

Ambivalent Perceptions of L2 English:

A Case Study of Neoliberal Globalization at an Elite Chinese University

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Dedication

For my dear mother

Ann Flores Madden (1936-2021)

Acknowledgements

I can't thank the members enough for agreeing to help me by serving on the committee. Their kindness and professionalism have served as the guiding light through this long, arduous process. I am especially grateful to the chair, Professor Tochon, whose passion for language, especially endangered ones, served as a noble motivator for me. His wisdom and advice will endure far beyond the finish of this dissertation.

Sadly, my beloved mother passed away earlier this year before being able to see me finish this journey. Without her love and care, I would never have gotten this far. In life, if we get anywhere, it is mostly because others have helped us along the way. My mother instilled in me a love of learning and compassion for the underdog, characteristics that serve as the foundation of this dissertation. I miss you so much mom!

Abstract

This dissertation examines the role social class plays in English language learning among students at an elite university in Northern China (hereafter pseudonymously entitled *Northern University*). I employ a mixed methods model, but the heart of my focus is on open-ended questions, qualitative interviewing and language policy analysis. Relying upon methodological pluralism, in broad terms I utilize critical discourse analysis, especially the works of Pierre Bourdieu, but I will also incorporate elements of other paradigms such as narrative analysis and postcolonial theory to add depth and nuance to the analysis.

My research questions focus on the ways, if any, that proficiency in English is used as a proxy for social class in China. I also measure the role parental social status plays in the motivation to learn English, and the way English is conceptualized as a type of symbolic capital in China. I then go on to explore the relationship between the global spread of English and its relationship to Chinese culture and neoliberal ideology, and how some of my data challenges Phillipson's (1992, 2004, 2009) linguistic imperialism hypothesis. In this manner, my study entails examining L2 English in China regarding issues of positionality, neoliberal globalization, cultural capital, asymmetrical power relations (social structure), cosmopolitanism and social-class identity, among others.

Though this study is exploratory, not confirmatory, some of the tentative implications are that globalization does not always equal homogenization, especially in powerful countries such as China, and that the neoliberalism is qualitatively different in China than it is in the Anglo-American countries such as the U.S and the U.K. To put it another way, neoliberalism is a globally circulating

capitalist ideology, but it is always locally appropriated and inflected. As I empirically demonstrate in this dissertation, neoliberal ideology in China exists in dialectical interaction with other, more powerful narrative resources such as Confucian familism and the Chinese variant of socialism. In addition to these two enduring discursive regimes, the data analysis shows how participants in my study also draw on the myths, symbols, and storylines of the Chinese national narrative to constitute and fortify their subjectivity in the face of outside cultural influences such as the growing encroachment of English and neoliberal ideology in the country.

My study hopes to contribute to the field of SLA by showing how the linguistic imperialism hypothesis is not applicable to the situation in a powerful country such as China. My study fills a research gap as to my knowledge it is the only study employing a mixed methods paradigm to research L2 English at the top university in China. This dissertation also makes a contribution to the study of the effects of neoliberalism on L2 development, and I show that neoliberalism has to be recontextualized in order to be useful to study the growing presence of English in China. Finally, my study adds to the growing body of research in SLA using the works of Pierre Bourdieu to show how social class impacts the L2 process, especially in terms of motivation.

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Chapter One: Rationale and Background

In this chapter I will give a schematic overview of the historical context in which I conducted my research. I shall first relate my research to the theory of linguistic imperialism by showing that though this idea has raised awareness about the potential harm the global spread of English may cause, its tenets are for the most part not applicable to the situation in China. Then, I will attempt to show how my research fills a gap on the role of social class on EFL among elite Chinese University students. Finally, I will give a brief synopsis of Chinese history, and then I will present a detailed account of the history of English in China.

Linguistic imperialism and English in China

Go to any major city in the world, and if you are there long enough you, will likely see signs in English and people speaking English. As English becomes more and pervasive, many scholars have become increasingly skeptical of the language's spread. These applied linguists, educators, and experts in other related fields have begun to demonstrate the way English can endanger other languages and cultures (Phillipson, 1992, 2004, 2009; Crystal, 1997; Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1995, 2000). Phillipson's work on linguistic imperialism in particular has served to raise people's awareness of the way English can serve as a vehicle of cultural, economic, and symbolic domination of developing nations by English-speaking countries, especially the United States. His hypothesis is both ground-breaking and compelling, and it has served to problematize the encroachment of English and thereby raising world-wide awareness of its potential to weaken, if not eradicate other languages and cultures.

While I tend to agree with most of the presuppositions of the linguistic imperialism hypothesis (in fact, it has served as an inspiration for my own research and teaching), the doctoral project I present here is not focused so much on the broader concept of linguistic imperialism per se. While some smaller

languages and cultures may indeed be under severe pressure due to the increasing intrusion of the English language, China has grown so economically and culturally powerful now that it can integrate English from a position of strength (Higgins, 2009). But this does not entail that English is helping China become fairer and more equitable: far from it. Utilizing the tools of critical social theory, I shall demonstrate that instead of external imperialism, the rapid spread of English may be contributing to domestic imperialism: the ways English might be worsening the socioeconomic inequality in China, and the way it perpetuates a type of symbolic violence against non-English speakers in the country.

Social class and English in China

The data I collected shows that high-status individuals can, to some extent, appropriate English to *strengthen* their cultural identities. On the other hand, disadvantaged children may not be afforded that very same luxury in the same manner as their more privileged counterparts. In this manner, my study departs from Philipson's linguistic imperialism hypothesis in that I focus on EFL in China not so much as a type of cultural imperialism-though there may be some elements of that-but rather as a type of unequally distributed cultural capital *within* the country.

According to Bourdieu (1977), cultural capital consists of the socially valued dimensions of an individual such as ways of speaking and dressing, educational credentials, tastes in art and music, and even body language; this cultural capital in turn can be converted into economic and symbolic capital. For example, in the U.S if one goes to a job interview, if one does not speak the "right way," (i.e., like an upper-middle class Caucasian with no regional accent), it might be harder for that person to land a coveted job.

Similar to economic capital, cultural capital is not evenly distributed, and as such it plays a critical role in the ways social status and power are transmitted from generation to generation. As the cultural

capital of the upper classes is used as a gate-keeping mechanism for entry into prestigious occupations and educational institutions, its asymmetrical distribution is problematic to say the least. Indeed, as a practitioner deeply influenced by critical pedagogy, one of the goals of my research is to denaturalize the link between English and its association with social superiority and intelligence. As I intend to show in the data analysis, parental social status plays a role in English proficiency, so its function as signifier of distinction in contemporary China is more about power and privilege than it is about any innate characteristics such as intelligence or intrinsic motivation.

In fact, my analysis will show that English proficiency in contemporary China is valued far beyond whatever practical utility it may offer. In the hyper-competitive environment of the top-ranked university where I collected my data, status-seeking behavior is quite prevalent. Bourdieu (1977) called this competitive desire the “struggle for distinction”. Status, which to simplify a bit, “is defined as the respect, admiration, and voluntary deference an individual is afforded by others, based on that individual’s perceived instrumental social value” (Anderson, Hildreth, & Howland, 2015, p.3). However, it is worth pointing out that while the desire for status may be a universal human tendency (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001), how status is defined is culture and context-specific. In the site of my study, the most significant metric of social position is academic achievement, of which English plays a significant role. In this way, English appears to be a signifier of valued cultural and symbolic capital among the urban youth I studied.

Nonetheless, it bears repeating that the cultural capital of the dominant classes is *not* inherently more useful or morally superior to any other cultural capital; quite the contrary. In fact, as I will show in my lengthy discussion of the various types of capital (1977), it is only through the *symbolic violence* that the cultural capital of the elites is viewed as superior. Though Bourdieu (1977) asserts that symbolic violence is usually not carried out on an explicit level, the mere association of the hegemonic class’s cultural capital with moral virtue, refinement, intelligence, and sophistication is one of the principal mechanisms

through which social classes reproduce themselves. Symbolic violence thus disparages and dismisses the folkways, norms and lifestyles of minorities and the working classes as less than; in turn, this makes social mobility more challenging for those on the lower end of the socioeconomic ladder.

Social class: Not as fluid as culture?

One of the tensions I explore in this dissertation is the scholarly emphasis on the fluidity and constructed nature of identity, which seems to contradict the essentialist self-positioning my participants exhibited (In general, they conceptualized their Chinese identity as something basic and authentic). I will discuss this dilemma at length in the later chapters, but for now I will turn to the issue of social class subjectivity. Social class does not have a clear and unambiguous definition as it may seem in lay discourse: “it is not a univariate construct; it is complex and multifaceted. Typically, it is conceptualized as consisting of both individuals’ material and social resources, such as their income and education, as well as their perceptions of their resources compared with others” (Belmi & Kristen, 2016, p. 506).

In her book, *Stratification: Social Vision and Inequality*, Botero (2005) writes about the intergenerational transmission of social class, what sociologists call social stratification:

Social stratification is concerned with the patterning of inequality and its enduring consequences on the lives of those who experience it. All of us live within pre-existing relations of unequal power, status or economic resources; and these unequal relations surround and constrain us, providing the context of our interactions, inevitably affecting the choices we make in life, opening some channels of opportunity, and closing off others. This is a condition of social life (individual choice is always limited by the choices of those around us), but stratification is concerned with how some have more freedom and choice than others. The point of stratification analysis is to see how such inequalities persist and endure – over lifetimes and between generations. (Botero, 2005, p. 3)

It is worth emphasizing her claim that the study of stratification concerns the socioeconomic fissures and the way they are passed on from generation to generation; the research in this dissertation precisely attempts to analyze the role English plays in these class fissures in China.

Social stratification operates on many levels: in face-to-face interactions across space and time, and in institutions such as education and government. As an enduring phenomenon, sometimes the metaphor of social structure is used to describe it. Although the metaphor of social structure does not capture the fact that there is some movement from class to class, the fact remains that throughout the world, classes tend to reproduce themselves: most children born poor will die poor (Kraus, Rheinschmidt & Piff, 2012). This stress on the intergenerational stability of social class was the main focus of Bourdieu's research; Bourdieu et al. (2013) especially focused on the role of the education system in reproducing inequality, a phenomenon relevant to my own focus on the role of English as a foreign language education. China represents an interesting case study in this regard: it is a nominally a socialist country where the state still plays a major role in the economy, yet is increasingly adopting free-market capitalism.

English and its role in the social structure of China

As I will demonstrate in my findings, among the young elites in urban China I interviewed, one's level of English proficiency is often utilized as a crude metric of one's social status, especially regarding educational level. It also sometimes serves as a signifier of whether one is from a tier-one city or a rural province, a distinction that carries deep social meaning in China; rural peasants in China are subject to symbolic violence as they are often viewed as uncouth, uneducated and less advanced than their urban counterparts (Hairong, 2003; Kipnis, 2007).

As a large body of empirical evidence on English in China strongly suggests that proficiency in the language projects a cosmopolitan, sophisticated, elite, hip and globalized identity, my study aims to examine the semiotic value of English, and the way it contributes to social stratification in contemporary urban China. To investigate how English in China can serve as a type of social distinction (Gao, Cheng, Zhao, & Zhou, 2005; Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2006; Norton & Gao, 2008; Li, 2009; Lo & Kim, 2012), my project hopes to build upon these previous studies.

Language and power

My project is sociolinguistic (it investigates the relationship between English and social class subjectivity) and semiotic in nature (I explore the symbolic function of English in China); it focuses on the ways in which participants use English language as a marker of elite social status, and the means by which they conceptualize their academic self-worth in terms of proficiency or lack thereof in the language. As will be explained in greater detail in the methods section, I plan to use narrative-theory inflected critical discourse analysis (CDA) as both a method and a theoretical framework. Because CDA explicitly examines both the semiotic and the material underpinnings of discourse, it will enable me to relate each participant's individual L2 English learning experience and sense of self to the broader social structure. For as one of the pioneers of CDA, Michael Halliday, argued in his, book, *Language as Social Semiotic* (1978), language is primarily about meaning making, and this meaning making is always influenced by the broader socio-political context to some degree.

Nonetheless, as will be explained in more detail in the methods sections, I also analyze some of the data with CDA in addition to using other approaches such as postcolonial theory, the linguistic imperialism hypothesis, and language socialization theory. This use of more than one scholarly paradigm is gaining increasing acceptance in the social sciences; in fact, one of the world's leading qualitative researchers, Norman Denzin (1978), terms any analysis using more than one school of thought *theoretical triangulation*. According to Denzin, this triangulation enables the researcher to analyze the data from more than one perspective and may help in rooting out the biases inherent in using one single paradigm. In any case, the heart of my methods lies in critical discourse analysis (especially the work of the eminent sociologist Pierre Bourdieu), and CDA is a "big tent," or an umbrella term if you will, that can weave together many different strands of research methods. What unites all these variations of CDA is the emphasis on power; indeed, analyzing the way discourse and power are inextricably

intertwined is *the defining* characteristic of CDA.

Consequently, CDA is a very broad scholarly practice that does not entail any one specific method, but there are some broad tendencies that underpin it: “The similarity most evident is a shared interest in social processes of power, hierarchy building, exclusion and subordination” (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 27). I broadly apply this analytical framework stressing power and hierarchy building to examine the role of English as a foreign language in contemporary China. More specifically, I pay special attention to the way English can lead to symbolic boundaries between the social classes; it is precisely this analytical focus on the imbrication between power and language that makes Bourdieu’s prolific and highly influential work so critical to this dissertation.

In addition to Bourdieu’s sociological approach, the research for this dissertation will pull together various strands of research in SLA, sociolinguistics, and critical theory. Employing a mixed methods paradigm, the work will be wide-ranging and eclectic, weaving together findings from previous research while exploring various ways the participants forge and maintain their identities as EFL learners in China. I will employ critical discourse analysis to investigate how my research participants give personal, cultural, and ideological meaning to their English language learning experiences; in other words, how they symbolically represent L2 English learning. I will also utilize critical social theory to situate the learners in my study in the broader sociopolitical contexts of globalization, asymmetrical power relations, and colonization. The key to integrating these seemingly disparate scholarly strands is the seminal work of the late French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. In the next section, I turn to the rationale of my study, which is premised on the importance of interdisciplinarity.

Contributions of this study

As the eminent applied linguist David Block (2012, 2014, 2018) has pointed out, the field of applied

linguistics, of which SLA is a subfield, has for the most part ignored issues of social class. However, in the last 5 or 10 years this has changed somewhat with a series of publications, many by Block himself. Block attributes the hesitancy of many applied linguists to address social class to a one-sided emphasis on recognition over redistribution. Building upon the work of the political theorist Nancy Fraser, Block writes that the struggle for recognition is a movement by the oppressed to rally “around particular inscriptions – such as nationality, gender, race, ethnicity, and increasingly, religion and sexuality” (Block, 2014, p.67). While these factors are indeed important, the downside, argues Block, is that the economic foundations of subjectivity and the social-class based dimensions of oppression are usually ignored. The result is the omission of any analysis of the ways economic marginalization impinges upon L2 development, especially in terms of identity.

Block explains that one reason scholars in applied linguistics have given short shrift to the material basis of oppression is partly due to the fact that the term “working class” is usually only reserved for whites, while racialized minorities are positioned according to their ethnic identities. To correct this misperception, Block advocates for the introduction of intersectionality theory into applied linguistics. Intersectionality is a paradigm for analyzing the manner in which the varied aspects of any given individual’s subjectivity function in tandem to generate marginalization as well as privilege. Intersectional approaches avoid the simple binaries of many of the previous paradigms and can thus offer researchers a greater ability to capture more of the subtleties, contradictions, nuances and complexities that characterize social relations. For example, besides race, ethnicity and gender, intersectionality considers caste, sexuality, religion, physical appearance, and physical ability, and the ways these subjectivities overlap and intersect.

While all these dimensions do indeed impact L2 development, most of them are beyond the scope of this dissertation. I focus principally on the relationship between English and the social class identities

of Chinese students in an elite university; I investigate how English is taken up to symbolically draw class boundaries. Using both qualitative interviewing as well as fixed-item questionnaires, I will look at the way English can signify valuable cultural capital in the hyper-competitive environment of the top ranked institution of higher education in all of Mainland China.

While there has been a great deal of research on EFL in China, very few of these studies focus specifically on social class, and to the best of my knowledge none of them use mixed methods to analyze EFL at the university level. For example, Butler (2013) used cross sectional data and found that class only slightly predicted English proficiency in primary schools but became a stronger predictor by high school. Feng Gao, in a literature review of his own and others' work, concluded that "Not only does social-class status influence the learning of English, but the reverse is also true: learning English affects social-class status" (2014, P.98). Another study (Li & Jin, cited in Gao, 2014, p. 99) on the effects of parental social class on EFL motivation in China, concluded there were no statistically different differences among the social strata in willingness to learn English in high school, but there was a correlation in university students.

Historical Context

In this section I will give a brief historical sketch of Chinese history. This synopsis of Chinese history will of course leave out many, many crucial dimensions; the purpose of this dissertation is not historical as such. Instead, I put forth a very selective rendering of the long 4,000 years or so of recorded Chinese history; Nevertheless, in China, the official stance is 5,000 years of history, but as there is not enough documented evidence for this extra 1,000 years, some scholars assert it is more legend than historical fact (You, 2010). I commence with this brief historical sketch in order to give enough background information to the reader so they can fully understand the context in which my research takes place. I start out by tracing the influence of Confucianism on Chinese culture, then I proceed to the foreign

encroachments of China and the resulting anti-colonial movement that culminated in the Marxist Revolution of 1949. I end the first chapter by documenting the sea-change in Chinese society after the death of Mao Ze Dong in 1976 and the subsequent introduction of capitalism brought upon by Mao's successor, Deng Xiaoping.

A brief overview

The People's Republic of China (the official name since 1949) contains one of the world's oldest continuously existing cultures (You, 2001). With almost 1.4 billion people, it has the largest population in the world. Though the historical record is not definitive going that far back, the Chinese consider themselves the first true civilization in human history. Arising in the Yellow River in what today is called the Northern Plains, China was an economic, scientific and technological powerhouse from the 1st until the 19th century.

For the most of its history, China's governing system was controlled by dynastic families, starting in the 21st century BC with the Xia dynasty. But the territory shrank grew, broke up, and re-united over various historical periods. As he reunified vast swathes of previously warring regions, Qin Shi Huang (18 February 259 BC – 10 September 210 BC) is considered the first emperor. The Qin Dynasty was followed by the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220 AD) a period in which the Chinese invented the compass and paper; they also had what scholars now regard as the most advanced techniques in medicine for that epoch (Roberts, 1999). In the next major dynasty, the Tang (618 to 907 AD), Chinese innovations included moveable type and gunpowder. This was also the time when China's economic dominance was at its peak, with the Ancient Silk Road reaching all the way to Africa and the Middle East. Nonetheless, the last feudal dynasty, the Qing Empire (1644 to 1912) saw foreign incursions into its territory and eventually collapsed. The subsequent Republic of China, which instituted many democratic reforms, was greatly weakened by the invading Japanese, and shortly after World War Two, it fell to the Chinese

Communist Party, which rules the country until this day.

Confucianism and Chinese Exceptionalism

In this section, I will set the context for my own study by reviewing some of the major dimensions of Chinese culture. Nonetheless, this section comes with a warning; as the reader will see in my discussion on the influence poststructuralism has had on social science research, any time we speak of culture, we are speaking in very broad and simplistic dimensions; a certain degree of abstraction is necessary when we conceptualize at the macro-level. But in no way do I wish to essentialize Chinese culture; China, like every other culture, has a great degree of internal variation, and many, many dimensions, sometimes even contradictory ones. In accordance with this polyvocality, I will use many linguistic hedges and disclaimers to signal to you the reader that in this section I am speaking at a very broad level, and it is not my intention to stereotype or overgeneralize. Having said that, all the work I cite in this section is by prominent scholars (most of them Chinese themselves) of Chinese history and education, scholars whose ideas help inform my research.

As we have seen in the brief overview, China has a long and venerable history, but up until fairly recently, except for a few relatively brief interludes, the country had remained relatively isolated from the outside world as the leaders tended to show little interest in foreign conquest and tended to view outsiders as inferior (You, 2010). In fact, the name in Mandarin for China, *Zhong Guo*, literally translates as “Central Kingdom.” This name is significant as it shows how the Chinese have often viewed themselves as the center of the universe, as a proud, even superior people. They have usually harbored deep mistrust, and at times hostility towards foreigners and their languages and cultures (You, 2010). Basing their culture on the pillars of Confucianism, the Chinese felt little need to look outside their borders for guidance or expertise. Established by the great ancient philosopher and politician, Confucius (551–479 BCE), Confucianism has been one of the most enduring and influential schools of thought in

human history. More than 2000 years after his death, Confucius remains an icon for China and for the Chinese diaspora until today.

His system of philosophical, pedagogical, and political thought stressed justice, individual and collective ethical behavior, hierarchy and paternalism in social relationships, benevolence, and honesty (Gao, 2009). Even today, these ancient moral precepts hold sway; Confucianism is woven into the very fabric of Chinese life. The Confucian reverence for family, respect for elders and teachers, belief in the moral virtues of education, emphasis on self-discipline and orderly social relations are still widespread in contemporary China (Li, 2003). Though Confucianism was by no means the only school of thought in ancient China-it had many competitors-it has been by far the most enduring and far-reaching.

Confucianism has been the foundation of Chinese culture, especially in the area of education, for more than 2000 years. In fact, Confucianism became so dominant for so long in China, that it could be considered the reigning *doxa* for over two millennia. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (2013), *doxa* (a term from ancient Greek meaning opinion) are the guiding social beliefs of any given era. Bourdieu only qualifies them as *doxa* when they have become so widely accepted that they are taken for granted as the natural order of things; they are rarely if ever questioned or criticized. In terms of his teachings on education, and using this definition, Confucian pedagogy has been, except for some brief interludes, the *doxa* in China for over two millennia.

Confucius' pedagogy was very sophisticated and wide-ranging and went beyond a mere theory of learning; he believed education as essential to individual and social virtue. He asserted that there was an innate drive toward learning, both internal and external:

The external refers to pragmatic acquisition of essential knowledge, whereas the internal refers to a natural drive towards the cardinal Confucian virtue 'benevolence'— becoming the most genuine, sincere and humane self possible. These two forces coexist in the Confucian tradition, although their centrality in Confucian thought is not equal. To Confucius, to be truly human is to reach the internal state of *ren*, and this is what it means to become 'a sage' the highest level of

being human. Learning is the pathway to sagehood and, in this sense, the process of learning is intrinsically rewarding. While internal moral cultivation remains the locus and focus of Confucian virtue, it is not in conflict with the external functions that learned people perform in society. Indeed, ideally, a person should become ‘a sage within and a king without’. (Gao, 2009, p. 58)

As this quote makes evident, Confucius viewed education as part of the natural order of the universe; to be learned was to be sanctified. Indeed, among the participants in my study there was a great deal of evidence of this reverence for learning.

While China was not a unified nation during Confucius’ lifetime (it consisted of warring city states and regional empires), in the era after his death, it became more and more unified. With this unification, came the need for skilled and knowledgeable bureaucrats to help run the vast country. By the time Qin Shi Huang united the country (thereby becoming the first Chinese emperor) in 221 BCE, knowledge of Confucianism formed the basis of the first ever civil service test not only in China, but in human history. This critical importance of testing remains in contemporary China, as I will show in later chapters.

Marx and “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics”

As China has legally enshrined Marxism as part of its official doctrines, and as Bourdieu (whose work constitutes the foundation of my research in this dissertation) himself retained some elements of Marxist thought in his theories, I will briefly explore Marxist ideology and its manifestations in contemporary China in this section. It is first important to point out the fact that this Marxism has been substantially adapted to the Chinese culture and social circumstances, especially since the post-reform era that began in 1979.

The Chinese revolution in 1949 was a watershed event not only for China, but for the world as well. While China was not the first country in the world to undergo a communist revolution, it was by far the most populous. However, the communism of the Chinese Revolution could not replicate itself in exact accordance with Karl Marx’s model. Marx took from Hegel the idea that history had a determinate

direction (a teleology). For Hegel, the ultimate purpose toward which history moved was freedom. Though Marx agreed with Hegel that humankind progressed toward liberation, the former was a materialist while the latter was an idealist. As a materialist, Marx (1988) believed that the economic structures, what he termed the base, are the primary factors in the march toward freedom; Hegel, as an idealist, argued that ideas and consciousness, not economic factors, drive history.

Both Marx and Hegel based their respective theories on dialectics, the premise that all progress can only occur only through the struggle, conflict, and contradiction. When humankind overcomes these contradictions, then history would reach its endpoint, and peace and freedom would finally prevail. Although Marx (Marx & Engels, 1998) maintained Hegel's idea that the endpoint of history is freedom, Marx and Hegel disagreed on how this freedom was to come about. Hegel believed that the struggle between ideas leads to progress toward liberation, but Marx pointed to the struggle between the classes and believed that only a violent revolution led by the oppressed working class could usher in true human emancipation.

In Marx's teleology, ("The iron law of history"), this freedom could only come through each society passing through the stages of feudalism, industrial capitalism, and socialism. In China's case, it obviously did not follow Marx's model as its socialist revolution occurred *before* it industrialized. China was still largely a rural feudal society in 1949 when the revolution occurred; it skipped a crucial step in the Marxist prediction. It was up to the visionary revolutionary Mao Ze Dong to adapt Marxism to the Chinese context.

Mao Ze Dong (1893-1976), the revolutionary leader and first General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, synthesized Marxism, a Eurocentric paradigm born out of rapidly urbanizing and secularizing industrial Europe, to the situation of China, a country consisting mostly of peasants living in extreme poverty at the time. Marx predicted it would be the urban working class, the proletariat, who

would lead the revolution against capitalism. China, a pre-industrial society at the time of the revolution in 1949, had only a minuscule number of proletarians. So instead of the urban working class bringing about the downfall of capitalism, Mao heralded the impoverished peasants as the bearers of revolution.

Mao was also a fervent nationalist who based his Marxism on anti-imperialist foundations (Freidman, 1994). The nationalist narrative Mao and his comrades propagated was part legend, part fact, and it goes as follows: The Han People (the dominant ethnic group in China) arose in the in what today is Northern China by conquering the backwards outsiders and implementing an advanced civilization. Then starting in the mid-19th century, China, owing to the corrupt and inept emperors of the Qing dynasty, experienced a “century of humiliation” in which foreign “barbarians” such as the British and the Japanese colonized swathes of Chinese territory and turned a good portion of the people into opium addicts. According to this narrative, it was only the heroic efforts of the Communist Party that saved the ancient and majestic Chinese people from “evil foreign forces” thereby restoring the greatness of the Chinese nation.

By fomenting xenophobic nationalism, Mao was attempting to provide the glue to unify a deeply impoverished country with strong regional cultures and identities. Mao’s essentialist narrative left out the fact that the Han people were far from a pure, genetically and culturally isolated ethno-racial group; to the contrary, they were a mixture of various cultures and ethnicities ranging from the Mongol to the Turks to Manchu to the Korean. Though modern-day archeologists no longer accept the notion of a pure Han people, the mystical belief in a genetically and culturally unified people superior to the “Barbarians” remains to some extent even in the modern era (Friedman, 1994).

Nonetheless, after Mao’s death, the overt xenophobia did decline somewhat, especially after Mao’s successor Deng Xiaoping introduced 改革开放 (Reform and Opening), which signaled a profound departure from orthodox Marxist economics to a mixed economy combining some socialist dimensions

with free-market elements. At the time of Mao's death in 1976, China had virtually no private industry or privately-owned property; the state owned all the land, and almost all the commerce consisted of state-run enterprises. This shift toward a more capitalist economy occurred in stages, starting with the privatization of agriculture, followed by the legalization of foreign investment and then to programs designed to promote and facilitate entrepreneurship.

In 1985, Deng eliminated price controls, greatly lower the tariffs on imported goods, and as a result, in 2001 China was admitted to the World Trade Organization (WTO). The ascension to the WTO triggered an economic boom in China with GDP growth reaching close to 10% a year from that year until 2018, the highest in the world for that period. In 1979, China with 800 million people at the time, had a GDP a little less than that of the Netherlands, a small country of 16 million people; by 2010 China had the second largest economy in the world and is predicted to surpass the U.S be the largest economy (as measured by absolute GDP) in less than 10 years (*Macrotrends, 2021*).

What poverty?

For the participants in my study, the extreme poverty and mass starvation of the pre-reform era is something they have not personally experienced. It is something they hear about from elderly relatives or read about in history books. Most of them are decidedly middle-class, free not of only material want, but also imbued with a sense of confidence that comes from having been equipped with the economic and social resources to help them succeed. As qualitative research on economic stratification has repeatedly shown, social class impacts not only one's purchasing power and material quality of life, "but our access to things, relationships, and practices which we have reason to value, including the esteem or respect of others and hence our sense of self-worth. It shapes the kind of people we become and our chances of living a fulfilling life" (Sayer, 2005, p.3). And as we shall see in this dissertation, it also affects the L2 acquisition of English.

Postcolonialism and EFL in China

In this part of the chapter, I will introduce the work of Xiaoyue You, an applied linguist currently at Penn. St. You, working out of a post-colonial paradigm, is a leading scholar on the history of English in China, and his work bears great relevance to my own study. To give context to You's work, I will first discuss post-colonialist thought and its relationship to my methods and some of the findings in my data.

Postcolonialism is the scholarly research of the devastation colonization has exercised and continues to exercise on countries and/or cultures that have been conquered or oppressed. It is a broadly interdisciplinary field of study; originating in literary criticism, it has branched out to anthropology, sociology, curriculum studies, applied linguistics, political science and history among others. The prefix 'post' in the term is not a temporal reference; instead, it is a methodological designation highlighting its fundamental mission: to give voice and agency to the colonized. Post-colonial scholarship does this by presenting the research from the vantage point of the oppressed instead of the oppressor (Loomda, 1998). It analyzes how imperialism, racism, ethnocentrism, and asymmetries of power have shaped the cultures of both the colonized as well as the colonizer. Post-colonialism also critically interrogates the underlying Eurocentrism that provided the ideological justification for the conquest of indigenous and Non-Western peoples all over the world.

This critical interrogation by post-colonialist scholars of Eurocentric imperialism is very much rooted in a critical awareness of language. Taking a cue from the "linguistic turn" in social science and philosophy (Young, 2001), post-colonial approaches take as axiomatic the fundamental role of language in not only epistemologies, but in the construction of the social world; more specifically, it especially highlights the discursive "othering" of indigenous peoples by the European imperialists (Said, 1979). In this manner, post-colonialism is consistent with the social constructivist approaches which in broad terms characterize poststructuralist thought. While I do not explicitly utilize a poststructuralist approach in this

research project, there are undoubtedly elements of it throughout this dissertation, especially my hesitation to express my claims with absolute certainty; therefore, I make repeated assertions that my findings are tentative, partial, and non-generalizable. Finally, taking heed of the findings from postcolonialism, I, as an outsider and white Westerner, try to adopt as much as possible an inductive approach to let my participants speak for themselves instead of me speaking for them.

The history of English in China

As I just mentioned, giving voice to members of non-European cultures is the fundamental mission of postcolonialism, which brings us back to Xiaoye You. You, a leading scholar of the function L2 English in China, argues for an agentic approach to the study of English in China, and he utilizes the nuanced, ambivalent, and ironic attitude typical of postcolonialism. His wide-ranging, insightful account of English in China, *“The Devil’s Tongue”* (2010) offers its readers a historically comprehensive history of English in the country. The name of the book originates from the extremely negative opinion that many Chinese (especially those in power) have harbored of foreign languages since the era of Confucius: non-Chinese languages were frequently referred to as the devil’s tongue.

In his work, You traces the changing nature and role of English in China from the Second Opium War (1856-1860) to the present. He starts the book with the metaphor he utilizes throughout the book: ““contact zones,” the places where two cultures encounter each other. Mary Louise Pratt defined a contact zone as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they lived out in many parts of the world today” (Pratt, cited in Carter, 2014, p. 2). Pratt then goes on to argue for a dialogical, not a unidirectional relationship thereby allowing for an agentic rendering of the colonized and oppressed. This agency in turn serves as the lens through which You analyzes the history of English in China.

In contrast to many scholars such as Phillipson (1882, 1992, 2009) who view globalization as unilaterally imposed from the West, You's book documents the way this one fundamental aspect of Western culture, the English language, has always been mediated and shaped by the local Chinese culture. The Chinese nation never adopted English wholesale; instead, it has always been appropriated and made to fit the needs of the Chinese themselves, especially the needs of those in power. Far from acting as a homogenizing and colonizing destroyer of traditional culture, You shows how L2 English has, in some cases, reinforced Chinese customs. For example, in the preface, You tells the story of when he was an undergraduate in a Chinese university in an English composition class, he and other classmates, unbeknownst to the teacher, would translate ancient Chinese legends and fairy tales for some of their journal writing assignments. According to You, these translations enabled him and the other students to maintain and affirm their Chinese heritage in the face of the cultural threat to their identities that English posed. Using personal anecdotes like this, in combination with extensive archival material and textual analysis, You is able to weave together a powerful narrative of counter-hegemonic struggle by the Chinese people in the face of the increasing encroachment of English.

In fact, You's status as an insider is one of the greatest strengths of his work. In a way he is both a participant and an observer; being born and raised in China, he is a participant. As a scholar of rhetoric and composition at a major American research university, he is an observer. Drawing upon his experiences as a native Chinese speaker learning English, he can personally relate to his own scholarly claims. As a researcher working out of a post-colonialist paradigm, he can deconstruct the Orientalism of previous depictions of China; as a professor at a prestigious institute of higher education here in the U.S., he can use all the tools of analysis of the Western academy. These shifting subjectivities from insider to outsider afford You a unique and I believe, privileged, vantage point to analyze the historical role of English in China.

Another powerful aspect of his research is You's problematization of the binaries of colonizer/colonized. Although China had periodically suffered from periods of Western military intervention, for the most part, the Chinese never viewed themselves as inferior to the Europeans; in fact, there is an enduring discourse of Chinese Exceptionalism in which the Chinese have usually viewed themselves as "Confucian nation-state acting under the Mandate of Heaven" (Jacques, 2012, p.186). In turn, this civilizational pride in being Chinese provided the psychological immunity against the corrosive hegemony of Western imperialism.

The Devil's Tongue

As the name of the You's book suggests, throughout much of Chinese history the foreign "red-haired people" were stigmatized as evil savages. Although Chinese nationalism has been mutable and capacious, absorbing and later discarding elements from ancient Confucianism to missionary Christianity, to dogmatic Marxism, the nationalist discourse of China as a unique and superior people has been a constant. You uses a plethora of sources to document this unwavering nationalistic fervor, including archival material such as student papers and political tracts; all these sources enable him to vividly depict the deep sense of national pride and xenophobia that have often served as the foundation of Chinese cultural identity.

In this manner, You is strongly rooted in a postcolonial paradigm. As outlined in the previous section, post-colonialism is a scholarly movement which challenges colonial domination in all its dimensions: political, ontological, and epistemological. It also challenges any overarching and simplistic binaries such as insider/outsider and dominated/dominating. In contrast to a great deal of Eurocentric scholarship that tends to reduce the complexity of developing countries through essentialization and temporal othering, post-colonialism stresses the mutability, hybridity, and context-sensitivity of cultural identity. Problematizing the static and homogenizing reifications of the colonizers, postcolonial identities are

conceptualized as fluid, contingent, overlapping, and open ended (De Lissovoy, 2010).

According to De Lissovoy, a major benefit of postcolonial scholarship is its trenchant critique of the asymmetrical power relationships that have structured the relationship between the European colonizers and the peoples they subjugated by force. This power differential has many dimensions, from the epistemological, to the economic, to the discursive to the educational to the political. In epistemological terms, Eurocentrism entails the privileging of Western ways of knowing over the politics of knowledge and content of education” (De Lissovoy, 2010, p. 279).

In ontological terms, colonialism was predicated a virulent form of racism and white supremacy which postulated a rigid racial hierarchy with Europeans at the top while groups such as the Chinese were viewed as backward and inferior and relegated to the bottom (Loomba, 1998). By assuming the innate superiority of European peoples, oppression and exploitation of the “natives” were given legitimacy in the eyes of the colonizers.

Nonetheless, given its immense population and geographical size and its deeply rooted nationalism, the Europeans were only able to colonize small parts of China, even at the times China was militarily weak. The colonial experience of China was in many ways qualitatively different than it was in other places as Chinese anti-colonialism was imbued with an intense patriotism and a decidedly oppositional stance toward European cultures and languages, a stance enabled by its significant power and size. Unlike the case in some colonized cultures, China had never fully experienced the psychological ravages of colonialism: there is little in the historical record indicating that the Chinese ever felt themselves to be a people “in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death of its local cultural originality” (Fanon, cited in Loomba, 1998, p. 23.) In fact, this “local cultural originality” has for the most part been zealously and explicitly protected by the Chinese state. This is not to say that China never incorporated any dimensions of Western culture; it merely means that the Chinese selectively

assimilated a limited number of foreign cultural elements from a position of confidence in their own heritage and civilizational identity. In other words, China strategically adopts bits and pieces of outside cultures from a position of strength, not from weakness.

The nationalist appropriation of English

In terms of L2 English in China, the language has continuously been harnessed by the nationalist project of the ruling Chinese elite, although it has not always had the desired effect. The Chinese government has always taken a purely instrumentalist approach to the English language; because English has become the dominant language of science and technology around the world, the Chinese government has promoted the use of the language as a neutral means to compete in the global marketplace. According to You (2010, p.267), English in China has been undergirded by a “Sino centric *ti-yong* dualism that has conceptualized English as a practical tool alien to Chinese cultural essence.” *Ti yong* roughly translates as “Chinese essence, Western practical use.” In other words, China would only instrumentally utilize a limited number of Western elements (such as English and technology), while proudly maintaining the Chinese language and cultural heritage.

As a consequence, this instrumentalist appropriation of English has been accompanied by an othering of Westerners; in official documents the introduction of English into the country was referred to as “using barbarians to control barbarians” (Hughes, 2006, p. 4). Yet as You claims, this compartmentalization has proven to be an impossible task. As any language, especially one with so much hegemony behind it such as English, bears the stamp of its culture of origin, the two cannot be totally separated out. In this manner, the English language can never be completely disembedded from its cultural roots so its introduction into China is bound to have some effects on the Chinese culture and social structure. Exploring these effects is the focus of this dissertation.

Ti-Yong dualism: An impossibility

As explained above, in the Chinese nationalist discursive regime, *ti-yong* dualism refers to the utilitarian adoption of English as a neutral means to advance China economically and technologically while still maintaining the superiority and purity of the Chinese culture. Contrary to my argument in this dissertation that EFL in China may contribute to a widening of socioeconomic disparities, You claims the opposite, arguing that L2 English may lead to a flattening of the traditionally hierarchical social structure. He states that because English is a foreign language in which critical thinking is stressed, the language has emancipatory potential. He goes on to assert that the distancing from the Chinese tradition of deference towards the elites that L2 English entails has contributed, at least in part, to the crumbling of feudalism and to the opening of China to the outside world.

However, in contrast to the rigorous standards of evidence that You uses to support all the other claims made in the book, his assertion that the critical thinking characteristic of the L2 English curriculum, especially in higher-level writing classes, has led to broad social changes is speculative at best. Moreover, critical applied linguists such as Alastair Pennycook (2001) have dismissed as imperialist and colonialist the notion that critical thinking is unique to the West. Nevertheless, despite the less-than-convincing nature of You's argument about the role of critical thinking, it remains one of the most interesting parts of the book. Just as any type of learning comes embedded in a specific culture, EFL is always historically situated in a specific time and circumstance. Much to his credit, You always places the changing approaches to L2 English in their historical context.

You also documents the ways that China's changing conceptualizations of EFL have paralleled the country's historical developments and ideological struggles. In his book, he traces the shifts in Chinese history and their effects on L2 English by periodizing the chapters. Chapter one documents the major role traditional Confucian culture played in English language teaching. Chapter two documents the

manner in which English was used by Chinese writers to communicate with the outside world about the atrocities being committed by the Japanese during their invasion of mainland China. Chapter 3 shows how the emancipatory potential of English was squelched by the ascension of Mao to power, who revived the xenophobic stance of ancient times toward foreign languages.

In chapter 4, You examines the sudden shifts in political ideology and approaches to L2 English that occurred after the death of Chairman Mao in 1976. There was a generalized softening of the xenophobic hostility to outside influences that Mao had fomented during his reign, and his successor, Deng Xiaoping, opened China's doors to the outside world with English promoted as a tool aid in the country's rapid ascension to a global economic power. In contrast to the way Mao had EFL eliminated as a subject in almost all the schools, viewing it as a dangerous symbol of the decadent, bourgeois West, to many ordinary Chinese in the post-Mao era, English has become an emblem of modernity, a gateway to the modern world of science, technology, commerce and well-paying jobs.

In the concluding chapter, "Writing in our tongue," You problematizes the notion that any particular culture or country owns English. In contrast to the critical tone that characterizes the earlier parts of the book, in this final chapter he adopts an almost celebratory acceptance of English as a neutral medium which the Chinese could unproblematically adopt to suit their own circumstances. You argues that the Chinese should take ownership of English, to treat it as they would their own language. You's evolving stance toward English through the various chapters seems to parallel, to some degree, the perceptions of English in Chinese history: from deep suspicion of English as the language of colonial oppression to an almost joyous acceptance of it as the key to economic prosperity and scientific progress. You's evolving posture toward English is also indicative of the profound ambivalence that he seems to hold in regard to the language. While You continuously refers to English as the "Devils Tongue," he never uses scare quotes around the term thereby leaving the reader to wonder if he is using the term ironically or

whether that is how he really feels about English. In the early chapters, he refers to English as the language of colonial domination and oppression, while in the last chapter he lauds the democratizing attitudes and scientific thinking that have supposedly resulted from the introduction of EFL writing into the university curriculum.

Nonetheless, the effect this ambivalence had on me as a reader actually added to the book's poignancy and intellectual rigor. Too often, scholars ignore the inherent complexity of the material they analyze, often reducing it to simplistic and Manichean oppositions. You's mixed feelings about English add an extra layer of nuance and depth to an extraordinarily complex phenomenon. Perhaps, learning another culture and its language entails both losses and gains: the loss of a falsely held notion of cultural purity and the gain of having a more fluid and multidimensional sense of self. Just like the role of English itself in China, You's narrative is dialogical and multidimensional. The intertextuality and shifting vantage points (archival materials, personal anecdotes, state political propaganda) he intersperses throughout the narrative imbue the book with a productive and lively tension.

Nonetheless, other scholars of EFL in China have taken a more measured and objective approach than You (Adamson & Morris, 1997; Adamson & Kuo, 2002). With ample empirical evidence, including statistics, official language policy documents and other archival material, Adamson (2004) traces the history of L2 English in a more chronological manner than You does (2010). Adamson documents how English speakers did not deeply root themselves in any significant numbers until the early stages of the 17th century. Their numbers were high enough by the beginning of the 18th century that a pidgin English had established itself in the southern regions of Guangzhou and Macau. Adamson asserts that the Chinese were deeply suspicious of these British traders, viewing them as a threat to Chinese culture and sovereignty. These fears were well founded: Britain soon thereafter introduced opium to China in an insidious plot to take control of the country. However, as was discussed above, You (2010) showed that

the Chinese were ambivalent about English, not uniformly hostile. and Adamson and Kuo concur with You's assertion:

What makes this phenomenal growth of English in China particularly interesting is the historically ambiguous status of the language in China. At different times, English has been portrayed as the tongue of military aggressors, barbarians, imperialists, and virulent anti-Communists. At worst, the language is associated with values that were seen to have contributed to the downfall of the last imperial dynasty of China and to threaten the survival of the People's Republic of China as a communist state. But English Language is a desirable school subject because it is the language of trade partners, investors, advisers, tourists, and technical experts, and as a subject in the curriculum, it has to be defined, promoted, resourced and taught as effectively as possible. (2002, p. 60)

In other words, as China has changed, so too has its stance toward English language learning. Especially notable in the above quote is the presence of discursive elements of neoliberalism: "trade partners, investors." I will explore the relationship between neoliberalism and English in more detail in chapter 4.

China's rapid transformation

The economic changes in China over the last 40 years have been drastic: never in the history of the industrialized world has an economy grown as fast in such a short time. According to Schoppa (2019), the per-capita GDP of China went from a 185 USD in 1978 to 8,132 USD in 2016. With over 800 million people lifted out of absolute poverty since it opened its economy in 1979, China has gone from being one of the poorest countries on the planet to the country with the second highest absolute GDP in the world. If one walks the streets of Beijing, Shanghai or Shenzhen nowadays, the cities, with their gleaming office towers and modern upscale malls with their storefronts advertising expensive Western products from Gucci, Apple, and Tiffany's, as far as the eye can see there are emblems of modern capitalism. In fact, much of the signage in the business districts in these cities is entirely in English, and one would be hard pressed to imagine that up until around 1979, China was an overwhelmingly rural country isolated from the outside world, plagued by severe poverty and hunger and run by a fervently

anti-Western, Marxist government.

However, in many dimensions, Mao's Marxism (Maoism) diverged sharply from orthodox interpretations of Marx (Lovell, 2019). Marx's teleology is predicated on a belief that history always followed the same path everywhere: societies start out feudal, then shift to industrial capitalism and then undergo violent revolutions led by the proletariat. Mao repudiated this universalistic version of communism of Marx by arguing that as each country has a unique culture and unique historical circumstances, each society will follow its own path toward communist revolution. The most fundamental divergence from Marx's predictions was that China was still feudal and had not yet transitioned to urban industrial capitalism. Instead of the oppressed factory workers rising up in the big cities, as Marx predicted, Mao believed that in China's case it would be the impoverished peasants from the countryside who would usher in the communist revolution. In terms of L2 English, Mao's thought took on a much more strident anti-colonialism than Marx's ever did and this, at least in the early days of his regime, fomented suspicion and hostility toward anything Western.

The post-Mao era

In modern China (after Mao Ze Dong and the Communist Party took over in 1949) Adamson and Kuo identified five distinctive phases: the waning of Soviet influence (1956–60); “the ‘quality in education’ movement (1960–66); the Cultural Revolution (1966–76); modernization under Deng Xiaoping (1977–93); and towards nine Years’ compulsory education (2001, p. 160). In the era of Soviet influence, the study of English was actively discouraged, and very few could speak the language at all. The study of Russian as a second language was adapted and attempting to learn English became somewhat stigmatized (being viewed as a lack of patriotism by officials in the ruling Communist Party). When Deng Xiaoping, an L2 English speaker himself, took over the reins of power in 1978 (it took him almost two years to fully consolidate power after the chaos that ensued after Mao's death in 1976), he started to implement

a vision for a drastically different China than the one he had inherited. As explained earlier in the chapter, Deng fused elements of Marxism with free market policies to create what he dubbed *socialism with Chinese characteristics*. It is precisely the introduction of capitalist economic policies into China and the subsequent opening to the outside world that created the conditions for widening inequality, the widespread study of English as a second language, and the increasing pervasiveness of neoliberal ideology, all of which I examine in the following chapters. But in order to set the stage for my research findings, I will elaborate in more detail the ways postcolonial thought has influenced all parts of my study from its conceptualization to the data collection and analysis to the conclusions.

Chapter 2 Postcolonial Qualitative Research

In the last chapter, I provided a broad, somewhat schematic account of postcolonialism. In this chapter, I will go into more detail to explore the ways in which postcolonial thought has influenced qualitative research on non-European peoples. As a phenotypically-appearing white Westerner and outsider doing research in a culture of which I had little familiarity before I moved there to work and collect data in 2013, it is imperative that I try to bring to conscious awareness of my own biases and subconscious presuppositions. I will do this by reviewing the manner in which much of Western social science on the East has distorted and caricatured the cultures it has examined. I will introduce some work from critical anthropology that serves as a corrective to these ethnocentric and Orientalist tendencies; I will show how the phenomenon of “temporal othering” distorts the research process, and how all research, including mine, is biased to some extent. Then, I will discuss how I integrate these findings into this dissertation project.

Linguistic *Othering*

One of the biggest paradigm shifts in social sciences occurred when J.L. Austin (1975) argued that language is much more performative than referential. According to Austin, while Western philosophy and social science have been primarily concerned with the constative (the truth value of propositions), most “ordinary language” actively brings into being the very things it purports to describe; language is not reflective, it does not mirror the external world, it constitutes the world. Although Austin’s work still maintained some of the cognitivism of Western philosophy, it did presage later developments in poststructuralist conceptualizations of culture. For instance, culture came to be defined as a process and not a thing.

The postmodernist nostrum that culture is rhetorical invention, not a naturally occurring entity in the

world (Andersen, 1991; Hobsbawn & Ranger, 1992), means that no culture is owned by its “natives,” no tradition or language is the sole province of any particular people. If culture is a discursive construction that can only be transmitted by individuals performing by its cultural narratives, then we must adopt a much more flexible and democratic approach to its nature. We must view it as a discursive creation and not as the reflection of some timeless essence. And in order to do so we must avoid binary “container metaphors” of either/or and instead adopt the notion of culture as a practical tool kit (DiMaggio, 1997) and cultural identity as a series or situationally available repertoires (Bunin-Benoirm 2010; Rampton, 1999, 2010). The metaphor of culture as a tool kit entails conceptualizing individuals as strategic performers who use different elements of culture to accomplish their goals and solve their problems; it also necessitates the idea of context-dependent, *multiple selves*, not a unitary cultural self. Individuals utilize the resources of whatever cultural narratives are available to them and deploying them as the need arises.

