CHINESE DOCTORAL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT,

IDENTITY INVESTMENT AND USE OF ENGLISH

IN AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

by

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ABSTRACT

For Chinese doctoral students, English is the most essential subject when studying in U.S. universities and living life in the U.S. Using English not only promotes academic success, but also helps them to pursue better job opportunities and a better life in the U.S. The purpose of this study was to explore Chinese doctoral students' English use, perceptions of academic achievement in relation to their academic motivation and identity investment. Chinese doctoral student interviews, questionnaires, classroom observations, and journal entries were used in this qualitative case study. The findings of the study show that Chinese doctoral students' English use and perception of academic achievement had impacts on their academic motivation. Moreover, Chinese doctoral students' identities were also reflected in the investment of academic achievement.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents who gave me strength

and courage in this journey:

My father, Lin, Pao-Yi

My mother, Kang, Su-Chin

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

In the last 5 years, there has been a significant growth in the number of international

students attending U.S. colleges and universities. According to the Bureau of Educational and

Cultural Affairs' Open Doors Report (2010), during the 2009-2010 academic year, new

international student enrollment increased 1.3% from the 2008-2009 academic year. In the mean

time, total international student enrollment in U.S. higher education also increased 3% during the

2009-2010 academic year. The top five countries of origin of international students were India,

China, South Korea, Canada, and Japan, and the top five U.S. states hosting these international

students were California, New York, Texas, Massachusetts, and Illinois. Despite the international

students' country of origin and the school he or she attended in the U.S. college or university,

English was the essential tool for international students to study in U.S. institutions.

As indicated earlier, Chinese international student population is the second largest

international student population in the U.S. institutions. Moreover, the Council of Graduate

School (2010) reports that Chinese graduate student enrollment has increased to 23%. Chinese

graduate students study in U.S. institutions in order to reach the goal of academic achievement.

Moreover, their opportunities of finding better employment are increased after they graduate. As

International graduate students go to U.S. universities, they not only encounter the issues of

using English properly in academia but are also trying to make senses of the new culture

(Perrucci & Hu, 1995). Surely, school is the most important environment for them to succeed in regard to individual goals.

In Huang's (2012) study, Chinese graduate student experienced the difficulties to adjust to American classroom cultures and learning styles. For Chinese graduate student, they are used to teacher centered instruction in Chinese education (Huang, 2012). However, American Graduate program emphasizes more on developing students' critical thinking skill, individual academic responsibility, professional preparation in future career and student-centered instruction. (Huang, 2012; Perrucci & Hu, 1995). As Huang (2012) points out there is a lack of understanding of teaching Chinese graduate student population in American higher education as well as learning unfamiliar American academic cultures for Chinese graduate student.

Although some of international students from India and Canada are fluent in English or even speak English as their first language, the majority of international students do not speak English as their first language. More often, these international students speak English as their second language. They go to school in order to study subjects, learn American classroom culture, make new friends, and to help adapt to a new life there. More importantly, they use English to engage in these activities.

Second language acquisition research emphasizes the relationship of language learners and their social environments (Lantolf, 2000; Leather & Van Dam, 2003; Peirce, 1995). Second language learning is not merely a case of an individual learner mastering the target language through their innate ability, but more likely a case of that individual learner making a connection with his or her social world via the process of learning the target language (K. Johnson, 2001; McKay & Wong, 1996; Peirce, 1995).

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores indicate to universities and professors the level of international students' English language proficiency to help plan adequate curriculum. Several studies (Hwang & Dizney, 1970; Seelen, 2002; Sharon, 1972; Stoynoff, 1997) have shown TOEFL scores to be unsuitable assessments for measuring international students' English language proficiency. Namely, a higher TOEFL score does not guarantee that these international students will succeed academically. The main reason for this discrepancy is that the traditional TOEFL assessment focuses on writing and reading rather than the listening and speaking skills they need in the classroom. Therefore, when international students are in a real classroom situation, they immediately encounter difficulty with listening and speaking (Troike, 1984; Zhang & Mi, 2010). Although the Educational Testing Service (2005) has changed the TOEFL assessment and pays more attention to assessing students' listening and speaking skills, TOEFL preparation is still not adequate for these international students to succeed in an academic learning environment.

Several studies (P. Johnson, 1988; Light, Xu, & Mossop, 1987) have found that English language proficiency did play an important role in international students' academic achievement. During the process of accomplishing academic achievement in the American university, using English is no longer a single-minded behavior for the individual, but rather a tool used to construct a connection between the international students, their social environment (sociocultural context of schooling), and the culture of the target language community (Bashir-Ali, 2006; Hsieh, 2006; K. Johnson, 2001; Koehne, 2006; McKay & Wong, 1996). Needless to say, English becomes the key that unlocks opportunities for the international student to achieve academic success.

Statement of the Problem

The TOEFL score does not measure international students' English language proficiency level accurately for the classroom nor for their academic achievement (Mathews, 2007). International students face challenges in their programs when using the English language, because of international students' lack of knowledge of English and the American culture (Abel, 2002). Huang (2012) and Troike (1984) also found that international students had a hard time understanding the lectures, because of the unfamiliar teacher instruction in the classroom. In order to create successful learning experiences for Chinese doctoral students, it is important not only to understand what Chinese doctoral students bring to the classroom, but also to assist them in the process of achieving academic success.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore Chinese doctoral students' perceptions of academic achievement with regard to their academic motivation and identity investment when using English in an American university. Research indicates that learning motivation and English proficiency are contributing factors in international students' academic achievement (Abel, 2002; Mathews, 2007; Troike, 1984). In order to gain a deeper understanding of how international students are motivated to achieve academic success, international students' identity investment must be revealed. According to Peirce (1995), the investment in language learning involves the continuous construction of identity. Therefore, identity is multiple, dynamic, and negotiated through the process of international students' perceptions of academic achievement when using English in the American classroom.

<center>**Research Questions**</center>

Research Question 1: How does international students' use of English and perceptions of

academic achievement impact their academic motivation in an

American university?

Research Question 2: How do international students reflect on and invest their identities

when using English in an American university?

<center>**Significance of the Study**</center>

The study explores international students' perceptions of academic achievement with

regard to their academic motivation and identity investment. The first research question explores

how international students' perceptions of academic success affect their motivation to complete

their program in an American university. Second, what efforts do international students make in

order to succeed in their study? Therefore, based on the first two issues, the study identifies the

international students' perceptions on academic achievement, motivation and identity investment

that facilitate better learning experiences in an American university.

Finally, the study provides university professors, administrators, and the international

office with insightful information about emerging international students' actual learning

experiences and academic needs. By referring to the study findings, university professors and

administrators can offer effective and better services to international students.

<center>**Limitations of the Study**</center>

There were several limitations to the study. First, the study focused only on higher

education in the university setting instead of k-12 grade school. Second, the participants were

from various educational programs in the study. Third, all the international student participants

<center>5</center>

came from the same country; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other international students in American universities.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are used in the purpose of this study:

Academic achievement: The goal that an international student intends to achieve, either academic or social, while studying at an American university (Kim & Sedlacek, 1995).

International students: Foreign students are enrolled at institutions of higher education in the United States who are not U.S. citizens, immigrants, or refugees. These may include holders of F (student) visas, H (temporary worker/trainee) visas, J (temporary educational exchange-visitor) visas, and M (vocational training) visas. Data thus exclude students who have long-term or permanent residency (World Education Service, 2007).

Chinese doctoral students: International students in Ph. D. programs in an American university who come from China and speak Mandarin as their first language.

First language: The student's first/native language or mother tongue.

Second language: An additional language other than the first language the student speaks.

Second language acquisition: A study of how and what a student learns in a second language.

Sociocultural context of schooling: The interactive context within which students and other school community members share beliefs, values, and behaviors (Balderrama & Diaz-Rico, 2006).

Teacher-centered instruction: The focus of the class is on the instructor. For example, lecture.

Student-centered instruction: The focus of the class is on both the students and instructor. For example, classroom group discussion.

Educational Testing Service (ETS): A nonprofit educational testing organization.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): The test measures a foreign student's ability to use and understand English at the university level. It evaluates a foreign student's listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills for performing academic tasks.

Identity: From the language learning perspective, identity is a site of struggle and changes over time (Peirce, 1995).

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 establishes the foundation for the research by presenting the facts about increasing international students who speak English as second language in American universities and their situations for achieving academic success in the classrooms. The two major research questions create a guide for study. The chapter also includes the statement of purpose, the significance of the study, and its limitations. Definition of terms is included.

Chapter 2 frames the study by incorporating theoretical framework and literature and also servers the purpose of guiding the research in an in-depth exploration of international students' perceptions on academic achievement and identity investment in an American university.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology and procedures for conducting this case study. Data collection and data analysis are offered in order to clarify the research questions. Demographic information about the international graduate student participants is also provided. The chapter also addresses trustworthiness for examining data reliability and validity.

Chapter 4 presents research findings through international graduate student participants' interviews, questionnaires, classroom observations, and journal entries. International graduate

student participants' perspectives on motivation, identity investment, and academic achievement are examined in this chapter.

Chapter 5 offers extensive discussion of the findings through the lens of theoretical framework and the literature review in chapter 2. The implications of the findings are provided as well as future research recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Second Language Acquisition

Second language acquisition is defined as a learning process in which language learners learn the target language other than their first language (mother tongue). The learning process includes gaining understanding of how the language is learned, what can be learned, and when it can be learned. Traditionally, language learning is viewed as an individual effort. In other words, being proficient in a second language largely depends on an individual learner's internal factors. However, many researchers (Lee, 2007; Peirce, 1995) have argued that second language acquisition lacks the consideration of taking individual external factors into account in the language learning context. One of the main external factors is the individual language learner's social effect.

Several studies found that individual language learner's social environment not only affects how individual language learners learn the target language, but also impacts their identity of being a language learner in the target language speaking context (Hsieh, 2006, 2007; Koehne, 2006; Macpherson, 2005; Morita, 2004). The study aims to investigate how international students' perceptions of academic success affect their language learning and identity. It is important for the study to draw attention to how these international students' identities change during interaction with their language learning and social environment.

Second language acquisition research has emphasized the relationship between language learners and their social environment (Lantolf, 2000; Leather & Van Dam, 2003; Peirce, 1995).

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Second language learning is not merely a case of how an individual learner masters the target language through innate ability, but more likely a case of an individual learner making a connection with his or her social world via the process of learning the target language (McKay & Wong, 1996; Miller, 2000; Peirce, 1995). During the process, language learning is no longer a single-minded behavior for an individual learner, but rather a tool of constructing a connection among an individual learner, his or her social environment (specific social context), and the culture of the target language community. Needless to say, language learning becomes the key that could open up opportunities for an individual learner in order to integrate into the desired community.

