LEARNING AS *LAOWAI:* RACE, SOCIAL POSITIONING, AND CHINESE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN CHINA

by

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Abstract

Due to China's increasing economic and political power, interest in learning Chinese as an Additional Language (CAL) is growing rapidly around the world. Large numbers of learners with no historical or cultural ties to China are undertaking the study of Mandarin, often for professional or economic gain. Research in the field of CAL has traditionally been driven by cognitive considerations, and has only recently begun to examine social and cultural factors that influence the learning of Chinese. In particular, the relationships between language acquisition and social identity categories such as race, gender, and class have only begun to be investigated.

This interview-based multiple case study explored the relationship between racial identity and language acquisition in China. Interviews were conducted with five adult, White learners of Mandarin who had previously studied or worked in China. The study found that participants were sensitive to their privileged position in the Chinese context, and worked to construct the identity of the *conscientious sojourner* in order to address this privilege. Simultaneously, their racialized identity as White sojourners caused their learning of Chinese to function as *discordant knowledge*, or knowledge that they were not, for social and cultural reasons, expected to possess. This discordance of their knowledge often allowed participants greater power or access to particular target communities.

This study provides insight into the experiences of a particular set of White learners of Chinese, offering a starting point for further research into the relationship between racial identity and Chinese language acquisition.

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who taught me what graduate school never could:

Eat well, stay warm, and all else will follow.

And, don't embrace your computer too lovingly.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

As China regains its economic, social, and cultural prominence on the world stage, the number of non-heritage learners of Chinese[1] is rapidly increasing. Historically, Chinese language education has been driven by diaspora communities, which have a strong presence throughout the world, and which have long established informal networks of community language schools. In fact, of all Heritage Language (HL) community schools in the US, those that teach Chinese are considered to be the most numerous (Wang, 2007). The growth in the numbers of students with no historical or cultural ties to China who are studying Chinese as an Additional Language (CAL) presents a series of important questions that have implications for policy, pedagogy, and the personal learning journeys of individual students. These questions extend beyond issues of how to teach students from different backgrounds with varying degrees of exposure to Chinese, although this is certainly an important consideration. This shift in the makeup of Chinese language classrooms is informed by global political and economic flows, which in turn are the result of a tumultuous centuries-long relationship between China and the rest of the world. Consequently, Chinese language classrooms are not neutral spaces, but are sites for the often invisible enactment of power relations.

One arena that reflects the manifestation of these power relations is the mass media, which predicts the coming dominance of China with a mixture of panic, disbelief, and awe. Articles regarding the spread of Chinese are found in every type of publication, and are peppered with battle metaphors and dire warnings. *Wired Magazine* refers to "The Mandarin Offensive,"

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[1] While the term "Chinese" refers to the general family of languages in China, it will be used throughout this paper interchangeably with the term "Mandarin," which here refers to the standard language officially recognized by the People's Republic of China (China).

as it discusses the "evangelism" of Chinese bureaucrats who travel the world promoting the teaching of Mandarin (Erard, 2006a, p. 2). *The New York Times* calls Mandarin a "hot new Chinese export" that the Chinese government is using to "conquer the world" (French, 2006), whose popularity is due both to business opporutnities and popular fashion. *Foreign Policy* shows a strategic photo of a White child alongside an Asian child doing math in an Oregon classroom decorated with Chinese characters, demonstrating that children are learning the importance skills of communicating in languages other than English, which the author calls "saying 'global' in Chinese" (Erard, 2006b). *The Economist* (2007) calls Chinese learning a "false Eastern promise," claiming that "the craze for teaching Chinese may be a misguided fad," but acknowledging, nonetheless, that interest in learning Chinese is growing rapidly. As they both reflect and feed public opinion about the global spread of Chinese, these articles demonstrate an ambiguous understanding of Mandarin as both a threat and an opportunity. The reason for this conflicting understanding is a result of the political and social context of Chinese in the world today.

In choosing the title for this study, I used the word lǎowài (老外), which is a term used exclusively in Mainland China to refer to foreigners. It is a relatively new term that is not heard in other Chinese-speaking contexts, and therefore does not factor into the experiences of someone studying in Taiwan, for example. Any mainstream Chinese-English dictionary will define the term *lǎowài* as "foreigner," but this simple definition belies the complexity of the usage and perception of this word among foreigners in China. While almost nothing has been written about this term in formal academic sources, a fierce debate about its connotations is ongoing in conversations between foreigners, and is the topic of many blog threads (e.g., Vamvanij, 2005). Many argue that the term is derogatory and even racist, but others consider it

neutral or even polite. While the term is not used exclusively to refer to White foreigners, Stanley (2009) notes that it does "connote *Western* foreigner rather than merely 'non-Chinese'" (p. 4). I purposely chose to use this term to refer to the group of people whose experiences I examine because I believe it reflects both the explicit differential treatment experienced by foreigners in China, as well as the misunderstanding and misconceptions that arise from the use of a single word.

1.2 The International CAL Context

In the following section I will describe the broader context of Chinese language learning internationally, focusing on political and economic factors and their implications for CAL research. Because individual learners of CAL are inevitably influenced by global political and economic forces, understanding the broader context of CAL is vital to an examination of learners' experiences.

1.2.1 Political Factors

The growing popularity of learning Chinese is embedded within the larger political and economic contexts of global affairs. Lo Bianco (2007) argues that while dominant discourses cast China's economic growth and increasing participation in world affairs as "the emergence of China," a more accurate description would be "the *re-emergence* of China," where China has "*recovered* prominence in world affairs, until very recently dominated by a Westernized modernity" (p. 1, italics original). This regained importance of China has created fertile ground for a new interest in all things related to China.

The increasing attention placed on its language and culture has allowed the Chinese government to undertake a new means of spreading its influence internationally, through a strategy of "soft power." "Soft power," a term coined by Joseph Nye Jr., is defined by him as

"the ability to shape the preferences of others [. . .] it is leading by example and attracting others to do what you want" (quoted in Kurlantzick, 2007, p. 5). In other words, soft power is any means of spreading influence or achieving goals that is not carried out through "hard power" strategies such as military force or economic bargaining.

Both Kurlantzick (2007) and Ding (2008), in their broad discussions of Chinese soft power, give substantial weight to the role of language in China's global growth. Ding explains that cultural factors are now considered by many international relations experts to be "…the force majeure in international relations, often superseding diplomatic norms, realpolitik, and rational choice" (p. 144). He makes a convincing case that one of the most powerful tools of cultural spread is language, due to its power to determine how its speakers view the world. Both writers make the argument that China is taking advantage of its fresh popularity in order to increase its cultural and political importance internationally.

The Chinese government has allocated large sums of money for the active spread of Mandarin abroad, funding Confucius Institutes (CIs) and classrooms that offer classes in Chinese language and culture. CIs are administered by the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (NOTCFL), commonly known as Hanban, and although it is officially a government-funded organization, Hanban claims autonomy from government influence. According to Hanban statistics, as of October 2008 there were 326 CIs in 81 countries (Hanban website, http://english.hanban.edu.cn).

In an interview with a Chinese-language online magazine, the director of Hanban, Xu Lin, talks openly about the opportunity for increasing China's cultural power that is provided by the growing desire of non-Chinese people to study Mandarin. She emphasizes that it is a societal responsibility to spread China's "cultural charm" (Chinascope, 2008, p. 28). Other initiatives

funded by the Chinese government such as The China-Canada Scholars' Exchange Programme

encourage students from around the world to study in China on partial or full scholarships.

Students may choose to undertake entire degree programs in China or simply study Mandarin for

a short period of time, and the reciprocal arrangement allows for Chinese students to study in

Canada as well (Education Office of the PRC website, http://www.chineseeducation.ca/htmls

/edu/17.html).

The use of soft power strategies is obviously not exclusive to China, nor is increasing

international influence under the guise of cultural and linguistic exchange a new phenomenon.

Institutions such as Alliance Française, the British Council, and the Goethe Institute, which

advertise themselves as the cultural relations bodies of France, the UK and Germany respectively,

all operate language programs that claim to take intercultural exchange and cooperation as their

philosophical basis. By setting up schools, language programs, and exchange opportunities in

other countries, these countries are doing nothing different than what China is attempting to do

now, and have been doing it for decades. That China's endeavors are being given so much

attention and sometimes criticism is another indication of the fear and misunderstandings

surrounding the spread of Mandarin. It also reflects historically-situated power dynamics, in

which the actions of an "emerging" power are held to a different standard than those of

established European powers. Further research into issues surrounding CAL internationally

would help to address and rectify this power imbalance.

1.2.2 Economic Motivations

Some individuals or nations choose to pursue a program of Chinese language instruction

in anticipation of future economic benefits; others see the current economic growth of China as a

good reason to pursue knowledge of its language (Ding, 2008; Kurlantzick, 2007). In his

discussion of Chinese learning in Europe, Starr (2009) cites a huge increase in learning Chinese at the university level in Europe, and claims that the majority of students choose Chinese for its "vocational value" (p. 13), arguing that students who are in the process of pursuing post-secondary education choose to learn Chinese because they believe it has a direct link with future job opportunities. Similarly, Ding calls knowledge of Chinese "an employing trump card in the job market," (p. 118), citing a study conducted in Europe, Australia and New Zealand, in which 38 percent of human resource and finance directors said they believe that Chinese will become the "most valuable business language in the forthcoming years" (p. 118). The perception that knowledge of Chinese is a guarantee of future employment has created a desire to learn Mandarin on the basis of instrumental motivation (Gardner, 2001).

Wang and Higgins (2008) explain that one reason the UK has recently poured more resources into Chinese language programs is because British exports to China were far behind those of France and Germany. It was claimed by the Higher Education Funding Council for England that one factor in this disparity was that France and Germany had an "expanding academic capacity in Chinese studies" (p. 3) which the UK lacked. After this report was released, the government allotted one million pounds towards improving the teaching and learning of Chinese in the UK. This is highly noteworthy because it reflects that some national governments are changing their language planning and policy practices based on interest in China, suggesting a sustained international shift rather than a passing fad.

1.2.3 Implications for Research

The growth in the number of CAL students internationally has outpaced endeavors to study and understand the causes, contexts, and implications of this phenomenon. In the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) specifically, the study of CAL is relatively under-

researched, especially in comparison to the wide range of literature in the fields of EFL and ESL. There is a call for more research in CAL, particularly for studies that move away from a pedagogical focus. Lo Bianco (2007) notes that the majority of Western research related to language in China deals with minority language education, the role of English in China, and the complexities of learning the Chinese script. Only the latter is relevant to learners of Chinese, and then mostly in a pedagogical manner.

Le (2004) asserts that "Affective factors such as motivation, beliefs, and anxiety have been almost completely ignored despite the growing body of evidence to indicate that foreign language learners are highly influenced by affective factors" (p. 3). Difference, as signified by physical appearance, undoubtedly has a major impact on these factors. Duff and Li (2004) argue that "further classroom-based research on non-European target languages is sorely needed, since the cultures, contexts, and particularities of those languages offer important and possibly unique insights into larger theoretical issues that have been dominated to date by research on Western European languages" (p. 453). One of these larger theoretical issues is the role of race in language learning, an issue that operates uniquely in a Chinese setting with White learners.

1.3 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between racialized identity and language acquisition in a multiple-case study of five White adult learners of Chinese.

The research questions explored in this study are:

1. What impact did participants' perceived status as White sojourners in China have on their language learning?

2. What identities did participants construct for themselves as learners of Chinese? How were these identities linked with the acquisition of the language?

A limited amount of research has been conducted (and published in English) on learning Chinese as a second language in a Chinese-speaking context. The majority of CAL studies, as I demonstrate in Chapter 2, have been carried out in settings where Chinese is taught as a foreign language. While understanding foreign language settings is certainly important, different questions arise in a second language context. One such question is the issue of race; as White learners move into settings where their physical appearance is marked and often at the forefront of discussion, their relationship with the target language community often becomes framed in terms of difference. Thus, the primary purpose of this study is to begin an examination of how the uniquely racialized experience of White learners of Mandarin in China shapes their relationship with the target language community, with the language itself, and ultimately how it impacts their identity as speakers of Chinese.

While the focus of this particular study is narrow, an examination of a unique set of participants' experiences has the potential to inform wider theory. Thus, the discussion of findings in Chapter 4 will not only examine and theorize participants' experiences, but will also demonstrate how my analysis can be applied to further understandings of race and language learning in general.

1.4 Organization of the Thesis

In this chapter, I have contextualized the issue of CAL internationally, arguing that political and economic factors influence the spread of Mandarin worldwide. I have also introduced the study and my research questions. Chapter 2 provides a review of literature that is relevant both to the sociohistorical context of CAL, as well as to my theoretical framework. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology I used in conducting this study. In Chapter 4, I present the findings of my study and discuss them in relation to the theoretical framework, the historical

context, as well as existing CAL research. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes with a summary of the thesis, suggestions for further research, and a personal reflection.

Chapter 2: Learning Chinese as an Additional Language in China: A Review of the Literature

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I first examine existing literature that moves beyond a pedagogical focus towards an understanding of racial, social, and affective factors involved in studying CAL. This will give the reader a broader understanding of the current state of CAL research, and will highlight the lack of explicit treatment of racial identity as a factor in language study. I then outline my theoretical framework, discussing how I approach key concepts of *racial identity*, *Whiteness*, *identity*, *agency*, *social context*, *sojourner*, *privileged marginalization* and their relationship to language acquisition. Finally, I provide a brief explanation of the historical relationship between China and the West, and demonstrate how this relationship has shaped understandings of race and Whiteness in China.

2.2 Race and Language Learning in Study Abroad Research

Several SLA studies have examined the role of racialized identity in language learning, particularly in a study abroad context. I briefly discuss some of these studies in order to show that previous research on the study of languages other than Chinese in the study abroad context has demonstrated the importance of examining race in the experiences of language learners.

One prominent study by Talburt and Stewart (1999) described the experiences of Misheila, an African American student on exchange in Spain. As the only African American student in the group, she reported constant sexual harassment, and attributed it to the color of her skin, as she observed that black women in Spain were sexualized in a different way than White women were. While other students in the group were able to "pass" or blend into the larger population, Misheila experienced what the authors term "hypervisibility" (p. 171). One of her

classmates stated that while he and other White students were able to take refuge in their "camouflage," Misheila could not. In this case, Misheila's racialized identity had a highly detrimental effect on her study aboard experience, and presumably on her language learning as well. She stated that she often did not want to even leave her room because she felt so uncomfortable, and she even went so far as to say that she had no desire to ever return to Spain. Misheila's case demonstrates the complex intersections between race and gender, as seen in the difficulty she and her classmates had in determining whether she was singled out more than other women, whether this attention was positive in any way, or whether she had any more attention than the blonde females in the group.

In the Asian context, Siegal's (1994) dissertation stands out as an important example of a study examining the relationship between race, gender, and language learning. Siegel studied the experiences of four White women studying Japanese in Japan through ethnographic data collection. She found that while the experience of each woman obviously differed greatly, their position as White females in Japan had a profound effect on their language learning, and that these effects ultimately were tied to issues of identity. Siegal focused largely on the women's use of honorifics and particular registers, as in Japanese these are markers of both linguistic proficiency and pragmatic competence. The socially appropriate (highly stratified) use of language was not always employed by the women, often because their position as White sojourners in Japan led to their interlocutors having low or altered perceptions of their linguistic abilities.

