can't move up.
(Transcript translation: IntTrans-Chen Qing014)*

On the other, in the light of their lack of communication and difficulty in integrating with local colleagues, they perceived that they were not the preferred candidate for promotion when opportunities emerged. Jim, for instance, claimed:

*... so when he [the manager] is in the situation of promoting someone, he would prefer the one who communicates more with him ...
(Transcript translation: IntTrans-Jim036)*

Jim believes that promotion is closely connected with one's sociability: the less one communicates with his/her colleagues, including the manager, the less they know about him/her, and the less probable they would accept him/her; if there is an opportunity of promotion, the manager prefers the one whom he knows well and with whom he has closer personal relationship instead of the one he does not know. In this connection, according to the views of the informants, difficulty in integrating with colleagues has undesirable consequences for their career advancement, which keeps them stuck in the present situation, and which does not ameliorate their difficulty in integrating with their colleagues. It is a vicious circle.

5.1.3.2 Difficulty in Integrating into Mainstream Canada (DiliMC)

Another aspect of the *Lack of Access to Opportunities to Practise Oral English* (LoAtOoPOE) presents itself in the informants' *Difficulty in Integrating into Mainstream Canada* (DiliMC), which was most salient in the remarks of those who did not work at Canadian companies. As is shown in Figure 9, such difficulty is, on the one hand, related to their living and working in the *Large Chinese Community* (LCC), and on the other, manifested by their *Reluctance to Communicate* (RtC) with members of Anglophone community and their perception of a solid *Ethno-Cultural Boundary* (ECB) between Anglophone and Chinese communities.

5.1.3.2.1 Living and Working in the Large Chinese Communities (LCC)

As mentioned in Section 5.1.2, the informants' *Weaknesses in Competitiveness* (WiC) in the Canadian job market resulted in their *Under-employment and Unemployment* (UaU). Those who could not find employment at Canadian companies ended up in Chinese communities. In Anglophone Canada, it seems that opportunities to practise English are plenty. However, if an individual works and lives in such sizeable Chinese communities as C Town (pseudonym), he/she has difficulty accessing such opportunities: C Town has become a self-contained cultural enclave, as it were, offering such conveniences of life as restaurants, supermarkets, libraries, post-offices, and banks – all providing services in Chinese and English; and one does not have to speak English in order to survive there. Peter, who had been living in C Town ever since he arrived in Canada, put it:

For the past ten years, I didn't make much progress in English, especially oral English, so I am sort of, working, having fun, making friends, all in Chinese, and the home language is of course Chinese... so in the C Town area, it is a Chinese environment, sort of still living in China. (Transcript translation, IntTrans-Peter032, 34)

He ascribes his slow improvement in oral proficiency in English to not having to speak the language in C Town where Chinese is the language of living and, for

some, making a living because they cannot find jobs outside the community in the light of their low level of oral proficiency in English. Zhou Min, for example, admitted:

... in the final analysis, you have to put it into use, otherwise what you have learned is in vain. My <manager>, he speaks English to me and I speak Chinese to him. We don't have LaoWais in our company, the manager was born here, they are Hong Kongers, they speak Cantonese, not Mandarin, but can understand Mandarin. So he speaks English to our mainlanders... (Transcript translation, IntTrans-Zhou Min034)

It appears that at her company, the working language among the workers is Chinese. Even when she has to communicate with her English-speaking manager, thanks to his ability of understanding Mandarin, she chooses Mandarin instead of English. For people like Zhou Min, living in C Town is similar to living in China, and chances of having to speak English are limited. They are not only physically reliant on C Town, but also psychologically dissociated from mainstream Canada.

5.1.3.2.2 Reluctance to Communicate (RtC)

C Town is a sizeable area where Chinese immigrants concentrate, but it is not an encircled entity shut from the outside world. There are also English-speaking people working and living in C Town. However, it was found that most informants were *Reluctant to Communicate* (RtC) with Anglophones, which was evidenced in three forms. The first was the fear of losing face, expressed by the informants to justify their unwillingness to communicate with members of Anglophone community. Lu Jun, for instance, acknowledged:

[Regarding no progress in English], I feel it is the issue of personality. If you are a sort of person, like me, who fears losing face, because my English is not good, I don't want to communicate ... (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Lu Jun 007)

They equate weak oral English skills to a personal defect; and in order to maintain self-esteem, such a defect should be covered by avoiding communication with Anglophones.

The second was the lack of self-confidence when communicating with Anglophones, not least in official settings. Chen Lin, for example, admitted:

... for me, since my language is not good, so when I have to deal with something official, I am less confident. Less confident, I mean, when in official occasions, if they repeat the matter several times and you still don't get it, you would fear troubling them and that they would be impatient, and you would be less confident. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Chen Lin 032,033)

What Chen Lin was talking about was his experience in gatekeeping encounters in which 'a member of a minority community asks for the approval of a majority-community member to advance professionally or to receive a societal benefit' (Erickson in Tannen, 2005: 205). Due to his stigmatization of his language skills, he tends to 'inhabit spaces of relative inferiority' (Block, 2007: 80) in relation to his Anglophone interlocutor whose mother tongue is English. What the fear of losing face and the lack of confidence have in common is that in order to avoid being positioned as an incompetent interlocutor, the informants keep themselves away from the mainstream of Canadian society, which results in the lack of knowledge about the target language community, for example, their attitudes towards communicating with immigrants, their openness to other cultures and their tolerance to immigrants' unsatisfactory English skills.

Such lack of knowledge led to a side effect, which was the third form of reluctance to communicate: fear of discrimination. Linda, for example, complained:

... they discriminate against you once you open your mouth to speak.... When you approach them to have a chat, because of your poor language, they just aren't willing to talk to you. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Linda001)

In fact, according to what she told me later, Linda herself did not experience overt discrimination targeted at her unsatisfactory oral English in Canada. During the interview, she told me about a story of an old Chinese passenger being rudely treated by a bus driver because of the inability of the former to understand what the latter had said. When I asked whether she had witnessed the incident in person, she told me that it was a topic of discussion in the LINC class she had attended. The authenticity of such stories does not matter to people like Linda; what matters is they would shun opportunities to contact the Anglophone community, which has a negative impact on the development of their oral English, which in turn exacerbates their fear of losing face and lack of confidence. It is, again, a vicious circle, leading to their dissociation from the mainstream society.

5.1.3.2.3 Ethno-cultural Boundary (ECB)

The natural corollary of dissociation is the grouping of those who perceive themselves as being excluded, not least when they have the similar ethnic, cultural and educational background. Such grouping is most evidenced by the term 'LaoWais' (the foreigners) that the informants dubbed local Canadians. Though being neutral, it connotes the meaning of 'outsiders' in contrast to we Chinese as 'insiders'. Interestingly, even though the informants are themselves newcomers to and a minority in Canada, they continued using this word to reference local Canadians. For example, Liang Tian said:

My boss's nephew studies at City University [pseudonym]. He came over to my lab a couple of times during summer vacations. I told him by email that we had a [Chinese] team playing basketball together and invited him to come along. He seemed to make an effort to decide to come, but didn't make it in the end. Perhaps his girlfriend, because of the good weather, didn't let him go... it's impossible that he would come, unless for something he is extremely interested in, otherwise..., that's why LaoWais are just LaoWais. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Liang Tian 008,009)

It is apparent that Liang Tian wants to have further contact with his boss's nephew – a member of the Anglophone community – in the first place, and it seems to him

that the latter had some psychological barrier hindering him from participating in the immigrants' game. Liang Tian continues to imagine the scenario of his failure to come – maybe his girlfriend wanted to go for an outing with him due to the good weather – before finally ascribing it to the ethnic difference. His last sentence presents his belief that all local Canadians are the same, that is, if the nephew did not come, others would not come either; that they are different from us; and that such a gap is difficult to bridge. Canada is an immigrant country where people of distinct ethnicity live peacefully side by side; it is a 'mosaic' in contrast to the 'melting pot' of the U.S., its southern neighbour. 'Mosaic' connotes, on the other hand, concrete boundaries between ethnic communities, as Sherly commented:

*... the superficial harmony is easy to achieve. In the final analysis, you are not at all a member of their ethnic group, am I right? So they will always look after their own [if there are chances of promotion].
(Transcript translation: IntTrans-Silvia103B)*

Silvia senses the invisible and impermeable boundary under the surface of peaceful coexistence. Some informants specifically linked their inability to penetrate into the Anglophone community to do business to the cultural difference which was perceived as insurmountable, as Lin Tao, an estate agent, put it:

*... Even those most successful Chinese agents like Peter Wang, those most famous agents, they can't get business cases from true whites. This is just because of differences in cultural backgrounds.... Even though you have strong sales <strategies>, when it comes to communicating with people, I can trust you, but it needs something else [to strike a deal], such as friendship, which is especially true to those LaoWais. You can sell my house at a higher price, that person might sell it at a lower price, [because] I can communicate with that person, just like we are <friends>, we can do it at ease, we can talk something else, about life, we can sit there, having a beer, having a chat, we have something in common, talking about something <funny>, sort of jokes [so I'll let that person sell my house] ...
(Transcript translation: IntTrans-Lin Tao017,018)*

From this data extract, it appears that she believes that culture is closely connected with the nation. She imagines that the culture of Canadian whites (or LaoWais) is very different from that of the Chinese and, no matter how hard the

latter try, such difference could not be overcome; that there exists a culture of business among the Anglophone community in which friendship takes precedence over profit; and that all the local Canadians share the same culture and are sure to have a large amount of common topics. Such belief of solid ethno-cultural boundary forestalls attempts to seek opportunities of meaningful conversations with local Canadians that would lead to closer relations with the latter.

5.1.4 Lack of Necessity (LoN) to Learn English

Because of the aforementioned *Lack of Access to Opportunities of Practising Oral English* (LoAtOoPOE), a common attitude found among the informants was that they deemed learning English unnecessary (Figure 9), which was evidenced in three dimensions. Firstly, those who work at Canadian companies believed that they could get by with their current English skills on the job, because the vocabulary needed to successfully carry out daily routine was limited, just as Chen Qing said:

... I feel I am lazy, especially after I got the present job. The vocabulary that I have daily contact with is restricted to professional terms, so I don't read other English materials, and I don't want to learn more. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Chen Qing014A)

As was shown in Section 5.1.2 the nature of informants' jobs, including that of Chen Qing, did not involve much verbal communication with their colleagues, which suggests that if she has grasped a limited number of technical terms and is able to comprehend written documents, she can successfully fulfil her duties. For that reason, there is no necessity for her to learn English other than English professional terms. In addition, the informants were aware that there was limited prospect of being promoted to higher positions which require strong communicative skills, which further negates their desire to improve English, as Lu Jun put it:

... I feel, in terms of career, in Vancouver, I literally have no aspirations. You know, no matter what reasons are, language, or social environment, , anyway, I don't feel there is room for career advancement in Canada. I don't <care> it at all. Just an ordinary

office work, at the bottom, is enough for me. So why shall I endeavour to learn English? (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Lu Jun115)

Since many informants had a managerial or senior professional position in China before immigrating to Canada, they are fully aware of what entails to be a leader who 'takes part in many meetings, lots of co-ordination between the departments, lots of <argue>' (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Jim029) and whose position requires a strong communicative skills. Given the limited prospect of acquiring such a position, there is no need to improve their language proficiency to a higher level.

Secondly, due to the lack of common ground with local colleagues, the informants who work at Canadian companies believed that they would never be truly accepted by their colleagues and become a member of their group; therefore there would not be many opportunities to take part in interactional conversations in the workplace. As such, they deemed making efforts to improve English unnecessary. Jim, for example, claimed:

... the reason why I don't put more effort into learning English is that I don't feel acutely that the language is an obstacle to my work. Some people are very talkative at work, in fact, if you didn't talk a lot, after you learn the language, and you still don't talk a lot, why bother learning it?(Transcript translation: IntTrans-Jim041,042)

The first part of this data extract echoes Chen Qing's remarks at the beginning of this section, indicating that his current English skills are adequate for getting by on the job. The second part connotes his taciturnity in the company. He used to be a business analyst (BA) in China, talking substantially at work (Section 5.1.4). His quietness in Canada is related to his inability to take part in interactional conversations due to, inter alia, the lack of common ground (Section 5.1.2.1) between him and his colleagues. For that reason, his current English is the English needed to get the job done, and no more (Block, 2007: 109); and there is no pressing necessity to make efforts to improve it.

And thirdly, in the light of limited existence of opportunities to speak English in the Chinese community, for those who work and/or live in it, learning English was rendered unnecessary. As Zhu Lang put it:

... like here in C Town, in those supermarkets, restaurants, and other service businesses, there are lots of people who can't speak English. They can make a living by speaking Cantonese, or Mandarin. For our immigrants, if they can't find jobs that need lots of language, they are sure to end up working here, there is no need of language. After I had been here for a few months, it was evident to me that in this area, you don't have to speak English and everything can be settled. (Transcript translation, IntTrans-Zhu Lang012)

According to him, jobs that need a lot of language are those that involve constant contact with members of the Anglophone community. Those who cannot find such jobs and end up in C Town are those who found it difficult to integrate into the mainstream of the society; they group themselves in the Chinese community thanks to the Chinese language environment. Once in C Town, since life carries on in the Chinese languages, there is no necessity to make more efforts to learn English.