Community of Practice

According to Fulton and Riel (2001), the term *community centered* is broadly defined as the learning community in which learners share similar interests, goals, or experiences in a specific setting. Their concerns of the term *community centered* focus on how students gain assistance from the use of online technology resources, such as online learning and teaching.

A similar idea that was adopted in community-centered second language acquisition is Lave and Wenger's (1998) community of practice. The term *community of practice* is defined as a group of people who share the same interests or profession, learn from each other, and develop skills they need in the social context (Lave & Wenger, 1998). When applying this idea to second language acquisition, one sees that international students in U.S. universities need to develop certain levels of English proficiency in order to deal with daily-life tasks or academic needs (Zhang & Mi, 2010). In this sense, community of practice (attending university, for example) provides opportunities (working with native speaking peers, for example) for individuals to

develop membership in the community through the process of learning the target language in a specific social context.

Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory originates from psychology. Sociocultural theorist Vygotsky believed that learning is how the person interacts with the sequential environment that also relies on the individual's conception of humankind's moral and actional nature (Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev, & Miller, 2003). Therefore, language learning does not comprise merely learning vocabulary and pronunciation, but also includes the meaningful communication between the individual and his/her social environment. For example, peer tutoring (social environment) provides English as second language students with the opportunity of learning the English language through social interaction. It is important to notice that the interaction between individual (second language learner) and environment is active so that they can construct meaningful relationships. Therefore, the language learning opportunity is not only influenced by the individual, but also affected by the individual's social environment (the opportunity is provided or not by the teacher or peer) (Burns & Roberts, 2010).

In addition, learning opportunities and social environments are influenced by each other. Learning opportunity can be limited if the teacher is the primary information giver in the classroom. Based on sociocultural theory, opportunities are created from student participation in activities and in negotiating the meaning and self-identity between members of the particular learning group (K. Johnson, 2001; Koehne, 2006; Macpherson, 2005; Schmitt, Spears, & Branscombe, 2003). The great benefit of this framework is that it provides opportunities for the individual learner's learning as well as for social learning that facilitates becoming part of the community (specific learning group, for example).

Sociolinguistic Theory

From the sociolinguistic perspective, the second language learner's construction of identity is important to the community of practice framework. In general, the sociolinguistic perspective refers to all social aspects that impact language learning, such as gender, class, race, culture, and economic status (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). The main premise of sociolinguistic socialization is that language is strongly associated with the culture, for example, one specific community that speaks the language in a particular way (different pronunciation or vocabulary use). In other words, an individual is learning the target language through grammatical and lexical forms as well as learning the specific cultural way of using the target language in the particular community of the target language (Hsieh, 2006; Lee, 2007; Rose-Redwood, 2010; Ying, 2003).

Therefore, the individual learns the new cultural information via the process of language learning in this community and also perceives the identity changed when using the target language in the current community (K. Johnson, 2001; Schmitt et al., 2003). From the sociolinguistic perspective, the whole social environment affects what and how an individual learns the target language in the desired community. Moreover, an individual reconstructs his or her identity in order to fit into the target language community and culture (K. Johnson, 2001; Koehne, 2006). For example, new immigrants need to develop English proficiency in order to take care of their daily needs, such as using English to shop for food.

Communicative Competence

Speaking proficiency is described as communicative competence (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980). Communicative competence also includes discourse competence and sociolinguistic competence. It is important for international students to attain the sociolinguistic

competence in daily life settings; however, it is not enough to only develop sociolinguistic competence when they attend college-level classes. Namely, international students have to develop advanced communicative competence in order to communicate in academic settings (Troike, 1984). College-level classes not only require students to perform more critical thinking skills, but also require students to be able to form a meaningful utterance in the academic setting by applying these skills (Ying, 2003).

Moreover, researchers such as Krashen (1988) and Freeman and Freeman (1998) stated the importance of academic language proficiency. The idea of academic language proficiency emphasizes competence beyond the usage of communicative competence, especially in academic settings. From the academic language proficiency perspectives, learning to speak in academic settings not only requires basic communicative competence development but also depends on learners' (students) cognitive development in the language. According to language learning theory, acquiring communicative competence takes 2-3 years; however, it takes 5-7 years for learners to be proficient in speaking the language in academic settings (Cummins, 1984). If language learners need at least 5 years to be proficient in the language in academic settings, it is uncertain that international students can be successful in college-level classes without fully developing sufficient speaking proficiency for academic purposes.

Academic Success

Researchers (Case & Richardson, 1990; Kim & Sedlacek, 1995) addressed the issue of defining academic success, saying it could be categorized as purely academic success or social success (for example, being a medical doctor) and may also vary by gender and race. However, in my research design, I not only defined academic success as derived from the literature, but I had participants define academic success. By doing this, the research considers participants

individually, which also helps them to recognize the meaning of academic success through their own perceptions. On the other hand, the definition of academic success for international students in the existing literature is mostly classified into two main categories for the most part: (a) completed at least a college degree, and (b) being a professional (Mathews, 2007). It is noteworthy that being a professional for international students not only means academic success, but it also indicates their employability in the U.S. job market.

The literature also examined what academic success means to these international students. As indicated earlier, academic success could make these international students more competitive in the job market. Furthermore, these students hope that academic success will help them to build a better life in the future. The meaning of academic success carries various goals for these international students (Li, Chen, & Duanmu, 2010; Mathews, 2007). Moreover, an individual constructs the meaning of academic success and acts in order to complete the degree or become a professional. Besides these international students' devotion to constructing meaningful academic success, the next section discusses how their perceptions of academic success impacts their identities in a language learning context.

Although having advanced English language proficiency seems to be an essential prerequisite for these international students remaining in the U.S., this will surely affect their identifies. According to university admissions in the United States, meeting TOEFL requirements is necessary for these international students before being admitted into U.S. universities. After these international students are accepted into the universities, these students may or may not feel prepared for the English language proficiency level needed to thrive in U.S. classrooms. In the meantime, researchers (Hwang & Dizney, 1970; Seelen, 2002; Sharon, 1972; Stoynoff, 1997) have indicated that the TOEFL score did not accurately measure international

students' English language proficiency. If this is true, there are international students in U.S. universities who passed the TOEFL exams but are not actually proficient in the English language.

As mentioned earlier, an international student wants to achieve academic success because he or she wants to have better future in terms of completing the degree and becoming a professional. However, if the TOEFL score fails to indicate these international students' actual English language proficiency in an academic setting, developing English language proficiency for academic purposes is the first thing that the international students need before they can achieve academic success (Akazaki, 2010; Johnson, 1988; Li et al., 2010; Zhang & Mi, 2010).

Mathews' (2007) study of international students supports the idea that higher English proficiency relates positively to student academic success. However, the process of English language learning influences these students' identities as they achieve academic success. Even international students who are proficient in the English language for academic purposes would probably want to also be proficient in the English language outside of academic contexts (Ying, 2003). For example, if these international students intend to stay in the United States and work as professionals in the U.S. job market, the perception of academic success may change their motivation for proficiency in English beyond the academic context. Furthermore, individuals create their own meaning of academic success through the understanding of how and why they should be proficient in the English language and the construction of developing professional skills (Ramsay, Barker, & Jones, 1999).

Motivation

Before discussing motivation in the second language acquisition field, it is important to understand what motivation is and what perspectives are about motivation in teaching and

learning. Initially, motivation can be rooted in human behavior to satisfy specific basic needs.

For example, the motivation for people to eat food (eat equals behavior) because of hunger

(hunger equals basic need). Motivation is viewed as stimulating action and behavior in order to

achieve people's needs and goals. There are three theoretical views about what motivation is: (a)

the behavioral view, (b) the cognitive view, and (c) the humanistic view (Snowman & Biehler,

2011). In the behavioral perspective, reward and reinforcement are the two main points. Reward

refers to people receiving incentives when they do something good. For example, a child

receives a toy when he/she behaves in public. Therefore, the motivation for performing good

behavior in public results in the child receiving a toy from the parents. On the other hand,

reinforcement (Skinner, 1983) focuses on the repetition of a specific behavior in order to produce

motivation in learning. For example, the teacher has students memorize the article for a test, and

the test format actually asks students to write down the memorized article. In so doing, every

student who has memorized the article will receive a good grade and this will stimulate them to

use those skills in a similar learning situation.

Moreover, rewarding is an extrinsic motivation that moves people to do something to get

an external reward (e.g., the child gets a toy); and reinforcement is more likely to be an intrinsic

motivation such that people do something to achieve the goal (memorization in order to develop

reading and writing skills). In sum, the behavioral views of motivation emphasize an individual's

behavior regarding their needs in the physical environment.

From the cognitive point of view, motivation is constructed from people's beliefs about

themselves and the environment. According to Snowman and Biehler (2011), the cognitive view

of motivation is highly associated with the learner's need for achievement. The need for

achievement is proposed by Atkinson (1964), who found that the different degrees of need for

achievement result in different achievement behaviors in developing the required skills or competence. For example, the motivation for developing communicative competence for the international student serves the need for achieving success in an American university. On the other hand, there will be a different motivation for developing communicative competence for the international student if the international student's need for academic achievement is to be able to use English fluently for social purposes. Comparing the two examples, the motivation for achieving communicative competence is different regarding their differentiated needs for achievement. Therefore, the learning behavior of achieving communicative competence for the international student who desires to be successful in an American university is more likely to focus on classroom language usage; and another international student's learning behavior of achieving academic competence is more likely to emphasize social language usage. Overall, the cognitive view of motivation shows how people motivate themselves through developing the required skills or competence in order to satisfy their goals (Akazaki, 2010; Mathews, 2007).

The behavioral and cognitive views are that motivation is basically an activation of goal-driven behavior, and the behavior is involved to satisfy people's needs and desires. From the humanistic perspectives, the motivation of people's needs has a more detailed description. The most important needs theory is presented by Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1987). There are five levels of needs in this hierarchical model: (a) physiological, (b) safety, (c) belongingness, (d) esteem, and (e) self-actualization. Maslow believed that people only attain minimum satisfaction of the lower levels of need in order to go to the higher levels. For example, people have to take care of their basic physical needs (e.g., food, oxygen) first and then they will make money (because they will have a healthy body) in order to afford housing for safety. The first four levels of needs (physiological, safety, belongingness, and esteem) are referred to as

deficiency needs that motivate people to act on their unmet needs. Self-actualization refers to a growth need that motivates people to achieve self-fulfillment (Snowman & Biehler, 2011). Generally speaking, the humanistic view of motivation is combined with the behavioral and cognitive view of motivation that stresses on both individual basic physical need and self-cognitive development in the environment.