In another Asian context study, Kumagai and Sato (2009) interviewed American students about their experiences studying Japanese in Japan. The White students spoke of a phenomenon they called "*gaijin* [foreigner] smash," which referred to their strategy of feigning ignorance in

order to achieve some benefit. For example, they would pretend to not understand when someone pointed out that they had purchased a child's ticket instead of an adult-priced ticket. It is important to note that the authors also interviewed American students of Asian descent, who were not able to use "*gaijin* smash" precisely because they were not White. Instead, they were forced to employ other strategies, which sometimes meant staying silent. In the case of the White students, they were able to use their physical appearance to break rules in order to have an enjoyable time in Japan. While the authors did not explicitly discuss the impact this had on their language learning, they do show that it made them more confident when interacting in Japanese society, which may in turn have lead to greater interaction with Japanese interlocutors.

These studies establish the importance of perceived racial identities in language learning. Within the target language community, learners' racial identities can allow them the benefit of engaging in certain inappropriate behavior, or it can deny them access to that community because of certain expectations drawn from a particular racial identity. Further, these studies highlight the importance of the social and historical context in understanding second language learning, as emphasized by Kelly (2008), Siegal (1994), and Rampton (1991) which I discuss in section 2.3.4 below.

2.3 Social and Affective Factors in CAL Research

While the field of SLA in general has embraced a shift towards a greater focus on affective factors such as motivation and agency, and their impact on identity formation during the language learning process (e.g., Norton Peirce, 1995), CAL research is just recently beginning to follow this trend (e.g., Duff, Anderson, Ilnyckyj, Lester, Wang, & Yates, 2010). The following section discusses some CAL studies that have moved beyond a cognitive or pedagogical focus to address the importance of affective and attitudinal factors. I review these

studies in order to show that while they are valuable contributions to the field, more work must be done to address this gap in the literature. Further, many of these studies were conducted prior to the current growth in the number of CAL learners, and therefore also reflect the need for studies that address the new contexts of Chinese as an internationally important language. Finally, I argue that although many of these studies examine the experiences of non-heritage language learners, many of whom presumably are White, the issue of racial difference is not addressed as an important identity category to consider in the analysis of data.

2.3.1 CAL in a Study Abroad Context

An early study by Kasper and Zhang (1995) carried out interviews with 21 students of advanced Chinese who had spent time in China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan. The purpose of the study was to examine themes related to pragmatic competence and challenges encountered by foreign students in Chinese-speaking contexts. Many of the difficulties recounted by students related to situations involving speech acts such as compliments, invitations, requests, terms of address, and thanking. The authors explain that these difficulties arise not only from actual features of the language, but also from cultural misunderstandings or differing cultural expectations.

Racial difference was not a category under examination in Kasper and Zhang's study, but the fact that the interview subjects were all non-Chinese (and I am presuming at least some were White), raises the question of how race could influence the participants' experiences. In fact, physical appearance was the basis for much of the discussion, as participants stated that they received an incredibly high number of compliments while in China that "focused on their appearance, achievements, skills, but most of all, on their Chinese language, regardless of how fragmentary it was" (p. 4). Also, "the majority of the students agreed that in being *conspicuously*

non-Chinese a foreigner in China enjoys many privileges and latitudes which are denied to the Chinese" (p. 16, emphasis mine). Some of the participants even argued that it is not appropriate for a foreigner to act "like a Chinese person," but found that their differential treatment, which was often the result of physical appearance, made it difficult to know how to behave properly in many situations. The study does reflect the strong link between racial difference and language learning outcomes: appearance leads to differential treatment, which in turn results in lower expectations of linguistic ability, and higher incidents of uncorrected linguistic and cultural missteps.

Another noteworthy study that moves away from a pedagogical focus is Le's (2004) dissertation exploring affect and Chinese language learning among American students who had studied Mandarin at seven different universities in China. Le compares students from three different ethnic backgrounds, labeled "non-Asian," "non-Chinese Asian" and "Chinese." Le's study is unique in that it focuses exclusively on foreign language anxiety in American learners studying at Chinese universities, unlike previous studies which have been conducted in Chinese as a foreign language contexts. The study utilized two numerical scales to assess the feelings of the participants: the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) scale and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), as well as a questionnaire about each student's language learning experience. Le's conclusions focus on a comparison of the three sets of students in the study, but similarities across the three groups are relevant to learners of Chinese in general. The study found that the majority of participants were primarily motivated by "interest in culture" and "interest in language" (p. 161), although future employment and travel opportunities also ranked high as a reason for studying Chinese. Le argued that the perceived link between language ability and employability appeared more strongly in the students of

Chinese in her study than had been reflected in studies of other languages, presumably because of the belief that relatively few non-Chinese people are proficient in Chinese. Le also stated that the integrative motivation of the students in this study was higher than students learning more commonly taught languages because a majority of participants indicated that they desired to have Chinese friends and understand Chinese culture.

Le reported that the levels of anxiety reported in this study were higher than in any other study of other foreign language learners using FLCAS, which are attributed to the status of Chinese as a less commonly taught language, as well as to cultural differences. Although several factors that students indicated as contributing to their anxiety are identified, they were not explored in any substantive manner. Participants were categorized by racial or ethnic background, as was the data analysis, which indicates that these categories may somehow explain or correlate with the findings, but this is not discussed in the study. However, by identifying several factors that contribute to student anxiety in studying Chinese, this study provides an excellent starting point for further research.

Two other studies that examined American students studying in China by Kubler (1997) and Hayden (1998) argue that study abroad is vital to learners' language development and should therefore be an integral part of any CAL program. Kubler made suggestions for how study abroad experiences should be approached in terms of length of stay, location, and type of instruction, but considers affective factors only superficially and does not discuss the potential impact of students' different cultural or racial backgrounds on the outcomes of their study abroad program. He places considerable emphasis on the students themselves, urging them to remain open to learning, to seek out as many speaking opportunities as possible, and to avoid socializing with other foreigners. While this is useful advice, it does fail to address those factors that could

potentially inhibit students from exercising this type of open attitude, such as their perceived

positioning in relation to native speakers of Chinese. It also assumes that they have the agency to

act in this manner (Norton Peirce, 1995). Hayden's study examined the impact of a semester

abroad on students' reading ability, and concluded that the group under investigation did

improve slightly over the course of the study. He was quick to problematize the methodology

and outcomes of his study, however, noting the multitude of factors that could have contributed

to its improvement. Like Kubler, he considered study abroad to be an important component of

students' CAL experiences.

A study by Tseng (2006) that compared the learning outcomes in a domestic and study

abroad program found that there was not a very significant difference in the outcomes by

learners in the different contexts, thus arguing that a domestic program can be just as effective as

study abroad if it is properly executed. Tseng highlighted the "surprising" case of one study

abroad learner whose parents were both Mandarin speakers, noting that this student lost

confidence in her abilities over the course of the program and did not develop her proficiency to

the same degree as other students. The student said she felt embarrassed at her weak skills

because she was expected to be proficient, given her physical appearance. Tseng contrasted this

with the Asian American students in the domestic program, noting that they did not encounter

such an "identity dilemma," and were therefore able to proceed in their language learning

unencumbered by what Tseng referred to as a "psychological or attitudinal problem." (p. 71). By

making this comparison, Tseng implied that domestic programs may be more beneficial for

heritage students because they will not encounter the identity difficulties that they would face in

China. Unfortunately, this paper placed responsibility entirely on the student, instead of

interrogating the power relations that shaped the student's so-called identity dilemma.

2.3.2 CAL in a Domestic Context

Chao (1998) and Samimy and Lee (1997) both looked at the impact of attitudes on the success of students learning Chinese. Chao followed two students, David and Karen, in a Chinese immersion summer camp held in the United States, where students were required to sign a contract promising that they would only speak Chinese. Chao concluded that the two students' drastically different attitudes towards what was required of them at the camp led to different language learning outcomes. David took a combative attitude, resenting his inability to talk about complex subjects and resisting his identity as a new speaker with limited proficiency. He did not want to speak about what he deemed to be "trivial" topics such as movies and fashion, but felt frustrated when he realized he could not express himself competently when speaking about topics such as Chinese philosophy. Even eating meals with other students became difficult, as the pressure to speak only Chinese was overwhelming. Eventually, David purposely took on the identity of a "bad student" (p. 4), intentionally missing class and not completing assignments. In contrast, Karen embraced the environment of the camp, reveling in the opportunity to speak Chinese and participating in as many extracurricular activities as possible. This engagement, along with her ability to, as she puts it, "tolerate the simplicity of my Chinese" (p. 5) allowed her to progress much further in Chinese than Daniel.

Chao concluded that ultimately a learner's degree of success depends upon his or her attitude, as well as on an "accurate" understanding of the learning environment: "a learner with a better grasp of how to learn a language may succeed in a trying situation, whereas one who holds erroneous beliefs about language learning reduces the likelihood of attaining true language ability" (p. 13). While this may be true, the learning environment in this study was a simulation of a Chinese-speaking context, and thus rather contrived. As such, it may not reflect how Karen

and Daniel would act and feel on a study abroad trip to China, for instance. Karen may have felt quite differently about her rudimentary grasp of Chinese if she was in everyday contact with speakers of strongly accented Chinese, or if she was forced out of a familiar American context and found herself negotiating cultural and racial differences while also attempting to learn a new language. Thus, while Chao's study offered an interesting case study and demonstrated the relationship between attitudes and language learning outcomes, a similar study carried out in a Chinese context may provide greater insight into other factors which impact affect and attitude, such as race.

Samimy and Lee (1997) set out to discover whether there was a correspondence between learners' and instructors' beliefs about learning Chinese as a foreign language, as well as the relationship between these beliefs and language acquisition. The authors concluded that students and instructors agree on the majority of statements about language use, for example that Chinese is a "difficult" or "very difficult" language to learn (p. 47). Given that this study was carried out in the foreign language context of the United States, students' understanding of the integrative and instrumental value of their language proficiency may be quite different from that of students studying in China. Students who are constantly complimented on their physical appearance, for example (as in the Kasper and Zhang study), may question how their physical appearance could impact their potential integration into the society, especially if their learning is driven by integrative motivation. Similarly, if learners, as obvious foreigners, are held to different linguistic standards than native speakers, the instrumental value of knowing Chinese may drastically decrease.

In this section I have reviewed some studies focusing on affective factors in CAL, argued for their value to the field, and identified a lack of direct treatment of race in the literature. The current study seeks to explicitly address this gap in the literature.

2.4 Key Terms and Theoretical Concepts

In this section, I describe my understandings of the key theoretical concepts I use to analyze my findings in Chapter 4: *racial identity*, *Whiteness*, *identity*, *agency*, *social context*, *sojourner*, and *privileged marginalization*.

2.4.1 Racial Identity and Whiteness

As the major identity category under examination, I consider race to be a social construct that is discursively created, continuously in flux, and context-embedded. As Kubota and Lin (2009) state, "racialization [the process of racial categorization] produces and legitimates differences among social groups based on perceived biological characteristics, yet it is a dynamic and historically situated process in which racial significations are always shifting" (p. 5). Dikötter (1992) explains that "these biological differences do not of themselves induce cultural differences, but are utilized to legitimize role expectations: physical features are given social meaning" (p. viii). Often, individuals' physical characteristics, such as their race, are ascribed meanings that signify that they belong to particular groups that behave in certain predetermined ways.

Nakayama and Martin (1999) argue that "Whiteness, like other social identities, is productively understood as a communication phenomenon" (p. viii). Based on this understanding, race should not be considered a fixed category that signifies something concrete about an individual. Rather, it should be understood as an identity category that is produced and reaffirmed by dominant societal discourses, as well as in everyday interactions.

Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) investigates the construct of Whiteness within Western society and how "Whiteness exerts its power as an invisible and unmarked norm against which all Others are racially and culturally defined, marked, and made inferior" (Kubota & Lin, 2009, p. 10). The unmarked nature of Whiteness in Western society means that "as a social construction, Whiteness gains its meaning from its encounters with nonwhiteness" (Nakayama & Martin, 1999, p. vii). Roman (1993) illustrates the invisibility of White in Western societies with the seemingly simple statement that "White is a color!" (p. 71). She points out that the term "people of color" is "ambivalent and oxymoronic," as it serves to confirm the status of White as an unmarked norm, and that "it can be used to imply that Whites are *colorless*, and hence without racial subjectivities, interests, and privileges" (p. 71). Obviously, the very fact that White people are often unaware of their racialized position in society is in itself a racial privilege that must be addressed.

While CWS is a useful means of critically examining the role of Whiteness in a society in which it is unmarked, it falls short when it moves into an environment in which Whiteness is very marked. While in the Western context the unmarked nature of Whiteness is what endows it with power, in China Whiteness draws its power from its status as a marked category. It is for this reason that studies such as this one are necessary, in order to provide new perspectives on how Whiteness functions in non-White-dominant contexts.

Because I take race, and Whiteness in particular, as the main construct under consideration in this study, I use the term White (i.e. capitalized), in order to refer to this as an identity category.

2.4.2 Identity

As Block (2003) explains, as part of the "social turn" in SLA, the field has shifted from examinations of cognitive factors in language acquisition towards research with a focus on social and cultural issues. Much of this research has been driven by poststructural explorations of identity. This poststructural approach moves away from traditional understandings of identity as a fixed category determined by cultural and social influences, and instead seeks to understand identity as evolving and changing in different contexts. Understandings of identity in SLA have been heavily influenced by Norton Peirce (1995), who has demonstrated that when individuals learn a new language, they create imagined identities for themselves as members of imagined communities. These identities and communities are strongly shaped by power inequalities that exist, often invisibly, in societies.

Drawing on Norton's (1997; 2000) work, Varghese et al. (2005) identify three characteristics of identity which I applied to my analysis of the data:

> identity is not a fixed, stable, unitary, and internally coherent phenomenon but is multiple, shifting, and in conflict [. . .] identity is not context-free but is crucially related to social, cultural, and political context—interlocutors, institutional settings, and so on [. . .] identity is constructed, maintained, and negotiated to a significant extent through language and discourse. (pp. 22-23)

This understanding of identity is important in relation to issues of language acquisition because it allows for analysis of how an individual's identity changes when he or she moves between cultures.

2.4.3 Agency

Closely related to identity is the concept of agency, which has also been taken up in SLA research in recent years, particularly in relation to immigrant learners of English. Duff (forthcoming) identifies agency as an important factor in the acquisition of a second language, and defines agency as "people's ability to make choices, take control, self-regulate, and thereby pursue their goals as individuals leading, potentially, to personal or social transformation" (p. 6). In her discussion, Duff draws on Ahearn (2001), who argues that as research in linguistic anthropology and applied linguistics increasingly treats language as a form of social action that is socioculturally mediated, understandings of agency are becoming more vital than ever. It follows, then, that language learning is also a socially and culturally mediated act, and that the degree of agency a language learner exerts will directly impact the type of language learning he or she engages in, as well as the outcomes of that learning.

2.4.4 Social Context

Because the poststructuralist understanding of identity is so heavily based on examining how identities are shaped by the context in which they are embedded, it is important to understand that the identities of language learners must always be analyzed within the immediate and larger social context the language learner is participating in. Norton (1997) argues that when language learners speak "they are also constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world" (p. 410). Thus, language learning is never exclusively about the acquisition of grammatical and lexical knowledge, but is inevitably also about how a learner's proficiency in a language impacts their relationship with the target language community, and how that in turn impacts their identities as learners or users of that language.

Particularly relevant to the understanding of learners' experiences living, studying, and working in the target language community is Kelly's (2008) argument for a critical approach to understandings of intercultural relations. While he and others speak about *intercultural communication*, I prefer the term *intercultural interaction*, as I feel it is more inclusive of the various types of relations that occur when individuals move between cultures. Kelly argues that in order to understand the challenges of intercultural communication, we must move beyond an analysis of "cultural differences" and towards an understanding of how larger social and political contexts impact interactions between individuals of different cultures. Using his own experience as an example, Kelly demonstrates how an examination of American-Japanese relations, as opposed to comparing essentialized notions of American and Japanese culture, is invaluable in understanding why some Americans may behave with arrogance and disrespect while in certain Japanese contexts. Although he does not discuss the experiences of language learners specifically, his argument can be applied in language learning contexts.