It should be pointed out that some categories in Figure 9, such as the *Reluctance to Communicate* (RtC) and the *Ethno-cultural Boundary* (ECB), seem to have a direct relationship with making no apparent efforts to improve English. However, there are situations where language learners are forced into a space where they have to communicate with native speakers on a frequent basis, which greatly improves language skills of the former who are initially reluctant to communicate, or perceive or imagine a solid ethno-cultural boundary. Therefore, opportunity counts. And these categories are treated as the subcategories of the *Lack of Access to Opportunities of Practicing Oral English* (LoAtOoPOE) which leads to the *Lack of Necessity* (LoN) to make more efforts to improve English.

5.2 Lack of Worth (LoW)

As is shown in Figure 6, another principal dimension of the answer to the research question is the *Lack of Worth* (LoW) of learning English. It is a relative notion: it does not indicate absolute worthlessness of learning English; instead, it signifies that, comparing what can be expected from the *Effects of Learning English* (EoLE) – making the informants more competitive in the job market – with the perceived *High Cost of Making Efforts to Learn English* (HCoMEtLE), learning English is not deemed highly worthwhile by the informants.

5.2.1 High Cost of Making Efforts to Learn English (HCoMEtLE)

The cost of learning English does not necessarily refer to the monetary expense entailed to achieve a goal. It sometime involves giving up such activities as make a living, relaxation and parental responsibilities that the learning excludes because time and energy of an individual are limited, and one has to choose one at the expense of the other. The cost also refers to expected efforts one needs to complete the task. In this study, the perceived cost of learning English consists of two elements: *Constraints on Learning English* (CoLE) and *Entailed Efforts* (EE). The former pertains to financial pressure, aging and parental responsibilities that one has to overcome in order to be engaged in learning activities, and the latter concerns perceived efforts needed to achieve a satisfactory level of English proficiency, such as time and energy.

5.2.1.1 Constraints on Learning English (CoLE)

Most informants talked about constraints that prevented them from learning English, and financial pressure was one of the most mentioned. As described in Chapter 2, the informants came to Canada as skilled workers. Though they had established themselves socially and financially in China, they were not well-to-do people. As such, they could not afford sitting in the language classroom as a full-time student for a prolonged period of time without joining in the workforce. Chen Lin, who has tried diverse menial jobs after coming to Canada, lamented:

You want to learn English, but you don't have money, you have to have money for food, you have to take care of the kid, to have money for family expense. You have to give up learning to work, to find a Chinese restaurant to work. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Chen Lin004)

He is acutely aware of the dilemma between money and English learning, which seems insoluble. For many informants, learning and working are incompatible. On the one hand, considering their inability to find a job where they can learn English informally in the workplace, they have to turn to the language classroom to improve English, which needs, inter alia, time and money; on the other hand, menial jobs such as Chinese restaurant work only bring about incomes for making ends meet and consume a substantial proportion of waking hours, and they do provide few opportunities to learn English at work. Under the pressure of survival, the informants choose working at the expense of learning, trapped in a vicious circle: working menial jobs does not help them improve oral English, and an unsatisfactory command of English prevents them from finding a decent job.

Another perceived constraint is aging, which was a recurring theme mentioned by the informants to hinder their English learning. They expressed their reluctance to learn English after having spent several years in Canada and reached mid-forties:

... now I don't have to use my mind after work, I can do whatever I want, I feel relaxed, the older I am, the less I am willing to learn. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Zhou Min210)

For people like Zhou Min, learning English is a difficult mental exercise rather than an enjoyable and relaxing activity. Given that learning English is a long-term task and that the informants are in their mid-forties without much room for career advancement, for which a better command of English is a prerequisite, they prefer relaxing themselves by watching Chinese TV programmes and browsing Chinese websites after a day of hard work, reluctant to make extra efforts to learn English.

As introduced in Section 5.1.2, there is a considerable amount of 'flying men' migrating between Canada and China, and the number of women who are in the

state of 'quasi-separation' cannot be neglected in the Chinese communities in Canada. The wife and the child live in Canada while the 'flying' husband works in China making money to provide the living expense of the former in Canada, only coming to visit them a couple of times every year during his vacation and holidays. Though immune from financial pressure, the housewives interviewed spoke of family chores and taking care of their child as a major hindrance to learning English:

Kid is adapting to the new environment, I have to adapt to him, I have to send him to extra-curricular activities, extra lessons after school, I have to accompany him to go there, and get tired after coming home, I have no time to settle down to learn English. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Yang Ye009)

Every 'single' housewife interviewed has at least one school-age child. For the children, adapting to a new environment is an immense challenge, which also poses an enormous challenge to the parent. Because the husband is in China, the wife has to take all the parental responsibilities. The amount of waking hours is limited, so is one's energy. Between the parent responsibilities and learning English, the informants have no choice but sacrifice the latter.

5.2.1.2 Entailed Efforts (EE)

As presented in Section 5.1.1.1, the informants perceived their lack of English communicative skills as a major weakness when competing in the Canadian job market. When asked how long it took to overcome such a weakness by learning, they all agreed that it was a long-term task. Fan Jin, for example, said:

... it'll take a long time, I believe it'll take at least three to five years, because, (2), I believe, if I switch on the TV and am able to understand everything on the programme, I believe it'll take three to five years. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Fan Jin103)

To understand everything on the programme entails not only substantial improvement in the aural skill, but also the familiarity with cultural knowledge of the Canadian society. Noticeably, the learning objective in the minds of the informants

is far beyond the level of carrying out transactional conversations with native speakers, just as Liang Tian said:

... when I first arrived here, a Hong Konger told me that, eight years, in eight years, you would be speaking like locals... (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Liang Tian022)

Whether the eight-year time frame mentioned applies to everyone or not does not make much difference. In fact, the aforementioned three-to-five-year time frame is also a rough estimation. What matters is the proficiency level the informants hope to reach is positively correlated with the efforts entailed, and, more importantly, such efforts are closely connected with their career ambition:

... the language people speak has different levels. If you want to do a better job, there is always room for improvement. If you just want to be a cashier, or to sell coffee at a McDonalds, I feel you don't need to make a lot of efforts, my current language skills are enough [for those jobs]. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Liang Ming103)

Liang Ming understands that the higher one's position is, the more advanced level one's command of English should reach, and more efforts one should put in learning English.

5.2.2 Lack of Effects of Learning English (LoEoLE)

The *Lack of Effects of Learning English* (LoEoLE) includes two dimensions: on the one hand, it refers to the courses they once took – mainly the LINC courses – were not helpful in terms of improving their oral proficiency in English to the extent that it did not hinder them from competing with their Canadian counterparts in the job market; on the other hand, it pertains to their doubt about the effects of future learning efforts as regards its instrumentality in finding a professional job commensurate with their work and educational experience.

5.2.2.1 Limited Help of LINC Courses (LHoLC)

As mentioned in Section 5.1.1.1, the informants did not possess strong communicative skills, not least the oral one. In order to improve oral proficiency, one has to practise spoken English on a regular basis. Considering that they, as pointed out in Section 5.1.3, lack access to opportunities of practising English in their daily lives, the informants had to turn to classroom learning to improve their oral skills. Eighteen out of the nineteen informants in this study have spent varied lengths of time in the LINC classroom, and only three of them have taken other forms of English programmes. As such, the LINC courses can be regarded as the informants' principal experience of formal English learning in Canada. Among the eighteen informants, seventeen claimed that the LINC courses were of limited help in improving oral English. One reason was that the courses were too easy and not practical. Silvia, for example, complained:

... I said it was not helpful, what I meant was that it's not helpful in finding a job... in class, for example, [the teacher said] 'today's <topic> is about weather', she would spend a day on it. After weather, there would be another <topic>, for example <greeting>, then, still another topic. I wonder whether they are useful in job hunting, you can't use them in job hunting, can you? However, whether it is usefull or not depends on what level you are at. For those who are English illiterate, such stuff would be helpful for them to ease in the society in a short period of time, but for us, it is way too easy (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Silvia105,106)

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Chinese immigrants had received at least eight years of EFL education before graduating from university in China, and their reading and writing skills tend to be higher than their listening and speaking skills. What they hope to achieve through the LINC courses is substantial improvement in oral English. The English illiterate she refers to are those immigrants from China who come to Canada on humanitarian grounds or as family-class immigrants who are mostly under-educated; and their learning objectives are to acquire basic English literacy, which is qualitatively distinct from those of well-educated professional Chinese immigrants who want to find a professional job in Canada.

Another reason for the perception of limited help was the lack of opportunities to practise oral English in the classroom. The LINC courses are not solely focused on

listening and speaking; instructors also teach reading and writing, aiming at improving students' all-around language skills. Therefore, only a quarter of classroom time is allocated for oral English. Besides, there are normally about 15-20 students in each class. In this connection, the opportunities for each student to speak are limited:

... there were many students in the class, so your opportunities for practising spoken English were not many. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-William006B)

More importantly, the informants did not regard such activities as pair or group work as authentic practising opportunities:

... in terms of spoken language, it was not helpful, since when we worked in pair or in group, students in the LINC class were making mistakes, so was I. we would never know whether we spoke correctly or not, besides, it was all simple chatting. (Transcript translation, IntTrans-Lin Tao007)

In the classroom, Lin Tao did not receive much feedback from her classmates in terms of the mistakes she made because their command of English was on the same level as hers. What the informants prefer is more opportunities for one-on-one interactions with the teacher – the 'real' Canadian who would correct their mistakes in real time, which is not practical in the LINC courses. Given the lack of such opportunities to practise, they deemed taking the courses pointless:

... I don't know what LINC was designed for. If it was for teaching people English for the sake of finding jobs, it is too far away from that expectation, it was not designed for that. I feel it was for people to idle days away there. (Transcript translation, IntTrans-Liang Ming023)

Liang Ming's expectation was to significantly improve oral English through the LINC courses in order to find a professional job commensurate with her work and education experience (See Section 5.2.1.2). Such expectation does not match the objectives of the LINC program, as Mary, the local English LINC teacher, explained:

*... part of the LINC programme is to kind of introduce students to the Canadian society, to me, it's more socialization, introduction to the language. The thing is, again, he wants to get a job, depending on what kind of job he wants to get. You have a goal beyond(**) this is just an introduction. (Transcript, Mary039)*

It is apparent that the goals of the LINC courses are incompatible with those of the informants. For that reason, they do not believe they can benefit substantially from such kind of formal English learning.

5.2.2.2 Dubious Benefits of English Learning Efforts (DBoELE)

The informants came to Canada as economic immigrants, which indicates that they would contribute to the economy of the country. On the other hand, they are practical in terms of what they can gain economically from immigration, including learning English in Canada. Liang Tian, for example, is such a practical person:

... it's not that they don't take learning English seriously. For example, if you pass 600 on TOEFL by the end of the year, you'll get a job of \$100,000 per year, she won't do the household chores any more, she would tell her husband, or he would tell his wife, you cook, I do English only for the rest of year, for that \$100,000 job, you will see whether she will be sweating over English or not. So it's because she doesn't have a clear view, she isn't clear about what she can get out of learning. (Transcript translation, IntTrans-Liang Tian023)

The scenario he depicts reveals that he has established a monetary relationship between learning and what learning can lead to. If that relationship is precarious, or if the benefit cannot match the efforts made, learning will not ensue since such an effort is not considered economical. In fact, any long-term endeavours including learning English involve risks which include uncertainty of achieving the expected goal. According William and Burden (1997: 129), there is an optimum level of uncertainty that drives the individual to take the risk; for the informants, however, putting effort into learning English cannot provide such ultimate uncertainty, because a good command of English is not a rarity in the job market:

The reason why I gave up learning English was because I have made a judicious analysis. Canada doesn't lack people who can speak English... (Transcript translation, IntTrans-Hu Fei010A)

What Hu Fei perceives is that English is the native language for local Canadians; in the job market, a good command of English is an average quality that one should possess, the achieving of which would not provide him with a competitive edge. For this reason, he is doubtful about the effects of long-term endeavour to improve oral English, which was supported by Jim:

So far I don't feel that upgrading my oral English to a higher <level> will definitely bring about brighter career prospects, not yet, so far, personally, I don't foresee such a definite benefit. This is the major problem. If you can <convince> me that a better command of oral English, good communicative skills, would bring about better career prospects, if I can be <convinced>, I would have a <passion> to learn... (Transcript translation, IntTrans-Jim049)

Career advancement depends on a number of factors, a good command of English being only one of them. Considering the several weaknesses in their competitiveness including the unrecognition of their work experience and the lack of a valuable social network (Section 5.1.1), for the informants, overcoming the shortcoming of oral proficiency in English would not likely result in a dramatic improvement in career prospects. Therefore, they are dubious about what benefits English learning can bring about to their career development.

5.2.3 Lack of Worth (LoW) of Learning English

Weighing the high cost of making efforts to learn English (HCoMEtLE) against the lack of effects of learning English (LoEoLE), the informants drew a conclusion that learning English is not a cost-effective endeavour. Hu Fei, the photographer, for example, was very practical:

... [learning English] is not economical. I prefer spending the same amount of time and energy on my profession instead of on English. If I can succeed in my profession, I am able to afford a <translator>,

which is more economical and fulfilling for me. (Transcript translation, IntTrans-Hu Fei010B)

He seems to make a sensible comparison between English learning and enhancing professional skills, the result of which favours the latter because it is more likely to generate foreseeable economic profits, which was echoed by Jim:

... if we endeavour to improve our communicative skills in order to be better than others, it is so called 'Shi bei gong ban' [a Chinese idiom meaning 'doubling your efforts to achieve a half of what you expected']. It's not entirely impossible, I guess some might have achieved this, you have to put much more effort though. If you put the same amount of effort into technical skills, to enhance your skills ... (Transcript translation, IntTrans-Jim037)

What Jim expects is economic success in Canada. Such success is perceived uneconomical, or inefficient, if achieved through learning English since, as the idiom indicates, it is too costly compared with the investment; in contrast, if it is achieved through strengthening one's technical skills, it is deemed more economical, which can be described by another Chinese idiom 'Shi ban gong bei' opposite to the previous one, connoting 'halving your efforts to achieve a double of what you expected'.