For too long, sociolinguistics and educators have overestimated the strength and durability of primary socialization while ignoring or downplaying the adaptability and flexibility of individuals (Lifton, 1992). Fortunately, much of the recent work in sociolinguistics reverses the relationship between language and culture: in early variationist sociolinguistics, identities, whether racial, national, regional or gendered, were the independent “variable” that determined language behavior (the dependent variable); however, the trend in contemporary sociolinguistics operationalizes language as the independent variable that in turn constitutes the dependent variable, identity. Because language behavior is mutable and adaptive, identity is as well. However, in early social science, there was little awareness of the role of language in constituting reality as language was viewed as a mere neutral medium that mirrored what was “really out there in the world.” The end result of this mistaken assumption was an overconfidence in the ability of researchers to study cultures other than their own; postcolonialism, which I discuss below, directly

attacks that overconfidence.

The demise of ethnographic realism

Regarding social science research, scholars working out of a postcolonial paradigm refute the possibility of ethnographic realism. Ethnographic realism is the belief that cultures are coherent, and stable entities that can be objectively described by a skilled, scientifically trained ethnographer (Clifford & Marcus, 1986). In their brilliant work, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Clifford and Marcus put forth the argument that ethnography is plagued by a lack of reflexivity on the part of its practitioners. Wedded to a scientific ideology (the belief that the rigorous methods of the “hard sciences” such as physics and chemistry can be used to study cultures), the positivist researchers that Clifford and Marcus criticize mistakenly believe in the possibility of “cultural translation.” Cultural translation is the notion that outsiders such as Western social scientists could immerse themselves in any non-Western society, and if they stayed long enough, could accurately represent that target culture in their research publications. Throughout their book, Clifford and Marcus vehemently refute any possibility of accurate cultural translation. Influenced by poststructuralist thinkers, especially Foucault, they assert that Western social science fundamentally distorts native cultures because it tends to ignore the political and epistemological issues that render accurate and objective representations by Western social scientists of non-Western cultures impossible. Instead of being objective observers who come to the ethnographic encounter as neutral blank slates, ethnographers arrive with their own biases, presuppositions, and limitations. As a result, Clifford and Marcus assert that Western ethnographers can no longer depict non-Western and indigenous cultures with full epistemological credibility. Instead, the best their ethnographic reports can hope to achieve are subjectively partial, historically contingent accounts that will always be somewhat fictitious in nature.

Nonetheless, it bears mentioning that Clifford and Marcus’s use of the term fictitious here does not

mean the ethnographers purposely attempt to deceive the readers of their accounts; it merely refers to the narrative features that ethnographers utilize to imbue their reports with holistic coherence. Clifford and Marcus argue that ethnographic accounts use literary devices to lend their writing scientific authority. Although narrative has been associated with fiction, postcolonial scholars argue that qualitative research accounts are also replete with some of the same rhetorical tropes found in fiction. For example, in most novels, all the characters are connected in some way to the storyline; by connecting all the disparate elements of the plot together, novelists give their works overarching meaning and coherence. Clifford and Marcus claim that ethnographers, just like authors of fiction, also rely upon narrative coherence. They go on to argue that all cultures are complex, multidimensional, contradictory, and mutable, but research monographs require a “compression” of all these “messy” elements to produce a coherent text or “story” fit for publication. Ethnographers do this by excluding what does not fit with the overall “plot.”

These ethnographic “plots,” similar to most works of fiction, tend to have a certain overarching theme or message (in my case, the “theme” of socioeconomic status and its relationship to L2 English in China). Clifford and Marcus show how ethnographers, in their quest for holistic unity, often distort the ‘data’ in order to make it fit into their overarching theme. These themes are usually highly abstract notions into which the everyday lived experience of the “natives” is collapsed. These abstract constructs are enabled by the asymmetries of power between the ethnographer and the people she is researching; the ethnographer is of course the one who is doing the defining:

The second is the relevance of intellectuals’ particular political projects for the development of abstract concepts. Through their ordinary participation in the political struggles of their day, social scientists’ commonsense views of their lived experience get entangled in the production of scientific concepts, with the result that the categories used for description and analysis become part of different political projects that treat abstraction and causality in particular oriented ways. Both these issues are linked to the issues of objectification and realism and their political significance for anthropological work. (Narotzky, 2007, p. 208)

The politics Narotzky refers to here is not only the power to name, but also the narrative distortions anthropologists use in their monographs to achieve scientific legitimacy and to further their own academic careers. The above quote also exemplifies one of the tenets of postcolonial and poststructuralist thought: there is an intimate causal relationship between power and knowledge (Foucault, 1981); for this reason, we researchers must be wary of artificially imposing our own categories on our participants as many positivist researchers are wont to do.

In any case, in the 35 years since Clifford and Marcus's powerful critique against positivist ethnography, there has appeared a powerful corrective toward more a more reflexive, participatory method in which the participants are viewed as collaborators, not subjects, of the research process (Lather, 1991, 1993, 1995; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Pillow, 2003; Hart, 2006). This more egalitarian approach, one designed to mitigate the power differences between the participants and the researcher, is precisely the one I take up in this research project. Accordingly, in the methods section, I will discuss in more detail these more reflexive and less hierarchical research approaches.

Time and the other

Another way asymmetrical power relations affect social science research is through the grand narrative of progress which underlies many accounts of non-Western cultures. Scholars working out of a postcolonial paradigm have shown how the ethnocentric belief that the West represents the apex of modernity, while the Global South remains far behind in terms of culture and knowledge, has shaped the tenor of much qualitative research. Mignolo (2009) goes as far to claim that without the brutal colonization by Europe of much of the world, there could be no discourse of modernity and progress because the "natives" served as the foil, the imagined opposite of the supposed development the West has achieved.

In terms of qualitative research, Fabian (1983) argues that the teleology of progress (the belief that there are universally invariant stages of modernization that all societies must pass through) that underlies modernist social science has resulted in a lack of a sense of the researcher and her informants being coevals. While in the true sense of the term, the scholar and the people she studies are coevals (people living at the same time), in metaphorical terms, they are often not. Fabian argues that in many social science monographs, the ethnographer and participants are not portrayed as dialogical or temporal equals. Due to the power imbalance between the researcher and the people she is researching, the “natives” tend to be viewed as less modern and less advanced. According to Fabian, this cultural distancing leads to an *Othering* discourse in which the ethnographers set their gaze upon ‘their subjects’ to seek out differences that signify the native’s supposed backwardness.

Granted, since the time since Fabian published his work almost 40 years ago researchers have become more reflexive and less ethnocentric (they no longer use pejoratives such as “primitives” or “savages” in their published works), but there still may be the tendency, even if on a preconscious level, to regard non-Westerners as stuck in time, as less sophisticated and modern (Young, 2001). In my case, having lived in China for many years and interacted on a personal level with so many Chinese people as friends, colleagues (including superiors), gym partners, and students, I would like to say I am better able to get past the tendency all we humans have to see outgroups through the lens of a stereotype. The fairly sizeable age difference between me and my participants may also have mitigated any proclivity to view them as less modern than me: quite the contrary. Given their greater technological proficiency, greater familiarity with pop culture, and greater fashion sense, if anything, I felt less hip and sophisticated, less *modern* than my participants.

Still, I was consciously on guard not let this lack of shared temporality, what Fabian called “*schizogenic* use of time” contaminate my research process, especially since some of my Western

colleagues teaching at Northern University did seem to fall victim to it at times. Some of the statements of these colleagues seemed to mirror the colonialist mentality. They would make comments to the effect that China was culturally backwards and that many of its people were ill-mannered. Having read widely on post-colonial theory as a graduate student in sociology (before I transferred to the SLA program), I would wince when I heard statements such as this. Though my colleagues are not the focus of this dissertation, hearing their ethnocentric generalizations heightened my awareness as to the enduring presence of the colonialist mentality, even among so called “progressives.”

Othering through Romanticization

Sometimes the temporal othering of the “natives” can take on a less malicious “othering” than the one Fabian describes and can instead lead to a romanticization of the culture under study. For example, in place of viewing their informants as backwards and crude, some qualitative researchers may go to the opposite extreme and romanticize their informants as purer and more pristine; they may see the participants and their culture as representative of a simpler, more authentic era. Clifford, the prominent anthropologist, (1998) asserts that a certain segment of alienated Western intellectuals suffers from feelings of lost authenticity, and therefore may resort to the trope of “modernity ruining some essence or source” (P. 6). In other words, they may have the proclivity to view non-Western cultures as more genuine and uncorrupted by decadent capitalist modernity. Obviously, this romanticization can seriously distort the way they conduct their research. Given the rise in globalization and internet technology, there exist fewer and fewer isolated societies that have not been affected in a certain manner way by modernity. That is to say that virtually every society in the modern world has a combination of cultural elements that have come from the outside, and virtually all of them have incorporated digital technology and adopted, to some extent, some elements of free market economies.

Though few cultures remain “pure” from outside influences, this does not mean that all societies will follow the Western model of cultural and economic development. Clifford repudiates the homogenizing tropes of unilineal progress toward modernization (such as those found in Marx and Hegel) and argues that globalization is not coterminous with Westernization and the loss of cultural diversity. Instead, culture in the contemporary world is a processual and dialectical interaction of the local with the global (glocalization), the recursive interplay of the whole with the part that characterizes almost all cultures in today’s societies (Appadurai, 2003). Appadurai utilizes the metaphor of *flows* to describe the movement of peoples, ideas, technology, and symbols that characterize modernity: instead of existing as bounded, discrete solids, cultures flow and intermingle much like liquids do.

New paradigms for the globalizing planet

In fact, many scholars have moved away from the classical paradigm and its assertion that nation, culture, language, cognitive styles and identity are all coterminous. By stressing the mutability and plasticity of ethnolinguistic identities and cognitive abilities, contemporary researchers are moving away from the mechanistic determinism of the old paradigms and discovering just how adaptive and flexible human beings can be. Instead of seeing humans as determined, limited, static, and bound by culturally specific modes of reasoning, many contemporary theorists argue for “open–systems assumptions about humans as adaptive living entities” (Kim, 1995, p. 170). According to Kim, humans have an inherent drive to adapt and grow and to have feelings of self-efficacy. When finding themselves in a strange and unfamiliar culture, humans (because they have an inherent need for homeostasis) are able to learn the normative and behavioral systems of the new society and adapt themselves to this new environment.

Participant reflexivity and qualitative interviewing

Although follow-up ethnographic interviews, such as the ones I do with 5 of my informants, are

somewhat artificial, they can be productive as they induce a heightened self-consciousness on the part of the informant. Forced to congeal and abstract from the incessant Heraclitean flux of lived reality, the informant may become more strategically aware of the self they are presenting in the interview. Given my affinity for post-positivist social science, I do not intend to rely upon the a-structural voluntarism of the ethnomethodological approach in sociology (the belief that reality is constructed principally through face-to-face interaction) but I do admit of a certain degree of agentic action on the part of individuals, even in the face of powerful structural forces.

However, theorists such as Appadurai (2003) prefer the metaphor of flows to that of structure. Following Appadurai, it would make no sense to theorize Chinese culture as either isolated from outside influences or as blindly following the Western path of modernization. In this way, I will not be “mourning the loss of some primordial essence from the past, a vision common of the prophets of cultural homogenization” (Clifford, 1998, p. 6) when I conceptualize Chinese culture. The “primordial essence” Clifford refers to is an imagined past of the culture under study that many scholars alienated from capitalist modernity believe to be superior to the present market-driven societies. In this way, this romanticization is predicated on an over-valorization of a supposedly simpler, more communal time, and it is a tendency of many anthropologists who study non-Western cultures, according to Clifford; it is especially prevalent in social scientists who equate globalization with the supposed loss of traditional cultures. While it may be true many traditional cultures have been influenced by modernity, there have also been concerted efforts to maintain time honored customs and preserve and defend non-European languages. For instance, in the case of China, the culture has been affected somewhat by Western cultures and ideas (i.e., Marxism and consumerism,), but as we saw in the discussion on Confucianism, some traditional folkways going back over 2,000 years ago remain to some extent. Moreover, as I showed earlier in the discussion on *socialism with Chinese characteristics*, the Marxism in China is far from

orthodox as it has been adopted to the unique circumstances of Chinese culture and history. And as pointed out previously, China has a long history of explicitly defending its own heritage from outside influences, and this protection continues until this day. For example, to combat the encroachment of what he sees as the decadent individualism coming from the West, Xi Jinping, the current president, has been taking steps to fortify and reinvigorate the Confucian way of life (Zhao, 2018).

The positivist gaze

When scholars in fields such as sociology and applied linguistics (the two fields my study is mostly based upon) try to adopt wholesale the methods from the “hard sciences” to do their research, certain epistemological biases may take root. While of course quantitative measures have their place, and I even use them in a small section of this dissertation, scholars must deploy them properly and with a high degree of caution. They must be put in their proper sociohistorical perspective and be triangulated. Otherwise, scholars of non-Western cultures may fall prey to the “visualist and spatialization bias” (Fabian, 1983, p. 123). According to Fabian, the visualist bias occurs when the ethnographer views the people they are studying as static objects to be analyzed and dissected in much the same manner as a paleontologist would study fossils. By overestimating their own ability to be objective, they engage in a type of what Fabian calls “empiricist phenomenalism.” This is the belief that through prolonged observation and scientific detachment the ethnographer can come to complete knowledge of the culture under study. He argues that this empiricist phenomenalism requires the “spatialization of culture.” This spatializing of culture entails conceptualizing the people under study as an internally homogenous community isolated in space and time from all other cultures.

Building upon Foucault’s (1973) concept of the gaze, Fabian argues that visualism is based upon methodological objectivism which “distinguishes the pregiven “out there” (object) from the observer

(subject) and accepts the existence of a permanent frame of reference for determining truth, rationality, or reality” (Patterson, 1990, p. 190). In his book, *The Birth of a Clinic*, Foucault (1973) cites the effect of the Enlightenment era on what scientists considered valid knowledge. The Enlightenment entailed a shift from abstract rationalism inherited from the Ancient Greeks to empiricism and its stress on “visible material reality.” With this change in basic assumptions, visual perception became to be associated with the truth (“seeing is believing”). While this association of vision with truth may seem quite harmless, Foucault believed this paradigm shift represented a major expansion in the power of those deemed to have scientific expertise. Because it is the scientists who are gazing; those being gazed upon are inert, voiceless, and powerless; there is a large gap in power between the person doing the seeing and the seen.

In terms of qualitative research, Fabian argues that this visualist bias results in monological ethnography. In a monologue, only one person does the speaking; everybody else is reduced to the role of a passive spectator. In monological qualitative research, the researcher holds all the power, and the relationship between her and the participants in her research is decidedly one way. In contrast to the power asymmetries of monological qualitative research, dialogical approaches attempt to conceptualize the informants as equal partners in conversation with each other. While Fabian concedes that ethnographers should keep a certain degree of intellectual detachment from in the interactions with their participants, they should also respect them as equals. Fabian goes on to argue that qualitative researchers must do their utmost to avoid the positivist gaze and instead adopt the guiding metaphor of dialogue; this dialogue requires “recognizing the intersubjectivity of interlocutors.”

This intersubjectivity first requires an acknowledgement of our participants as equals, and it entails an admission that our encounter with them is unique in its own way; in other words, our ethnographic interviewing itself shapes the subjectivity expressed by ourselves and our informants. These subjectivities themselves may not be generalizable outside the research encounter so we must avoid

premature epistemic closure:

Our very beings are co-constituted and developed in an intersubjective exchange with the people we work with. Acknowledging our interdependence frees us to take an empathetic and hermeneutic stance that I have termed the epistemology of the hyphen, in our qualitative research relationships, and in the process, reject the objectivist, dissociative mode of procuring research. Instead, we produce knowledge that is socially responsible by virtue of its grounding in empathy and care. Second, I suggest that we are also on the line when it comes to the relationship between ourselves, and our audiences. The constraints and freedoms that contour our voices as qualitative researchers shape not only the stories we tell about our participants, but also ourselves as human beings. We must incorporate affect into our reports for them to do justice to ourselves, our readers and listeners, and our participants. (Granek, 2013, p. 178)

As we can see in this quote, Granek is challenging the notion of the qualitative research process as consisting of autonomous, pre-formed identities expressing some essentialist version of the self. Instead, each interaction itself between the researcher and the participants constitutes a type of co-constructed intersubjectivity, an intersubjectivity based upon a mutual humanistic respect.

Intersubjectivity refers to the shared consciousness among people communicating with each other or engaging in a common task. Fabian argues that intersubjectivity in qualitative research can only be achieved through hermeneutic reflexivity; this reflexivity, among other things, involves the researcher consciously placing herself in the written reports. For instance, in place of using distancing rhetorical devices such as ‘the research was conducted,’ it is more accurate to write, “I conducted the research.” The first example, which consists of an agentless passive, gives the misleading impression that the researchers have no role in the collection and analysis of the data, and that the data speaks for itself; it seems like an attempt to mask the interpretive nature of ethnographic work and to make it appear that there are no biases or subjective assumptions going on. Of course, before collecting data we should try to eliminate as much as possible the preconceived notions we have, but we know that purely inductive research is impossible; we never come to the research process without some pre-existing assumptions.

In fact, our very research questions contain assumptions, and the data can never speak for itself.

For instance, in this project I focus on the role of social class and L2 learning in China. Implicit in this focus are the assumptions that social class exists, that it can be measured, and that language learning has a social dimension. These are all abstract phenomenon that involve some degree of subjective interpretation. In fact, even the “hard sciences” are subjective to a certain extent. Philosophers of science have convincingly demonstrated that it is impossible to evaluate a scientific hypothesis in isolation because there are always auxiliary assumptions involved (Quine, 1951). Without these background assumptions, the hypothesis would not make sense. For example, throughout this paper, I discuss motivation, a construct that has a relatively long history in the field of psychology, and more recently, in the field of SLA. But in similar fashion to my first example concerning social class, motivation is not something that can be observed directly so a whole host of presuppositions underlies its use in the scholarly research: that it is relatively stable across different contexts, that it can be measured and quantified, and that it varies from individual to individual.

Historicity and qualitative research.

These foundational background assumptions and concepts that make any research intelligible are rooted in the broader sociohistorical context and as such are not always obvious or visible (Lather, 1991; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). A term that is often used to describe this historically conditioned nature of being is *historicity* (Stewart, 2016). According to Stewart, historicity has many dimensions, but the dimension most relevant to this dissertation is the one Stewart attributes to the German philosopher Martin Heidegger. Heidegger challenged the essentialism associated with Western philosophy and religion (for example, the belief that every human has a unique core or soul). Instead of an unchanging essence separate from space and time, Heidegger argued that history inscribes itself on people and societies. In my case, the fact that I am American, speak English, and have been exposed from an early age to the ideologies of capitalism, individualism, and democracy have all had their influence on me as

a person. Consequently, when I am in China, their historicity is in general somewhat different than mine; they are more likely to be influenced by the legacies of Confucianism, collectivism, and familism. However, it bears emphasizing that history does not determine our thoughts and action, and there is *always* individual variation within cultures, but history does affect us all to some degree. Moreover, as I mentioned in the discussion on the globalization, we are all also subject to a large number of cultural traditions and discursive regimes in the modern, interconnected world, and we consequently have access to a wider range of identity options than ever, but this does not completely erase the influences of the cultural legacies into which we are born and raised.

Obviously then, the researchers' historicity, their embeddedness in a particular place and time, would also impact the way they conduct their studies. Indeed, everything from the concepts we employ, to the paradigms we adopt, to the way we formulate our research questions and analyze the data are all impacted by the historical traditions in which we are enveloped; as I showed above in the discussion on Fabian's work, the historically conditioned nature of our epistemologies (our ways of knowing) can be quite subtle. For example, why do English speakers use the phrase, "I see" to indicate understanding? As Fabian explains, this is likely due to the Enlightenment shift to scientific empiricism and its commitment to visual verification. This "visualism" has had enduring effects and has spread from the scientific realm to the everyday realm. Similarly, when social sciences switched from a more humanistic paradigm to a more positivist one, they adopted this visualist metaphor to conduct their research.

In this way, events, trends, and ideas from hundreds of years ago may still have lingering effects, and we are often unaware of them. However, by becoming aware of them we can become more reflexive and empathic researchers. For example, in the preceding pages I introduced Clifford and Marcus' (1986) trenchant critique of qualitative research in which they showed how researchers tend to arrive to the ethnographic encounter with certain preconceived notions that in turn form the foundation for an

overarching narrative; these narratives then structure the empirical findings to constitute a seamless story that is then published. The cohesion of the ethnographic story is partially enabled by elision of data that contradicts or does not fit into the foundational storyline. This biased fitting of the data to the researcher's narrative almost always occurs on the subconscious level, so fortunately, it can be mitigated through greater awareness of the ways the concepts and models scholars use may distort their findings. To address this bias, Clifford (1988) states that "ethnographic accounts should be reflexively aware of the ways in which are socio-historically situated" (p.5). Indeed, Clifford points to the historicity of all cultural interpretations, the ways all social science research is mediated by socially constructed factors such as language, race, nationality, gender, ethnicity, and class. Accordingly, throughout the whole dissertation process, I have been on the lookout for any possible subconscious biases I may hold, and I also report on the data that contradicts my narrative that social class strongly affects my participants' approach to L2 English.

Chapter 3: Bourdieu, Power and Social Class

In this chapter I will review the work of the renowned sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and the way his concepts have influenced many of the main ideas presented in this dissertation. I will then relate Bourdieu's paradigm to other theories of social class and language, especially those of Max Weber and Karl Marx. I will show how Bourdieu's selective appropriation of these classical sociologists serves as what I believe to be the most fruitful paradigm with which to study the focus of this dissertation, the relationship between social class and L2 English in China.

Social stratification

Perhaps no other scholar in recent history has been more influential in uncovering the mutually constitutive relationship between language, education, and social stratification (the enduring, inter-generationally transmitted socio-economic divisions in any given society) than Pierre Bourdieu. In his cogent, innovative, and seminal works, the distinguished French sociologist synthesizes Marxist and Durkheimian ontology, Weberian notions of the cultural nature of social-status, and sociologically informed linguistics to construct an explanatory paradigm of social structure and its tendency to reproduce inequality (Bourdieu, 1984, 1991). His wide-ranging and innovatively bold work also focuses in on the role of educational systems in producing and maintaining the class, ethnic, and linguistic hierarchies in advanced capitalist societies.

According to his thesis, capitalist societies are stratified culturally, as each class has a distinctive *habitus*, which consists of the modal personae, aesthetic tastes, speech styles and registers, cognitive socialization patterns and status hierarchies. Expanding upon Marx' notion of economic capital, Bourdieu's likens the dominant class's habitus as cultural or symbolic capital, which consists of generalized ways of acting and being of the upper classes. In turn, this cultural capital is used as the

benchmark upon which all other cultural practices and identities are evaluated. As most working-class individuals' symbolic capital differs from the archetypal habitus of the dominant classes, Bourdieu asserts that the habitus of people from the lower strata is viewed as inferior and deficient by mainstream upper and middle-class society. In this manner, Bourdieu fused Marx's paradigm of the economic with Weber's emphasis on the cultural and with Durkheim's social semiotics (Brubaker, 1985).

Bourdieu's field theory

Just like Marx, Bourdieu was a conflict theorist who viewed the struggle for power as constitutive of human existence. But unlike Marx, who viewed the fight for power as being that between workers and the owners of the means of production, Bourdieu believed that society was characterized by relatively autonomous fields:

A field is a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies. (Bourdieu, cited in Lingard, Rawolle & Taylor, 2005, p.760).

Fields are constituted through the symbolic metrics of what counts as knowledge and status, and these measuring sticks are somewhat unique to each field. Within these fields, Bourdieu argues, individuals and groups jockey for position and for the accrual of greater amounts of cultural and symbolic capital.

Nonetheless, unlike the traditional, lineal notions of causality in social science (i.e., independent variable predicts variation in dependent variable), in field theory, the *gestalt*, or entirety of relations, is the principle focus. with the principle being that "behaviour is derived from the totality of coexisting and interdependent forces" that affect the actions and thoughts of individuals and groups (Burnes & Cook, 2013 p. 410). This relational paradigm, which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 4, is adopted by

Bourdieu from the pioneering social psychologist Kurt Lewin (1952). The notion of field stands in contrast as an analytical paradigm to the substantialist models used by most social scientists. Substantialist ontologies are based on the premise that discrete, stable entities with causal properties are the motor of social interaction, whereas relational ontologies, as the name indicates, focus on the relations between entities, not the inherent properties of the entities themselves. As I myself adopt a relational paradigm in this dissertation, I will explain it in more detail, but first I will explore Bourdieu's concept of the education field.

Bourdieu and education field

In terms of the field of schooling, Bourdieu argues that because the habitus of the dominant classes serves as the foundation of the educational system, the behaviors and linguistic styles of working-class and immigrant children are disparaged and stigmatized, a process which results in their educational disengagement and alienation (Bourdieu labeled this disparagement "symbolic violence"). As teachers, all of whom are university graduates, many with advanced degrees, tend to use the speech patterns, schemata, and body language typical of the middle class, Bourdieu argues that the poor and working-class students are at an inherent disadvantage due to their differing habitus. When these working-class children go to school, their differing cultural capital is viewed as evidence of deficiency, and an entire vicious circle often takes place: the children are seen as cognitively and culturally less than, and the teachers then tend to have lower expectations for them, and these lower expectations usually result in decreased academic performance among the marginalized children.

What is more, this hierarchical ranking of the different types of cultural capital is almost entirely arbitrary. For example, the speech style characteristic of the average upper-middle class person, is *not*, in the objective sense, linguistically or aesthetically or intellectually superior to working class and minoritized speaking styles; it rather is seen as such due to the symbolic and material power the groups

speaking the so called “standard language” speak. As these emblems of elite cultural capital such as speech style are intrinsically no better than any other form of cultural capital, they only achieve distinction and prestige relationally; that is, in contrast to what they are not (i.e., the cultural capital indexed by the working classes and minoritized). Bourdieu termed this whole process of the way the cultural capital of the elites is misrecognized as inherently superior *the cultural arbitrary* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2013). Later in this dissertation, I will attempt to show how L2 English appears to be a type of this cultural arbitrary in China.

Reproduction of inequality

As Bourdieu and his colleagues have shown, it is not only in primary and secondary schooling where the cultural arbitrary occurs; it is also prevalent in higher education and the workplace. For example, the cultural capital typical of the upper classes is utilized as a gate-keeping mechanism for entry into the most prestigious universities and high-status professions, which in turn hinders the upward mobility of the disadvantaged. For example, in job interviews, the employers are looking for employees with the “right fit;” on a subconscious level, they will likely feel more comfortable with candidates who share similar backgrounds to themselves, i.e., somebody with similar cultural capital.

A similar process occurs with the imposition of the dominant curriculum in public schools. Bourdieu has argued that the content of any educational contents almost always reflects the perspectives, interests, and tastes of the ruling classes. Bourdieu termed this hegemonic imposition of the dominant classes’ world views and epistemologies by the educational system *pedagogic action*. Through this pedagogic action, working-class and minoritized students’ ways of knowing are not valued; consequently, these marginalized children often become disengaged and alienated and therefore tend to exhibit low academic performance. Pedagogic action is especially insidious, Bourdieu argues, because the dominant classes’ cultural capital is *misrecognized* and naturalized as being superior; consequently, its origins in the

asymmetrical power relations are hidden and made to appear as the natural order of things. In this manner, Bourdieu points to the education system as one of the linchpins of class domination.

At the foundation of this overarching theory of capital is Bourdieu's concept of unveiling; this unveiling involves systematically documenting the often-invisible ways that power and domination circulate. As a critical theorist, Bourdieu thought it imperative that sociologists make a decisive break away from "the common-sense experience" to document how asymmetrical power relations flow through the various types of capital. In this manner, Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction shares an affinity with the work of Gramsci and his theory of cultural hegemony. For Gramsci (1992), the wealthy and powerful in any given society inscribe the worldviews, epistemologies, norms, and status hierarchies upon the less powerful classes. Gramsci argued that the ruling elites do not normally need to resort to using military force to maintain their dominance; instead, they universalize and naturalize their particularistic ideologies and interests by making them seem fair, legitimate, and facilitative of the good of all. Though this cultural hegemony benefits the powerful at the expense of the working-classes, it is usually accepted by the latter because the former control the media, the government, and the educational systems which socialize the population into adopting the ruling class's norms and values. In this way, the material and cultural interests of the upper classes remain largely disguised because they are viewed as just and natural. In this manner, both Gramsci and Bourdieu were critical theorists whose scholarly work served to uncover the hidden dimensions of power. As I will explore later in this dissertation, the role of English seems to qualify as a type of cultural hegemony in contemporary China because it appears to privilege the upper classes while putting the working classes at a disadvantage.

Durable inequality

In the previous sections, I explored Bourdieu's mapping of the multifaceted and interlocking ways that social class domination is constituted and passed on from generation to generation. As an umbrella

term for the differing lifestyles, tendencies, predispositions, and communication styles of the hierarchically positioned social classes, cultural capital brings together all these myriad dimensions, most of them inscribed upon children in early familial socialization, that serve as the overarching sorting mechanism for enduring social stratification. Indeed, so strong was Bourdieu's belief in the causal efficacy of cultural capital that he called his work "the cultural reproduction model" (Bourdieu, 1982; Bourdieu & Passeron, 2013), though as I will discuss later in the chapter, some influential scholars find Bourdieu's mode too pessimistic and deterministic (Sayer, 2005).

Nonetheless, there is a broad consensus in the field of sociology (Brubaker, 1985; Calhoun 2006) that Bourdieu's work improved upon many of the previous theories of social class power asymmetries. These previous theories failed to specify the precise means by which social class position is passed on from generation to generation (what sociologists call social stratification). Unlike these other approaches to the study of socioeconomic inequality, which merely showed correlations between parental social status and that of their offspring, Bourdieu's concept of the habitus links both the macro (the broader social structure) with the micro (the individual's aesthetic tastes, ways of speaking, etc.). In this way, Bourdieu's conceptual framework enables researchers to avoid empty abstractions characteristic of previous conceptualizations of social structure; by linking the individual with his or her position in the broader social space with the notion of the habitus, Bourdieu and Passeron (2013) provide scholars with a methodological tool to show how social classes tend to reproduce themselves. He accomplishes this by theoretically and empirically demonstrating how the early socialization patterns inscribed upon the habitus of the children of the differently positioned social classes are strong predictors of life outcomes such as occupational prestige and income.

And it is not only cultural capital that affects one's life chances; Bourdieu also stressed the role of social capital in the reproduction of inequality. Social capital is a measure of the individual's access to

relationships, social contacts and mentors that can facilitate success in certain endeavors such as school, work, or the marriage market. It refers to the strength of one's social ties in social networks; to whom one can trust and to whom one can go to with a problem. In terms of social stratification, social capital facilitates upward social mobility for those with access to social networks composed of powerful people. Powerful people are valuable resources for job openings and alumni networks for prestigious universities. As working-class individuals tend not to have access to these types of networks, they are at an inherent disadvantage relative to those who do have access to them (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2013).

Bourdieu's Fundamental Contribution

In my opinion, the most important and seminal idea of Bourdieu's is his illustration of the ways the struggle for power and domination extends far beyond the mere political and economic spheres; according to Bourdieu, the "fight for distinction" is present in virtually all dimensions of social life, from art to language to education (what Bourdieu called "fields"). For example, Bourdieu challenged the notion that aesthetics (what is considered beautiful or of high artistic value) is based on some disinterested, universal criteria. Instead, he argued, what is considered "high art" is contingent upon the social position and power of the class with which it is associated. As was shown above, the fight for domination also exists in the field of schooling. In this manner, school curricula are similar to economic practices and are thus only "a particular case of a general theory of the economy of practices" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2013, p. 122). In other words, just as the social classes struggle over economic capital, they also compete for educational resources, though as Bourdieu and other scholars have shown, the educational system is already rigged in favor of the elite classes (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Apple, 1982).

It is worth noting that Bourdieu made these claims of class domination not by mere theoretical proclamation but rather by collecting data and analyzing actual social practices. This emphasis on practices, on what people actually do on a regular basis, was critically important for Bourdieu for

Bourdieu was far from being an armchair sociologist. Though he put forth several groundbreaking theoretical and conceptual contributions, in his heart Bourdieu very much believed himself to be an empirically oriented social scientist who stressed the importance of collecting data and running statistical tests on the data collected.

In addition to his quantitative work, Bourdieu also did qualitative ethnography, such as his famous study on rural Berber society in Algeria. In this manner, Bourdieu's work offers researchers the conceptual apparatus and social scientific tools to empirically trace the links of social structure to the actual *lived* and *embodied* experience of the individual (the *habitus*). As I will explore in more detail in the data analysis, as a result of his extended studies, both qualitative and quantitative, Bourdieu believed that everyone's life aspirations and motivation were conditioned by his or her social position, a claim which some critics believed leaves out any agency on the part of the marginalized and minoritized. As my study strives to achieve a balanced rendering of the tensions I saw in the data between impersonal social forces behind the spread of L2 English into China, and the agentic appropriation of English by some of the participants, I will provide a brief historical and theoretical sketch of the debate between structure and agency in social science research in the following section.

Social facts over agency?

The debate in sociology between those who stress structure and others who stress agency has been one the main dividing points in social theory since the time of one of the pioneers of the field, Emile Durkheim (1858-1917). Durkheim, whose life mission was to have sociology recognized as a science, postulated the facticity of society thereby setting the foundations for the structural bias that for the most part continues to this day. I use the term facticity because Durkheim coined the term "social facts." According to Durkheim (2004, p. 50), "A social fact is every way of acting, whether fixed or not, which is capable of exercising an external constraint on the individual or, which is general throughout a given,

whilst having an existence of its own.” In other words, Durkheim is saying things like culturally based symbols (what here termed “collective representations”), morals, roles, the education system, status hierarchies, gender ideologies, technologies, language, and so on all preexist the individuals born into them, and these “social facts,” as he called them, exert coercive power over individuals. For example, as a person born in the United States, I did not choose for English to be my native language, nor did I choose for society to be drastically transformed in my lifetime by the internet; these are social facts beyond my control.

More agentic paradigms

However, in contemporary social theory there have been several prominent challenges to the structural determinism of Durkheim and his scholarly heirs. For example, Jurgen Habermas (1987) integrates intersubjective phenomenology and rationalist pragmatics to propose that humans, when they come together in uncoerced communication, can achieve agency. At the risk of speculating, I believe that Durkheim would have likely viewed the intense pressure exerted on the younger generation to learn English in China as a social fact beyond individual volition; on the other hand, Habermas would have viewed this phenomenon in a less deterministic manner. He would likely conceptualize it as a matter to be debated within school systems and within families in a deliberative manner so that a consensus as to the optimal course of action could be rationally and justly be reached by relevant social actors.

The prominent social theorist Anthony Giddens also critiques structurally determinist explanations in social science such as Durkheim’s by showing that individuals have some autonomy as subjects. In contrast to the positivism of Durkheim, who conceptualized humans as subject to the laws of causality just like any other entity in nature, Giddens (1991) argues that in late modernity the power of cultural traditions has loosened its grip on individuals. With the rise of globalization, electronic communication, jet travel and secularization, individuals are not as rigidly bound to a specific place and time as they were

in pre-modern societies. In pre-modern societies, traditions, mores, and rituals are handed down from generation to generation and usually remained unquestioned; they were taken for granted as the natural order of things. But with the advent of modernity and the waning influence of tradition, individuals become more reflexive. Instead of being passively molded by one's heritage, Giddens argues that individual identity becomes a "reflexive project," and consequently individuals begin to take an active and conscious role in crafting their own sense of self and in authoring their own life narratives.

Bourdieu's approach did maintain some elements of structuralism and therefore stressed agency to a lesser degree than did Habermas and Giddens, but he always emphasized that macro-social forces could only be explained through the mechanism of individual action. As I showed in the discussion on the habitus, Bourdieu criticized previous conceptualizations of structural determinism as they did not specify the specific ways social structure affects individual practices (actual behavior). By linking the micro with the macro through his concept of the habitus, Bourdieu has reached iconic status in the social sciences and curriculum studies. And whatever the differences between Bourdieu, Giddens and Habermas, their works represented a major ontological, methodological, and epistemological challenge to the prevailing social structural determinism that had previously dominated sociology.

In this way, all three authors problematized the Durkheimian ontology that conceptualized individuals as inert objects acted upon by external social forces. Giddens also critiqued Durkheim's structural functionalism, with its assertion of collective teleology and system needs as unscientific and overly metaphysical. Moreover, by mimicking the methods of the natural sciences, positivist such as Durkheim denied any freedom of action for social actors. Giddens, Bourdieu, and Habermas disagreed with the rigid determinism that the purely structural paradigms proffered; instead, they advocated a third way, neither completely structural nor completely voluntarist. Giddens termed his new idea "structuration theory because it integrated both structural variables while considering individual action

as well. Similarly, Bourdieu believed that his paradigm fused objective social structure with individual phenomenology, which I explain in the following paragraph.

Giddens and Bourdieu argued strongly against positivist social scientists who denied any explanatory role to the individual actor. In classical sociology, the positivists like Durkheim and his contemporary intellectual heirs viewed actors as unaware of the greater structural forces shaping virtually every facet of their lives. Giddens, as was discussed on the previous page, on the other hand, argued that individuals in this current era, what he terms late modernity, are freer than ever to construct their own identities and life stories.

However, Giddens was no existentialist who believed that humans have absolute agency. He disagreed with Western voluntarism characteristic of philosophers such as Kant and Sartre, philosophers who posited the autonomous mind of each individual and the concomitant ability of each person to act rationally and be the master of her own destiny. Similarly, Bourdieu also stressed the ways social structure impinges upon individual agency, but in asymmetrical ways: given their greater access to symbolic and material capital, upper class individuals enjoy greater freedom of action than the working classes.

In fact, to simplify a bit, one can say that both Bourdieu's work and the reaction to it in the scholarly community mirror the ongoing debate between structure and agency (Brubaker, 1985). Bourdieu's work was in essence trying to find a scientific and methodological compromise between Sartre's emphasis on individual agency and reflexivity of knowing agents and the influential anthropologist Levi-Strauss's more deterministic structuralism.

Second, and in this context more important, it set against one another, in a relation of fruitful tension, two radically different approaches to the study of social life: Sartre's voluntarism and Levi-Strauss's structuralism. Sartre's emphasis on the creativity, freedom, and undetermined power of choice of the individual subject and Levi-Strauss's emphasis on the causal power of structures operating independently of the consciousness of agents came to be seen

by Bourdieu as antithetical poles of a basic opposition between subjectivism and objectivism, an opposition discernible in different guises throughout the history of social thought and constituting, in his view, the chief obstacle to the construction of an adequate theory of society. (Brubaker, 1985, p.786)

As one can see, Bourdieu was trying to forge a middle ground between agency and structure, but in my reading of him, Bourdieu leans more toward structuralism than agency, though Brubaker conceptualizes Bourdieu's theories in a more agentive fashion.

Brubaker goes on to show that Bourdieu also fused Durkheim's emphasis on collective symbols and collective memory with Marx's critical approach to class conflict. He illustrates the parallels between the "middle Marx" characteristic of the works, *Theses on Feuerbach* and the *German Ideology*. Just like Marx in these works, Bourdieu stressed class conflict as fundamental to capitalist societies, and they both were practice theorists who looked at the way class divisions are constituted and maintained by individuals in their daily lives. Bourdieu also adopted the basic ontological premise from Marx "that social being determines consciousness" (Brubaker, 1985, p. 789); in other words, one's subjectivity is socially constructed; it is not innate. In this regard, Bourdieu could be considered, at least in part, a Marxist.

Nonetheless, Bourdieu also diverged from orthodox Marxism with his appropriation of Weber. Weber took a more cultural approach to class reproduction, and as I showed earlier in the chapter, Weber focused on the symbolic aspects of social stratification (p.748). Weber did not dismiss the economic factors entirely, but he argued that any theory of social reproduction had to be multicausal and therefore include all the variables involved in complex phenomenon such as social class reproduction. Throughout his entire career, Bourdieu argued against simplistic ontologies, and this is reflected in Bourdieu's multivariate model, which avoids the reductive causality present in many of the previous schools of thought such as Marxism. In this way, I have appropriated Weber through Bourdieu in my model by analyzing L2 English in China in both the material-economic and semiotic-cultural aspects. Bourdieu

also adopted Weber's epistemological imperatives in his work; As I discuss in the following section, I too utilize Weber's seminal methodological insights to more effectively define the terms I use in this dissertation (Confucianism, familism, social class, neoliberalism and so on).

Weber and ideal types in research

As discussed earlier, when I utilize terms such as neoliberalism, Chinese culture, socialism and so forth, I am not referring to concrete, easily definable empirical referents; rather I am using these hypothetical abstractions as heuristic devices. Heuristics are aids to thought; given the complexity of language and society, they are indispensable in communicating social reality, but they are by necessity partial, subjective and incomplete. Max Weber called these concepts in social science "ideal types." He defined them as the perspectival and limited "accentuations of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct" (Weber, cited in Shils & Finch, 1997, p. 90).

For example, if I use a term such as social class, I am only pointing out one dimension of a multidimensional process. In this way, I abstract out the differences, and to some extent, I may even distort the experience and viewpoints of my study's participants by compressing them down into a few hypothesized constructs such as "cosmopolitan subjectivity" or "L2 motivation." Accordingly, I identify as a post-positivist researcher (Lather, 1993), and I make no exaggerated claims that my findings represent a full and accurate representation of informants' experience with English language learning.

Weber called these ideal types, typifications, in that social scientist takes what is more or less *typical* to a phenomenon and subsume it under a general term. However, everybody and every language uses typifications, not just social scientists:

The typifying medium par excellence by which socially derived knowledge is transmitted is the vocabulary and the syntax of everyday language. The vernacular of everyday life is primarily a language of named things and events, and any name includes a typification and generalization referring to the relevance system prevailing in the linguistic in-group which found the named thing significant enough to provide a separate term for it. The pre-scientific vernacular can be interpreted as a treasure-house of ready-made pre-constituted types and characteristics. (Schutz, cited in Kim & Berard, 1962, p. 267)

Using these typifications, Weber hoped to fuse interpretive and explanatory social science. While most social scientists have viewed interpretive paradigms, which focus on subjective localized meaning, and explanatory paradigms, which focus on generalizability and causality, as mutually exclusive, Weber conceptualized them as mutually reinforcing: in both approaches, the researcher must rely on the subjective meanings of social actors and then convert them into typifications.

Weber argued it is not objective reality as such that matters in social science; rather, the meanings people attach to that reality are the most important. Humans, unlike other objects in the material world, are not mere dependent variables in a causal chain of mechanistic forces; instead, we interpret, and to a certain extent, create, the external world through not only these typifications, but also through symbols, narratives, myths, schemata and numerous micro-interactions between individuals. Although Weber did argue that social phenomena such as social class and religion could be studied scientifically, he believed that sociology could not rely on strictly naturalistic methods in the same manner as the “hard sciences” such as physics and chemistry.

Naturalism in social science

Naturalism (Bevir & Blakely, 2018) is both a method as well as a philosophy. As a philosophy, it asserts that only natural entities exist; there are no such things as spirits, ghosts, deities or supernatural beings (this distinction is far beyond the scope of my research). As a scientific approach, naturalism asserts that humans are no different from other physical entities such as atoms or oxygen or chemical bonds; they are subject to universal, immutable and causal laws. As a result, naturalist methods usually

employ an etic perspective. An etic approach in social science attempts to objectively record and measure observable social action from a neutral outsider's perspective, and it attempts to discover invariant causal laws that hold true regardless of time or place. Moreover, in etic paradigms, the cultural phenomenon under study are analyzed and interpreted using the researcher's terms, categories and classification systems.

Bevir and Blakely (2018) trace naturalism all the way back to Thomas Hobbes' classical work, the *Leviathan*. Inspired by Galileo's discoveries in physics, and Descartes' work in geometry, Hobbes likened human psychology to the push/pull mechanism of springs and cogs in machines; he believed researchers could study humans using the methods of the natural sciences. In etic approaches, humans have no reflexivity and no agency. The opposite of the deductive etic approach is an emic approach, (explained in more detail in chapter 6), which attempts to delve into the lived perspectives of the participants' subjective experience; it is inductive in that the researcher does not impose her own categories on the data but instead tries to interpret the phenomenon from the informants' perspectives.

Weber's ideal types combine interpretative and explanatory functions; they causally relate formal features of social life to their culturally significant elements, to typified subjective meanings seen as antecedent causal factors. Ideal types are heuristic aids designed to help impute causes to events shaped by both subjective and non-subjective factors "As a discipline concerned with ideal-type construction, sociology occupies a middle ground between the nomothetic search for highly abstract concepts, subsuming events under analytic laws, and the ideographic interest in the serial causality of unique events" (Zaret, 1980, p.1196). This "middle ground" is precisely the one Weber and Bourdieu operate in; and in my research, I take up this approach from them.

Given his "middle ground" approach, the overall tenor of Weber's work problematizes Marx's sweeping theory of class domination. Although Weber viewed Marx's theory as having some utility, he

believed it was totalizing and reductive. By interrogating macro-level grand narratives with overly scientific pretensions such as those of Marx, Weber presaged some of the developments in poststructuralist and postmodernist thought. While Weber certainly maintained strong elements of positivism throughout his career, and while he did view himself as forging sociology as a rigorously empirical science, he did not believe in naïve empiricism, the belief that data is unmediated and therefore speaks for itself. Weber was an empiricist, but not a naïve one; he asserted that social scientists must always use conceptual frameworks and theories to analyze and interpret their findings, and that total objectivity is therefore impossible; in this way, Weber could be considered a post-positivist.

Subjective empiricism

Weber did believe that observable facts were the bedrock of science, but he argued that social life is undergirded by subjective meaning. In fact, Weber thoroughly grounded his work on both the empirical methods of science as well as the phenomenological tradition in continental philosophy. As Bourdieu himself was strongly influenced by Weber, it is worth giving a brief sketch of the latter's intellectual roots. From continental philosophy, Weber culled an awareness of the way humans, unlike other objects in the natural world, are conscious beings who ascribe complex meanings to the world around them.

The phenomenological tradition is a branch of philosophy dating back to the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). "Phenomenology strives to understand the world from the phenomena of local experience as seen from the perspective of the participants in relation to others' perceptions and experiences, and in locally contingent contexts, not through pre-established objective categories" (Kramsch, 2002, p.9). Unlike positivism with its purportedly objective scientific categories taken from the perspective of the researcher, phenomenological social science focuses on the subjective life world of the people being studied. Taking his cue from Husserl, Weber believed that social scientists should

not posit transcendent, law-like generalities as the phenomenological lifeworld of humans are heavily localized and context-dependent; these lifeworlds are not universal and timeless. The fact that humans are only conditioned, but not determined, by external factors such as social structure, therefore leave some room for the agentic actions of individual social actors. In the next section, I explore the role of agency in L2 development.

Individual and collective agency and language learning

Although Bourdieu's work in many ways remains more relevant than ever given the increasing worldwide pervasiveness of neoliberalism and consumerism, some critics have noted that the overall tenor of his work is overly deterministic in that it assigns almost exclusive causal status to social class origins (Sayer, 2005). These critics assert that Bourdieu exaggerates the internal homogeneity of each social stratum while failing to take into account the ability of working-class individuals to imagine a future different from the one they are socialized into. For example, Sayer's 2005 book, *The Moral Significance of Class*, criticized Bourdieu's theories for being "Hobbesian" in their excessive focus on the struggle for power and prestige thereby discounting the transformative capabilities of individuals and social movements. Sayer also points out that Bourdieu overestimates the fixity and determinateness of collective identities while underestimating their fluid, volitional, and situationally variable nature.

With this criticism in mind, my research project will not take social class origin and its relationship to English as a given, but it will rather investigate both how L2 English affects class identity and is affected by it (a bidirectional as opposed to unilinear model). I will thereby expand upon previous research in sociolinguistics and SLA (Kramsch, 2006; Kubota & Lin, 2009; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Pavlenko, 2003; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000, 2011) investigating the transformative dimension of L2 learning, the way acquiring an L2 can change one's self-concept.

To do this, in the qualitative interviewing and open-ended question items I put forth specific questions about imagination, agency, and the way learning transforms the L2 learner's sense of self, especially in terms of their social-class identity. I inquired about the role English plays in their future career plans and life goals. I did this principally in the open-ended questions about the way the participants use their perceived proficiency or lack thereof in English as a resource to place themselves and others in the social hierarchy of the intensely competitive university where I collected my data. In the analysis that follows, I will incorporate this part of my project by building upon previous research empirically documenting the ways in which identity is not a static, monolithic, and unchangeable entity that merely precedes L2 development. Rather, it is a process whereby the second language learning experience itself impacts the social identity of L2 learners (Block, 2007; Chan, 2002; Dagenais, 2003; Gao, Cheng, Zhao, & Zhou, 2005; Duff, 2007; Hasan, 2003; Huhtala & Leti-Eklund, 2010; Kinginger, 2004; Kramsch, 2012; Li, 2011; Lo & Kim, 2012). To put it another way, I look at the ways identity both partially constitutes and is partially constituted by L2 development. In this manner, my research questions center on the manner in which learner subjectivity is both reflective of the past as well as being future oriented and imagined. This bidirectional and processual relationship is also consistent with complexity theory in SLA (Larsen-Freeman 2007; 2013), a broader paradigm in which my research is situated. In the next chapter, I will explore this lively tension between the imaginative powers of the "future self" and the more structural explanations of class-based theories in sociology.

Chapter 4: Bourdieu and SLA

In this chapter I will attempt to bridge the focus of the last chapter (Bourdieu's sociological theories) with contemporary work in SLA. While SLA primarily originated in linguistics and educational psychology, two fields based on cognitivist paradigms that focus on the isolated individual (Atkinson, 2010), in the last 10 or 15 years there has been a rapidly growing scholarly focus on the social dimensions of language learning, and many of these scholars have been using Bourdieu's ideas to focus on the extra-individual factors in L2 development. I will trace Bourdieu's influence through the work of Bonny Norton and others who show how asymmetrical power relations impact L2 learning, especially in terms of motivation. At the end of the chapter, I will show how Bourdieu's seminal concept of cultural capital can be used to analyze *cosmopolitan subjectivity*, a theme I found in a good part of the data I collected.