Rampton (1991), in his discussion of the goals of cognitive SLA research, problematizes the desire to provide "generalizable" information about language acquisition by arguing for the importance of examining social factors:

> In seeking this generality, there is an implicit claim that social factors are secondary in language learning, and the ubiquity of the phrase "the learner" tacitly supports this view. The term does little to encourage examination of the socio-historical particularities which might impregnate efforts to come to grips with someone else's language. It bespeaks a deracinated, a-cultural non-entity, it invites no cross-reference to the class, race, and gender stratification which might interact to produce the cultural significance of learner

status and it suggests nothing of the way in which language learning might reflect and

feed into change in the social order. (p. 241)

What Rampton calls "social factors" includes social context and the interactions that occur

within those contexts. He urges researchers to consider the culture, race, class, and gender of

their participants, which includes the social contexts these identity categories operate in. He

argues that analyses that are devoid of contextualization not only provide incomplete profiles of

language learners, but may also result in incomplete analysis of the phenomenon under

examination. Finally, he implies that researchers even have an ethical obligation to socially

situate their data analysis and question how it may influence social patterns.

Siegal (1994) reflected the argument made by both Kelly and Rampton, arguing that

"learning a second language in the culture where it is spoken is a specific instance of cultural

contact. It is precisely the perception of the learning situation as an instance of cultural contact

which is shaped by a sociopolitical world. This is largely ignored in most language acquisition

theory and research" (p. 86). Here, learning is considered not just an intercultural interaction,

but also a sociopolitical interaction that will inevitably have sociopolitical consequences. That

this has been largely overlooked in SLA research is unfortunate, but opens opportunities for

studies such as mine to begin examining this topic.

2.4.5 The Sojourner

The concepts of identity, agency, and social context intersect to provide the basis of my

understanding of the notion of the sojourner. Sojourners can be understood as individuals who

travel to another country for a purpose other than exclusively leisure, but with an understanding

that they will return to their home country after a relatively short period of time has elapsed (Pitts,

2009; Siegal, 1994). While there is no set period of time that differentiates the sojourn from any

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other type of stay, sojourners typically do not anticipate staying in the country permanently, and certainly do not apply for citizenship.

Siegal's (1994) work highlighted the importance of her participants' status as sojourners, and how the short-term nature of their stay in Japan had a major impact on how they were perceived by their professors and peers, as well as how much they were willing to invest in language learning. In some cases, the women were considered to be less serious students because their time in Japan was limited. As Pitts (2009) pointed out, the reason for the increase in American students opting for short-term periods of study abroad is largely because it is affordable, easy to integrate into an academic course of study, and less intimidating than committing to a lengthy period of time in a new culture. An individual's identity as a sojourner can negatively impact language acquisition, as in the case of some of Seigal's participants. Conversely, the option to be a sojourner can provide students with new opportunities to interact with their target language.

The relative ease of the sojourner's experience stands in sharp contrast to the experience of certain other types of migrants, such as refugees or economic migrants. In the latter cases, individuals sometimes do not have the same options to leave and the nature of their investment in language learning may differ from that of sojourners. Directly related to the unique nature of a sojourner's experience in comparison with that of other types of migrants is the element of agency, as sojourners by definition are able to choose when and where their journeys will take place.

2.4.6. Privileged Marginalization

This final guiding concept in my analysis is the notion of what Conceison (2004), referring specifically to White foreigners in China, calls the "privileged marginalized Other" or

the "*significant* Other" (p. 3). I refer to this phenomenon experienced by this particular group as *privileged marginalization*. Conceison argues that although many of the laws separating foreigners from locals in China have disappeared, "routine gestures of 'othering' remain intact" (p. 2).

Drawing from her own experience as a White researcher in China, she illustrates the recurring incidents of being pointed at by a child and called "*wàigúorén*"(foreigner) and compares them with Frantz Fanon's account of a White child looking at him and saying "Look, a Negro…Mama, see the Negro!" (p. 2). Conceison argues that both incidents result in "an 'othering' that triggers fragmentation, alienation, and objectification of the Self through the powerfully dominating gaze of the Other" (p.3). She is sensitive to her positioning in China and reflects:

> after all, how can one dare to compare the feelings of a contemporary Caucasian American female in China to those of a colonized African male in French Algeria? Isn't the latter's anger at such humiliation justified, while the former's is oversensitive and naïve, perhaps even hysterical? What about the fact that when a White American or European is "Othered" in China, it is as likely to be in the form of being pushed to the *front* of the line as to the back, or that one's blonde hair is repeatedly touched and praised out of admiration and wonder rather than disdain? How can such innocuous humiliation be compared to that of Franz Fanon's? (p. 3)

What Conceison highlights here is the sense of guilt she feels as a foreigner in China when she examines her position in the larger social and global context. Without being sensitive to the larger context, she may simply, as an individual, feel anger at being singled out by another individual and feel fully justified. However, knowing that she comes to China from a position of

privilege, she feels that the anger may not be legitimate, especially in comparison to someone whose marginalization is the product of oppression and extreme injustice.   It is this important question of the relationship between privilege, marginalization, and language learning that I examine in this study.

2.5 Racial Discourses in China

In this section I move from a discussion of broader theoretical considerations to a brief description of the specific context of China, in order to demonstrate how discourses of race have developed historically in China, and how they function in contemporary Chinese society.

Dikötter (1997) argues that racial discourse in China is based not only upon discourses of difference, but also upon discourses of sameness. According to him, when faced with an outside invader, the highly stratified Chinese society banded together under the vanguard of race, claiming that all who lived within the borders of China were descendants of the same Yellow Emperor, and thus of the same blood and the same race. He also states that:

> Racialised identities are central, and not peripheral, to notions of identity in China: precisely because of the extreme diversity of religious practices, family structures, spoken languages and regional cultures of population groups that all define themselves as 'Chinese', ideologies of biological descent have emerged as powerful and cohesive forms of identity. (p. 32)

He and Guo (2000) counter the argument that racial identity is the foundation of national identity and nationalism in China, because according to them the so-called "yellow race" includes Japanese and Koreans as well. In any case, Whiteness is seen as a Western category of identity, and thus the Western Other is most often a White Other.

Some have argued that Whiteness, that is having paler than average skin, has always been held as a standard of beauty in China. Lee (1999) points to the use of the word "White" to indicate positive images, and the word "black" to indicate negative images. While some may perceive this to be proof of an inherent attitude embedded in language, one needs to look no further than English to see similar instances of such words, for example "black market." Schein (1994) discusses the significance of "the White woman" in post-Mao China, and her seemingly ubiquitous presence in all forms of media representing everything from sexual liberation to capitalism to democracy. Whiteness here, and in particular feminized Whiteness, is directly linked with consumerism and the desire for Western products.

This is not to say that discourses of race appeared in China only after the death of Mao; Dikötter (1992) argues that racial consciousness existed in China long before Europeans arrived in the 19th century. While clashes between China and the West are often framed as cultural misunderstanding, Dikötter argues that "cultural intolerance towards the outsider in China was associated with a feeling of physical discontinuity" (p. 6). Many of the early terms used to refer to foreigners were based on physical characteristics, for example "red-haired barbarians" and "blue-eyed barbarians." Besides being differentiated due to their physical appearance, Westerners were also dehumanized by being referred to as "devils," and this characterization of foreigners was even enshrined in official rhetoric until the late 1800s.

The relationship between China and the West continues to be an important topic of discussion, often framed by examination of larger global social and economic forces, especially given China's growth as an economic and political power, as Chapter 1 suggested. Many scholars highlight the "post-Mao era," which began with China's opening up in the early eighties, to be of particular importance as it signified a huge social change during which contact with the

West increased exponentially. Cai (2003) explains that the position of the West as both

aggressor and holder of progressive knowledge has complicated China's relationship with the

Other:

> Ever since its first defeat by a Western power in the 1840s, China has had an ambivalent
>
> and tumultuous relationship with the foreign Other that had very rudely imposed itself.
>
> […] The alien Other, as a result, was to be simultaneously admired and feared, emulated
>
> and contained. The complex attitude continued in the post-Mao era, when the rush to
>
> modernize and the influx of Western technologies, critical theories, social practices, and
>
> pop culture induced both appreciation and apprehension of the West. The problem of how
>
> to configure the foreign Other in relation to the Chinese self therefore continues to be a
>
> subject of intellectual speculation. (p. 108)

Following Kelly's (2008) argument outlined above, the ambivalent attitudes towards the West on

a societal level will also impact feelings and thoughts of individuals. Thus, Westerners moving

into a Chinese context may be considered representatives of Western culture, particularly in

smaller or more rural cities where there are few foreigners. As Cai makes clear, these larger

political and economic forces inevitably influence individuals' perception of foreigners. Brady

(2006) observes that even in contemporary China foreigners' treatment by ordinary Chinese

people is based on an awareness of their "hyperpolitical status" (p. 3). While the treatment of

foreigners is not explicitly taught, Brady argues that people have a general awareness that they

should keep a distance between themselves and foreigners.

One drawback of much of the literature dealing with Chinese foreign relations is that it

either focuses on China's relationship with the United States, or it treats "the West" as a

homogenous entity and ignores national differences altogether. Although White foreigners in

China are often treated the same regardless of their nationality, major international incidents may result in a foregrounding of nationality. DeWoskin (2005) provides an example of this when she reports lying to a taxi driver about her nationality after the NATO bombings of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade because of the resulting anger towards Americans. "White" may be a useful categorization for a certain level of theorization, but the foregrounding of race by both Western and Chinese scholars is indicative of its power to subordinate other individual characteristics, including ethnicity and nationality.

The "West," like the "East" or the "Orient," is often treated as a concrete place, but in fact is similar to the notions of identity and race in that it is constructed and shaped by social context and the imagination. Drawing on Said's (1978) seminal work on Orientalism, Stanley (2009) writes that "The West and the Orient are fictions constructed and used in identity work, often to create a coherent Other as a foil against whom to define the Self" (p. 4). In her study of foreign oral English teachers in Shanghai, Stanley (2009) highlights the performative nature of the teachers' position in China. Many of the teachers noted that they were expected to be "fun," and to entertain their students as much as actually teach them English. While Stanley does not attribute this attitude to a perception of racial difference, many of the teachers' comments point to their feelings of being treated as racialized beings. Some issues they discussed included the conflation of "being White" with "being American," as well as feeling as though one is an animal at the zoo. Stanley also demonstrates that many Chinese students' beliefs about how their foreign teachers should act are based on perceptions of the West that are gleaned from Western pop culture. Expectations of foreign teachers include that their classes should be fun, full of playing games, casual, non-academic, and that teachers should be funny and entertaining.

This expectation is not unique to China, as Duff and Uchida (1997) showed in their study of EFL teachers in Japan, in which one of the participants very consciously and successfully modeled his teaching on the teasing style of David Letterman. Duff and Uchida also show how these expectations can pressure other teachers into being more "fun" by integrating more American pop culture into their classes, even when they feel uncomfortable with this style of teaching. Also, it can lead to conflict with non-Western teachers, as they are then considered to be boring in comparison with their Western colleagues.

Interestingly, Stanley argues against a conflation of "Western" with "White," claiming that even the non-White participants of Asian descent in her study were "sufficiently Western" (p. 4), meaning that they were considered by Chinese people to be non-Chinese. This "Westernness" is based on stereotypical characteristics such as displaying self-confidence, having little knowledge of Chinese, and having relationships mainly with other Westerners. However, later one Chinese-Canadian teacher explains that the reason he "performs foreignness" is that he feels he must "prove" that he is Western, and therefore a legitimate foreign teacher, despite the fact that he looks Chinese. He even states that "once they accept you as *lǎowài* you can be knowledgeable" (pp. 13-14). Here, in order to compensate for his non-Whiteness, the teacher feels that he must purposefully and distinctly perform his Western characteristics, which White teachers are assumed to already possess. While Stanley's study focuses on language teachers rather than language students, it demonstrates the importance of understanding how foreigners are perceived in China, and how this perception influences their expected behavior and, in turn, on their role and identity.

2.6 Summary

     In this chapter I have reviewed some of the research on race and language learning in SLA generally, followed by a discussion of CAL research dealing with social, affective, and attitudinal factors. I then defined and explained the key terms and theoretical constructs that underpin the analysis of my data. Finally, I contextualized contemporary racial discourses in China through a brief discussion of historical relations between China and the West. In the following chapter I will explain the methodology of the study and introduce my participants.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology of the study. I first offer a description and rationale for my research design. I describe the process of recruitment and criteria for inclusion of participants in the study, and introduce my participants. Next, I explain how I conducted my interviews, discussing my theoretical approach to the interviews, as well as generalizability, validity, and ethical considerations. I then discuss my data collection methods and explain how I undertook the transcription and analysis of my data. Finally, I examine my positioning as a researcher in relation to this study.

3.2 Research Design

The research design for this study was an exploratory, qualitative, multiple case study. It took place at a Canadian university over the span of two months. The study is exploratory because its purpose is to contribute to an under-researched field of study by generating new research questions and offering new perspectives on broader theoretical issues related to race in language learning (Duff, 2008).

The data were collected through one-hour long, English-language interviews with five research participants. I chose to conduct interviews in order to engage in open dialogue with my participants, something that is more difficult to achieve through other means of data collection such as surveys or questionnaires. The focused nature of interviews also allowed me to explore a very specific topic: race in CAL. Direct observations or follow-up work with participants who later returned to Chinese-speaking communities would have been desirable, but were beyond the scope of the project.

Yin (2003) identifies four weaknesses of interviews as data sources: the potential for poorly constructed questions; bias in participants' responses; inaccurate responses due to flawed memory on the part of interviewees; and the possibility that interviewees will structure their responses to fit what they believe the researcher hopes to hear. I addressed the first concern by asking for feedback on my interview protocol from my committee members, who offered their advice to me as experienced researchers. Conducting a pilot interview also helped me to judge the construction of my questions. The last three concerns deal with the highly situated and socially constructed nature of the interview process. Although I led the interviews and asked specific questions, the truthfulness, accuracy, or focus of participants' responses were largely beyond my control, and therefore I can only address these concerns through my approach to data analysis, which I discuss below.

3.3 Case Sampling

3.3.1 Criteria for Inclusion in the Study

Participants were required to meet three basic requirements, which I explain below.

3.3.1.1 Race: Self-identification as "White"

Although "foreigners" and those called *lǎowài* in China are not exclusively White, I chose to focus on people who identify as "White" or "Caucasian" in order to explore their particular racialized experience. I do not mean to suggest that all people who identify as White have similar experiences; as others (e.g., Kubota & Lin, 2009) have pointed out, race intersects with countless other identity categories, including gender, class, and sexual orientation. However, given that Whiteness is accorded unique status in China (see Chapter 2), I felt that it was appropriate for this study to have a limited focus on people who identified as White. It was beyond the scope of this study to do a comparison of the experiences of people of different races

who have lived and studied Chinese in China. Those born in North America of Asian descent were also excluded from the study because although they are certainly foreigners in China, their appearance leads to an entirely different range of experiences and expectations than White foreigners, as I have witnessed in my own experience and is corroborated in other studies (e.g., Le, 2007). My recruitment letter (Appendix A) stated that participants "must self-identify as Caucasians." I did not stipulate a particular first language or ethnic background, although four of the five participants were North Americans with English as a first language.