In this regard, the informants tended to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of English learning, the result of which was that learning was not considered worthwhile, just as William claimed:

... if you compel yourself to spend much time on such stuff [learning language and culture], I don't feel it worthwhile. Like we immigrants, we should enjoy an easy life here. If there is something you like, you spend more time on it. If you don't like, you don't have to force yourself to ...in order to achieve some objective. This is what I call 'making most of what you are good at'. (Transcript translation: IntTrans-Dom038)

What the informants are good at is technical skills, and investing time on them produces economic return more efficiently. The opposite side of 'making most of what you are good at' is shunning investing in something that they are not good at

– the oral English skill, which is deemed lack of efficiency, burdensome, and not worthwhile, as Li Fang put it:

... learning English, for me, is too difficult. Why should I trouble myself and make my life difficult? I am over 40, why should I make my life harder? When I first arrived, I thought I had to strive, strive for three years on English ... (Transcript translation, IntTrans-Li Fang024)

Because of reaching her mid-forties, Li Fang senses that there is not much room for her career advancement that might otherwise bring about more economic success; considering that their objective of improving proficiency in English through persistent and hard work is for career advancement, the effects of such endeavour are limited. Therefore, she prefers leading an easy life instead of engaging in an undertaking that is not cost-effective.

Summary

In this chapter, I have reported the principal findings of this study, which is organized around the two major aspects of the answer to the research question: one being the *Lack of Necessity* (LoN), and the other the *Lack of Worth* (LoW). It should be pointed out again that these two categories are not superordinate ones that enclose other subcategories; instead, they are the resultant categories of other interacting categories and subcategories which are shown in Figure 10 and whose descriptions are presented in Table 2 at the beginning of this chapter. In addition, making no efforts to improve oral English has a returning effect on the *Lack of English Communicative Skills* (LoECS) and *Lack of Valuable Social Networks* (LoVSN), which dilutes their competitiveness in the job market – it is a vicious cycle. Furthermore, the *Lack of Valuable Social Networks* (LoVSN) and *Lack of Recognition of Chinese Work Experience* (LoRoCWE) contribute to the *Dubious Benefits of English Learning Efforts* (DBoLEiG), because making efforts to improve English can only partly ameliorates the informants' competitiveness which is also subject to the value of their social network and the recognition of Chinese work experience by the Canadian society, over which the informants have limited control. The last point to make is that there are relationships between the categories that

are not reported and included in Figure 10. For example, the *Lack of Valuable Social Networks* (LoVSN) is associated with the *Large Chinese Community* (LLC), the subcategory *Lack of Cultural Knowledge of the Canadian Society* (not shown in the figure) of *Lack of English Communicative Skills* (LoECS) is connected with the *Ethno-cultural Boundary* (ECB) and *Lack of Common Ground with Colleagues* (LoCGwC), to name but two. It is not that they are trivial relationships that can be dismissed, but that the focus of this chapter is to display the major findings that are directly related to the research question in as a neat way as possible.

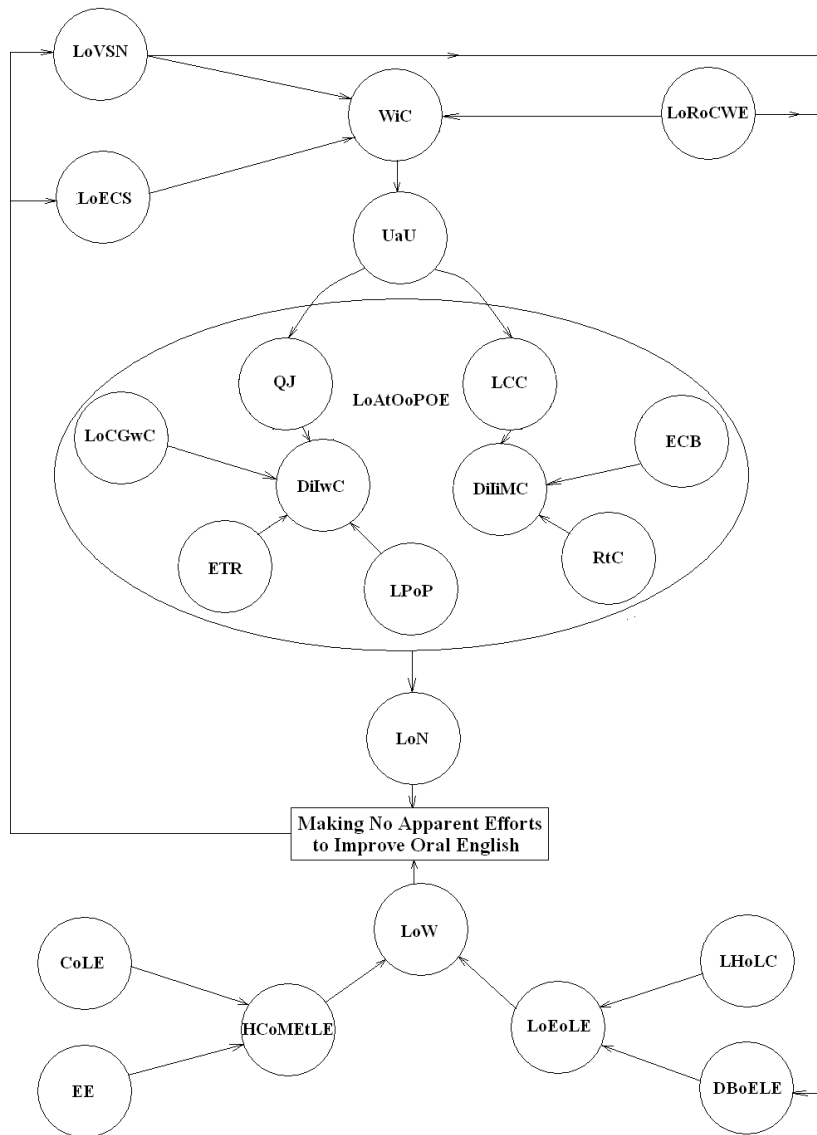


Figure 10 More detailed relationships between the categories

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| CoLE – Constraints on Learning English | LoCGwC – Lack of Common Ground with Colleagues |
| DBoLEiG – Dubious Benefits of English Learning Efforts | LoECS – Lack of English Communicative Skills |
| DiIiMC – Difficulty in Integrating into Mainstream Canada | LoEoLE – Lack of Effects of Learning English |
| DiIwC – Difficulty in Integrating with Colleagues | LoN – Lack of Necessity |
| ECB – Ethno-Cultural Boundary | LoRoCWE – Lack of Recognition of Chinese Work Experience |
| EE – Entailed Efforts | LoVSN – Lack of Valuable Social Networks |
| ETR – Eating Technical Rice | LoW – Lack of Worth |
| HCoMEtLE – High Cost of Making Efforts to Learn English | LPoP – Limited Prospect of Promotion |
| LCC – Large Chinese Communities | QJ – Quiet Jobs |
| LHoLC – Limited Help of LINC Courses | Rtc – Reluctance to Communicate |
| LoAtOoPOE – Lack of Access to Opportunity of Practicing Oral English | WiC – Weaknesses in Competitiveness |
| | UaU – Under-employment and Unemployment |

Chapter 6 Discussion: Non-investment in English

In Chapter 5, I have reported the major findings of this study, the theorizing about which is the principal target of this chapter. I will first reiterate the research question followed by a brief recapitulation of the major findings. Next I will put forward my theory about the phenomenon under investigation, and then, in the remaining part of this chapter, I will elaborate on how the theory came into being.

6.1 Review of the Research Question and Major Findings

The research question of this study is: Why do many well-educated professional Chinese immigrants to Canada make no apparent efforts to improve their proficiency in English after settling down in Anglophone Canada?

The informants of this study provided an answer, which can be elucidated from two aspects. One is that they did not perceive pressing necessity to learn English in Anglophone Canada, which is closely connected with their opportunities to practise English in their daily lives. In the light of the informants' weaknesses in competitiveness, such as the lack of communicative skills in English, recognition of their professional expertise and valuable social networks, most informants could not find employment commensurate with their educational and work experience. Most of them were underemployed or unemployed. Those who were able to find employment at Canadian companies found it difficult to integrate with their local colleagues because: 1) they were engaged in quiet jobs that did not entail much verbal communication with the rest of the company, which would otherwise have forced them to speak English to their colleagues on a more frequent basis; 2) due to a lack of common ground with their colleagues, the informants could not take advantage of interactional conversations among local colleagues in the workplace; 3) considering their weaknesses in competitiveness, and in order to secure their present job, the informants invested much of their spare time in technical skills at the expense of communicative skills, which exacerbated their difficulty in integration; and 4) given the lack of communication between the informants and their colleagues, the prospect of being promoted to a higher position of the former

was limited, which would otherwise have provided them more opportunities of interacting with their colleagues. The informants' difficulty in integrating with their colleagues was a manifestation of their lack of access to opportunities to practise oral English, which resulted in their belief that there was no immediate necessity to improve English.

For those who could not find employment at Canadian companies, they either worked at companies run by the Chinese, or were self-employed doing business solely with Chinese customers, or were unemployed. They felt it difficult to integrate into the mainstream of Canadian society, which was related to: 1) that they lived and worked in the large Chinese community where the Chinese languages are the languages of working and living and one does not have to know English in order to survive; 2) that they were reluctant to communicate with members of Anglophone community for such reasons as fear of losing face, lack of confidence and fear of discrimination; and 3) that they believed that there was a clear ethnic and cultural boundary between the locals and them that was impossible to cross. Their difficulty in integrating into mainstream Canada was another manifestation of their lack of access to opportunities to practise oral English, which led to their opinions that learning to improve English was unnecessary.

Another aspect of the answer to the research question is that the informants did not consider learning English highly worthwhile, which was based on their evaluation of the learning effects against the cost of learning. The cost, which was perceived to be high, encompassed the constraints that stood in the way of learning, such as the pressure of making a living, aging, and parental responsibilities; and efforts expected in order to make substantial improvement in English, such as time and energy. Compared with the amount of cost, the learning effects were not deemed encouraging, which included two dimensions. On the one hand, the only formal means of learning English that most of the informants had experienced, the LINC course, was considered of limited help in terms of improving their oral English so that they could compete with their Canadian counterparts in the job market; and on the other hand, they were dubious about what future

learning efforts could bring about in the light of the fact that everyone speaks English in Canada and career success does not depend solely on English language skills.

6.2 A Theory of Non-investment in L2

After having lived in Canada for a period of time and settled down there, the informants have developed a new type of identity, that is, marginality, which results, as is shown by the arrows in Figure 11, from their relations with three kinds of community: the professional community, the community of practice in the workplace of Canadian companies, and the Canadian national community. Such relations are those of non-participation considering the informants' under- and un-employment status, difficulty in integrating with local colleagues in the workplace and difficulty in integrating into the mainstream of Canadian society.

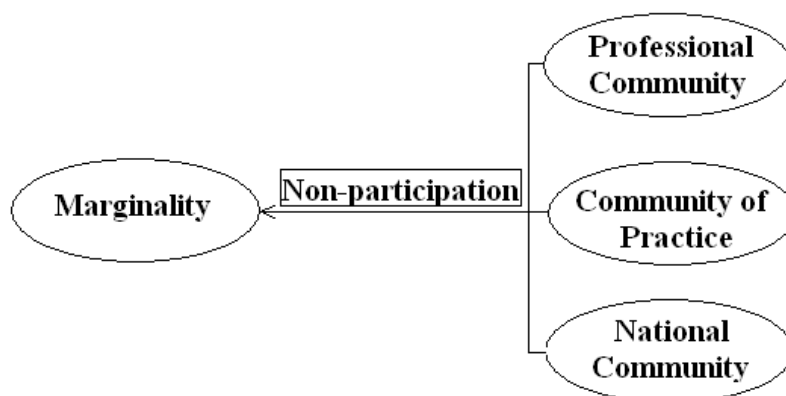


Figure 11 Marginality, Non-participation and the Communities

On the other hand, after settling down in Canada, the informants are demotivated to learn English even though their proficiency in the language has not improved, which results from the informants' calculation of the value of English learning, involving, as Figure 12 shows, its utility value and its cost.

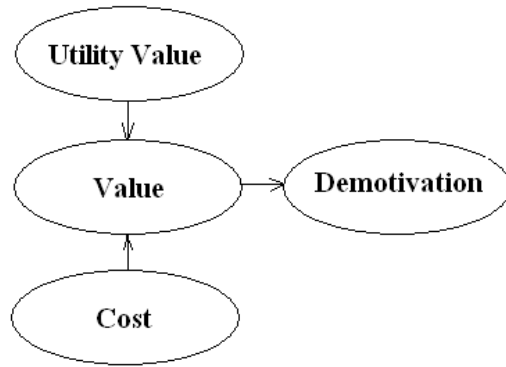


Figure 12 Value and Demotivation

Learning an L2 is construed as an investment; therefore, the informants' decision not to put more effort into learning English can be regarded as non-investment. My theory of non-investment is, as indicated in Figure 13, the consequence of two factors: marginality and demotivation.