Motivation and Second Language Acquisition

Traditionally, language acquisition implies that individual innate ability highly influences language learning achievement. Over time, language acquisition has shifted its attention to the relationship between individual language learning and the environment. Especially for second language learning, the purpose is not to meet the individual's physical needs, but instead to provide a functional tool for the individual in order to fit into a new environment (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2001). For instance, a new immigrant learns the target language in order to feel belongingness into a new community. In other words, the motivation for learning the target language is to be seen as a member of the desired new community.

As pointed out earlier, motivation is always involved with achievement, especially in the educational arena. The most inspired motivation theory in second language learning is from Gardner (Gardner & Lambert, 1959). A psychologist, he conducted research investigating the relationship between second language achievement and five attitude/motivation variables. From his socioeducational model, the five attitude/motivation variables were the followings: (a) integrativeness, (b) attitudes toward the learning situation, (c) integrative orientation, (d) motivation, and (e) instrument orientation (Gardner & Lambert, 1959). Gardner's (Gardner & Lambert, 1959; Gardner, Gliksman, & Smythe, 1982; Gardner & Masgoret, 2003) studies have showed that motivation is the major variable impacting second language achievement in

comparison with the other four variables. Motivation in his studies referred to goal-directed behavior where individuals show different levels of feelings, behaviors, and cognitions in order to achieve a goal. On the other hand, the other four variables do not seem to impact second language learning as significantly as motivation when examining individuals' attitudes toward learning and teaching and their perception of the language community.

Gardner's motivation theory has been prevalent in examining the relationship between motivation and second language achievement. However, Dornyei (1994) argued that Gardner's motivational theory emphasizes the individual's language learning motivation in order to satisfy individual needs and desires, rather than pay attention to the individual as a social being in the environment. From Dornyei's (1994) perspective, motivation for second language learning not only connects with the learner's own needs/wants at a personal level, but it also is associated with identity (re)construction in the social environment. He further suggested that motivation research in language learning should always take into account "who learns what language where" in a sociocultural aspect.

Identity Investment

Peirce (1995) proposed the idea of language learners' investment instead of motivation in order to understand the complicated relationship between the language learner's learning, identity, and social environment. Peirce (2000) explained the following:

> My data indicate that motivation is a much more complex matter than hitherto conceived. A learner's motivation to speak is mediated by other investments that may conflict with the desire to speak—investments that are intimately connected to the ongoing production of the learners' identities and their desires for the future. (p. 120)

Similar to Dornyei's (1994) study, the participants' identities were changed or reconstructed because of the interaction with their social environment. The interaction of

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participating in the social environment also influenced their investment because of the lack of opportunity to invest in a second language (Morita, 2004).

In addition, Peirce (1995) described "identity as multiple, a site of struggle, and changing over time" (p. 14). She continued, saying that

> when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers but they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. Thus an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own social identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space. (p. 18)

With this in mind, language learners' investment in learning a second language does not only consist of the individual's desires, but also relates to the individual's relationship with the social environment.

Summary

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework and literature review to frame this research study. First, it is important to know that the definition of academic achievement is similar among researchers (Case & Richardson, 1990; Kim & Sedlacek, 1995; Mathews, 2007). Therefore, it is important to know whether the research participants have the same definition as the literature does. Next, we know from the literature that motivation indicates different perspectives on individual needs (Dornyei, 1994; Gardner, 1959, 1982, 2003). Therefore, there is a need to determine whether the international student participants' perceptions of academic achievement have an impact on academic motivation.

Next, from these studies (Akazaki, 2010; Dornyei, 1994; Mathew, 2007; Morita, 2004; Peirce, 1995), there is a need to understand international students' identity reflection and identity investment in relation to their investment in English language proficiency and academic achievement.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

This research investigates how international students' perception of academic success

affects their identities in the process of using the English language at a university. Therefore, the

following key areas are addressed in the research: Define international students' perception of

academic success and identify each individual's motivation behind achieving academic success

through the use of English and how identities were invested during the learning process. To

better understand the research, the following questions were included:

Research Question 1. How does international students' use of English and perceptions of

academic achievement impact their academic motivation in an

American university?

Research Question 2. How do international students reflect on and invest their identities

when using English in an American university?

Setting of the Study

The student-centered research institution selected for the study is located in the

southeastern United States. According to The University Office of Institutional Research and

Assessment (2010), the total student enrollment was approximately 30,009 in the 2009-2010

academic year, which included both undergraduate and graduate students. The University

Factbook also indicated that there were 815 international students attending the institution in the

2009-2010 academic year. The international student population was an estimated 4.2% of the

total student population for the same academic year. In comparison, in 2008-2009 the international student population was an estimated 3.9% of the total student population. Because of the increasing number of international students at the institution, the institution should address international students' needs in order to provide them a better learning experience.

Participants

Five Chinese doctoral student participants were selected by purposeful sampling strategies from international students who attended International Student Orientation. Creswell (2007) asserted that selected research participants "can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (p. 125). There were general research criteria for selecting participants, and 5 Chinese doctoral students agreed to participate in the study. The criteria for selecting participants were following: They had to be (a) an international student, (b) enrolled full-time on the main campus of the university, (c) a graduate student who met the TOEFL and GRE requirement of the university, and (d) have lived in the United States for at least 2 years

After the 5 Chinese doctoral student participants were selected for the study, the Chinese doctoral student participants chose one of their courses for classroom observation. Each of the 5 Chinese doctoral student participants' educational backgrounds were illustrated as following:

Participant 1: Matt

Matt (pseudonym) was a Chinese, male, international graduate student who had been at the university for 2 years. He earned his bachelor's degree in Applied Mathematics in Shan Tou University, China and decided to go to graduate school in the United States. When he arrived at the university, he started out studying in the English Language Institute because he did not meet the TOEFL requirements. At the time of the research, he studied in the doctoral program of

Applied Mathematics in the College of Arts and Sciences at the university where this research took place.

Participant 2: Ryan

Ryan (pseudonym) was a Chinese, male, international graduate student who had studied at the University for 3 years. He obtained his bachelor's degree in English in China and had a master's degree in TESOL at the university. He studied for his doctoral degree in English as a Second Language in the College of Education at the U.S. university where this research took place.

Participant 3: Helen

Helen (pseudonym) was a Chinese, female, international graduate student who had attended the university for 2 1/2 years. She earned her undergraduate degree in Finance in Kung Ming University, China. She first studied at the English Language Institute at the university until she passed her TOEFL. She studied in the doctoral program of Human Resource at the College of Commerce at the U.S. university where this research took place.

Participant 4: Grace

Grace (pseudonym) was a Chinese, female, international graduate student who had studied at the university for 2 years. She obtained her bachelor's degree in Environmental Engineering in China and was perusing her Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering at the College of Engineering at the university where this research took place.

Participant 5: Anne

Anne (pseudonym) was a Chinese, female, international graduate student who had attended the university for 2 years. She earned her bachelor's degree in English and her master's degree in Ancient Chinese History in Cheng Du normal university, China. After coming to the

United States she majored in the History doctoral program at the College of Arts and Sciences at the university.

Qualitative Instruments

Questionnaire

The international student questionnaire (Appendix A) contained questions about the Chinese doctoral student participants' demographic information and their attitudes about studying in the American university (Koehne, 2006; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003).

Interview protocol

Based on studies on international students' learning, academic achievement, and identity investment in American universities (Hsieh, 2006; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002; McKay & Wong, 1996; Morita, 2004; Omar, 2007; Schunk, 1991; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995), the researcher designed an interview protocol for Chinese doctoral students (Appendix B). The international student interview protocol asked Chinese doctoral student participants about educational background, learning experience, and perception of academic success at the American university.

Classroom Observation

Classroom observation was used to examine the international student participants' learning situations as well as the college professor participants' interaction with the Chinese doctoral student participant in the classroom. Merriam (1998) noted that observation assists investigators in observing the subjects first hand as well as provides them with instant feedback about the observed subjects. The classroom observation rubric (Appendix C) was adapted from the *Staffordshire University "Guidelines for the Observation of Teaching"* (The University of

Minnesota, 2004) in order to draw detailed pictures of both college professor participants' and Chinese doctoral student participants' interactions in the classroom.

Journal Topic Entries

Based on recent studies (Abel, 2002; Macpherson, 2005; McKay & Wong, 1996; Peirce, 1995; Schmitt et al., 2003; Troike, 1984), the journal topics (Appendix D) were created to ask about Chinese doctoral students' perception of using English in the American university and their identity investment. Journal topics were used to gain information and apply reflexivity in the research process, but they also helped the international student participants to raise self-awareness of their identities during the process of using English in their academic and even social environments.

<center>**Data Collection**</center>

Gaining Consent

As soon as IRB approval was given, consent forms for Chinese doctoral student participants (Appendix E) were distributed to the 5 selected Chinese doctoral students. After each participant completed the consent forms, the participant placed the consent form in a sealed envelope. Consent forms were collected by the researcher. To protect participants' rights, the researcher kept signed consent forms in a sealed envelope for the duration of the study.

Procedure

Once IRB approval was given, the researcher began the data collection process. Case study (Strauss, 1987) was the qualitative methods that was used, which included collecting data by means of questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and journals topic entries.

Questionnaire. The international student questionnaire contained questions about the Chinese doctoral student participants' demographic information and their attitudes about

studying in the American university. The one-time questionnaire took about 10 minutes. The international student questionnaires was conducted at Week 1.

Interviews. The one-time international student interviews were conducted in the school library. The international student interview protocol asked Chinese doctoral student participants about educational background, learning experience, and perception of academic success in the American university. The estimated interview time was 30-40 minutes. The interviews were collected from Week 2 through Week 8. There were five interviews in total.

Classroom observation. Classroom observations were used to examine the Chinese doctoral student participants' learning situation. As Merriam (1998) noted, observation assists the investigator in observing the things firsthand as well as provides instant feedback about the observed subjects. The classroom observation rubric was adapted from the *Staffordshire University "Guidelines for the Observation of Teaching"* (2004) in order to draw detailed pictures of international student participants' interactions in the classroom.

The study mainly focused on the Chinese doctoral student participants' use of English, perceptions of academic success and identity investment in the American university; therefore, the classroom professors' instruction and interaction with other students were not included in the classroom observation. The classroom selection was decided by the participant when the IRB gave permission to start the research. Once the classroom was selected by each participant, the researcher verbally asked each professor's permission to conduct classroom observations. The permission request form for conducting classroom observation (Appendix F) was given to each professor at the beginning of the classroom observation. The five permission requests for conducting classroom observation were collected and stored in a sealed envelope. The classroom

observation time was one hour and 15 minutes every other week. The classroom observations were visited at Weeks 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and11. There were 30 classroom observations in total.