Bonny Norton and Bourdieu

Although he himself did not focus on second-language speakers and the way L2 learning relates to social structure and class-identity in SLA, more recent work bearing Bourdieu's influence has (Norton, 1995, 1997; Atkinson, 2010; De Costa, 2010; Kramsch, 2012). The research in this dissertation hopes to expand upon these scholars' contributions by examining (through questionnaires and semi-structured interviewing) the way English is conceptualized, appropriated, and embodied by Chinese University ESL students seeking privileged cultural capital in an intensively competitive, increasingly neoliberal, post-communist China. I will first start by reviewing the work of Bonny Norton.

Bonny Norton (1995) was the first prominent scholar to fully integrate Bourdieu's ideas into the field of SLA. She put forth a compelling critique of the individualist and cognitivist bias of early SLA research. Cognitivism is principally focused on the isolated mind and its operations; it does not consider social factors such as social class, race, ethnicity, and contextual factors as these are viewed as irrelevant. For

instance, as I explain later in the chapter, in cognitivist paradigms the concept of motivation is seen as stable and internal to the individual. Norton challenged this individualist ontology by showing how all aspects of L2 development, not just motivation, are socially situated. L2 learners do not exist in a vacuum, and by ignoring the social factors in SLA, she cogently argues that cognitivist paradigms are partial, incomplete and misleading.

As a consequence of the dominant role in SLA played by these “mother disciplines,” many SLA scholars have adopted not only much of the content of cognitive psychology and linguistics, they have incorporated the underlying epistemological and ontological presuppositions as well, especially naturalism: the belief that because humans are continuous with nature, the methods of the natural sciences should be used in SLA research. As a result of this hegemonic positivism, the majority of research has been conceptualized, operationalized and analyzed principally from a psycholinguistic and quantitative framework. Given the dominance of cognitivism, the role of history, culture, and the embodied living and breathing individual has been abstracted out. Unlike positivist research with its emphasis on objectively capturing a pre-existing reality, the research paradigms discussed below rest on the premise that L2 identities are contingent and provisional: a context-bound, interactional achievement and not an outward expression of some internal cultural essence (Mori, 2012).

In contrast to the Cartesian emphasis on the centered, stable subject, discursive-analytic informed research challenges the knowing, transcendental self of Western philosophy by employing a more constructivist and fluid approach to identity; this fluidity problematizes the essentializing and naturalizing approaches to identity that positivist researchers employ. Qualitative research that explores data in depth is favored over abstract generalizing. In the following sections, these alternative approaches to theorizing identity and second language development are presented starting with Bonny Norton’s concept of investment.

In her two seminal papers, “Social identity, investment and language learning” (1995) and “Language, identity and the ownership of English” (1997), Norton convincingly demonstrated how social factors do indeed affect L2 development. Drawing on both Bourdieu’s notion of cultural and symbolic capital as well as the decentered subjectivity of poststructuralist theory, she challenged the notion of a unitary cultural identity; she also repudiated previous theories of motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Schuman; 1978; Dörnyei, 2005) that had conceptualized it as a fixed psychological trait. In contrast to the cognitivists who viewed SLA in learner-internal, mentalistic terms, Norton posited the centrality of power relations as one (but not the only) causal factor in L2 development. Arguing for an approach that-much like Bourdieu’s-that integrated the macro (social structure, the circulation of people and ideologies around the globe, and race, ethnic, and gender and ideologies) with the micro (the immediate context in which the language learning takes place), she asserted that the asymmetrical power relations of society affect second language learning.

According to Norton, individuals are positioned differently by the dominant discourse according to their race, nationality, age, gender, and ethnicity; those with high status are more likely to be seen by others as possessing the “right to speak.” Conversely, those with little cultural capital are not seen by others as legitimate speakers of the target language. In turn, whether or not an L2 learner is granted legitimacy as a speaker has an effect on the “investment” the learner is willing or *able* to make in acquiring the target language.

Norton chooses the term “investment” instead of motivation because the latter implies a learner-internal, immutable psychological characteristic, while “investment” captures the context-bound and situational nature of L2 learning. She also explicitly repudiates the notion of cultural identity, preferring instead to use the term “social identity” as the former term invokes a notion of homogeneity and fixity while the latter posits the mutability, ambiguity, and the multidimensional nature of a L2 learner’s sense

of self. Norton, borrowing from poststructuralist discourse, terms this shifting sense of self “subjectivity.” As identity is always in flux, Norton argues that terms like culture and motivation cannot adequately capture the dynamism and complexity of SLA.

To illustrate this fluidity, Norton cites the case of Eva, an L2 learner of English originally from Poland, and the way she is positioned and positions herself differently according to the context. For example, at first Eva is treated as an outcast by her coworkers and is perceived as a deficient speaker of English. However, when her colleagues learn that she speaks Italian in addition to her native language, her “subject position” changes from that of an illegitimate speaker of “broken” English to that of a sophisticated multilingual European. Eva also uses her role as a mother as to overcome her seeming “introversion” to assert her right to speak on her daughter’s behalf. I use scare quotes around the term “introversion” because Norton argues against the notion that there are fixed, cross-situationally consistent personality traits. Instead, she asserts that one’s sense of self and one’s personae are constantly shifting and adapting to the demands of the immediate context. Using these types of case studies, Norton is able to show that while in certain contexts L2 learners such as Eva may seem shy and passive, in other situations, they can appear outgoing and assertive.

Accordingly, Norton’s research findings show that using simplistic binary oppositions such as native/nonnative speaker, introverted/extroverted and motivated/unmotivated fails to take into consideration the way second language development is shaped by contextual factors, especially those of power and social position. Up until fairly recently, Norton points out, mainstream SLA had relied on the aforementioned totalizing and reductive binary oppositions, when in reality SLA is an incredibly complex phenomenon that belies simplification. In this manner, Norton conceptualizes social identity and its relationship to the second language learning as an exceedingly complex process that simplistic dichotomies cannot capture.

The imagined self

Subsequent to her groundbreaking work on investment in L2 development, Norton continued arguing for a more social approach to SLA. To better articulate the way that identity and L2 learning are mutually constitutive, scholars in SLA such as Norton working out of the Bourdieu's paradigm from sociology have coined new constructs such as "imagined second-language-selves" and "imagined language communities" (Norton, 2001; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Kanno & Norton, 2003). The imagined second language self is the learner's prediction of his or her sense of self after it is transformed from studying or learning the L2; the imagined language community is the learner's perception of the target language community. The use of the term imaginary here does not mean these concepts are not real; far from it. Rather, it means the learners' conceptualizations of all the dimensions in L2 learning are subjective and more connotative than denotative, and more future-oriented than present-oriented. As I will show in more detail below, the imagined language self and the imagined language community have been empirically demonstrated to significantly impact the L2 process.

Imagined communities

The increasing acceptance of the notion of imagination in SLA can be traced back to the introduction of the historian Benedict Anderson's (1991) groundbreaking work on national identity. Anderson challenges the idea that nations are naturally occurring, bounded groups of people all sharing the same traits and cultural identities; instead, he argues that so called "national communities" are discursive inventions made possible by the printing press and mass literacy. This universal literacy and the subsequent linguistic standardization in turn enabled groups of disparate, loosely organized groupings of heterogeneous individuals to conceptualize themselves as all sharing the same cultural and national attributes. Consequently, according to Anderson, standardized languages created a uniform medium for persons who may have little in common, the overwhelming majority of whom will never meet in person,

to construct “imagined communities” of nation states. While the question of the validity of Anderson’s hypothesis lies outside the scope of this dissertation, his idea that the self-concept of any given individual involves, at least to some extent, discursively imagining it into being, proved to be a seminal one. Consistent with the major ontological tenets of poststructuralist thought, his work shows that national identity is not some immutable, primordial essence residing inside each individual, but rather involves the imaginative and figurative creation of togetherness.

Anderson’s emphasis on the discursive nature of subjectivity was subsequently taken up by Norton (2001), who fully introduced the concept into the field of SLA. Norton modified Anderson’s ideas, though, by synthesizing it with other theoretical currents in education and applied linguistics. She accomplished this by transposing Anderson’s the notion of imagined national communities to “imagined language communities” and the influential theory of communities of practice approach (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). By introducing Andersen’s social constructivism and the communities of practice paradigm into the field of SLA, Norton has been instrumental in forging a new theoretical and empirical approach into the study of second language development and second language identity, an approach I hope to contribute to in this study.

In terms of scholarly work on L2 motivation, the idea that subjectivity is forged through the imaginative powers of the L2 learner has led to innovative work that has increasingly problematized many of the dominant assumptions in the field. For example, Dörnyei, one of the most widely cited scholars in the field of L2 motivation, asserts that previous approaches, such as those by Gardner and Lambert (1972) were much too simplistic and present-focused to capture the dynamic complexity and future-oriented dimension of second language development. Moreover, the static representations of Gardner and Lambert failed to link personality traits as measured on questionnaires with behavior, and they ignored the context-specific and aspirational dimensions of L2 motivation (Ushioda & Dörnyei,

2009). As a growing body of published research shows that L2 subjectivities entail a vision of the future, scholars have now begun to use term, “ideal L2 self” in order to describe this phenomenon (Dörnyei & Csizer, 2002; Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, Csizer & Nemeth, 2006; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Ryan; 2009). The ideal L2 self represents the future or aspirational self-concept the learners hold of themselves in regard to their L2 acquisition. For example, an L2 English learner may envision him or herself speaking fluent English thereby gaining an increase in social status or self-esteem, or a European in Japan may see him or herself speaking fluent Japanese, which will make him or her more seem more sophisticated, intelligent, and cosmopolitan. In this fashion, Dörnyei’s work conceptualizes L2 motivation and L2 selfhood as more process than product, as more future oriented than present-focused. Thus, much of the focus of my research project takes up Dörnyei’s emphasis on the role of becoming (which emphasizes change and development) instead of the role of being (which emphasizes stasis and stability). For this reason, many of the questions I will ask of the participants will specifically concentrate on the way English relates to their imagined future.

Dörnyei’s later work, upon which I am basing much of this research project, challenges what he views as the reliance on the simplistic dichotomy of integrative vs. instrumental motivation; he argues due to the massive cultural, social, and linguistic changes brought upon by globalization, a disruptive paradigm shift is necessary for the study of L2 motivation. For decades, the dominant model of motivation in SLA was predicated on the division between two supposed types of L2 incentives: integrative and instrumental (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Integrative motivation indicates a fondness for the target culture and a desire on the part of L2 learners to affiliate and interact with its L1 speakers; it implies at least a partial subjective identification, and an intrinsic interest in the heritage of the native speakers of the L2. Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, is based upon more extrinsic factors such as learning the target language for career or educational purposes, for example a person studying English

as an L2 so they can get a better job or a promotion. While not doing away with this motivational binary entirely, Dörnyei argues that the instrumental/integrative dichotomy is only relevant in certain contexts, and it ignores the fact that with globalization and the spread of English as a lingua franca, the language cannot be solely identified with a few countries such as the U.S. or the U.K. Instead of being the sole province of a singular Anglo-American culture, Dörnyei claims that English has become a symbol of an international identity. As the language becomes progressively unmoored from any particular nation-state, the concept of integration into a clear identifiable, geographically bound people becomes increasingly untenable: “Does the notion of integrative motivation for learning English have any real meaning, given the increasing reframing of English as a universal basic skill to be taught from primary level?” (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009, p.3). This rhetorical question is indeed relevant to the informants in my study as all of them had started to study English before their middle school years.

Gaps in the L2 motivation research

In this way, Ushioda and Dörnyei’s work convincingly demonstrates that in certain contexts English may serve as an emblem of global citizenship and a cosmopolitan identity; nonetheless, their research fails to take into consideration the role of social class in the forging of this cosmopolitan subjectivity. Because I use critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the basis of my research questions, however, I will be able to investigate the function of social structure in the L2 development of the participants thereby filling a gap in the research literature. CDA can help researchers specifically account for the influence of the asymmetrical power relations which impinge upon L2 development, and by documenting both the social class origins and social class aspirations of my study’s participants, I would hope my study helps to elucidate the socially conditioned dimensions of L2 English learning in Northern University.

Despite the sociological limitations of Ushioda and Dörnyei’s work, their theories are innovative and groundbreaking; their work combines three decades of previous research on L2 motivation with work in

educational psychology concerning the future oriented nature of the self-concept (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Ushioda and Dörnyei base the thrust of their work upon these two prominent educational psychologists, Markus and Nurius. In their widely cited paper, “Possible selves” (Markus & Nurius, 1986), they demonstrate that motivation and identity are inextricably intertwined; because behaviors are based upon one’s beliefs about oneself, the self-concept has a causal impact upon motivation. For example, if a student self-identifies as an outstanding student, he or she will likely study hard and strive to get good grades as these actions are consistent with his or her sense of self. The self-concept, according to Markus and Nurius, has past, present, and future components; the dimension based upon the future image one holds of oneself was labeled the “possible self” by the authors. The possible self is especially critical to creating and maintaining motivation for any goal that requires intense and extended effort and sacrifice. Given the long, arduous, and at times painstaking nature of second language learning, the concept of a possible self holds out great utility for the study of L2 motivation (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009), and this focus on the “possible self” as imagined by my participants is the central focus of the open ended-questions and follow-up qualitative interviewing in my research project.

Empirical work on possible selves

Other scholars have been empirically verifying Dörnyei’s hypotheses that the “possible self” affects L2 motivation and L2 acquisition, and some of the most promising research has been carried out in Japan. Testing Dörnyei’s hypothesis, Yashima’s study (2009) operationalized an “ideal English-speaking self” and carried out a series of studies confirming its validity. Yashima, whose work synthesizes Gardnerian motivational theory (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) with Markus and Nurius’s theory of possible selves, also expands upon this previous research by also analyzing the role that cosmopolitan subjectivity plays in L2 English motivation. Her findings seem to confirm Dörnyei’s claim that in terms of learner motivation, English can no longer be identified with specific English-speaking nation-states.

Yashima's studies consist of extensive qualitative and quantitative work studying the motivation of L2 English students in Japan, and she found that the most motivated students were driven by what she termed an "international posture." This posture is the cosmopolitan "tendency to relate oneself to the international community rather than any specific L2 group" (Yashima, 2009, p. 145). These findings were consistent with her earlier work carried out on the motivation of English language learners in Japan in which she found that the respondents' desire to assimilate with American and/or British respondents showed the weakest correlational coefficient of all the predictor variables tested (Yashima, 2002). Instead of studying English to interact with Brits or Americans, the highly motivated participants indicated a more generalized openness to, and interest in, foreign peoples and ideas, which Yashima subsequently coded as "an intercultural friendship orientation" (p. 159). In other words, the more cosmopolitan respondents seemed to be more motivated to learn English than their less "worldly" counterparts. In effect, Yashima's data show that the students who put forth the most effort in L2 English learning tended to have an "ideal English-speaking self" characterized by a global outlook and an appreciation of different cultures.

My own findings on cosmopolitan subjectivity

However, this humanistic rendering of cosmopolitanism is not for the most part what I found in the data I collected. While some of the participants did indeed show evidence of Yashima's (2009) dimension two, "Global Openness," more common were expressions of what I code strategic cosmopolitanism. I coded strategic cosmopolitanism any expression that framed openness or respect for cultural difference or the desire to learn a world language in terms of its career or economic benefits. For example, in the in-depth interviewing, Jane, an economics major at Northern University, stated that while English enabled her to interact with "foreigners," she couched this intercultural awareness in utilitarian terms:

In the international business world, we have to be able to communicate with people from different countries. By

communicating with foreigners in English I can learn more about their cultures and this will help me after I graduate. My dream job is to work in an international bank or investment firm.

In this section of the transcript, one notes evidence of “international openness;” however, instead of openness to the “Other” as an end in itself, it appears to be more of a means to an end: that end being a high status, well-paying job. Given the intensely competitive nature of the students in Northern University, this utilitarian posture toward the outside world may not be that surprising.

Familial neoliberalism?

Nonetheless, it could very well be that the type of instrumental motivation I found in the data is qualitatively different than what Garner and Lambert (1972) found in Canada. As I pointed out previously in my discussion on the Confucian foundations of Chinese culture, the importance of family and nation in China tends to take on greater significance than it might in more individualistic-leaning cultures such as the U.S. Indeed, a factor-analytic study with a large sample on L2 motivation in China found that honoring one’s parents and the country itself, “The Motherland,” by excelling academically was a statistically significant predictor of L2 English motivation. The researchers found what they coded as “social responsibility”, which is

Learning the target language to combine “harmonizing the family” and “putting the country in order,” emphasizing individuals’ responsibility to fulfill social expectations. This motivation type, which is based on Confucian tradition, was not found in existing literature and might be particular to Chinese or Asian contexts. (Gao, Cheng, Zhao, & Zhou, 2007, p.141).

This drive to bring status to one’s parents is especially strong due to the test-driven nature of university admissions, where one’s score on the standardized test called *Gao Kao* is in most cases the only criterion for acceptance into the most elite institutions of higher education such as Northern University, where my study took place. As English is a section of *Gao Kao*, and as a degree from a prestigious university is a highly valued emblem of symbolic capital in China, many upwardly mobile parents exert strong pressure

on their children to learn English.

This family-based instrumentalist attitude toward cosmopolitanism was attested to throughout the data. For example, Phil, a public relations major at Northern University, stated that while he utilized his advanced proficiency in English to communicate with “Westerners”, he framed this intercultural contact in terms of the national collegiate exam and his career aspirations: “I have been learning English since kindergarten. My parent stressed it a lot, and it is part of *Gao Kao*. I wanted to make my parents proud by getting into a top university and then get a good job.” In this manner, though the data did confirm Dörnyei’s hypothesis that integrative motivation has to be reconceptualized as English becomes more globalized, instrumental motivation still seems to exert a strong motivational push on the participants in my study, though it seems to be different from the type of motivation found in English-speakers studying L2s in that in China familial status seems to take precedence over individual status.

Competitive cosmopolitanism?

In everyday discourse, what in applied linguistics is now called *openness to international experience*, is commonly referred to as cosmopolitanism by laypeople. While my study does not focus on cosmopolitanism per se as a causal factor in EFL motivation and proficiency, I do investigate what, if any, role cosmopolitan identity is mediated by English in the Chinese status hierarchy. In other words, in what way, if any, does English proficiency constitute a cosmopolitan identity amongst my study’s participants, and what role might this type of identity play in the status distinctions necessary for social stratification to occur? As cosmopolitanism tends to be a classed phenomenon, i.e., it is conditioned by one’s social position, (Calhoun, 2006, 2008), I will focus on the role social structure plays in the desire for a global identity. As discussed in the previous paragraph, although a growing body of empirical evidence seems to indicate that in certain contexts a more globalized identity predicts levels of L2 motivation for some L2 English language learners (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2006; Csizer & Dörnyei, 2002,

2005, 2006; Yashima, 2002, 2009), these studies virtually ignore the role that social structure and other economic factors play in the cultivation of cosmopolitan subjectivity. In spite of the overwhelmingly positive connotation of a more expansive, globalized, supranational identity in elite circles, there has been a decided lack of critical questioning of the way cosmopolitanism can function as a type of cultural capital that enables the wealthy and powerful to distinguish themselves socially and culturally from their less privileged counterparts: “Cosmopolitan theories need to be supplemented by emphasis on the material conditions and social institutions that make this sort of cosmopolitan inhabitation of the world possible—and much more likely for some than others” (Calhoun, 2008. p.110).

For example in their important paper testing the utility of Bourdieu’s ideas in education, Lareau & Weininger, (2003) argue that elements of the white, upper-middle class habitus such as cosmopolitan subjectivity can serve as a type of “symbolic boundary (p. 208) that denotes “highbrow cultural capital” that can exclude children from marginalized communities never afforded the opportunity to develop this type of extra-local disposition: “Unlike the commonly envisaged cosmopolitans, the majority of people in the working class do not trade, work, love, marry or do research internationally” (Lamont & Aksartova, 2002, p.2). Given the classed nature of supranational subjectivity, my study hopes to fill a gap in the research by critically examining the sociological consequences of the increasing acceptance in China of English proficiency as a marker of cosmopolitan identity.

Nonetheless, in this study, I do not assume a deterministic relationship between social class and EFL motivation; I not only examine the way social structure affects attitudes and motivation towards L2 English learning, but I also delve into the way the students “imagine themselves” through their English learning experiences, especially as it relates to a cosmopolitan identity. The questions asked of the respondents heavily focus on what they perceive to be the social and personal significance of English in today’s world. The participants in this research project are the first generation in China to come of age

in the internet era, and are thus exposed to more external symbols, artifacts, and information (much of it in English) than any previous Chinese generation in history (Ong, 1993). Due to this plethora of semiotic resources, contemporary Chinese youth have many more identity options and thus more agency in the forging of the self than ever before.

Consequently, in today's interconnected globalized world, it may no longer be tenable to posit discrete, mutually exclusive cultures. Poststructuralist scholars assert that self is provisional and contingent (Young, 2001; Holland, 2008). Culture and languages are heteroglossic and hybrid, incorporating various elements from around the world (Higgins, 2009). Thus, any given individual's repertoire can contain elements from many different cultures at once: identities "are unfinished and in process" (Holland, 1998, p. vii). With the internet and mass media available in virtually every corner of the world, notions of the self and national identity are being transformed and reformulated in ways that social scientists and applied linguists have just begun to explore. Therefore, in the qualitative interviewing, I attempt to capture the participants' subjectivities in all their complexity instead of reducing them into a singular overarching template.

Subjectivity vs. identity

To better capture this fluidity, poststructuralist-influenced scholars in applied linguistics post-Norton prefer to use the term subjectivity instead of identity (Kramsch, 1996). While identity is most often associated with Western philosophers such as Descartes working out of a cognitive and individualist ontology, subjectivity is a term which stems from a more sociological paradigm

Identity draws on a philosophy of consciousness which assumes the ultimate autonomy of the individual, the idea that the individual has agency or choice over action, thought and being. The kind of thinking focuses on individual cognitive and emotional of social self-awareness, and stresses human agency. From this perspective, the role of social mediation in our identities is lessened, though of course not ignored. Several other approaches see it from a different, more social approach, and much valuable work in applied linguistics has been conducted...drawing on the

tradition of poststructuralism. Here, the preferred term is *subjectivity*, which focuses on the social mediation of identity formation in a particular way. The term draws on the work of the French philosopher Michel Foucault with his notions of *discourse*, *power* and the *visibility of subjects*. (McNamara, 2019, p. 2)

To simplify a bit, *subjectivity* is more situationally based and mutable, while *identity* is more internally based, and stable. The former usually refers to the social roles, personae, discourses, scripts, signs, symbols, and narratives that individuals deploy to project socially recognized subject positions.

In this way, my approach toward learner identity is informed, to some extent, by the poststructuralist axiom that the self is neither coherent, fixed, or transparent:

The notion of *subjectivity* (e.g., Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1981) highlights the various social forces and influences that go into constituting individuals and their personalities, seeing the latter as made up of fairly miscellaneous collections of often conflicting ways of looking at and being in the world. Rather than suggesting, then, that humans have internally rational, unified, and consistent selves, the notion of *subjectivity* indicates that personalities and personhood are fundamentally disunified and fragmented. (Block, 2007, p. 27)

Nonetheless, on the other hand, it may be entirely possible that this theory of the “decentered” and disjointed self is just the perspective of disaffected intellectuals alienated from market-values dominated cultures that they live and work in; as I will show in the data analysis, the participants in my study did not typically show themselves to be fragmented and decentered. To the contrary, all my ethnic Han Chinese informants seemed to be strongly rooted in their national identities, though not chauvinistically so.

Communities of practice

The communities of practice approach (CoP), as the name indicates, posits the social nature of learning and identity. According to Lave and Wenger (1991), CoP is a type of participatory learning whereby groups of people come together for a specific purpose (work, sports, education, learning a new craft) and through which the participants learn from each other through intensive and regular interaction (in its earlier versions, CoP theory was predicated on the on face-to-face contact, though later versions were

modified to include “virtual” communities of practice). Building upon Lave and Wenger’s work, Norton (2011) asserts that L2 acquisition is in fact a type of CoP, but influenced by Anderson’s theory of “imagined communities” (1991), she argues that language communities can sometimes transcend geographical and social barriers through the active imagination on the part of L2 learners. Norton points out that up until the recent past, most second language speakers remained rooted to their native languages and cultures, but with internet technology and the increasing circulation of people, images, and ideas across borders, L2 learners have more semiotic, linguistic, and educational resources with which to imagine the target language community. They are no longer isolated from the L2, even if they live thousands of miles from any L1 speaker: with the mere click of a mouse, they can come into contact with the target language. This increasing accessibility, in turn, can free the L2 speaker from the confines of their physical location, thereby stimulating transformations in the L2 learner’s sense of self: “The important point is that the investment in the target language...can best be understood in terms of future affiliations and identifications, rather than prevailing sets of relationships” (Kanno & Norton, 2003, p. 244). By incorporating the role of imagination and aspiration into the field of SLA, Norton’s work has imbued her Bourdieusian sociological approach with a distinctively agentic dimension, an approach similar to the one I am adapting in my project. In the next section, I will elaborate on Bourdieu seminal concept of cultural capital and relate it to cosmopolitan subjectivity.

Cultural capital, neoliberalism and cosmopolitan subjectivity

As I showed in Chapter one, Bourdieu defined cultural capital as the disparities that develop between differently positioned social groupings stemming from varying backgrounds in education occupational status and wealth, differences that in turn confer privilege and serve as the linchpin of the intergenerational transmission of social class. Cultural capital also indexes one’s position on the social ladder. For example, higher-status parents socialize their children to project elevated social position

through the cultivation of “upper-class” ways of speaking, dressing gesticulating, addressing others, and appreciating emblems of so-called “high culture and leisure” such as opera and golf. However, Bourdieu did not develop the concept of cultural capital in a vacuum; its origin goes back to one of the “founding fathers” of sociology.

In other words, as I briefly discussed in Chapter 2, the pioneering sociologist Max Weber’s work exerted a strong influence on the development of Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital (DiMaggio, 1982). In turn, Weber’s theories represented an implicit challenge to what he viewed as Marxism’s excessive emphasis on economic determinism. Weber’s ideas stood as a corrective to Karl Marx’s work in terms of the cultural dimensions of social stratification as Marx almost exclusively stressed the role of economic relations as the primary causal factors in determining any individual’s life chances. While Weber did agree that differences in income and wealth mattered and were important in the intergenerational transmission of social class, he indirectly criticized Marx for ignoring the cultural factors behind the status attainment process. These factors include dress, style, ways of speaking, and perhaps most significantly, intellectual and artistic tastes. Weber argued that these cultural styles of groups were of great significance because they served as the criteria for social closure:

‘Social closure’ is one of the most basic terms and concepts in sociology. Basically, closure refers to processes of drawing boundaries, constructing identities, and building communities in order to monopolize scarce resources for one’s own group, thereby excluding others from using them. Society is not a homogenous entity but is instead internally structured and subdivided by processes of social closure. (Oxford Bibliographies, 2012)

As one can see in the above quote, the term “boundary” is the guiding metaphor in this paradigm; these boundaries define group membership itself: who belongs and who does not. By dividing ingroup from outgroup, social closure is the *sine qua non* of social exclusion and for the distribution of power. For example, in the data I collected, I found that perceived English proficiency is often deployed as criteria for social closure by serving as a proxy measure for defining who is a cosmopolitan, educated elite and

who is not. In this manner, it seems as if cosmopolitan subjectivity may serve as a group boundary determining who enjoys social esteem and who does not among contemporary Chinese young adults residing in urban areas.

In this regard, in this research project I tested whether proficiency in English is indeed a type of symbolic and cultural capital among university students at the super elite Northern University. While I do include the material dimensions of class in my model (as measured by parental income), my analysis is more Weberian than Marxist. While contemporary sociologists generally classify both Weber and Marx as conflict theorists, the two greatly differed in terms of their approaches and methodologies. Conflict theory takes as a given that struggles over power for scarce economic and symbolic resources serve as the guiding principle of all societies (Collins, 1981). While Marx's theory relied on the overarching dichotomy of owners vs workers to theorize social class and power, Weber believed this dichotomy too simplistic and too materialist to truly capture the complexity of power, and the way it is semiotically distributed.

Going beyond social classes in the economic sense of owners and workers (per Marx), Weber used the term *status groups*. Weber defined status groups in non-economic terms, and he asserted that they usually revolve around race, religion, language, occupational status, educational credentials, life style and leisure pursuits, political affiliations, and any virtually any other criteria that can serve as a symbol of status and honor (DiMaggio, 1982). Bourdieu (1997, 1982) taking his cue from Weber, termed these dimensions symbolic and cultural capital.

In this way, I find Bourdieu's model a much more powerful tool to capture the multidimensional, fluid, subtle and complex ways that power circulates. Marx's simplistic division between owners and workers, while appropriate for its time, can never fully depict all the discursive and semiotic dimensions to power:

Max Weber's notion of status culture may be useful in this regard. Weber noted that elite status groups, collectivities bound together by personal ties and a common sense of honor based upon and reinforced by shared conventions-generate or appropriate as their own specific distinctive cultural traits, tastes, and styles. This shared status culture aids group efforts to monopolize for the group as a whole scarce social, economic, and cultural resources by providing coherence to existing social networks and facilitating the development of comembership, respect, and affection out of which new networks are constructed. The content of a status culture is arbitrary; status honor may be connected with any quality shared by a plurality. (DiMaggio, 1982, p. 189)

In this sense, Weber and Bourdieu's theories are much more consistent with poststructuralist theories of hegemony such as Foucault's (1981) as they all view power as constantly circulating and mutating on various levels; this is in contrast to Marx's more static model: Marx believed that the dominance of the ruling class could only end with a proletarian revolution. Moreover, Bourdieu and Weber also made room for the role of affect and of micro-interactions in their conceptualizations of dominance and subordination. Obviously, in the research I present here, I do not put forth a Marxist model, but rather base my paradigm on Weber and Bourdieu.

Chapter 5: Setting, participants and research questions

In this chapter I will describe the university where I carried out my data collection. I will summarize some of the characteristics of the student body as well as some of the particulars of my participants. After presenting the research questions, I shall describe discuss my questionnaire and the theoretical reasons behind each item. Finally, I will analyze some of the responses and relate them to these research questions.

My research setting is Northern University (a pseudonym), a large institute of higher education located in a major city in the northeastern region of China. It is one of the most elite universities in China; in fact, in terms of admission, it is the most competitive institute of higher education in all of China: only those with the highest test scores, which are, in almost all cases the sole criterion for getting in, are admitted. Many members of the current Communist Party leadership, including the last two presidents, are graduates of this prestigious university. Although it had been traditionally known as a tech school (it is commonly referred to as the MIT of China), it has also expanded and strengthened its liberal arts and social science programs, mainly in order to rise in the World University Rankings. To gain admission to Northern University, the participants in my research had to study and prepare diligently over the course of many years for the collegiate entrance examination; they could be thus be characterized as highly motivated, ambitious, and intensely competitive.

At the time of the data collection, I was EFL lecturer in Northern University, where the classes are relatively large (up to 40, even for a speaking class). I taught mostly intermediate oral and listening skills classes; there are no classes for beginners as in order to be admitted, students need an almost perfect score on the English section of the *Gao Kao* (in Chinese this means *High Test*), the national collegiate admission test. Even so, there is still a wide range of proficiency among the students with some in the intermediate range while others have near-native fluency.

Given their status as the future elites of China, and their ability to communicate in English, I decided to use Northern University students as my study's participants. For the pilot study, I recruited them via email and *Weixin*, the most popular online social platform in China. The recruitment script was uploaded and is still available on the IRB application (Study #2014-0185). However, due to ethical considerations, no students who were enrolled in my classes at the time were utilized; I only relied on former students with whom I was already familiar. All of the participants were undergraduates currently enrolled in EFL classes at the university (all students need at least 2 semesters of English to graduate; some majors require up to 4 semesters). However, as I use a convenience sample ($n=40$) at a highly selective university, my study has limited generalizability.

Data collection and analysis

All the participants in my study came to my office (I was not present; a student volunteer was in charge) at their convenience and filled out a fixed response questionnaire (39 items in all), consisting of both open-ended and Likert-item questions. For the quantitative portion of the study; the 24 Likert questions were intended explore the relationship between social class origins and L2 English proficiency and motivation (the "ideal L2- self questions"). The participants also responded to 15 open-ended questions designed to gauge the linguistic ideology surrounding their perceptions of English. For example, they were asked to either write a response to a question such as, 'What is your opinion of the global spread of English?' or to complete the sentence "English is like..." I specifically included this item to see what type of metaphors and language ideologies the respondents would use to characterize English.

As discussed above, linguistic ideology consists of "entrenched beliefs about the nature, function, and symbolic value of language" (Sergeant, 2009, p. 346). In this fashion, these questions concerning the "symbolic value" of English are consistent with the Bourdieusian foundations of my research: that those from the dominant classes (or those who aspire to membership in them) strive to construct and

retain their privilege by accruing and displaying symbolic cultural capital (in this case, English). Finally, as my research focus also includes the more subjectively experienced dimensions of social class identity and its relationship in regard to English, I chose a select group of 5 respondents to do in-depth follow up interviewing, mostly carried out via the social messaging platform *WeChat*.

I gave all the participants for both the pilot study and the second wave of data collection (n=27) the same Likert questionnaire consisting of 24 fixed-item responses. To measure social status, I collected information on their parents' income (collapsed into 4 ranges), a dummy variable for father's and mother's educational level (college graduate or not), and another dummy variable for first-tier city (Beijing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Shanghai) or not. In China, residence in any of these cities is highly valued as a type of symbolic capital; the housing costs in these places are sky-high, and these cities' education systems are the best in the country. As a result of the social status and job opportunities that living in these cities brings, the wealthy and well-connected tend to predominate in tier-one cities. Given the fact that residence in any of these cities gives one access to greater material and cultural capital compared to the rest of the people in China, I decided to use this as a control variable in my quantitative model.

Second wave of data collection.

Based on the committee's initial feedback, I diversified the second sample in order to make my study more representative. As I had chosen the most outgoing students and the students with whom I had a close rapport, my pilot study sample likely suffers from a bias towards students with both a high level of confidence in English as well as those with a more cosmopolitan outlook. To make my sample more inclusive, I recruited at least one of the following: A Uighur (an ethnic minority group in China with a distinct language and culture); a Chinese-Korean (There are many students at Northern University who immigrated as children to China when their parents opened businesses here or were transferred here by

their companies); two ethnolinguistic minority Zhuang participants; One Thai and one North Korean international student. I also found four students from impoverished rural areas, who are relatively rare at Northern University being that they do not normally have access to the quality education and tutoring that their more privileged classmates enjoy. In this regard, based on the feedback from my committee, I made my sample more representative of the country of China as a whole.

A note on pseudonyms and racial identity

As virtually every Chinese L2 learner uses an “English name,” in English class, and that is what I know mostly them by, I have used almost all English pseudonyms, except for the two participants who use Chinese names in their English classes (I gave these two Chinese pseudonyms). The prevailing custom in China is for English teachers in primary school to assign or let the children choose an English name. I myself give my students the option to use their “English names,” or their Chinese ones as I believe as adults it should be their right to name themselves, and I also believe in cultural integrity.

As for race, I did not include a category for that as all my participants are phenotypically East Asian. As I discussed in the literature review, race is a social construction, and the way it is experienced in China is qualitatively different that it is in the U.S. Although ethnic minorities in China constitute around seven percent of the population, the ethnic minorities are for the most part not distinguishable in terms of visible racial characteristics (Stats.gov.cn, 2021). The only group which may be construed as racially distinct are the Uighurs, a minority Turkic Muslim principally residing Xinjiang, a province in the Northwestern region of China. Although many Uighurs may appear “Caucasian” (they originated in Turkey and migrated to China starting over 900 years ago), the group has had such high intermarriage rates that they it would be inaccurate to conceptualize them in purely racial terms; the closest approximation to categorize them would be as an ethnolinguistic group as their customs, religion and language (a Turkic language unrelated to Chinese) mark them as distinct from the dominant Han Chinese

majority. Unfortunately, the Uighurs and other minority groups have come under strong assimilative pressure in the last 15 to 20 years, though that issue falls out of the scope of this dissertation. In any case, the only Uighur in my study speaks fluent Mandarin and appears phenotypically East Asian, and he did not bring up his ethnic heritage in the interviews, nor did I ask him any particular questions in this regard. In China, this is a highly sensitive topic, and given the risk which he could incur if we discussed it, I avoided the topic entirely.

Table 5.1

Participants in the pilot study ($n=13$)

<u>Pseudonym</u>				
Bob	Hydraulic engineering	M	Han	N
Ana	Economics	F	Han	Y
Gary	Physics	M	Han	N
Alice	Statistics	F	Han	Y
Billy	Biology	M	Han	N
Linda	Finance	F	Han	N
Jill	Business Management	F	Han	Y
Joe	Electrical Engineering	F	Han	N
Katherine	Mechanical Engineering	F	Hmong	N
Phil	Mathematics	M	Han	N
Deng	Electrical Engineering	M	Han	Y
David	Computer Science	M	Han	Y
Stephen	Automation	M	Han	Y

As noted in the IRB application, I strove my utmost to ensure to guarantee anonymity through the entire research process. Though I personally knew all the participants, I was not in the room when they filled out the fixed-item questionnaire (I had some of my current students at the time administer the

questionnaire), and to avoid social desirability bias (Devlelis, 2003), during the recruiting process, I did not tell any of the participants what exactly I was looking for; I just informed them that I was doing research on L2 English in China.

Table 5.2

Second wave of data collection participants (n=27)

Pseudonym	Major	Gender	Ethnicity	social class	Tier one city
Hans	Computer Science	M	Han		N
Kevin	Automation	M	Han		N
Grace	Psychology	F	Han		Y
Bob	Economics	M	Han		Y
Siran	Computer science	M	Korean		Y
Peter	Electrical engineering	M	Uighur		N
Sally	Sociology	F	Han		N
James	Mechanical engineering	M	Han		Y
Thomas	Economics	M	Zhuang		N
Charles	Computer science	M	Han		N
Mary	Business management	M	Han		Y
Matthew	Mathematics	M	Zhuang		N
Scarlett	Chemistry	F	Han		N
Andrew	Electrical engineering	M	Han		Y
Emily	Biomedical engineering	F	Han		N
Cathy	Electrical engineering	F	Han		N
Jerry	Systems engineering	F	Han		Y
Gina	Hydraulic Engineering	F	Han		N
Gregory	History	M	Han		N
Mary	Chinese	F	North Korean		N
Aaron	Biology	M	Han		N

Olivia	Economics	M	Han	Y
Kyle	Physics	M	Thai	N
Harold	Journalism	M	Han	N
Hannah	Art	F	Han	N
Arthur	Physics	M	Han	Y
Albert	Chemical engineering	M	Han	Y

Descriptive statistics

All the participants were between the ages of 18 to 20 at the time of the initial data collection; males represented (62.5) percent of the sample ($n=25$). As I focus on the intergenerational transmission of English and social status, I collected data on parental social status. As I mentioned above I used a dummy variable (0 for non-college graduate, 1 for college graduate) for both parents. As can be seen in the table below, the number of college graduates for fathers (FTRGR) is somewhat higher than that of mothers.

Table 5.3 Parental education

FTRGR		
	N	%
0	24	60.0%
1	16	40.0%

MTRGR		
	N	%
0	29	72.5%
1	11	27.5%

These percentages are significantly higher than the average college completion rate for the presumed age cohort of most of the parents; as of 2017, only 7% of the individuals in China as a whole between the ages of 45-54 had college degrees. Though 54% of the current generation of individuals between the ages of 18 to 22 are enrolled in tertiary education, as recently as 1980, a mere 2% of the population

had a college degree (World Bank, 2017). Accordingly, the fact that 32% of the parents of my participants had a college degree is quite telling, but given the elite nature of Northern University, perhaps it is to be expected.

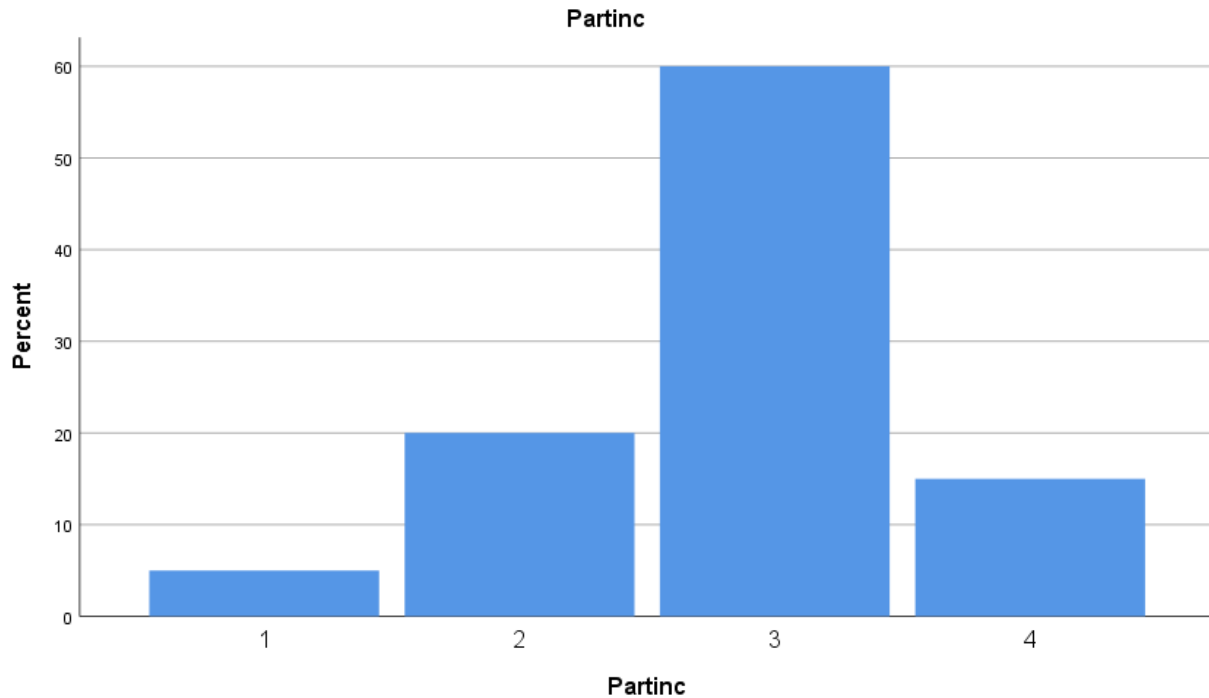
As Bourdieu and other sociologists of education have pointed out (Collins, 1980), high SES parents tend to possess the hegemonic social and cultural capital to pass on to their children so that the former have a much higher probability of being admitted to an elite university. For example, in the U.S, a study of 38 top ranked higher education institutions found that the offspring of the top 1% of income earners outnumbered the number from the entire bottom 60% of the wealth scale (“Some colleges,” 2017).

As for my coding in regard to income level, I collapsed the range into 4 items on the scale with one being the lowest (less than 50,00RMB a year) and 4 the highest (more than 500,000RMB a year); The frequencies are illustrated in the tables below.

Table 5.4 Frequency table parental income

		Partinc			Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	1	2	5.0	5.0	5.0
	2	8	20.0	20.0	25.0
	3	24	60.0	60.0	85.0
	4	6	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.5: Parental Income Bar chart



Because I used an ordinal scale on the questionnaire, I could not calculate the average income of the parents of my participants. However, just by eyeballing it is probably likely about the equivalent of around 26, 000, which is quite a bit higher than the national average of \$9, 997 in 2017 (World Bank).

For social status (SES), I collapsed the 3 measures of mother and father's education and income level. As mother and father's education was a dummy variable, I added 1 point for each parent who is a college graduate to the income scale. As a result, my SES scale has 6 possible scores: 1 would be the represent a participant whose family has the lowest income scale with neither parent a college graduate; 6 would refer to somebody whose parents have the highest income level and are both college graduates. This composite measured is the focal point of interest so I chiefly relied on this measure. In the table below are the percentages for each:

Table 5.6 Parental SES

		SES			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	2	3	7.5	7.5	10.0
	3	13	32.5	32.5	42.5
	4	10	25.0	25.0	67.5
	5	7	17.5	17.5	85.0
	6	6	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

For approximate categorizing, I label group one, *highly marginalized*; group two, *working class*, group 3, *lower middle class*; group 4, *middle class*, group 5, *upper-middle class*, and group 6, *upper-class*. As can be seen from the table, the families of my participants fall mostly in the middle range of SES. This position on the middle range is somewhat misleading though because very few people attended university in the era when my informants' parents were college age; consequently, this drags down the composite SES measure. This again points to the dangers of taking data out of context: education as a constituent of middle-class subjectivity can vary tremendously from generation to generation.

Recruitment

I sent out emails and WeChat messages to 24 of my former students for the pilot study and 42 for the second wave of data collection. The criteria I used for the pilot study was far from scientific: I chose those students whose names I could remember, and with whom I had developed a friendly rapport. Being that I was teaching 18-credit hours a week and being that I usually had over 250 students in total each semester, remembering names was no easy task. However, as noted previously, based on the feedback from my proposal defense committee, for the second wave of data collection I stratified my sample more purposively by trying to recruit more ethnic minorities and students from impoverished rural areas. In this regard, I was able to make my sample more representative of the population as a whole. However, given the current political climate in China, I refrained from focusing on any issues of race or ethnicity.

However, despite my personally knowing all the potential participants, I still had a low response rate: some students did not return my messages, and some students were too busy to be able to participate. As a result, with response rate of only 61 percent, the possibility of selection bias is very high. More specifically, the type of response bias in my recruitment could be classified as volunteer bias, which is “systematic error due to differences between those who choose to participate in studies and those who do not” (Jordan, et al., 2013). In other words, the former students who I chose and who agreed to participate may differ systematically compared to those who I did not choose, or who did not agree to participate. As a consequence, I must clearly state that the sampling is not randomized and therefore has limited external validity. The generalizability of my study is further limited by the elite nature of my participants; as mentioned previously, admission to Northern University is extremely competitive so obviously the students there are not representative of the college population as a whole, much less all of L2 learners of English in China. Having said that, I would like to at least think that this research project will offer its readers a unique sociological glimpse into the hyper-exclusive world of Northern University, a place the future ruling elites of China are molded.

Research questions

- 1) To what extent if any, does English contribute to social stratification in China? This question also touches upon issue of structure vs, agency; in other words, does English contribute to class domination, or can it be appropriated agentively in terms of social mobility; also subsumed under this issue of agency is the following question: Does the rapid spread of the English in China represent a threat to the cultural identities of the L2 learners of the language?
- 2) What is the semiotic value of English for my participants, and does it function as a type of cultural and symbolic capital? This question also touches upon the concept of language ideology and L2 English motivation.

- 3) Does English proficiency partially constitute cosmopolitan subjectivity, and is cosmopolitan subjectivity a type of cultural capital?
- 4) Is neoliberal ideology related to the rapid spread of English in China, and if so, how is it connected to contemporary paradigms of L2 motivation in the field of SLA?

Materials: Fixed-item questionnaire

In this section, I will review some of the questions on the fixed-item questionnaire by relating them to the theoretical and empirical factors that I have explored in the previous chapters. As I already mentioned, the fixed-response questionnaire had 24 questions with a Likert scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 8 (strongly disagree), which I reverse coded for 1 (strongly disagree) to 8 (strongly agree) for roughly half the questions. All the items were in some way related to my research questions.

For example, Questions 1, “I like English-speaking cultures” was one my measures for integrative motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), and “It would bother me if a close family member married a Westerner” was designed to gauge openness to experience, a proxy for cosmopolitan subjectivity (Yashima, 2009). To probe the participant’s comfort level with English, I included question four, “I feel confident when speaking English,” and question nine, “I feel comfortable speaking English in class.” For my metric of social distance (Hofstede 1997), I include item 6, “American culture is close to mine.” Social distance is negatively correlated with cosmopolitanism, and I constructed this item to investigate whether the participants viewed American culture as alien to them.

As a good deal of the focus of this dissertation focuses on motivation, I included question 7, “Studying English gives me a sense of accomplishment.” I felt that this question helped me to measure intrinsic motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) and also helped in uncovering the role neoliberalism

(Harvey, 2005) plays in L2 development. To incorporate the more recent development in L2 motivation research (Dörnyei, 2009) on the role of the “ideal self,” I used question eight, “I feel like a different person speaking English than I do when speaking Chinese,” question 10, “I envision in the future speaking English with foreigners,” and question 19, “In terms of my future, English is more useful than Chinese.” To assess language ideology regarding English and globalization (Ives, 2009), I utilized question 11, “The spread of English benefits the world;” question 20, “English represents a threat to Chinese language and culture.” To investigate their language ideology in regard to Chinese, I used questions 15, “Chinese is a beautiful language,” and 18, “If I have children I will make sure they speak Chinese.”

As for my metrics of cultural and symbolic capital, I had the participants answer, “To be considered an educated, sophisticated person, one must speak English” (item 12); and “Speaking English makes me feel sophisticated and worldly” (question 14); “One’s ability to speak English is related to one’s intelligence” (question 23). Question 24, “I feel I have to compete with my Chinese classmates in terms of English ability,” was designed to probe neoliberal competitiveness (Harvey, 2005).

Though competitiveness is not a trait unique to countries where neoliberal values dominate, the hegemonic ideology of neoliberal individualism pressures individuals to become “entrepreneurs of the self” (Foucault 1981). Just as entrepreneurs look to produce profits from their business ventures, entrepreneurs of the self in neoliberalism conceptualize the self in a fundamentally economic manner. According to Foucault, individuals come to view the self in terms cost/benefits and investments as the discursive regime of market capitalism increasingly inscribes its utilitarian logic to all spheres of human life.