The fifth participant, Atticus, informed me during the interview that as a Jewish Israeli he does not always identify as White, although he did volunteer to participate in the study based on the criteria outlined in the recruitment letter.   His participation in the study pointed to the problematic approach I had initially taken to the concept of race. Although I attempted to explore my participants' identities and experiences as racialized beings in both Chinese and Chinese-learning contexts, I failed to explore their understandings of themselves as racialized beings in the North American context, or in any other location in which they may have lived.

3.3.1.2 Previous Chinese Language Study in China

I required that my participants had at some point engaged in "active language study in China." By this I did not necessarily mean taking formal classes, but simply that part of what they did in China was study Chinese, whether in classes, with tutors, or purely naturalistically. This requirement was in place because of my goal to investigate the relationship between race and language learning during sojourns in China. All of my participants had gone to China with different goals, but each had engaged in at least one month of formal classroom learning. I also did not specify a minimum period of time spent in China, although each participant's total time of residence in China exceeded one year.

By "China" I exclude Taiwan, which I acknowledge to be a politically sensitive decision. I do this because as I have learned through talking with people who have lived in Taiwan, their experiences differ considerably from those in China, in part due to the amount of contact and exchange between Taiwan and Western countries during the 20th century. It would be fascinating to conduct a study comparing language learning in Mainland China and Taiwan but, again, it was outside the scope of this project and including students who had studied in Taiwan would have added a complicating factor to my already complex group of participants. As I discuss below, I did make the mistake of not excluding students who had studied Mandarin in Hong Kong, where the term *lǎowài* is not heard, and which has a much longer history of contact with foreigners. Therefore, one participant's experience is different in this regard, a fact that is noted in my discussion of the data.

3.3.1.3 Chinese Proficiency

Participants were required to be at an "intermediate to advanced" level of proficiency in Chinese, by their own assessment. This was not meant to be an exclusionary factor, but only meant to reflect that individuals were invested in their language learning, had spent some time and effort on studying, and were likely still involved with the Chinese language in some way. Participants were not tested prior to the interview, and therefore their level was entirely self-assessed. Two of the participants, Leo and Ted, expressed concern that they would not be appropriate for the study because they felt their Chinese level was not high enough. After I explained that I was more interested in their experiences rather than their actual linguistic ability, they both agreed to participate.

Because recruitment was conducted mostly in the Chinese language program in a local university, all participants used Chinese and were connected to Chinese contexts in their

professional, personal, and academic lives. All participants were engaged in higher education

and most were still involved in academic programs at the undergraduate or graduate level.

Although this was not initially one of my requirements, it did result in all participants having a

strong commitment to both the Chinese language and to their continuing education more

generally. Otherwise, my requirements for inclusion were quite relaxed and this resulted in a

highly diverse group of people with regard to age, occupation, interests, and time spent in China.

I do not see this heterogeneity as a limitation; rather, I feel that it reflects the diverse nature of

people engaged in the study of CAL.

3.3.2 Participants

3.3.2.1 Recruitment

Participants were initially recruited with the assistance of a professor at a Canadian

university who offered to circulate my recruitment letter to individual students who matched my

criteria. The letter was not sent to every student in the program, nor was it posted anywhere,

primarily because of the sensitivity of the topic: i.e., experiences of race and racialization. I had

originally intended to personally make recruitment pitches in classrooms, but was advised

against doing so because my primary criterion for participation was race (being a White learner

of Chinese), and a public recruitment pitch that excluded people on the basis of race might be

considered insensitive and exclusionary. However, this initial recruitment strategy yielded only

two participants. Afterwards, I approached people who were recommended to me by other

professors and who had expressed interest in my project, sending them an introductory email

message and the recruitment letter.

As mentioned earlier, I had initially conducted a pilot interview in order to assess the

appropriateness of my questions and gauge the timing of the interview. A colleague of mine,

Leo, agreed to help me with the pilot interview. With his permission, I later decided to include Leo's interview in my data analysis. This was done because I was unable to find more participants, and because Leo had provided me with very rich accounts of his experiences that were particularly relevant to the main theme of my thesis, and which I had not originally anticipated.

3.3.2.2 Participant Profiles

In this section I provide a brief description of each of the five participants (see Table 3.1) in terms of demographic information, their prior history with Chinese language study, and their residence in China or in another Chinese-speaking region. Table 3.2 summarizes how participants viewed their own Chinese proficiency based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) scale (Appendix B). Participants are listed in alphabetical order.

Table 3.1: Participant Profiles

Participant	Age	Time Spent in China	Activity in China
Amber	23	1 year	language study
Atticus	30	1 year	language study
Lao Wang	60	indeterminate; 8 times, between 2 weeks to 3 months each	language study, teaching English, traveling, working
Leo	29	2 years	teaching English
Ted	46	14 years	teaching English

Table 3.2: Participants' Self-Reported CEFR Scores

Participant	Listening	Reading	Spoken Interaction	Written Interaction	Spoken Production	Written Production
Amber	B1	A2	A2	B2	B2	B2
Atticus	B1	C1	B2	A2	B1	A2
Lao Wang	B1	B1	B1	B1	B1	B1
Leo	A2	A2	A2	A2	A2	A2
Ted	B1	A1	B2	A1	B1	A1

Amber

Amber was a 23-year-old female student completing a BA in Asian Studies at a large Canadian university. She spent one year in Hong Kong on an exchange through a Canadian university, during which her goal was to improve her proficiency in Mandarin while also studying Cantonese. At the time of the study, she had been studying Chinese for approximately three years, and was taking an advanced university Chinese course that focused on speaking and writing skills. Amber's Chinese learning was directly related to her professional goals; she hoped to become a professor of Chinese mythology, and was thus focusing on developing her reading ability.

Atticus

Atticus was a 30 year-old Jewish Israeli who had settled in Canada. He began studying Chinese approximately nine years prior to the study at a Canadian university. He spent a summer at an intensive Chinese immersion program in the US, and then undertook a year of language study in Beijing. He held an MA in Chinese history and was considering returning to school for another MA or a PhD. At the time of the study, he was increasing his proficiency in Chinese with a specific focus on reading.

While Atticus responded to me through the recruitment letter which stated that participants were to "self-identify as Caucasian," during the interview he informed me that he did not always consider himself to be White. However, he stated that in China he was always considered to be White, regardless of whether or not he informed people that he was Jewish. For this reason, because I am focusing on participants' perceived status as White sojourners, I feel that Atticus's experiences can be examined from this perspective.

Lao Wang

Lao Wang (not Chinese, despite the pseudonym she chose) was a 60-year-old female, who was retired but still actively involved in her field. She had visited China several times, initially to tour, and later to take classes and teach to English. She had also traveled to China in a professional capacity to act as a representative of her organization and to share her expertise with Chinese colleagues. At the time of the study she was taking two advanced university Chinese courses focusing on speaking, reading, and writing.

Leo

Leo was a 29-year-old PhD student at a Canadian university. He lived in China for two years teaching English, and aside from a crash course for travelers before he left, had never undertaken formal classroom study of Chinese. Leo reported that he made efforts to learn as much as possible through his everyday communications and felt that he had learned a lot while in China. He was considering taking an intensive summer Chinese course, as he anticipated a need to read Chinese in order to conduct his research.

Ted

Ted was 46 years old at the time of the study. He had spent 14 years living and teaching English in China. He studied Mandarin for several months in China as part of his teaching program, but considered teaching to be his primary activity in China, and felt that his language learning had plateaued. His use of Chinese was primarily for everyday activities, and he reported that he made an effort to communicate in Chinese as much as possible. At the time of the study, he was working on a PhD at a Canadian university, and was preparing to return to China to continue teaching as well as to carry out research.

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 The Interviews

The interviews took place in a university research centre. When participants arrived, I introduced myself and asked them to read and sign the consent form (Appendix C). The interviews were audio-recorded using a portable digital recorder that was placed in the centre of the table. After I transcribed the interviews, I sent them to each participant to keep for their own records.

The interview began with participants placing themselves on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) scale (see Appendix B) with regards to speaking, listening, and written production. The CEFR is a method of self-assessment created by the Council of Europe that is gaining popularity as an assessment tool in North America and elsewhere (Council of Europe website, www.coe.int). It is comprised of a series of "can-do" statements that range across six levels of ability. Its purpose is to allow students a more positive way to demonstrate their language ability, and it counters traditional assessment tools that focus on what learners are not able to do. My use of the CEFR was not meant to be a diagnostic exercise or a detailed measure of participants' CAL abilities, but only to help me understand the abilities and communication goals of the participants as language learners. None of my participants were familiar with the CEFR before I introduced it to them.

The interviews lasted between 35 and 60 minutes and were divided into three sections (see Appendix D for interview protocol). First, I asked background questions about the duration and location(s) of their prior Chinese studies and motivations for learning Chinese. Next, I asked specific questions about participants' experiences in China, inquiring about positive and negative learning experiences, the types of friends they had, and the type of formal or informal Chinese

language study they had engaged in. I then asked questions specifically relating to the notions of

lǎowài and race. The questions relating to *lǎowài* included in what contexts they had heard the

term, how it made them feel, and how they reacted. Finally, I asked whether they felt their race

had any bearing on their experience and on their identity as Chinese speakers or learners.

The interviews were semi-structured; I had a list of questions that I asked each participant,

but I allowed the conversation to flow as naturally as possible. I asked for clarification on

certain points and allowed participants to follow tangents, particularly when they were relating

anecdotes. This follows Yin's (2003) suggestion that interviews in qualitative case studies be

approached as "guided conversations rather than structured inquiries" (p. 89), in which the

interviewer follows a predetermined interview protocol but asks additional questions as they are

required. The questions were asked in the same order in each interview. Because the interview

with Leo was initially a pilot interview, the questions I asked him were in a different order and

some were framed differently; however, the main themes discussed were the same as in

subsequent interviews.

3.4.1.1 Theory of the Interview

In approaching the interviews, I follow Talmy (2010) in recognizing the importance of

the interview as a social practice or co-construction rather than simply a research instrument.

This perspective encourages researchers to move beyond what Roulston (2009) calls a "neo-

positivist" conception of the interview as a uni-directional method of data collection in which the

researcher expects to approach the interview objectively. Both Talmy and Roulston argue for an

approach to conducting interviews that recognizes the interviewer's key role in the co-

construction of the interview, and that treats the answers given by participants as versions of the

truth, rather than as objective reports. In this way, the interview itself can become a topic under investigation, and foregrounds the position of the researcher in relation to the interviewee.

Although my primary objective was to do a thematic analysis of my data, I acknowledge the co-constructed nature of the interviews and my role in influencing the answers my questions elicited. As a novice researcher and first-time interviewer, I inevitably made several mistakes during the interviews, mainly interrupting or at times asking leading questions. For example, during the interview with Atticus, I provided the possible answer of "surprise" to my question about how people react to hearing him speak Chinese, instead of waiting for his own reply. Had he not been prompted by me his response may have been different. A discourse analytical approach to my data would have provided interesting insights into how my positioning and relationship to the participants was enacted during the interviews but was not the focus of this analysis.

Largely as a result of the social nature of interviews, the answers provided by participants must always be analyzed within their social context, and cannot be taken as objective truths. As Duff (2008) states, the interview "produces a version of truth, a snapshot of competence or of ideas elicited for a specific purpose in a particular space and time" (p. 133). For this reason, I have analyzed participants' responses by paying particular attention to their social context, and do not claim to draw any generalizeable conclusions from the data.

3.4.2 Generalizability and Limitations

Duff (2008) argues that "Most case study researchers do not hold generalizability to populations as an achievable or desired goal; on the contrary, they usually assume an inherent lack of generalizability" (p. 176). With only five participants, generalizability was certainly

never my goal, and by conducting an exploratory study I merely hope to contribute new perspectives by addressing issues of race in the context of emerging research literature in CAL.

Although my participants were diverse in their age, backgrounds, and activities in China, they were all invested in China, its culture, and its language, both professionally and personally. The manner in which I recruited participants (in a university setting, through professional connections) resulted in a somewhat homogenous group of learners, which may have resulted in them sharing a particular type of experience. Two were PhD students with a meta-awareness of second language acquisition issues, and two were students of East Asian studies with knowledge of the historically and politically situated nature of their learning. One was deeply connected to China for professional reasons. At the time of the study, they were all continuing to study Chinese and foresaw future travel to China. Thus, it is not surprising that they would demonstrate a sensitivity to their social position in China. Also, given that I focused on race as a primary category of investigation in this study, I largely ignored other factors such as gender and class. In the future, research conducted with participants who are more diverse would be fruitful, and I make suggestions for this research in Chapter 5.

One limitation of the study which resulted from an oversight on my part is that one participant, Amber, had spent her time studying in Hong Kong and went to China only as a traveler. She volunteered for the study because I failed to specify on the recruitment letter that I was seeking participants with experiences in Mainland China. Because of the unique history of Hong Kong in relation to its dealings with foreigners, the experience of a White sojourner in a former British Colony is likely to be different than his or her experience would be in China. While Amber used terms such as "Chinese people" and "Chinese communities" when she spoke about her experiences in Hong Kong, and seemed to conflate Hong Kong with China, her

experiences should be considered in a different light than the other participants. However, I did

not want to exclude Amber's data, because she shared so many interesting experiences and

opinions with me, and because I think that according to her perception, she was engaging in what

she considered to be "Chinese" communities while she was in Hong Kong.   In order to address

this difficulty, I have incorporated Amber's data into my discussion in Chapter 4, but each time it

appears I attempt to explain how it may be viewed as Hong Kong-specific or not.

3.4.3 Ethical Considerations

In recruiting participants, collecting my data, and reporting my results, I followed the

ethical guidelines outlined by my university. I submitted a proposal, which included copies of

the recruitment letter (Appendix A), consent form (Appendix C), and interview protocol

(Appendix D) to the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB). Because my participants

were adults and the study was deemed to pose minimal risks, my proposal was accepted for

expedited review and consequently approved (see Appendix E for approval certificate).

In order to help protect anonymity, participants were asked to choose pseudonyms and all

information pertaining to them was stored in password-protected files under these names. After

potential participants responded to my recruitment letter, I sent them a copy of the consent form

for their own records, set up an interview time, and asked them to choose a pseudonym. Prior to

each interview, participants signed the consent form. At the end of the interview, participants

were offered a $20 gift card to the university bookstore to compensate them for their time.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Transcription and Representation

I transcribed each interview myself using Express Scribe transcription software that

allowed me to slow the audio playback. As I engaged in a thematic analysis rather than a

discourse analysis of the interview itself, the transcriptions are relatively undetailed. I indicated

laughter, pauses, emphasis and self-corrections (see Appendix F for transcription symbols).

Representing the data in Chapter 4 presented a challenge for me, as I recognize that

including large chunks of interview data can be cumbersome and difficult to read or interpret.

Drawing on Bauman and Briggs (1990), Talmy (2010) explains that the process of transferring

speech into written text is a process of decontextualization, entextualization, and

recontextualization, in which the speech is taken out of the recorded conversation, encoded in a

written text, and then embedded within an analysis. Briggs (2007) emphasizes the power

researchers hold when they engage data in this process, and urges us to be sensitive to the proper

and respectful use of others' words.

Because I have the power to recontextualize the words of my participants, I feel that it is

important and necessary to include as much of the original data as possible. Especially in

relating seminal stories in their entirety, I hesitate to summarize what my participants said, and

hesitate even more to include only short quotes meant to be somehow representational of the

entire account. Again, this is because I feel that both summarizing and choosing stand-alone

quotes is already a process of analysis in itself. Although I am obviously offering my own

analysis of the data, I want the speakers to be represented as much as possible, and for the reader

to get as much of the context as they can.