Journal entries. The journal topics were created for asking about Chinese doctoral students' perceptions of using English in the American university and their identity investment. Journal topics were used to gain information and apply reflexivity to the research process, but they also assisted the Chinese doctoral student participants in raising self-awareness of their identities during the process of using English in their academic and even social environments. Each journal entry was about 20-30 minutes long. One journal topic was given to Chinese doctoral student participants weekly from Week 3 through Week 11. There were a total of 45 journals from all the international student participants.

<div align="center">

Data Analysis

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The case study (Strauss, 1987) was used to investigate how Chinese doctoral students' perceptions of academic success affected their identities in the process of studying at the American university. Marshall and Rossman (2006) suggested six steps for analyzing research data:

1. Organizing the data;

2. Immersion in the data;

3. Generating categories and themes;

4. Coding the data;

5. Writing analytic memos; and

6. Offering interpretation.

Initially, the research data were collected from questionnaires of Chinese doctoral students, interviews of Chinese doctoral students, classroom observations, and weekly journals

of international students. Questionnaires, interviews, classroom observation field notes, and weekly journals were transcribed. The transcriptions were verbatim in order to accurately represent the participants' responses and thoughts. After completing all of the data transcriptions, the next step was to generate the emergent themes. Coding was used to analyze the emergent themes in the study. Following the overall data transcriptions, the researcher reported the research results.

Trustworthiness of Data

The study used triangulation of interviews, questionnaires, classroom observations, and weekly journals in order to ensure the data's trustworthiness. Also, "member checking" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was used to ensure that coded data of the research findings were matched with the emergent themes. During the process, the researcher and two other graduate students were enlisted in order to check the coherence of coded data and emergent themes.

Summary

Chapter 3 offered the research methodology and procedures of conducting this case study. Data collection and data analysis were described in order to explore the research questions. Demographic information to be collected from the international graduate student participants was described. The chapter also addressed trustworthiness for examining its reliability and validity.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to explore Chinese doctoral students' academic achievement perceptions in relation to their academic motivation and identity investment in an American university. In the study, the 5 participants' names were replaced by pseudonyms of their choice: Matt, Ryan, Helen, Grace, and Anne. The forms of data collection were Chinese doctoral student participant interviews, questionnaires, classroom observations, and journal entries. The 5 participants were interviewed for 45 minutes each. They had completed the questionnaires and written nine journal entries with given journal topics. The researcher also observed the 5 participants' classrooms for 75 minutes once every other week. The participants decided which classroom the researcher would observe at the beginning of the research period. Two of the participants were males, and 3 were females.

The findings of this case study were presented in regard to research questions. Research questions aimed to investigate Chinese doctoral students' use of English and perceptions of academic achievement in relation to their academic motivation and identity investment in an American university:

Research Question 1: Findings

Research Question 1: How does international students' use of English and perceptions of academic achievement impact their academic motivation in an American university?

The interviews, questionnaire, journal entries and classroom observation data were coded first in order to describe the international students' perceptions of academic achievement and academic motivation in the American university. From these analyzed data, there were five themes emerged that represented their perceptions: (a) educational background, (b) different classroom culture experiences, (c) perceptions on professors' instruction, (d) perceptions on academic achievement, and (e) motivation toward academic achievement.

Educational Background

From the data of questionnaire and interviews, the five Chinese doctoral student participants described their educational backgrounds. The 5 participants had earned their bachelor's degrees in their native country, China. They had studied for doctoral degrees in various educational programs in the American university where this research took place. They all spoke Mandarin as their native (first) language and English as their second language. The participants started to learn English when they were sixth graders in China. Taking English courses was mandatory until senior high school. If students attended colleges in China, English became an elective foreign language course, and students had the choice of taking English or a different foreign language. Two of the 5 participants, Ryan and Anne, whose undergraduate major was English, had more English learning experience than the other 3 participants. Overall, the 5 participants had at least 7 years experiences of learning English. Regardless of their English learning experiences, all the participants had met the TOEFL and GRE requirements for admitting at the American University.

Different Classroom Culture Experiences: China Versus United States

For the 5 participants, the major purpose of coming to the United States was to study at the university. Classrooms became the environment where they spent most of their time to

engage in learning. In this study, all the participants came from China and shared similar Chinese classroom cultural experiences. According to interviews and journal entries data, they all experienced the difficulties of getting used to the American classroom culture their first few months at the university. For example, there was no set arrangement of where students should sit in the classroom at the American university. Some classrooms had traditional rows of desks, and others had long tables and chairs around the classrooms. Matt said,

> I felt like the university in the U.S.A. had more freedom. For example, the chairs and desks were not that organized in the classroom, you can sit wherever you like and the teacher does not really care. Not like in China, we still had to sit in a row style classroom in the college.

Despite the difference in the physical environment in the classroom, the participants all agreed that the major difference was the numbers of students in the classrooms. They all noticed that the American classes had fewer students than the classrooms in China did. Helen mentioned this when the researcher asked about her learning experience in the American university. She said, "In here, classroom only had 10-12 students. But in China, some of the classes had 40 or 50 students. And the classes were both for undergraduate and graduate students."

For Helen, she felt that the smaller classroom would facilitate her learning more, because the professor would have more time to help each individual in the classroom. On the other hand, Anne also seemed to agree that the smaller classroom did provide a better learning opportunity. Anne had smaller classes this semester than other participants in the study. She really enjoyed the smaller classrooms at the American university. She said,

> I used to be very shy and quiet in the classroom. In China, we had more than 30 students in every course I took, and professors did not even have time to talk to their students in the class or ask questions. But here, one of my classes had only six students in the classroom, and the professor would always pause her lecture and ask if we had any questions. We had to do discussion and debate for the class. At first, I was shy and did not talk too much, but the class was too small and I tried to speak a little more than I usually do. My professor and classmates were really nice even though sometimes I did

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not pronounce correctly. I really felt like that I had more opportunities to learn and use English in this smaller classroom that I did not have in China.

Helen and Anne expressed the importance of how smaller classrooms provide more learning opportunities in the American university. Another participant, Grace, had taken advantage of the small classroom as well. She described her classroom by saying the following:

I had a class with only three students in the classroom, and that was very efficient. Because we had a few people, the teacher would kind of do one-on-one teaching, and if we had questions, the teacher would have time to answer it. But, if it was a big classroom, a lot of students, then the teacher was not able to cover each of student's need. In that case, the teacher was less efficient in the classroom.

Comparing the classroom learning experiences in China and the U.S., the participants found that learning provided many possibilities. For the participants, the new classroom culture experiences in the American university brought them new perspectives on what the classroom was in another culture.

Perceptions of Professors' Instruction

From the data of interviews, questionnaire, classroom observation and journal entries, all participants described their observations on general classroom culture differences in China and the U.S. However, without the teachers (professors), learning would not take place in the classrooms. The participants all mentioned that the professors' instruction made an impact on their learning.

In general, the instruction referred to the professors' teaching style in the classroom. The instruction varied in relation to the participants' majors and courses. For Grace and Matt, whose majors were environment engineering and applied mathematics, most of their courses were designed as teacher-centered instruction, such as lecture.

Grace's class was mainly lecture and contained two design projects. In her class, each student had 30 minutes to present a project throughout the semester. During the classroom

observation, Grace had a few opportunities to participate in class discussion with her classmates. However, when the researcher asked her about teachers' instruction in China and the U.S., she viewed that both Chinese and American teachers relied heavily on lecture. Personally, Grace preferred the lecture instruction. She said,

> The lecture would be useful for me if the teacher went through all the materials in specific details and told us where to find the regulations and the procedures of how to design the system. If the teacher did not go through the task and I would feel like that I did not learn much for that type of the (wasted water) system. So I would prefer that the teacher gives us as much as details through lectures or handouts.

The course Matt took was mathematical theory and he was the only graduate student in the class. During the classroom observation, the majority of class instruction was lecture. Matt and other students were busy taking notes the whole time and did not really have an opportunity to participate in the class. Matt stated,

> The lecture style was about the same, but American teachers had more interaction with students. The American teacher would lecture and gave us time to see if we had questions or let us having discussion. I felt it was good for this kind of instruction.

Grace and Matt reflected that their teachers' instruction emphasized lecture, but the other 3 participants, Ryan, Helen, and Anne, held different perceptions of their teachers' instruction. Unlike Grace and Matt's courses, which were focused on lecture, Ryan, Helen, and Anne's courses tended to have various types of instruction, such as discussion, classroom activities, and student presentations. The 3 participants agreed that a variety of instructional methods did promote their learning more than lecture only.

Moreover, they felt that student-centered instruction provided them opportunities to learn actively. They viewed lecture as a one-way path to knowledge learning as opposed to actively providing input and exchanging information with the professor and classmates in the classroom. For example, Helen compared her professors' instruction in China and the U.S.:

The teachers in China just teach us the knowledge from the book and we must handle the knowledge by ourselves. But here (American university), professors will use different kinds of instruction, like books, handouts, power points and movies… Chinese teachers only focus on our scores, but here, teachers more focus on the experiences during the process of learning knowledge.

Ryan also voiced the following:

For me, reading an abstract article by yourself is a single way of understanding. But in the class, you discuss the article with classmates and they might have different opinions than mine and I gain different knowledge. I think the way (classroom discussion) is more effective and positive for me to learn.

Examining Helen and Ryan's experiences, student-centered instruction not only offered students more choices for learning, but also promoted learning interactions among professors, individual students, and other classmates in the classroom.

Although the 5 participants had quite different experiences with teachers' instruction, they all shared one very importance experience, which was interaction in the classroom. All participants admitted that lecture instruction was the most prevailing mainstream instruction in China through all levels of education. Besides, teachers were viewed as authority figures in schools, and students were not taught to question their teachers in the classroom. Therefore, all participants in the study were not used to having student-centered instruction and had not had the opportunity to interact with teachers. According to Grace,

In China, we didn't have so much interaction academically or personally with professors while we were studying. Especially we only had the professor doing the lecture and didn't have much discussion, like in the United States….it is kind of like interaction between students and professors; I think it is very good.

In conclusion, all participants had very positive attitudes toward the learning opportunities that were provided through classroom interaction such as discussion. They felt that they learned more actively by immersing themselves in the American classroom type of instruction. Certainly, the teacher's instruction had influenced the way the participants viewed

learning. As the participants experienced a different type of instruction than they were used to, they appeared to develop different learning attitudes and ideas about what it takes to be successful in the American university.