Open ended questions

However, uncovering the full depth of the growing pervasiveness of phenomenon such as the spread of market values and their effect on L2 development requires more than fixed-item questionnaires; it requires open-ended responses and extensive qualitative interviewing as well. Therefore, to offer a more complex, nuanced, in-depth portrait of my participants' attitudes toward L2 English in China than a mere questionnaire can offer, I asked each informant 15 open-ended questions. I also chose 5 informants for extensive follow-up interviewing that took place over the course of two years after the initial completion of the questionnaire. Most of the follow up interviewing took place over the most popular social messenger in China, *WeChat*; for the small number of follow-up interviews done in person, I transcribed and coded them. I have already analyzed some of the responses, and I will analyze more throughout the remaining parts of the dissertation.

As I am interested in the effect of social class on L2 English motivation, I started off with question one, "Why do you study English?" The responses to this question were quite illuminating, and as I will show later, instrumental motivation appears to play a strong role in the informants' L2 development. For question two, I asked them to compare the way they feel when speaking English in comparison to the way they feel when speaking Chinese. As for question 3, "Compare your confidence levels in speaking Chinese with those of English," I included these items because I believed it would help me explore the participant's subjectivity in relation to English. As I pointed out in my discussion on Norton (1997), subjectivity stresses the sociological factor's such as power, race, gender, and contextual variables in people's self-understanding more than the psychological term "identity" does. Given that CDA and its fundamental focus on power and domination serve as my principal methodological approach, I was trying to get the participants to narrate their L2 English experiences in more sociological terms; the replies to these items were relevant to my research interest in language ideology, and the way this ideology relates to the structure vs agency debate in SLA (Pennycook, 2001). Question five (Could you

describe your sense of self and how foreign language learning relates to that?) directly addressed this issue of subjectivity as well. Though the focus of this dissertation is not pedagogical per se, I felt that question 9 (What are your favorite classroom activities? Your least favorite?) might help me further gauge the type of subjectivity mentioned in the previous paragraph. I was hoping to elicit their attitudes toward English, especially in terms of affect.

To delve into the issue of English and neoliberal competitiveness, the questionnaire asked item number 7, “Do you think English should be on *Gao Kao*?” As mentioned previously, the *Gao Kao*, which literally translates as *High Test*, is the rigorous college entrance exam that many students prepare for throughout their entire childhood. 92.5% of the participants responded in the affirmative, and when asked why, most cited the imperative of globalization. For example, one participant, who supports keeping English wrote in their response, “English is the most common language in the world so learning English is important for our teenagers.” Indeed, so common was this type of response that it would be fair to say that a majority of respondents equate English with globalization itself.

The next open-ended question, number 8, also touched upon the issue of neoliberal globalization: “What is your opinion of the global spread of English?” Most of the responses were framed in seemingly pragmatic terms by stating that English is a type of lingua franca enabling different countries to communicate. Given that Northern University has served as a pipeline to the heights of power in the ruling Communist Party, it is worth noting that for this item, not one respondent mentioned cultural imperialism or that English represented a threat to the Chinese language and culture, though one respondent did say that “we can’t forget to teach our children Mandarin.” This overwhelming approval of English, albeit in an instrumental fashion that I coded as “The English as a global lingua franca” was a recurring theme not only in this question but in the follow-up interviews I did as well. This is a clear illustration of the dramatic shift in the Communist Party (and given the Party’s hegemony, therefore the

country) away from Maoist anti-imperialism in which English was viewed as the “devil’s tongue,” to acceptance of English as a means to compete in the neoliberal world of borderless markets and free trade.

As for question 9 (“What is your opinion of Chinese people who don’t speak English?”), and question 11 (“Why do you think some Chinese speak better English than others?”), I was attempting to verify if the participants utilized others’ English proficiency as a proxy measure for the latter’s social background. Although each response was worded uniquely, as is to be expected in an open-ended question, the modal response was what I coded as “generational lack of English proficiency.” As I documented in the literature review, for the older Chinese people who grew up in the Mao-era, the study of English was actively discouraged; consequently, relatively few people of those generations studied English at all. In this manner, English can signify one’s generational status. For instance, one participant wrote, “I would think they are old. If they are young it is a bad sign because they teach English in all the schools now.” This response got two codes: “the generational lack of English” and “English as an emblem of cultural capital.” By stating that being unable to speak English is a “bad sign,” the respondent seemed to be stigmatizing young people in China who can’t speak English. This response seems to be a textbook example of the previously discussed concept of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1977).

However, not all the answers were consistent with neoliberal individualism. I coded 7 responses (4 for question 9 and 3 for question 11) as “awareness of social structure” as the respondents did bring up the fact that one’s social background strongly affects the opportunities one has to acquire English. For example, one answer went as follows: “It is ok. I will not look down on them. It is common because in many villages they don’t have teachers who know how to speak English.” As I previously pointed out in my discussion on neoliberalism, neoliberal ideology is premised on ontological individualism in that life is conceptualized as a race where everybody has the same opportunities; this is a denial of the impact of social structure, and each person is seen as responsible for his or her own life outcomes. According to

this radically individualist ideology, the talented and hard-working will succeed; those who don't either lack competence or don't work hard enough. Their low social position and their lack of cultural capital is seen as their own fault. Nonetheless, as evidenced in the response above, some of the participants did seem to be aware of the structural constraints that students from working-class backgrounds faced.

I also coded 10 answers total from these two questions (some responses merited more than one code) as having what I termed, "individual choice ideology;" these responses framed learning English as "the individual right to choose." For example, note the following answer, in regard to Chinese people who don't speak English. "I will also show my respect because language is a personal choice." Again, these types of responses attest to the fact that there was a great variety to the attitudes expressed toward L2 English in the data.

Questions 10 ("In what way do you think your previous educational experiences in foreign languages have affected your attitude and motivation?") was included to help me trace the habitus (Bourdieu, 1984, 1981) of the participants. As habitus has to do with one's dispositions, among other dimensions, I hoped to gain insight into how earlier experiences with L2 English shaped my participants' attitudes and motivations toward the language. I will explain habitus in more detail in the next section, but in addition to disposition and attitudes, they also have an affective component. Indeed, some of the responses did contain affective elements. For example, one respondent wrote,

When playing piano, I tried to make my performance have the same feeling which the composer wanted to express. I tried my best to make my performance have the same feeling as the composer, and I felt very good after learning some English and Italian words.

In this answer, one can see elements of elite cultural capital (playing classical music on the piano) in which the informant tries to gain what Bourdieu called a "feel for the game." Bourdieu explained that this "feel for the game" has its origins in the social class the child grows up in, and it becomes internalized

so that it becomes part of one's skills, affective desires and tendencies. Nonetheless, it bears pointing out that subsequent empirical research testing Bourdieu's hypotheses found that the relationship between parental SES and appreciation for "highbrow" pursuits such as classical music and fine arts is probabilistic not deterministic (Dimaggio,1997). For example, students who come from middle-class families would be more likely to develop the desire to excel at English, but not all the middle-class students will develop this propensity; at the same time, some working-class individuals will show the desire to achieve a high level of English.

Question 12, ("What comes to mind when you see a Chinese native speaker conversing in English?"), was another attempt to see if English is considered symbolic capital among the participants in my study. The responses to this item showed the strongest evidence of all the questions in support of Bourdieu's theories; I coded 77.5% of the responses ($n=31$) as containing at least some elements of cultural or symbolic capital. Broadly speaking, cultural capital is any type of skill, trait, characteristic, tendency or disposition that facilitates upward social mobility, while symbolic capital is anything related to the individual which confers status or recognition upon him or her (Bourdieu, 1977). For example, one respondent wrote: "If you speak English fluently you can be seen as some brilliant person," while another noted, "Those who know English are more knowledgeable. If it is a job requirement, the speaker is professional." The latter response conceptualizes English in both in terms of symbolic capital ("brilliant person") and cultural capital ("professional"). A third response, was also a typical one: "If a younger person is well educated, we assume they can speak English." On the other hand, I only marked 2 responses as containing the code I explained above. "awareness of social structure," one of which stated, "I might think they had the chance to go to good schools and maybe have tutors. In China, you have to live in an expensive area to go to good schools." Yet despite these two responses, the overwhelming majority of answers to this particular open-ended question seemed to indicate that yes, English is indeed

considered a type of valuable cultural and symbolic capital in elite Northern University.

Meritocracy

In order for this type of symbolic capital to make a significant impact in neoliberal societies, it should be seen as earned through one's own efforts and talents; the belief that one's income, social position, possessions, and educational credentials are a result of hard work and innate ability (and not due to the "right connections" or any other unearned privilege such as race, gender, or educational opportunities that others might not have, such as attending high quality schools in wealthy suburban areas) is called meritocracy (Azevedo et al., 2019). In other words, meritocracy is predicated on an underlying belief in "a just world" in that it is believed that people generally get what they deserve in life (Lerner, 1977). Azevedo and his colleagues hypothesize that due to the need among most people for perceived predictability and order in the social universe, they tend to uncritically accept the status quo. This acceptance is especially salient in regard to economic inequality and power asymmetries:

According to system justification theory, people are ideologically motivated (to varying degrees, depending upon situational and dispositional factors) to defend and justify existing social, economic, and political arrangements. In the context of contemporary capitalist societies, with their very high levels of inequality, this means that many citizens—especially those who are drawn to politically conservative ideas and opinions—are prone to use stereotypes and other social judgments to excuse and rationalize social and economic disparities within and between groups in society. (Azevedo, et al., 2019, p. 57)

The consequence of this hypothesized "system justification" is a generalized endorsement of the massive economic inequality within society (Harvey, 2005). In neoliberal ideology, inequality is viewed as a natural and fair result of the differing work ethics and talents among the individual members of society. It is believed fair because those subscribing to neoliberal ideology assume that anyone, if they are talented enough and work hard enough, can achieve success.

In order to determine if the meritocratic ideology exists among my participants at Northern

University, I included question 13, “Do you agree or disagree with following statement? Be sure to give reasons why or why not: Anyone in China can be successful if he or she works hard enough.” Unlike some of the other responses in which the tenets of neoliberalism seemed to predominate, the respondents to this question exhibited a high degree of awareness of the structural constraints that often hinder disadvantaged people’s aspirations for upward social mobility. For example, one participant wrote, “I disagree. Certain irresistible obstacles might prevent her or him from success.” Another response was even more detailed and quite sophisticated: “No. because a person’s success relates to many other factors such as SES, educational background and your EQ (your ability to deal with difficulty, not angry when facing difficulty, even *guan xi*.” *Guan xi*, which rough translates to relationships or connections, is a type of social capital (knowing the “right people”) in which one’s social networks can be leveraged to gain job opportunities that can later be converted to economic capital (higher salaries) and occupational prestige. Indeed, Bourdieu (1977) has shown that social capital is one of the cornerstones of the intergenerational transmission of SES.

Indeed, many of the participants expressed awareness of the advantages social capital brings; over half the responses to this item (57.5%) were coded as “awareness of social structure,” and many of the explanations behind their belief that upward social mobility in China is limited, and many showed a Bourdieu-like understanding of social stratification. For example, one respondent wrote, “I think family background or family conditions are also quite important. It is hard to succeed without family support.” Given this high awareness of the structural constraints, I would be hard-pressed to state that my participants subscribe to a neoliberal ideology in its entirety. Unlike the founding myth of the U.S that “anyone can make it if they try hard enough,” in China there does seem to be more of an awareness of the ways differences in parental SES strongly affect individuals’ life chances. In this way, in my data, I did not see the hyper-individualism that characterizes contemporary American society. Perhaps this is

due to the lingering influence of Confucianism (with its emphasis on the family), and the socialist rhetoric of the ruling Communist Party. Whatever the case may be, as I will discuss in a later chapter, neoliberalism is always locally inflected and appropriated and is never the same everywhere.

Question 14 asked, “What comes to mind when you see a foreigner or see a foreign language?” I included this item to evaluate the extent to which, if any, that English and L1 English speakers are seen as exotic outsiders. In my experiences in China, outside the major cities there are few foreigners so when they do appear they are somewhat of a curiosity; some people stare and point and say, “外国人,” *wai guo ren*, which literally translates as “outside country people;” in other words, a foreigner. However, this may sound worse than it really is; it is not done in a malicious way, and most people are just curious. The answers to this question were quite uniform: respondents from the big cities basically stated that it was normal, while those from smaller cities and rural areas tended to say they used to view seeing foreigners as a novelty, but now that they were in Beijing, the novelty had worn off. For example, one participant wrote, “I used to think wow, so cool. I wonder where they are from. Now I just think it’s normal.” In general, it seems that as China increasingly integrates itself with the outside world, and more and as more immigrants and foreign workers enter the country, English is perceived to be less exotic and more of just another sign of contemporary globalization.

Question 15, (“Is social status important to you? Why or why not?”) was included to gauge the way the participants viewed the role of social position in their lives. Social status is a measure of how well respected and admired one is for her possessions, wealth, achievements, occupation or educational level (Anderson, Hildreth, & Howland, 2015). While scholars studying the globalization of capitalism point out that competition for material and symbolic capital is the hallmark of neoliberalism, the participants in my study also expressed how competitive China (which is still officially communist) is, and much of this competition is geared toward gaining and signaling status. As admitted students at the top ranked

university in China, the participants had already achieved a major symbolic achievement, an achievement that will serve as a lifelong constituent of cultural and symbolic capital. In this way, my participants are likely to be much more competitive than the average Chinese person. Indeed, almost all the respondents did say social status was important to them (38 out of 40, or 95%), but many of them qualified their responses in instrumentalist terms; for instance, one participant wrote, “Yes, if you have high social status, you can have a better career and life. Also, it can benefit you in ways you can’t perceive.” Another replied, “Yes, I don’t like the people who laugh at low social status, but I have to admit social status is important because it largely determines how much you can earn, how good you can live in the future.” Nonetheless, not all agreed; one participant wrote, “It is not important to me now because I think my life is my own life. And I can live well even though I don’t have high social status.” This statement reinforces my disclaimer mentioned several times already: we must avoid sweeping generalizations about any given culture or group of people and always stress the existence of individual variation.

Moreover, it would be a mistake to fully attribute the importance the overwhelming majority of the participants placed on social status to neoliberalism. Firstly, the desire to be respected, recognized and admired may be a universal human tendency existing in every society, though varying by degree (Anderson, Hildreth, & Howland, 2015). Even if the desire for social status is not universal, survey research shows that in cultures strongly influenced by Confucianism such as China, Vietnam and South Korea, social relations are often characterized by rigid social hierarchies (Hofstede, 1997). Interestingly, one response to this question explicitly linked the importance of social status not to capitalism or Americanization, but to his or her Chinese heritage: “Of course it counts. I think although I’m open to many new things, I have many traditional thoughts too, and in China social status always plays an important role.” This response is consistent with Hofstede’s finding (1997) that China tends to be high

in power distance, which is a measure of the degree to which a culture is characterized by hierarchical social relations.

The next question focused on why some L1 Chinese speakers make posts in English on the most common social networks in China such as *WeChat* and *Weibo*. As a daily user of WeChat (I use it mostly as a means to improve my Chinese vocabulary and reading comprehension), I was intrigued as to why so many posts were in English, even though the overwhelming majority of users are L1 Chinese speakers. I coded two responses to this item: “Showing off” ($n=16$) and “English as a lingua franca” ($n=32$; the totals are more than 100% as some respondents merited both codes). As an example of the former code, one participant wrote, “Using a foreign language seems high-ranking.” An instance of the latter code went as follows, “Some people have English and Chinese friends, and they want everybody to understand.” I found the latter responses slightly baffling as WeChat and Weibo are almost exclusively used within China and the Chinese diaspora as other social networks such as Facebook and WhatsApp are banned. The relatively few non-Chinese who do use WeChat are mostly study-abroad students in China who can speak at least some Chinese. Having said that, these statements lend further empirical support to my previous claim that the most significant tenet of the language ideology of my participants toward L2 English is that it is a vital lingua franca in today’s globalized world.

The next open-ended item was intended to elicit the metaphorical rendering of L2 English on the part of the participants. Though simply prompted to finish the sentence, “English is like...,” the responses provided a rich glimpse into the figurative world of L2 learning. As metaphor helps to structure thought (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), I included this item to delve into the way the respondents figuratively conceptualized English. I coded the responses, and the modal code ($n=23$) was “English for intercultural communication.” Several answers under this category utilized a variant of the metaphor of English as a connection between people and countries. For example, one respondent wrote, “English is

like bridge which combines different countries,” and another wrote, “English is like a bridge which makes people all over the world able to communicate with others.” This bridge metaphor seemed to have a humanistic tenor to it as it implies that English can bring the world together in dialogue.

However, not all the responses were so lofty; some were purely utilitarian in nature. These answers ($n=12$) were coded as “English for instrumental purposes” with the metaphor of English as a tool being the modal response. For example, one participant wrote, “English is like a tool for ESL learners who will spend lots of time to command it.” This answer makes evident the tremendous amount of time and effort that goes into L2 acquisition, an investment that these intensively competitive students mostly viewed as worthwhile. Another informant used a slightly different analogy to indicate this conceptualization of English as an investment; they wrote, “English is like an armor. It protects you from easily losing competitions in career, study, helps you survive in this international world.” As is evident in this answer, the responses I coded under this category were largely devoid of affect or any indication of integrative motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) in that they conceptualized L2 English proficiency as a means to an end, not an end in itself.

Another set of responses ($n=4$) I coded as “Futuristic English.” This code was somewhat similar to the “L2 English for intercultural communication” code discussed above, but instead of connecting cultures, it imagines English as a bridge to the future. For instance, one participant responded as follows. “English is like a key to open the door of the future, which has a lot of knowledge and great chances to make your life better.” Similarly, one other respondent wrote, “English is like an elevator to the global world of tomorrow.” These conceptualizations of English as being emblematic of modernity occurred in the follow-up interviews as well, which is in stark contrast to the Mao era in which English was seen as an alien signifier of cultural and economic imperialism.

The final open-ended item was the most open-ended of all: it states, “If you have any additional

thoughts or feelings on the role of English in China or in your personal life (either now or in the future), please write them here.” Many of the responses to this prompt expressed ambivalence toward the growing presence of English in China. For instance, one participant wrote, “To accept globalization, English should become part of our daily lives, but we should keep Chinese good at the same time.” A second participant expressed his personal enjoyment in reading in English, but expressed dismay at the erosion of the ancient Chinese heritage:

I can read many books in English, the original language they were written in. Translation vision isn't clear or beautiful enough. I think English is important in China. But many people are even not too close to Chinese. They don't appreciate traditional Chinese culture.

The dilemma expressed here is interesting: English is seen by this participant as important for China (presumably to be able to compete in the contemporary global marketplace), yet it comes at price: the loss of the Chinese language and culture. As discussed previously, though most participants in the fixed-item responses did not seem to see view the spread of English as a threat to Chinese culture, there are some that do. Even so, there was not one instance where any participant expressed outright unambiguous opposition or hostility toward English in China; rather, the responses ranges from celebratory to grudging acceptance. Those who expressed this grudging acceptance couched their mixed feelings toward English in the discourse of Chinese nationalism; English is to be strategically appropriated to make China economically and technologically more powerful, but must be done carefully so as to maintain the integrity of Chinese culture.

A few of the students ($n=4$) expressed what I coded as “personal or aesthetic appreciation for English.”

These responses were effusive and exhibited a great deal of affect in their tone:

I guess my love for English shaped me in many ways. For hobbies, I love soccer, American and British pop music, TV series and movies, so obviously they are all highly related to English. Also, for study, this campus is international and requires high English skills so it's one of the reasons I chose it.

Another participant described her ability to divulge her emotions more openly in English: “Sometimes if we want to say something to express our feelings, we are too shy to use Chinese. We’d like to use English, I’ll feel better to say in English.” This excerpt is consistent with the findings in previous research that the L2 usually carries less emotional resonance than the L1 (Pavlenko 2003).

To conclude this chapter, as the reader can see, the participants in my study are in no way a monolith. In analyzing the results from both the fixed-item questionnaire as well as the open-ended questions, one can see that the students vary in their postures toward L2 English. Granted, almost all the students did cite the importance of social status, but given elite nature of Northern University (not to mention the possible universal desire for the respect and admiration that elevated social position usually brings) that is to be expected; this finding is also consistent with Gee’s (2005) theory of “recognition work” discussed in the next chapter.

Nevertheless, perhaps the most interesting finding of note is the fact that some of the informants traced their intense competitiveness not to the encroachment of American-style capitalism, but to traditional Chinese culture. Whatever the cause, this issue points to a bigger epistemological and methodological dilemma in social science: we humans are so complex and our behavior so overdetermined, that it is almost impossible to point toward one or two particular causal factors for any social phenomenon. While the discursive regime of neoliberal individualism may have made inroads in China, it has not completely eclipsed other competing discourses such as Confucianism or socialism.

Chapter 6

Methods: Critical Discourse Analysis

In this chapter, I will discuss the methods I used to analyze the open-ended questions (as well as the follow up interviewing among a select group of informants), and the language policy analysis. As the theoretical foundation of this study relies heavily on Bourdieu's theories to examine the relationship between the English language and social stratification in China, I have chosen to utilize critical discourse analysis (CDA) in the qualitative part of my research. While, CDA consists of a wide range of theoretical and methodological dimensions, its fundamental mission is to develop and theorize

an understanding of the centrality of language, text, and discourse in the constitution not just of human subjectivity and social relations, but also of social control and surveillance, the governance of polity and nation-state, and attendant modes of domination and marginalization, lived desire and pleasure. (Luke, p. 99)

In essence, CDA concerns itself with the mutually constitutive relationship between discourse and power (Luke, 2002; Gee, 2005; Fairclough, 2001), and it fits well with the sociolinguistic focus of my research project looking into the impact of English on the Chinese social structure.

As is obvious from its name, scholars using CDA explicitly incorporate a critical dimension into their work as they assert that language is always, in one way or another, implicated in the broader power relations that constitute societies, and "that injustice and oppression shape the social world" (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui, & O'Garro, 2005, p.367). Tracing its roots all the way back to Marx (1884) and Gramsci (1992), CDA scholars conceptualize power as being asymmetrically distributed, and they do not see society as one functional whole; instead, they view it as a dynamic process riven by class, race, gender, ideological, regional, ethnic, and generational fissures, among other dimensions (Fairclough, 2001). In this manner, CDA offers researchers an appropriate and effective

theoretical paradigm and empirical methodology “to answer questions about the relationships between language and society... and to locate the multiple ways in which power and domination are achieved” (Rogers et al., 2005, p. 365). Utilizing this critical focus on asymmetries of power, in this project I examined the way the hegemony of English is established through the dominant discourse of neoliberal globalization (Bourdieu, 1998), a discourse that appeared prevalent to me among the student body when I started teaching there in 2013. However, as the reader shall soon see, things were much more complex and nuanced than they first appeared.

Pioneering work in CDA

Rogers and her co-authors, whom I cited in the previous paragraph, mention two books published in the same year as being the works that help to bring CDA into prominence: Fowler et al.’s book, *Language and Control* (1980), and *Language and Ideology* (Hodge & Cress, (1980). Unsatisfied with the way mainstream linguistics had bracketed off the study of language from any social or political concerns, the authors of these two books urged linguists to broaden their focus to incorporate findings from critical theory and sociology into their work. Also influential was Michael Halliday’s book, *Language as Social Semiotic* (1978), which called for a paradigm shift in linguistics away from Chomsky’s focus on syntax to one investigating how language is fundamentally about making meaning (Rogers et al. 2005). In this fashion, my study does not look at the grammatical competence of my respondents’ L2 English, but instead hones in on the way they assign semiotic value to English in their lives, and the way learning it affects their social class subjectivities.

By combining the tools of both the sociologist and the linguist, CDA enables researchers to examine the way discursive hegemony is accomplished, and the way ideological justifications are constructed and maintained. As CDA’s central focus is the discursive dimensions of power, it is the most effective and relevant paradigm with which to address my research questions; these questions are centered on the ways,

if any, that English proficiency, or lack thereof, is symbolically used as a sorting mechanism for social stratification in China. In this manner, my study entails examining issues of positionality, cultural capital, social dominance, asymmetrical power relations and social-class identity, among others. Because CDA is multi-disciplinary-its practitioners draw upon theories and findings from fields as diverse as philosophy, linguistics, psychology, education, political science, and anthropology-I find it to be a useful and valuable instrument to help me answer my research questions.

For example, in the open-ended interview questions, I examined the relationship between English and the participants' sense of self; the way they use English for "recognition work" (Gee, 2005, p.99). According to Gee, one of the pioneers in CDA, recognition work occurs when individuals and groups use discourse and its attendant symbols, genres, rituals, and personae to signal their personal and/or collective identities. He uses the active signifier "work" because he rejects static and essentialist models of identity; instead of immutable identity, Gee views the sense of self as mutable, multi-dimensional and context-sensitive, as more process than product: "A focus on the contextually specific ways in which people act out and recognize identities allows a more dynamic approach than the sometimes overly general and static" approaches to identity (2005, p. 6). In this fashion, I relied heavily on Gee's model of CDA (explained in more detail below) to explore the manner in which the participants in my study used English to index their social class identities in the *particular context* of in an intensely competitive and elite university in China.

Gee writes that discourse is the fundamental way in which people recognize, form, and transform their social selves: "When any human being acts and interacts in a given context, others recognize that person as acting and interacting as a certain 'kind of person' or even as several different 'kinds' at once" (2001, p. 100). One of the ways people index these social identities is by using symbols of dominance and elite status to place not only themselves, but others, in the social hierarchy. For example, as English is imbued

with power and prestige in the hegemonic neoliberal discourse in post-communist China (Gao, et al., 2005), the language is often perceived as a type of social good: “Social goods are anything a group believes to be a source of power, value, status, or worth” (Gee, 2001, p. 100). Similar to Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic capital, Gee’s idea of a “social good” presupposes a sort of semiotic economy whereby individuals utilize the symbolic resources at their disposal to constitute subjectivity and to place themselves and others in socially recognizable subject positions. The way people use socially available discursive repertoires to index their identities was termed Discourse with a capital D by Gee, who distinguished it from discourse with a small d, which consists of smaller “connected stretches of talking or writing” (2001, p. 104). As I did not collect or analyze any naturally occurring data, my questionnaires and interviews focused primarily on discourse with a capital D.

In this fashion, I utilize Gee’s CDA framework to investigate the manner in which my respondents show what “kind of person” they project to be when using or learning English. Specifically, I examine the way the participants utilize English in the discursive formation of the self in a society that some scholars argue is rapidly transforming from Maoist collectivism, in which social solidarity and cooperation were emphasized, to a culture increasingly dominated by a free-market capitalist ideology stressing self-interest, competition, and instrumental rationality (Harvey, 2005; Block, 2007; Kipnis, 2007). Given the growing prevalence of neoliberal capitalism and its concomitant ideological commitment to the global spread of English (Phillipson, 1992), my research questions were designed to investigate the reasoning behind the increasing acceptance of the language in China, and to look at the ways the respondents ideologically construct their relationship to English.

Nonetheless, the ideological discourse surrounding English in China cannot be analyzed in isolation but must be approached in conjunction with the respondents’ attitudes towards meritocracy, capitalism, social justice, and language learning in general. As I am specifically interested in the relationship of the

participants' social class origins with their stance toward these various dimensions, I will statistically test the relationships among these variables in the quantitative section of this project. In the qualitative section, I will be especially interested in language ideology, as this concept is consistent with CDA's axiom that both self and group identities are discursively constructed.

For example, two pioneers of the study of language ideology, Irvine and Gal assert that "languages index social groups...linguistic features are seen as reflecting and expressing broader cultural images of people and activities" (2000, p.37). In this fashion, I specifically examine the ways in which the "images" of English as an L2 in China function to project personal and social meaning among the participants, but it is worth pointing out that given the tremendous amount of variation found in the data, the semiotic function of L2 English among the participants is far from unambiguous. Having said that, in the section below, I relate language ideology to contemporary neoliberalism.

Neoliberal discussions

As one of the chapters in the textbook I used in several of my classes at Northern University focuses on the global spread of English (though it does so in a fairly neutral manner), I began to notice that in class discussions the students quite frequently linked English with what scholars now call neoliberalism. Neoliberalism, which takes as a given free market capitalism, self-interest, and competitive individualism (Bourdieu, 1998; Ives, 2009; Kipnis, 2007; Pennycook, 2001) went virtually unchallenged in the students' discussions, and the students seemed to regard proficiency in English as a means to compete with others for jobs and social status. Most of the students appeared to accept the fundamental premises of capitalism and the growing intrusion of English into virtually every facet of Chinese life; indeed, they not only welcomed China's shift towards a more market-oriented economy, many of my students also asserted that their success in this post-communist society hinged partly on their English proficiency (though in a mostly instrumental fashion, as I have already demonstrated in the previous

chapter). Using CDA in my analysis in this chapter. I hope to shed some light on how this dominant discourse of the global elites, neoliberalism, is appropriated (though locally inflected) by students at Northern University, and “how language-as-a-resource discourse, which invokes conceptualizations of people and language in a way legible to the marketplace” (Mena & García, 2020, p.2) is repeatedly invoked by the participants

Neoliberalism and SLA

As China integrates itself into global capitalism, and as the neoliberal ideology becomes increasingly pervasive there (Harvey, 2005; Kipnis, 2007), scholarship in SLA and applied linguistics should adopt a much more skeptical stance toward the increasing encroachment of English and its role in the spread of free market ideology. As Pennycook, in his work, *Critical Applied Linguistics* (2001) points out, scholars in the field have for the most part ignored the sociopolitical dimensions of L2 learning by reducing it to learner-internal psycholinguistic processes. However, the use of CDA in SLA research can counteract this methodological individualism by exposing the manner in which asymmetrical power relations structure L2 learner’s linguistic motivation and opportunities to develop the target language. While neoliberalism tends to frame social reality as the accumulation of freely decided individual choices, a growing body of research shows that L2 development is strongly conditioned by social factors that cannot be reduced to mere individual-level variables (Norton, 1995, 1997; Pennycook, 2001; Philipson, 1992, 2001, 2009).

In fact, this neoliberal ideology, which seems to be fairly prevalent in post-communist China, appears to qualify as a type of Bourdieusian habitus (Bourdieu, 1984, 1991). As pointed out in chapters one and two, the habitus consists of the class-based dispositions, attitudes, and worldviews of each social stratum. According to Bourdieu, because the habitus is largely a function of early childhood socialization, it remains largely outside of conscious awareness and is thus somewhat resistant to change.

This then begs the question: Does their L2 English proficiency help to constitute the habitus of the participants in my study? As all the respondents indicated that they had begun to study English in primary school, at the latest (many had started even in pre-school), and as none of them in any of the data challenged the *practical* utility of English, the discourse in Northern University in regards to English would seem to fit Bourdieu's definition of an "enduring disposition." Moreover, these engrained attitudes toward English as a marker of international capitalism and consumer culture (Gao, et al., 2005; Yashima, 2009; Ives, 2009; Lo & Kim, 2012) seem to be a case of what Bourdieu (1991) would deem as a naturalization of the ruling class ideology, and what Gramsci (1992) would call hegemony. Hegemony occurs when the ideas, attitudes, and worldviews that benefit those in power are uncritically accepted as common-sense, natural, and inevitable (Francese, 2009). As I showed in the previous chapter, there were multiple instances of this hegemonic naturalization. The neoliberal discourse of globalization (and its supposed need for English as a *lingua franca*) was never questioned or challenged by any of the respondents (though as I also pointed out, a very small minority of the respondents were uneasy about the possible harmful effects of L2 English on Chinese language and culture). In this way, there seems to be an interlocking nexus between neoliberalism, globalization and the linguistic ideology toward English among the informants.

Given this focus on linguistic ideology, I feel CDA is an effective tool to give an up-close look at the way individuals in my study appropriate and articulate the globally circulating discourses about English. In the last chapter, I examined examine the ways the neoliberal ideology functions as a way to promote the approval of the spread of English in China. For example, to implement and maintain the hegemony of English, advocates of globalized capitalism often posit the need for an international *lingua franca* (Crystal, 1997; Tollefson, 2000; Philipson, 2002, 2009), and they naturalize the increasing encroachment of English as not only necessary but beneficial thereby eliding the sociopolitical dimensions of the

language's growing hegemony: The most publicized information on the spread of English throughout the world tends to isolate the phenomenon from changes in power and economic relationships, depoliticizing it and treating it as an inevitable or quasi-natural trend over which humans have little or no control. (Ives, 2009, p. 662)

As I showed in the previous chapter, the participants did indeed tend to depoliticize the spread of English in China; they expressed approval of it by employing language of inevitability (that English is the natural concomitant of globalization, and everyone must adapt to this trend in order to compete in the increasingly interconnected world). However, this seeming approval toward English could possibly be due to my role as a L1 speaker of English who makes his living teaching it, and the participants' desire to please me, their former teacher. This possibility, along with the power asymmetry between me and my participants, makes it imperative that I examine my own positionality in the research process; I do this in the following section.

CDA and the qualitative researcher

Throughout the history of qualitative social science research, the relationship between the ethnographer and the informant has been undergirded by a rigid and unyielding power imbalance. In the classic narrative of anthropology, a Western anthropologist, steeped in the scientific discourse of an overly ambitious positivism, seeks out and an exotic *Other* (often times either implicitly or explicitly assumed to be inferior) to classify, to examine and to *define*. Guided by the canons of ontological holism, the informants the anthropologist observes are assumed to be emblems of a static, timeless and unitary culture (Marcus 1989). Predicated on a sweeping conceptual dualism, ethnographic authority is then established by a series of crude binary oppositions: savage/civilized; modern/traditional; and rational/emotional etc.

Drawing on antiquated theorizations of groupness from classical anthropology and sociology, these sweeping dichotomies exaggerate the differences both within and between cultures. They take as axiomatic the internal cohesion, stability and discreteness of cultures, and it has as a consequence the reification and solidification of identities that are in fact socially constructed, overlapping, internally heterogeneous and inherently fluid. Furthermore, it adopts the ontological foundationalism of classical anthropology with its emphasis on absolute boundedness of groups with an almost mystical celebration of the complete incommensurability of each ethnolinguistic group. This cultural determinism (that each individual totally internalizes his or her native culture and is therefore qualitatively different than individuals from other cultures) is then meshed with the Marxist-inspired ontological dichotomization of society into two groups: the oppressor and the oppressed. This over-theorization of power whereby structure is emphasized over agency and individuals are reduced to mere representations of social categories leads to an ontological dualism. Each person is categorized into one of two opposing camps dominant or dominated, oppressed or oppressor, majority or minority, etc. The multidimensional and multifaceted nature of the individual is sacrificed in favor of a unidimensional theory of power with greater explanatory generalizability.

This use of explanatory causality is extremely telling as it evokes the sociological determinism of Emile Durkheim, even using the same concept of the “conscious collective” which served as the foundational trope of early sociology. In Durkheim’s conceptualizations, there exists an absolute sociological determinism whereby the individual is reduced to a dependent variable while social structure is accorded causal absoluteness. Durkheim’s conceptualization of society as being supra-individual, of having a reality that is *sui generis* in nature has had a profound and lasting impact on all subsequent cultural theorizations. By radically breaking away from the atomistic epistemology of Descartes, Durkheim’s writings triggered a dramatic paradigm shift away from ontological individualism

towards sociological foundationalism whereby individuals are conceived as being deeply embedded in and determined by the surrounding culture. Although many of Durkheim's formulations had their intellectual antecedents in German Romanticism (as will be explored later), their seminal influence on both social science and lay conceptualizations of culture is evident even in contemporary social theory.

Structural Functionalism

Durkheim's ideas gave birth to a scholarly movement known as structural functionalism; in turn this structural functionalism became the dominant paradigm in both sociology and anthropology. For example, many of the earlier taken-for-granted assumptions of culture in the applied linguistics research have their intellectual antecedents in Durkheim's writings: the most important one being that when we speak of a culture we are referring to something real and concrete, not an abstraction. Durkheim conceived of each culture as having an organic reality, as being internally cohesive and as being separate and bound from all other cultures. The conceptualization of each culture as being a total entity, separate and autonomous from all other cultures is especially significant; it has important implications for ethnic theorizing and cross-cultural communication and thus, applied linguistics. However, by positing the existence of a collective mind, Durkheim reduces society to an immutable monolith. Granted, even the most so-called "individualistic cultures" show evidence of generalized patterns of thought and action, but to assert an invariant and uniformly shared culture is to vastly overstate the internal homogeneity of any given culture. Similarly, in even in the supposedly "collective cultures" of Asia, there exist a great deal of within-group variation and diversity, a diversity that is ignored when utilizing crude generalizations that mechanistically reduce billions of people to one salient culture category such as "individualistic" or "collective." No so-called "cultural traits" are cross-situationally consistent; there are always contradictions and paradoxes, even a dynamic sense of indeterminacy.

Trait and place ethnography

Durkheim's influence on Radcliffe Brown (one of the pioneers of scientific ethnography) and functional anthropology is unmistakable. The "trait and place" anthropological movements are premised on the belief that the most effective way to study the 'exotic other' was to conduct a scientifically objective participant-observation analysis, what we now call ethnography. However, there are several ontological and epistemological difficulties inherent in the representation and signification of groupness. Although scientific objectivity is stressed in the social sciences such as applied linguistics, true objectivity and therefore pure logical induction is impossible. The researcher always has to have some epistemological starting point, some preexisting concepts, which will structure, if not bias what he or she will observe. More importantly, these preconceptions do not even have to be specific to the group under study; they can be the nomothetic theories of culture that the researcher holds. In the case of classical anthropology, the aprioristic assumptions that each culture is an independently existing, tightly structured, cohesive and bounded entity, would obviously have a major impact on the ethnographers' findings. They will search for patterns, not variations, rules, not exceptions; in the search for holistic simplicity, many anthropologists will overlook or ignore nuances and counterexamples. Even naming the group under study, a procedure which given the fluid nature of social grouping is logically problematic because categorizing a determined number of people as a group presupposes a shared and homogenous identity, an identity that can be highly variable, multidimensional and situationally specific. In fact, as will be shown later, more contemporary anthropological and sociological discourse has largely abandoned the antiquated notions of absolute and monolithic groupness (the treatment of groups as static entities). In a major paradigm shift away from structural functionalism, the most innovative conceptualizations in social science now emphasize the fluid, performative and dramaturgical nature of cultural identities, ethnicity as doing not being.

Nonetheless, the essentializing conceptualizations from early anthropology were adopted

wholeheartedly by some scholars in applied linguistics and TESOL. As Durkheim's work "provided the source of functionalism in both anthropology and sociology" (Giddens, 1995, p. 144), his ontology had achieved dominant status in the SLA scholarly literature, though his name rarely appears in the citations. For example, Dell Hymes, the anthropologist who invented the notion of communicative competence and who has thus achieved scholarly distinction in applied linguistics and TESOL, in his highly influential book "*The Functions of Language in the Classroom*," operationalizes culture as a unitary, internally cohesive whole. Throughout his book, sweeping generalizations are employed to stress the unqualified differences between cultures; the malleability and flexibility of the culturally mediated cognitive and linguistic patterns are dismissed in order to achieve a macro-theoretical sense of intracultural unity. Even worse, the complexity and plurality of cultural differences are collapsed into totalizing dichotomies such as "Indian and non-Indian (p376), "working class and middle class" (p.132). By not using hedges or qualifiers (i.e., some Indians or most middle-class children tend to....) and by formulating the groups under study as holistic monoliths, Hymes and the other authors in this otherwise well written anthology give the mistaken impression that there is an absolute one-to-one correlation between respective group membership and individual behavior.

In this manner, when outsiders such as myself have studied non-Western cultures, across-the board generalizations have often been employed to stress the unqualified differences between cultures; the malleability and flexibility of the culturally mediated cognitive and linguistic patterns are dismissed in order to achieve a macro-theoretical sense of intracultural unity. This tendency toward holistic description leaves the mistaken impression that there is an absolute one-to-one correspondence between respective group membership and individual behavior thereby leaving unexamined the tremendous amount of in-group variation. It is likely that this tendency toward sweeping depiction at least in part stems from adopting an essentialist paradigm instead of a relational one.

Identity as relational

In this section, I will briefly explain ontological relationism and its significance for theorizing concepts such as social class and L2 identities that form the basis for my research project. As its name implies, relationism takes relations as the fundamental constituents of reality. Instead of attributing priority to discrete entities and secondary importance to ways they interact, social scientists employing a relational paradigm approach assert the primacy of ongoing interaction and the ways they affect the entities: “What is distinct about the transactional approach is that it sees relations between terms or units as preeminently dynamic in nature, as unfolding, ongoing processes rather than as static ties among inert substances” (Emirbayer, 1997, p. 289).

In other words, the entities under study, whether they be social class, cosmopolitan subjectivity or L2 motivation, cannot be accurately studied when taken out of the context in which they occur. It is for this reason that my research only partially relies on the Likert questionnaire. These types of quantitative methodologies wrench the variables out of the settings in which they naturally occur; consequently, they can at best give an incomplete and somewhat shallow depiction of the phenomenon under study; it is my hope that the extended, open-ended qualitative interviewing will complement the quantitative part of my research project so that I can offer the readers a more holistically complete portrayal of my respondents and their EFL learning experiences.

It is precisely this relational complexity that makes researching L2 learning and L2 subjectivity so challenging and fascinating at the same time. Adding to this dynamic complexity, we use language to study language; ironically, it is language itself that may pose perhaps the biggest obstacle to capturing the truly relational nature of not just L2 learning but of social life in general. For instance, even though we use the noun “society,” it is more of a ceaseless process of actions and interactions that would be more accurately portrayed with a verb:

Our languages are constructed in such a way that we can often only express constant movement or constant change in ways which imply that it has the character of an isolated object at rest, and then, almost as an afterthought, adding a verb which expresses the fact that the thing with this character is now changing. For example, standing by a river we see the perpetual flowing of the water. But to grasp it conceptually, and to communicate it to others, we do not think and say, 'Look at the perpetual flowing of the water'; we say, 'Look how fast the river is flowing.' We say, 'The wind is blowing,' as if the wind were actually a thing at rest which, at a given point in time, begins to move and blow. We speak as if a wind could exist which did not blow. This reduction of processes to static conditions, which we shall call 'process-reduction' for short, appears self-explanatory to people who have grown up with such languages (Elias, cited in Emirbayer, 1997, p. 283).

In this way, language simplifies and turns multiplicity into singularity. Having said this, communication itself, not to mention social science, would be virtually impossible without the use of abstract nouns. For example, when I utilize the term L2 motivation, I do not intend to define it as an isolated entity or as an independent initiator of L2 learning; in keeping with a relational approach, L2 motivation should be conceptualized as inextricably meshed with a host of other factors ranging from the immediate context, to gender, to age, to the relationship of the speakers, and even to the nature of the research context. In fact, L2 learning would probably be more accurately portrayed with a verb. In terms of the research in this dissertation, it means that all the findings should be viewed as tentative, subjective and partial, not as definitive and objective.

For instance, when I use the term "Chinese culture" from my own perspective (or from the perspective of any outsider, even the most prominent scholar), it should not be taken to be an objective reflection of an actual empirical referent but rather as simplified reification of a very complex *process* "where systems of description and naming are employed to deal with aspects and phases of action, without final attribution to 'elements' or other presumptively detachable or independent 'entities,' 'essences,' or 'realities,' and without isolation of presumptively detachable 'relations' from such detachable 'elements'" (Dewey & Bentley, cited in Emirbayer, 1997, p. 286). To put it more simply, the referents used

throughout this research project, should be viewed more as heuristic devices or as placeholders designed to spur thought and analysis than as stable and discrete entities.

In fact, lexical items in general, especially those one referring to human phenomenon, are in general more relational than essential. The belief that entities have fixed underlying essences (essentialism) is belied by the relational nature of human identity:

In calling attention to relationality, we have two aims: first, to underscore the point that identities are never autonomous or independent but always acquire social meaning in relation to other available identity positions and other social actors; and second, to call into question the widespread but oversimplified view of identity relations as revolving around a single axis: sameness and difference. The principle we propose here suggests a much broader range of relations that are forged through identity processes: Identities are intersubjectively constructed through several, often overlapping, complementary relations, including similarity/difference, genuineness/artifice, and authority/legitimacy. (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 598)

The supposedly defining characteristics of any given social category are usually too broad, vague and malleable to freeze into static and essentializing signifiers. Instead, Bucholtz and Hall argue that though there may be some broadly shared characteristics among the members of social categories, they acquire their strength and vitality when they are used differentiate and contrast themselves with what they are not.

Nonetheless, Bucholtz and Hall go beyond this contrastive principle (which can be traced back to Ferdinand de Saussure's contention that language functions through relations of difference) to include other dimensions of relational logic. They depart from the sole emphasis on contrasts to include the ideas of "adequation and distinction." The term adequation stresses the point that in order for groups or people to be conceptualized as similar, they do not need – indeed cannot – be identical, but must merely be seen as sufficiently alike in that specific situation. Consequently, differences undermining or not supporting the interactional goal of achieving groupness will be dismissed or ignored; conversely, things held in common viewed as forging group bonds will be emphasized and played up.

In regard to the research in this dissertation, the varying contextual salience of the participants' identities becomes evident when they discuss different facets of themselves. For example, Ana, a first-year student from a small city on Shandong majoring in economics, stresses her affinity for Chinese culture in response to the following prompts in the follow-up interviewing:

Paul: Please explain what being Chinese means for you.

Ana: Pride. I am extremely proud of my country.

Paul: Could you be more specific?

Ana: Our history. We Chinese have a long and glorious history. We have made many inventions. Our culture is deep and special.

Paul: What do you mean when you say Chinese culture is deep?

Ana: We have so many customs and ways of life that have been around for thousands of years. Our art, our food, and many other things. I also feel our language is very poetic, and we Chinese feel a strong connection to it.

Paul: How do you feel when you speak Chinese?

Ana: Umm, in my hometown, I never thought about that. I come from a small city where there are almost no foreigners so everybody speaks Chinese. But when I came here to Beijing where there are different people from all over the world, I realized that my language is important, and I feel proud of it. When I speak English I don't, um feel as comfortable. It is not my mother tongue.

Especially noteworthy in the above snippet is Ana's use of the first-person plural pronoun "we." Even though she and I were the only two people present, and I am obviously not Chinese, the use of "we" created a bond between her and every other Chinese person. By lumping the diverse civilizations, regions, cultures and linguistic groups that constitute China, Ana is forging a type of "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983) discussed in chapter 3.

Also evident in the above interaction is erasure. Erasure occurs when any given ethnolinguistic category is artificially attributed an internal homogeneity it does not truly contain. While some

simplification and abstraction are necessary in order to communicate efficiently, erasure is often done not for cognitive efficiency, but for reasons of power, rhetorical persuasion or the forging of social solidarity (or social exclusion):

Erasure is the process in which ideology, in simplifying the sociolinguistic field, renders some persons or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible. Facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away. So, for example, a social group or language may be imagined as homogenous, its internal variation disregarded. Because a linguistic ideology is a totalizing vision, elements that do not fit its interpretive structure –that cannot be seen to fit– must be either ignored or transformed. (Irvine & Gal, 2000, p. 404)

By invoking the Chinese language as an emblem of Chinese cultural identity, Ana erases the hundreds of regional “dialects” that exist until the present day (though most of them are slowly dying out). In fact, up until the late 70s, when the government initiated a massive Mandarinization campaign, a sizeable portion of Chinese citizens outside of the Northeast had limited or no proficiency in Mandarin, now the official language of China (Li Wen-Chao, 2014).

Also papered over with the indexical “we” in Ana’s declaration is the ethnic and class diversity that exist in China. Similar to other nationalist discourses around the world in which the internal fissures and minority identities are glossed over in the forging of a superordinate national identity, Ana and the other respondents in my study seem to imagine China as ethnically and linguistically homogenous nation when in fact there are 55 officially recognized minority groups (Xinhuanet.com, 2018). According to Barabantseva (2008) there are historical reasons for the dominance of the homogenizing discourse in China; China had been invaded many times throughout its history; therefore, unity to fight foreign invaders became not only a military imperative but also a foundational cultural narrative (Barabantseva, 2008). This homogenization is emotionally invoked through the government’s repeated use of the term *minzu*, a word roughly translated as “the people.”

The term *minzu* was first introduced in China in the late nineteenth century to integrate the conception of people (*min*) and the notion of descent (*zu*) to respond to the challenge posed by Western imperialism. It was utilised to propagate a new kind of sentiment among the Chinese based on political and national grounds. The concept served the purpose of strengthening internal borders in order to confront outside threats and later the ruling regime of the Qing dynasty. As such, it evolved and was related to the emergence of the idea of a pure Chinese nation free of aliens and independent from foreign influences.” (Barabantseva, 2008, p. 569)

One can see the relational logic behind the connotations that the term *minzu* evokes; it gains its resonance by stressing the unique historical mission of the united Chinese nation, a nation free from the corrupting influence of foreigners. *Minzu* is also consistent with the official Marxist ideology that stresses the primacy of the people as bearing the working-class consciousness that allegedly served as engine of the Chinese Revolution of 1949 that brought Mao and the Communist party to power.