3.5.2 Thematic Analysis

As Braun and Clarke (2006) point out, thematic analysis is widely used in qualitative

research yet suffers from a lack of clear definition, which may have a negative impact on the

quality of the research conducted. My thematic analysis was carried out from an inductive, data-

driven approach, in which I focused on attempting to explain or deconstruct the accounts my

participants shared with me, rather than trying to fit the data into pre-defined categories of responses, which would be more in line with a deductive approach. Naturally, however, I did have specific questions in mind when I began the research, and therefore initially focused on the theme of Othering through the use of the term *lǎowài*. During the process of transcribing and reading through the data, I began to notice other interesting themes that were shared across the participants' accounts, and shifted towards a more inductive analysis.

Braun and Clarke also differentiate between semantic-level and latent-level analyses. A semantic analysis focuses on surface-level themes, describing and analyzing what participants said, and then theorizing the data in relation to previous research. On the other hand, latent analysis examines the underlying factors that cause the semantic-level themes to take the particular shape that they do. Thus, latent thematic analysis encourages the researcher to move from description and interpretation of the data towards examining the underlying assumptions and ideologies that have influenced the surface themes. Braun and Clarke use the rather unflattering metaphor of a blob of jelly to illustrate their point: semantic analysis would describe the shape and features of the blob, while latent analysis would look inside the blob for objects that have resulted in its taking that particular shape. I have attempted this latter approach, and feel that beyond describing what my participants shared with me, I have theorized their answers in such a manner that offers an explanation for how underlying constructs, namely the status of the White sojourner in China, influence the construction of identities the participants engage in.

3.6 My Positioning

My own position as a White learner who has studied Chinese and lived in China was not only the impetus of the study, but greatly influenced the data collection and analysis. This work emerged out of my own personal experience as a White learner of Chinese, and was inspired by

the difficulties I encountered during my year of studying Mandarin in a small Chinese city the year before this research took place. I wanted to learn whether other White CAL learners had experiences similar to mine, and thus began my research with an exploration of the word *lǎowài*. My own reaction to the word was highly negative and I perceived it to be a derogatory expression that seemed to degrade me and cast me in the role of nothing more than a spectacle. Hearing from others in the study who took little or no offense at the word was shocking and fascinating to me, and I began to question how this difference in attitude might affect an individual's language acquisition. At the time that I was formulating my research topic, I was also involved in a narrative-based study of my own and other White learners' experiences of learning Mandarin in both China and Taiwan (Duff, Anderson, Ilnyckyj, Lester, Wang, & Yates, 2010). Through personal reflection and discussions with the members of the research team, in which questions of race and Othering were repeatedly cited, I arrived at the topic of my study.

In the interview data itself, the "in-group" nature of my relationship with the participants was very evident. Most participants did not know me prior to the interview, but assumed that I was also a learner of Chinese, and our co-membership in this community was often referenced. In particular, many participants code-switched in Chinese without translating the words into English, evidence that they acknowledged common knowledge. Leo and I established co-membership when, during his description of the "yuppie scene" in Shanghai, I stated with laughter "I know exactly what you're talking about." In-group membership was established more subtly in other interviews, as participants simply did not explain certain things to me, working under the assumption that I had similar experiences and did not require further explanation.

3.7 Summary

      In this chapter, I have explained how I collected my data, including my choice of methodology, case sampling, recruitment, ethical considerations, criteria for inclusion in the study, and participant profiles. I have also outlined how I conducted the interviews, my own positioning in the research, and how I carried out data analysis. In the next chapter, I will share my findings and discuss them in relation to both theory and existing literature.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the findings of my study and offer my analysis and interpretation of the collected data. I explore the experiences of my participants through an analysis of two themes that emerged from the data: the construction of the *conscientious sojourner* and the importance of *discordant knowledge* in participants' experiences. Both of these themes demonstrate the relationship between language learning and identity construction. In the final sections I then link this analysis to the theory and research discussed in Chapter 2.

4.2 Theme One: Constructing the Conscientious Sojourner

4.2.1 The Participants as Sojourners

Drawing on the definitions of agency discussed in Chapter 2, namely Duff's (forthcoming) emphasis on learners' "ability to make choices, take control [and] self-regulate" (p. 6), I begin the discussion of this theme by demonstrating that the participants in my study were all *sojourners* who possessed *agency*.

The short-term nature of most participants' stays (no longer than two years at one time except for Ted, whose case I discuss below), characterizes each participant as a sojourner. The agentive nature of their stays is most clearly reflected in the fact that no participant reported feeling compelled to live or travel in China by forces outside themselves. They all mentioned that they had chosen to go to China (or Hong Kong) of their own volition, arguably entirely for their own benefit in order to further their academic or professional careers. Most importantly, each of these people could have returned home at any time during their stay; work contracts and the cost of travel were likely the most pressing factors that kept them in China. It is this "safety net" that most differentiates the sojourner from the immigrant, refugee, or economic migrant, and

the agency that is facilitated by the safety net endows the sojourner in China with an inherent privilege.

Even Ted, whose 14-year stay in China and imminent return may be considered quite different from the experience of a typical sojourner, still spoke of his experiences from the perspective of a sojourner. His family's return to Canada was a direct result of his status as a sojourner: his daughters had been entirely educated in the Chinese system, but the advice of Chinese friends about the notoriously difficult Chinese exam system for university entrance convinced Ted and his wife to return to Canada for the sake of their children's education. Ted even stated that his friends urged them to leave China on the basis that Ted's children did not have to endure this difficult educational experience, whereas their own children had no choice. The ease with which Ted and his family were able to move between China and Canada is indicative of the sojourner's agency, and the improvement in the children's educational situation is an example of the privilege that that Ted felt resulted from his particular situation.

One's status as a sojourner in China did not always have positive results in terms of feelings of successful integration, however. When discussing the difficulty of "getting into" a Chinese community, Amber said that her friends explained to her that they usually did not want to befriend foreign students precisely because they were there only for a short period of time. Given the context of Hong Kong, these friends may have also been reacting to the historical presence of Westerners in Hong Kong, either out of resentment (because White Westerners colonized their home) or out of indifference (because White Westerners have been around for centuries and are not as exciting a novelty as they are in China). This resistance to investing time and effort in developing friendships with people who are unlikely to ever treat Hong Kong (or China) as a home may have a negative impact on learners' access to Chinese-speaking

communities. Conversely, it may motivate some people to put more effort into demonstrating their genuine interest in connecting with people.

4.2.2 Sojourner Status and Belonging

For the sojourners in this study, the primary intention of living in the target language society was not necessarily to ensure integration. This attitude is reflected in the participants' varied responses to my question "How important is it for you to be a part of Chinese society?" Regardless of how they answered the question, all participants highlighted that they believed it was impossible, and in some cases undesirable, for them to belong in a Chinese society.

Atticus laughed aloud at the question, and immediately stated that he had never thought about being a part of Chinese society "because I know it's clear for me that you know I'm not - I'm not Chinese." This statement is noteworthy for someone who had devoted so much time to the study of its language, and had achieved such high proficiency in it. This suggests that his motivation was perhaps more instrumental than integrative (following Gardner 2001). Although this in itself might not be surprising given that his learning of Chinese was driven by academic interests, his attitude towards belonging to Chinese society was entirely based upon the fact that he was "not Chinese." This is especially interesting in light of the fact that Atticus was an immigrant to Canada and had by all appearances integrated into Canadian society, making Canada his home. Not "being Chinese" then must be a matter that stretches beyond the logistical consideration of passports and documentation, and hints at the importance of race or ethnicity. Atticus equated belonging to Chinese society with "being Chinese," and thus implicitly identified race and ethnicity as a factor. He later stated that he would like to live and work in China again for a period of time, and so clearly he considered the possibility of participating in Chinese society without really "belonging" to it.

As opposed to Atticus, Amber immediately answered "extremely important." She characterized "belonging" to Chinese society as having very close-knit friendships in which people will do whatever is necessary to help another person. However, she also felt that "it's really difficult to get into that [Chinese society]." At the end of the interview she said "I don't think that Chinese people are ready for like White people to integrate into their society," making an explicit connection between her race and her difficulty in entering Chinese society. Again, this difficulty can be explained as simply resulting from the colonial presence of the White British in Hong Kong, but it is important to note the extent to which this perception affected Amber: because she felt that it was so difficult for her to relate to modern China, she chose to study ancient Chinese folklore.

Amber introduced a tension that is evident in the responses of the other participants as well: she desired to belong to Chinese society, but she felt it might be impossible. In particular, Ted reiterated this sentiment when he stated that while it was important for him to be a part of a Chinese community, "it took me a while to actually accept that you know I could— I could live out the rest of my life here and always be a *lǎowài* um because that made the whole thing in some ways seem rather futile." It is interesting that Ted described this futility despite the length of time he had spent in China.

Both Leo and Lao Wang highlighted the importance of their professional identity in China, rather than addressing the question of whether or not they could ever belong in China. Lao Wang spoke about the importance of "building bridges" with China in order to be successful in her work there, and that it was vital to "get to know China" in order to achieve this goal. Leo stated that:

I wanted to have- I was really intentional about having a _professional_ identity. I did not

want to be seen as somebody who came to China to dick around and or travel and oh by

the way I'm teaching on the side. I _really_ wanted people to know that teaching was my

profession […] I really wanted to be seen as like an _equal_ with my colleagues.

Thus, by foregrounding their professional identities, Leo and Lao Wang avoided the question of

whether or not they could belong to a wider Chinese-speaking society, but emphasized that they

desired to belong to a particular community in a professional capacity.

Participants' initial motivations for going to China, as well as their perceptions of how

they fit into Chinese society, highlight the role of agency and autonomy in their experiences as

sojourners. Whether they thought it was impossible to belong to the society, or whether they felt

it was only possible in a professional role, they had the ability to choose whether or not to try to

belong, to return again, and to make Chinese part of their lives. These are the choices that

characterized them as sojourners.

4.2.3 Sojourner Status and Perceptions of Difference

All the participants reported feeling that that had been treated differently than Chinese

people during their time in China, and that they were often treated better, a sentiment that falls in

line with Conceison's (2004) concept of privileged marginalization. Atticus expressed some

discomfort at this treatment when he said "they treat foreigners very nicely and give a lot of

respect - but maybe they treat you _too_ nicely (.) maybe they treat you better than they should,"

reflecting some of the feelings of guilt conveyed by Conceison. However, participants did not

always view this differential treatment as a problem, an attitude that seems to arise from the fact

that they approached the question of belonging to Chinese society as an impossibility, as I

reported in the previous section. Participants expressed this position either by emphasizing the importance of personal relationships, or by approaching difference as an inevitability.

Ted stated that if he was called *lǎowài* by someone he knew he would never see again, it tended to not bother him. Some of his close friends would refer to him as *lǎowài*, but he felt that they meant it in a neutral way and believed they would have been appalled if they thought it offended him. Both Ted and Leo stated that sometimes their responses depended on the tone of the exchange; if they were clearly being mocked, it bothered them, but if it reflected simple curiosity it was usually inoffensive. Leo conveyed the general feelings of the participants by saying "I never saw it as negative and I never felt like anybody who said it to me was saying it because they were like trying to be <u>mean</u> to me."

For some, being treated differently was considered simply a fact of life, a sentiment most evocatively expressed by Lao Wang. When I asked her how she felt about being a foreigner, she replied:

> I think it's actually- I think it's just a <u>scream</u>[2] you know (.) because you know (.) there's two kinds of people (.) there's Chinese people and there's foreigners and you know that's the way it is. […] You know <u>whoa</u> we look different you know and we uh we are. […] And you know for people on the street it's really just (.) you know I'm in a sort of like 'holy cow' you know 'there's an elephant over there' you know it's just something unusual.

For Lao Wang, not only was being different not problematic, but she also made an explicit link between "looking different" and "being different." She argued that it was completely expected that someone would treat her differently because she was a novelty, just as an elephant would be within a particular context.

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[2] By "it's just a scream," Lao Wang means that the experience is highly enjoyable.

The differential treatment participants received was a result of their race; being called *lǎowài* and being stared at like an animal (elephant) are phenomena based on physical appearance. Drawing on Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) and the notion that Whiteness draws its meaning from contact with non-Whiteness, *lǎowài* can be considered a manifestation of how Whiteness becomes highly marked (rather than unmarked) in a non-White dominant context. Participants' reaction to this word and its connotations, namely shrugging it off as an unavoidable occurrence or disregarding it if it had no immediate impact on personal relationships, is an example of how the White sojourner's privilege operates in non-White dominant contexts. Because there was not a lot at stake for these sojourners (aside from Ted, they were not planning on staying long and building a life in China), they had the privilege of disregarding, but still benefiting from, the racialized, differential treatment they received. In the following sections, I show how the participants chose to construct identities in response to the privileged position they occupied in China.

4.2.4 The Conscientious Sojourner: Respectful Engagement

Having shown that the participants were beneficiaries of the sojourner's privilege, I now move to an explanation of how they sometimes countered this privilege through the construction of their identities as conscientious sojourners, that is, visitors to China who strived to involve themselves in a respectful manner (i.e. in contrast to the American "*gaijin* smash" students discussed in Chapter 2). I use the word *involvement* to refer to the participants' activity in China because although they desired to participate in Chinese society to a certain degree, their goal was not to fully integrate or acculturate (either because they did not want to, or because they deemed it impossible).

4.2.4.1 The Conscientious Sojourner and Cultural Viability

Regardless of their perceptions of belonging in China, all participants spoke of their pursuit of cultural viability, an important characteristic of the conscientious sojourner. When I asked participants to share a positive experience they had while in China, each of the experiences they reported on fell into one of three categories: making a friend with a local person, having a "normal conversation" in Chinese, or "successfully" completing an everyday task. These three goals all reflected a desire to be involved in the community, rather than to simply exist as a privileged sojourner who does not even make an effort to learn the language and build relationships.

Atticus spoke of being able to have conversations with construction workers, talk about "serious issues" with local university students, and understand lectures delivered in Chinese. While talking with construction workers shows a desire to interact with everyday Chinese people, the latter two examples show Atticus' desire to be part of a Chinese academic community. When I asked him how he felt after being able to understand a Chinese lecture he said he felt that "I understand the culture or I can- or maybe not understand but I can <u>benefit</u> from it I can <u>live</u> within this culture." He stressed that while he was not be able to "understand" everything about the culture, his ability to understand the language was of benefit to him, and showed that he could live in and be involved in the culture, however temporarily.

Similarly, Leo classified positive experiences in a general way as "it's usually things- I mean where I was able to complete some really mundane task but I was able to do it the right way." Leo highlighted the everyday nature of tasks such as buying train tickets, but emphasized the importance of carrying out these tasks properly. By "the right way" he meant what he understood to be the culturally appropriate manner, something which takes time and experience

to learn. This social success is not only a reflection of linguistic capability, but also cultural competence. The desire to complete a "mundane" task reflects the importance of being independent in a new context and being able to live in a manner similar to adults of the target community.

Lao Wang shared a story of meeting a woman who was of a similar age and also retired, and being able to converse with her in Chinese.   She said "it was great because that's exactly what I wanted to be able to do is have little conversations like that." Lao Wang also mentioned that although the woman could speak some English, they only ever conversed in Chinese. This ability to connect with a peer through "little conversations" made Lao Wang feel "terrific."

When asked about negative experiences, participants invariably shared stories of being laughed at, being cheated, or being unable to complete an everyday task. In fact, Leo said he considered himself to be successful whenever he managed to complete a task he had failed to accomplish in the past. However, he stated:

> At first the negative experiences were more like I was afraid people were saying bad things about me because (.) I felt like every time I went out people were pointing and staring and like making fun of me. Once I got over that then it was more about not being able to do the things that I wanted to do in my like everyday life or occasionally like being afraid that I got cheated because I didn't understand what was going on or something like that.