Perceptions of Academic Achievement

The questionnaire, interviews and journal entries indicated that the participants all agreed on the importance of achieving academic success and were strongly confident that they would achieve it. Interestingly, the participants did not view GPA as the measure of their academic achievement. They did recognize that the GPA was important for university records and that they had to achieve a certain GPA in their studies. Matt said "if you can study in a PhD program, a 3.0 GPA should not be a problem." The participants viewed academic achievement as a means of preparing themselves for their future careers. Three of the 5 participants wanted to go back to China after graduating from the university, and the other 2 participants wanted to stay in the U.S. after they completed their programs.

For participants, academic achievement was not only measured by individual academic performance but also related to the individual's profession in the future. First, the participants defined academic achievement as individual academic performance, such as attending academic conferences, having publications, and participating in class. For example, Ryan said,

> If it is academic achievement, it definitely relates to professional development, such as publication and conference…. Classroom performance and the quality of writing are also important. To myself, I think it is to speak in the class and being aggressive in participating in the class.

Grace also described her perspective on academic achievement:

> Academic success for me would be that you have your own ideas of major that you are studying and you know the general trend in the development of your research area. You know what kind of people do the work and you can collaborate with them. And you can publish your own paper and go to the conference to present them. You have your own ideas about your own work.

Like other participants, Helen also perceived that academic achievement was in relation to individual academic performance in her field. However, she expressed her frustration by saying,

> I will try to do my best in my course. Sometimes it is hard, because my study of finance in China is different than the finance in the U.S.A. So I need to put a lot of time and energy to learn that and I still cannot do very good sometimes…. Also, academic achievement is important to me. I want to get some opportunities to write some articles to publish, but I don't find a lot of opportunities.

Second, the participants also defined academic achievement as individual profession. All the 5 participants showed strong desires to succeed. When the participants worked hard to accomplish their academic goals through achieving individual academic performances first, they also prepared themselves for their future professions as well. They saw that individual academic accomplishment would lead them to achieve an individual profession. Individual professions for the participants included being a college professor or tenured in a company. For example, Anne talked about her perception of individual profession.

> Academic achievement should be important because it is what you are pursuing for your career. But I think academic achievement meant for me, especially for a history graduate student is how I adjust myself in the new academic environment. You have to understand how this American historical academic circle is doing, how does this coordinate and you should pay attention to make you look more professional. When you adjust yourself in the new environment, you also find a new role. I think the most important thing to me is…academic achievement also helps you to be professional in your field. How you handle your situations in the field. How you can contribute to this field. How you can make links among different scholars.

From the participants' perceptions of academic achievement, the participants not only expected to surpass professional academic performance, but they also would be required to be well prepared in future professions. In this section, the participants defined their views of what academic achievement was to them, and the next section described the participants' motivation to accomplish academic achievement.

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Motivation Toward Academic Achievement

From the interviews and journal entries, the 5 participants' eagerness to be successful in academia played a major role in learning. Four out of the 5 participants, Ryan, Matt, Anne, and Grace, all indicated that their interest in research was the major motivator for them to attain academic achievement. Through their class preparation of reading assigned materials and doing homework, they learned what they liked or disliked about the class content in relation to their research interests. Grace said, "I think I should relate to my research interest (motivation). I think it should be something that serves as my research."

The participants' liking of the class content seemed to impact their motivation to learn. Matt voiced, "If I am interested in the class and the class fits into my research area, I will be more motivated. In some situations, I am not that motivated in some required courses." Also, Ryan, responded with a similar thought:

> It depends on the topic. Like last week, we talked about language and dialects. I took a similar course before so I was very interested in it and studied a lot and talked a lot in the class. This semester, I am taking a doctoral core course and I am not that interested in this course. I focus more on my study that relates to the program.

On the other hand, Helen had a different perception of what motivated her to achieve academic success:

> The biggest one is to learn more about my major. To learn something different than in my country and also to deal with different problems. If the class has some discussion session or movie/video to see, I would think it is interesting and would be more motivated to search for more knowledge about this class.

Research Question 2: Findings

Research Question 2: How do international students reflect on and invest their identities

when using English in an American university?

Participants' Identity Reflection

      English language experience. The data of interviews, classroom observation and journal entries revealed the Chinese doctoral student participants' use of English experiences in the classrooms, and their responses were positive as well as negative. Anne described her experiences:

> Using English is fine, but sometimes it can cause problems. A good thing for using English is that there are many interactions in the class, so that it is convenient for all of us to communicate. Negative side is that sometime you may not understand what the teacher says, so that you'll miss some important things. Also, when communicating with professors to discuss projects, I cannot understand some of the teachers' words.

Ryan also provided his perspective on this topic:

> I think using English in the course is not a big problem for me. Generally speaking, I can discuss with native speakers and come up with useful information. However, there might be occasions when I had some trouble understanding American cultures. Other than that, using English helps me communicate with native speakers better.

      According to Anne and Ryan, understanding the classroom content (either conversations with the professor or American culture) was the issue relating to using English to communicate with others in the classroom. For Helen, understanding the classroom content was time constrained:

> I feel confident of using English in my course. The positive example is that I have more opportunities to share my opinion and experience, like my professor can call my name and ask me a question. The negative example is that when my professor asked a question to all students, even though I knew the answer of the question, I still needed time to translate it into English and organize it. During the time of my thinking, my classmates already answered the question, so I don't have opportunities to answer questions.

      Matt was the only participant who experienced very limited English usage in the classroom. He said, "It is a lecture form course, so I seldom use English in the class."

      Perspectives of English language proficiency and academic success. Throughout the data of questionnaire, interviews and journal entries, three out of the 5 participants recognized

that English language proficiency was very important to them because English was their second

language in their classrooms. Helen said the following:

> English language proficiency is really important for international students who want to get their degree in the U.S.A because you need to take classes and communicate with your classmates in English. It is necessary, especially when the courses have some discussion.

Then she expressed how English language proficiency was important to accomplishing

academic success:

> Academic achievement is also important for all students, everyone wants to get an A score in every class. However, for international students, it is much harder. Because we need to solve the language barrier at first and then we could understand the professors and knowledge well.

Ryan also shared a similar perspective with Helen:

> When I came here, I realized that language is going to be important to help me succeed. So I spend a lot of time improving my English proficiency…. I also realized that being active is important both in class and outside classroom. This approach motivates me on learning English language and being better at what I do.

The participant Grace expressed an opinion about speaking skills; that speaking was as

important as writing:

> I think there must be equal importance [given] to oral expression as to writing skill in English. Before I took the course, I thought for graduate students, writing skill in English should be more important. Because this is how your professors try to evaluate your academic ability. However, I feel that your oral expression is equally important. For a graduate student, intellectual exchange with other colleagues, professors should be a significant part of your learning experiences. This exchange includes presenting your paper, participation in conferences where you need very strong oral skill. This skill will not only make your ideas better understood by other people but also gain much more information in your own writing.

For participants Anne and Matt, they did not believe that English language proficiency

was that important, like the other 3 participants did in this study. Both Anne and Matt expressed

their concerns at improving their English language proficiency.

English language proficiency influences academic achievement. The discussion came

from the interview question, "Do you think that your English language proficiency will influence

your academic achievement in the class?" The 5 participants all agreed that English language

proficiency did influence their academic achievement. For Helen and Anne, understanding

specific academic vocabulary was a challenge in the classroom. Helen said, "In my finance class,

I need to spend more time understanding what the definition is so I can get the formula."

Anne also explained how English language proficiency affected her learning:

If I don't understand what the teacher is talking about, it would be hard for me to understand the course. That's very important. I have a specific example for reading the paper. That paper was full of terminology on my research interest. If I don't understand the terminology, it is difficult to understand the paper. Then that will influence my writing so that's very important. Well, I will print out the vocabulary and memorize them. But my vocabulary is not quite enough for me. Sometimes, it is just hard to keep up with all those memorizations.

The participant Matt viewed writing as being outweighed by other language skills, such

as speaking, listening, and reading. He stated,

I don't think English language proficiency is very important to study math. But when it comes to writing research, writing English becomes important. Speaking is not important, even though you don't know. You still can easily understand through [reading] a math formula. However, speaking is necessarily for me. I am tutoring undergraduates and I have to pass ITAP in order to be eligible for teaching undergraduate classes. Sometimes it is not a language program; it is just my students and I using different methods to solve the problem.

On the other hand, Ryan and Anne held opposite perspectives than Matt. They believed

that speaking was very important in relation to academic achievement. Ryan said,

Because you need to discuss in the class, if your English is not good, it will influence your communication. For example, you cannot express your thinking completely, or other people might not be able to understand you correctly. However, writing on final papers and reading responses also needs English language proficiency skills.

Learning perception changed. For the 5 participants, the process of adapting to a new

classroom culture was not easy. The discussions from their interviews, classroom observation

and journal entries showed that Chinese doctoral student participants not only tried to learn English but also learned to adjust to the new learning environment. During the process, the participants experienced struggles and challenges in relation to self-adjustment in order to achieve academic success in the American university. In the study, all 5 participants mentioned that they were more passive learners in Chinese classrooms because of the lecture method of instruction in China. In the American classroom they experienced the "freedom" to express their ideas or question their teachers in the classroom. They developed a sense of active learning and being responsible for their studies in the American university. For example, Matt said,

> I do not like to talk and I am more passive on speaking in the class….I did not speak in my classes in China. I developed this habit in China and I think it is hard for me to change it in a short time. On the other hand, if I am interested in the class I might speak more. But in a class like math theory, I do not speak much because I do not understand the theory much.

Another example was provided by Ryan:

> I think here [in the American university] is more depending on your self. In my country, like my classes in college, nobody would speak actively. In general, the teacher would call students to answer the question in China, and here students always answer the question actively in classes. I think the opportunity is held in your own hand and you should more actively participate the learning.

Helen reflected on how her learning attitudes changed. She voiced, "In the past, I finished the outline that the professors gave us and remembered it and I went to the exams. In here, I spend more time to learn the language first and knowledge on my own." In addition, she said that she had to cooperate with her classmates in a project, which she never had experienced before. Grace also had a similar experience. She responded, "Handling group work is challenging work. You need to adjust to others' schedules. Also, different people have different ideas about projects, so it is hard to compromise with each other."

Learning expectation. As mentioned earlier, the 5 participants all experienced different classroom cultures. With this in mind, the data of questionnaire, classroom observation and journal entries suggested that certain types of instruction could help them to learn better. The 2 participants Anne and Grace thought that one-on-one interaction with the professor would help them to learn the most in the courses. Anne said, "I think talking to the professor after class or in her office hours helps me the most. This is because one-on-one conversation can solve my problems more efficiently." Grace also preferred one-on-one interaction while she was learning. She answered, "I think the occasionally one-on-one instruction by the professor helps me most while I am learning the course. This kind of instruction gives me more chance to express my ideas and could get immediate response from the professor."