The relational logic of Chinese nationalism is also consistent with narrative theory which partly informs my research project. Narrative is inherently relational as it serves to connect the disparate elements of selfhood within a larger socio-historical framework (Sommers, 1994). By connecting the parts of one’s life within a broader narrative, individuals are able to imbue the various facets of their existence with meaning and purpose. Sommers argues that another manner in which narrative is relational is through “causal emplotment.” By causally tying together the isolated experiences of one’s biography, narrative enable persons to achieve a sense of coherence in their lives through the use of

selective appropriation... temporality, sequence, and place. Together, these dimensions suggest narratives are constellations of relationships (connected parts) embedded in time and space, constituted by causal emplotment. Unlike the attempt to produce meaning by placing an event in a specified category, narrativity precludes sense-making of a singular isolated phenomenon. Narrativity demands that we discern the meaning of any single event only in temporal and spatial relationship to other events. Indeed, the chief characteristic of narrative is that it renders understanding only by connecting (however unstably) parts to a constructed configuration or a social network of relationships (however incoherent or unrealizable) composed of symbolic, institutional, and material practices. (Sommers, 1994, p .616)

As is evident in this quote, narrative employs relationality as it ties together many disconnected events into a coherent whole. In the case of my participants, these coherent wholes by necessity involve

the individual appropriation of collective semiotic resources such as national symbols, signifiers of social position, and contrastive subjectivity (the defining of oneself by stating what one is *not*, i.e., *not* American, *not* Western, *not* a foreigner). This use of out-groups to define the in-group is not unique to the participants in my study; the fundamental importance of contrastive identity has been a theme in the published research in social psychology for several decades now. For instance, Tajfel and Turner (1979) put forth what they termed “social identity theory” as a way to counteract a European alternative to the individualist bias in American psychology (the dominant paradigm at the time). According to social identity theory, subjectivity is accomplished by socially comparing oneself with other individuals and groups; as fundamentally social creatures, critical dimensions of human selfhood are based upon the groups of which any given person is a member. Tajfel and Turner go on to argue that due to the vital significance of groups in constituting individual identity, persons tend to be liable to in-group bias, “to make characteristics of these groups or social identities positively distinct in comparison with relevant out-groups” (Liu, Li & Yue, 2009, p. 580).

Tajfel’s decades of research provide strong empirical support for his claims that in-group solidarity is strengthened by contrasting one’s own in-group with out-groups. In fact, researching the conceptualizations of out-groups was much more than an abstract intellectual pursuit; it was personally meaningful for Tajfel. As a Holocaust survivor, Tajfel was fascinated by the dynamics of inter-group relations, and how they could spiral out of control and descend into hatred and even genocide. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Tajfel strongly objected to the methodological individualism so characteristic of psychology at the time. Consequently, he argued against attributing prejudice solely to personality variables. As research showed that even ordinary Germans took part in the genocide against Jews, Tajfel felt compelled to search for other causes of racism, and what he found was something rooted not in personality, but in one of the critical functions of cognition: categorization itself. In his

experimental work, Tajfel found that mere grouping any phenomena within a category made subjects much more likely to *minimize* differences within the category and exaggerate the differences *between* the categories (Tajfel & Wilkes, 1963). For example, if Tajfel and his associates asked the participants to judge the lengths of lines that were unlabeled, their judgements were fairly accurate, but when the lines were categorized group *A*, Group *B* and so forth, the subjects' perceptions became somewhat distorted. They estimated the lines within the groups as more alike in length than they truly were; conversely, they judged the lengths of the different lines between the groups as larger than they really were.

The *category accentuation effect*, as this phenomenon is now called, has a profound effect on intergroup relations. Research shows that people tend to view members of any given out-group as more homogenous and alike that they actually are (Hamilton & Gifford, 1976). This outgroup homogenization effect was attested to throughout the data I collected, especially on the follow-up interviewing. For example, Bob, a second-year hydraulic engineering major was asked about his motivation to learn English and replied:

Paul: What motivated you to learn English?

Bob: As you know, China is very competitive so we need English to find a good job.

Paul: So, you basically approach English in practical terms?

Bob: Mostly yes, but I also think English helps my confidence level too

Paul: Confidence in regard to what? Finding a job.

Bob: Yes, but it is more than that. I feel that I can become more social by learning English. You can communicate with foreigners with English. And when you communicate with foreigners, you see that they all talk more, and are not shy. When I see that the foreigners are so comfortable speaking, it makes me want to be like them. As we all know, in the business world nowadays, they look for people with good social skills, so I need to be more outgoing, not shy.

Paul: So, are you saying that Chinese people are shy?

Bob: Yes, most of them.

Paul: But I have met many outgoing Chinese people.

Bob: Yes, but that is only a few, not many. When I am around foreigners, I noticed that they are not shy at all.

As we can see in this excerpt, there is evidence of the category accentuation effect; Bob resorts to the use of linguistic absolutes such as “all” and “not at all,” in describing “foreigners,” and does not use qualifiers until I ask him about his in-group, the Chinese, to which he replies, “only a few.” Notably, in this snippet, Bob resorts to both neoliberal logic, “in the business world, they look for people with good social skills,” and relational logic by defining supposed Chinese shyness with foreigners’ alleged extraversion (It is also worth pointing out here, that in keeping with the inductivist tenor of the extended interviewing, I never explicitly asked the respondents to compare cultures; it was all done by them unprompted).

This relational logic became especially pronounced when the respondents foregrounded my own nationality. The respondents seemed to want make binary distinctions between American culture and Chinese culture thereby passing over all the similarities between the two nations and the differences within them. As an example, Gary, in one of the follow-up interviews, a third-year student majoring in physics, explained his desire to go to graduate school in the U.S.

Paul: You stated you enjoy your English classes. Can you tell me why?

Gary: English is fun. I mean obviously, it is a requirement here so I really have no choice. But I would take the classes even if I don’t have to. I like to have foreign teachers. The foreign teachers are easier and more relaxed than the Chinese ones.

Paul: In what way are they easier?

Gary: It is much easier to get an A (slight laughter). They are also joke more and don’t care if you come

late.

Paul: They don't care if you come late?

Gary: I come late to English class from time to time, and my foreign teacher never says anything, but in physics classes, some teachers will lock the door a minute or two after class starts so nobody late can enter.

Paul: Wow!

Gary: Yeah.

Paul: Well, physics I so hard, you can't be late (slight laughter).

Gary: I have always loved physics. I even won my province's top prize in a high school physics competition.

Paul: Congrats! That's wonderful.

Gary: Thanks. I would also like to get my Ph.D. in your country.

Paul: Why is that?

Gary: I have always been interested in the U.S. I like the movies, and I love the NBA. America is so free compared to China. You can say what you want.

Paul: But China now has some of the top universities in the world, so you could get a great graduate education if you stay here too.

Gary: True, but I want to see another culture. An open culture. Americans are so talkative, not bashful like Chinese people.

In this excerpt, it becomes evident that Gary resorts to sweeping generalizations to define both American culture and Chinese culture, and this may be at least partially due to his belief that the purpose of ethnographic interviewing is to look for what is *different*, not the same.

Relational identity without outgroup denigration

Gary's statements, like those of all the respondents in my study, shows evidence of the category accentuation effect. Nonetheless, Tajfel's other predictions, outgroup derogation and in-group bias,

were not attested to in my data for the most part. While there were indeed many instances of pride in Chinese culture and a celebration of the Chinese language, only two participants made explicitly negative comments about non-Chinese people. Perhaps this was due to the *social desirability effect*. The social desirability effect occurs when respondents in research surveys or interviews give inaccurate responses in order to show themselves in the best light (DeVellis, 2003). Obviously, in the contemporary world, any direct expressions of racism or prejudice tend to be stigmatized (in mainstream society at least), so my informants may not have been entirely genuine in their answers so as to appear enlightened and progressive. While this may be the case in the open-ended interviews, in the anonymous fixed-item questionnaires (where I was not even in the same room as the participants) social desirability would likely have less of an effect; despite this anonymity, in item 3 on my survey (*Chinese culture is superior to others*), only 2 out of 40 agreed by marking 5 on the Likert scale, *tend to agree*, while the rest disagreed to various degrees.

The absence of outgroup bias in my findings may also be due to the lack of a representative sample. As detailed in the research settings sections, Northern University is an extremely elite institute of higher education; my respondents are not typical. It could also be that the participants on my convenience sample were more likely to have what Yashima (2009) coded as “international posture.” In any case, my findings run contrary to much of the published literature in the social psychology of inter-group relations:

This research consistently demonstrates that the mere categorization of people into groups can lead to favoritism toward the in-group and discrimination against the out-group. The tendency to establish a relative superiority of the in-group over the out-group has generally been interpreted in motivational terms. According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), people strive to enhance the value of their own group relative to the out-group in order to maintain a positive social identity. Consistent with this general bias, people also tend to hold differential expectancies about the behavior of in-group and out-group members. They expect in-group members to display more desirable and fewer undesirable behaviors than out-group members.

(Maass, Salvi, Arcuri, & Semin, 1989, p. 982)

As social science has few if any universal covering laws that hold for all people in all cultures, it can only deal with tendencies that though sometimes widespread, are inherently context-bound. In the context of this highly prestigious university, where a fairly high proficiency level in English is required, and where many of the parents of my participants stressed tolerance and open-mindedness, there was virtually no outgroup derogation. And this finding was not limited to my research: having spent 3 years teaching at Northern University, I found the students to be quite open-minded and tolerant.

The linguistic category model

Another manner in which my findings differ from some of the previous research on intergroup relations is the language my participants used to describe the group dynamics between themselves and the members of the L1 target culture. As discussed previously, a consistent finding of previous research is outgroup homogenization, which is the belief that outgroup members are more similar than they actually are. The flip side of this depersonalization is the individuation of in-group members: we tend to view our fellow group members more as distinct individuals and not just as stereotypes of the group. In-group members usually carry out this dynamic by varying the degrees of abstraction used in their respective descriptions of in-group and outgroup individuals.

Consistent with the research showing how language apparently plays a critical role in human cognition, *the linguistic category model* has empirically demonstrated that individuals tend to use more concrete language to refer to their fellow in-group members and more abstract language to describe outgroup members (Semin & Fiedler, 1988). According to Semin and Fielder, by using abstract terminology to refer to outgroup members, ingroup members are less able to view the former in all their uniqueness; instead, they usually see them through the lens of a fixed stereotype, and this in turn can lead to intergroup biases. The authors go on to argue that the stubborn persistence of stereotypes is due to

the utilization of sweeping essentialist language that “renders disconfirmation of preexisting ideas about in-group and out-group difficult” (Maass et al., 1989, p. 982). In other words, even in the light of counter-stereotypic evidence, the fixed notions one has of outgroup members is highly resistant to change.

In terms of this type of stereotyping of outgroups (L1 speakers of English), my research findings are consistent with Maass et al.’s theory. Nonetheless, in regard to the depiction of in-group members, contrary to the predictions of Maass et al., the participants in my study used the same level of abstraction to describe their fellow L1 speakers of Chinese as they did “foreigners.” In their influential paper, the authors

argue that the same behavioral episodes are encoded at different levels of abstraction depending on whether such behaviors have positive or negative connotations and whether they are performed by in-group or out-group members. In particular, we argue that socially desirable in-group behaviors and undesirable out-group behaviors are encoded at a high level of abstraction, whereas socially undesirable in-group behaviors and desirable out-group behaviors are encoded at a low level of abstraction. Considering that information encoded at an abstract level is relatively resistant to disconfirmation and implies high stability over time. (Maass et al., 1989, p. 983).

Building upon Semin and Fiedler's (1988) linguistic category hypothesis with its four levels of linguistic abstraction, Maas and his co-authors code their participants’ statements regarding both in-group as well as outgroup members. They use a range of 4 levels, from the most concrete to the most abstract. In the most basic, tangible level are descriptive action verbs (DAVs), for example, *to speak* or *to walk*, that index a single, observable event, which by definition must have as a minimum one unchanging and physically observable feature. In the second level, one finds “interpretive action verbs (IAVs),” for example, *to assist* or *to deceive*. As we can see from the adjective “interpretive,” the physical action is coupled with an evaluative component so in this way the signifiers are not tied to just one physically observable action; instead, many actions or behaviors could be subsumed under the term.

In comparing the two levels, one can see that DAVs are much more objectively coded as there is no

evaluation involved; IAVs on the other hand are much more subjective in nature. As an example, Semin and Fielder use the verb *to help*; this verb refers to a broader group of actions that do not specify the behavior in question (e.g., *to bother* could signify distinct actions such as speaking loudly, waking someone up with a middle-of-the-night phone call or aggressively panhandling). Due to their subjective nature, *interpretive action verbs* are tightly bound to the immediate context and can vary not only from culture to culture but from individual to individual too.

The third level of their model consists of *state verbs* (SVs). SVs refer to emotional states such as love or wish; they do not directly index a directly observable behavior in a specific situation, but can refer to a specific direct object. Because they do not reference on specific action, and because they require some degree of evaluation, SVs are more subjective. The fourth and most abstract class of language referring to people consists of certain adjectives (ADJ), such as *violent* or *creative*. Adjectives are the most abstract because they attribute dispositional and cross-situationally consistent essences to persons or characteristics of a person. For example, if I state that John is nice, I am implying that this is a stable trait that does not vary from situation to situation. When used to refer to groups of people (e.g., The French are romantic or Asians are good at math), it can lead to an essentialist homogenization.

In fact, it was at this essentialist fourth level that most of my participant tended to describe *all* groups, not just out-groups. In other words, contrary to the dominant findings in the research literature on intergroup dynamics, the participants in my study did not use less abstract and more individualized language when referring to their fellow Chinese (their in-group) than they did when referring to out-group members (variously referred to as foreigners, Westerners, or Americans by my informants). For instance, Alice, a first-year student from southern China majoring in statistics, mostly resorted to the level four adjectives to describe both Chinese and American culture.

Paul: Your English is very good. How did you achieve such a high level of proficiency?

Alice: I watch a lot of American movies. I love American movies.

Paul: Why do like them so much?

Alice: They are exciting, but scary. Your country is so violent. I wanted to go study there, but my parents wouldn't let me. They said it is too dangerous.

Paul: Why did you want to study in the U.S.?

Alice: I want to improve my English and see another culture, but the U.S is a little crazy (laughter).

Paul: So, you parents wouldn't let you?

Alice: No, they said I have to stay in China.

Paul: I see

Alice: It is ok. I am at Northern University, so I think my future will be good. I love my country anyway. It is so peaceful and harmonious.

Paul: What do you think the reasons are for the differing levels of violence between the countries?

Alice: I think in the U.S. the people are selfish. They don't care about others, but in China we are considerate of others, and we always worry what other people will think of us.

Paul: Why is that?

Alice: Um, maybe it is because of the family. In China, the family is very important. We always want to honor our family and never cause them shame.

As can be seen in this excerpt, Alice is mostly using 4th level abstract language to characterize the United States as well as her own country; the U.S. is “violent and selfish,” while China is “peaceful and harmonious.” This was one of the few instances of outgroup derogation, but the level of abstraction to describe Chinese culture is the same, though obviously more positive.

This use of highly schematic characterizations of the in-group may be inconsistent with Semin and Fiedler's (1988) linguistic category hypothesis, but they do jibe with the findings of self-stereotyping theory: “Self-stereotyping involves perceiving oneself as a member of a group and consequently behaving in line with this social identity” (Biernat, Vescio, & Green, 1996, p. 1194). Self-stereotyping theory research has shown that when individuals firmly classify themselves within any social category, they tend to incorporate those sweeping stereotypes (even negative ones) into their own discursive repertoires and self-schemata. As I pointed out above in the discussion on social identity theory, Tajfel

& Wilkes (1963) found that when any given social category is personally salient to an individual's sense of self, the commonly accepted stereotype of the group often becomes incorporated into the person's self-identity. For example, the social psychologists Sinclair, Hardin, & Lowery (2006) argue that "people apply cultural stereotypes to the self" (p. 529), and that this self-stereotyping is accomplished through interaction with significant others such as family, friends and classmates.

The three co-authors come to these conclusions by building upon the research of the Chicago School of Sociology and their influential relational paradigm, symbolic interactionism, a theory originating from pragmatist philosophy. Symbolic interactionism analyzes the interactional effects of communication, and the way individuals use the resulting symbols and norms to constitute their own subjectivities and regulate their own behavior. It takes as a given that humans use interaction with significant others as a frame of reference to create semiotic worlds that are personally and intersubjectively meaningful for them. Once these frameworks are established, even though they are situationally contingent, they tend to be somewhat stable and enduring. In fact, one of the pioneers of symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934), argued that his paradigm is a useful tool to aid social scientists in comprehending how society is forged and maintained through repeated micro-interactions of individuals. In the following section, I will show how some of the informants used the symbols and the imaginary of the ancient Chinese nation to narrate their own life stories. In this manner, one can see how the participants embed their own subjectivity using the Chinese national narrative.

Chinese culture and history as a narrative resource

In keeping with the inductivist nature of my study, I tried to consciously avoid any a priori, essentialist approaches to ethnolinguistic identity. Just as in CA, an in postmodern and performative ethnography, in narrative-based research, identity is conceptualized as temporary product of conversational interaction and not as preceding it. In this way, the linear and deterministic relationship between culture and the

individual, the linear approach that one's background determines one's thoughts and behavior, is discarded for one that conceives of identity as a fluid and context-sensitive interactional achievement of discourse. Of course, this fluid, contingent approach to identity does not entail the complete dismissal of culture and the embrace of autonomous individualism; instead, rather than constituting the self, culture and history are seen as resources that the individual can deploy and appropriate to project an image of the self that is relevant to whatever situational demand arises. By conceptualizing culture and history as resources and not as causal variables, we are afforded a much more flexible and agentic approach to the cultural identity.

With this caveat in mind, of the three participants, Greg seemed to draw on the resources of Chinese history and culture for his identity performance to the greatest degree. In the following excerpt, one can see how Greg struggles to express his pride in Chinese history without seeming nationalistic:

Paul: So, what do you think when I mention Chinese history?

Greg: (3). Um... Can I say proud?

Paul: Of course, this interview is about you so feel comfortable to say whatever you want.

Greg: Ok. Our history is long. We have many dynasties and wars. China is strong.

Paul: What do you mean by strong?

Greg: We are the oldest country in the world, and we have great art and architecture.

In this segment of the interview, one can see how Greg utilizes Chinese history as an asset to fashion his identity in interview with me, an American interlocutor. However, as evidenced by his hesitation and his uncertainty of whether such an expression of pride was acceptable, his reply seemed to be mediated by my presence as a cultural outsider. In this excerpt, the dialogical construction of the self becomes apparent. Nonetheless, as this is not naturally occurring talk, and given the fact that the interview

questions almost automatically trigger the display of category membership (in this case, Chinese national identity), one cannot infer that his group membership would be indexed in a more naturalistic setting.

Greg also utilized the discourse of Chinese culture to craft the presentation of his identity to me in the interview. When I asked Nick to define Chinese culture, he replied: "It is deep. It defines me." While the other participants remarked on the length and complexity of Chinese history, Gina and Mary were more neutral in their utterances when describing their identities. Nick, on the other hand, became physically animated-by leaning forward in his seat, raising the pitch of his voice, and using vigorous gestures-when asked about Chinese history. As I will show in chapter 6, the ability to draw upon the vast repertoire of the Chinese national story may serve as a buffer against the threat L2 English could pose to the Chinese culture and language.

Constructing lives through narrative

In examining the transcript, one can see how the interview itself is meaning-making. The participants such as Greg shape their narrative through agentive tales in which they are protagonists of their own life stories. The plot they used to structure their utterances seemed consistent with the middle-class norms of achievement orientation: obtaining higher education and getting a prestigious, well-paying job. Although these tales are always individually inflected, their shape and content are drawn from the normative life stories of the surrounding culture: "Narrative inquiry rests upon the epistemological assumption that we as human beings make sense of random experience by the imposition of story structures" (Bell, 2002, p.208). As children of the Chinese middle-class, most of the participants' narratives centered around the opportunities and challenges of upward mobility. In this way, the story structures of the individuals in the follow-up interviews were dominated by two themes: cultural and linguistic differences and career and personal development.

In Greg's case, he contrasted his discomfort in English with his passion for the Chinese language. In contrast to his stated struggles with English, he animatedly discussed his thoughts on the Chinese language by positing the creative force of Chinese, its ability to forge new perspectives on reality:

Greg: Chinese is different than English. (1.5). English is stricter but (.5) In Chinese you can be creative, you can combine words to make new ones.

Paul: In what way?

Greg: For example, you can combine an adjective and a noun and make a brand-new word. You can be very poetic in Chinese.

Paul: In English we call that coining a new word.

Greg then grabbed his pencil and drew out two words and combined them thereby creating a new word. He did this in a very vibrant manner, and he seemed pleased to share his passion for the language with me, a beginning-level Chinese language-learner at the time. This exchange also illustrated the fluid nature of positionality. While I, as his former teacher now occupying the role of a researcher, operated from a more privileged position outside of the confines of interview, in this context he was the expert; in this exchange with the language, I took the role of the novice and he of the expert. But his passion and joy for his culture was contagious and his enthusiasm made me comfortable despite this sudden inversion of the power dynamic. In this way, just as Gregg used Chinese history as a resource to fashion his identity, he used the language as a way to project pride in his heritage. By placing himself in the grand narrative of ancient Chinese history and language, the self-account he projected to me seemed firmly planted in the discourse of Chinese nationalism. The strong pride he exhibited in the interview shows that power and identity are shifting and context-sensitive thereby problematizing simplistic binaries of powerful/powerless. Moreover, by drawing on the discourse of Chinese nationalism, Greg was able to articulate his identity from a position of confidence and strength. In this manner, he negotiated his identity with me not as a powerless, racialized minority, but

as a bearer of an ancient and proud cultural tradition.

Social Class and the symbolic value of English

In this section, I will review some of the literature on the semiotic function of English. However, I also stress the lived material conditions (i.e., economic resources) that impact students' approach and motivation toward learning English. In this way, I try to avoid adopting an overly idealist paradigm in this study. Idealism is based upon the belief "that a person's cognitive states are a function of his language or conceptual structure" (Fisher, 1984, p. 27). While I do believe that the languages people speak influence the way they think, feel and act, there is also a pressing material reality outside of discourse, especially for the working class and the impoverished. Poverty and oppression and their destructive effects go far beyond the discursive level, and certain approaches such as the one we discussed above, symbolic interaction, mostly leave out this material dimension.

By mostly leaving unexamined these material dimensions of social life and focusing on the discursive, symbolic interaction is deeply rooted in semiotics; in social semiotic approaches, social processes are principally about creating and maintaining *meaning*. Indeed, when Mead used the term *mind*, he was not referring to a spiritual entity or the neurons and synapses of our physical brains; he was referring to a person's ability to utilize symbols to construct meanings for the surrounding world. Symbolic interactionists thus emphasize the importance of language and its role in meaning making. Moreover, as with any semiotic theory, symbols must be interpreted, so according to Mead, meanings are constantly being recreated and adapted to the needs of the immediate context. This is done both on an individual as well as the social level with the result being that that these meanings are at least partially shared. It bears mentioning that these shared meanings are far from abstract, disembodied intellectual constructs; they have significant effects on human thinking and behavior. Because people base their behavior on these shared understandings, they play a fundamental causal role through what has now become known

as the Thomas theorem: “If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences” (Thomas & Thomas, cited in Merton, 1995, p. 380). In other words, the definition of any given situation, the way the participants interpret it, would obviously largely determine the course of action (or inaction) they would take toward it. For example, while one person may see a beautiful wooded section of land as beautiful nature to be preserved, a real estate developer may get dollar signs in their eyes and see an opportunity to make a profit. In this manner, symbolic interactionism presaged many of the later developments in poststructuralist and social constructivist approaches in that they all refute the notion that reality is pregiven. These theories all share fundamental premise that language does not objectively capture pre-existing reality; instead, it is argued that language itself creates the very social worlds that surround us.

Not only do researchers in symbolic interactionism assert that language creates social reality, they posit its role in constituting subjectivity. George Herbert Mead (1934), one of the pioneers of symbolic interactionism, argued that self-concepts are formed and regulated by situationally adopting others’ perspectives on the self. Because individuals are members of any number of social relationships, self-understanding is not only fluid but also context-appropriate, corresponding pragmatically to the social expectations relevant to the immediate context. Because stereotypes about the groups to which one belongs represent commonly shared perspectives on the self, self-evaluation may be influenced by the stereotypes associated with one’s most salient social group memberships.

In terms of the focus of my study, the subjective interpretations on the part of my participants toward the target language and the target culture are tremendously significant in regard to their motivation and manner of studying it. In other words, the heart of the qualitative part of this research project is to delve into the way in which my informants symbolically conceptualize English, both personally and socially—the role, if any, that English plays as a symbol of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977).

Relationism and research methods

“Even the most abstract categories, despite their validity—precisely because of their abstractness—for all epochs, are nevertheless, in the specific character of this abstraction, themselves likewise a product of historic relations, and possess their full validity only for and within these relations. (Marx, 1971. P. 105)

The people social scientists focus their studies on are not the only ones using relational logic to make sense of the world; everybody utilizes it, including me and all other researchers in SLA or any other field for that matter. In the interest of researcher reflexivity, it is therefore necessary to stress the relational and embedded nature of the concepts I utilize as tools of analysis. These entities and concepts cannot be understood in isolation; they are *not* invariant underlying essences that remain unchanged regardless of the context. Instead, it is “only in relation to other things and the totality of all things” (Sayre, 2008, p. 907) that we can come to a more adequate understanding of the phenomenon we are analyzing. For example, the concept of my analysis, neoliberalism, cannot be grasped as an unchanging, timeless principle which is the same everywhere and everyplace; it must not be seen as a static, context-free independent variable bringing upon uniformity throughout the world. In place of this static essentialism, I try to analyze neoliberalism holistically and relationally as a *process*, deeply integrated into many different levels, from the individual, to face-to face interaction, to the regional, to the national, to the global to the sociohistorical. As an empirical phenomenon, neoliberalism is constantly interacting with other phenomenon and other discursive regimes such as national traditions, individual personality differences, racial and gender systems of oppression, among others, and as a result, it is always locally inflected.

Indeed, all theoretical categories of social analysis can only be made meaningful when they are placed in a concrete context so we must be aware of the “historical specificity of conceptual categories.” Moreover, concepts are always affected by power relations so researchers need to practice “self-

reflexivity about one's categories and their material basis" (Sayre, 2008, p. 914). While CDA is always concerned with this material basis, regardless of the topic being investigated, CDA scholars point out that the economic terms such as "social class" or "occupational prestige" are not mere numbers in a data set, they also represent people's lived experience.

CDA and economic determinism

However, it is worth pointing out including the material basis of social action in any paradigm is not synonymous with economic determinism. Economic determinism is premised upon the tenet that all social behavior and social relations are mere epiphenomenon of economic relations. While CDA does admit of the partial casual significance of social class, it does not do so in a reductive sense. Instead of reductionism, CDA conceptualizes reality as being complex, multilayered and overdetermined, with many different variables and levels constantly interacting. As a linguistic theory, one of the principal foci of CDA is semiotics: the study of signs (Halliday, 1978). Anything that communicates meaning is a sign, and social actors can, among other things, deploy signs to constitute their own subjectivity and to practice agency. As I have pointed out previously, the English language itself is a sign, and my data shows how the participants can agentively appropriate English as a semiotic resource, though this appropriation is always, at least to some degree, inflected by material reality, especially social class.

To be sure, the semiotic resource of English enables my informants to "emplot" L2 English experiences within several overlapping relational narratives ranging from the competitive narrative of neoliberalism to the cosmopolitan narrative of sophisticated global subjectivity to the narrative of the "glorious Chinese civilization." For example, in the case of the excerpt analyzed earlier in the chapter, Ana's declarations concerning Chinese civilization, we saw how she utilized erasure to homogenize Chinese culture and to imagine it as unitary. Other scholars have also researched the role of erasure in life narratives. Bearing some similarities to Irvine and Gil's concept of erasure discussed above, Somers

(1994) show how narratives by definition use selective appropriation. Building upon the work of the political philosopher Charles Taylor's notion of "hypergoods," which are "a set of fundamental principles and values" (Taylor cited in Sommers, 1994, p. 617), that guide persons' thoughts and behavior, she writes that narratives always use some sort of evaluative criteria and/or overarching theme.

Sommers (1994) goes on to argue that narrative is a legitimate tool of analysis for social scientists because narrative combines both the emic and etic perspectives. The emic perspective is the lived experience of a particular individual or a particular place, while the etic approach takes more positivist approach and looks for generalizability. Emic researchers tend to look at how particular people in a particular context people behave and act. It is focused on the localized process of meaning-making. Emic studies are especially interested in the way customs affect cognition, the perception and categories the locals use to carve up and interpret the world. They endeavor to understand how the people they are studying experience their lived reality; accordingly, emic approaches usually avoid imposing the researchers' categories; in this way emic research is radically inductive. Emic researchers tend to stress that each context, each event, each culture is unique and therefore generalizability is not possible (Windelband, 1998). The etic approach, on the other hand, has scientific pretensions and, as a result tends to rely more on the categories and concepts of the researcher to analyze the data (Salvatore & Valsiner, 2010). It tends to be more deductive in nature, looking for general and universal laws or patterns.

Having said that, it is important to note that the emic/etic distinction is not based upon a mutually exclusive binary; instead, they exist upon a continuum. No one study can be purely emic as there is always some sort of interpretation on the part of the researcher. Conversely, no study can be 100% etic as every situation and every person is unique in certain ways so that when we generalize we always lose something in the abstraction (see my discussion in the conclusion regarding Weber's method of ideal types as way to address this dilemma). In any type of social science (under which I subsume applied

linguistics and its subfield SLA; see Sealey and Carter's book "*Applied linguistics as a social science*), a certain type of abstraction is necessary in order to, at a minimum, compare similar phenomenon in different places. For instance, a focal point of my analysis centers on neoliberalism, an ideology especially characteristic of the U.S and the U.K. (Harvey, 2005), two countries that have vastly different socio-historical experiences than China. Neoliberalism in China does share some similarities with those found in other countries, but it also distinct in many ways. By combining a mixed-methods paradigm, and by contextualizing and historicizing the expression of neoliberalism in China, and showing how it interacts with other discursive traditions such as those of Confucianism, Chinese nationalism and Marxism, in this research project, I combine both emic and etic approaches to capture all the subtleties, contradictions and complexities that are found in my data.

Although the terms emic/etic are of fairly recent origin, the debate surrounding the nature of social science goes back centuries (Are psychology and sociology sciences akin to chemistry and biology-etic- or are they part of the humanities-emic?). The linguist Kenneth Pike, in an attempt to address this question for the field of linguistics coined these terms based on the fundamental distinction phonologists make between the phonemic and phonetic:

'Etics' and 'emics' are neologisms coined by the linguist Kenneth Pike from the suffixes of the words phonetic and phonemic... Phonetic accounts of the sounds of a language are based upon a taxonomy of the body parts active in the production of speech utterances and their characteristic environmental effects in the form of acoustic waves. Thus, the linguist discriminates between voiced and unvoiced sounds, depending on the activity of the vocal cords; between aspirated and nonaspirated sounds, depending on the activity of the glottis; between labials and dentals depending on the activity of the tongue and teeth. On the other hand, phonemic accounts of the sounds of a language are based on the implicit or unconscious system of sound contrasts which native speakers have inside of their heads and which they employ to identify meaningful utterances in their language. (Harris, 1976, pp. 331-332).

In other words, the scientifically oriented linguist focuses on the objective sounds, the phonetic, while the speakers subjectively hear the phonemic, the minimal sound distinctions in their particular language. In this way, the emic approach primarily focuses on what is subjectively meaningful to the social actors,

while the etic approaches strive for operationally defined objective classifications. In a fairly rough manner, my research project maps onto this binary: the qualitative section is more emic, while the quantitative part is more etic, though I stress the former much more than I do the latter. And just like phonology itself, my research employs a relational approach.

Emic and Etic Narratives

It is for these reasons that I find a critical discourse analysis approach that focuses on the narrative nature of the data to be very helpful in helping me to address the research questions of this dissertation. As mentioned above, narrative paradigms can combine both emic and etic methods. It is emic in the sense that by getting our participants to narrate their experiences, qualitative researchers can, to some extent enter into the symbolic worlds of our informants' narratives. Although the narrative resources people use to construct a life-story are mostly collective in nature (the socially constructed symbols, scripts, roles and categories), the way individuals inflect, appropriate, combine and transform them imbue each person with an irreducible uniqueness. This narrative fashioning of the self also constitutes a space for agency, though one that is still conditioned by social structure, as Bourdieu stressed throughout his published works:

Bourdieu's understanding of agency is that it takes place in, is produced in, and is inextricably bound up with, the world. He specifically rejects the idea of a knowing, transcendental consciousness (along the lines of the Cartesian cogito) somehow able to free itself from its history, social trajectories, and circumstances of thought. All activity and knowledge—this includes both disinterested scientific or scholarly work and the most tacit (and therefore virtually unconscious) physical movements or personal dispositions—are always informed by a relationship between the agents' history and how this history has been incorporated, on the one hand, and their context or circumstances (both in a general sense and 'of the moment'), on the other. In other words, agency is always the result of a coming together of the habitus and the specific cultural fields and contexts in which agents 'find themselves', in both senses of the expression. (Schirato & Webb, 2002, pp. 255-266)

In this way we humans are both singular and collective beings as the self is never authored in a vacuum; each person's self-understanding always comes embedded in a deep web of pre-existing socially available discourses and power structures.

However pervasive these objective power structures may be, they must always be interpreted and experienced on the individual level. In the case of my research here, there is no doubt that the global spread of English results primarily from centuries of imperialist conquest and economic domination (Philipson, 1992, 2001, 2009). As mentioned in the introduction, this macro-level fact is not the focus of this dissertation; rather, I wish to link these broader social and historical forces to the concrete, lived experience my participants have as university English language learners in contemporary China. A global phenomenon carrying deep social meaning, English is a kind of metaphorical Rorschach test upon which Chinese EFL learners project their own subjectivity, their own images and concepts of globalization, social class, modernity and the foreign "other." In this way, my research links the micro with the macro, the emic with the etic.

The emic part involves my attempt to elicit from my participants how English is meaningful to them. For example, as I discussed in the previous chapter. I found the metaphorical elicitation item "English is like...." extremely effective in providing me with a momentary glimpse into the figurative world of my participants. In this manner, my research is phenomenological in that I explore the subjective meanings my participants attach to the role of L2 English in their lives and in their culture.

In this way, I am keeping with the methodological imperative of CDA, which is the focus on the intersectionality of semiotic meaning, asymmetrical power relations, and language. This emphasis on semiotics is consistent with hermeneutical phenomenology; the basic tenet of hermeneutic phenomenology is that our most fundamental and basic experience of the world is already full of

meaning (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). These meaning precede us and are always embedded in the larger sociopolitical structures, but it is also up to the individual to interpret and articulate them:

We are enmeshed in our world and immediately experience our world as meaningful because our world—with its other people, its histories and cultures, and its events—precedes any attempt on our part to understand it or explain it. The purpose of hermeneutic phenomenological research is to bring to light and reflect upon the lived meaning of this basic experience. Researchers attempts to describe phenomena as they appear in everyday life *before* they have been theorized, interpreted, explained, and otherwise abstracted, while knowing that any attempt to do this is always tentative, contingent, and never complete. (van Manen, 2014, p.289)

Given this radical incontingency, I approached the open-ended interviews with an acute awareness of the processual and performative nature of cultural identity. In contrast to the reification of cultures as entities, as actual things, I tried to avoid the “fallacy of misplaced concreteness” (Whitehead, 1929) by adopting an ideographic epistemological stance. Ideographic approaches view each person and each context as somewhat unique and therefore not generalizable. Viewing cultural identities as fluid and strategic appropriations from a variegated repertoire, nomothetic generalizations about cultural traits are untenable. Through the avoidance of cultural essentialism, I attempted to keep in mind the context-dependence of the self, the way people can negotiate and access different identities depending upon the immediate situation. Thus, my analysis is founded upon a thoroughgoing perspectivism (Conant, 2005). Perspectival approaches are based on a modest epistemology that all knowledge claims come from a certain vantage point; there are no transcendental perspectives that confer absolute objectivity to the researcher. Our data, our methods, indeed the very research questions we ask, are bound to an interpretive paradigm:

The world, as we experience it, appears to have contradictory qualities. A coin appears round when viewed from here, elliptical when viewed from there; the mountain appears green in this light, blue in that light; and so on. But these are not necessarily intrinsic properties of the world, but may rather be perspective-dependent properties of it – that is, they may not necessarily be properties of the objects we perceive as those objects are in themselves. Rather they may just be relative to some point of view or set of standing conditions under which the objects of experience are encountered. (Conant, 2005, p. 20)

While this approach may seem to imply an absolute relativism, that anything goes, I do not go that far. Instead of relativism, the argument that there are no absolute standards for deciding what is right, in this paper I adopt a soft relativism (explained in more detail in the following chapter).

A soft relativism, which is what a perspectivist approach entails, *does not* consider every interpretation as equally worthy; rather it requires a *healthy* skepticism that no one researcher and no one paradigm or school of thought can capture the absolute truth. Indeed, all perspectives are to some degree somewhat influenced by the viewpoint of the person doing the viewing (thereby reminding us of the old proverb, “where you stand depends upon where you are sitting.” The influence of perspective on our claims to truth is not based upon armchair philosophy; a growing body of research provides empirical support for its explanatory potential (Clementson, 2017; Levine, 2017; Kunda, 1990). This research shows that our pre-existing beliefs, the cues in the immediate situation and our group identities, among other things biasing us, are so deep, powerful and pervasive that they can even affect what we think we see:

In line with work demonstrating that social identities alter visual processing, a study showed that party affiliation shaped people’s perceptions after watching the video of a political protest, in other words an identity-relevant event. When participants thought that the video depicted liberally minded protesters (i.e., opposing military recruitment on campus), Republicans were more in favor of police intervention than Democrats, whereas the opposite emerged when participants thought the video showed a conservative protest (i.e., opposing an abortion clinic). Faced with the same visual information, people seem to have seen different things and drawn different conclusions depending on their political affiliations. (Bavel & Pereira, 2018, p. 218)

As evidenced in this quote, the particular collective identity of the subjects affected their perception of what they thought they saw, which is consistent with the research showing that among all the factors impeding objectivity, group identities exert the most profound distortionary effect (Shook & Fazio, 2009). Given my status as an outsider researching in a Chinese context, being aware of the power of

these biases help me to strive to my utmost to guard against letting my group identity bias my findings, but completely eliminating my own subjectivity from the research process is impossible.

Given this inevitable presence of bias, I do not subscribe to a correspondence theory of truth in regard to my findings; “Narrowly speaking, the correspondence theory of truth is the view that truth is correspondence to, or with, a fact” (Marian, 2015, p.56). Instead of this positivist goal, as I discussed in the literature review, I adopt a relational paradigm, which entails never analyzing any given phenomenon in isolation; only by holistically placing my findings in context and comparing and contrasting them to other perspectives can I hope to shed light on the dialectical relationship between English and the Chinese social structure.

Chapter 7: Mixed Methods Research and Data Analysis

In this chapter, I will start off by exploring the historical and theoretical rationale for doing mixed-methods research. Luckily for me, Bourdieu, whose concepts inform this dissertation, also utilized mixed methods. Accordingly, I will review this dimension of Bourdieu's research, and then I expound upon the ontological and epistemological foundations upon which mixed methods lies. I will then wrap up the chapter with a brief overview of some of the quantitative analysis I carried out based upon the data I collected in the fixed-item questionnaire.

Bourdieu and mixed methods research

As I have repeatedly stressed throughout this proposal, I base the tenor and much of the actual content of my research on Bourdieu's work. It is important to note that while Bourdieu is famous for much of his theoretical work, he was also an avowed empiricist who strongly advocated that any and all abstract theories be grounded in hard data, and early in his career he combined statistical data with ethnographic methods (Calhoun, 2006). In fact, Bourdieu left the field of philosophy, the discipline he held a Ph.D. in, because he viewed it as too far removed from the everyday life (practice) that he truly wished to study. He also felt that philosophy was prone to conceptual dualism that abstracted out most of the nuance and complexity of the empirical world. In fact, Bourdieu argued against the traditional antinomies of qualitative/ quantitative, objective/subjective, and structure/agency; he believed that his work could integrate these illusory dichotomies by working on different but complementary levels of analysis. For example, his notion of habitus illustrates how the socio-economic milieu (the structural) in which an individual is socialized strongly affects the way that person speaks, thinks, and even the body language and gestures he or she uses (the micro-level). While not explicitly invoking the term "mixed methods" his work did indeed incorporate various aspects of the quantitative such as analysis of correspondence

(in his work examining cultural capital in France) with qualitative research such as fieldwork in small-scale societies such as the Kabyle in rural North Africa.

What animated Bourdieu (1987), and what continues to animate contemporary scholars employing mixed methods, is the definitive repudiation of simplistic binary oppositions:

One of the main obstacles to scientific sociology is the use we make of common oppositions, paired concepts, or what Bachelard calls "epistemological couples:" constructed by social reality, these are unthinkingly used to construct social reality. One of these fundamental antinomies is the opposition between objectivism and subjectivism or, in more current parlance, between structuralism and constructivism, which can be roughly characterized as follows. From the objectivist point of view, social agents can be "treated as things," as in the old Durkheimian precept, that is, classified like objects: access to the objective classification presupposes here a break with naïve subjective classifications, which are seen as "prenotions" or "ideologies." From the subjectivist point of view, as represented by phenomenology, ethnomethodology and constructivist sociology, agents construct social reality, which is itself understood as the product of the aggregation of these individual acts of construction. For this sort of sociological marginalism, there is no need to break with primary social experience, for the task of sociology is to give "an account of accounts."

This is in fact a false opposition. In reality, agents are both classified and classifiers, but they classify according to (or depending upon) their position within classifications. To sum up what I mean by this, I can comment briefly on the notion of point of view: the point of view is a perspective, a partial subjective vision (subjectivist moment); but it is at the same time a view, a perspective, taken from a point, from a determinate position in an objective social space (objectivist moment). Let me develop each of these moments, the objectivist and the subjectivist, as they apply to the analysis of class, and show how they can and must be integrated. (pp. 2-3)

In keeping with Bourdieu's critique of dualism, in this dissertation I view qualitative and quantitative methods not as mutually exclusive but rather as complementary.

Therefore, I wholeheartedly agree with researchers employing a mixed-methods approach who reject the assumption that qualitative and quantitative research paradigms are incommensurable; to the contrary,

if carried out properly, the two are mutually reinforcing. In this manner, mixed-methods scholars attempt to avoid the underlying dualisms which structure most social science research such as “subjectivism/objectivism; rationalism vs. empiricism; realism vs. antirealism; Platonic appearance vs. reality; and facts vs. values” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18). Rather than viewing qualitative and quantitative paradigms as being dichotomous and mutually exclusive, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (two prominent researchers employing mixed methods in curriculum studies) conceptualize the two on a continuum, with mixed somewhere in the middle. They assert that both qualitative and quantitative approaches are empirically based and built on logically connecting evidence, “regardless of paradigmatic orientation, all research in the social sciences represents an attempt to provide warranted assertions about human beings (or specific groups of human beings) and the environments in which they live and evolve” (2004. p.15). In other words, quantitative and qualitative research are much more similar to each other than is commonly believed (Howe, 1992).

In addition to asserting the commensurability of qualitative and quantitative methods, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie criticize “methodological purists” of both persuasions. These purists frequently claim that the two respective research traditions each stem from a distinct ontology and epistemology and are therefore incompatible. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie counter these purist assertions of incompatibility by denying that epistemological claims are constituted by the researchers’ ontological presuppositions; they repudiate those who equate ontology with epistemology, asserting that even so-called quantitative research is interpretive and intersubjectively based. “Mixed methodologists” argue that throughout the research process even the most quantitatively oriented scientists have to make decisions that are anything but objective: from choosing which issue to research, to operationally defining the variables, to choosing a sample, to deciding whether and where to publish (Howe, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Onwuegbuzie; 2002). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie go on to write that most researchers are “soft relativists” and most

scholars in the human sciences now adhere to the tenets of perspectivism; the belief that there are no transcendental standpoints from which one can objectively view reality because all humans, scientists included, are embedded in preexisting epistemological communities (for example, linguistic, socio-economic, racial, ethnic, occupational, national, and historically constituted communities) that shape its members' viewpoints of reality. Given these culture-bound "fore-structures of understanding," all data are filtered through pre-existing conceptual schemata that render complete objectivity impossible. In this manner soft relativism entails a healthy skepticism and intellectual curiosity in appreciating and taking into consideration the way individual scholars, just like all other people, are socialized into sometimes vastly different social worlds that can deeply affect the way data are conceptualized, collected, analyzed, depicted and represented.

Nonetheless, soft relativism does not imply an absolute relativism where every theory has the same significance and truth values as all others. Scholars employing mixed methods assert that there has been an increasing convergence in regard to the underlying philosophical presuppositions of research, and that since pure objectivity is impossible, it is best to examine how this bias affects the research process. By adopting pragmatism, mixed-methodologists admit of the importance of culture-bound perspectives, and therefore take into consideration the situated nature of all research. Mixed methodology is also characterized by an abiding intellectual humility due to its strong commitment to fallibilism (the belief that all our theories, data, and worldviews are tentative and subject to change in light of new evidence; this belief is the major tenet of post-positivist research). Therefore, methodological eclecticism is stressed and it is taken as axiomatic that social interaction is constitutive of reality, and always in dialogical conjunction with our inner mental worlds. Finally, mixed methods give the researcher more leeway in deciding which techniques best address the issue being studied. Although many researchers give equal weight to the qualitative and quantitative, some may emphasize one aspect over the other.

As it is at the researchers' discretion which method to emphasize in mixed methods, I have decided that due to the fact that my research questions are heavily focused on how English relates to the learners' *identities*, qualitative interviewing will offer me the most in-depth method to delve into the participants' lived experiences with the language; for this reason, my project will dedicate much more time and attention to the qualitative dimensions.

Quantitative Section

The quantitative part of this project explores the relationship between English proficiency and social class origins to determine exactly what relationship, if any, exists between parental SES (the education, income, and occupational status of the participant's mother and father) and the subjects' English proficiency and motivation (unfortunately, however, due to the excess number of missing values, I was unable to analyze English proficiency). Because the items on my survey employ an ordinal response rating scale, and because my sample is neither random nor representative, I cannot assume a normal distribution; therefore, I have chosen to use non-parametric statistical methodology. I have already carried out a pilot survey to measure the relationship between the social-class origins of the participants, and their TOEFL scores using the non-parametric, exploratory factor analytic technique known as *multifactorial analysis of correspondence*. This technique is tentative and preliminary rather than confirmatory and definitive in that no fixed hypotheses are put forward. This technique also enables the investigator to visually plot relationship among the variables: "Correspondence analysis is an exploratory multivariate technique that converts a data matrix in to a particular type of geographical display in which the rows and columns are depicted as points" (Greenacre & Hastie, 1987, p.437). In this manner the researcher can come up with a very concrete representation of the data in contrast to the more abstract nature of much statistical data. In keeping with the tenor of the mixed methodology that informs my research, I believe that the clear graphic depictions that characterize correspondence analysis

are a good fit with the perspectival epistemology described in the previous section.

By utilizing exploratory technique such as correspondence analysis I will not employ a null hypothesis; however, I am interested to see whether the socioeconomic factors (as taken from my fixed-item response questionnaire) are associated the with the participants' L2 motivation and ideal self. SES is measured in the questionnaire by items such as parental education and income. I have also included questions concerning cosmopolitanism, the importance of social status, and the language ideology of English and English language learning to see if the SES can explain the variance in the responses. Also included in my exploratory model are items controlling for gender and region (dummy coded as tier one city or not).

Quantitative data analysis

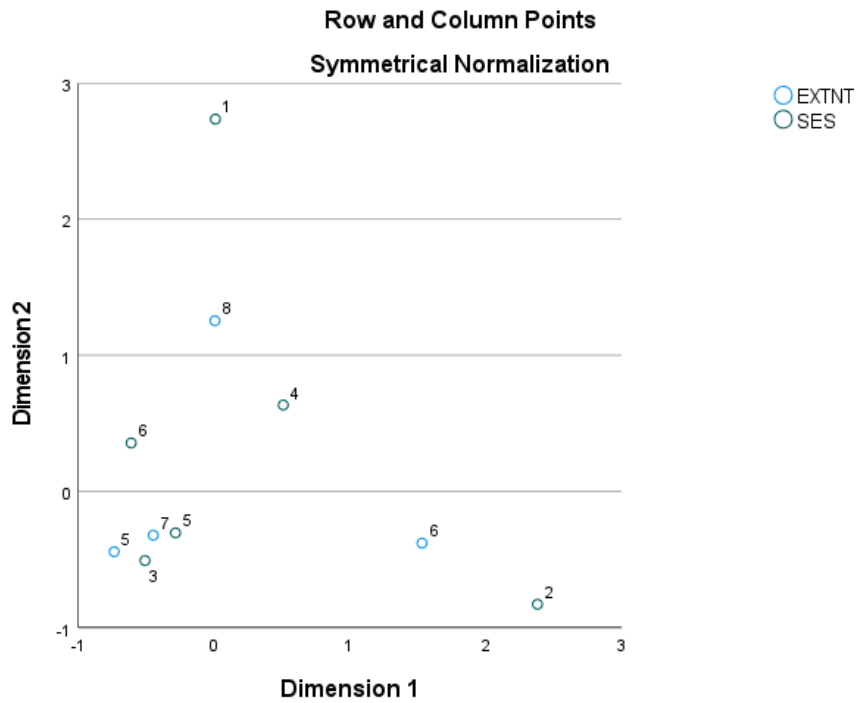
In this section, I will present some of the data using this correspondence analysis. I used SPSS *version26* to run the data. The relationship between SES and extrinsic motivation are shown in the tables below. As extrinsic motivation is tied in with neoliberal competitiveness, I am especially interested in its relationship with parental SES. I took the extrinsic motivation scores (EXTNT) from item 2 on the fixed-item questionnaire, "Learning English will help my career." Range is one, strongly disagree, to eight, strongly agree. As can be seen in the table below, not one respondent disagreed even slightly with this statement. Table 7.2 gives a graphic representation of this relationship.