This reflection is significant because it shows a development in Leo's own awareness of himself as a participant in the community. He shifted from feeling singled out because of his physical appearance to feeling frustrated at being unable to accomplish simple tasks.

Ted had difficulty thinking of negative language learning experiences on the spot, but he did share a time when he was at an English Corner[3] and was asked what he did over the summer holidays. When he answered that he had traveled to Beijing, students asked him where that was and:

> I kept repeating it over and over again and finally I just said well- I didn't I- I kinda felt like they were putting me on because it just seemed so ludicrous to me so I said 'oh well it's the capital of your country for goodness sake' and they said 'oh- oh- oh you mean Beijing ((putting emphasis on tones)) and so then I thought well these tones really are important ((laughter)).

This story expresses Ted's frustration at feeling made fun of, but also displays an epiphany as he realized the importance of tones. Both feelings, the emotional desire to not be teased, and the intellectual desire to be understood, reflect a greater desire to be included in a local (Chinese) community.

What these positive and negative stories suggest is that feeling accomplishment or failure in relation to language learning was often tied to learners' feelings of their own viability as independent, competent and accepted members of the target society. This is nothing unique, but does indicate that the participants were actively engaged in language learning.

4.2.4.2 The Conscientious Sojourner: Not an "Ugly American"

Often, the identity of the conscientious sojourner was developed by participants comparing themselves against other foreigners who, from their perspective, failed to challenge the stereotype of White Westerners in China. This theme was developed by Ted and Leo, who both referred to the "ugly American stereotype" and compared themselves against it. Ted gave

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[3] An "English Corner" is a space, such as an area in a public park, where students gather to practice their conversational English. Every university holds English Corners and often recruits foreigners to attend as native speaker models.

an extended account of an American teacher at his school who he felt embodied this stereotype of arrogance, ignorance, and complete lack of interest in China. In describing her he said:

> It was just uh so obvious that there was nothing about China that appealed to her (.) um there was nothing for her to learn from Chinese people or Chinese culture or Chinese language. Um like her big joke was how poorly she said hello and thank you and she'd have- she had cards written out for where she wanted to go and it was (.) well in my mind it kinda set North American Chinese relations back quite a bit ((laughter)).

By stating that she "was just kind of the ugly American stereotype that we'd kinda had in the back of our minds we'd been trying to not copy ((laughter)) or not put forward," Ted made it clear that he and his wife made a conscious effort to act differently. What is "ugly" in Ted's opinion is the lack of attempt to learn the language, treating her inability to speak as a joke, and a complete lack of interest in anything China has to offer, besides employment and the benefits that come with being a foreign teacher. Leo echoed this sentiment by saying:

> If you live in another country and you <u>don't</u> make an effort to learn the language you- you kind of um I don't know ((laughter)) what do I want to say here. It's like you're kind of- you're kind of a jerk you know it's like (.) and especially if you speak English and you know there's this kind of um I don't know like sort of ugly American stereotype and whatever. And- and um I just think as a matter of like humility almost and a matter of like um respect like that's important to me if I'm in a- if I'm working long term in a place.

Leo similarly defined "ugly" as a lack of respect for the local culture and general arrogance. He placed great importance on learning the local language as a sign of respect.

Both Ted and Leo acknowledged their position in the larger social and historical context. Ted jokingly claimed that the woman in his story damaged relations between China and West, but this seemingly offhand comment is indicative of his perception of himself, in contrast, as a representative of the West. The term "ugly American" also reflects a conflation on Ted's part of "Westerner" and "American," since he was Canadian but did not mention using his nationality a means of avoiding this particular nationality-based negative stereotype. Leo was the only participant to mention the powerful role of English, and was very aware of how his position as an English teacher endowed him with power. Leo argued that sojourners have a responsibility to learn the local language, especially if they speak English, implying that making an effort to learn the local language may counter the power position held by English speakers.

4.2.4.3 The Conscientious Sojourner: Rejecting the Foreigner Scene

A second strategy used in the construction of the conscientious sojourner identity was an purposeful rejection of foreign friendships. Again, this was reflected most explicitly in the accounts of Leo and Ted.

Ted stated that most of his friendships in China were with Chinese colleagues and former students, and emphasized the importance of making Chinese friends:

> We'd tell people sometimes we didn't come to China to spend time with North
>
> Americans and this got- gets passed onto other people then it sounds like we're really
>
> ((laughter)) wanting to isolate ourselves from foreigners. That's not entirely true but that
>
> was kind of our underlying assumption that in China we would spend time with Chinese
>
> people.

Ted later lamented that upon returning to China in the near future, his family would have to settle in a larger centre so that their daughters could attend a bilingual school. This larger city would

have "a much larger expat community that we're gonna get dragged into kicking and screaming ((laughter))." This resistance to becoming part of a larger expat community shows Ted's continuing commitment to participating as much as possible in a Chinese community.

Leo and his wife did make friends with other foreign teachers, but he also emphasized the importance they placed on making Chinese friends. He talked about his dislike of the "yuppie scene" in Shanghai, something he clarified was not specific to China and was a result of his lack of interest in engaging in reckless partying behavior regardless of context. He claimed that the reason they chose to live in a smaller city was "we had heard these things 'well if you go to a big city you're just gonna have foreign friends and you won't learn any Chinese' so that was a kind of an ideology that we had." Leo clearly drew a correlation between having exclusively foreign friends and difficulty learning Chinese.

Both Ted and Leo emphasized choosing smaller centres with few foreigners on the grounds that they would be more likely to make Chinese friends. This rejection of friendship with foreigners is also one indication that they attempted to resist the stereotype of foreigners being insular, and also reflects the importance they placed on building relationships with local Chinese people, presumably to develop their knowledge of local language and culture.

Amber, who made friends with both local Hong Kong youth and other foreign students, also emphasized the importance of respectful integration through the expression of interest in local culture. People who "spend all their time in British pubs" and "don't even eat dim sum" are "ostracized" and "looked down upon" by other expatriates and, presumably, by the target Chinese-speaking community itself. She implicitly contrasted them with herself, who took great interest in Hong Kong culture and often went to eat dim sum with her local Chinese-speaking friends. In the context of Hong Kong, as compared to China, making an effort to engage with

local culture could be considered even more difficult and thus admirable, given the much greater prevalence of Western culture (at least in its superficial manifestations of food and entertainment).

The identity of the conscientious sojourner was constructed through attempts to counter stereotypes, as well as explicit rejection of the foreigner scene. Another major factor in this identity was the learning of the language, and the interesting dynamic I discuss in the following section.

4.3 Theme Two: Discordant Knowledge

4.3.1 What is Discordant Knowledge?

By discordant knowledge, I refer to any knowledge, expertise, or experience that an individual is not, for any social or cultural reasons, expected to possess. Discordant knowledge is by definition unexpected, and therefore it is often hidden. Thus, the element of surprise inherent in this kind of knowledge, coupled with its deviation from social norms, makes it a powerful tool in the creation of personal identity and the quest for belonging in a target group. It is important to note that the knowledge itself is not inherently discordant; it is the historical, social, political and cultural context in which an individual participates that makes certain knowledge discordant.

For my participants, their acquisition of Chinese, both as a process and as an outcome, is a form of discordant knowledge. Each participant repeatedly stated that they felt that they were not expected by members of Chinese-speaking communities to have any knowledge of Chinese, that their knowledge often came as a surprise to their interlocutors, and that it set them apart both in their target and home communities. It is unclear whether participants were always conscious of the discordance of their knowledge, but I believe that at times they did consciously employ it

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for their own benefit. Discordant knowledge expressed itself in three ways in my participants'

accounts, which I identify and illustrate with examples in the following sections.

4.3.2 Beyond the Instrumental Value of Learning Chinese

For all of the participants, Chinese was cited as important for its instrumental value, but

for many this value extended beyond the traditional understanding of instrumental motivation

(Gardner, 2001) as involving the ability to learn language or communicate in order to accomplish

other goals. Some indicated that it was the study of the language more than the language itself

that allowed them to access their immediate Chinese-speaking communities. Both Amber and

Lao Wang shared the idea that by learning the language and showing Chinese people that they

were interested in the language and culture, or if they indicated knowledge of facts about China,

they would in this way prove themselves as valid potential members of the society.

Amber repeatedly stated that it was very difficult to "get into" a Chinese community, but

that she was able to do so largely because she displayed an interest in Chinese culture and

language. Speaking about her local Cantonese-speaking friends, with whom she developed and

continued to enjoy strong friendships, she speculated that they invested time and effort in her

despite her short-term stay because: "I guess like they saw that I was learning Cantonese and I

was really trying to you know learn their slang and stuff." Here, she emphasized that her friends

appreciated the effort she was making, especially in regards to her interest in the local vernacular.

Later in the interview she spoke about using slang terminology, especially terms of address, to

joke with these friends.

When I asked her why she thought it was hard to "get in" to Chinese culture she ventured

the following explanation (A=Amber; R=Roma):

A: And then also I think that um (.) some of my other friends told me that like they

        just don't view that like White people or Western people are the same as them.

        And they don't think that they can understand their way of life and that's what

        they told me so I think once you kind of prove yourself to them=

R: = hmm=

A: = then and like you say like <u>yeah</u> I do know I <u>do</u> know Chinese history I <u>do</u> know

        like the second emperor of the Han dynasty or something. And they kind of uh

        realize that maybe you know more than them about certain Chinese things and

        then so they say 'oh well ok maybe you can be like part of our community.'

According to Amber's understanding, it is difficult for White people to enter Chinese

communities because they are perceived as being inherently culturally different and unable to

understand the Chinese way of life. She believed that by revealing her interest in the local

language and her knowledge of obscure facts, she could challenge this view of White people and

thus "prove" herself worthy of entering the community.

        Again, centuries of British colonial rule have perhaps predisposed Hong Kong residents

to have poor perceptions of foreigners, but Lao Wang, speaking about a Mainland Chinese

context made a similar argument when she said:

        Sometimes uh you know they indeed are- are surprised by the- often if you show

        any knowledge of the culture too (.) I mean beyond chopsticks you know. If you've

        heard of a composer of a- you're familiar with any work or a famous person you know

        they're really surprised because they sort of assume that <u>we're</u> the ones who are

        completely isolated and uncultured and isolated and ignorant and if you actually know

        something uh they think that's really quite <u>neat.</u>

While Lao Wang did not make a direct link between possessing this knowledge and gaining entry into the society, her mention of cultural knowledge echoes Amber's. She said that people express surprise when a Westerner demonstrates knowledge of Chinese culture, and that this surprise challenges the perceived stereotype that Westerners are "isolated, uncultured, and ignorant [about Chinese matters]." She also referenced a certain type of knowledge; in order for the possession of knowledge to have value, it must demonstrate a depth of understanding that moves "beyond chopsticks," that is beyond superficial cultural knowledge.

Both Amber and Lao Wang pointed to the value of the possession of cultural knowledge as well as the expression of interest in local culture. In fact, they both identified the value of the discordance of their knowledge. In Amber's view, White people are often assumed to have little cultural knowledge of China, and that is the precise reason why knowledge of obscure Chinese facts lends them some legitimacy. Also, she speculated that perhaps people were sometimes caught off guard by the fact that she knew more than they did about their own culture. This is clearly a violation of local expectations, and thus results in the granting of respect. Similarly, that someone "uncultured" or "ignorant" would know something about a Chinese composer would be unexpected, and would therefore also be grounds for bestowing respect. Neither Amber nor Lao Wang characterized this knowledge as common or shared knowledge that can be used as a starting point for conversation which in turn leads to building of relationships. They both stressed that it is the mere possession of this knowledge, and its unexpected and therefore discordant nature, that is valuable.

4.3.3 Unexpected Knowledge of Chinese

Because their physical appearance marks them as obviously foreign, the ability of White people to speak Chinese often provokes surprise and astonishment from Chinese interlocutors.

The assumption that they do not understand what is being said around them featured prominently in some of the anecdotes related to me by my participants. For example, in what Leo cited as an important positive moment for his language learning, he told a story of being in a DVD store and overhearing another customer haggling with the owner over the price of a DVD. The owner argued that he could not give the customer a special price because he would then be compelled to give everyone else the same price. The customer, pointing at Leo, retorted that Leo would not know about the special price because he could not understand them. At this point Leo chimed in and said "I do understand," and "everybody just like erupted into laughter." Leo cited this as a moment of extreme pride in his abilities:

> I felt um like hey I just showed that I'm just- I'm not just the- the like kind of peripheral um you know- like the guy who doesn't understand (.) you know the foreigner. Like I'm here and I'm <u>participating</u> in this and I made a joke you know and so that- things like that I think that sort of thing was a motivation like um wanting to be able to participate in a way that was not just like 'hey there's a foreigner.'

The important point here is not just the fact of Leo's wanting to participate and to assert an identity beyond that of "the foreigner." This account, and its function as both a humorous story and a success story, hinges on the fact that Leo's knowledge of Chinese was hidden until he chose to reveal it. His comment of "I do understand" is only funny because it was assumed by those around him—an assumption based entirely on his appearance as a foreigner—that he could not understand. Similarly, this account is a proud moment for Leo because he was able to participate legitimately in an interaction by making a joke—a joke that was predicated on his appearance as someone who would not know Chinese.

Atticus also told a story about revealing hidden knowledge when he was at a karaoke bar and overheard people saying "there is a *lǎowài* here." Atticus reacted by voicing indignation, not because he was truly angry, but because he wanted to engage in a sort of experiment to see what would happen. The people reacted with what Atticus identified as embarrassed laughter once they realized that the foreigner they were talking about could in fact understand what they were saying, and could also answer back in intelligible Chinese. The initial naming of Atticus as a *lǎowài*, which the entire story is based upon, only occurred because he was physically (racially) different. In the same way, his ability to answer back in Chinese was discordant with that physical difference and thus resulted in laughter and discomfort. Ted told a similar story that had a different outcome:

> We were in um- in Kunming at the Stone Forest and this Chinese person walked up
>
> to me and asked me in Chinese for directions ((laughter)). I just thought well you're
>
> really optimistic ((laughter)). But I was able to (.) I knew where he wanted to go and I
>
> was able to tell him where he wanted to go and uh it just made me feel really like I
>
> belonged there.

Again, the humor of this story is based entirely on Ted's appearance and the normal assumption (seen earlier in Leo's story) that a non-Chinese person in China will not understand Chinese. Ted's reaction to the man as being "really optimistic" is only funny because, as an obvious foreigner, it is unusual that a Chinese person would ask him for directions. Asking for directions in Chinese showed that the man assumed Ted both spoke Chinese and was familiar with the area, two skills that would normally be rare for a foreign tourist spending a few hours at a tourist site. However, Ted was able to counter the image of the foreign tourist by achieving demonstrating his linguistic knowledge. This story differs from Leo's however, in that it was

Ted who was surprised at his abilities, while the Chinese man for whatever reason assumed he had those abilities. In this way, the discordance existed from Ted's perspective, but it still functioned to make him feel better about his abilities, and to feel like he "belonged there." The power of the knowledge did not come from the interlocutor's surprise, as it did in Leo's story. Rather, the power came from Ted's own perception of himself, and the surprise that he felt when he realized the extent of his abilities.

Just as White speakers are included when their discordant knowledge is shared, sometimes they are excluded when that discordant knowledge is kept hidden. Atticus shared what happened after he and his parents refused to eat at a restaurant because of what they felt was its poor hygiene standards: "so- so after that when we were passing and they didn't know that I speak Chinese so they used this *gǔizi shénme shénme* [4] you know." The term "*gǔizi*" means "devil" and, unlike *lǎowài*, is unquestionably a derogatory term. Atticus assumed that it was used because the speakers did not know he could understand. Lao Wang also hypothesized that foreigners are sometimes spoken about because it is assumed they will not understand. When I asked her if she had ever been called a *lǎowài*, she answered:

> Um you know never to your face ((laughter)). It's quite funny you know but uh you
> know when people will talk about you- you know uh- you know even if they're- even if
> just you're sitting in a restaurant and somebody else says 'oh there's a
> *lǎowài'* you know- you know um not knowing that you speak any Chinese.