The 2 male participants, Ryan and Matt, believed that using examples would assist them to learn better in the classroom. Ryan answered, "Providing different perspectives on a classroom helps me a lot. The professor would use examples from different cultures to better explain the points." Matt also provided a similar statement. He said, "It is much easier to understand the course when the professor gives us detailed examples."

Helen was the only participant who perceived that class discussion would help her to learn the most in the classroom. However, she was concerned about her English language proficiency in discussions. She voiced, "Discussion requires a higher level of English language proficiency, you need to translate your thought into language."

Identity Investment Regarding Academic Achievement

The emerged theme from classroom observation and journal entries revealed that academic achievement would prepare all the Chinese doctoral student participants for future professions. The 5 participants had studied in doctoral programs for 2 years in the American

university and hoped to develop skills they needed for their professions. During the process of achieving academic success for the participants, not only did they motivate themselves to accomplish academic achievement, but they also invested themselves to achieve academic success. In her study, Peirce (1995) explained that "the notion of investment… attempts to capture the relationship of the language learner to the changing social world. It conceives of the language learner as having a complex social identity and multiple desires" (pp. 17-18).

For the participants in this study, achieving academic success involved different levels of identity investments in the classroom, such as adjusting to the American classroom culture, learning to interact with professors and classmates, and change from passive learning to active learning. For example, Anne said, "Through discussion with classmates and professors, my spoken English has improved a little bit."

Ryan described his identity investment experiences:

I know that learning a new language would change the way you think. I might be more active and participatory in class now than I was. I have also made friends with my classmates by using English. This also helped me further my language learning. I also have become more culturally sensitive on things, because I am able to differentiate similarities and differences between Chinese and English.

From the participants' learning experience in relation to English, motivation, and academic achievement, identity investment not only helped the participants to practice professional skills they needed but also (re)constructed identity for each of the participants.

Summary

Chapter 4 presented the findings of the research questions in relation to Chinese doctoral students' perspectives on the use of English, motivation, identity investment, and academic achievement. Data were collected and analyzed via Chinese doctoral student participants' interview, questionnaires, classroom observations, and journal entries. The following themes

emerged: (a) educational background, (b) different classroom culture experiences, (c) perceptions on professors' instruction, (d) perceptions on academic achievement, (e) motivation toward academic achievement, (f) participants' identity reflection, and (g) identity investment regarding academic achievement.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

Chapter 1 established the foundation for the research by presenting the fact of increasing international students who speak English as a second language in the American university and their situations for achieving academic success in the classroom. The research questions were created to guide the study. That chapter also provided the statement of purpose, the significance and the limitations of the study, and the definition of terms.

Chapter 2 framed the study by incorporating the theoretical framework and literature review and it also served the purpose of guiding the research for the in-depth exploration of international students' perception on academic achievement and identity investment in the American university.

Chapter 3 presented the research methodology and procedures for conducting this case study. Demographic information about the international graduate student participants was provided. Data collection and data analysis were described in order to explore the research questions. The chapter also addressed trustworthiness for examining its reliability and validity.

Chapter 4 presented research findings through Chinese doctoral student participants' interviews, questionnaires, classroom observations, and journal entries. Chinese doctoral student participants' perspectives on motivation, identity investment, and academic achievement were investigated in this chapter. Themes emerged in relation to the research questions in the study.

Chapter 5 offers extensive discussion of the findings through the lens of the theoretical framework and literature review discussed in chapter 2. The implications of the findings are provided as well as the future research recommendations.

Discussion of Research Question 1

Research Question 1: How does international students' use of English and perceptions of academic achievement impact their academic motivation in an American university?

Social Factors on Classroom Learning

The traditional view purports that learning a language depends on individual effort or individual internal factors. Although the theory of second language acquisition helped language learners to understand how people learned a language other than their first language, researchers like Peirce (1995) and Lee (2007) argued that second language acquisition lacks the consideration of taking individual external factors into account in the language learning context, such as the language learner's social effect. Studies (Koehne, 2006; Macpherson, 2005; Morita, 2004) found that language learners' social environment did affect how language learners learn the target language. Moreover, the first research question of this study was consistent in predicting that social environment impacts their learning context (Koehne, 2006; Morita, 2004).

The participants' responses indicate that the experiences of cross-culture classrooms brought them new perspectives of what learning is. First, they felt like that they were liberated from the organized style of the Chinese classroom. The participants liked that they actually had the freedom to choose their own seat in the American classroom. This liberation also made them take control of their learning. Second, the participants favored the small class size in the American university. They all indicated that Chinese classrooms had at least 30 students, but in

the American university they had an estimated 10 students in their classes. Although all the participants in the study had either lecture instruction or seminar instruction in their classrooms, they all gave positive responses to the small class size. The reason that they all had positive responses was that they had more learning opportunities because of access to their professors and classmates. The participants experienced that professors did have more time to interact with their students than Chinese professors did in the class, because it was easier for professors to interact with the smaller classes.

Third, although these participants perceived that there was opportunity to facilitate their learning, they also pointed out that opportunity was limited sometimes by the teachers' method of instruction. Teachers' instruction refereed to lecture (teacher-centered) or seminar/discussion (student centered) in the classes in this study. For Matt and Grace, their classes were lecture-based instruction, and they experienced very limited interaction in the classes. Therefore, they sensed the lack of opportunity to enhance the (speaking) skills they needed for academic achievement.

The other 3 participants too advantage of the opportunity to interact with professors and classmates in their student-centered classrooms. They did feel that they learned better and were benefited by the student-centered instruction.

Overall, the findings from the study do indicate that Chinese doctoral students' learning was affected by social factors, such as classroom setting, classroom size, and teacher instruction.

Chinese Doctoral Students' Definition of Academic Achievement

Research studies have shown that academic achievement can be categorized as academic success or social success (Case & Richardson, 1990; Kim & Sedlacek, 1995). In their studies, these researchers viewed earning higher GPA as reflecting academic success in school; on the

other hand, they viewed being a professional as representing social success. In 2007, Mathews found similar definitions of academic success and classified them as (a) completed at least a college degree, and (b) being a professional. In the study, however, all 5 participants defined academic achievement as being a professional.

It was interesting to find that the 5 participants cared less about GPA as a measure of success. They perceived GPA as important for passing the courses, but it was not the measure they utilized to evaluate their academic achievement. Moreover, they emphasized more the process of achieving academic success, which was to develop skills they needed for their future professions (Abel, 2002).

Only one participant wanted to work at a company after she completed the program. The other participants wanted to be professors after they graduated. For them, skills like conducting research, attending conferences, writing publications, and classroom participation were essential to prepare them not only to become professionals, but also to attain academic achievement (Li et al., 2010).

Therefore, the findings of this study reported that Chinese doctoral student participants' definition of academic achievement was being a professional by developing professional skills through the doctoral program in an American university.

The Relationship Between Motivation and Academic Achievement

The 5 participants believed that academic achievement was important to them in the sense of being a professional in their fields. The motivation to achieve academic success was their research interests in relation to their studies. From the participants' responses, they seemed to agree that motivation was a goal-oriented factor needed to accomplish academic success (Gardner & Masgoret, 2003). However, Gardner's motivational theory was criticized because it

did not consider the individual learner's social relationship (Dornyei, 1994). In this study, the participants were more motivated if the course was related to their research interests. Otherwise, they expressed less motivation for preparing for or participating in the class.

Overall, the participants' perception of academic achievement did have an impact on academic motivation. In order to achieve academic success, the participants had to have a professional level of academic performance that reflected their definition of academic achievement in the study. However, the participants showed inconsistent motivation regarding their personal beliefs about what (research interest) was important to learn and what (course unrelated to research interest) was not important to learn in the classroom (Tanaka & Ellis, 2003).

Discussion of Research Question 2

Research Question 2: How do international students reflect on and invest their identities when using English in an American university?

In this discussion, the Chinese doctoral student participants' responses regarding identity reflection were revealed first in two aspects: (a) English language usage and academic achievement, and (b) learning to succeed. Second, the international student participants' identity investment was discussed in relation to their identity reflection.

Reflection on English Language Usage and Academic Achievement

In general, the participants were confident in using English in the classroom. The participants, however, had different ideas of what aspect of English language proficiency was important to them and how this aspect impacted their academic achievement.

For Helen, Grace, and Ryan, the 3 participants reflected that speaking skill was very important to them in terms of English language proficiency. Canale (1983) and Canale and

Swain (1980) described speaking proficiency as communicate competence. However, the development of advanced communicative competence in academic settings was very much needed for the international student participants (Troike, 1984). Moreover, the term academic language proficiency (Freeman & Freeman, 1998; Krashen, 1988) was used to describe the need to acquire specific academic knowledge in English language proficiency.

For example, there were many classroom discussions for Helen. Because of the discussions, she felt like that speaking skills were very important for her to be able to participate in these discussions. However, she also felt that she needed more time to transfer her Chinese way of thinking into the American way of thinking before she could even speak in the discussion.

For Grace, she also perceived the importance of speaking skills. She found that she had to develop excellent speaking skills in performing her professional work. On the other hand, Ryan reflected on his experiences of being frustrated when his academic conversations with his classmates included an understanding of American culture. However, he realized that the only way to learn American culture was to actively communicate with his English native speaker classmates. With this in mind, developing academic utterance in the academic setting was required for international students (Ying, 2003)

Moreover, Matt was the only participant who focused on writing skills. Because of his mathematics major, he did not have much opportunity to use his speaking skills in class due to the lecture type of instruction. He did not think good speaking skills or poor speaking skills would have any impact on his academic achievement. However, he was more concerned about improving his writing skills in order to publish academic articles in his field.

Despite the participants' views of English language proficiency, the results of the study indicate that English language proficiency influenced academic achievement (Stoynoff, 1997). Helen and Grace experienced difficulties in understanding academic terminology in the classes, and this resulted in motivating them to study harder before classes. On the other hand, Ryan and Anne believed that poor English (speaking) skills would influence an individual's professional communication.

Reflection on Learning in the American University

The findings show that the participants' cross-cultural classroom experiences not only influenced their motivation to attain academic achievement but also impacted their perceptions of their social interaction in classroom practice in the American university. A research study by Rose-Redwood (2010) had similar findings to those the participants experienced. The participants came to study in the American university and also entered a world that was somehow different than what they had experienced or even expected. From the participants' responses, they first felt the freedom of being a student. They expressed the freedom of choosing their own seats and the freedom of interacting in the classroom.