Figure 13 Non-investment, Marginality and Demotivation

6.3 Marginality

People as social beings have relations with multiple communities. The communities can be those that people have actual engagement with in their daily lives such as the community of practice in the workplace; they can also be imagined ones such as the national community which is formed by all the people within a nation (Anderson in Wenger, 1998:182). An individual's relationship with a community can be membership of it, either actual or imagined membership depending on the aforementioned types of community, which can be construed as participation or imagined participation in the community in question. An individual's

relationship with a community can also be non-membership, either actual or imagined, which can be regarded as non-participation or imagined non-participation. Both participation and non-participation can have an impact on the individual's identity, which plays a role in his/her decision to take a particular action.

Marginality of the informants comes from diverse sources in Canada depending on their employment status: for those who work at Canadian companies, it mainly comes from their non-participation in the community of practice in the workplace; for those who work in Chinese-run businesses, who are self-employed or unemployed, it results from their non-participation in the professional community and the Canadian national community. Such marginality has repercussions for the informants' decisions to invest in English.

6.3.1 Non-participation in the Professional Community

The professional community in this study consists of people who work as professionals in Canada; they are the counterparts of the informants. Many informants cannot, though they hope to, find a professional job after immigration; therefore they do not have much actual contact with members of the professional community, and their understanding of the community is, to a large extent, an imagined one, that is, 'creating images of the world and seeing connections through time and space by extrapolating from our own experience' (Wenger, 1998: 173). As is shown in Figure 14 which is a dissection of Figure 11, the professional community can be construed as an imagined community, and the fact that the informants cannot find access to it can be considered as non-participation in the community, which gives rise to marginality. And the informants' relationships with the professional community and their consequence can be comprehended with reference to the notion of capital.

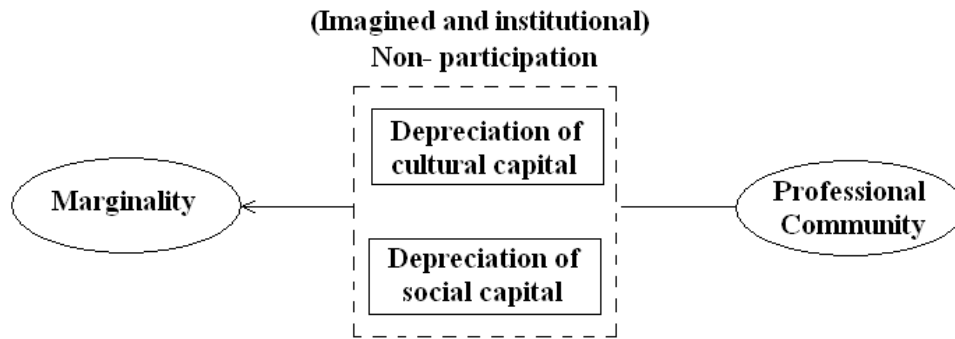


Figure 14 Marginality, Non-participation and Professional Community

6.3.1.1 Depreciation of Capital

‘The social world is accumulated history [sic]’ (Bourdieu, 1986: 242). For the informants, most of their history is their life experience in China wherein they have learned and worked their way to positions of relatively high socio-economic status. They have built up a certain amount of personal resources such as educational credentials there, work experience and a social network. According to Bourdieu (ibid: 241-258), those resources are different forms of capital that can be converted into each other. Educational credentials, for example, are a form of cultural capital that can be converted into a remunerative professional job which brings about not only economic capital but also social status – a form of social capital. Conversely, a strong social network, a form of social capital, can be mobilized by an individual to help find investment opportunities that generate economic capital, which may in turn create educational opportunities for his/her children to accumulate cultural capital. The fact that most of the informants were well-educated professionals in China indicates their relative success in the accumulation and conversion of capital in their homeland.

On the other hand, capital connotes market, without which the former is meaningless. The value of some capital is only meaningful when the capital is

related to the market where it was created; in other words, such kind of capital is relatively local. The informants' social capital accumulated in China, for instance, has lost much of its value in Canada: the social network cultivated in China cannot help them find valuable employment opportunities – immigration is uprooting, as it were, leaving original networks immigrants have developed behind in their home country. They must start afresh accumulating social capital in Canada by cultivating a new social network.

As discussed in Section 3.2.1.2, in order to develop a valuable social network that includes their Canadian counterparts, the informants have to spend a prolonged period of time and energy in addition to having the capability of communicating effectively in English, which the informants lack. In this connection, the new network they developed in Canada includes solely Chinese immigrants with limited value in terms of finding a professional job.

As regards the informants' professional experience accumulated in China, the cultural capital in its institutionalized state, its value in Canada depends on the recognition of the Canadian institutions – Canadian companies and professional organizations. If it was accumulated in multi-national corporations in China, there is possibility of its being recognized by Canadian companies thanks to globalization: technology and administrative systems of multinational corporations tend to be homogenized across the globe, and such multinational corporations are in the main western companies; the Chinese market and the Canadian market are incorporated into the global market in which the west, in most cases, determines the value system, and such cultural capital can be acknowledged in Canada for that matter. However, this recognition is to a large extent dependent on the informants' capability to display their professional expertise. Considering their lack of communicative skills in English, what is expressed often cannot do justice to what they are capable of; for that reason, such kind of cultural capital the informants possess is often greatly depreciated in Canada. If the professional experience was accumulated in local Chinese companies or governmental agencies in China, it is not recognized by Canadian companies and such

regulatory organizations as Engineers Canada. In this connection, this type of cultural capital the informants possess is mostly nullified.

As such, the overall capital that the informants brought with them into Canada is greatly depreciated, which leads to their lack of competitiveness in the Canadian job market.

6.3.1.2 Dissociation from the Professional Community

When the informants first arrived in Canada, they cherished a hope that they would find in the near future a professional job equivalent to the one they had had in China. For that reason, the professional community is as much a reconstruction of their past as it is an imaginative construction of the future (Norton, 2001: 164). However, due to the substantial depreciation of capital they once possessed in conjunction with low level of oral proficiency in English, the informants' competitiveness in the Canadian job market is significantly reduced, which leads to the fact that many of them are unable to secure a position that matches their expertise: they either change their career or are unemployed. They do not belong to the professional community; for them, the professional community still remains to be an imagined one with which they do not have actual engagement. They are dissociated from it.

6.3.1.3 Marginality Resulting from Dissociation

The dissociation of the informants is a form of imagined non-participation. Such non-participation is an institutional non-participation which refers to a situation where people's relations with a community are not direct and are mediated by institutional arrangements (Wenger, 1998: 169). In the case of the claims processors mentioned in Section 3.3.2, their lack of status in the insurance company is largely because of the marginalized status of their department in the company's management structure; and due to the lack of direct interactions between the claims processors and the rest of the company, the whole insurance

company was to a large extent an imagined entity in their minds. So are the informants in this study who do not have much direct contact with the professional community. And their denial of access to it is caused by, inter alia, the non-recognition of foreign work experience and educational credentials, and the rendering useless of original social networks. In other words, it is the regulatory professional organizations and the Canadian society, the biggest institution, that play a significant role in the dissociation of the informants. Wenger argues that institutional non-participation can 'reach deep into the definition of a practice' (ibid: 171), that is, non-participation plays a defining role in the informants' relations with the professional community. For them, the hope of becoming a member of the professional community ceases to exist; the future is closed.

As a mode of belonging, imagination is a 'delicate act of identity because it plays with participation and non-participation' (Wenger, 1998: 178). In the case of the informants, similar to Katarina, the marginalized Poland teacher discussed in Section 3.3.2, since it is non-participation that dominates their relations with the professional community, the identity that takes shape is the imagined identity of non-participation, that is, marginality, due to the imagined denial of access to the professional community.

6.3.2 Non-participation in the Communities of Practice

Though the overall capital of the informants greatly depreciated after immigrating to Canada, some of them managed to find a professional job, though at a lower level relative to their expertise, at Canadian companies where the majority are local Canadians. The workplaces where the informants engage can be viewed as communities of practice, and the fact that the informants cannot integrate them with their colleagues can be considered as non-participation in the communities, which leads to their marginality. As is illustrated in Figure 15, such non-participation can be explained in relation to the nature of engagement, that is, their membership of and negotiability in the communities; it should also be understood with reference to the impact of the newly formed small culture among the informants.

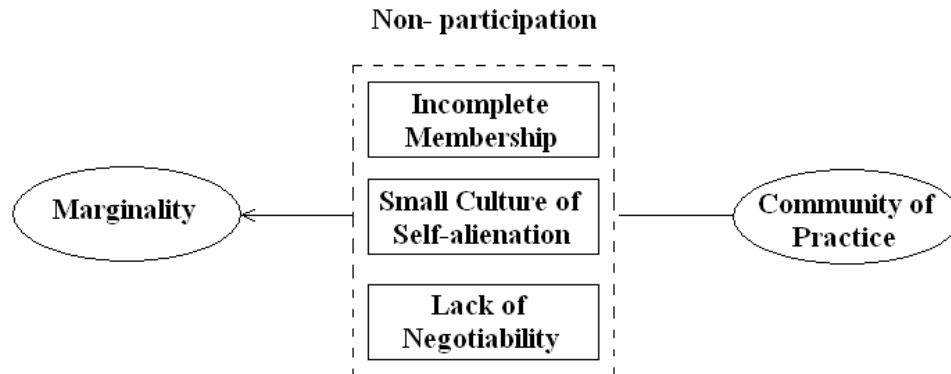


Figure 15 Marginality, Non-investment and Community of Practice

6.3.2.1 Incomplete Membership

In the workplaces of the informants who work at Canadian companies, apart from carrying out daily routines to meet the demands of their employers, staff members talk about hockey, tell jokes, and exchange views on what happens in the society. They form closer relations than mere working relationships. In this connection, the workplaces of the informants are communities of practice where people make

... the job habitable by creating an atmosphere in which the monotonous and meaningless aspects of the job are woven into the rituals, customs, stories, events, dramas, and rhythms of community life. (Block, 2007: 46)

On the other hand, the informants' relations with such communities are problematic. As an employee, they inevitably have to interact with other staff members to fulfil their job responsibilities. However, if they only talk business with their colleagues, if they walk away when their colleagues are talking about hockey, or if they only care about news in China while their Canadian-born co-workers are interested in what happens in Canada, the informants' relations with the latter cannot be termed as close. Given that one major indicator of a community of practice is close

interpersonal relations among its members, the membership of the informants in the communities of practice cannot be construed as full: they do not have common ground with their colleagues; they are not truly accepted by the latter; and they are alienated.

6.3.2.2 Small Culture of Self-alienation

As discussed in Section 3.3.3, a small culture is ‘the composite of cohesive behaviour within any social grouping’ (Beales, Spindler and Spindler in Holliday, Hyde and Kullman, 2004: 64). The small culture I refer to here is the phenomenon pinpointed among the informants who work at Canadian companies and claim that they ‘eat technical rice’. They do not put more effort into improving their English in order to seek opportunities of promotion to managerial and administrative positions. Rather, they enhance their technical skills in order to secure the present technical job. According to Holliday (2011: 123-150), deciphering a small culture requires the comprehension of particular cultural resources people resort to in the process of its formation, which encompass, *inter alia*, social and educational traditions (Figure 4 in Section 3.3.3). In the case of the informants, such resources refer to a particular Chinese educational tradition that places much emphasis on learning practical and technical skills instead of on enhancing leading and communicative skills. Holliday also claims that interpreting small cultures requires taking into consideration people’s personal trajectories (*ibid*: 123-150), spatial and/or temporal. In terms of spatiality, the informants live on ‘eating technical rice’ in Canada, but not necessarily in China. In fact, most of them were senior professionals in China with managerial and administrative responsibilities, not solely ‘eating technical rice’ there. With regard to temporality, such an educational tradition may prevail in one period of time, but may have lost currency in present China.

Therefore, their recourse to this particular educational tradition should be understood with reference to the adversities the informants are faced with in the Canadian job market and in the workplace. As discussed in Section 3.3.1.2, despite the fact that there exists innumerable small cultures, there are

commonalities found in their forming processes, one being that people put into perspective their current situation and skilfully utilize readily available cultural resources to solve the immediate problems they encounter. As such, such cultural resources are in fact a social tool-kit only useful when needed (Crane in Holliday, 2011: 137). Predicated on this argument, the aforementioned educational tradition is only an instrument the informants employ for justifying the choices made to solve the following immediate problem: in Canada, they lack competitiveness in the job market; they find it difficult to integrate with their colleagues in the workplace, thus not being able to establish close interpersonal relations to achieve either job security or promotion opportunities; their only strength is their technical skills; and they need job security. Their conclusion is that it is wise to 'eat technical rice' in Canada.

The small culture of 'eating technical rice' is in essence a culture of self-alienation. It is at the expense of improving informants' oral English skills. By 'eating technical rice', the informants only avail themselves of or invest in part of cultural capital that has already been acknowledged by the Canadian companies, that is, their technical skills, without augmenting other forms of capital that have been depreciated, for example, social capital and another form of cultural capital – a good command of English. This small culture does not make contributions to more integration of the informants in the workplace, which would otherwise lead to fuller membership in the community of practice; it only strengthens informants' alienation in the workplace.