This observation that the word *lǎowài* is only used behind one's back or when people think they are not understood is interesting because it implies that once someone knows a foreigner can speak Chinese they will not use the term. Atticus' assumption that he was insulted only because he was thought to not understand the insult similarly assumes that if people knew he understood

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[4] An approximate translation of this sentence would be "they called me devil and all that sort of thing."

they would not have called him that. He did not consider the possibility that the people wanted him to know that they were offended and therefore returned the insult. In this context, the idea that people will only refer to others using offensive terms if they think cannot be understood endows the Chinese-speaking White sojourners with a powerful potential hidden knowledge (and identity) that allows them to listen in on what is being said about them without being found out.

4.3.4 Low Expectations of Foreign Learners of Chinese

In response to my question about how participants felt their race impacted their language learning, many said that it was highly beneficial. Ted provided one such response:

> People never expected me to speak Chinese um so they had very low expectations and <u>anything</u> I said was just cause for celebration which makes me feel really bad. Here-because if a Chinese person comes here and presents a paper or something in English people will criticize their accent or something. If I- if I say hello in Chinese the 'ha' or 'you're so good your Chinese is <u>so</u> good' they just assume or they- they- they seem to think that my I'm- I'm a fluent Chinese speaker so that- that has never really seemed fair.

He went on to say "I've felt just really kinda lucky to be a visible minority in China" and

> I've never felt that anyone expected me to know more Chinese than I do and I only get positive reinforcement for anything I might say even if people struggle with it and yes some- yeah if there's something that I say people don't understand um generally people are very patient and willing to help me out work things out um so it's been nothing-yeah it's been nothing but beneficial.

Lao Wang echoed this when, in answer to my question about how people react to her speaking Chinese, she said:

> Chinese people all think it's fantastic and uh they- uh they- you know their

impression is of course no matter how <u>bad</u> your Chinese is the first thing out of their

mouth is 'don't you speak Chinese well' and I always think that's terrific. I always tell

foreigners you oughta learn Chinese because you know you will be so encouraged. No

matter how bad you are people appreciate the fact you're trying and I- it's just so great.

While Ted and Lao Wang had a similar impression of how they were treated when they

spoke Chinese, their interpretations were quite different. Ted contrasted his experience of

always being praised to the treatment of non-native English speakers, and the intense criticism

they are sometimes subjected to when speaking English. He recognized this as unfair, but still

emphasized the importance of the positive reinforcement he received when speaking Chinese.

Lao Wang, on the other hand, did not problematize the praise she received, seeing it only as a

positive factor. In fact, she cited it as an encouraging reason for other foreigners to begin

learning Chinese.

Again, these comments from Ted and Lao Wang are rooted in their experiences as

racialized beings whose discordant knowledge gave them an advantage in their target

communities. Because it is still relatively uncommon and unexpected for a White person to

speak Chinese, their knowledge, no matter how limited, garners them praise, which in turn works

as a motivating factor to further engage in the target community. Interestingly, none of the

participants stated that this low expectation was an excuse to simply not study Chinese at all, a

fact that is linked to the creation of the conscientious sojourner identity.

4.3.5 Non-White Foreigners: An Important Counter-example

With the exception of Amber, the participants spoke in terms of their general identity as

foreigners, as opposed to a more specifically racial White identity. It could, therefore, be argued

that "foreignness," and not race, is the crucial factor in the participants' experiences of privilege

and discordant knowledge. However, some participants shared their observations of the experiences of non-White foreigners (particularly those of Asian descent), and consequently affirmed the power of racial identity in shaping experiences. Ted said that at one point there were five North American teachers of Chinese descent in his teaching group, and he claimed that none of them had a positive experience. He gave one specific example:

> There's a young woman from Toronto who was in our city and she was kicked out of a cab because the driver thought she was teasing him by not pronouncing her destination properly. And she'd spent time in Taiwan and her level- like among the White teachers her level was really high um but she yeah people were- people were just not willing to cut her any slack at all.

Lao Wang echoed this by saying:

> There's no question if- if I looked Chinese uh and went for example to China uh as a Cantonese speaker everyone assumes you're Chinese you can speak the language and nobody's gonna slow down for you. Whereas with a foreigner they're gonna be incredibly patient and again incredibly encouraging. So I get way more help I think than I would if I was you know like a- I'm in class here you know uh Koreans and Japanese I get way more help you know I think there's a bias towards uh- uh- uh Europeans learning Chinese.

Speaking of participating in an English Corner, Atticus said that people would immediately gather around him and preferred to speak with him than with Asian Americans, even when they found out that English was not his first language. Ted, Lao Wang, and Atticus point to two important issues: the expectation on the part of native Chinese that Asian North Americans have certain kinds and levels of cultural and linguistic knowledge, and the preference

for White native speakers to act as English experts. (This latter issue has been widely discussed in literature on linguistic imperialism and native speaker norms, e.g., Cook, 2005.)

On the surface, the difficulties that Asian North Americans face in integrating into Chinese society seem to contradict the argument that race is a major, if not ultimate, factor in determining outsider status; if people who are racially Asian are not accepted as legitimate participants, then surely race cannot be a determining factor. However, the experience of Asian North Americans in China (which must be further explored) is again often predicated on racial assumptions and discordant knowledge. It was because of her physical appearance that the woman in Ted's story was misunderstood; her knowledge, or in this case lack of knowledge, was not in accordance with expectation based on her race and therefore the target community was unwilling to "cut her any slack." Lao Wang felt that Asian-looking foreigners get differential treatment in a Chinese learning context, and that European (presumably White) learners are treated better. In Atticus' case, his physical appearance led to the assumption that he speaks English well, while Asian Americans' physical appearance signifies that they do not.

4.4 Implications for Research and Connections to Existing Theory

Although in the preceding sections I have illustrated the two themes of the conscientious sojourner and discordant knowledge separately, they are in fact interrelated and should be viewed together when considering their importance in relation to existing research and theory. Therefore, I discuss them in tandem here in connection to identity, Whiteness, and study abroad.

4.4.1 Identity

Following the social turn in SLA and the subsequent emphasis on the importance of considering identity as a factor in SLA (Block, 2008), my analysis of participants' construction of their identities as conscientious sojourners is another example of how language learning must

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be viewed in relation to sociocultural context. By consciously constructing themselves as

conscientious sojourners, the participants worked to resist the position of privileged

marginalization (Conceison, 2004), a position that is informed by the historical power imbalance

between China and the West. Ironically, however, this resistance was often based on the very

nature of their privilege; they were able to disregard differential treatment because they were not

aiming to integrate into Chinese society, and they were not aiming to integrate into Chinese

society because they could and were likely to leave after a relatively short period of time.

Further, the construction of a respectful identity was in itself an agentive act because it was

largely based on *choosing* to learn Chinese or to have only Chinese friends, and also to be seen

as atypical sojourners.

This agentive construction of identity is an example of how larger social context informs

the experiences of individual learners. Because of the relative rarity (at least historically) of

Western students learning Chinese, compared especially with students learning English, these

students of Chinese usually have less at stake in their language learning, and therefore more

latitude in the decisions they make. That is, relatively few CAL students require advanced

knowledge of Chinese to pursue Chinese-medium higher education or to obtain employment.

Thus, they also have more power to create a specific type of identity. This supports current

understandings in SLA research of identity as fluid, shifting, and context-embedded.

It is important to take into consideration the fact that this identity of the conscientious

sojourner was constructed for me within an interview setting, and it is reasonable to assume that

participants would desire to portray themselves in a positive light. Also, recruitment was

somewhat biased toward attracting learners with a positive orientation toward Chinese language

and culture(s). As I have discussed in Chapter 3, I consider these interviews to be versions of the

truth (Duff, 2008). Obviously, it is impossible to verify whether participants actually conducted

themselves in the manner they related to me, or remembered all past experiences related to their

laowai status. Therefore some may argue that this discussion is unhelpful in furthering our

understandings of learners' experiences in China. However, the very fact that participants chose

to construct this particular identity for me, regardless of whether it is an accurate description of

their actual behavior or perceptions at the time, indicates that this particular group was sensitive

to their positioning. They all demonstrated that they understood their privileged position, and

whether or not they found it problematic, they did express displeasure at the behavior of other,

disrespectful, sojourners.

This focus on identity reflects work currently being conducted as part of a narrative-

based exploration of the experiences of five adult White learners of Chinese who have had

experience learning Chinese in both Mainland China and Taiwan (Duff, Anderson, Ilnyckyj,

Lester, Yates, & Wang, 2010). As with my participants, many of the learners in that study

constructed identities of the conscientious sojourner in their narratives, highlighting how they

differed from other foreigners in their particular Chinese-speaking contexts. Duff et al. argue

that the emphasis on difference in the identities expressed by the learners were strongly tied to

their membership in various communities. As with the discordant knowledge used by my

participants, the learners in this study also considered the unexpected or novel nature of their

language proficiency to be integral in the development of their identities as speakers of Chinese.

4.4.2 Whiteness

As Kubota and Lin (2009) argue, SLA research has not yet embraced critical

examinations of race to the same extent as many other fields. The constructs I identified in my

participants' accounts are both based on their racialized identities, and my study is therefore an example of the connection between race and language learning.

CWS contends that Whiteness draws its meaning from contact with non-Whiteness (as I discuss in Chapter 2), but this simple argument does not take into account that non-Whiteness takes multiple forms. In the context of China, Whiteness takes on meanings as a result of its contact with local Chinese racial identities, but also draws meaning from its contact with non-White foreigners. The participants in this study drew attention to the fact that in many cases their experiences differed quite drastically from the experiences of Westerners of Asian descent. The utility of discordant knowledge is an excellent example of this difference, as it allows White speakers of Chinese a power that is not available to speakers who appear to be Asian.

I noted in Chapter 2 that a limitation of CWS is that it is situated in a White-dominant context in which Whiteness is unmarked, and does not explain what occurs when White individuals move into a non-White dominant context in which their race is highly marked. The differential treatment that White sojourners in this study reported is a result of this markedness. However, as Conceison (2004) has noted, markedness in this context results in superior treatment as opposed to the inferior treatment often accorded to marked individuals in a White-dominant context. This has a direct impact on language acquisition, as it can serve to render study of language unnecessary.

4.4.3 Study Abroad

As Kinginger (2008) notes, there is a widespread belief held by the general public and perpetuated by academic institutions that study abroad programs are superior to classroom language learning, and that immersion in a target language community is guaranteed to result in major improvements in language proficiency. Pitts (2009) also emphasizes this point by

demonstrating the growing popularity of study abroad programs among American university students. This belief reflects traditional theories of SLA (e.g. Schumann's, 1978, Acculturation Model), which take for granted that integration into another culture is necessary for meaningful language acquisition to occur. This belief persists despite various studies that have identified numerous complicating factors, including gender (Ehrlich, 2001) and race (Talburt & Stewart, 1999). Study abroad experiences must be deconstructed further in order to provide students and teachers more realistic understandings of what they entail. As Kinginger asks, "What do we really know about learning in study abroad programs, and what is the role of language education in this process?" (p. 2). While this study is not specifically focused on the study abroad experience (only Amber and Atticus engaged in formal study abroad), the constructs I have identified in my data can be applied to the exploration of study abroad experiences, as well as more general experiences of living abroad and cross-cultural exchange.

4.4.4.1 Similarities with Past Research

In relation to the issue of low expectations, my participants' accounts largely reflected the sentiments expressed in the study abroad research conducted by Siegel (1994), Kasper and Zhang (1995), and Kumagai and Sato (2009). While Siegel's investigation took place in Japan and focused on gender, many of her observations are relevant to my context of Chinese learners as well, namely the contention that her participants' linguistic development was vitally linked to issues of identity. Also, she observed that the learners in her study could not participate actively in Japanese society because, as sojourners, they were never considered potential members. This in turn led to low expectations of linguistic ability, a sentiment also found among Kasper and Zhang's students of Chinese. Kumagai and Sato's students who practiced "*gaijin* smash" in Japan were reacting to the low expectations held by their interlocutors, and using it to their

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benefit. In all these studies, as in mine, race was the key factor in the creation and perpetuation of low expectations.

Although it has not been treated in the same manner as I have discussed it here, the notion of discordant knowledge and its power in language acquisition is evident in much of literature I review in Chapter 2. As scholars observing the general issue of the growing popularity of Chinese (e.g., Kurlantzick, 2007; Starr, 2009) have noted, many students take up the study of Chinese for its perceived positive impact on employability. The cachet of a (White) Western person who speaks Chinese is based upon the perception that few non-Chinese people speak Chinese. Much of this power lies in the belief in being set apart by one's knowledge of Chinese is often just as useful as the actual instrumental application of this knowledge.

4.4.4.2 Furthering Existing Research

My discussion of discordant knowledge demonstrates that knowledge is not neutral or static, and that we cannot approach the outcomes of study abroad research (or any SLA research) with the assumption that the same knowledge or cultural experience will benefit all students equally and in the same manner. While much of the research does acknowledge students' different backgrounds and social factors in relation to how "much" knowledge they acquired, it does not answer the question of what dynamics arise as a result of the mere possession of that knowledge. The existing research on CAL (e.g. Chao, 1999; Samimy & Lee, 1997) focuses on outcomes of Chinese instruction in terms of how well or how quickly students acquire proficiency, but fails to acknowledge that this proficiency will function and be valued differently for different groups of learners.

The value of a study abroad or other type of immersion experience in China thus has the potential to be drastically different for non-White learners, which raises three important

questions for research. First, if there are low expectations on the part of overseas host communities for one group of learners (those who are White) and high expectations of another (those who appear Asian), how does this difference impact the learning experiences, opportunities, outcomes, and motivation to persevere with language learning of individuals within each group? If White students are given more concessions while their Asian-looking peers are expected to speak like native speakers and are treated poorly when they do not, will this result in greater language acquisition for one group? Closely related to this question is the issue of motivation. In some cases, possession of discordant knowledge will give students greater access to Chinese speaking communities, motivating them to speak more and possibly resulting in greater language acquisition. Conversely, some students may take advantage of the low expectations placed on them and simply choose to not expend a lot of effort towards language learning. Other students may consider these low expectations to be insulting and may strive to prove themselves to be speakers of Chinese despite their race.

Finally, how does discordant knowledge, with its racial basis, impact the interpersonal dynamics between learners? If all students have similar knowledge of the language, but this knowledge works more in favor of one group than another, this has the potential to quite negatively affect the relationships between members of each group. This also may have a strong bearing on motivation and attitude towards learning. These questions would be instrumental in complicating some of the conclusions drawn in existing CAL literature, such as Tseng's (2006) contention that heritage language students who face identity trauma in a study abroad program are somehow personally to blame for their negative experiences. The questions also highlight the importance of not homogenizing participants in study abroad research; students' backgrounds (not just racial) must be taken in to consideration when assessing their progress.

4.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented some of my interview data and analyzed it through two constructs of the conscientious sojourner and discordant knowledge. I have then briefly discussed how these two ideas inform existing research and theory. The next chapter provides a summary of the thesis, suggestions for further research, as well as a personal reflection.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present a summary of the findings discussed in Chapter 4. I then make suggestions for future research related to the issues under examination here. Finally, I reflect on how the research process and my analysis of participants' accounts affected me as both a learner of Chinese and as a researcher.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The first research question addressed in this study explored the impact of participants' perceived status as White sojourners on their language learning. The participants' status as White sojourners meant that they were endowed with agency and privilege by the host community and also were well aware of the advantages they had. The possession of agency meant that they had some control over their experience in China, at least in terms of length of stay, what kind of relationships they cultivated, and how much they were willing to invest in language study. The privilege that accompanied this agency rendered the study of Chinese largely unnecessary, but the participants engaged in language learning regardless, allowing them to construct particular identities.