In addition, the participants felt that they were responsible for their study and active in learning. The participants pointed out that discussion style instruction was helpful for enhancing their English and communicating with their professors and classmates academically in the classroom.

The sense of student freedom and student responsibility that these international student participants developed was completely opposite from what they had experienced as students in China. However, the research found a positive influence on Chinese doctoral student participants' new cultural classroom experiences.

An additional finding in the study was that Chinese doctoral student participants developed higher expectations of specific types of instruction that could be more accessible to them to help them achieve academic success. For example, discussion could be used more in order to promote learning opportunities for these international students. Although the participants perceived that discussion was helpful, they still felt that they had not been provided much opportunity in the classroom to discuss.

On the other hand, the participants also felt that they needed more time to process the information during class discussion. One participant said that her American classmates always answered the questions before her in class, although she knew the answer. At the beginning, she felt uncomfortable learning in a classroom culture in this situation. However, she was able to adjust to the new classroom culture and became comfortable enough to speak in the classroom.

Identity Investment

From the participants' responses on identity reflections, the participants' identities had changed based on their perceptions of English language proficiency, academic achievement, and cross-cultural classroom experiences. In this section, the international student participants' identity investment was revealed in relation to their reflections: (a) adjustment to American classroom culture, (b) limited opportunity to use English, (c) the need to improve English language proficiency, and (d) the desire for academic achievement, (e) the use of English, academic achievement, academic motivation, and identity investment.

Adjustment to American classroom culture. It was obvious that the Chinese doctoral student participants experienced "identity as changing over time" (Peirce, 1995) in adapting to the American classroom culture, such as the teacher's instruction style and individual learning experiences. First, the participants were not used to the class discussion method of instruction in

the classroom, because they had limited or no experience with class discussion in classes in China. However, they began to learn to participate in discussion. For Grace's example, she described herself as a shy student who did not speak much in class; however, the class she had this semester consisted of only five students, and this forced her to talk in class. She tried to express her ideas more in the class and realized that the professor and classmates were fine with her pronunciation.

One unanticipated finding was that the layout of classrooms influenced the Chinese doctoral student participants' perception of what would help them learn better. It appeared to the participants that the freedom of choosing their own seats and having fewer students in the classroom liberated them, and they went from being passive learners to active learners. The sense of freedom the participants developed helped them realize that the power of learning had shifted from the professor to the student (Baron, 1975). A possible explanation for this might be that small classrooms did provide more time for the professor to have discussions. For the international student participants, they were experiencing that knowledge was shared by both the professor and the student via discussion in the American university as opposed to their previous experience, which was depending on the professor to deliver the knowledge through lecture (Heggins & Jackson, 2003).

Limited opportunity to use English. Although the participants perceived that class discussion would open the door for them to practice English in the classroom and facilitate their learning, the actual opportunity was limited in the classroom. The results of the study present the Chinese doctoral student participants' "identity as a site of struggle" (Peirce, 1995). Helen showed her struggle of wanting to answer the questions in the classroom; however, her speaking was not fast enough so that her American classmates had already answered the questions. She

explained this situation to me as having to think in Chinese first and then translate into English before she was able to reply in class. Her identity was negotiated with the process of knowing the answer but being unable to interact in English. And she felt that if she did not have good speaking skills, it would influence her academic achievement.

Two of the 5 participants also struggled with the limited opportunity to use English. The reason for this was because instructors used the lecture method of instruction in their classes. They took notes in the classes, and the professors only paused for seconds to check if the students had questions. For the 2 participants, they not only struggled to practice English, but also struggled to even have the opportunity to speak English in class.

Improve English language proficiency. The present findings seem to be consistent with other research that found that English language proficiency was important for international students in relation to academic achievement (Ying, 2003). The 5 participants' identity reflections of "community of practice" (Wenger, 1998) addressed their need to improve their English language proficiency in regard to academic success in this specific academic setting. However, as indicated earlier, limited opportunities to use English had resulted in international student participants needing of improve their English language proficiency. The lack of interaction with the academic community made the participants fear that they were not able to prepare themselves to attain academic achievement.

The participants expected themselves to have the skills that a professional would have, such as the ability to present at a conference. However, opportunity was limited, and the participants felt the strong sense that they should have been provided opportunities to improve their English language proficiency while learning the specific subject in the program. The result

may be explained by the fact that the participants' insufficient English language proficiency had been affected by the limited opportunities provided in the American classroom.

The desire for academic achievement. Finally, the Chinese doctoral student participants' perceptions of academic achievement played an important role in academic motivation and identity investment. Peirce (1995) stressed "identity as multiple" in language learning, and this is supported by our earlier observations, which showed that international student participants had multiple identities in the American university. Their identities were as graduate students, Chinese international students, and English language learners.

With this in mind, the international student participants invested in English language proficiency and did so with the understanding that they would attain academic achievement or professional skills. During the process of investment, the international student participants' identities changed through self-reflection of how these identities negotiated different situations and coexisted with each other. It is important to understand the international student participants' identity investment of being a professional that defines academic achievement and this also leads to participants' academic motivation in learning (identity as a gradate student) and the need to improve English language proficiency (identity as a English language learner).

Use of English, academic achievement, academic motivation, and identity investment. In summary, the 5 Chinese doctoral student participants' use of English played an essential role in relation to their academic achievement, academic motivation and identity investment. For the Chinese doctoral student participants, They had to use English in order to engaging in academic activities in American classrooms; moreover, they perceived that developing higher English language proficiency was required in relation to achieve academic success. According to the Chinese doctoral student participants, their perceptions of academic

achievement impacted their academic motivation. Also, the 5 Chinese doctoral student participants reflected their identities in the processes of accomplish academic achievement and how the perceptions of academic achievement affected their academic motivation when using English in the American university. Furthermore, the Chinese doctoral student participants' identity reflections illustrated their identity investment of adjustment to the American classroom culture, the limited opportunity to use English, improvement of English language proficiency, and the desire for academic achievement.

Limitations of the Study

The results of the study show that there were elements that constrained the research. First, the selection of 5 Chinese international student participants for this study limits the generalizability of international students' learning experiences and perceptions of academic achievement and academic motivation in the study.

Second, the 5 international student participants' English language proficiency presented a limitation. Although they agreed to use English during the interview procedure, they seemed to be uncomfortable and asked the researcher about clarification of certain language use.

Third, another limitation was that the study did not investigate whether the international student participants' professors acknowledged the international students' learning experience and teaching instruction in the classroom. However the results of the study did show that professors' understanding of international students' cultural backgrounds and learning experiences was helpful to the international student participants. In addition, the findings showed that instruction differences also affected international student participants' motivation to learn.

Implications

There are several implications for university professors, the graduate school, and the university international office. First, the study does report that method of instruction and small class size influence international students' learning. For university professors, providing "learning time" (Carroll, 1963) helps international students to be familiar with course schedule, course instruction, course content and course activities. In doing so, international students learn what to expect in American classrooms and how they should prepare for American classrooms.

Second, the study does support that the university admission's English language requirement does not necessarily reflect the international student participants' English language proficiency in actual classroom practice. For example, the participants had a difficult time understanding the professor due to the speed with which he spoke. Therefore, the graduate school needs to use various English language assessment to identify what language skill international students needs in order to provide adequate assistance. Several English language assessments are suggested to identify international students' language skills other than using TOEFL as the only indication, such as International English Language Testing System (1992) and Canadian Academic English Language Assessment (2013).

Third, the study does illustrate the international student participants' identity (re)construction through their perceptions of academic achievement, academic motivation, and identity investment. It is important for university professors, the graduate school, and the university international office to understand what the international students experienced in learning and also to be able to provide assistance for international students. For example, the graduate school can provide American higher education seminars to help international students

to understand the American classroom culture. Moreover, university professors can try to understand international students' previous educational experiences and learning styles. Finally, The graduate school, university professors and international office can collaborate together in order to offer academic workshops such as writing and presenting for academic purpose to international students.

Future Research

The data collection from the international student participants' interviews and journal entries offers some unexpected perspectives in relation to learning as well as teaching practices in the classroom. The current study did not explore whether teacher instruction or the professors' perceptions of international students' academic achievement and English language proficiency had impact on international students' learning. Therefore, an interesting study would examine whether there is a difference in university professor and international student perceptions of academic achievement? How does the university professor view the relationship between international student's English language proficiency and academic success? How does different teaching instruction influence international students' learning? To what extent can teaching instruction be provided that promotes the best learning experiences for international students?

Recommendations

The results of the study suggest that the graduate school should develop various English language assessments for international students who are admitted to the university (Baik & Greig, 2009). In doing so, the graduate school can make a plan to improve international students' English language proficiency and reduce barriers to learning that are due to language issue. Moreover, the university international office should offer seminars to help international students learn American classroom culture and also provide academic workshops for international

students to improve academic English language skills. Finally, university professors may take into account international students' previous learning experiences and English language proficiency and make adjustments in teaching method (Andrade, 2010).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore international students' perceptions of academic achievement with regard to their academic motivation and identity investment when using English in the American university. Theoretical framework and literature were illustrated through the lens of second language acquisition, sociocultural perspective, motivation, academic success, and identity investment in order to examine the international students' perception of academic achievement and learning discourse. This qualitative case study consisted of collected data, data analysis, and the procedure of member checking to ensure the reliability and validity of the research. Seven themes emerged from the findings of the study. Finally, the discussion of the findings of the study was presented. The limitations, implications, and recommendations in relation to the findings of the study were provided in the hope of raising the awareness of university professors, the university graduate school, and the university international office about international students' learning and life in the American university.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

International Student Questionnaire

Please read each statement and place an X in the box that best describes you.

1. What is your gender?   Male_____   Female_____

2. What is your ethnic group?

   Caucasian___   African American___   Asian___   Hispanic/Latino___   Other___

3. How long have you been staying in the U.S.? _____

4. How long have you been studying at the university? _____

5. What is your Major? _____

6. Do you plan to stay in the U.S. after graduating from the university? Yes__ No__

Please agree or disagree with the following:

Statement	Strongly agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
I am confident that I will achieve academic success.					
I believe academic success is related to English language proficiency.					
I feel comfortable about using English in class.					
It is helpful for college professors to understand international students' cultural backgrounds and learning experiences.					
It is good for international students to maintain their first language cultures, while experiencing the American culture.					
The purpose of academic success is to find a job in the U.S.					
The college professor's instruction helps me to learn better in spite of English being my second language.					