Table 7.1 Extrinsic Motivation Contingency Table

		Correspondence Table						Active Margin
		SES						
EXTNT		1	2	3	4	5	6	
1		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4		0	0	0	0	0	0	0

5	0	0	3	0	2	2	7
6	0	3	1	3	1	0	8
7	0	0	8	3	3	2	16
8	1	0	1	4	1	2	9
Active Margin	1	3	13	10	7	6	40

Table 7.2 Extrinsic motivation and SES



By eyeballing the scatterplot, there does seem to be a slight relationship between SES and extrinsic motivation. However, when the chi-square is calculated, it fails to reach statistical significance ($p > .05$).

Table 7.3 significance level

				Summary
Dimension	Singular Value	Inertia	Chi Square	Sig
1	.643	.414		
2	.458	.210		
3	.200	.040		

Total		.664	26.564	.865
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As can be seen from the high P value in the table, SES was not a predictor of extrinsic motivation; similarly, when I ran the data, on cosmopolitan subjectivity, there was also no significant relationship. However, given the nature of my sample, it is not so surprising. The informants in this study are among the approximately 2,700 hundred or so admitted to Northern University out of nearly 9 million Gao Kao test-takers. They are extremely select, and they *all* exhibit high degrees of extrinsic motivation to learn English so there is little variation in the dependent variable to explain.

Ideal L2 self and SES

In this section, I test Dörnyei & Ushioda's (2009) theory of the ideal self and its relationship to social class. As can be seen in the table below, almost all the respondents did have an ideal L2 self. This is consistent with the qualitative data I collected as well; as I indicated in the analysis of the open-ended questions, Dörnyei & Ushioda's hypothesis was supported by the data. However, as they do not theorize power, I as a CDA practitioner, decided to test the relationship between parental SES and the ideal L12 self. I used item 10, "I envision speaking English with foreigners in the future. Using the Likert scale, one would indicate "strongly disagree, while 8 is "strongly agree." The results are in the table below. The responses are broken down in the table below.

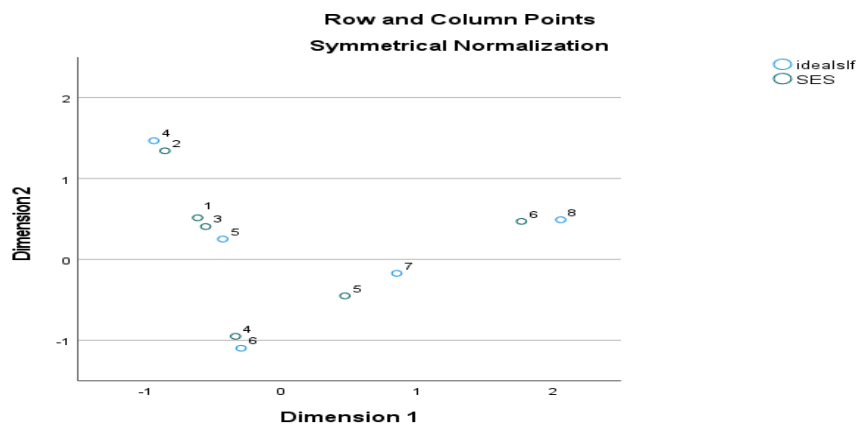
Table 7.4 Descriptive statistics ideal L2 self

		idealslf			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	4	3	7.5	7.5	7.5
	5	18	45.0	45.0	52.5

6	9	22.5	22.5	75.0
7	6	15.0	15.0	90.0
8	4	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

As the chart illustrates, there not one person marked 1 to 3, and only 3 chose 4, “tend to disagree.” Everyone else agreed to the statement. However, in the sample, SES did not seem to affect the strength of the ideal self.

Table 7.5 Ideal Self and SES Graph



In this scatter plot one can trace somewhat of slope, and the P value for the relationship between the two variables (.676, $p > .05$) came the closest to statistical significance of all the focal relationships analyzed. Again, with so little variation in the ideal-self variable, the non-significant finding is not unexpected. In fact, this finding, coupled with all the other the non-significant results, which in the interest of brevity I left out, point, to the internal homogeneity of the sample in terms of their motivation to learn English and in terms of the parental SES. In the qualitative interviewing, this motivation was usually instrumentally linked with global competitiveness: one must speak English to compete in the international workplace.

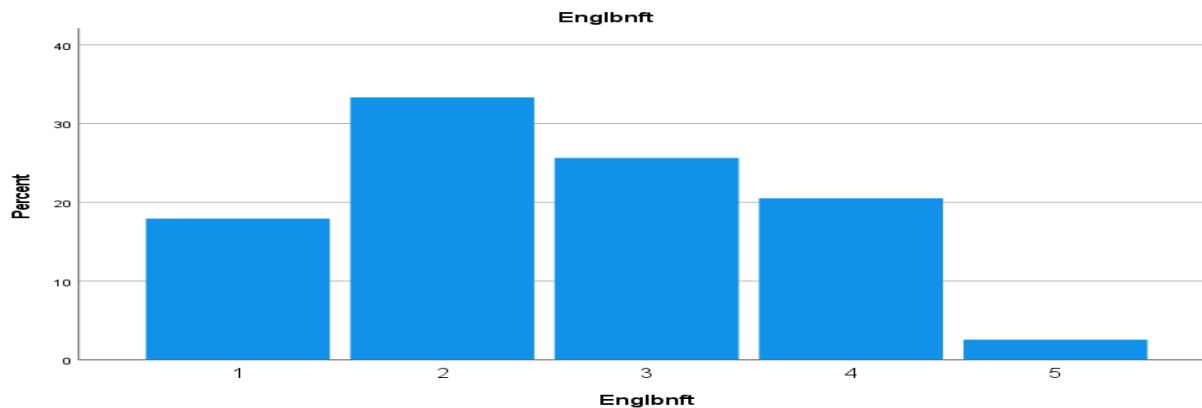
This wholehearted embrace of globalization was found among almost all the participants, and as was shown in the qualitative analysis, English is seen as the *sine qua non* of globalization. For example, in analyzing item 11, “The spread of English benefits the world,” only one person disagreed, marking 5, “tend to disagree”, which is the mildest form of disagreement. To prevent automatic fill ins, I reverse coded some of the items, including this item so 1 is “strongly agree”, while 8 is “strongly disagree.”

Table 7.6 English and Globalization

		Englnbft			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	7	17.5	17.9	17.9
	2	13	32.5	33.3	51.3
	3	10	25.0	25.6	76.9
	4	8	20.0	20.5	97.4
	5	1	2.5	2.6	100.0
	Total	39	97.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.5		
Total		40	100.0		

As one can see, there are no values listed for the responses 6,7, and 8. This demonstrates how powerful and widespread the belief that English is needed for globalization is in the data. The bar graph below gives graphic representation to this table.

Table 7.7 Bar Graph English and Globalization



To sum up the quantitative results, SES was not a predictor in the sample for any of the outcome variables of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, cosmopolitan subjectivity or the ideal L2 self. However, given the similar parental SES of the participants, there is just too little variation in this independent variable to really have an effect on any of the dependent variables. Given their middle-class social position, and given their being admitted to the top-ranked university in China, the students at Northern University are in general privileged and empowered, and the data reflect that. As for English, though they view it as necessary for globalization, most participants adopt a purely instrumentalist approach to the language, viewing it as just another tool such as numeracy and social skills that are needed to compete in the globalized workplace.

Critical theory and critical ethnography

“The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways. The point, however, is to *change* it.”

(Karl Marx)

Although I am not doing ethnography per se (I am doing ethnographic interviewing as a follow-up to the survey), the theoretical paradigm I am working out of, critical discourse analysis, bears some strong affinities with critical ethnography. Both can generally be subsumed under critical theory. Critical theory is an umbrella term in social science, philosophy and education (i.e., critical pedagogy) that analyzes the

role asymmetrical power relations play in generating social harms such as inequality, racism and sexism (Guess, 1981). While there are various strands of critical theory, the strand most relevant to my approach is firmly rooted in sociology. By its disciplinary nature, sociology goes beyond the individual level to look at social structure as the primary focal point of analysis. By focusing on social structure (the patterned and institutional arrangements of society), sociology is distinct from psychology. While not all schools of sociology focus on power, critical theory takes it as axiomatic that power pervades and underlies all social relations. This pervasiveness has many dimensions, but critical theory highlights the role of ideology in creating and maintaining economic, educational, racial, and gender disparities.

While Marx was of course the first major figure in history to be considered a critical theorist, subsequent critical theorists have moved somewhat from what many viewed as Marx's overemphasis on economic factors (Habermas, 1987). Habermas believed that hegemonic discourses played a bigger role in constituting oppression than did the relations of production. Thus, Habermas and other scholars of the Frankfurt School such as Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse believed that in order to achieve true freedom, justice and equality, the ideology of the ruling classes had to be dismantled. In contrast to Marx, who believed the only path to liberation was through violent revolutions spearheaded by the working class, contemporary critical theorists stress the emancipatory potential of counter-hegemonic discourses in overturning oppressive social structures.

This emphasis on overcoming oppression is what distinguishes critically oriented research from positivist research. While positivism strives for neutrality and objectivity, critical scholars go beyond mere analysis to advocate for social justice. For example, whereas orthodox ethnographers tend to conceptualize their work as the unbiased collection of qualitative data for the purposes of academic publication, critical ethnographers aim to interrogate the systems of oppression that unfairly subjugate certain peoples. Gary Anderson, in his influential article, "Critical ethnography in education: Origins,

current status, and new directions” (1989), writes

Critical ethnographers seek research accounts sensitive to the dialectical relationship between the social structural constraints on human actors and the relative autonomy of human agency. Unlike other interpretivist research, the overriding goal of critical ethnography is to free individuals from sources of domination and repression. (p. 249)

In other words, critical ethnography does take into account the constraints asymmetrical power relations place on people, but it also leaves space for individual agency. It also tries to raise awareness of these disparities in power and advocates for the underdog.

In this manner, critical discourse analysis and critical ethnography are metaphorically walking a tightrope: they both require an intricate balancing act to logically and empirically integrate structure and agency into a coherent rendering of the phenomenon under study. If agency is stressed too much, the researcher risks leaving out the structural inequities and constraints which may impinge upon our participants’ ability to act; conversely, if we overemphasize structure, we run the danger of conceptualizing the people we study as “cultural dopes” (Garfinkel, 1967). With the sarcastic use of this term, Garfinkel was criticizing macro-theoretical paradigms in sociology such as structural-functionalism (discussed in the literature review), which reduced individuals to mere puppets and replicators of the wider social structure. To bridge this seemingly intractable dichotomy between structure and agency, I rely principally on the work of Pierre Bourdieu.

Reconciling the binary via Bourdieu

As a sociologist utilizing a relational paradigm, Bourdieu viewed the structure/agency binary as a false dichotomy. In place of conceptualizing them as dueling oppositions, Bourdieu argued that the individual and society (the terms he preferred over structure and agency) were inextricably intertwined. Bourdieu subsumed social-structuralist approaches under the rubric *objectivism*; he categorized more

agentic paradigms such as ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism under the label *subjectivism*. Bourdieu saw his scholarly and methodological life's work as one of constructing "a non-Cartesian social ontology that refuses to split subject and object, intention and cause, materiality and symbolic representation (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 5). The objectivists in sociology mostly rely on quantitative methods, and the people they study tend to be reduced to mere numbers plugged into statistical equations. Bourdieu termed this approach social physics because the sociologists who use these types of paradigms treat the people they study in the same mechanistic manner as a physicist studying matter and motion would. On the other hand, he called more semiotic approaches that reduce their scope to the individual or face-to face interactional level constructivist phenomenology.

Bourdieu's work combined collapsed both these approaches, subjectivism and objectivism, into one unified whole he termed "genetic structuralism." Genetic structuralism combined the study of the economic distribution of scarce goods and services (objectivity of the first order) with the second order, systems of classification, which are "the mental and bodily schemata that function as the symbolic templates for practical activities-conduct, feelings, judgements and thoughts-of social agents" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 7). Bourdieu and Wacquant also called on all social scientists to critically examine how their own elevated social status impact the research they do, and he even wrote a book on it entitled "*An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*" (1992).

Theoretical presuppositions of researcher reflexivity

As briefly mentioned in earlier chapters, my research project strives for reflexivity. In contemporary qualitative research in education and applied linguistics, it has become customary, indeed almost mandatory, for the researcher to critically examine him or herself in relationship to the research (Lather, 1991, 1993, 1995; Pillow, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Because research is always situated and always biased to some degree, post-positivist researchers argue that there is no such thing as a

transcendently objective viewpoint; all scholarly work takes place from a specific structural (economic, racial, gendered, ethnic, linguistic, generational, regional, etc.) and personal location:

Reflexivity is lauded as a necessary methodological stance, particularly in feminist and post-structuralist research. Indeed, it has become somewhat of an imperative, a doxa of post-positivist educational research that the researcher situate themselves, 'own' their investments and constructions in the research process and in the production of both meaning and 'partial' truths. These methodological interventions are significant, and unsettle and reframe many epistemological claims of research. (Kenwaya & McLeod, 2004, p. 527)

Kenwaya and McLeod argue that when scholars are upfront about their own social position, it helps to give their audience a greater sensitivity to any biases that researchers may bring to the whole process.

The goal of reflexivity is consistent with the post-structuralist turn in qualitative research, especially with Foucault's (1981) claim that there is no 'view from nowhere' (all knowledge claims are biased and partial), and that power circulates through claims to truth. By becoming more reflexive, the goal is to generate "research that questions its own interpretations and is reflexive about its own knowledge production towards the goal of producing better, less distorted research accounts" (Pillow, 2003, p.178).

According to Gary Anderson (1989), using reflexivity for these less distorted research accounts involves four dimensions. The first one is the researcher's constructs. Anderson urges qualitative researchers not to unthinkingly adopt the concepts they use; even seemingly common-sense ones such as "social class" are social constructs that need to be critically interrogated. If not, Anderson argues, the researcher risks reproducing the very power structures she is trying to dismantle. The second dimension involves the participants' constructs. While it is critical that qualitative researchers try to reach an emic understanding of the informants' lived reality, to try to see things from their perspective so to speak, it is also important not to take "the informants' commonsense constructs" at face value. This is not as easy as it sounds; while it is imperative ethnographers critically analyze the data, they must be careful not to

distort what the informants are saying and doing. Although we can never completely put ourselves in our informants' shoes, we can contextualize and historicize the data. In order to adequately historicize my findings, I provided the historical background for the setting of my research, and I documented my own positionality.

Another way I endeavored not to distort my findings was to ask many clarification questions. Because any given term or concept is context-dependent and meaning is often ambiguous, I tried to probe deeper into what my respondents were trying to convey. For example, in the following excerpt, I prompted Billy, a first-year biology major, to expand upon what the terms “international” and “correct” meant for him.

Paul: Can you tell me why you don't like English very much?

Billy: Well, English is ok, I don't hate it. It is just that I sometimes have trouble expressing myself...er I have to really think before I talk and after I don't know if I was correct.

Paul: Correct in what sense?

Billy: The grammar and meaning. In Chinese, I don't have to worry about these things

Paul: So why are you worried about being correct?

Billy: Nobody likes to make mistakes, especially in front of others. Besides, being good at English makes people look more international.

Paul: Can you tell me what you mean by that?

Billy: You know, more modern and cool.

Paul: Please tell me more

Billy: For example, our parents, um, their generation couldn't really speak English, but our generation is different, China has opened to the world so we need English to communicate with them.

As we can see in this snippet, the term *international* was both used in its common denotational sense of association between nations, but Billy added the additional connotation of a generational difference. If I had not asked Billy to elaborate, I would have never picked up this additional nuance. Nuances such as

these are easier to discover when the researcher is open about his or her positionality, which I discuss in the next session.

My positionality

I am middle-aged male of mixed European and Hispanic ancestry. Phenotypically I appear white, though I self-identify as *other* on official forms because I refuse to identify myself as non-Hispanic white (my mother was of Nicaraguan descent, born and raised in Brooklyn). Originally, my family was working-class, but as the years went by we experienced enough social mobility to be comfortably middle-class. I have lived in both marginalized inner-city areas that were majority-Hispanic as well as suburban majority-white, middle-class areas. I feel this experience of living on two-sides of the class and racial divide gave me a sort of cognitive flexibility to deal with people from all walks of life, and for as long as I can remember, I have identified with the underdog, the poor and the oppressed. I consider myself bi-cultural, and while my Spanish was getting a little rusty in China, I speak the language with a high degree of proficiency. I have always sympathized with the plight of immigrants, even more so now that I myself was one in China, struggling to learn a new language and culture. Given the mixed-heritage nature of my background, I do not feel comfortable reducing my identity to any overarching categories such as European-American. Nonetheless as a phenotypically appearing “white person,” I am well aware of all the privileges light skin confers in the contemporary world, although as explained below, the way race is interpreted and experienced in China varies significantly from way it is interpreted and experienced the U.S.

Throughout my childhood, my limited-English proficient grandmother, a native of Nicaragua would babysit me, and I came to learn of the severe discrimination she faced when she first arrived to New York City when she was only 19 years old. She only knew a few words of English, and some of the neighbors would mock her accent and tell her to go back to her country. These stories impacted me

greatly. I became fascinated by issues of social class, culture, language, and power, and perhaps this is the reason I pursued graduate education in sociology as well as TESOL, and a career as an ESL instructor.

Although early in life I had already developed a sense of the role that social class and race play in people's lives, it wasn't until I started teaching at an inner-city community college in New Jersey as an adult that I truly became aware of the way asymmetrical power relations work to constrain and limit working-class people's life chances (I had so many students who were forced to juggle two and three jobs and take care of children at the same time that attendance at classes was highly irregular, and many students were forced to drop out). Many students could not complete the homework assignments due to all their other commitments or out of sheer exhaustion. Conversely, I developed a keen awareness of my own class and racial privilege in comparison to that of most of my students (most of whom were first-generation college students of Dominican, Brazilian, Cuban or Egyptian heritage.) Luckily, I was able to develop a close rapport with my students and their stories inspired me; they were trying to get ahead despite the enormous obstacles they faced. And while I still hold this class and racial privilege, At the time of the data collection I was living and working in China, where the discourse of class, and even more so race, is articulated in a much different manner than it is in the U.S. Regardless of country, however, it became glaringly obvious to me that structural position strongly affects not only L2 learning, but all facets of education and life for that matter, and I became more determined than ever to study the role of social class in the SLA process.

Social class habitus and reflexivity

While in the U.S., the discursive regime of race is pervasive and socially significant, affecting virtually all facets of American life (Omi & Winant, 1994), in China social relations are conceptualized not so much in terms of the supposed innate biological characteristics of race as they are in a nationalistic frame. China lays claim to the oldest living continuous civilization, and this long history serves as a

powerful semiotic and narrative resource that Chinese individuals can utilize to construct their personal, social, and racial identities. For instance, since their first extensive contacts with Europeans, the Chinese had tended to view the former as hairy, foul-smelling barbarians (Hughes, 2006). This discursive othering of Europeans, often called, “red-haired savages” (You, 2010) is exemplified in the name of the country itself in Mandarin: *Zhong Guo*, which means *Central Kingdom*. The Chinese viewed their country as the center of the earth and as the apex of civilizations; all other countries were considered beneath it. Although China has become much more welcoming of outsiders than ever before, individuals who are visibly *foreign* are explicitly positioned as such on a daily basis: people will often stare and say “*wai guo ren*”, which translates as foreigner (it literally means outside country people). In this manner researching Chinese English learners in China is quite different than studying them in the United States. In the U.S., the Chinese are a racialized minority group who often suffer from discrimination, but here I am the outsider, the second language-learner with limited proficiency in the national language. Admittedly, this social stigma is mitigated by my status as a faculty member in an elite university, but it is my status as a foreigner and second-language learner that is most salient in my daily interactions, and in this project, I can make no claims to an insider status, which I am sure affects the data in many ways (the informants are probably less likely to open up to me than they would to an insider).

In addition to my lack of insider status, I am also the former teacher of the participants, which in combination with my role as a researcher automatically imbues me with some authority. While qualitative researchers should usually strive to lessen the status differences between themselves and those they study, (Lather, 1995, 1997), and as much as I would like to see myself as a friendly, down-to-earth teacher and person, I am still of higher social status than the participants. Nonetheless, given the potency of Chinese nationalism and given its massive population and economy (now the second-largest in the world), it would be a gross simplification to view the Chinese people through facile binaries such as

colonizer/colonized; oppressor/oppressed; or Third-World/First-World. While China was partially colonized by the Europeans, and indeed the first Europeans in China did discursively construct the Chinese as an inferior race, China also colonized other peoples and the sense of China as the center of civilization (Chinese Exceptionalism) never completely disappeared: “The Chinese have usually viewed themselves not as passive victims of the West but as agents of world history; their sense of national grandeur makes them unlikely candidates for colonial passivity” (You, 2010, p. 38).

While Western social science has traditionally represented Non-Western people as backwards and primitive (Said; 1979), as existing outside of history and progress (Fabian, 1983), the discourse of Chinese Exceptionalism can serve as a powerful counterweight against Western colonialist hegemony. As the Chinese believe themselves to be heirs to a glorious civilization (Nonini, 2008), as living representations of *The Central Kingdom*, they come to the ethnographic encounter not as powerless objects of the scientific gaze, but as *empowered* participants with recourse to a large repertoire of stories, symbols, and cultural capital with which to narrate their *own* experiences. So, while there is always a power imbalance between the researcher and the researched (Marcus & Fisher, 1987; Lather, 1991; Pillow, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), the participants in my research, who already possess a great deal of symbolic capital due to their status as students at Northern University, appear to strongly believe in their ability to shape their own destinies; in other words, they had a high degree of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). I will explore the nature of self-efficacy, especially the way it is correlated with SES, in chapter 10).

In addition to the agentive possibilities afforded to the participants by the Chinese exceptionalist narrative, it can also be argued that no single discourse can achieve complete hegemony, not even the nationalist one. However, this national narrative is so powerful that it affects the way another powerful discursive regime, neoliberalism is articulated. For example, Nonini (2008) argues that neoliberalism is

neither uncontested nor universally accepted in China; neoliberalism may be a globally circulating discourse, but it is always localized, it is never homogenous, and it always exists in dialogical tension with other discourses:

In terms of an historically informed ethnography of liberalization in China, there needs to be a franker acknowledgment of the limits to ethnographic generalizations about the putative national dominance of neoliberalism and the distribution of market-oriented (neoliberal?) subjectivities in China. This is especially needed given the preference among those making claims for neoliberal restructuring in China to focus on individuals instead of social groups; on urban settings instead of rural ones; on elite and highly educated informants instead of displaced workers, farmers or members of the ‘floating population’ of migrants to urban areas; and on processes of lifestyle and consumption choice instead of those of work, administration, and social movement activism and protest. Instead, in considering whether and to what extent the Chinese population ‘buys into’ market logics of thinking and acting, one must take into account the sheer diversity of class (and class-associated traits such as educational, and urban vs. rural) backgrounds in China, the discursive formations that exist in China today (Maoist, Confucianist, Daoist, Buddhist, etc.) as alternatives to ruling market logics, and the presence of large-scale protests exhibiting widely held moral economies.” (p. 147)

As we can see from this quote, ideologies such as neoliberalism are never adopted wholesale, they mesh with pre-existing “discursive formations” to produce highly localized and distinct discourses whereby some elements of the hegemonic ideology are assimilated while other dimensions are refashioned or rejected outright (Yang, 2000). Thus, in regard to neoliberalism, researchers must take care not to assume in an a priori fashion that its spread is homogenizing the world: “Other anthropologists, as well, have assumed rather than demonstrate the validity of sweeping claims about the universalization of neoliberalism around the world” (Nonini, 2008, p. 172). In this way, in this project I will pay close attention to any indication of heteroglossia, the mixing of different registers, ideologies, genres and discursive regimes (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986) and the ways individuals can challenge even the most hegemonic of ideologies. Accordingly, when attaching an overarching label to a country, I use the relational paradigm to indicate the dialectical relationship between the various circulating discourses.

Agency and L2 learning

By examining the meaning-making process of the participants, I investigate to what extent, if any, they engage in creative discursive agency, “that is, how individuals are able to initiate or take advantage of opportunities for the creative development of their discursive practices (Flowerdew & Miller, 2008, p. 204). Even though my research is primarily sociological in nature (some sociology tends to stress the causal efficacy of social structure thereby leaving little room for the agentic actions and thoughts of individuals), I will still attempt to let the informants author their L2 experience in their own words. As previous work in applied linguistics on the global spread of English (Higgins, 2009; Pennycook, 1995) has suggested that in some limited cases, certain English L2 learners can creatively appropriate English by adapting it to their local circumstances and making the language their own, I do not automatically assume that English is destructive of Chinese cultural identity. Instead, in the open-ended interviewing and in the data analysis, I hew closely to the participant’s stated claims regarding English: Do they view it as a tool to empower themselves or do they perceive it as an alien cultural intrusion, or do they see it in a manner previously unexplored by previous research?

Participants not subjects

In keeping with the agentic and reflexive dimensions of this research project, I will briefly discuss the way I attempted to make it as collaborative and reciprocal as possible. Firstly, I tried to “focus upon developing reciprocity with research subjects – hearing, listening, and equalizing the research relationship – doing research ‘with’ instead of ‘on’” (Pillow, 2003, p. 179). In this way, I tried to downplay my own authority throughout by stressing solidarity over hierarchy with my participants. In some ways this came easy to me as most of my informants were former students of mine, and they were already familiar with my informal bearing in the classroom. In order to reduce the power distance (Hofstede, 1997) between my students and me (which I find lessens the L2 speaking anxiety on their

part), I encourage the students call me by my first name. I also engage in small talk with them before and after class, and I frequently joke around in class.

Hopefully, the interviews carried out in the course of my research offer a deeper understanding of the experiences, joys, triumphs, and struggles of the rapidly growing population of Chinese English Language learners. In fact, this study attempts to fill in a gap in the literature as there have been few published studies of adult Chinese students studying English at elite universities, and to the best of my knowledge, none have employed correspondence analysis. The interviews themselves and the discussion and analysis are designed to let the voice of the students themselves emerge. In this way, anyone reading this dissertation, will be able to “listen” to the narratives of the participants regarding their everyday lives, and the way their national and social class subjectivities are projected in the interviews. A recurring theme I found in these narratives was a striving for cosmopolitan subjectivity, which I analyze in the next chapter.

Chapter 8: The Cosmopolitan Habitus and Language Policy

In this chapter, I will analyze some of the data using Bourdieu's notion of the habitus (as defined in the literature review) as my analytical tool. However, I do not wish to import Bourdieu's ideas wholesale and uncritically. I will therefore discuss some criticism of Bourdieu's work as well as supplement them with additional paradigms that I believe will aid my analysis of the relationship between English and social structure in China.

As the greatest portion of my research focus centers on the open-ended questions and the qualitative interviewing, I will report some of the data from those portions here. The most obvious result from the preliminary data shows that almost all the students resorted to a neoliberal discourse to describe their experience with English in China. It is important to note that I am using the term *neoliberal* here not only in terms of its purely economic denotation, but also in its more expansive sense as referring to "particular attitudes or inclinations towards entrepreneurship, competition, responsibility, and self-improvement" (Kipnis, 2007, p. 383). Interestingly, Kipnis' inclusion of "self-improvement" (the constant focus on self-invention and reinvention) in his definition of neoliberalism, bears some conceptual similarities with Dörnyei's (2009) construct of the "ideal I2 self." In fact, as will be shown below, the conceptualization of English as a means of self-development is attested to multiple times in the data.

By adopting Kipnis' definition of neoliberalism, one can go beyond the conceptual dualism of integrative/instrumental motivation discussed in the literature review to see how the neoliberal subjectivity among the middle-class urban youth of contemporary China actually operates. For instance, when Hank, (all names used are pseudonyms) was prompted to finish the sentence, "English is like" he replied, that it is "a tool to get a better life. A bridge to help me get to the outside world. A song that is fair-sounding. A book that can enrich my knowledge. A poetry that is moving, a game that is amusing, a

movie which is attractive.” As this quote indicates, Hank seemingly combines both instrumental motivation (“a tool to get a better life”) with an aesthetic appreciation of language learning (“a song that is fair-sounding”).

One can see that the data analyzed in previous chapters as well as Jane’s quote above, clearly fit with Kipnis’s definition of neoliberalism, especially with regards with the desire for self-improvement and for accruing cultural capital. In this way, the strategic cosmopolitanism I found in the qualitative interviewing is entirely consistent with neoliberalism; they are mutually reinforcing.

While Hank’s celebration of English (“a song that is fair-sounding” and “poetry that is moving”) may at first glance appear to fall outside of the economic logic of social class, aesthetics do not exist in some abstract and universal Kantian realm. As Bourdieu and others (DiMaggio, 1982) have empirically demonstrated, cultural tastes in music, art, food, and entertainment are conditioned by social origin; there is a strong correlation between stated artistic and leisure activities and education level thus showing that “tastes function as a marker of class” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 1). Therefore, to assert that aesthetic pleasure is universal, that it exists outside of history and social structure is, according to Bourdieu, akin to a “bourgeois denial of the social world” (1984, p. 5). As I will show in the discussion on the ideology, this denial of the constraints of the social structure is exactly what the discursive formation of neoliberalism attempts to do.

Therefore, it is entirely possible that just as social position predicts taste in arts and food, the embodied pleasure in foreign languages may be associated with SES. Indeed, the data I collected seems to show that aesthetic appreciation of English correlates with middle-class subjectivity. Although I did not include specific items on the aesthetic appreciation of my questionnaire and thus could not quantitatively confirm any relationship, in the in-depth, open-ended interviewing, only two of the respondents from the lowest two quintiles expressed aesthetic appreciation of English; instead, they

framed their approach to English in practical terms.

For example, Lisa, whose parents were factory workers, replied to the “English is like?” with the by writing “a way for me to get a good job and help my family have a better life.” Hank, whose parents come from the upper quintile of SES as measured in my index, also showed evidence of what I have coded as *cosmopolitan subjectivity*: any and all of the participants’ declarations that indicated a willingness or desire to communicate or identify with those outside of China through English were subsumed under this code. These themes of communicating with the “outside world” and cultivating oneself through English occurred frequently, for instance, Eddy, a first-year engineering major, when asked to describe his ideal self, replied

I want to become a person who can excel in my area, and foreign language is one vital tool help me to learn and communicate with people in worldwide scale. Without foreign language this is just a daydream.

Just as Hank, did, Eddy seem to conceptualize English as a necessary constituent for cosmopolitan subjectivity, a subjectivity that previous research has indicated is strongly associated with one’s socio-economic position (Calhoun, 2006, 2008; Igarahi & Sato, 2014). In this way, becoming proficient in English appears to provide upwardly mobile Chinese youth with the symbolic resources to fashion the self as worldly and sophisticated.

Counter-hegemonic discourses?

On the other hand, the students’ declarations may also be interpreted in a less structural and more agentive manner as well. As mentioned in the discussion of Pennycook’s work (1991, 1995, 2001), it can be argued that far from being a passive victim of Western, capitalistic imperialism, L2 learners in non-Western countries may “indigenize” English by inflecting it with their own cultural traditions thereby making it their own. In a similar vein, Block (2007) argues that the humans are reflective and

self-aware beings who can critically examine and transform their lives; they are *not* passive vessels of the hegemonic categories of the dominant culture. Agreeing with Pennycook that individuals can creatively appropriate dominant discourses in an anti-hegemonic manner, Block repudiates essentialist approaches to identity, instead arguing that subjectivity is relational, context-bound and always shifting, an inter-subjective achievement that can be, under certain conditions, emancipatory. Given that subjectivity (a term that Block prefers because it eschews the essentializing connotations of the term “identity”) is a constant work in progress, it is never fixed thereby according individuals the space to construct their own sense of self. Given this context-bound fluidity, the data I collected exhibited both the structural and the agentic dimensions of the participants’ L2 English experience.

In this way, my research approach combines what my Kang and Lo (2004) term “*discourses of disposition*” with “*discourses of agency*.” The discourses of disposition for the most part views identity as fixed, ascribed and durable while the discourse of agency conceptualizes the self as fluid, freely chosen and mutable. Similar to the paradigm adopted in this dissertation, Kang and Lo combine discourse analytic with narrative approaches to yield a highly nuanced and empirically grounded portrait of identity and agency. While admitting of the powerful influence of social structure, their research is also premised on the claim that

Identities are multivalent, situated and negotiated between participants... Moreover, individuals’ positionings can change over time and depend on whom one is speaking with...our approach concentrates on the indexical aspects of language. We do not believe the terms our interviewees use merely label pre-existing differences in the world; instead, by pointing indexically to features of the surrounding context, they create and define that world by its use. (Kang & Lo, 2004, pp.9-10)

The authors attempt to fuse this situated and performative dimension of identity with Bourdieu’s notion of habitus. Habitus, according to Bourdieu, is “the subjective but not individual system of internalised structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or

class” (1977, p.86). Given that he believed it to be embodied and mostly operating on the subconscious level, Bourdieu regarded habitus as fairly stable and immutable after the period of early childhood socialization. In fact, Bourdieu conceptualized the habitus as so powerful that he believed it was one of the principal mechanisms whereby social class is intergenerationally transmitted.

On the surface, the immutability of the habitus and its foundations in the broader social structure may seem to be incommensurable with the emphasis on the interactional

Habitus is a mediating notion that bridges the gap between the individual and social, capturing the way society becomes deposited in individuals in the form of lasting dispositions, structured propensities to think, feel, speak, and dress in determinate ways. The habitus of Donnie and his mother as indexed by their accents and dress is a means by which social structure becomes mental structure and, although habitus operates beneath the level of consciousness, it rises to the surface when social dispositions are countered by exposure to novel external forces or differences of power. (Young & Astarita, 2013, pp.176-177)

In this excerpt, Young and Astarita argue that the concept of the habitus is useful for researchers as it fuses the individual and the corporeal with the social and the semiotic.

Practice theory

Young and Astarita place Bourdieu’s idea of the habitus within the broader paradigm of practice theory, a multimodal social semiosis which goes beyond language to include body language, gaze, prosody, and ‘the symbolic acts of deference.’” In practice theory, the habitus is both the cause and effect, and because it has its origins in the social structure but exists in, and is enacted by, individual bodies, it can help scholars dissolve the boundaries between the seemingly incommensurate discourses of structuralism and phenomenology. Structuralism is the macro-sociological approach which emphasizes

the broader social forces, and the ways these forces shape and constrain individual behavior and impinge upon individual agency. In contrast, the phenomenological approach is the micro-level paradigm that focuses on the subjective interpretations of autonomous individuals and thus admits of a more agentive approach than the more determinist tenor of structuralism.

Contextualizing Bourdieu

As the main focus of the research in this dissertation is the role of English in the Chinese social structure, especially in regard to status attainment, it may at times seem overly deterministic in tenor. Though I attempt to mitigate this tendency to emphasize the power of abstract social forces with the qualitative interviewing (to give my participants space to voice their own agency), my academic background has its origins in academic sociology (I majored in it as an undergraduate, and began to study for a Ph.D. in it before switching to SLA). Academic sociology, especially in the U.S., is heavily quantitative and for the most part, more focused on the enduring macrostructures and institutions:

Table 8.1 macro vs. micro-sociology

Macrosociology	Microsociology
Large scale social processes	Small scale interactions
Big picture	Small picture
Explanatory	Interpretive
Quantitative	Mostly qualitative
Studies patterns and trends	Studies face-to face interaction

Of course, the simplified dichotomies in the above table are analytical in nature; they are used as conceptual distinctions and heuristic tools to help researchers focus on certain particular aspects of a research topic; they do *not* represent the actual divisions of empirical reality. In this way, the distinction between the macro and the micro is much more about methods than it is about actual “levels” of society. Instead, as Randal Collins argues, “Microsociology is the detailed analysis of what people do, say, and think in the actual flow of momentary experience. Macrosociology is the analysis of large-scale and long-term social processes, often treated as self-subsistent entities such as ‘state,’ ‘organization,’ ‘class,’ ‘economy,’ ‘culture,’ and ‘society’” (1980, p. 1231). In terms of my research, much like Bourdieu’s work itself, which this dissertation is indebted to, I try to avoid these facile binaries by employing a mixed-methods paradigm. In the following section, I will place ideas of Bourdieu by placing them in their socio-historical and epistemological contexts.

Bourdieu and the repudiation of epistemological dichotomies

Alexander and Giesen (1987) trace the distinction between the macro and micro back to the medieval debate in ontology between nominalism and realism, and in political philosophy, the debate between the state and the individual. However, the early sociologists were eager to shed the emerging discipline of all ontological and metaphysical dimensions in an attempt to turn sociology into a data-driven, purely empirical science. As a consequence of these scientific pretensions, the abstract distinction between the micro and the macro was mostly left unexplored. Nonetheless, around the turn of the 20th century, ontological and epistemological debates even started to appear in the so-called hard sciences. For example, in physics, relational paradigms adopting a processual and holistic approach based on the premise that the sum is greater than the parts began to gain ground at the expense of the atomistic paradigm (which examines discrete substances in isolation).

In biology, vitalism, a more holistic approach that challenged the reductive materialism then dominant

at the time, began to gain proponents though it was later largely dismissed as pseudoscience (Alexander & Giesen, 1987, p. 11). These ontological and epistemological debates subsequently began to spill over into the social sciences; for example, gestalt psychology, which emphasizes the emergent nature of the human mind and behavior, repudiated the atomistic individualism of the then hegemonic status of behavioral psychology.

In sociology, it was Karl Marx and his intellectual heirs such as Bourdieu and Habermas who showed that once capitalism takes hold of a culture, an instrumentalist mentality begins to dominate virtually every sphere of social life. This societal emphasis on utility, whether it be material or symbolic, fuses the macro with the micro in that it encapsulates the socio-historical origins (the macro), but it reproduces itself through the actions and behaviors of interacting individuals. While these interactions are important in and among themselves, they can never be fully understood in isolation. Marx repeatedly warned of excessively focusing on the immediately observable and thereby neglecting the broader socio-historical forces, as this "represents a political stance in which researchers ignore the economic and material bases of human activity or only treat them in a cursory manner" (Young & Astarita, 2013, p. 173). As discussed in the preceding discussion on practice theory in SLA, practice theory offers researchers the conceptual and empirical tools to bridge the macro/micro divide.

Obviously, one cannot link the macro and the micro without utilizing the notion of social class. Although researchers can operationally define social class (in my model, I use a composite measure of the parents' education level and income), it is still somewhat of an abstraction.

In sociology, the most common metaphor for conceptualizing the generalized and enduring patterns of social life has been social structure:

From a micro viewpoint, what is the 'social structure'? In microtranslation, it refers to people's repeated behavior in particular places, using particular physical objects, and communicating by using many of the

same symbolic expressions repeatedly with certain other people. The most easily identifiable part of this repetition, moreover, is physical: the most enduring repetitions are those around particular places and objects. Most of the repetitive structure of economic organization takes place in particular factories, office buildings, trucks, etc. The most repetitive behaviors that make up the family structure are the facts that certain people inhabit the same dwelling places day after day, that the same men and women sleep in the same beds and touch the same bodies, that the same children are kissed, spanked, and fed. The 'state' exists by virtue of there being courtrooms where judges repeatedly sit, headquarters from which police leave to ride in the same squad cars, barracks where troops are repeatedly housed, and assembly halls where congresses of politicians repeatedly gather. (Collins, 1981, pp. 994-995)

Collins argues that by necessity sociology must rely on abstract reifications, and that terms such as social class and social structure are a kind of "shorthand" that enable social scientists to conceptualize the big picture. However, he warns social scientists to always keep in mind that they are dealing with "reifications" not actual empirical referents, when they utilize abstract terms such as social class and power.

Accordingly, instead of focusing on stable empirical referents, the stance I adopt in this dissertation is based on Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" (1980), a concept I discussed at length in previous chapters. However, this kind of imagining is socially mediated; as people never remember in isolation as individual minds. Unfortunately, mainstream cognitive science and psychology decontextualize what is a socio-cognitive, not merely cognitive phenomenon (Atkinson, 2002). Although one of the ways in which memory is collectivized is through language, mainstream cognitive psychologists have conceptualized language as an abstract system of innate, invariant mental operations, isolated and severed from the outside world. Nonetheless, as was mentioned previously, more and more cognitive scientists are challenging this cognitivist orthodoxy (Stern, 1991). Instead of being merely being inside the brain, cognition also takes place in the micro-interactions we humans engage in on a daily basis, and these interactions themselves are conditioned by the broader macro-context.

I agree to some extent that micro-social interactions are what ultimately constitute the “stuff” of sociology such as social stratification and racism; however, by focusing merely on the micro-sociology, it is too easy to lose sight of the way these face-to face interactions are themselves frequently shaped by the asymmetrical power relations of the broader society. Though these asymmetries of power are not always clearly visible, that does not mean they do not matter. Social reality always comes prepatterned and the discourses, symbols myths and personae are socially mediated. As Gee (2001, 2005) shows, it is by selectively combining these semiotic resources that individuals project subjectivity, but as CDA shows asymmetric power relations (i.e., social class) impact one’s subjectivity. Individuals are positioned differently and bring different resources any interaction, as is shown in the graph below.

T

Table 8.2 Social class resources

Dimension	Gloss
Property	Material possessions, such as land, housing, electronic devices, clothing, books, art, etc.
Wealth	Disposable income and patrimony (e.g., what owned property is worth in financial terms).
Occupation	The kind of work done: information-based or manual, specialized or unskilled, etc.
Place of residence	The type of neighborhood one lives in (poor, working class, middle class, gated community, an area in the process of gentrification) or the type of dwelling (individual house, flat, caravan).
Education	The level of schooling attained and the acquired cultural capital one has at any point in time.
Social networking	Middle-class people tend to socialize with middle-class people, working-class people with working-class people, etc.
Consumption patterns	Shopping at a supermarket that is "cost-cutting" or one that sells "healthy," organic products. Buying particular goods and brands.
Symbolic behavior	Including body movement, clothes worn, how one speaks, how one eats, pastimes engaged in, etc.
Spatial relations	The conditions in which one lives: dwelling size, bedroom size, proximity to others across day-to-day activities, etc.
Mobility	The means, disposition, time, and knowledge necessary for travel.
Life chances	Quality of life in terms of personal comfort, access to preventive medicine, life expectancy, etc.

(From Block, 2014, p.26)

Perhaps the dimension least amendable to direct observation utilizing the micro-interactional paradigm is the final one: mobility and life chances. These variables are constituted by the intergenerational transmission of social class, which is obviously a long-term process (Weber, 1968).

In fact, Bourdieu himself considered dissolving the false binaries underlying contemporary social science as one of the principal goals of his vast scholarly work. In addition to the macro/micro distinction, Bourdieu challenged the binaries of "subjective/objective, material/symbolic, structure/agency, empirical/theoretical, public/private, and freedom/necessity" (Power, 2015, p.48). Nonetheless, before

exploring Bourdieu's repudiation of epistemological and epistemological dualism, it is important to note that although Bourdieu shared with the poststructuralists such as Derrida an abiding dislike of binary, unlike the latter's anti-scientific tenor, the former very much embraced science. Indeed, Bourdieu himself embraced science and viewed his work (much of which was quantitative) as scientific. However, Bourdieu is not the only scholar who integrates the macro with the micro, as can be seen in the following section.

Blommaert and World Systems Theory

Indeed, much contemporary work in sociolinguistics problematizes the macro-micro dichotomy by arguing that is too simplistic and reductive:

The first problem is that studies of language in society tend to apply a simple untheorized distinction in the levels of context included in analysis: the micro-versus-macro distinction. Discourse analysis of spoken interaction or the sociolinguistic analysis of individual variables in speech would typify microanalysis, whereas ideologically oriented critical discourse analysis and studies of language policy and language attitudes would typify the latter. As a rough gloss, whereas micro approaches examine how people affect language, macro approaches would focus on how language affects people. (Blommaert, 2015, p.106)

Blommaert claims that this misleading ontological and epistemological dichotomization of the macro and micro belies the complexity and multilayered nature of language use. Instead of these facile binaries, Blommaert imports the concept of chronotope, originally developed by Bakhtin, into sociolinguistics. Bakhtin himself took his cue from Einstein's theory of relativity and adopted the concept, which refers to the fusion of spacetime, into the study of literature. Blommaert takes the idea of the chronotope one step further, combines it with the concept of scale to come up with a new paradigm in sociolinguistics, a paradigm that dissolves the micro-macro distinction almost entirely.

As any human event is embedded in spacetime, it is neither exclusively macro nor micro, but a fusion of both. For example, I jokingly ask my students "Why I am in China? By invoking the micro-event of my teaching in China, the students are primed to think in terms of my individual dispositions

and usually answer something to the effect, “You like Chinese culture,” or “You are a curious person.” By ascribing my presence in China to the dispositional level, the students are resorting to a sort of methodological individualism whereby the broader socio-historical factors that partially constitute and enable these dispositions are omitted. Accordingly, in order to get the students to think in terms of a wider time scale, I only half-jokingly reply, “The British Navy.” By historicizing my dispositions, and by linking them with the vestiges of a centuries-long process of colonialization in which the English language was spread by military force, I am in effect trying to get them to think critically. I am also attempting to have them realize that a seemingly simple referent as “a foreign English teacher in China” can invoke a variety of different meanings depending on the scope of the perspective. In this way

The interstices between distinct levels of context disappear because each local (micro) act of contextualization operates using locally (in)validated invocations of translocal (macro) meanings...chronotopes as historically configured tropes point us to the fact that specific complexes of “how-it-was” can be invoked as relevant context in discourse and affect what can and does happen in discursive events. Events, acts, people, and themes can be set and reset, so to speak, in different timespace frames, in such a way that the setting and resetting enable and prompt indexicals ordered as socioculturally recognizable sets of attributions. (Blommaert, 2015, pp. 107-108)

Utilizing Blommaert’s terminology from the above quote, in my rhetorical question I am taking the “local meaning of “The English Teacher” as a curious person who loves Chinese culture and “resetting” it into a “translocal macro meaning” (as one resulting from centuries of colonialism and global asymmetries of power). As we can see in this example, the concept of chronotope can help explain the ways spacetime is critical in the constitution subject positions, and they can also help researchers interrogate power:

Chronotopic representations enlarge the ‘historical present’ of their audiences by creating chronotopic displacements and cross-chronotope alignments between persons here-and-now and persons altogether elsewhere, transposing selves across discrete zones of cultural spacetime through communicative practices that have immediate consequences for how social actors in the public sphere are mobilized to think, feel and act.” (Agha, 2007, p. 324)

By expanding the horizons upon which subjectivity is conceptualized, applied linguists as well as teachers and their students can more critically examine the ways phenomena such as English in China are naturalized as being necessary and good. With the introduction of the chronotopic paradigm, it becomes clear that the spread of English to China cannot be reduced to individual-level choices and preferences. To the contrary, the increasing global hegemony of English is embedded in a centuries-long process of war, conquest, and imperialist domination, a domination that is discursively reconfigured into the language of opportunity and social mobility. As I have shown in my discussion of the increasing dominance of neoliberal discursive regime, the participants in my study rarely mention the more structural phenomenon such as colonialism and Orientalism in relation to the increasing hegemony of English as a global language.

As for his theory of time scales, Blommaert (2015) took his cue from the *Annales school* and their World Systems Theory. Unlike traditional historiography, which primarily focuses on political and diplomatic themes (especially wars), the *Annales school* looks at long-term economic shifts, and how these shifts affected the common people in their everyday lives. This fusion of the local with the translocal and of the short-term with the long-term became the dominant theme in Blommaert's work as he viewed it as a productive and fruitful tool to analyze sociolinguistic phenomena in all its complexity. Due to the inherent complexity of language, Blommaert strongly agreed with World Systems Theory's emphasis of the nonlinear and emergent nature of social reality. Because language, as not only a social phenomenon but as a biological, psychological, economic, interactional, philosophical, and political one, has so many distinct variables interacting at so many different levels, simple linear models cannot capture it.

In this manner, Blommaert's chronotope/scale paradigm is part of a broader movement in the physical and social sciences toward complexity theory. Complexity theory completely renounces all forms of reductionism (the belief that any phenomenon can be understood by breaking it down into its constituent

parts). For example, in the chart below (Horn, in Larsen-Freeman, 2013), we can see the distinctions between a complex systems approach and the more traditional reductive approaches.

Table 8.3 Complexity Theory

Paradigms of Simplicity and Complexity
(based on Horn 2008)

Paradigm of Simplicity	Paradigm of Complexity
Adheres to the principle of universality	Without denying universality, also adopts the complementary principle that the individual and the local are intelligible in themselves
Seeks to reduce wholes to their simple constituents	Integrates elements into their ensembles or complexes
Seeks principles of order	Looks for self-organization
Assumes determinism; linear causality	Looks for relationships
Separates subject from object; observer from observed	Puts the observer back into the experimental situation
Treats contradiction as error	Regards contradictions as paradoxes...as indices of a deeper reality
Thinks monologically	Thinks dialogically and so relates contrary concepts in a complementary manner

The second dimension, “Integrates elements into their ensembles or complexes” is a definition of emergence, which is also a main methodological and ontological tenet of emergence. Emergence, at the risk of simplification, is the principle that the sum is greater than the parts, in other words holism, but it is much more profound than that: it is a repudiation of linear determinism itself:

Complex systems are also nonlinear. A nonlinear system is one in which the effect is disproportionate to the cause; Conversely, in a linear system a cause of a particular strength results in an effect of equal strength. When a spacecraft is nudged into orbit by firing its thruster rockets, a linear system is responsible. Nonlinear systems can also sometimes exhibit linearity, however, at other times, they may react in a way that is all out of proportion to the cause. A rolling pebble, for example, can trigger an avalanche. This has been termed the 'camel's back' effect. A simple trigger, one which occurs all the time, might be enough on any given occasion to bring about a great convulsion in the system, or to throw the entire system into a chaotic state. (Larsen-Freeman, 1997, p.143)

In common parlance, this is commonly known as the butterfly effect (Dizikes, 2008), and it is based on the work of an MIT meteorologist, Edward N. Lorenz, who found that even tiny changes in initial conditions can have massively disproportionate effects on ultimate outcomes. Using the metaphor of a butterfly as a trope, Lorenz' stress on disorder over order and becoming over being represented a distinct paradigm shift away from Isaac Newton's paradigm of lineal causality. By moving away from Newton's mechanistic determinism, complexity theorists have been able to show dynamic systems such as language or education cannot be reduced to their constituent parts alone. In this way, systems theory is firmly rooted in a relational paradigm (discussed previously in the literature review) in that it is the interactions between entities that is considered constituent of reality, not the isolated entities in themselves. In fact, the term 'entity' used here is more of a placeholder because in systems theory 'entities' are not conceived as concrete substances, but rather as phases in a process; the process is principally predicated on relations not essences.