6.3.2.3 Lack of Negotiability

As discussed in Section 3.3.1, Negotiability is 'the ability, facility and legitimacy to contribute to, take responsibility for, and shape the meanings that matter within a social configuration' Wenger (1998:197). Negotiability is, on the one hand, closely related to linguistic capacity to make sense of and express meaning. In the light of the fact that the informants' oral and aural proficiency in English is not high, it can be argued that they do not possess much negotiability. On the other hand,

negotiability concerns power relationships and control over meaning making. An individual who is good at communication does not necessarily possess substantial negotiability: if one has enough power, he/she is in possession of considerable negotiability without having to be eloquent. Considering that most immigrants who work at Canadian companies are underemployed and that their prospect of promotion in the workplace is limited, they have less power at the company to assert their meaning than those whose rankings are higher, which also suggests their lack of negotiability. Negotiability allows people to assert membership (Wenger, 1998: 197) by communicative skills or by power, and a lack of it connotes the informants' inability to claim full membership of the community of practice, resulting in their alienation.

6.3.2.4 Marginality Resulting from Alienation

As is shown in Figure 3, an individual's position in a community of practice – insider or outsider, peripherality or marginality – is determined by the relationship between his/her participation and non-participation in the community, which also applies to the informants. Due to the fact that they have to co-operate with their colleagues in order to fulfil job responsibilities, there is some measure of participation in the community; therefore they are not outright outsiders. On the other hand, their alienation connotes non-participation, they are not insiders either. Inasmuch as the alienation is not likely to ameliorate in the future considering the influence of aforementioned small culture and their lack of negotiability, non-participation dominates its relationship with participation. As such, in the community of practice, the informants do not occupy the peripheral position which is on an inbound trajectory leading to an insider status; rather, they are stuck in the marginal place, which is likely to perpetuate. Such marginalization can reach deep into their identity (Wenger, 1998: 193), that is, marginality.

6.3.3 Non-participation in the Canadian National Community

Anderson (1983 in Wenger, 1998:294) argues that a nation is best construed as an imagined community of which one imagines oneself as part and in which one has no actual contact with most of its members. Canada as a nation can be conceived as such by many who claim to be Canadians. However, whether the informants identify themselves with the Canadian national community, as it were, is open to question. They live in the Chinese community, speak Chinese, watch Chinese TV programmes, read Chinese newspapers, and care more about what happens in China than in Canada. In this connection, it can be argued that they see themselves much more as Chinese than as Canadians, and a small culture can be pinpointed among them which is described in this study as ‘gravitating towards the Chinese community’, meaning that the informants tend to live, socialize and work in the Chinese cultural enclave with ramifications of distancing themselves from the mainstream of Canadian society, which can be comprehended as non-participation in the Canadian national community. As such, the non-participation is intertwined with the small culture, which is to be elucidated from standard language ideology as its ideological origin, othering as its formation process and essentialist cultural statements as its product, as Figure 16 indicates.

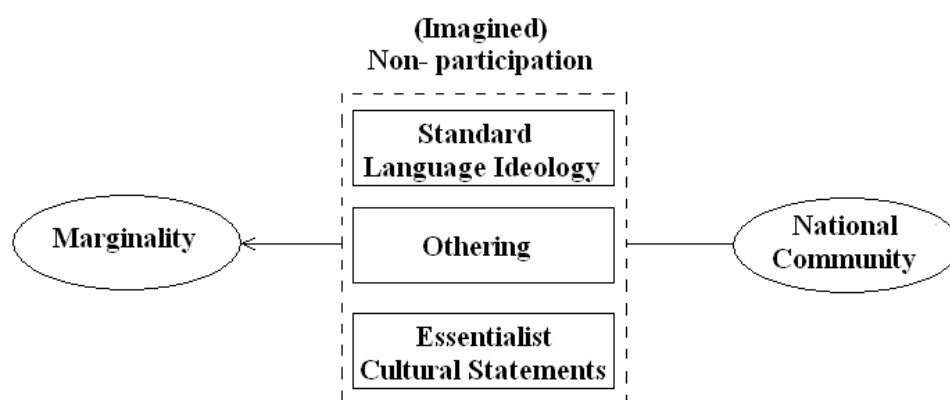


Figure 16 Marginality, Non-investment and National Community

6.3.3.1 Standard Language Ideology as Origin

Holliday (2011:131) posits that ideology as a form of social structure is one of the contributors to the universal process of small culture formation (Figure 4). The

ideology in this study pertains to the standard language ideology which is 'a bias toward an abstract, idealized homogeneous language which is imposed and maintained by dominant institutions and which has as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class' (Lippi-Green, 1997:64 in Tollefson, 2007:26). This ideology advocates a standard and thus unvaried way of speaking which is regarded as a better way of transmitting information and a normal way of existence of the language while in effect the contrary is true: it is agreed upon by sociolinguists that language variation is normal, necessary and intrinsic to all language varieties, including standard ones (ibid:30). However, in the light of its connection with the language of upper middle classes, and its being promoted on all levels of public educational system (ibid: 31) which, according to Bourdieu (1990), reproduces the social structure in which upper middle classes occupy dominant positions, the standard language enjoys a predominant position while the other varieties, not least immigrants' interlanguages – a term introduced by Selinker (1972) roughly referring to types of language (or linguistic systems) used by second language learners who are in the process of learning a target language – are either stigmatized or considered as incompetent and erroneous. (Tollefson, 2007:30-31).

Standard language ideology does not merely exist in English speaking countries. In China, Mandarin, the official language originating from the spoken language of the capital city Beijing, has been promoted throughout the country on every level of education for more than a half century (Institute of Applied Linguistics of Ministry of Education, n.d.) while at the same time language related discrimination obtains (Zhang and Wan, 2005). For the informants who have gone through the Chinese educational system and who have lived most of their life in China, linguistic discrimination is not unfamiliar to them, and standard language ideology has been unconsciously internalized. For that reason, in Canada, they fear being discriminated against and are reluctant to communicate with members of Anglophone community: they deem their English – interlanguages – as deficient, and imagine that Canadian Anglophones would also consider their English as deficient, which distances them from the mainstream of Canadian society and gravitates them towards the Chinese community. And in this connection, standard

language ideology can be viewed as a main contributor to the formation of the small culture in question.

6.3.3.2 Othering

Given the dearth of contact with members of the 'Canadian national community' due to the effect of standard language ideology, imagination plays a significant role in forming informants' opinions about local Canadians. Imagination may yield a sense of affinity (Holliday, 2011:179), as the informants tend to believe that there are many commonalities among Chinese immigrants themselves and they share many topics. Whether they do have common ground or not does not matter; it is an imagined participation, a source of identification. Conversely, imagination may lead to distance; such terms as 'small circle' and 'LaoWai' set a clear demarcation between 'us' and 'them'. Again, whether such imagination is groundless or based on facts does not make much difference; it functions to include 'us' and exclude 'them'. This imaginary cleavage is intertwined with the informants' Chinese national identity, which becomes particularly salient when their individual self 'is thrown into crisis' (Block, 2007: 170) in their new host country: they cannot express themselves efficiently in the official language of the country, and they cannot integrate into the new national community.

The root of the imaginary boundary between 'us' and 'them' is othering, the process of constructing, or imagining, a demonized image of 'them', or the other, which supports an idealized image of 'us', or the self. It is a means by which social groups maintain a positive sense of identity (Holliday, 2011:69-70). In the case of the informants, though othering does not demonize local Canadians, it nevertheless paints a picture of self in a more positive way which is presented in their reluctance to communicate with the locals: it seems that it is the locals who first bias against, do not truly accept, or discriminate against, the informants, thus locating the latter at a morally superior position and justifying the lack of efforts of the latter to communicate with the former. Othering is also essentialist, prone to applying the picture of the other to all members of the group being othered: if one

individual of the Canadian national community who was invited does not come to take part in the informants' activities, or discriminates against them on the basis of their unsatisfactory oral proficiency in English, then other members of that community are likely to act in the same way. The ramifications are that, in their minds, the informants group together and set up mutually exclusive communities, forming a sense of belonging to the Chinese community and a sense of distance from the Canadian national community: it is a kind of universal cultural process by which people, including the informants, in a seemingly natural manner, create social cohesion within small cultural groups, which is particularly conspicuous in intercultural contexts (ibid: 147).

6.3.3.3 Essentialist Cultural Statements

One product of the small culture 'gravitating towards the Chinese community' is statements about culture made by the informants. Considering the dearth of effective communication, or contact, between the informants and local Canadians, the views of the former about the cultures of the latter are prone to be imaginary and essentialist: the Canadian culture is imagined to be monolithic and associated with the English language; the cultures of different nations are mutually exclusive and impermeable; and the Chinese immigrants cannot be truly accepted by local Canadians for that matter, no matter how hard the former try to be part of the latter. In fact, cultures are in a state of flux. Different cultures, when contacting face-to-face, can interact, blend, and assimilate; and the boundaries between them can be blurred instead of watertight, which is particularly true when a culture with more hard and soft power invades a culture with less hard and soft power. The problem of the Chinese immigrants' culture statements lies, maybe due to the fact that the informants are reluctant to communicate with members of Anglophone community, or to the fact that they occupy less powerful positions in the Canadian society, in its unawareness of the changing nature of culture. In addition, this perspective on culture conjectures that people within a 'national culture' are necessarily able to find common ground. It is oblivious to the fact that people are, even within their own 'national culture', vastly different from each other in terms of social

stratification, political and religious view points, educational level; and that, as manifested by numerous Internet interest groups, commonalities can be found among people from different parts of the world.

The repercussions of the essentialist cultural statements are twofold. Firstly, they further distance the informants from members of target language community, since the former believe that there is a deep cultural cleavage between them that cannot be bridged. Secondly and more significantly, these essentialist cultural statements have a 'return influence' (Holliday, 2011:142) on the formed small culture 'gravitating towards the Chinese community', since, by amplifying the differences between the cultures, they encourage the cohesion of the informants, thus strengthening the Chinese national identity and consolidating that small culture, a culture of distancing.

6.3.3.4 Marginality Resulting from Distancing

To the extent that the informants do not have much actual engagement with members of the Canadian national community, their relations with the latter are largely determined by imagination. The informants hope to be more integrated into the mainstream of Canadian society, which indicates some degree of imagined participation. On the other hand, the small culture of 'gravitating towards the Chinese community' distances themselves in their minds from the local Canadians, which suggests imagined non-participation. Due to the exclusive nature of imagined culture differences, that is, the informants tend to visualize that communities of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds are mutually exclusive, and that being an insider of one – the Chinese community – implies being an outsider of the other – the Canadian national community, and vice versa, non-participation plays a dominant role. An imagined community invites an imagined identity (Norton, 2001: 166), which is determined by the relationship between imagined participation and non-participation. Owing to the defining role of non-participation, such relationship gives rise to the identity of non-participation, that is, marginality.

6.3.4 Marginality and Non-investment

The dearth of improvement in informants' oral proficiency in English is largely related to their not putting more effort into learning the language. Norton (2000: 11) claims that learning an L2 can be construed as an investment in the learner's identity. Extrapolating from her conceptualization of investment, I argue that not making more efforts to learn English can be regarded as non-investment, and such non-investment is inextricably connected with one of the informants' identities – the newly formed marginality after immigrating to Canada.

Such inextricability can be elucidated from two distinctive angles – imagination and engagement. Wenger (1998: 217) argues that the major reason we imagine our relations with a particular community is that we hope to learn to be a full member of that community in the future. In the case of the informants, they hope to be a member of the professional community and fully integrated into the Canadian national community. In the light of the marginality resulting from the informants' relations with the two communities, those hopes cease to exist: the ambition of seeking a job commensurate with their work and educational experience is thwarted; the aspiration of being fully integrated into the mainstream of Canadian society is frustrated. Marginality renders investment in English unnecessary: the informants will never acquire professional positions that match their expertise and require a good command of English; they are gravitated towards the Chinese community where Chinese is the language of work and living. Marginality obstructs investment in English.

For those informants who work at Canadian companies, they experience another kind of marginalization. They are engaged in daily routines with local colleagues; however, they cannot integrate themselves into the latter. The marginality from the community of practice in the workplace causes the informants to believe that improving oral English is not necessary: they do not share common ground with the locals; they do not have many interactional conversations with the latter; and

their English is only the English to fulfil job responsibilities. Marginality arrests investment in English.

6.4 Demotivation

Marginality only plays a partial role in the informants' decisions not to invest in English. Another part of the story is demotivation. Most of the informants enrolled on the LINC courses in their first days in Canada; they were motivated to learn English in the beginning. After having lived in Canada for several years and settled down there, they are not willing to make more efforts to learn English even though their proficiency has not improved noticeably; their motivation ceased to exist. They can be regarded as demotivated because, according to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011: 139), demotivation is related to 'specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action'. The demotivation is, premised on the findings, connected with the informants' perception that learning English is of low value, and such attitude towards learning is inextricably related to their middle-class identity. As is discussed in Section 2.1.2, there is no unified definition of the concept *middle class* in studies on social stratification in China, since the country is undergoing a profound transformation from a planned economy, where the majority of its citizens were impoverished, to a market-oriented economy which is currently the second largest one in the world, and research on the newly-formed middle class is in its nascent stage (Lei, 2011: 2). However, no matter what criteria social scientists (e.g. Lei, 2011; Li and Zhang, 2009) adopt, income, education, occupation, or the combination of diverse factors, they all include well-educated professionals in the category of middle class. For that reason, according to their bio-data (Table 4.1), the informants belong to the middle class in China.