APPENDIX B

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

International Student Interview Protocol

1. Would you please describe your educational background?

2. How long have you studied in the university?

3. Can you compare your teachers' instruction in your country and the United States?

4. According to your learning experiences, do you think that teachers' instruction impacts your learning? Why?

5. Would you please describe your learning experience in the classroom at the university in the U.S.A.?

6. What do you do to prepare for the class?

7. Do you think it is helpful if your professor understands your cultural background and learning experience?

8. How do you define academic achievement? Is academic achievement important to you?

9. Do you think that your English language proficiency will influence your academic success in the class?

10. What factors motivate you to study for the class?

11. How does the professor's instruction influence your motivation in learning?

APPENDIX C

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION RUBRIC

Classroom Observation Rubric

Participant:_____ Course: _____

Date: _____ The Observer: _____

This form is adapted from the Community College of Aurora's Mentor Program Handbook and Staffordshire University's "Guidelines for the Observation of Teaching" (2004). This classroom observation rubric is modified in order to focus on students' performance in the classroom. Each area includes prompts regarding what should be observed.

1. Learning objectives:
   - What are learning objectives for the participant in the class?

2. Student Preparation for the class session:
   - Does the participant know what preparation (reading or assignment) he or she should have completed prior to class?

3. Educational climate for learning:
   - Is the participant interested and enthusiastic?
   - Is the participant's name being called by the instructor?
   - How is the participant seated in the classroom?

4. Opportunity for student participation:
   - What are the participant's activities in the classroom?
   - Is opportunity provided for the participant to engage in the class?
   - Does the participant interact with the class or the instructor before, during, or after the class?

5. Individualization for instruction:
   - Does the participant ask for course related assistance from the instructor privately in the classroom?
   - Is opportunity provided for the participant to activate his or her prior learning and experiences?

APPENDIX D

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT JOURNAL TOPICS

International Student Journal Topics

1. Can you please describe the course that you are taking right now? What is your goal in this course? What do you expect to learn from the course?

2. Can you please describe the classroom cultures that you experience in your own country and the American university? How do the classroom cultures influence your learning?

3. How do you describe the relationship between English language proficiency and academic achievement in your learning the course?

4. Please tell me about your learning experience in this course so far? What is your favorite part in the course and why? What is your least favorite part in the course? Why?

5. How do you feel about using English in the course? Can you give me positive and negative examples of using English in the class? (It can be a conversation with the professor or discussion with classmates.)

6. What types of the professor's instruction help you the most while you are learning in the course? Does this particular instruction require a higher level of English language proficiency?

7. Tell me about your preparation for the course. What factors motivate you to study for the course? How do you achieve your goal for the course?

8. What challenges do you find in achieving your goal for this particular course?

9. How do you change your perspective or get a new perspective about English language proficiency and academic achievement in your learning the course?

10. How have you personally changed as a result of using English in the course?

APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

<div align="center">The University of Alabama
Informed Consent for International Student</div>

You are invited to take part in a research study. The study is called *International Students'*
Perceptions of Academic Achievement and Identity Investment in the American University.

Who is the researcher?

Liang-Yin Lin, a doctoral student from the University of Alabama. Ms. Lin is being supervised
by Dr. Miguel Mantero, an education professor at the University of Alabama.

What is this study about?

The study investigates how international students' perception of academic success affects their
identities in the process of using English language at the university.

Why was I asked to be in this study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are an international student.

What will I be asked to do in this study?

During the study, you will be asked to:

- Answer the questionnaire
- Answer the interview questions. During the interview process, the conversation will be
  audio recorded so that the researcher can be sure of what you said.
- Allow Ms. Lin to observe your class
- Write 10 journal topics

How much time will I spend in this study?

The researcher will observe your class over a 3-month period. The questionnaire will take about
5-10 minutes. The one-time interview will take about 45 minutes. Each Journal topic will take
about 30 minutes.

Will I be paid for being in the study?

You will not be paid for being in this study.

Will being in this study cost me anything?

There will be no cost to you, other than the time you spend participating in the study.

What are the benefits (good things) that may happen if I am in this study?

There is no guarantee that you, the participant, will benefit from the study; however, the study will provide you an opportunity to gain in-depth understanding of how your perception of academic success influences your identity investment in academia. Moreover, you may feel good about knowing that you have provided valuable information about international students' academic experiences in the American university.

What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am in this study?

There are no foreseen risks to you, but there are reasons you may not want to participate. For example, you might not want me to analyze your journal entries for publication purposes; you might not have time to consent to an interview; you might incur stress when being observed.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your identity will be kept confidential by using a pseudonym of your choice. Such information will remain the same in presentation and publications.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

All data include interview audio recordings, transcripts, questionnaires, classroom observation field notes, and journal entries. These will be stored in a locked cabinets for 3 years. When the data are no longer needed, they will be destroyed.

Can I stop participating before the study is finished?

Taking part in the study is voluntary. It is your free choice. You can refuse to be in it at all. If you start the study, you may stop participating at any time during the study. Your participation or lack of participation in the study will have no effect on your relationship with the University of Alabama.

If you have any questions while you are reading this form, please ask investigator, Liang-Yin Lin at (917) 669-1065 (llin8@crimson.ua.edu). If you have any questions later on, please contact my

advisor, Dr. Miguel Mantero, at the University of Alabama. You can contact him at (205) 348-1402 or e-mail him at mmantero@bamaed.ua.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Ms. Tanta Myles, The University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer, at (205) 348-8461 or toll free at 1-877-820-3066. You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach website at http://osp.ua.edu/site/PRCO_Welcome.html or email us at participantoutreach@bama.ua.edu. After you participate, you are encouraged to complete the survey for research participants that is online at the outreach website or you may ask the investigator for a copy of it and mail it to the UA office for Research Compliance, BOX 870127, 358 Rose Administration Building, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0127.

__ Yes, you may audio record my interview.
__ No, I do not want my interview recorded.

By signing below, you give your consent to participate in this research study under the conditions described. You will be provided with a copy for your records.

Printed Name of

Participant_____ Date:_____

Signature of

Participant_____Date:_____

APPENDIX F

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR COLLEGE PROFESSOR

The University of Alabama
Informed Consent Form for College Professor

To Whom It May Concern:

  This letter is to introduce <u>Liang-Yin Lin,</u> a doctoral student at the University of Alabama, conducting her dissertation research on *"International Students' Perceptions of Academic Achievement and Identity Investment in the American University."*
  I am asking you to be in the study because the research participant in your class has recommended your class for classroom observation in the study. The purpose of this research is to investigate how international students' perception of academic success affects their identities in the process of using English language at the university. Therefore, the classroom observation only emphasizes the participant's interaction in your classroom. There are five main categories for the classroom observation in the study: 1) learning objectives, 2) student preparation for the class session, 3) educational climate for learning, 4) opportunity for student participation, and 5) Individualization for instruction. The data will only be collected on the participants' interaction with the class and the instructor in the classroom. Your instruction and interaction with other students will not be observed or collected for this study.
  Your identity will be kept confidential by using a pseudonym of your choice. Such information will remain the same in presentation and publications. The classroom observation will be held once every other week during the 12 weeks research period. There will be six classroom observations in total. You will not be asked to do anything. There will be no cost to you. Also, there is no risk or benefit to you.
  Taking part in the study is voluntary. It is your free choice. You can refuse to be in it at all. If you start the study, you may stop participating at any time during the study. Your participation or lack of participation in the study will have no effect on your relationship with the University of Alabama.
  If you have any questions while you are reading this form, please ask investigator Liang-Yin Lin at (917) 669-1065 (<u>llin8@crimson.ua.edu</u>). If you have any questions later on, please contact my advisor, Dr. Miguel Mantero, at the University of Alabama. You can contact him at (205) 348-1402 or e-mail him at <u>mmantero@bamaed.ua.edu</u>.
  If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Ms. Tanta Myles, The University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer, at (205) 348-8461 or toll free at 1-877-820-3066. You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach website at <u>http://osp.ua.edu/site/PRCO_Welcome.html</u> or email us at <u>participantoutreach@bama.ua.edu</u>.
  By signing below, you agree to allow the researcher to observe your classroom under the conditions described. You will be provided with a copy for your records.

Printed Name: _____   **Date:** _____

Signature: _____

APPENDIX G

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Recruitment Script

Recruitment Script (verbal, in person)
My name is Liang-Yin Lin, and I'm a doctoral student from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the College of Education at the University of Alabama. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study on International Students' perceptions of Academic Achievement and Identity Investment in the American University. You may participate if you are a full time doctoral student at the University of Alabama and have lived in the United State for at least 2 years.
As a participant, you will be asked to do the following:
1. One-time Interview: The interview time is estimated at 30-40 minutes.
2. Questionnaire: Answering the questionnaire will take about 10 minutes.
3. Classroom observation
4. Journal entry: There are 10 journal topics. You are being asked to write a page of journal weekly regarding given journal topics. Each Journal entry will take about 30 minutes.

Will I be paid for being in the study?

You will not be paid for being in this study.

Will being in this study cost me anything?

There will be no cost to you, other than the time you spend participating in the study.

Can I stop participating before the study is finished?

Taking part in the study is voluntary. It is your free choice. You can refuse to be in it at all. If you start the study, you may stop participating at any time during the study. Your participation or lack of participation in the study will have no effect on your relationship with the University of Alabama.

If you have any questions while you are reading this form, please ask investigator Liang-Yin Lin at (917) 669-1065 (llin8@crimson.ua.edu). If you have any questions later on, please contact my advisor, Dr. Miguel Mantero, at the University of Alabama. You can contact him at (205) 348-1402 or e-mail him at mmantero@bamaed.ua.edu.

If you would like to participate in this research study, please sign your name bellows:
Participant Name:_____   Date:_____

APPENDIX H

IRB APPROVAL

November 14, 2012

Office for Research

Institutional Review Board for the
Prevention of Human Subjects

Liang-Yin Lin

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA
R E S E A R C H

Tuscaloosa, AL 35404

Re: IRB # 12-OR-370: "International Students' Perceptions of Academic
       Achievement and Identity Investment in the American University"

Dear Ms. Lin,

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for
your proposed research.

Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR par.
46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined
below:

*(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but
not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity,
language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or
research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program
evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.*

Your application will expire on November 13, 2013. If the study continues
beyond that date, you must complete the IRB Renewal Application. If you
modify the application, please complete the Modification of an Approved
Protocol form. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval,
except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants.
When the study closes, please complete the Request for Study Closure
(Investigator) form.

Please use reproductions of the IRB-stamped consent forms.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this
application, please include the assigned IRB application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Carpantato T. Myles, MSM, CIM
Director & Research Compliance Officer
Office for Research Compliance
The University of Alabama

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