This relational dimension (denoted in the table on the previous page "integrates elements into their ensembles of complexes") refutes substantialist metaphysics. Substantialism, also known as substantivism, "takes as its point of departure the notion that it is substances of various kinds (things, beings, essences) that constitute the fundamental units of all inquiry" (Emirbayer, 1997, p.282). While substantialism does admit of interactions between the supposedly discrete entities, these entities remain fixed in their supposed essence. In this manner, Newtonian and Cartesian substantialist models employ algebraic equations to analyze the physical and social world; consequently, a type of epistemological and ontological essentialism is assumed:

the dominance of linear models has led many sociologists to construe the social world in terms of a 'general linear reality.' This reality assumes (1) that the social world consists of fixed entities with variable attributes, (2) that cause cannot flow from 'small' to 'large' attributes/events, (3) that causal attributes have only one causal pattern at once, (4) that the sequence of events does not influence their outcome, (5) that the 'careers' of entities are largely independent, and (6) that causal attributes are generally independent of each other. (Abbot, 1988, p. 169)

Abbot, a leading social theorist, goes on to assert that although the social scientists who believe in a “general linear reality” almost always adhere to strictly quantitative methods, they always resort to an overarching narrative to make the data tell a compelling story. These stories are usually implicit or couched in positivistic terminology. As I show in the next section, however, social stratification cannot be completely captured quantitatively; it also has discursive dimensions.

Cosmopolitan time scales

The sociologists Igarashi and Saito, building upon the work of Bourdieu, assert that in today’s world cosmopolitanism functions as an emblem of a bourgeois social position that in turn, serves as a mechanism for social classes to reproduce themselves: “cosmopolitanism can operate as cultural capital that becomes a locus of stratification on an increasingly global scale” (2014, p.2). The findings from my study seem to lend to support Igarashi and Sato’s claims that while an openness to the outside world is seen as an unmitigated good by the participants, the classed nature of this cosmopolitanism, the way it is distributed unequally across the social strata, is overlooked. Igarashi and Saito do not criticize the normative goals of cosmopolitanism *per se* (an interest in foreign cultures and an openness to the “other”), they only highlight the way cosmopolitan operates in the contemporary world to reproduce inequality:

First, education systems legitimate cosmopolitanism, a set of dispositions of openness to foreign others and cultures, as well as competencies to enact such openness with ease, as universally desirable for people living in a global world. Second, education systems nonetheless make access to cosmopolitanism unequal. On the production side, education systems distribute cosmopolitanism unequally across different countries, schools, and curricula in terms of the hierarchy between the West and the non-West. On the consumption side, families with large volumes of cultural, economic, and social capital are advantaged to pursue educational tracks associated with large volumes of cosmopolitanism as cultural capital. Finally, education systems link academic qualifications that signal cosmopolitanism with positions that require extensive interactions with people of multiple nationalities. Thus, education systems implicate cosmopolitanism in stratification at the global level by conferring on it the character of cultural capital: being defined as universally desirable, while its access and profits are unequally distributed across different groups of actors around the world (Igarashi &

Saito, 2014, p. 12).

As the data I collected showed that the respondents tend to view English as an essential and necessary component of a cosmopolitan identity, I heavily focused on that in the subsequent qualitative interviewing.

In the follow-up interviewing, many of the informants did seem to value a cosmopolitan social imaginary. Rizvi, sociologist of education building upon the work of the prominent Canadian social philosopher Charles Taylor and the prominent Marxist Cornelius Castoriadis, asserts that social imageries are fluid discursive formations that social actors can appropriate agentively (2014). He defines social imaginary' as a "framework that is at once descriptive and prescriptive of how things are and should be organised around a set of norms that gives them meaning and significance" (p.234). He argues that social imaginaries are powerful motivators for both individual and collective action because they contain both empirical, semiotic and affective dimensions, and they provide ideological legitimacy for discursive formations.

While the social imaginaries of cosmopolitanism, which consists of universal solidarity, human rights, respect for cultural diversity, are social goods that few people would object to, research has shown that in most cases, strategic cosmopolitanism seems to predominate over the more humanistic versions. The humanistic version can be defined using the five following dimensions:

Extensive mobility in which people have the right and means to 'travel' corporeally, imaginatively and virtually; to experience many places and environments en route; and a curiosity about other practices, places and peoples. 2. Global openness to other peoples and cultures and a willingness / ability of members of a society to appreciate and incorporate elements of the practices / language / culture of various 'others'. 3. Social reflexivity and imaginaries of alternative modernities, a willingness to take risks by virtue of encountering the 'other', involving self-transformation, incompleteness, lack of certainty and uncertainty. 4. Social plurality and a developed 'civil society', both as indicating cultural interaction and as spaces in which reflexivity may be manifest. 5. The presence of a global 'public' sphere or space, that is 'the always ever present sphere of

discourse that contextualizes political communication and public discourse' and which is constituted and reproduced through multiple interactions often over large distances" (Tyfield & Urry, 2010, p. 279)

However, as I discussed in the previous chapter, this humanistic rendering of cosmopolitanism is not for the most part what I found in the data I collected. While some of the participants did indeed show evidence of what Yashima's (2009) termed "Global Openness," more common were expressions of what I code strategic cosmopolitanism. I coded strategic cosmopolitanism any expression that framed openness or respect for cultural difference or the desire to learn a world language in terms of its career or economic benefits. For example, in the in-depth interviewing, Jane, an economics major at Northern University, stated that while English enabled her to interact with "foreigners", she couched this intercultural awareness in utilitarian terms:

In the international business world, we have to be able to communicate with people from different countries. By communicating with foreigners in English I can learn more about their cultures and this will help me after I graduate. My dream job is to work in an international bank or investment firm.

One can see that the data analyzed at the start of the chapter as well as Jane's quote above, clearly fit with Kipnis's definition of neoliberalism, especially with regards with the desire for self-improvement and for accruing cultural capital. In this way, the strategic cosmopolitanism I found in the qualitative interviewing is entirely consistent with neoliberalism; they are mutually reinforcing. It seems as if Hank, along with almost all the other respondents, seemed to embrace the increasing prevalence of English in China as part of the overall spread of global capitalism. This neoliberal subjectivity, with its emphasis on constant striving is in stark contrast to feudal China, or even socialist China, where people's sense of self was largely fixed, and collective subjectivity was more prominent (Ngai, 2003; Hairong, 2003; Yang, 2009). Now in contemporary China, the emphasis is on self-development and academic success as a means to achieve a desired identity and to achieve middle-class status (Ong, 1993). However, the striving for academic success likely preceded the introduction of globalized neoliberalism in China;

neoliberalism may have just hastened the process.

Chapter 9: Foreign language policy in China, discursive nationalism and “*Othering* discourse”

“Language is the most important tool for humans to think and communicate; it is also the prerequisite for people’s social activities, and it is significant for people for people all around social development. With the globalization of social and economic activities, foreign language competence has already become a requirement for people around the world. Therefore, learning and mastering foreign languages, especially English, is of critical importance.”

These are the words from the national guidelines for English Curricular requirements at Senior High School Stage (translated by Pan, 2011, p. 249), the syllabus used by all public high schools in China. While at first glance the content of this language policy may seem innocuous, even beneficial, upon deeper examination one can see hegemonic neoliberalism doing its ideological work. While employing a euphemism (“the globalization of social and economic activities”), what the Chinese Foreign Language Policy really promotes is neoliberal individualism. This neoliberalism, which takes as a given free market capitalism, self-interest, and competitive individualism (Bourdieu, 1998; Ives, 2009; Kipnis, 2007; Pennycook, 2001) is much more than a mere economic ideology of Western capitalism; it is an increasingly pervasive discursive regime affecting virtually all facets of contemporary life (Harvey, 2005; Block, Gray & Holborow, 2012), up to and including individuals’ sense of self:

On a deeper level, neoliberalism can be characterized as a transformation of subjectivities. The neoliberal emphasis on individual responsibility, in which people are encouraged to take greater initiative regarding their lives and be accountable for their own choices (instead of relying on support of the state or solidarity of community), can be understood in terms of how subjects are governed, or, in terms of governmentality... in this manner brute force is not needed to have people comply. People are encouraged to become “entrepreneurs of the self” and this neoliberalism commodifies even our deepest sense of belonging and identity. (Shin & Park, 2015, pp. 2-3)

Being an “entrepreneur of the self” becomes the new imperative in the neoliberal world in which the social safety net has been shredded, and where social solidarity is increasingly viewed as a quaint

anachronism. As L2 English in China seems to be firmly embedded in this discourse of competitive individualism, it may play a role in the fragmentation of China along social class lines.

As evidenced by the foreign language policy examined above, English seems to be an essential constituent of bourgeois subjectivity in contemporary China; proficiency in it has come to serve as a marker of neoliberal striving on both an individual and a societal level. As an emblem of globalization itself, English is viewed as the *sine qua non* of the international capitalism: “The global spread of neoliberal free market doctrines naturalizes the use of English as the language of global competitiveness” (Piller & Choi, 2013, p.24). With competition hailed as the engine of personal as well national growth, the Chinese now use proficiency in English to index upward mobility and global sophistication, thereby giving rise to “cultures of individualism with their highly competitive subjectivities” (Piller & Choi, 2013, p.28). In this manner, English becomes a tool for Chinese individuals to struggle with others for social status and access to high-paying jobs on a national as well as international scale. However, as I have stated throughout this research, neoliberalism is not the only socially available discourse as Confucian familism, the Chinese variant of socialism, and Chinese nationalism also serve as narrative resources for the participants in my study, and they offset the stronger variants of individualism seen in the Anglo-American countries.

Storied nationalism

Can the cultural world of humans be studied using the same methods as those utilized in the natural sciences? Max Weber, the great social scientist writing at the beginning of the last century answered this question in the negative. Weber argued that the human sciences (psychology, history, sociology, etc.) are different in kind than the natural sciences such as chemistry and physics. Humans, living in a world of meaningful symbols, are not like the phenomena of the purely physical world of atoms, molecules, and cells; unlike these natural entities, individuals are conscious beings who interpret and reflect on the

world around them. In order to interpret the world, humans use language, symbols, and myths to make sense of their existence. In other words, humans not only inhabit the physical world, they create their own linguistically and culturally mediated life worlds. In the field of SLA, while more quantitative methods have yielded many important findings on second language learning, qualitative analysis such as the one presented in this chapter can also deepen our understanding of second language learners' actual lived experiences. In order to research the phenomenological life-worlds of L2 learners at Northern University, in this section I employ the discourse analysis with a focus on the narrative constructions of the respondents (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Bruner, 2004). I selected 5 of the participants for more extensive, qualitative investigation after they all completed the initial survey. I carried out a series of open-ended interviews focusing on their take on the role of English in China as well as in their own lives. The findings indicated that the participants drew upon the discursive resources of Chinese history and culture to project their identities in the interview. In terms of social class, English was seen as a kind of crude proxy for socioeconomic status and as a resource for middle-class subjectivity.

With the rise of China as a world power, many of the country's citizens now have the economic means to enjoy middle-class lifestyles. As a result, many Chinese citizens can now afford to live, work and study abroad. Often the target of othering discourses, these students are often viewed through the prism of rigid and essentializing stereotypes. However, within China, the context is much different than it is abroad: instead of being an oppressed, racialized minority, they are the dominant group with access to the material and symbolic resources to index elevated social status. In fact, the site of my study, Northern University, is the most prestigious institute of higher learning in all of China, a place with such competitive admissions that there is a famous saying, "进入天堂比进入清华大学更容易" (it is easier to get into heaven than it is Northern University).

The goal of the follow-up interviewing I conducted endeavors to get beyond my outsider's perspective

of Chinese culture; instead, I attempt to understand the lived experience of 5 of these students from their own vantage point so the follow up interviews were done over period of two years on a free-flowing, conversational basis, mostly on the social messaging platform WeChat, but with the initial stages done in-person.

In the snippets presented below, I will let the students explain for themselves what being Chinese means to them, and how English relates to that. Moreover, this study attempts to fill in a gap in the literature as there have been few published studies of adult Chinese students in highly prestigious universities. As my participants are the future elites of China, most of them will occupy positions of power and status in their respective careers; in this way my study offers a glimpse into the thoughts of the future leaders of China

Data analysis for the follow-up interview

The first question I asked of each of the participants was some close variant of “could you tell me about yourself? This question seemed like a good icebreaker and is the same one used in many job interviews. Nonetheless 2 of the 5 participants seemed perplexed by the question. For example, note the reaction of Mary, whom I was interviewing in person, in the following excerpt.

Paul: So, tell me about yourself.

Mary: Um, I'm a sophomore finance major at Northern University, and I like fashion and cooking.

Before Mary started to answer this question, she seemed baffled and she tilted her head to the side with a look of puzzlement conveyed on her face. Perhaps this question seemed self-explanatory to me as an American who has been through many job interviews, but perhaps talking about oneself is more characteristic of countries strongly influenced by the discursive regime of individualism such as the one

I grew up in. Whatever the cause, In Mary's case I had to ask elaborative questions in order for her to open up more. Getting Mary to open up was somewhat of a challenge as I did not want to explicitly convey my own research interest by asking close-ended yes/no questions, questions that are of course easier to answer but do not convey and depth. As already mentioned, every attempt was made to elicit the participants' experiences from their own perspective; any overt cues as to what I expected the respondents to say and any leading questions were avoided. Nonetheless, the researcher's expectations, even ones existing below the consciousness level of the researcher or the participants, can have powerful effects on the data (Rosenthal & Fode, 1963; Creswell, 2007; Jackson, 2009). In narrative inquiry, the questions are as broad as possible so as to give the respondents as much space as possible to answer the questions as authentically as possible.

Having said that, I am almost certain that the participants in this study did sense that I was looking for particular answers. For example, all 5 respondents seemed to analyze their experience through contrasts, or rigid binaries: Chinese culture/people are this way; Americans are that way. Although there is a large body of theory and empirical research documenting the way human thought is largely structured by an overarching conceptual dualism (Barth, 1969; Billig, 1988; Markova, 2003; Staerke, Clemence & Spini, 2011), I did not mention the word differences in any of the questions I asked of the participants. Nonetheless, they seemed to construct their ideas of Chineseness by stressing what it was not: American. For example, Gina, in the excerpt below, was answering my follow up question on why she went to the U.S for his senior year of high school:

Paul: So why did want to go to the U.S.?

Gina: I think the United States is a good place to study law and live. I wanted to learn a foreign culture.

Paul: What have you learned?

Gina: A lot. For example, directness. Chinese people are long in their expression but the Americans, they speak directly. I'm learning to speak more direct, like an American.

Again, although I never explicitly asked the participants to compare the two cultures, the participants did it themselves, as indicated in this excerpt.

Greg also predicated his utterances concerning Chinese culture upon binary oppositions. Like Gina and Mary, he contrasted Chinese communication strategies with American ones:

Paul: When I mention Chinese culture, what comes to mind?

Greg: Chinese people always think more about other people...they do not talk as much as Americans.

Paul: Do you mean that Americans talk more?

Greg: Yes, but they talk quicker. Chinese usually delay, they think first about what they're going to say. Americans just talk. Chinese care more about other people.

In this way, Greg, like many of the other participants, narrates his Chinese identity dialectically by contrasting it with American culture. This ontological dichotomization may be due to a combination of two factors: Chinese exceptionalism (the believe that China is unique form all other countries) and the possibly universal tendency for humans to think in terms of dualistic oppositions, which I discuss in the next section.

Cognitive dualism and identity

Greg's use of the outgroups to relationally define what being Chinese means to him gives further empirical support to growing body of research (Staerklé, Clémence, & Spini, 2011) showing how social identity (whether it be racial, gendered, classed, or ethnic) is at least partially premised upon a thoroughgoing cognitive dualism. In fact, social scientists as far back as George Herbert Mead (1934) were arguing that the way any given person defines him or herself is produced through interaction with and perceptions of others. Subsequent scholars built upon Meade's work (Wagner & Hayes, 2005;

Markova, 2006) showing that the group identities are mostly defined in relation to what they are *not*. Staerklé, Clémence and Spini call this structuring of reality through binary divisions antinomic thinking:

Antinomic thinking is for example found in the context of ideological values. Both political and lay actors symbolize ideological values with antagonistic social categories which organize perceptions of minorities vs. majorities and of subordinate vs. dominant groups...Self-control, for example, is objectified into an antagonism between groups perceived to be in control of themselves and groups perceived to be “out of control” such as drug addicts, obese or psychologically unstable people. (2011, p. 763)

For example, Greg stressed his perception that Americans are more spontaneous in their speech while the Chinese are more restrained and unhurried, speaking less and carefully measuring what they say before they say it. Not only did all the participants in the follow-up interviews make similar comments concerning what they perceived as the differing socio-pragmatic styles in the respective cultures, they did so without the uses of hedges or qualifiers (i.e., some Chinese or Westerners usually etc.); instead, they resorted to blanket absolutes such as “Chinese people” and the *Other*, who were variously termed “Americans” “Westerners” or the overarching term “foreigners.”

To put it another way, the way the participants grounded their conceptualizations of the perceived differences between Chinese and non-Chinese culture seemed to rest upon an overarching ontological dualism. Furthermore, this dualism is consistent with the findings of many previous studies carried out from a poststructuralist paradigm: "As poststructuralist theory tells us, difference does not refer to inherent or essential traits of individuals or groups. Rather, difference refers to meaning created through contrast and negation, often through hierarchical dualisms such as white/black, man/woman, culture/nature, etc." (Kim, 2004, pp.996-997). By structuring the world through these reductive binary oppositions, cognitive order is established and maintained and group boundaries are reified.

In keeping with the paradigm of CDA that informs this dissertation, it bears repeating that the reification of human groups mentioned in the preceding quote are discursively created and inflected,

though not determined, by the asymmetrical power relations of the broader society. Being mostly middle to upper class members of the dominant ethnic group (Han Chinese) in the largest country in the world, a country soon to pass the U.S. in the size of its economy, seemed to enable the participants in my study to discursively define the foreign “Other” from a position of confidence and poise and not one of inferiority. By relying on a conceptual and ontological dualism, they articulated a distinctive Chinese identity that was a source of deep pride. Similar to group dynamics elsewhere, this identity is largely accomplished through exaggeration of the differences between the Chinese and “foreigners” and the homogenization of out-groups through blanket generalizations such as: “They are outgoing; they don’t think before they talk.” Such dichotomous thinking is not unique to Mainland China, but seems to be widespread in various societies and may even be a cultural universal (Wagner & Hayes, 2005; Markova, 2006.).

By providing a “conceptual framework through which stereotypes of in-groups and out-groups in diverse societies are seen as the product of antinomies which structure shared knowledge” (Staerklé, Clémence and Spini, 2011. P. 264), binary thinking enables people to clearly define themselves and the outside world, and when done from a sense of confidence, it can be quite agentic. As is attested to throughout the data in virtually all the participants in this study, the binary oppositions between Chinese and the foreign “Other” is a foundation of their national identity, an identity which seemingly imbues them with a sense of honor and dignity. Moreover, as I pointed out in the previous chapter, this othering discourse was carried out for the most part without outgroup denigration. Perhaps because of the tremendous amount of economic, cultural, and demographic power that China has accrued as it has transformed itself into a crucial player on the world stage, the participants are able to narrate their national identities from a position of strength.

Orientalism and anti-colonialism

By linking self-narratives with the larger sociopolitical context, Critical Discourse Analysis gives scholars the conceptual tools to link the cognitive and the discursive with power relations of the broader society. In order for any critical paradigm such as CDA to

develop into a rigorously critical theory there are three controversial issues that require clarification. These are a) the relationship between psychological processes and social practices, b) the reification and legitimisation of different knowledge systems and c) agency and resistance in the co-construction of self-identity. (Howarth, 2006, p. 66)

Indeed, the ability to craft any identity, cultural or otherwise is not a purely agentive phenomenon, done *ex nihilo*, but is instead forged utilizing the socially available discourses, symbols, and narratives, all of which are conditioned by the power relations of the surrounding social structure. While individuals do have some leeway in fashioning themselves, their sense of self always, at least partially, relies on the pre-existing building blocks for subjectivity and these societal influences provide “the multiple ways in which individuals move through such institutionalized discursive regimes, constructing selves, social categories, and social realities” (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 200, p. 451). With China gaining increasing prominence as a world power, Chinese national identity imbues the participants with these “social categories” that render them less susceptible than ever to the Eurocentric and Orientalist discourses which had previously marginalized them (You, 2010).

According to Said (1978), Orientalism is a colonialist and homogenizing discourse that relies on simplistic binary distinctions between “The West” and what was previously called the “Orient.” By positioning the “Orient” as inferior and less advanced, Orientalist discourse provided the ideological legitimation for the imperialist conquests of what we now call Asia. Through a series of racist binary oppositions (rational vs irrational; savage vs civilized; democratic vs. despotic etc.), Europeans were able to frame their colonialist expansionism as a benign imposition of a supposedly superior civilization. Instead of attempting to empirically depict the Asian peoples in all their complexity, individuality and

nuance in a fair and disinterested manner, Orientalist “scholars” relied on crude stereotypes and caricatures as way to expand their own countries’ hegemony:

In a sense the limitations of Orientalism are, as I said earlier, the limitations that follow upon disregarding, essentializing, denuding the humanity of another culture, people, or geographical region...indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness, usually overriding the possibility that a more independent, or more skeptical, thinker might have had different views on the matter. In a quite constant way, Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand. (Said, 1979, p. 34)

A simple examination of the historical record confirms that the colonialist discourses that positioned the “natives” as less than the “Westerner” not only legitimated the conquest of those deemed “Other,” the negative stereotypes were sometimes internalized by the conquered themselves, a process termed “symbolic violence” by Bourdieu and Passeron (2013).

However, in contemporary China, there has arisen an anti-colonialist discourse to counter this cultural imperialism and concomitant symbolic violence perpetrated by the Western powers (Barabantseva, 2008; You, 2010). This anticolonial discourse turns the tables on the West; by utilizing the narrative and semiotic resources of the achievements and prowess of 4,000 years of recorded Chinese history, the national imaginary of China a resurgent ancient power taking its rightful place alongside other world powers enables the Chinese to view themselves as bearers of a unique and venerable culture superior to the West in many ways. In fact, some of my participants embedded their L2 English in this nationalist narrative. One respondent answered my question concerning his advanced L2 English proficiency in the following manner:

Paul: Do you think your English proficiency weakens your Chinese identity?

Dave: No, not at all. To the contrary, being good at English helps me to communicate with foreigners in many ways. One of those ways is that I am able to represent China to the outside world. Many foreigners misunderstand China, but when we Chinese are fluent in English we can explain our culture to them. So, I kind of feel that my fluency in English makes me feel even more pride in being Chinese.

This statement serves as strong counter-evidence to Phillipson's linguistic imperialism hypothesis (1992,1994, 2009) that English is decimating other cultures and languages. In the case of China, where certain people such as Dave (i.e., those high in cultural and symbolic capital) can appropriate English to bolster the cultural identities, Phillipson's theory does not seem to be tenable, though it may be valid for countries not as powerful as China. Having said that, as I mentioned in the introduction, this does not mean that L2 English in China benefits the country as a whole; my data suggests that English may be contributing to the growing problem of socioeconomic inequality thereby furthering injustice and oppression in the country.

Social class, recognition and English proficiency

Social status (one's position on the social ladder) reflects one's perceived importance and the amount of respect society accords him or her. As a result, high status individuals tend to have greater access to valued material and social resources. Social status predicts virtually every life outcome from self-esteem to leisure pursuits, to life expectancy, to anxiety levels, to educational outcomes to divorce and obesity rates (Wilkinson, 2005; Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2009). One's social position also appears to affect each individual's self-construal, especially their perceived ability to act upon the world:

Social class contexts provide an important source of variation in people's understanding of what it means to be a good or appropriate person in the world. Middle-class contexts are characterized by abundant resources, low material constraint, and a wide array of opportunities to exercise choice and control as a result, these environments tend to promote and support an independent model of the self: one that defines a normatively appropriate person as agentic, distinct from others, and focused primarily on one's personal

motives, goals, and preferences. By contrast, working-class contexts are characterized by limited resources, high material constraints, and fewer opportunities to exercise choice and control; as a result, these environments tend to promote and support an interdependent model of the self: One that defines a normatively appropriate person as somebody who adjusts to the conditions of the context, sees themselves as connected to others, and responds to their needs, preferences, and interests. (Belmi, et al., 2002, p. 256)

In other words, individuals with higher social position show higher levels of the belief that they control their own destiny than low-status individuals do. Some social scientists assert that these differences in perceived control over one's destiny may be an accurate assessment of the amount of economic, cultural and symbolic capital powerful people can convert to obtain desired outcomes (Gekas & Schwalbe, 1983; Stephens, Markus, & Townsend, 2007).

Moreover, those high in self-efficacy exhibit a greater amount of status-seeking behavior; they tend to base their sense of self on whatever is valued in the surrounding culture, and they actively seek out prestige and recognition to a greater degree than individuals lower on the social ladder do (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972; Belmi, et al., 2002; Kraus, Rheinschmidt & Piff, 2012; Belmi & Laurin, 2016). Because social status has so many dimensions and potential signifiers, and because it is not always clearly visible, it is often created and negotiated "through self-presentation to others" (Lampel & Bhalla, 2007, p. 439). In this manner, given that advanced English proficiency may be a symbol of elite status in China (Gao et al., 2005; Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2006; Norton & Gao, 2008; Li, 2009; Yashima, 2009; Lo & Kim, 2012), it is entirely possible that the motivation to learn it is at least partially attributable to status seeking; in turn, this proficiency can be used in face-to-face encounters to signal one's social position.

As status seeking is the pursuit of material and symbolic signifiers that enhance an individual's standing in a group, I did find some evidence in my data that high levels of English proficiency did confer a certain degree of prestige and honor. For example, Jane the economics major with whom I interacted with at great length via the popular messenger APP, *Wechat*, conceptualized English in the

flowing way:

Paul: So, tell me how you feel when speaking English.

Jane: Well, my English is not perfect, but I have studied it for a long time, and I feel comfortable using it. Even when I was a kid, I wanted to learn English. When I would hear Chinese people who could speak good English, I felt so impressed.

Paul: What made you feel impressed?

Jane: Well, back then most Chinese people couldn't speak English, so I thought they were really smart and really cool.

Paul: Do you feel the same way when speaking English?

Jane: Well, a little bit. I mean, as I said I am not fluent, but I think my English is better than most people, so it does give me a sense of accomplishment that I can at least communicate with foreigners, and when other Chinese people see me speaking English, maybe they feel jealous.

Paul: Why would they feel jealous?

Jane: We Chinese people are very competitive so maybe they feel intimidated. They would probably never admit that, but it is probably true, at least for the competitive people.

Paul: Do you compete with others in terms of English proficiency?

Jane: Not directly, but maybe in a way. When I hear a Chinese person speaking better English than me, I feel a little nervous.

Paul: Why nervous?

Jane: Because maybe they are judging me.

In fact, the way Jane conceptualized English in competitive terms was consistent with my experience with what my students have told me many times outside of class; they would say something to the effect that certain other students speak much better than they do when in fact their English levels were usually quite similar. More often than not, it was that the student who seemed to have higher levels of oral English ability had greater confidence in speaking and not greater L2 proficiency.

Indeed, in the data I collected, there were many occurrences of this type of comparing oneself with fellow students, with at least 6 students engaging in what I coded as L2 English comparison. For example, Linda, a third-year finance major was explaining her experience of L2 speaking anxiety:

Paul: Why don't you feel confident speaking English in class?

Linda: I feel a little ashamed that most of the other students speak better than I do. I look at them speaking, and I am like, why can't I speak as smoothly as them.

Paul: But you do speak well

Linda: Not compared to some of the others. I have to think before I speak, but they seem to just talk automatically. I pause a lot because I am thinking of what I'm gonna say first, but they are fluent.

Paul: But I remember you on the TOEFL style spontaneous speaking task we did at the end of last semester and you were great.

Linda: That is because I could practice first, but in real situations I can't speak that well.

As we can see in this excerpt, Linda's L2 speaking anxiety seemed to be based on what she believed to be her relatively inferior oral English proficiency. In reality, though, her English level was very high, and her marks in my class reflected that. But Linda was not the only one with this type of L2 anxiety, and it points to a much broader phenomenon, social comparison, that touches upon social class and neoliberalism, which are the main foci of my research.

Social Comparison and L2 English proficiency

Social comparison theory is based on the hypothesis that humans have a seemingly inborn need to judge themselves by comparing themselves to others (Suls, Martin & Wheeler, 2002). There are two types of social comparison: upward and downward. In upward comparison, a person compares herself to a person with greater levels of that attribute; conversely, downward comparison occurs when people evaluate themselves to those with less of the desired attribute. In the case of Linda that we examined in the previous paragraph, she was engaging in upward comparison: she was judging herself by evaluating

herself against somebody she though had greater L2 English proficiency. While upward comparison can be harnessed as a motivational tool by giving people goals to aim for, it can also lead to depression, low self-esteem and feelings of helplessness.

In an article published in *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, Suls et al. (2002) trace the origins of the scholarly study of social comparison to the pioneering social psychologist Leon Festinger (1954). Festinger found that because absolute measures such as the amount of money a person has or how tall they are not very useful in determining how they stack up against other people. Instead, people are more likely make distinctions on how much money they have or how tall they are *compared to* those around them. The tendency to compare oneself to other has been found to exist even in very young children, suggesting that it may be innate (Mussweiler, 2001).

Whatever its origins, social comparison seems to be universal, though the degree and manner in which it is practiced vary from culture to culture (Wood, 1989). While more research is needed to shed light on this complex phenomenon, it appears that social comparison may have significant and long-lasting effects on people's life outcomes:

Comparing the self with others, either intentionally or unintentionally, is a pervasive social phenomenon. Perceptions of relative standing can influence many outcomes, including a person's self-concept, level of aspiration, and feelings of wellbeing (i.e., subjective well-being). Just as comparison of objects and symbols is a core element of human conduct and experience, so too is interpersonal comparison. (Suls, Martin & Wheeler, 2002, p. 159)

My findings in this research project as well my years of teaching corroborate the above claim: students are constantly comparing themselves to their classmates in terms of L2 proficiency. What's more, this comparison is usually upward so, it can erode the students' willingness to communicate in the target language, though further research is needed to confirm this observation.

It is also quite possible that this L2 anxiety stemming from social comparison is worse in cultures where neoliberalism is dominant than it is in countries characterized by more egalitarian ideologies.

While as far as I know there have been no published studies on the effect of neoliberalism on L2 anxiety, social comparison does seem to be more prevalent in countries characterized by high levels of capitalist individualism (Smith & Kim, 2007). Moreover, as stated above, social comparison seems to be a cultural universal; it exists in every culture that social scientists have ever studied, but in an era of hyper-individualism and consumerism, individuals' self-understanding becomes saturated with market logic in which people struggle to achieve higher levels of economic and cultural capital than the "competition." As perceived L2 English level is often used as a crude signifier of one's social position and educational background, it would seem to logically follow that many Chinese young people experience anxiety and shame when they feel their English proficiency does not compare favorably to their peers. This L2 anxiety could obviously hamper L2 acquisition; as Krashen (1982) argued long ago, any phenomenon that contributes to the "affective filter" will make acquiring the target language more difficult.

Neoliberal logic and self-esteem

As was pointed out in the literature review in regard to the way the economic system affects individuals' self-understanding, neoliberalism tends to weaken traditional "sources of the self" (Taylor, 1989) such as religion and nationality; instead, in societies with market economies, one's subjectivity is often premised on the guiding principle that self-worth and honor depend upon out-competing others in terms of wealth and social status. Taylor writes that in pre-modern times, identity was pre-given and mostly fixed. People largely identified with their social roles based on family, tradition, nationality, ethnicity, and social class. However, in modern society, the sense of self is more open and fluid. Instead of being pre-formed, one's subjectivity is viewed as an agentive and creative ongoing project or narrative in which the person can freely choose among a plethora of identity options. Bauman (2000) termed our era liquid modernity. Bauman argued that this new paradigm emphasizes the openness, but instead of being experienced as a liberation from the fixity of tradition, it is a new burdensome responsibility. This burden

has increased even more since Bauman published his hypothesis twenty years ago as the market mentality has only strengthened its grip:

The neoliberal narrative consists of a central ideological construct — hyper-individualism — whereby the locus of control is the individual exercising agency through (free) market operations. This simple ideological construct not only marks a shift in focus from the community to the individual, but it also denies the essential social nature of humans. Hyper-individualism, which only acknowledges individual action and individual responsibility, provides the core justification for neoliberalism (Wrenn, 2015, p. 508).

This shift from a communal paradigm to an individualistic one (though the one social “source of the self,” national identity, remains strong in China), likely affects almost every dimension of social life, including language learning,

One of the defining characteristics of this competitive hyper-individualism is the constant striving for the accrual of cultural and symbolic capital, and as Bourdieu (1991) himself pointed out in his book *Language and Symbolic Power*, a great deal of this capital hinges on language. Language, as one of the most salient constituents of symbolic capital, is highly visible arena in which struggles for dominance and status take place. In this way, there is no neutral way of speaking as the linguistic market infused with power relations. In fact, Bourdieu strongly criticized “autonomous linguistics” in the tradition of Saussure and Chomsky for autonomous linguistics advocates removing the study of language from the social realm. Bourdieu, on the other hand, always argued linguistic utterances or expressions can only be analyzed as part of the relations between a habitus and “linguistic market.” Different social classes tend to use languages in different ways, and these linguistic patterns affect people’s life chances as schools and high-status professions favor the language of the powerful. In this way, social structure affects the type and degree of linguistic resources any one person has access to. Consequently, because those with highly valued linguistic capital can convert it into economic capital, social classes tend to

reproduce themselves. Nonetheless, while Bourdieu did not focus his research on SLA, his concepts are a useful tool to analyzing L2 English in China.

The commodification of language

English in China, as in many other places across the globe, has been commodified (Heller, 2010). For Heller, the commodification of language entails a shift from valuing language for its association with a particular culture and people, to appropriating a language in a utilitarian manner to help one succeed in the intensely competitive neoliberal workplace. Moreover, languages such as English have been appropriated by many L2 learners not just as a practical tool for communication and career advancement, but also as way to project middle-class subjectivity. Just as individuals engage in status competition through the consumption of luxury goods to signify their social position, they may now use languages such as English to index their social position. Status competition has become more salient than ever in the increasingly neoliberal world as identity has lost its traditional moorings:

Accounts of modernity trace the development of this new self to the process of individualization in which identity shifts from a fixed set of characteristics determined by birth and ascription to a reflexive, ongoing, individual project shaped by appearance and performance. The roots of this shift lie in urbanization and industrialization, which open access to an array of new goods and experiences, while at the same time permeating the core of the family and extending interdependencies. With people living more rational, anonymous lives, traditionally stable frameworks for group and individual identity—such as family, religion, class, and nationality—weaken and are modified or abandoned. (Zukin & Smith McGuire, 2004, p. 180)

With the rise of the consumerist and performative self, English has become, in some ways, similar to any other consumer good. However, the authors point out that the “choosing self,” of consumerism is predicated on an incomplete and inaccurate view of human relations. Smith McGuire and Zukin argue that that the belief that humans freely create their own economic reality stems from the “illusory nature of consumer freedom” (2004, p. 183). This is due to the increasing ontological individualization and the

subsequent erasure of the underlying structural antecedents upon which the consumer culture rests. As social classes tend to replicate themselves, it is much more difficult for somebody born working class to accumulate enough money to project a middle-class identity through consumption of economic goods such as a luxury car or a large house in the “right neighborhood.”

Heller (2010) stresses that this consumer culture is very much a product of late capitalism, an era in which wealth is considered the ultimate metric of success in life. As the neoliberal ideology is premised on the belief that “anybody can make it,” those who do not obtain some degree of economic wealth may internalize the stigma associated with “not making it.” Because English is a marker of middle-class subjectivity among contemporary urban Chinese youth, this may explain the shame that some of my respondents express at their perceived lack of English proficiency.

The hidden injuries of class and meritocracy

In a landmark book of qualitative research on the everyday lived experience of working-class people, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, the sociologists Richard Sennet and Jonathon Cobb (1972) documented the daily life and social interactions that signal one’s social position. They found that in certain situations in which their class identities became salient, working-class individuals would often suffer from feelings of inadequacy and worthlessness. In their ethnographic interviewing, Sennet and Cobb paid special attention to the interactions between people of different classes. As conflict theorists, they probed how their informants felt when communicating with their superiors at work and when dealing with people of higher social status outside of work, and how individuals dealt with these gaps in social position. Their frequent feelings of shame stemming from these gaps show how conflict more than harmony is what tends to characterize highly stratified societies. As discussed previously, conflict theory takes as a given that in all contemporary industrialized societies individuals and groups struggle over limited economic and symbolic resources, and conflict theory can be traced all the way back to Marx:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. (Marx & Engels, 1945, p.11)

While neither Marx and Engels nor Sennet and Cobb focused on language per se, their axiom that class conflict is fundamental and pervasive is relevant to the field of SLA. For example, the privileged role of L2 English in China is not due to the aesthetic or linguistic superiority of the language itself, but instead stems from centuries of imperialism and colonialism. On a more micro-level, English is often used as a crude proxy for one's educational level, so it serves as a gatekeeper for many high-status jobs. Furthermore, as I mentioned above, the lack of high-level proficiency in the language can be a cause of shame among some contemporary urban youth in China.

This sense of shame, though in a completely different context, is precisely what Sennet and Cobb found among the lower-status individuals they interviewed in their research. The authors argue that the need for sense of dignity is a powerful and innate human drive; because working-class subjectivity is often experienced as embarrassing, anything that indexes lower social status (such as not being able to speak English) can result in a loss of a face. This is especially true in societies where neoliberal ideology predominates. As was discussed in the literature review, neoliberalism is based on the ideology of meritocracy, which is the belief that life is a fair competition, and that the hardest-working and most talented get ahead. Consequently, under meritocratic dogma, the rich are viewed as being worthy of their wealth due to their supposed diligence, and the poor are seen as lazy and untalented and therefore deserving of their lowly plight (Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2009).

With its emphasis on absolute individual responsibility and its denial of social structure, meritocracy does not exist in the real world; high-status parents pass on their class privileges to their offspring, so some people have advantages that others do not (Sandel, 2020). Despite this fact, the meritocratic

ideology that anybody can make it is often internalized by people, especially those living in cultures where neoliberalism predominates. The result, Sandel argues, is that those who obtain high social status tend to attribute their success to their own talents and efforts, and not to any unearned privileges they may have had. They tend to think that their relatively high social position stems from their own social superiority, and they may come to look down upon those lower on the social ladder

Conversely, those perceived as less successful will often place the blame on themselves for their lower social position, and frequently experience a stinging sense of humiliation interacting with or comparing themselves with those of elevated social status. In terms of L2 English in China, my findings show that some of the respondents view proficiency in it as a function of their own merit. While not one informant cited their own intelligence for the reasons for their ability to speak English well (perhaps because this would be seen as unseemly bragging, a behavior that is generally frowned upon in China), some did attribute their proficiency to their own hard work. Below is an excerpt of an interview I had with Jill, a second-year business major who was one of my top students:

Paul: How were you able to achieve such a high level of English?

Jill: I studied hard for it, and not just for grades in school. I frequently watch American television shows and movies so I can learn the way people really speak, not like in the books.

Paul: What do you mean like the books?

Jill: I mean, you see how they use such proper English in the books, but then I would go watch an American movie, and they don't talk that way. So, to really learn to communicate, I knew had to do more than just learn the English they teach in school. Watching movies and listening to the music was a way for me to get my English better.

Paul: Do you enjoy English?

Jill: So so. It is more about my career. If you want to get a good job, English is a must. I work really hard at it.

Paul: Do you feel that everyone in China has an equal chance to learn English?

Jill: Maybe not before, but now yes. Before only the really rich people in the tier-one cities had the opportunity to learn English, but nowadays almost everybody in China has internet. With the internet anybody, no matter where they are, can study English for free if they want to.

In this excerpt, we can see that Jill's evidence shows a combination of meritocratic ideology along with instrumental motivation. In fact, both meritocracy and instrumental motivation are the building blocks of the neoliberal approach to L2 learning. In societies governed by meritocratic principles, competition for money and status become paramount; consequently, an instrumental attitude toward virtually every sphere of life becomes predominant (Habermas, 1987; Sandel, 2020).

The sociologist Weber attributed this instrumentalist mindset of the modern world to the Protestant-infused capitalism that arose in Northern Europe during the 17th century (Zaret, 1980). In his classic book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (2002[1905]), Weber detailed the religious factors behind the shift from feudalism to industrial capitalism. One particular variant of German Protestantism that became ascendant, Calvinism, had as one of its principal tenets the belief that that wealthy, successful people were the divinely chosen ones. Unlike the traditional Catholic church, which was less concerned with worldly riches, Calvinism glorified wealth; consequently, the pursuit of it became a moral imperative. Weber therefore believed that capitalism as we know it today had its origins in the work ethic inspired by this belief that wealth was a sign that one was blessed by God. As religion was the dominant force at the time, these Calvinists, and to a lesser extent, Lutherans, wanted to demonstrate to others that they were indeed chosen by God; they worked zealously to open new businesses, invent new products, and engage in trade and invest. The unintended aggregate result of all this relentless pursuit of wealth, according to Weber, was the advent of modern capitalism.

In order to obtain wealth and elevated social status, Weber argues, a sort of ruthless efficiency takes hold; human behavior comes to be governed by a means-ends way of thinking. Traditional customs, rituals and communitarian values weaken, and the quest for material riches predominates. In this manner,

Weber's theory can accurately be construed as an anti-Enlightenment narrative. Unlike Enlightenment optimists such as Hegel and Kant who heralded reason as emancipatory, Weber viewed the advent of cold rationality as leading to selfishness, alienation and loss of meaning. Disembedded from the religious and cultural narratives that formerly imbued life with a sense of individual and collective purpose, people living under modern capitalism suffer from a loss of transcendental values and are therefore rootless. Despite having its origins in Protestantism, capitalism eventually separates itself from the religious sphere and becomes totally secular. Instead of being focused on the afterlife, as in traditional Christianity, the focus is shifted to the profane realm of material acquisition.

While Christianity has had very little influence on China, there is little doubt that post-Mao China has gradually turned away from Marxist collectivism and toward capitalist individualism (Kipnis, 2007). Nonetheless, in the data I collected, I found little evidence of the rootlessness and meaninglessness that Weber attributed to modern capitalism. As I detailed in the section on the narrative nature of Chinese nationalism, my informants seemed to discursively incorporate their self-understanding into the overarching story of the Great Chinese Civilization. Instead of the alienation and loss of meaning that Weber attributed to modern capitalism, my respondents' identities appeared to be firmly rooted with meaning and purpose as modern heirs to a venerable and powerful ancient civilization. And although some of the informants did evidence an instrumentalist attitude toward life in general and English in particular, most informants also showed elements of a non-materialist mindset. For example, many of my respondents spoke fondly of their volunteering experiences (some of the majors have a service requirement in which the students must go to impoverished villages to teach and mentor; some of the students do it entirely of their own volition). Joe, an engineering major described his experience:

Paul: You mentioned you volunteered in a small village in Hunan last summer. Please tell me about it.

Joe: At first, I did not really want to do it. I grew up in a big city, Shanghai, and I never lived in a village.

I thought it would be boring and uncomfortable.

Paul: What made you think that it would be boring and uncomfortable?

Joe: I thought it would be so backward with no technology, and the people would all be uneducated.

Paul: Did it turn out to be what you expected?

Joe: Not really. The village had internet, and almost everybody, even the old people, had mobile phones. And the people were so nice and very hospitable. I realized that they knew things I didn't.

Paul: Such as?

Joe: They knew how to farm and fish and things like that. I came to respect that. They are the ones feeding the people in the big cities like where I am from.

Paul: So how did you find teaching?

Joe: I loved it, but it is so tiring. I really liked helping the children to learn. I think it is a good idea for students from the famous universities to see how some of the poor people live, and for us to motivate the poor children. I felt really proud of myself for going there and trying to make a difference.

As we can see from Joe's passion for helping the disadvantaged, the neoliberal values of self-interest and competitive individualism are not uncontested. In fact, in the follow-up interviews as well as during my 3 years of teaching at Northern University, dozens of students related to me how much they enjoyed giving back to the community and working with the disadvantaged. Consequently, it would be inaccurate and misleading to say that neoliberal values have completely taken precedence over other values such as compassion and social solidarity.

An Oxymoron?

Ironically, this social solidarity and compassion co-existed with expression of meritocratic ideology, a combination which is seemingly contradictory. As discussed above, meritocracy is premised on the firm belief in "just desserts," that each person is responsible for their own level of success. If a person has low social status, under meritocratic ideology, it is their own fault. Volunteering to help the poor, on

the other hand would seem to assume that some individuals are poor through no fault of their own. Nonetheless, these two dimensions would only seem contradictory in a binary world. In fact, the world is not so black and white; as we saw in the discussion in the literature review on poststructuralism, the social world is exceedingly complex, ambiguous and paradoxical. To reduce reality to a series of binary oppositions is too simplistic and distorting; instead, researchers should try their best to capture the context specificity and the nuanced nature of the data they collect.

The importance of considering this context specificity is almost impossible to overstate. As I discussed in the literature review on neoliberalism and Max Weber's methodology of ideal types, abstract terms are heuristic devices designed to aid scholars through the various stages of the research process; the terms themselves have no true empirical content until they are applied to a concrete situation. Once we get down to micro-interactional level, we can see those discourses such as neoliberalism are simultaneously interacting with other discourses; they *never* stand alone in isolation, and in fact, they are frequently contested by other discourses. In this manner, the data I collected challenges the notion that neoliberalism is homogenizing the world.

Bakhtin

This multi-discursivity in my data is consistent with Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia. As mentioned in the literature review, heteroglossia refers to the ways in which individuals appropriate a whole variety of voices, ideologies, register, genres and so on. In this way, Bakhtin's approach entails decentering the unitary, knowing subject. Instead of the self-aware and autonomous individual typified by Cartesian rationalism, decentered subjectivity emphasizes the manner in which individuals are constituted and positioned by a variety of discourses. While neoliberal striving is the main focus of my research project, this discourse co-exists with several other discourses such as Chinese nationalism, Confucianism, and Marxist collectivism. Moreover, Bakhtin's theory is consistent with the processual approach I adopt in

this dissertation; he views identity as fluid, mutable, context-sensitive and in constant flux.

In this way, Bakhtin's approach repudiates the ontology of autonomous individualism that traditional academic psychology has been based upon. Throughout most of its history, academic psychology has examined the individual in isolation and conceptualized her as having fixed internal traits (this paradigm also informed early SLA). Bakhtin, on the other hand, takes a more interactive approach in his theory. For this reason, Bakhtin termed his model "dialogical." As you can see from the name, dialogical is the adjective for dialogue, and it is opposed to monolog. In monological communication one person speaks, and the other(s) listen; in dialogical communication there is genuine interaction not only with other interlocutors but with ideas and the physical and cultural context. In monological approaches, the lone individual is the locus of knowledge, while in dialogical paradigms, all knowledge is socially situated and collectively constructed utilizing a variety of discursive regimes, symbols, and genres.

In terms of the seemingly contradictory nature of my informants' statements, Bakhtin would likely see this as normal and natural. Bakhtin repudiated representational theories of meaning; in representational semantics, it is assumed that language objectively mirrors the outside world (Rorty, 1979). This metaphor of a mirror is based on a correspondence theory of truth. According to Rorty, correspondence theories of truth are predicated on the assertion that words, beliefs, and observations reflect the way things actually are. Rorty challenges this representational epistemology and argued that we can never know reality as it is. As a consequence, Rorty put forth a more deflationary version of truth by arguing that truth is only what any given speech community believes to be true. Like Bakhtin, Rorty insisted what we believe to be true is communally generated and does not accurately reflect the "actual state of affairs."

In this manner, Bakhtin (1981) opposed theories which view reality as coming predetermined (whether originating in the internal states of autonomous individuals or in the surrounding social structure). While

not dismissing these dimensions entirely, Bakhtin viewed them as nothing more than the raw ingredients that people utilized for in-situ interaction. Bakhtinian psychology therefore problematizes the use of terms that refer to stable internal states and attitudes. Instead, supposed traits such as extraversion and self-esteem are seen as fluid, emergent phenomena that are interactionally constructed. This fluidity, Bakhtin asserts, stems from the conversational nature of identity. Just as the conversations are to some degree open-ended and unpredictable, the individual's sense of self is constantly shifting in response to their interlocutor's statements: "Understanding is formed through the dialogic struggle between competing voices or discourses. Through the dense self-other interconnection between intimate and public venues of social practices the sense of 'selfness' is being constructed" (Meei-Ling & English, 2002, p.2). Accordingly, the subjectivity my respondents index in the interviews may differ from the subjectivity they project in other situations.