The second research question sought to describe how the participants' acquisition of Chinese was influenced by the identities they constructed for themselves as language learners. While being aware of their position of privilege as sojourners, the participants all emphasized that they attempted to respectfully engage with Chinese society. They actively constructed the identity of the conscientious sojourner, which is characterized by the desire to learn the language.

Thus, the study of Chinese is not only undertaken in order to ensure learners' cultural viability, but is also evidence of learners' respect for local culture. Language learning serves to

challenge the position of privileged marginalization that foreigners in China find themselves occupying. It also serves as a tool to facilitate entrance into the target language community, and therefore to reduce marginalization and facilitate socialization.

The second theme of discordant knowledge relates more directly to the question of race. Learners' physical appearance immediately marks them as outsiders, and any knowledge of Chinese that they demonstrate often takes their Chinese interlocutors by surprise. Therefore, it is often the surprise, or the discordance of their knowledge, that allows foreigners access into the target language community. The unexpected nature of the knowledge also allows foreign language learners to keep the knowledge hidden until an opportune time. Strategic use of hidden knowledge can allow learners to participate in exchanges that are based upon surprise. The prominence of discordant knowledge in the participants' accounts is itself evidence that they were attempting to reject their privileged positions by engaging in an activity that was not required of them. This reflects their sensitivity to the position they occupy in China, and in turn to the larger social context in which they are embedded. For participants, learning Chinese was not only an educational endeavor, but functioned to challenge the privileged position they held as White sojourners in China.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

Obviously, a discussion of race is incomplete with a "White"-only data set. The next step in this project would be to explore the experiences of people of other racial backgrounds. Of particular interest would be the experiences of black foreigners in China, especially in light of China's strengthening ties with various African countries, which has resulted in large numbers of African students studying in China on scholarships sponsored by the Chinese government. A deeper examination of foreigners of Asian backgrounds is also necessary. This includes not only

foreign-born Chinese who grew up in Chinese diaspora communities, but also those from other Asian countries. Similar to its ties with Africa, China is also continuing to develop economic and political relationships with countries with weaker economies, particularly in South East Asia. Both these groups have a unique relationship with China that is mediated by history and current political and economic factors. Any future study that takes race as a primary categorizing factor should also be sensitive to the heterogeneous nature of race; that is, not all "White" or "black" people can be assumed to have similar backgrounds, and must be further characterized by nationality, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, etc. Further, the regional differences of China itself should be taken into consideration, as its geographical proximity to various other countries may influence the nationality of foreigners living in different regions.

Studies with participants reflecting diverse attitudes towards China and the importance of learning Chinese are also required. Again, because of the relative homogeneity of my participants' attitudes, the role of language and their perceptions of their positioning in China led to attempts to construct positive and respectful identities. In the future, it would be interesting to interview former learners of Chinese who have stopped studying the language, for whatever reason. Also fruitful would be interviewing people who have lived and worked in China without undertaking any language study. Conducting research in China with any of these groups of people would be very different than doing it in their home contexts, as it would offer a different perspective that is not filtered as much by physical and temporal distance from the site of the experiences.

A final type of study that could be conducted in the future is one that compares the experiences of foreigners in China with those in Taiwan. Because of the very different political and economic trajectories taken by each since 1945, the present environments differ in many

ways. Having explored the importance of larger social context on the experiences and perceptions of five individuals, I believe that there must be important and intriguing differences in how language learning by foreigners functions in Taiwan and China. Further, including other contexts in which Chinese is used, such as Singapore, would yield more insight into how history, social context, race, and other factors impact language learning.

5.4 Personal Reflection

Because this research study was inspired by my personal experience and my participants' backgrounds were similar to mine in many respects, it is inevitable that I would approach the research with some preconceived notions in mind. I expected to hear stories of exclusion, differential treatment, frustration, and resentment. I was surprised by the attitudes of most of the participants; far from resenting their treatment in Chinese society, most had very positive experiences and felt that different treatment was inevitable given their position as foreigners. Only Amber reported that she felt her race and outsider status kept her from engaging fully in Chinese society, interesting given the fact that the majority of her time was spent in Hong Kong, where White Westerners have asserted their presence for centuries. What I learned from listening to my participants' accounts is that their generally casual attitude towards their position in China appears to be the key to a good experience. While there certainly were negative experiences and moments of frustration, they did not allow those to deter them from their goals. As I embark on my next trip to China, I hope to adopt this attitude and challenge myself to not immediately resent someone who refers to my Whiteness. To echo Lao Wang, we *are* different, and much of our experience of China will lie in how we respond to that difference.

Naming the identity of conscientious sojourner that I saw in my participants' accounts has encouraged me to reflect on my own construction of this identity for myself. I have often

used my study of Chinese as evidence that I am not just another White person enjoying myself in China. In the past, I have fiercely refused to teach English in China, and resented the fact that people in both Canada and China immediately assumed that my role in China was to be an English teacher. I used my identity as a student of Chinese to counter what I perceived to be the negative assumption that the only function Westerners have in China is to teach English. I also considered my study of Chinese to be a means of resisting the hegemony of English. While these ideas still inform my philosophies of learning and teaching, I have learned from my participants that it is possible to be a sojourner in China while still acting in a respectful manner. The identity of the conscientious sojourner is not just a construct to be used by the White sojourner to assuage guilt; if actually enacted to the best of one's ability, such an identity can positively contribute to the resistance against existing power inequalities.

Similarly, I have enjoyed and continue to enjoy the power of my discordant knowledge of Chinese. In Canada, knowledge of Chinese sets me apart at job interviews and at parties. In China, knowledge of Chinese allows me to impress people and engage in conversations in which my knowledge of Chinese is a major topic of conversation. I have also sometimes chosen to keep my knowledge hidden, as I did many times in order to avoid unwelcome romantic advances. This use of Chinese for beyond-instrumental purposes as I discuss in Chapter 4 is in itself indicative of privilege. As Ted pointed out, he was always praised for his knowledge of Chinese, however rudimentary, whereas Chinese speakers of English in a North American context are often criticized for their (apparent) poor command of English. This inequality makes me wonder whether using my knowledge of Chinese to prove that I am culturally sensitive and caring is in fact ironic.

As a novice researcher, one of the most valuable lessons I learned from conducting this study was that my own positioning as a White person in a White-dominant society led me to initially overlook the problematic nature of the term "White." When I wrote my recruitment letter, I specified that participants "self-identify as Caucasian," and assumed that this would be a relatively simple qualification. Also, in the interviews I asked participants to think about their race in the context of their experiences in China, but I failed to ask them about their racial identities in their home context of North America. This reflects my implicit understanding that White people need not problematize their racial identities in a White-dominant society, the very assumption that Critical Whiteness Studies seeks to challenge. It was not until Atticus informed me that because of his Jewish identity he does not always consider himself to be White that I realized my oversight. In my future research, I will pay more attention to the question of how Whiteness operates in home contexts, and how it filters my own perception and expectations of my participants.

Finally, in a recent response to a follow-up email, Atticus informed me that he is back in China, and shared with me that "after the conversation [the research interview], I am now more aware of the problem." By "the problem," he means his positioning in Chinese society. I was inspired by this email, because during our interview Atticus expressed some resistance to the importance I was placing on the notion of *lǎowài*. At the end of the interview he even said "I thought the research is mostly about my experience in studying Chinese but it's actually more about *lǎowài* and all that," indicating that he considered the two to be unrelated. Hearing that our conversation has prompted him to think more about his positioning while now in China is highly rewarding, as I feel that this study has had some benefit beyond the fulfillment of a requirement for my MA degree.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

UBC   T H E   U N I V E R S I T Y   O F   B R I T I S H   C O L U M B I A

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Vancouver, BC, Canada V6T 1Z4

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Fax: (604) 822-3154
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Recruitment Letter

Learning as Laowai: Race, social positioning, and language acquisition in China

Hello,

My name is Roma Ilnyckyj and I am a graduate student in the Department of Language and Literacy Education.   As part of my MA thesis, I am conducting a study that will investigate the influence of non-linguistic factors, in particular race and gender, on the study of Chinese among Caucasian learners. The study will be supervised by the Principal Investigator, Dr. Patricia Duff, Department of Language and Literacy Education (604-822-9693).

Participants in this study must have engaged in active language study in China, must currently be at an intermediate to advanced level of proficiency, and must self-identify as Caucasian. It is not necessary for participants to be studying Chinese at the present time.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked for no more than two hours of your time: one hour for an initial interview, and up to one hour for follow-up correspondence through email. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. You will receive a copy of the transcription of your interview to review for accuracy. To thank you for your time, you will be offered a $20 gift card to the UBC Bookstore. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

If you are interested in participating in this study and feel that you meet the criteria outlined above, please contact Roma Ilnyckyj at 604-345-9661 or r.ilnyckyj@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Roma Ilnyckyj

Appendix B: CEFR Table

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Self-assessment grid

	Reception		Interaction		Production	
	Listening	**Reading**	**Spoken Interaction**	**Written Interaction**	**Spoken Production**	**Written Production**
C2	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.	I can express myself with clarity and precision, relating to the addressee flexibly and effectively in an assured, personal, style.	I can present a clear, smoothly flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.	I can write clear, smoothly flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles, which present a case with an effective logical structure, which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.
C1	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers		I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write detailed expositions of complex subjects in an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can write different kinds of texts in a style appropriate to the reader in mind.
B2	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view
B1	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes & ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can write straightforward connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Self-assessment grid (continued)

	Reception		Interaction		Production	
	Listening	**Reading**	**Spoken Interaction**	**Written Interaction**	**Spoken Production**	**Written Production**
A2	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate need. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions my educational background and my present or most recent job	I can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like „and", „but" and „because"
A1	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can write a short, simple postcard, for examples sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can write simple isolated phrases and sentences.

Source: Council of Europe, retrieved from
   http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?M=/main_pages/levels.html

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January 7, 2009

Consent Form
Learning as Laowai: Race, social positioning, and language acquisition in China

Dear potential participant,

This letter is to invite you to participate in a study undertaken by Roma Ilnyckyj, graduate student in the Department of Language and Literacy Education. The study will be supervised by the Principal Investigator, Dr. Patricia Duff, Department of Language and Literacy Education (604-822-9693). The data collected through this study will be used by Roma to complete her MA thesis, and may also be used in the publication of an article.

The proposed research, entitled "Learning as Laowai: Race, social positioning, and language acquisition in China," is described below.

Purpose
The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of non-linguistic factors, in particular race and gender, on the study of Chinese. The study will focus specifically on non-Chinese learners who have previously spent time in China studying Mandarin.

Study Procedures
If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked for no more than two hours of your time: one hour for an initial interview, and up to one hour for follow-up correspondence through email. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. You will receive a copy of the transcription of your interview to review for accuracy.

Potential Risks
There are no significant risks to participating in this study.

Potential Benefits
Participation in this study will allow you the opportunity to reflect on your experiences of studying Chinese and contribute to the scholarship of a growing field.

Confidentiality
Should you choose to participate in this study, your anonymity will be protected. You will be asked to choose a pseudonym for yourself, and will be referred to only by this name during the course of the data collection and in the research report. Data will be kept on Roma Ilnyckyj's computer in a password-protected file.

Remuneration
To thank you for your time, you will be offered a $20 gift card to the UBC Bookstore.

Contact for information about the study
If you have any further questions about this study, please contact Roma Ilnyckyj at 604-345-9661 or r.ilnyckyj@gmail.com

Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects
If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.

Consent
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

_____
Subject Signature   Date

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Background questions:

1. How long have you been studying Chinese?

2. Why did you first begin studying Chinese?

3. Can you tell me when and where you studied?

4. Why are you still studying Chinese? Have your motivations changed?

5. How would you judge your Chinese proficiency?

6. What are your goals? How high do you want to go?

7. What goals did you have when you left for China? Did you reach this goals? What helped/hindered you in achieving these goals?

China questions:

1. What kind of language learning did you engage in in China? Did you take classes, have a tutor, just talk to people?

2. Can you tell me about a really positive experience you had with language learning in China?

3. Can you tell me about a really negative experience you had with language learning in China?

4. What kind of friends did you have in China? Were they other international students or teachers? Did you have any local Chinese friends?

5. How important was it for you to become part of Chinese society, in your view? Did you?

Lǎowài questions:

1. Were you called a *lǎowài* in China?

2. In what context? By whom?

3. Had you heard the term before you went to China? Did you hear other terms? Which did you notice more?

4. How did it make you feel? Do you have different feelings in different contexts? Are you always offended?

5. How did you respond to it?

6. Reading these excerpts from blog entries (http://sanpaworn.vissaventure.com/?id=123) dealing with the term, which (if any) would you say most reflects your understanding of the word? Why? What do you think about the other opinions?

    a. "I'll bet none of you can tell me of a personal situation in which the term/word "laowai" was used to address you in respectful manner. Get real...... "hello my good/dear laowai friend John how are you today". It's a derogatory, racist, xenophobic word/term. CASE CLOSED. I'm waiting for your positive examples you politically correct "humps"." (stifler 18.02.2005)

    b. "If we have to be particular about the origin of laowai, yangren, guilao, or yanguizi, Chinese are not the only ones to blame for coining such terms, the westerners came from the oceans [sic], on gunships, remember?! However, if you truly understand TODAY's Chinese, the people, the language, and the culture, you'd know that the antagonism towards foreigners has long gone and gone with it was the derogatory flavor of the word laowai" (Gin, 26.02.2005)

    c. "Whether it's [sic] use is negative or neutral depends quite a lot on the speaker's attitude toward foreigners." (Mark, 27.02.2005)

    d. "And obviously it also depends on the listener's attitude." (Gin, 02.03.2005)

7. How did you feel being white in China? Do you think your race had any impact on your language learning?

The University of British Columbia
Office of Research Services
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
Suite 102, 6190 Agronomy Road, Vancouver,
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - MINIMAL RISK

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:	INSTITUTION / DEPARTMENT:	UBC BREB NUMBER:
Patricia Duff	UBC/Education/Language and Literacy Education	H09-02847

INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:	
Institution	**Site**
N/A	N/A

Other locations where the research will be conducted:
Centre for Research in Chinese Language and Literacy Education (CRCLLE) Boardroom (on campus)

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):
N/A

SPONSORING AGENCIES:
N/A

PROJECT TITLE:
Learning as Laowai: Race, social positioning, and language acquisition in China.

CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE: December 8, 2010

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:	DATE APPROVED:
	December 8, 2009

Document Name	Version	Date
Consent Forms:		
Consent Form	N/A	November 7, 2009
Advertisements:		
Recruitment Letter	N/A	December 5, 2009
Questionnaire, Questionnaire Cover Letter, Tests:		
Interview Protocol	N/A	November 7, 2009

The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board
and signed electronically by one of the following:

Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Chair
Dr. Ken Craig, Chair
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
Dr. Laurie Ford, Associate Chair
Dr. Anita Ho, Associate Chair

Appendix F: Transcription Symbols

Transcription Symbols[5]

Symbol	Meaning
(.)	indicates a short pause
-	indicates a false start or a self-correction
(( ))	indicates additional information about the utterance
<u>under</u>	indicates emphasis placed on a word
' '	indicates reported speech
=	indicates a continuous utterance

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[5] Adapted from Jefferson, 2004