6.4.1 Lack of Value of Learning English

According to the major principle of expectancy-value theories, expectancy of success and value of the task are indispensable factors to motivate an individual to perform the task, and it is unlikely that effort will be invested in the task if either is

missing (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 13). As pointed out in Section 5.2, the informants do not deem it worth the effort to learn English. Therefore, their demotivation is related to their perceived low value of the learning task. The value of a task is, according to Eccles and Wigfield, defined by its attainment value, intrinsic value, utility value and cost (Eccles, 2007: 109). In this study, as is demonstrated in Figure 12, the perceived low value of the task of English learning is connected with its high cost and low utility value .

6.4.1.1 High Cost of Learning English

The cost carries a negative effect on the overall value of a task, and it encompasses such elements as efforts needed to accomplish the task, and conflicting tasks and distracting influences that stand in the way of that particular task (Eccles, 2007: 112-113). In this study, the former refers to perceived efforts entailed to reach a satisfactory level of English proficiency; while the latter pertains to the constraints – making ends meet to support the family, aging, parental responsibilities – experienced by the informants on learning English.

Whether the informants believe that it takes eight years to speak as those locals do or there is always room for improvement, they are indicating that the task of reaching a satisfactory level of English proficiency necessitates enormous time and energy. This immense amount of effort can be understood with reference to the notion of small culture and the informants' middle-class identity. From the small culture perspective (Holliday, Hyde and Kullman, 2004; Holliday, 2011), cultural elements include artefacts and discourses: the former encompass physical and visible aspects of society which is many people' popular view of culture, involving, inter alia, literature, ways and venues of spending holidays, and such national sports as ice hockey; while the latter pertain to what provides 'small cultures with the systems of language or concepts necessary for shared understanding' (Holliday, 2011: 142), including jargon shared by hockey fans, names of popular characters in a soap opera and jokes that the locals comprehend and laugh at.

What artefacts and discourses have in common is that they are both related to the life experiences shared by people who are part of a particular small culture.

Unlike those unskilled immigrants who come to Canada from China on humanitarian grounds and are in need of English literacy, the informants have reached a certain level of reading and writing skills during their university education. They believe that learning English is as much about learning its related cultures as about learning the grammatical rules. What concerns them is acquiring a capability to carry out interactional conversations with members of Anglophone community, which usually includes knowledge of small cultures. Given that most informants are relatively new to Canada with average time in Canada being 5.5 years, the number of small cultures they are not familiar is still numerous. In this connection, the efforts needed to reach a satisfactory level of English are perceived as being tremendous.

As regards the constraints on learning English the informants have experienced, such as having to make money to support the family or parental responsibilities, they can be explained in terms of capital and their middle-class identity. No matter which class stratification they position themselves, or are positioned, in Canada, the fact that most of them are subject to enormous financial pressure if they cannot find a job related to their work experience in a relatively short period of time after landing in Canada indicates that their economic status was in the middle in China: the economic capital they possess is moderate at best instead of being affluent, and they are open to risks of slipping into low-income working class status in Canada. Therefore they cannot afford to buy a prolonged period of time to learn English. For those housewives of 'flying men' whose daily lives are occupied by household chores and taking care of children, due to the reluctance of the families to resign themselves to low-income working class status in Canada, their husbands work as middle class professionals in China to support them and their children in Canada. Though the wives are not subject to financial pressure, they cannot afford to translate economic capital into study time by hiring someone to do the domestic chores and take care of the child.

In addition, when the informants were talking about their unwillingness to learn English because of their age, they were signifying a dearth of time they felt to reach a satisfactory level of English proficiency, which can also be understood in relation to their middle-class status. As discussed in Chapter 2, these informants belong to the particular cohort of immigrants chosen by the Canadian government according to the points system in which education, work experience and age feature prominently. They are well-educated professionals, and it takes time for one to reach the middle-class status. As such, when they landed in Canada, they were in their mid-thirties or early forties. At the time of the interviews, they were either approaching forty or in their mid-forties. In a Chinese mind, if one reaches forty and has not established him/herself professionally, his/her future career is doomed. Considering not having much time left for career advancement in Canada, a prerequisite of which is a good command of English that takes a lengthy process to achieve, the informants feel the inadequacy of time.

Given the enormous efforts perceived necessary to reach a satisfactory level of oral English and ineluctable constraints experienced, learning English is construed by the informants as a costly endeavour, which considerably reduces the overall value of the task.

6.4.1.2 Low Utility Value of Learning English

The utility value of English learning connotes the usefulness of the task with regard to the learning objectives. The reason why the informants left the language classroom was their perception that LINC, the only formal learning programme that most informants took in Canada, did not produce desirable results. There is a mismatch between their learning objective and the goal of the programme, and such a mismatch is closely related with their middle-class identity. As pointed out in Chapter 2, one of the goals of the LINC program, especially at lower levels, is to introduce the English language to newcomers in order to ease them into the society, while the objective of the informants is to substantially improve their oral proficiency in the shortest period of time so that they can compete in the job market

with their middle-class local counterparts. For that reason, they are more concerned about opportunities to practise oral English with the teacher, the only genuine native speaker in the classroom. However, such opportunities are limited, which makes them perceive that the LINC programme is not instrumental in improving their oral proficiency and does not have much utility value in facilitating their competition in the job market.

The lack of utility value of learning English does not only manifest itself in the informants' attitudes towards the LINC courses, it also presents itself in their attitudes towards future English learning, which can be explained in relation to the notion of cultural capital. According to Bourdieu (1986:248), the acquisition of such resources as material and symbolic profits – economic and social status for example – through the accumulation of cultural capital depends on the scarcity of the cultural capital and 'may be less profitable than was anticipated when they were made'. A high level of oral proficiency in English, a form of cultural capital, is what the informants want to achieve, but an average quality that ordinary local Canadians possess. Therefore, if achieved, such cultural capital does not provide them a definite advantage in the job market; it is a must in lieu of an asset. Besides, to obtain a job commensurate with their work and educational experience, that is, their previous middle class status, a good command of English is only one factor; there are other factors at play, such as a valuable social network and the recognition of past work experience. As such, after settling down in Canada, the informants do not attach high value to achieving a high level of proficiency in English.

6.4.2 Demotivation and Non-investment

As discussed in Section 3.2.1.3, Dörnyei and Ottó's process model (1998) of L2 motivation indicates that motivational behaviour can be divided into pre-actional, actional and postactional phases, and that within each phase distinctive motivational influences have an impact on the actions an individual takes. Taking this premise as a starting point, I argue that, in the case of the informants, motivation is the prelude to demotivation because demotivation results from

reducing or diminishing the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action by certain external forces (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 39). I also argue that in the phase corresponding to demotivation, demotivational influence, that is, the perceived low task value in this study, has an impact on the action the informants take, that is, investment in English.

Investment entails, from a more 'economic' perspective, a process of decision making in which an investor takes into consideration the amount of available resources he/she can mobilize for investment against what can be expected as a return from the investment, which is also the case for the investment in English – a form of cultural capital. In terms of the resources, Bourdieu (1986: 253) argues that the labour-time required in the process of capital accumulation is the defining factor of the value of that particular form of capital; in that sense, time and energy can be construed as resources for the investment in English. Bourdieu (1986:252) also claims that different forms of capital can be converted into each other; for that reason, economic, social and cultural capital can all be deemed resources. As discussed earlier, the informants experience such constraints as aging, parental responsibilities and the pressure of making ends meet that hinder them from learning English; the available time and energy at their disposal to invest in English are limited. Besides, the amount of social and cultural capital they originally possessed has greatly depreciated after immigrating to Canada, and their economic capital is moderate at best. As such, the overall resources that can be employed for investment in English – a kind of cultural capital – are not plenty.

As regards the return, investment in English is not regarded as a profitable one by the informants. As discussed in Section 6.4.1.2, the perceived low value of learning English also owes to the low utility value of the task, which is due to, on the one hand, the perceived limited help of the LINC courses in terms of improving informants' oral English and, on the other, the dubious benefits of future learning felt by them. The former can be regarded as unproductiveness of the investment in English, and the latter can be construed as the uncertainty of the return. Taken together, the return of the investment in English is problematic.

When making investment decisions, an individual does not consider the available resources and investment return separately: it is not uncommon for people to be engaged in a task that produces a modest return thanks to the minimal resources the task entails; conversely, it is not rare for people not to invest in a lucrative project due to a lack of available resources. As such, it is the judgement of cost-effectiveness that matters. For the informants in this study, the demotivational influence, which is the perceived low value of the task – the high cost and low utility value, connotes that learning English is not a cost-effective investment, which has an impact on the informants' action, resulting in their non-investment in English.

Summary

In this chapter, I have theorized about the findings of this study, arguing that the reason why well-educated professional Chinese immigrants to Canada do not make more efforts to improve English after settling down there can be explained by my conceptualization of non-investment in English, which is connected, on the one hand, with marginality, an identity resulted from the informants' non-participation in the professional community, community of practice, and Canadian national community; and on the other, with their demotivation to invest in English, which is the consequence of the informants' judgement that such investment lacks value.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I will first point out the limitations of this study, and then make some suggestions for future research on questions related to this study. After that, I will summarize the contributions of this study to knowledge and stipulate the practical implications of this study to the field of applied linguistics and English teaching in Canada. This thesis will end by a personal reflection based on my experience of conducting this study.

7.1 limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study reside mainly in its exploratory research design, which can be discussed from two dimensions. The first is the sole dependence on the interview as its method of data collection. Though in exploratory studies, the interview is more focused than the observation – another major instrument of data collection – due to the fact that the former normally employs an interview guide which usually derives from an examination of related literature and reading of such archival resources as newspaper articles and government statistics (Stebbins, 2001: 38), in order to achieve ‘thicker descriptions’ (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 156), other research methods are desirable in addition to the interview, for example, the observation. Therefore it would be ideal if I had had access to Canadian corporate settings where I could observe the work lives of the informants and to the LINC classroom observing several LINC classes, which would generate richer data and by which the veracity of the study would be further enhanced. The former seemed impossible in the first place because it entailed access to the management of a Canadian company, and I am just a novice researcher new to the country while my informants were low-ranking employees at their respective companies; as regards the latter, I emailed the department of the Toronto District School Board in charge of allocating LINC teachers to different schools, but did not receive any reply. For these reasons, the observation was excluded from the research design.

The second limitation is connected with the first, which is that I was the only researcher collecting and interpreting the interview data, which is not uncommon in exploratory studies (Stebbins, 2001: 67). Given the heavy subjective elements

involved, to achieve optimum veracity of the study is an issue. Though I employed every means possible to enhance it, such as member checking and deliberately choosing informants whose profile might be opposite to those who had been interviewed, I must acknowledge this weakness implicated in exploratory research, not least in the earliest stage of the exploration of the phenomenon in question. Such a weakness can be substantially improved by later studies that constitute a concatenation of studies on related groups of people and social phenomena (ibid. 69), which is the subject of the next section.

7.2 Suggestions for Future Research

Stebbins' (2001) notion of concatenation connotes a series of studies along a continuum from purely exploratory to more confirmatory, from hypotheses generating to more hypotheses testing, which is necessitated by follow-up studies, not on the same group of people and the same phenomenon by other researchers, but on the related groups and related social phenomena by the same researcher and other researchers alike. Such studies, including the ones suggested in the following paragraphs, will generate new theories that confirm or modify the previous ones and lead to a theory that is broad in scope, high in veracity and inclusive in detail.

Canada's immigration policy is undergoing a profound change, shifting its focus to recruiting international students who are already in Canada, which is known as the Canadian Experience Class (CIC, 2013). There are a large number of Chinese international students studying in universities and colleges in Canada who are likely to apply for immigration after graduation. Future studies can target this group of Chinese, investigating how they learn English and how they integrate into mainstream society. Another group of Chinese whom can be targeted by future research are those adults who come to Canada for family reunion and belong to the category of Family Class. They form the majority of the students in the LINC programme. From my observation, however, they are also the ones who have the least contact with the world outside of Chinese communities. It will be fruitful to

examine the reasons why they invest in English, and how English has an impact on their daily lives.

Such explorations may verify the theorization of this study about the informants' not making apparent efforts to improve English, which may widen the scope of the current theory by including new types of immigrants and combining newly generated theories. Observations can be employed as a means of research apart from the interview, collecting data from real time interactions between the participants and members of the target language community in and outside the classroom, and tracking how their perceptions about themselves change over time in the host country. Besides, studies can also involve members of the target language community, in the workplace and in the neighbourhood, collecting their narratives of how they interact with the Chinese, which proffers richer data and diverse perspectives of local Canadians on Chinese immigrants' English learning.

7.3 Contributions of this Study to knowledge

As discussed in Chapter 3, there is a lack of value theory in L2 motivation research, and theories within the value-expectancy framework in mainstream psychology are predominantly expectancy-related. This study is an attempt to incorporate the value theory into a conceptual framework to investigate a social phenomenon related to L2 learning. Also mentioned in Chapter 3 is that, compared with the number of studies on L2 motivation, demotivation is an under-researched area. This study, by combining the working definition of demotivation and the value theory, is also a contribution to research on demotivation, a field that lacks empirical studies.

My conceptualization of *non-investment* can be regarded as an extension of the existing concept *investment* which, as discussed in Section 3.2, seems to be a preferred substitution for motivation by some scholars who believe that motivation theories treat L2 learners as 'idealized abstractions or bundles of variables behaving and responding in theoretically predictable ways' (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011: 76). My view is that *motivation/demotivation* cannot be discarded altogether.

By combining the value theory with the definition of demotivation, I organically connect the latter with *non-investment*, which addresses the issue as to what kind of resources people capitalize on when making investment decisions, which does fuller justice to this economic term. Humans are complicated, so is the rationale behind their behaviour, the investigation of which needs a broader perspective. Investment, or non-investment, is a human act; it is connected with people's identity; it is also under the sway of motivational/demotivational factors.

7.4 Implications of this Study

The results of the study benefit researchers and practitioners alike. In this era of globalization, the international flow of human capital has become increasingly frequent and its volume has become increasingly huge. China as a country with the biggest population in the world has been contributing substantially to this international migration of human beings, of which well-educated professional Chinese immigrants to Canada are a part. This study discloses the reasons why Chinese immigrants' do not make more efforts to improve English in Anglophone Canada, which has significant implications for applied linguists who are in the field of globalization. Firstly, it brought to the fore the economic dimension of globalization that has been largely neglected by applied linguists who are mainly interested in its cultural aspect. The economic rationale behind the Canadian immigration policy, the middle-class identity of the informants, their calculation of the value of investment in English, their aspiration for economic success in Canada, all point to the pivotal role economics plays in the informants' immigration, integration and English learning.

Secondly, it has improved understanding of the role English plays in this era of globalization. English is indispensable for the flow of human beings on the global scale and for immigrants to integrate into such major immigrant countries as Canada, the US and the UK. It is a necessity as such. However, in order for immigrants to achieve integration into Canadian society, learning English is not sufficient; there are other necessities parallel to it, such as the recognition of international work experience and educational credentials and a valuable social

network, the lack of which leads to the unlikeliness of integration, which in turn render improving English unnecessary.

And thirdly, the aforementioned necessities signify that a large part of the local remains intact, which contributes to the debates about whether the local has been swallowed by the current process of globalization given the intensiveness and extensiveness of the latter. The lack of recognition of Chinese work experience and educational credentials, the insistence of employers on the Canadian experience, and the difficulties of first generation immigrants to integrate into the host country signify that, far from being overwhelmed, a significant proportion of the local stays unchanged vis-à-vis the homogenizing effects of globalization.

As regards the implications of the study for learning/teaching English to Chinese immigrants to Canada, they can be described from two dimensions. One is that, given that one of the major findings is the lack of opportunities for the informants to practice oral English, English courses providers located in Chinese communities may create more programs targeted at oral English only. From what I know, in the vicinity of C Town, there was an evening spoken English program which involved volunteers in the community and ran once every two weeks. Program organizers may try opening more spoken English courses running twice a week and hiring more native speakers, and such courses could involve field trips and evening parties, which creates more opportunities for Chinese immigrants to contact members of Anglophone community.

The other is that teachers could initiate discussions among the learners about the issue of opportunities for practicing English outside the classroom. During the discussions, the teacher may bring to the fore two issues for the learners' consideration. One is the standard language ideology. As mentioned in Chapter 5, many informants were reluctant to communicate with English native speakers for fear of being discriminated due to their unsatisfactory English. The teacher can describe the origin of the issue, point out its negative impacts on second language learning, and help the learners overcome such fear or anxiety, which may encourage the learners to create more opportunities of contact with members of

the target language community. Two is the issue of small cultures. In Chapter 5, I depicted that the informants believed that the cultural boundaries between the Chinese and Anglophone communities could not be crossed, which forestalled their attempts to initiate conversations with native speakers. During the discussion, the teacher may differentiate small and big cultures, and draw learners' attention to the possibilities that small cultural differences may be significant even between people from different parts of China and that the differences between the two communities may not as substantial as they expected, which can help remove the psychological barrier in Chinese immigrants and encourage them to get in touch with native speakers outside the classroom.

Final Thought

The writing-up of this thesis is concluded back in Toronto two year after I collected the data and left the city where I had lived for two years. Walking on the familiar streets, I took notice of the slogan on the license plate of every vehicle, which is 'Yours to discover'. Though it connotes that the vast wilderness of the province is waiting for everyone to explore, it reminds me of the role as an explorer in this exploratory study which has profoundly changed my way of life. Stebbins (2001: 72) talks about the life style of social science explorers who, due to their curiosity in their areas of research, become immersed. They do not split their work from lives, turning most of their waking hours into their intellectual pursuit that will foster understanding of the group, process, or activity being investigated, which epitomizes what I have experienced in the past three years. As a novice researcher, I have already been aware of the loneliness and hardship of scientific explorations. However, given my internalized curiosity to understand the unknown and the rewardingness that such explorations proffer, I will continue walking on this path of social science exploration.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Questions kept in mind in the interviews and asked depending on the individual and circumstance:

GROUP A: Questions concerning language learning experience:

- a. Have you ever taken LINC? ESL programmes? What's your opinion about them? Were/are they helpful? If not, what kind of programmes would you like to take? Why? Why did/didn't you take such programmes?
- b. What are the biggest obstacles to improving English?
- c. Do you read local newspapers, listen to the radio and watch local TV programmes? Why or why not?
- d. Do you take any measures to study English these days? Why or why not?
- e. What are the differences between learning English in China and here in Canada?

GROUP B: Questions concerning relations with L1 and L2 communities:

- a. Why did you want to come to Canada?
- b. How do you describe your relations with your colleagues? Are they locals or fellow Chinese immigrants or immigrants from other countries? What role does culture play in your relations with the locals?
- c. How did your social network help find your current job/how did your social network have an impact on finding your current job?
- d. What do you think of L2 proficiency of the Chinese immigrants at large? What are the causes of this?

GROUP C: Questions related to education and work experiences:

- a. Did you ever/Do you plan to go back to school for a degree or diploma or certificate after coming to Canada? What kind of programmes did/will you take? Why did you make the decision to take that particular programme?
- b. Was the certificate or diploma helpful? Why?
- c. What did you do in China? How did you enter this field after immigrating to Canada?
- d. Tell me your experience of finding the job?
- e. Are you satisfied with your job? Why?
- f. In your opinion, what are the major hurdles for Chinese immigrants to clear when trying to find the same job as they did in China?



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CONSENT FORM

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me

any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications

If applicable, the information, which I give, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form

all information I give will be treated as confidential
the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity

.....

.....
(Signature of participant)

(Date)

.....
(Printed name of participant)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s)

Contact phone number of researcher(s):.....647-995-6237.....

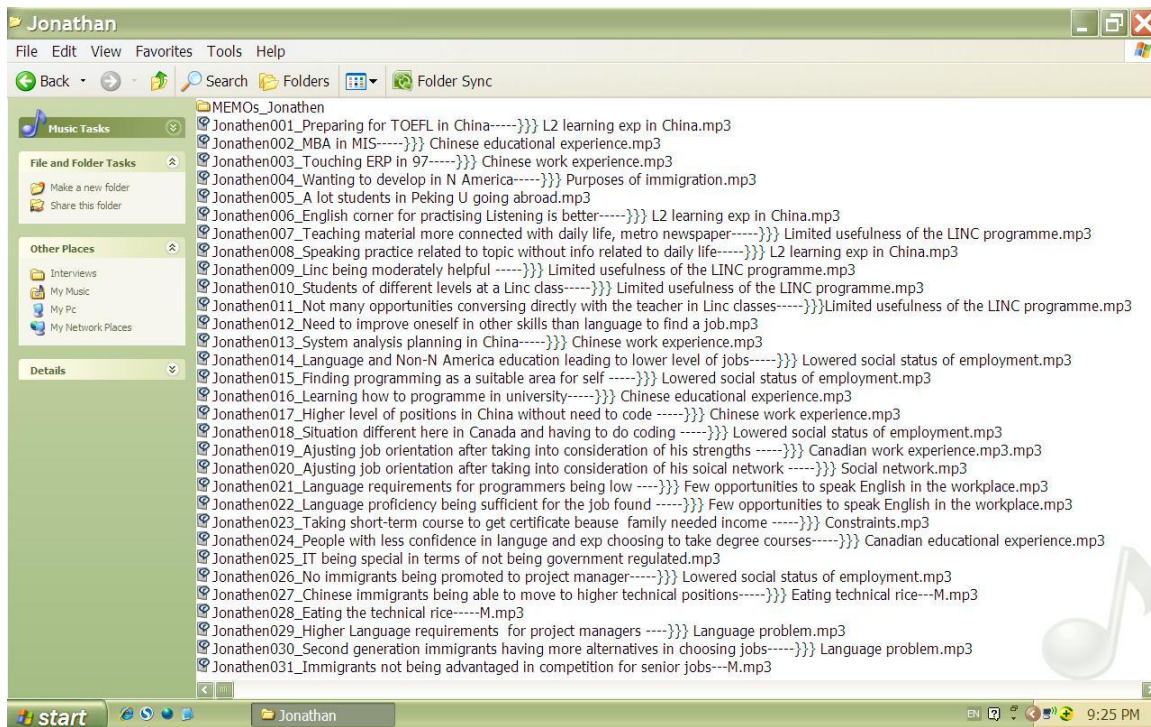
If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:
Fan Zhang at fz214@exeter.ac.uk

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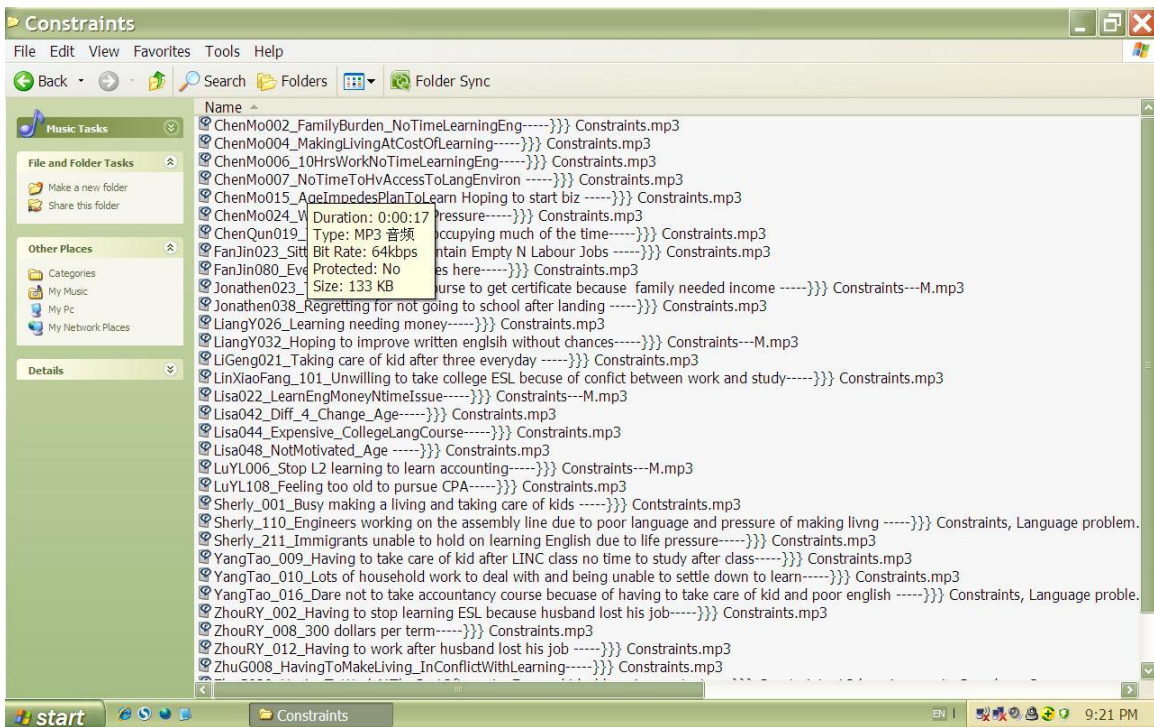
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Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

Appendix 3 Sample of Data Analysis 1



Appendix 4 Sample of Data Analysis 2



Appendix 5: Sample of Interview Transcripts

Meanings of the transcription symbols:

- [] added by the author
- , continuing contour
- . falling intonation
- (.) micropause
- (..) pause of about 0.5 second
- (...) pause of about 1 second
- (2) pause of about 2 seconds
- ___ emphasis
- ? Questioning intonation
- ! Exclamatory utterance
- { } other details
- (XX) unable to transcribe
- < > original words or sentences in English by the informants
- (**) Informant stops without completing the sentence

1. Excerpt of interview with Silvia

Z: You said <LINC> was not much helpful to you.

S: Yes.

Z: Could you describe it in more detail? Why wasn't it much helpful?

S: I feel (..), what I meant, was, it was not helpful for you to find a job.

Z: How did the teacher teach in the classroom?

S: Her teaching was, like, centred on tasks. For example, today's topic is weather, so teaching of this week is around this topic. After this, there is another topic, for example, greeting, such stuff, daily conversation. And next week there is still another topic

Z: Um

S: I felt, can you count on this stuff to find a job?

Z: Um

S: It's useless for finding a job. Of course, it depends on what level a person is on. For those who know little English, <LINC> can help them ease into life here. But for those who have such problems,

Z: Like those who have university education.

S: Yes, it is way too simple. It is not targeted. It is not targeted professionally. For example, if you were a professional in a certain area, what you need is the vocabulary of that area, right?

Z: Um

S: You need support in this aspect, to help you compete in the job market here, to take advantage of your expertise. She always taught you such stuff as weather and the federal system, it made you <get lost>, why? because what you learn, you need to go find a job, and it hasn't solved your problems.

Z: Uh

S: Am I right? So I don't think <LINC> suits everyone. It only suits those whose English is very limited, under-educated, it is effective for them. For those professionals, those who were professionals in China, it is not helpful.

Z: Not helpful. It's not targeted.

S: Yeah, not targeted. Too general, you know. Do you really believe you can improve your spoken English in a short period of time? Our Chinese immigrants are very busy here, I told them, five years, I give you five years, after five years, you come to tell whether you have made progress. Basically, five years at least.

Z: Yeah.

S: In five year, in fact, many people can't improve their spoken English.

Z: Why?

S: It <depends> on his motivation, am I right? for those who are motivated, it is possible in five years. It doesn't mean that he is strong in language skills, at least he has no problem listening and speaking. For those who are not motivated and not good at learning, he can't improve even in ten years. Yes, it really depends on motivation. Learning English is indeed a difficult task.

Z: So there weren't many chances to practise spoken English in the <LINC> classes?

S: There were chances. However, you should know those who spoke to you were on the same level as yours, you wouldn't make progress. Your opportunity to speak to the teacher was limited, so <LINC> is, basically, a kind of transitional, how to say it, if your English is very limited, ok, you can take the <LINC>. I feel the government should open those courses that are more targeted, of course, it's difficult, more professionally targeted.

Z: Yeah.

S: On the other hand, for those professionals from China, their English is very poor. They even can't make progress by taking the <LINC>. So if you ask them to learn the professional vocabulary, you will kill them.

Z: So aren't they very miserable here?

S: Yes they are very miserable. Especially the first five years. That's why many with advanced degrees are doing labouring work here. It's not that they don't have useful expertise, it's that he can't get his expertise known to the employer. If they don't know your expertise, how can they employ you? They don't discriminate you, you have to demonstrate your expertise. The point is, how can you demonstrate you expertise with your lousy English?

Z: Yeah.

S: So I fully understand it. I used to work at an automobile factory. On my assembly line, you can't imagine how many doctors working there.

Z: Really?

S: You know, they came to Canada in their forties, and had established themselves in China. After immigration, you have to make a living to support the family, how can you survive if you don't have income? Those males, they had physical strength. During that period, auto-industry was not in trouble, they worked there, that was really tough. My supervisor, he had an advance degree, he had worked in the defence industry.

Z: He was working on the assembly line as well?

S: What a pity. He wasn't using his brain whatsoever, he was using his muscle!

2. Excerpt of interview with Li Fang

Z: Does it have anything to do with my previous question regarding improving your English?

L: You know, the software he [her husband] is developing is bilingual, Chinese and English. In fact, it is more targeted at Canadian customers, since the Chinese are less likely to use it. You know, those who are able to get online to claim tax credits are well-educated, without problems in reading English. If he has language issues, he is not likely to use this stuff. So it is the English version that is used more often. Now I am now advertising online, in Chinese and in English. So he writes English ads for me, and I put them onto those English websites, which is a bit difficult for me. I am afraid of signing up, you know after you sign, they will send you confirmation code to my email box, which is English, and I have to read these email, it is a process of learning English. but I feel this process is more useful than what you learn in the classroom. This is more practical.

Z: Yeah.

L: I feel those LINC or ESL courses are not very useful. You see, I have learned so many years, I haven't made any progress. It's true. Besides, it is free. As Liang_Ming said, if they charged you \$300 tuition fee every year, you would make more progress. I agree, absolutely agree.

Z: Uh uh.

L: I told Liang_Ming later the LINC and ESL should be transformed. You can register free of charge, but you need to have tests twice a year, if you fail, you quit, or you will be charged for continuation. If so, it will be more helpful.

Z: Yeah.

L I told Liang_Ming, Canadian LINC and ESL absolutely need transformation. They should charge \$150 or \$300 a year, not too much in order for affordability, which puts some pressure on the students, and I would make more progress.

Z: So from my understanding, the reason why you don't make much progress, or, you don't feel pressed for improving English, is that you don't have pressure of making a living.

L: Mainly because of the lack of pressure, including many friends around me, they came to Canada as investors, you know those people, they came to Canada, they bought a big <house>, taking care of the kid, and the house. The husband flies back and forth, and they, they go to the LINC class if they'd like to, or stay at home if .

Z: Taking the LINC classes is a kind of leisure activity?

L: Yes, and it made you drowsy. You know, the classes began in the afternoon, I was so drowsy that I felt asleep often. Because the LINC teacher was a LaoWai, and he didn't care, as long as you didn't snore. Sometimes the teacher asked someone to answer a question, and he got no response, because that person was sleeping, and it happened very often.

3. Excerpt of interview with Jim

Z: the other day when I was chatting with Kelvin, he told me you didn't have to learn a lot of English, you just needed enough English to get the job done, that's it. So how do you interact with your co-workers? In Chinese or in English?

J: Um, basically in English. In our department, including our bank, there are some Chinese colleagues, occasionally, when we meet face-to-face, we will speak Chinese. In <official> circumstances, we speak English. Besides, there are a lot of people from India in our bank, including those <outsourcing> or <contractor>, lots of Indians. So we speak English.

Z: You just mentioned, to be promoted to positions higher than Kelvin's is more difficult?

J: Yes.

Z: Such difficulty lies in the lack of openings? are there any other factors?

J: Are you talking about up to the next level of Kelvin's?

Z: Yeah, I mean those higher levels.

J: Uh, (..) I can only say according to the circumstances of my company, those who work in the technical line, or the administrative line, the structure of the personnel in the company is like a pyramid, the higher the level, the fewer the positions, one position for one person, unless they decide to create a new department. Not just for our Chinese, basically the higher the level, the less the opportunity. If everything is equal, when there is an opening for the <position> of <senior expert> in the department, there are in the <team>,

Z: Several competitors.

J: the locals, the Chinese, who compete for it, in this circumstance, do we Chinese have advantages? (..) from my experience, relatively, we Chinese don't have many advantages. Because, there is an example in my department. He is a local, a white man, that has nothing to do with racial discrimination, he is good at socializing, he had communication with the management, <small talk>, having <lunch> together, playing golf, he visited manager's house very often, of course he is now a senior manager, I guess he doesn't visit him anymore, they have more means to communicate apart from work. Am I right?

Z: So this stuff

J: This stuff, (..) very few immigrants do this stuff.

Z: Why is it so? If it is considered beneficial for getting promoted, why don't we do this?

J: I guess, it is (..) at least for our cohort, of course, for the cohort of 1980s, the educational system might have changed a lot, but for us, the cohort of 1970s, the education we received, there was a major defect in this respect in our secondary and tertiary education. (..) Besides, it (..) had to do with family education, isn't it? Since generally speaking, of course there were exceptions, some families might cultivate social skills in their kids, most families, when kids were in school age, parents would tell them to learn hard, get good marks, and be good at school or in the workplace in the future,

Z: {smile}

J: and make a living by 'eating technical rice'.

Z: Yeah, {smile}'Eating technical rice'.

J: This kind of education. Some might become aware earlier than others that, to succeed, it is not enough to toil over your work at the corner, you need to socialize. Some might wake up to this very early, but the majority didn't. In Canada, there are more difficulties. One reason, of course, is language. Behind the language, is the whole culture. Culture is sort of, for example, they grew up from their childhood playing hockey, and what interests them is to spend their holidays in a cottage somewhere, to travel, etc. all sorts of things. His meanings behind his words, the movies, that sort of things, just like, if you ask a LaoWai, you talk to him about the Chinese Four Great Novels, you speak of Zhang Fei, we know the <category>, a lot of such things, those implied meanings in the words, you don't know. Besides, you can't express something subtle and nuanced.

Z: Yeah.

J. If you play golf, you can chat something with him as well, but you aren't able to get the effect you want to achieve. If their LaoWais play golf together, if he wants to achieve something, he would grasp this chance to win the favour from the boss and get him trust you (..) that is (..) in a word, they are their own.

F: Their own.

J: Yes, a lot of factors that can't be overcome (.) So when it comes to [promotion] (.) they will look out for their own. He would take care of those who communicate more with him.

Appendix 6 Certificate of Ethical Research Approval

STUDENT HIGHER-LEVEL RESEARCH
DISSERTATION/THESIS



Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

DISSERTATION/THESIS

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/guidelines/> and view the School's statement on the GSE student access on-line documents.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name: Fan Zhang

Your student no: 580005492

Return address for this certificate: 28 Lady Churchill Crt, Scarborough, ON, M1V 2J6, Canada

Degree/Programme of Study: Doctor of Education

Project Supervisor(s): Dr. Tony Wright, Dr. Yongcan Liu

Your email address: fz214@exeter.ac.uk

Tel: 07542071683

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my thesis to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed: Fan Zhang date: 26 Aug 2011

NB For Masters dissertations, which are marked blind, this first page must not be included in your work. It can be kept for your records.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: April 2011

Certificate of ethical research approval

DISSERTATION/THESIS

Your student no: 580005492

Title of your project: Social capital, economic capital, or cultural capital? Well-educated Chinese Immigrants' language and social practices in Canada

Brief description of your research project:

The Chinese community is the biggest ethnic minority community in multicultural Canada. Impressive the size as it is, the overall economic achievement as a group, however, is not satisfactory for them, especially for the well-educated Chinese immigrants (WECIs). One of major reasons is their relatively low L2 oral proficiency. The main purpose of the research is to explore the reasons why, as a group, well-educated Chinese immigrants to Canada do not seem to make apparent improvements in their oral English proficiency which is pivotal to improving their social and economic status in Canada.

The research questions are:

1. How are the opportunities to practice oral English outside/inside the language classroom for WECIs?
2. What are the aims of oral proficiency that WECIs want to reach? What are the career aims for the WECIs? How are the two aims related?
3. What kinds of capital did WECIs bring to Canada? What kinds of strategies do they employ to maximize their capital? What impacts do these strategies have on their oral proficiency?

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

15 Chinese adult immigrants who have been living in Toronto for more than three years. All of them had tertiary education in China. Their current occupations include IT technician, hotel room cleaner, real estate agent, car cleaner, electrician, cell-phone repairer, bank clerk, tailor, etc.

Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:

- a) **informed consent**: Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents). Copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document.

See attached Information Letter for the Participant.

- b) **anonymity and confidentiality**

The informants will be explicitly informed that the data used in the report will be under pseudonyms (Information Letter for the Participant).

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

The primary data come from in-depth interviews with the focal participants. Interviews will be conducted in a casual and friendly manner in participants' homes or quiet public places such as a café. Interview questions will be concerned only with participants' language learning experiences and language-related social experiences and will not contain any elements that will insult the participants'

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indignity and threaten their job or other forms of security. After first interview has been carried out, I transcribe the data and have it initially coded. I then send the transcription, the initial codes (analytical only) and a summary of major points to the interviewee for his/her comments, which will lead to either a second round interview or their written comments. Interviews will be conducted in a conversational way to elicit rich and colourful data.

At the same time, I will register as a student for government-funded ESL courses of different proficiency levels and running at different times of the day to observe how the teachers organize the classes, how are the opportunities of practicing oral English in class; I will talk to the classmates about the reasons why they come to the class; and I will join in immigrants' social gatherings such as dinner parties and group day trips, taking opportunities to ask about their language experiences. I will invite a couple of native-born ELS teachers to take part in the project as well for 1) their perspective of language proficiency of the Chinese as a whole and 2) their comments of my research findings written during the last phase of data analysis. The secondary data consists of the field notes of the observation of the classes and immigrants' social gatherings, talks with ESL students and participants in the social gatherings, and interviews with the ESL teachers.

Data analysis will take place as early as possible. It is neither a distinct stage nor a discrete process; it is throughout the whole research process. So is memo writing which is an integral part of the former. Every interview will be transcribed and initially coded on a line-by-line basis, comments from the focal participants and ESL teachers will be code in this way as well while observation field notes will be analyzed incident-to-incident. I will divide the pages of a word document named after the participant into two columns; the left column contains the transcription, and right one for the initial codes and memos. Analytical memos will be written as a different document named after the participant as well but numbered in order, for example Memo_John_001, which will be indexed accordingly in proper places on the right column of the transcription page. After the initial coding is finished, I will move across codes to codes, interview to interview, trying to group codes under a more abstract higher order concepts—categories. Initial coding, focused coding and memo will inevitably bring about insights and develop ideas and concepts which fine-tunes the subsequent data collection.

As coding and categorizing move on, by constant comparison between data and concomitant conceptualization, I will search for the relationships that systematically linked the existing categories which would lead to a tentative theorization. This theorization will be continuously checked against the incoming data, adjusted and modified if there is a gap between the newly arrived data, categories and the fledging theory, until the point where any new data added to a particular category throws no new light on the relevant concepts.

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

A recording device will be used when carrying out interviews. The data collected will be transferred to my personal computer, access to which is protected by password and restricted to the researcher only; a copy of data will be burnt onto a compact disc and stored at a safe place; and the remaining copy in the recording device will be deleted in case it gets lost. The data collected belong to the researcher and the interviewee(s) involved in that particular interview; the researcher will ask the interviewees whether they want their copy of data, and if yes, a copy of data will be burnt onto a compact disc and sent to them by registered mail. After the thesis is accepted, similar safe measures will be adopted to store and protect the data. If in the future the data will be used for academic purposes, the participants will be informed in advance and consent will be sought after. If any participant wants to destroy the data at any time of and after the study, I will follow his/her will.

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

The interview questions are not about political views, religion, sexuality, etc. and do not inquire into personal and family issues. Pseudonyms will be used in the thesis.

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's **Research Support Office** for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.


N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: 26th August 2011 until: 31st December 2013

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature)  date: 26th August 2011

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.

GSE unique approval reference: D/10/11/87

Signed:  date: 28/09/2011
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

This form is available from <http://education.exeter.ac.uk/students>