Addressivity and ethnographic interviewing

Bakhtin termed this constantly shifting, dialogical subjectivity "addressivity." Addressivity serves as a critique of the focus on the isolated utterance in traditional linguistics. As mentioned above, Bakhtin argued that the most critical dimension of language is that it is always directed toward others, even when no other person is present. Addressivity is the heart of human communication as even internal speech is integrated into an almost infinite chain of previous utterances. In this way, speakers are always responding to something previously said. Addressivity also takes into account the goal-directed nature of oral interaction, so it entails analyzing what it is that the interlocutors are trying to accomplish.

The dialogical and goal-oriented nature of human communication not only occurs in everyday speech, but it is also present in qualitative research. Just like everyday interaction, qualitative interviewing like the kind I did for parts of this research project, are co-constructions between the interlocutors; as such they are always situated in a specific place and time. This situational specificity obviously comes with

the cost of rendering generalizability somewhat problematic, but it offers a more nuanced and grounded renditions of my participants' experience with learning English in China.

While I do take into account this fluidity and situational specificity, as I have already documented in some of the qualitative data analysis, my participants did seem to show evidence of being fairly strongly rooted in their Chinese identity (though the salience of that identity varied somewhat depending on the questions). In this way, I did not find much proof of the decentered self as posited by poststructuralists; nor did I find much evidence for a singular, monological identity. As detailed in the previous paragraphs, a monological identity is based on one single dimension, but Bakhtinian research has shown that individuals' sense of self is polyvocal (containing many voices). Consequently, a more balanced interpretation seems to lie somewhere between poststructuralist decentering and modernist essentialism. This seems to be the approach adopted by many scholars in certain scholars using the methods of conversation analysis (CA).

Conversation analysis and membership categorization

While I do not utilize the methods of CA in this research project, some of the general findings from the CA literature in regard to subjectivity seem to be somewhat relevant to the way my participants projected their identities in the interviews, so I will discuss that in this brief section. Firstly, I must start by stating that I did *not* analyze any naturally occurring data for this research project. Although CA is most fruitful for analyzing naturalistic data, the way it approaches identity as being co-constructed in-situ is relevant my analysis of the follow up interviews. CA is especially helpful in addressing some of the contradictions I mentioned in the previous page that I found in some of my informants' statements.

In a nutshell, CA is highly inductivist, meaning that researcher tries her best to let the data speak for itself; this is the opposite of deductive research in which the researcher uses pre-given categories to

test hypothesis. In inductivist research

one treats social identity as a flexible resource in conversational interaction. Close attention to the sequencing of talk suggests that speakers' identities are much more subtle than simple pre-given category labels suggest, and that they change rapidly as a function of the ephemeral (but socially consequential) demands of the situation. Were a psychologist to have sampled the interaction only at one given point, they would have seen a participant using, or being attributed with, only one identity; but we show that speakers use, and attribute each other with, a variety of different identities as their business progresses. In so doing, the speakers can be seen not only to avow contradictory identities but also to invoke both group distinctiveness and similarity-and neither of these strategies are easy to square with social psychological theories of identity. We put what we find... into the debate between, on the one hand, ethnomethodological preference for working from participants' own orientations to identity and, on the other hand, social psychological research practices which tend to privilege analytically given social categories. At the very least, we argue, the social psychological approach can be enriched by attending more to identity as a matter of situated description and less as a matter of perceptuo-cognitive processing. (Antaki, Condor & Levine, 1996, p.473)

In this excerpt we can see that the authors assert that given traditional psychological research's reliance on essentialist approaches to identity, it cannot explain why participants sometimes contradict themselves. These "contradictions" do not seem so contradictory once we move away from the premise that individuals' identities are cross-situationally consistent, which is the principal tenet of essentialism. Instead, CA views socially available discourses such as those of nationality, gender, ideology and so on, as potential resources available for meaning making in interaction with others. Utilizing a radically inductive, emic paradigm, CA scholars endeavor not to impose their own etic categories as researchers on the data. Instead, they pay close attention to the "membership categories" used by the participants themselves. Membership categorization analysis in CA analyzes the manner in which individuals mobilize categories when communicating with each other. CA takes as a given the pragmatic nature of most human communication: when interacting, the interlocutors are usually trying to accomplish something, even if it is just to maintain a positive image in the eyes of the individuals they are interacting

with.

As individuals are almost always concerned with saving face and presenting a positive image to their interlocutors, they may sometimes tailor the content of their utterances under the constraints of impression management (Goffman, 1959). In his famous *book, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman suggests that people want to control the way other people think about them, especially when engaging in face-to-face interaction. In the literature review I discussed performativity theory, and CA's emphasis on impression management is consistent with the findings in performativity theory regarding the dramaturgical nature of the self. In putting forth his theory of impression management, Goffman adopted the root metaphor of the theater by asserting that in everyday mundane interactions individuals are performing in much the same way actors on a stage do.

While I do not adopt Goffman's paradigm in this research project, in analyzing the data, the possibility that my informants were engaging in impression management is quite real. In fact, many scholars who have studied the ways participants in social science research tailor their responses in order to project a positive image of themselves term this phenomenon social desirability bias. Social desirability bias occurs when research subjects give what they deem to be socially desirable answers to the researcher(s) in place of offering responses that reflect their real behavior or true thoughts on the subject matter (Chung & Monroe, 2003). Chung and Monroe assert that there are two types of social desirability: outright deception (when the respondent consciously misrepresents the truth) and self-deception (when the participants subconsciously provide misleading responses). Obviously, this has serious repercussions in terms of the accuracy of any data collected, and researchers should take relevant measures to mitigate its occurrence.

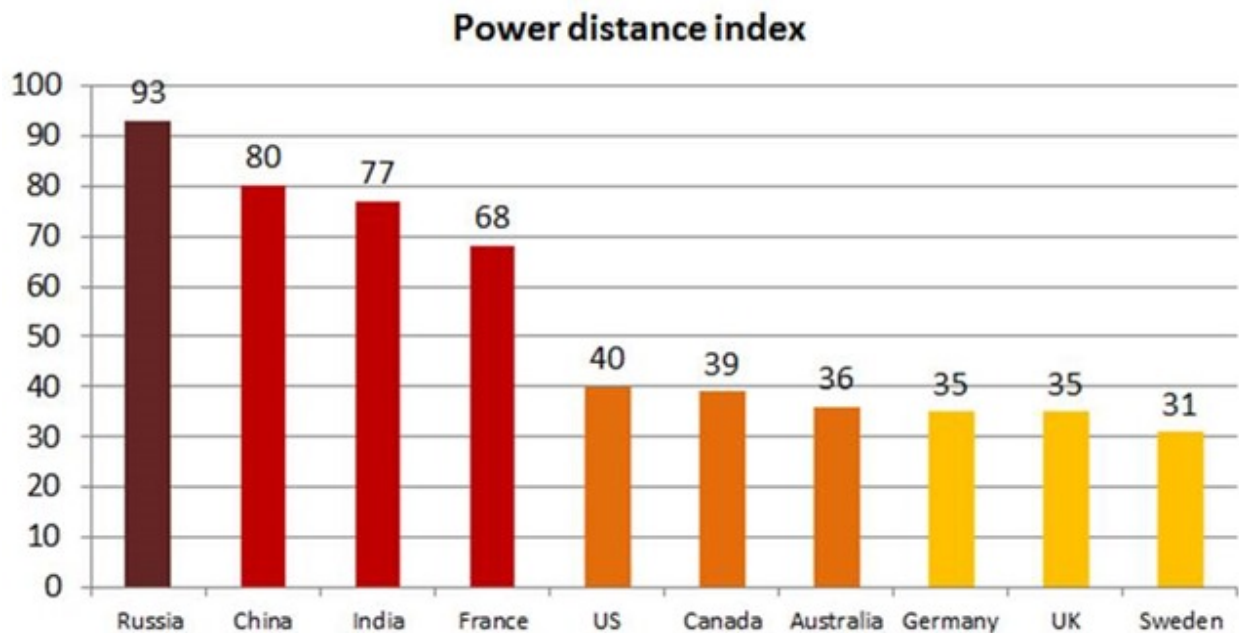
Obviously, we researchers would want to eliminate social desirability bias as much as possible. While I have no way of knowing with any certainty if my informants exhibited social desirability bias, I

did take several steps to mitigate its occurrence. For example, I even went beyond the requirements of the IRB in terms of consent. In addition to the signed form, I informed them additional times that they I would do everything possible to guarantee their anonymity. When the participants were administered the closed-item questionnaire, I was not even in the room (I had some student volunteers present instead). I repeatedly stressed that my research was trying to investigate the role of English in China (I did not tip my hand any more than that, though I did sense that the participants were trying to infer what my research hypotheses were), and that their honest participation would hopefully, albeit in a very small way, help improve the way English affects contemporary China. While this may seem a fairly distant concern for them, my participants did volunteer their time with no monetary or academic incentive so hopefully they were motivated sincerely help me produce accurate findings.

Power distance and qualitative research

Finally, as the participants were all my former students, I would hope I could say I enjoyed a good rapport with them. In order to establish good rapport with all my students, I tend to deemphasize power distance when teaching. Power distance is a concept referring to the degree to which any given society or individual accepts social hierarchies. It measures this concept by quantifying the extent to which people lower on the social ladder believe that the hierarchical arrangement of culture or organization they are in is viewed as fair (Hofstede, 1997). Again, we must be wary of generalizing traits to whole cultures; accordingly, it bears pointing out that power distance can vary from situation to situation and from individual to individual, but as can be seen in the graph below, taken from Hofstede (1997), China sits to the left in the graph, meaning the country is high in measured power distance.

Table 9.1 Power distance bar graph



Interestingly, China has as its official ideology communism, a radically egalitarian ideology so it would appear to be ironic that they measure so high in power distance.

However, as was discussed in the literature review, any given culture has many dimensions, some of them contradictory. In the case of China, Confucianism, which stresses familial and hierarchical relationships, predates Marxism by over 2000 years and has exerted a strong influence on Chinese culture. Whatever the reason, the survey data do show that China tends to be very high in power distance, and teachers enjoy much higher status than they do in most Western countries (which as a teacher in China for several years I myself personally experienced). I also so I felt it imperative to address this power imbalance in my teaching and research. Nonetheless, in keeping with the postmodern “incredulity toward metanarratives” (Lyotard, 1984), it is best to avoid sweeping generalizations; therefore, instead of asserting that China is a high-power distance culture, it would be more accurate to say that in certain situations, some individuals and some organizations in China may exhibit hierarchical tendencies.

However, social hierarchy seems to be a human universal; it appears in some form in every large-scale society (Pinker, 2002). In this way, hierarchical social relations differ in degree, not in kind, and obviously there is a vast power imbalance between the researcher and her participants, no matter where the research is being conducted. Accordingly, this power asymmetry should be addressed by the researcher.

As I described above, I have a very informal style, and I accordingly use language that stresses solidarity and deemphasizes the differences in power between my students and me. I have my students call me by my first name, I joke around a great deal, I sometimes communicate with them via messaging apps on social networks, and I volunteer to help them with matters such as composing CVs or cover letters. I strongly encourage them to come to my office where my door is always (figuratively) open. Nonetheless, beyond these interpersonal concerns lies a deeper philosophical issue that would render social desirability bias less problematic as a methodological concern than it might seem.

Distributed cognition and intersubjectivity

In fact, of all the paradigms I have related my data to, social desirability bias, practice theory, impression management, and Bakhtinian addressivity are all phenomenon that could be subsumed under the rubric of distributed cognition. Distributed cognition theory is premised on the tenet that thinking, acting and perception are not merely individual-level phenomenon. Scholars in distributed cognition go beyond the mentalist theory of thinking to assert that human thought processes are not limited to one's brain (Hutchins, 1995). Other people's thinking and behavior, external artifacts, symbols, myths, tools and so on also influence individuals' thinking in behavior. Distributed cognition is a direct challenge to traditional cognitive science, which asserts that thinking only happens within the individual. In fact, the way any given individual thinks, acts, and behaves is profoundly influenced by others.

Indeed, one of the world's leading psychologists entitled his best-selling book "*The Social Animal*" (Aronson, 2004). Aronson's book, drawing upon his own research in addition to hundreds of other empirical studies, provides strong evidence documenting how the mere presence (even if only implied) of other people transforms the attitudes one holds and can radically alter the way he or she behaves in comparison to the way he or she think and acts when alone. As an example, Aronson cites a naturalistic experiment he conducted that measured the average speed of joggers in public places; he found statistically significant differences in their speeds when the runner was jogging alone when compared to the presence of bystanders.

Measuring the speed of joggers may seem irrelevant to the field of SLA, but there are actually some parallels. What the findings from social psychology have documented in a large and growing body of research is that the individualist ideology dominant in some Western cultures such as the U.S. is not, for the most part, empirically tenable. Like joggers in the park, the power of the situation affects their performance and attitude. Individualism places the locus of action of control on the isolated agent and asserts that each person is the author of his or her own destiny and self-consciously and rationally controls, plans and regulates his or her conduct based upon internally stable personality traits and moral principles. Nonetheless, the data covering decades of research summarized by Aronson illustrates how the power of the context often exerts more influence on people than any internal attributes they may have. Aronson's critique of the individualist bias in American culture in general and psychology in particular is also relevant to the field of SLA.

The discipline of SLA has its origins in linguistics and cognitive psychology, two fields pervaded by the individualist bias. Concepts such as L2 motivation, short-term memory, and native speaker intuition all have their origins in those two fields; as a result, these concepts have been analyzed under the individualist bias. These concepts are viewed as learner-internal and fairly stable, regardless of

context. In other words, they are seen as dispositions. For example, if we say such and such a student is a good language learner, we are making a dispositional attribution. A dispositional attribution is one that assumes that any person's attitudes and behaviors are mostly or entirely due to his or her own internal characteristics. The opposite of a dispositional attribution is a situational attribution. A situational attribution, as the name implies, is when the power of the immediate context is considered as the primary determinant in the behavior or attitude of the individual (Aronson, 2004).

What is more, the situational-dispositional continuum seems to vary by culture; people in countries where individualism is highly valued tend to make more dispositional attributions; conversely, people in countries where collectivism is more common are more likely to make situational attributions (Morris & Peng, 1994). I can illustrate this tendency with an example from my own life. I was in a crowded high-speed rail station in Beijing when a person cut in line. I said to my friend, a co-worker born and raised in China that the person was rude for jumping the queue like that, to which my colleague replied, "Maybe someone in her family got sick, or maybe she got stuck in heavy traffic so that is why she is jumping the line." In this anecdote, I was making a dispositional attribution by citing the trait of rudeness to the line-cutter, while my co-worker attributed the offending behavior to situational factors. This anecdote illustrates how cognition is socially mediated and conditioned.

Chapter 10: Social Approaches in SLA

As I employ a social approach in this research project, in this chapter I will discuss the increasing acceptance of more socially oriented approaches in SLA. I will trace the cognitivist origins of SLA research and show how up until fairly recently these social paradigms were mostly marginalized. I will go on to show that although these approaches have opened up many previously undiscovered dimensions of L2 learning, some of them ignore issues of power. While of course we SLA researchers need to leave room for approaches that stress the agency of L2 learners, if we go too far, we risk losing site of the way social structure impinges upon L2 development. Accordingly, using some of the data I collected as evidence, I will conclude the chapter by exposing the weaknesses of the social paradigms that undertheorize power.

SLA: No social animal here (Yet)

Emerging out of linguistics and psychology, the field of second language acquisition has traditionally been characterized by a cognitivist orientation (Cook, 1989; Doughty & Long, 2003; Ellis, 2012). In this manner, scholars in SLA have usually employed a paradigm that emphasizes the isolated individual and his or her innate and autonomous structures of mind. As Gass (1998; 2003) argues, the field of SLA's primary focus has been on the 'internal mental state' of the learner, and the way the learner's mental representation of the target language, the interlanguage, develops or fails to develop. As the cognitivist approach is by definition mentalist-focusing on the thought processes of the idealized native speaker-it primarily emphasizes hypothesized and unobservable knowledge of the language over linguistic performance: "understanding underlying competence, not the external verbal behavior that depends on that competence, is the ultimate goal" (Doughty & Long, 2003, p. 4). Because language use (performance

data), is viewed as unsystematic and mistake-prone, it is not viewed as accurately representing the learner's mental knowledge (competence) of the target language. As a result, researchers working from this perspective tend to focus on the learner-internal mechanisms of second language acquisition, but as competence is by definition latent and unobservable, this raises many methodological and epistemological issues.

In this sense, the notions of learning and acquisition in much, if the majority of mainstream SLA research have been theorized and operationalized using a psycholinguistic paradigm. For example, Kasper (1997) argues that "learning or acquiring anything is about new knowledge structures...A non-cognitivist discipline that has learning as its central research project is a contradiction in terms" (p. 310). Scholars working out of the cognitivist paradigm view the scope of SLA theory and research in a much more limited sense than more socially oriented scholars do (Firth & Wagner, 1997, 2007). For example, cognitive researchers tend to utilize "native speaker intuition'-operationalized through the use of grammaticality tests and metalinguistic awareness-as a baseline to test competence, which by definition can only be inferred, not directly observed. Many, but not all of these scholars work out of a computational model (Levitt, 1989; Krashen, 1998; Gass, 2003; Ellis, 2009) adopted from cognitive psychology whereby the brain is analogized as a computer that processes input and produces output. Key foci of research in the computational paradigm are memory, perception, attention, decoding, and information processing in general.

With its emphasis on internal mental processes, computationism for the most part ignores supra-individual factors such as power, status, or social identity. Strongly influenced by Chomskyan theories of universal grammar, cognitive approaches to SLA have relied heavily on the notion of interlanguage. According to (Selinker, 1972, p. 229) interlanguage is the "latent psychological structure" or mental grammar that the learner has of the target language. Subsequent psycholinguistically-oriented

researchers have taken up Selinker's theoretical construct to argue that SLA's primary focus should be on the systematic ways the L2 learner's mental representation of the target language rules are obtained, stored, and turned into output. As Selinker was a linguist working out of the Chomskyan tradition, the core of his and his intellectual heirs' work has been in the domain of syntax and morphology. Also, as is evident from the use of the term "latent," the methodology of this cognitivist approach was primarily concerned with learner-internal mechanisms of SLA.

However, in recent years there has been an increasing, though limited, acceptance of more socially oriented approaches. Socially-oriented paradigms have always been somewhat marginalized in SLA, but a seminal article, "On discourse, communication, and some fundamental concepts of SLA research," published in 1997 in the *Modern Language Journal*, compellingly argues that SLA needs to be more receptive to non-cognitivist approaches. Its authors, Firth and Wagner, argued for a more inclusive SLA, not for a complete reconceptualization of the field. They argue that SLA had been increasingly dominated by psycholinguistic and cognitivist approaches that in effect devalued more contextual and sociolinguistic approaches. Firth and Wagner assert that highly influential scholars such as Michael Long and Susan Gass—who argue that actual language performance is of little use to SLA theory—have contributed to the hegemonic status of the cognitivist paradigm in SLA that leaves no room for alternative approaches. Firth and Wagner also criticized Long and other prominent researchers who have adopted the Chomskyan dichotomization of competence and performance as the former assert that it is impossible to empirically know where competence ends and performance begins.

In their groundbreaking article, Firth and Wagner go on to point out that in mainstream cognitivist SLA, as in theories of Universal Grammar, the actual living speech data of the speakers is considered degenerate, inaccurate and full of errors. For the Chomskyans and their heirs in SLA, it is competence—the internal mental representations of the syntax that is most important and worthy of study.

Unfortunately, the dominant focus on cognitive approaches has left many areas of research employing more social approaches unexplored.

Firth and Wagner argue that issues of social identity and contextual factors have been mostly ignored by scholars working out of the cognitive approach; as an example, they cite the extensive use of the native/non-native speaker dichotomy in the SLA literature. According to the authors, the widespread use of this term has resulted in the conceptualization of L2 learners as “deficient communicators” of the target language thereby omitting all the other dimensions of identity as well as the contexts in which the second language is developed.

Firth and Wagner also claim that psycholinguistic approaches tend to utilize an etic approach whereby the process of SLA is interpreted, and analyzed from the perspective of the researcher; mimicking the supposed universal objectivity of the hard sciences, it is the researcher who creates the categories of analysis. Given this etic approach, Firth and Wagner assert that a fundamental aspect, indeed the very essence and purpose of communication, which is to intersubjectively create meaning, is overlooked in this type of research. While Firth and Wagner concede that the use of researcher-centric categories of analysis has its place, they contend that so too should emic approaches. In direct contrast to etic research, scholars using an emic methodology do not impose their own *a priori* concepts on the data; instead, as I pointed out in chapter two, they attempt to understand the phenomenon under study from the vantage point of the participants themselves.

Another prominent scholar calling for the “social turn” in SLA has been David Block (2007a, 2007b). Incorporating poststructuralist theories of identity with the communities of practice paradigm of Lave and Wenger (1991), he calls for a complete paradigm shift in the field. Block asserts that even the term “acquisition” is a faulty and misleading metaphor for language learning as it implies a passive cognitive process; instead, Block argues that L2 learning should be conceptualized as a collective and

collaborative endeavor that is predicted on the notion of joint participation, not acquisition. He echoes Sford (1998), who advocates a “brand of participationist discourse which is grounded in the vision of thinking as a form of communication” (p.55). Sford emphasizes agency and “activities we usually call thinking are clearly dialogical in nature-they are acts of informing ourselves, arguing, asking questions and waiting for our own responses” (p.56).

Like Sford, Block views L2 learning as an inherently social process that mainstream cognitivism has almost completely disregarded. Instead of focusing on the internal mental processes of L2 acquisition, Block urges SLA scholars to examine the interactional and intersubjective ways in which language novices are initiated into the target language community. This type of research would entail more interpretive research such as conversation analysis, ethnography, narrative inquiry, and discourse analysis, research paradigms which I have related my data to in this dissertation. Social approaches to SLA take as axiomatic that “L2 input and processing of L2 input in social settings are socially mediated, that social and linguistic context affect linguistic use, choice and development, and that learners intentionally assert their social identity through their L2” (Tarone, 1997, p. 837). One of the most promising socially-oriented paradigms to emerge in recent years is the language socialization approach, which I discuss in the next section.

English in China and language socialization

The data I collected and analyzed also seems consistent with language socialization theory. Language socialization (LS) refers to the scholarly study of the way novice language learners are initiated into a new language community (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1994; Duff, 1995). Researchers taking a LS approach view language learning as involving much more than the grammatical competence posited by Chomsky. LS involves both learning the language (morphosyntax, phonology, and the lexicon) as well as how to use it socially (pragmatic and communicative competence). Thus, LS is concerned with issues

of identity and culture, the way learning a new language is akin to adopting new subjectivities and new resources for narrating the self. Thus, scholars working out of a LS paradigm usually rely on longitudinal and ethnographic data that examine the way social positions and identities affect the L2 learning process. LS also examines the sociocultural context in which the language is learned rather than focusing on the internal psycholinguistic mechanisms that mainstream cognitivist SLA seems to prefer to study.

In contrast to learner-internal emphasis of much of mainstream SLA, LS focuses on social interaction and the way the L2 is learned through collaboration and co-construction of meaning with others. Unlike the universalizing discourse of much of early SLA, SL stresses the situated and contingent nature of language learning and the fluid and situational nature of L2 identity and learning. By emphasizing the contextual and social nature of language and language learning, SL scholars illustrate the way second language learners are not passive objects but rather are active, conscious and strategic agents who can negotiate interactions with the ‘expert’ (speakers with greater proficiency or with insider status). Thus, the type of language learning environments includes L2 classrooms, peer groups, and job sites, basically anywhere where novice language in interaction and the initiation of newcomers to the linguistic community can be observed over a period of time.

This active and agentic dimension of L2 learning was evident throughout much of the data I collected. For example, in the extended interviewing I asked Kathy, an engineering major, if she viewed English as a threat to her own cultural identity:

Paul: Can you describe how you feel when speaking English in contrast to when you speak English?

Cathy: In the past, I was intimidated when speaking English. I felt like it was a language that didn’t really belong to me.

Paul: Belong?

Cathy: Um, you know, that it is the language of foreigners, and I am not fluent in it. I didn’t feel natural

speaking it like I do when I speak Chinese.

Paul: But every time we speak in English, you seem so relaxed and confident.

Cathy: Thanks! Maybe because when I got to Beijing, I began to see many Chinese people speaking English. I am not from a big city so most people can't speak English. But here in Beijing, it is so international. I started to think that if those Chinese people could speak English so confidently, then so could I. I forced myself not to be nervous speaking English, and I even made friends with a few foreigners so I could practice my English with them. Little by little my English got better. By now, it doesn't matter if I speak English or Chinese. I feel pretty much same in both.

Paul: So, English does not affect your Chinese identity?

Cathy: Not now. I love my country, and I think that if I can communicate with foreigners, I can make then have a better image of China. If we Chinese learn English, it will make out country stronger, not weaker.

In this snippet, one can see the way in which Kathy agentially guides her own socialization into becoming a proficient L2 English speaker. As a novice speaker, she was hesitant and lacking in confidence, but as she moved from her provincial city into the elite circles of Beijing, she encountered new communities of practice, and she consciously and strategically appropriated English.

However, we must consider the larger context beyond this brief snippet. Although there is indeed evidence of agentic, self-directed L2 learning in the data I collected from Kathy, she does come from a relatively privileged background; her parents are in the top quintile of the SES scale I used. Her father owns a successful furniture factory, and her mother is a high school teacher with a master's degree. As I documented in the discussion on agency, social class predicts self-efficacy (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983; Stephens, Markus & Townsend, 2007). Bandura (1977), who coined the term, defines self-efficacy as the confidence any given individual has in their ability to achieve successful outcomes in certain endeavors like academics, sports or one's career. Bandura and subsequent researchers have published hundreds of studies showing how self-efficacy has a major impact on life outcomes.

In a nutshell, if one believes they can succeed in any given task or field, the person is more likely to put in the effort and persevere to reach her goals or to achieve mastery. Conversely, if one feels that success is unlikely no matter how hard he or she tries, then that person will be less likely to see the point of putting in all the time and effort. Those high in self-efficacy are said to have an internal locus of control. Locus of control is a continuum that measures the extent to which a person feels that the power to control outcomes is within them due to their own talents and work ethic; on the other hand, an external locus of control is a more fatalistic attitude whereby the individual has the tendency to believe external forces such as luck, social structural variables, or the influence of more powerful others are the causal factors behind what happens to them in life (Bandura, 1977).

Gekas & Schwalbe (1983) explain that the most likely reason higher status individuals tend to have an internal locus of control is that they have more economic and symbolic resources to achieve the outcomes they desire. Conversely, lower status individuals have limited economic and symbolic capital, which makes it more difficult achieve success. In this way, locus of control is to some degree an accurate appraisal of one's position on the social ladder. The brief snippets such as the one examined above are incomplete and can be misleading if not placed in the larger context: in this case, the need to take into account the resources Cathy grew up with as a child of the upper-class. While the relationship between SES and self-efficacy is only a probabilistic one (some lower status individuals enjoy high self-efficacy, while not all those with elevated social position have high-self-efficacy), the data do show that it is strongly correlated with SES. In turn, this self-efficacy is a major factor in life outcomes, but we can sometimes only see indications of these agentic attitudes in the snippets of data we analyze, but not its origins.

In this way, the way power circulates is sometimes concealed, and it is up to the researcher to discover it. In this research project, as documented in the methods section, I measured parental SES as

part of the close-ended questionnaire. In keeping with the principle of CDA which inform my research here, I am interested in the way power is a factor in the data I collected; knowing the social class backgrounds of my participants helps me to contextualize the excerpts of the ethnographic interviewing.

As two leading CDA scholars put it:

Whatever the case, in respect of the object of investigation, it is a fact that CDA follows a different and a critical approach to problems, since it endeavours to make explicit power relationships which are frequently hidden, and thereby to derive results which are of practical relevance. (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 15)

While I found it fruitful to analyze the above snippet under language socialization paradigm, by pointing out the hidden role power plays in the likelihood of agentic L2 learning happening or not, I am giving empirical support to the tenets of CDA. This methodological pluralism is also in keeping with the poststructuralist maxim that there is no one single privileged viewpoint or paradigm as they are all partial and incomplete; by combining some of their best dimensions in the analysis, researchers can obtain a richer, more nuanced analysis of the data they collect.

Chapter 11: Conclusion: Research is always unfinished

Though this chapter serves as the obligatory conclusion, I will try not to make any sweeping definitive statements. In keeping with the skeptical tenor of the entire project, there were too many nuances, contradictions and ambiguities to make any grand proclamations. Instead, I will tentatively state my thoughts on this whole research process and then make detailed recommendations on how other scholar's work could be used to analyze the data I collected. To say it another way, there are so many models and approaches social scientists can use to analyze data, that none of them can ever give a complete and accurate picture of the phenomenon under study.

Some thoughts on the research questions

In keeping with the post-positivist tenor of this project, this dissertation is much more exploratory than confirmatory; having said that, I will briefly relate my findings to the research questions in this section. For example, research question one asked: "To what extent, if any, does English contribute to social stratification in China?" As I realized when I started collecting the data, this question was likely too ambitious given the limited scope and generalizability of my sample. Given these limitations, I cannot definitively confirm that English does contribute to the growing socioeconomic divisions; nonetheless, overall, my data may point in that direction. While I pointed out in the quantitative analysis I did not find statistically significant relationships between parental SES and most of the focal variables, this is likely due to the fact that most of my participants are middle-class any way, so there is little variation in the independent variable; also, *all* my participants are roughly equal in their intense competitiveness in terms of career goals and academic achievement. Without this competitiveness and intense ambition, they would never have been able to gain admission to Northern University. However, as was shown in the descriptive statistics, most of the informants come from families in the middle to upper income range so they were endowed with the privileged cultural and economic capital that

facilitated that ambition.

Also, likely stemming from this intense ambition is the agentic appropriation of English that almost all of the respondents exhibited. My informants almost all cited the role of English in globalization (in this sense there was evidence of neoliberal ideology), and they conceptualize English as just another necessary tool to compete in the global marketplace. This competition was not just viewed from the individual level, but from the national level as well; English is seen as a way to strengthen the national economy and to improve China's ability to interact with the outside world. Accordingly, I give a qualified "no" to the second part of question one: "Does the rapid spread of the English in China represent a threat to the cultural identities of the L2 learners of the language?"

I qualify it because while in my sample virtually nobody viewed English as a threat to Chinese culture, though there were some slight misgivings about it, I cannot generalize my finding to other, less elite areas of the country. Further research is needed to document the ways the Chinese who speak little or no English feel toward the language. I would suspect that English may not represent a cultural threat to them as much as it would a type of symbolic violence against them. As was pointed out in the chapter on Bourdieu, symbolic violence is the disparagement and feelings of humiliation that many marginalized people may experience because their cultural capital is looked down upon as deficient by the dominant classes. As my data did show that indeed, a lack of English proficiency, among the younger generation at least, is stigmatized and associated with the undereducated, many non-English speakers may internalize that stigma. And although not part of my research, on an anecdotal level, I did detect a sense of embarrassment among many Chinese people I came across in my daily life there when they informed me that they could not speak any English.

As for my research question two, "What is the semiotic value of English for my participants, and does it function as a type of cultural and symbolic capital?", I showed again and again how in the data analysis

that English proficiency indexes an educated and middle-class subjectivity, though this relationship is contingent upon generational status. This question also touches upon the concept of language ideology and L2 English motivation. In regard to the cosmopolitan subjectivity question, yes, this subjectivity does seem to constitute valued symbolic and cultural capital, but in a mostly instrumentalist fashion. English and intercultural understanding are mostly conceptualized in terms of what they can do for one's future career.

Regarding L2 English motivation, my data did confirm Dörnyei & Ushioda's (2009) contention that integrative motivation is no longer a useful concept as English becomes unmoored from any specific culture. Though a few respondents did indicate fondness for American and British culture, most informants viewed English as a way to communicate with generic "foreigners" or "Westerners." English is seen as a necessary element of globalization, but relatively few respondents expressed intrinsic appreciation for the language.

Finally, the neoliberalism I found is much different than the variant dominant in the U.S. In place of extreme individualism, Chinese neoliberalism seems to be more focused on familial and national honor. English can help in one's career and therefore bring status to the entire family, not just to the individual. In the nationalist sense, increasing English proficiency is conceptualized as a way to make the country more economically and scientifically competitive, and given the strength of the national identity, English does not seem to represent a threat to my participants. But again, this could be due to the elite status of my participants.

Contributions of my study

This dissertation contributes to the field of SLA in many ways. Most importantly, it adds to the growing acceptance of social approaches in the field; with my academic background in sociology proper,

I have introduced many concepts and theories from that field into SLA. This sociological background helps me to focus on the role of power, which has traditionally been undertheorized in SLA. In addition to the sociological focus, my discourse analysis of the data showed that due to the country's cultural and economic power, the influential linguistic imperialism hypothesis does not, for the most part, apply to the linguistic situation in China. On top of problematizing the linguistic imperialism hypotheses, I interrogate the wholesale mapping of the concept of neoliberalism onto the L2 English situation in China. While I did find elements of neoliberalism in the data, especially in regard to the instrumental appropriation of English for competing in the contemporary globalized economy, the extreme individualism of neoliberal ideology was largely absent. Instead, I showed that neoliberalism is offset somewhat by Confucian familism and the Chinese variant of socialism. Furthermore, as I empirically demonstrated in p. 245 in the previous chapter, many participants such as Cathy, drawing on the discourse of Chinese nationalism, assert that "If we Chinese learn English, it will make our country stronger, not weaker."

Moreover, given the classed nature of cosmopolitan ideology, this dissertation fills a gap in the research by critically examining the role of supranational subjectivity and the way it functions as a marker of elite cultural and symbolic capital. And as far as I know, it is the first mixed methods study using non-parametric statistics to study the role of English at an elite Chinese University. I also add to Bonny Norton's (1995, 2011) work in bringing the groundbreaking work of one of the most influential sociologists of the last century, Pierre Bourdieu into the field of SLA. By bringing Bourdieu's paradigm into SLA, I document how one of the most influential theories of L2 motivation (Dörnyei, 2009), lacks the necessary focus on the role of SES.

Summary of methods and theoretical background.

In order to gauge the constructs in this dissertation, I utilized the methods of narrative-inquiry infused

critical discourse analysis to specifically ask the participants how they imagine their future in relation to English. In both the fixed-item questionnaire as well the open-ended questions, I focused on the role of English in the participants' self-perceptions and the ways the language impacts upon the way they imagine themselves to be in the future. In this fashion, I believe my study contributes to the growing body of research investigating the role of imagination in SLA, but unlike many of these other studies, I used scholarly work from sociology to show how asymmetrical power relations impinge upon the L2 learner's motivation and perceptions of the target language community. In other words, the L2 is never imagined in isolation; L2 learners' subjectivity, attitudes and perceptions towards the target language are *always* socially conditioned to some degree. And as I have crossed disciplinary barriers to delve into the unexplored sociological foundations of SLA, my research does not fit into any one box.

Given my interest in sociology, my research is fundamentally concerned to what extent, if any, English constitutes a criterion for boundary making and social closure between groups. Using critical discourse analysis, I examined the ways socially constructed binaries are indexed (elite vs. non-elite; cosmopolitan vs. provincial; educated vs. uneducated), and I documented the symbolic function of English in the forging of these discursive fissures. In other words, my basic research focus was: in what way, if any, does English reflect and constitute the participants' social class identity? By combining the statistical with the semiotic, a more sociologically-informed portrait of the second language development of the informants emerged. Given that the foundations of my research project stem from the worldviews of Bourdieu, who saw the world as divided into competing *social classes*, my dissertation focuses much more on sociological factors than is typically found in SLA research.

In this way, CDA in general and Bourdieu's theories in particular are the analytical tools I used in this research to document the relational quality of the self, and the ways proficiency in English may be used as a crude index of social status in contemporary China. According to Bourdieu, one of the linchpins of

the intergenerational transmission of social class is social closure, an idea he adapted from Max Weber:

Social closure, according to Weber, occurs wherever the competition for a livelihood creates groups interested in reducing that competition. These groups try to monopolize advantages and maximize their rewards by closing off opportunities to outsiders they define as inferior or ineligible. Such exclusion may be based on any convenient or visible characteristic, including race, social background, language, religion, and gender. (DiMaggio, 1997, p. 342)

According to DiMaggio, social closure is one of the cornerstones of social stratification. This closure by definition excludes those without the necessary criteria. In the case of my research site, the data showed that proficiency in English may serve as a yardstick for boundary marking between those who are considered educated and those who are not. However, there are so many other factors at play (generational status, awareness of structural constraints, and other competing discourses), that it is hard to say with certainty. In fact, uncertainty and ambiguity pervade the data.

Accordingly, after all these years planning, carrying out, analyzing and writing up this dissertation, I have come to an appreciation of the immense complexity of L2 development; to reduce it to a few overarching banalities would be disservice to this complexity. Though I did not explicitly employ a poststructuralist approach in this research project, my inability to come to any definitive conclusions after all this time has taken me in that direction. Consequently, in the next section, I will put forth some poststructuralist-infused musings on my final thoughts as I come to the end of this long journey.

Anti-essentialism

At the risk of contradicting my assertion at the beginning of the chapter that I would attempt to avoid sweeping proclamations, I can say that one of my tentative conclusions is that the notion that each culture shares a certain invariant essence is just not tenable; there is too much internal variation, especially in regard to China, the world's most populous country. However, despite this variation, people can *experience* essentialism on a subjective phenomenological level. As Anderson (1991) has shown,

national communities *imagine* homogeneity. Though it may be imagined, it is almost always perceived as real. In fact, some scholars assert that the tendency for people to experience their identity in essentialist terms may be an innate function of the human brain (Pinker, 2002).

Although almost all social scientists now view social categories such as race, ethnicity, and national identity as socially constructed, the human brain may have an innate tendency to essentialize these ascribed labels as natural kinds (Gil-White 1999). Since the time of Kant, we have become aware of the conceptual basis of all human thought; conceptualization involves abstracting out the differences among individual entities to create a homogenous overarching category or label. Gil-White, a cognitive anthropologist who has conducted studies on small-scale societies throughout the world, argues people tend to conceptualize social groups as having unobservable underlying essences that make all members similar in certain aspects. In the case of my data, though there seemed to be a great deal of ingroup variation among the individuals in terms of personality and worldviews, the participants did tend to describe Chinese culture as being something timeless, ineffable, and profound, something precious that they carried within. They certainly did not view it as a social construction or as imaginary; to call it such would be a scholarly imposition, and does not reflect the lived reality of the participants. To obtain a richer view of this cultural essentialism, I next turn to the work of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803).

Herder and cultural nationalism

Herder, a German philosopher and poet, argued fervently in favor of cultural essentialism. Working on two levels, one a mission to raise and accentuate the German national consciousness especially vis-à-vis the French, the other to critique and rally against the pretensions of Enlightenment universalism, Herder postulated an essentialist relationship between language and culture: if a people loses its language, they subsequently lose its culture. Although trained as a philosopher, when speaking about the wonders of language, Herder jettisoned the objective and rationalistic register of that discipline to employ an

almost mystically poetic discourse: “Has a nationality anything dearer than the speech of its fathers? In its speech resides its whole thought domain, its tradition, history and basis of life, all its heart and soul. To deprive a people of its speech is to deprive it of its one eternal good... with language is created the heart of a people” (Herder, as quoted in Fishman p. 1, 1969). By utilizing terms such as “heart and soul,” Herder advocated an essentialist conceptualization of language whereby it is viewed not as something learned from the outside but rather emanating from the inside, from each speaker’s soul. This conceptualization ignores the role of contingency in first language learning as one’s language is determined by one’s place of birth not by the soul. Reducing language to the soul begs the question of what happens to the billions of people who speak more than one language. Moreover, by employing such nonscientific and numinous terms such as soul, Herder mystifies language thereby transporting it into the metaphysical realm.

Herder’s cultural essentialism

Herder postulated that each ethnolinguistic group inhabited a unique reality, and that worldviews of each culture are incommensurable. Contrary to the universalistic discourse typical of that epoch (the Enlightenment argument positing universal laws governing all humans in the same manner regardless of culture or epoch), Herder adopted an emic perspective and argued that each culture contained characteristics and perspectives unique to it. In adopting this type of cultural relativism, Herder presaged many of the positions of post-structuralism, especially the mistrust of totalizing narratives and hostility toward philosophical rationalism. Whereas rationalists claim that human reason is timeless and invariant, ethnic nationalists in the tradition of Herder argue that each culture has a unique essence that differentiates it from all others. This ethnic particularism may not seem so extreme, but Herder goes beyond this seemingly harmless ethnolinguistic celebration of uniqueness to a more controversial emphasis on cultural purity.

In fact, Herder despised hybridity and cultural mixing and his writings advocated for ethnolinguistic purity and authenticity. As history has sadly shown us, the notion of cultural purity is one of the most dangerous ideas known to humankind as it largely rests on the discursive construction of the “other” as a contaminant, which can result in not only cultural misunderstanding but also even genocide. By engaging in othering discourse by making differences between cultures absolute, Herder’s ideas, which have influenced many subsequent scholars, especially Sapir and Whorf, obscure not only the individual variation within cultures but our own common humanity as well. By promoting monoculturalism and monolingualism within each nation, Herder ignored the inherently syncretistic nature of both language and culture; there is nothing social that is pure or autonomously created, everything emerges out of the already preexisting. Also, by using organic metaphors likening people to botanical species, Herder dismisses the role of reflexive reason and cognitive flexibility; human beings’ growth and development are not predetermined like those of plants. Rather than being passive recipients of their genetic endowment and the environment, humans are able to actively reflect upon and interact, even change the society at large.

Essentialism versus instrumentalism

The proponents of ethnic particularism such as Herder collapse the concept of the personal self into the collective and communal self. This sublation of the individual to the cultural leaves their theories powerless to account for the vast body of empirical and quantitative data that point to the unique personalities of individuals. The presupposition of the internal homogeneity of culture, whether it be normative, linguistic, or cognitive, results in the glossing over of the internal fissures and paradoxes of each society especially those concerning power and status. While the notion of the discretely and impermeably bounded cultures characterized by a distinctively identifiable series of traits has undergirded the dominant discursive tradition in anthropology, sociology and the early

conceptualizations of culture in applied linguistics, it has not been the only tradition.

As discussed previously, similar to Herder, Durkheim and his intellectual heirs in structural-functionalism in anthropology adopted an essentialist and primordialist vision of society where the collective bonds of kinship, myths, religion and commonly shared symbols were believed to serve an integrative function to create and accentuate a distinctive and unique ethos in each respective culture. However, the seminal work of the anthropologist Fredrick Barth triggered a dramatic paradigm shift in the underlying presuppositions of groupness. Instead of focusing on the reified and fixed content of cultures, which is a static and outdated way of analyzing culture, Barth adopted a social constructionist model. Barth believed it is not the objective characteristics or traits of a cultural group that make it unique and different from other cultures, but rather the subjective categorization and contextual salience of those differences:

We can assume no simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences. The features taken into account are not the sum of the objective differences, but only those that the actors regard as significant.... Some cultural features are used by the actors as signals and emblems of differences, others are ignored, and in some instances, radical differences are played down and denied. (Barth, 1969, p.3)

Barth's formulations were a radical break from the then dominant assumption in anthropological discourse that cultures were relatively stable, fixed, and immutable, and that each culture was qualitatively and incommensurably different from the next. Barth problematized the foundationalist assumption of classical anthropology and its "axiomatic view of the social world as a mosaic of discontinuous and definite cultural difference, rather than a seamless web of overlapping and interweaving cultural variation" (Jenkins, 1997, p. 12).

To put it another way, it is not cultural difference per se which accounts for the essentialist feelings of groupness, but rather conscious awareness and manipulation of these differences. The social actors in any given situation regard only a select few of these differences, usually the most symbolic ones, as

group boundaries markers distinguishing in-group from out-group. Consequently, Barth's model moved away from Herder's model of fixed cultural traits. Instead, he adopted a more dialectical and relational model whereby feelings of in-group solidarity are always dependent upon the comparison with and differentiation from out-groups. For Barth, social scientists should not base their research upon the search and discovery of observable cultural differences, but rather the socially defined and constructed phenomenological perceptions of these contrasts. Moreover, by reintroducing humans as consciously reflective, strategizing and reasoning agents, Barth's model offers a more humanistic assessment of the possibilities for human self-awareness and transformation, possibilities that can be used to critique the more deterministic paradigms which pervade much of the ethnic theorization literature.

Barth takes up the instrumentalist conceptualizations of social groupness initially formulated by the great German sociologist Max Weber, whose work greatly influences the research presented in this dissertation. Weber strongly argued against the primordialist school of ethnonationalism, a school of thought that can be traced back to Herder. This essentialist primordialism, which postulated the innate necessity of a sense of belonging, a sense of belonging that is usually expressed through the highly evocative imagery of blood, soil and language. While most ethnic theorists take as axiomatic the assumption that ethnicity is premised upon the belief in common ancestry and shared cultural heritage, Weber believed this approach ignored the role of power in group formations. He believed that feelings of groupness are created not by ideas of consanguinity or shared history but by mobilization for economic or political gain: "Ethnic membership does not constitute a group; it only facilitates group formation of any kind, particularly in the political sphere. On the other hand, it is primarily the political community, no matter how artificially organized, that inspires the belief in common ethnicity" (Weber, cited in Jenkins 1997, p. 10). Weber criticized the then hegemonic status of ethno-nationalist discourse and its reliance of organic metaphors and essentialist conceptualizations by his problematizing of the take-for-

granted assumptions of ethnicity. Whereas thinkers such as Herder and Rousseau had naturalized ethnolinguistic groups by presupposing their existence as God-given, Weber showed that the origins of groupness lied not in some deity or even nature but in a historically and politically mediated, but most importantly, humanly manipulated dynamic. Barth revived the long-dormant social constructivist paradigm of Weber and used it to problematize the then dominant conceptualizations of groupness in anthropology. This more instrumentalist approach to group theorizing is also characteristic of Bourdieu's work, upon which the tenor of my research project here is based.

Barth started his anthropological career doing ethnographic research amongst the highland tribes of Indonesia. He was immediately struck by fluidity and mutability of the tribes, which contradicted his preconceptions of the fixed, tightly bounded, and insular notions of tribalism he had come to expect due to his anthropological background. The tribes, while nominally different, shared many of the same customs and rituals and members frequently switched membership between the various tribal groups. Barth was struck by the contextual variability of tribal identity; whereas in some situations the members of the tribe expressed their collective identities, in other situations the interactions were guided by the categorization of each participant as a unique individual. Most importantly, although the tribes shared many of the same cultural patterns and traits, they still viewed themselves as separate and distinct entities. The tribes performed this sense of difference by distinguishing themselves through the symbolic enlargement of minor differences into emblems of boundary markers between the respective groups. Thus, Barth's ethnographic work showed that even groups that appeared to be culturally similar, experienced themselves as radically different. By the same token, differences between the individual members of the same tribe were simply ignored and accorded no boundary marker significance to define as an outsider.

Barth's formulation that it is not objective cultural differences that lead to the formations of

distinctive social groups but rather that highly selective and subjective definitions of groupness precede any feelings of social solidarity. This theory offers a great deal more explanatory and pedagogical utility than the previous hypostatized notions of cultures. Barth's theory can account for the well-documented phenomena of intergroup homogeneity as well as in-group heterogeneity. Whereas the previous theories of absolute cultural determinism could not account for the tremendous amount of individual variation within cultures, Barth's work shows while there may be vast divergences in in-group behavior as long as each member subjectively defines him or herself as a participant in that group, feelings of groupness will be sustained. Conversely, while there may be tremendous cultural similarities between any two respective groups, as long as they mutually categorize each other as different, the contrastive feelings of groupness will remain operational. In other words, in-group cultural attributes are not absolutely coextensive with individual member's attributes.

In terms of my research project, however, the most significant aspect of Barth's analytical construct is the refutation of the discontinuity hypothesis: the theory that each culture is discrete, absolutely bounded and ontologically unique from all others. As each culture is conceived as being unique and only understandable to its members, the discontinuity hypothesis stresses the problematic and difficult, if not impossible nature of intercultural communication. If each culture is incommensurable with all others, then an outsider such as myself could never achieve any grasp of Chinese culture at all. This is not to say that researchers who are insiders do not have a distinct advantage, they certainly do; it just means that an outside researcher, if he or she achieves a good rapport with the participants, can reach a certain level of understanding.

As I have already demonstrated in previous chapters, this dialectical process of subjectivity was attested to over and over again in the data I collected. The participants seemed to anchor their own cultural identity by contrasting themselves with out-groups (i.e., "Westerners and foreigners"). In this

manner, my data confirms Barth's theory that identity is not so much based on the "stuff of culture" (traits, values and customs) as it is relationally accomplished through the deployment of selective binary oppositions with outgroups.

However, I did not see evidence of the utilitarian strategizing that forms the other tenet of Weber and Barth's hypothesis. Like Weber, Barth tended to view groups as cohering mostly for practical political or economic reasons, but by all appearances the informants in my study experienced their Chinese identity as something real and foundational to their sense of self. While they did appropriate English in an instrumental manner, their Chineseness, on the other hand, seemed to be viscerally experienced and basic to their identity.

This essentialist feeling of being Chinese on the part of my participants may seem to run counter to my repeated assertions that cultural identities are fluid and mutable, but I don't believe this is necessarily the case. While the customs, values, symbols, practices and languages, the "stuff of culture" as Barth called them, are constantly evolving, the rooted sense of belonging to a particular culture may remain. In other words, the objective characteristics of any given culture are not what defines it as much as it is the subjective and dialectical feelings of difference from other cultures. For example, the Chinese now longer practice foot binding and arranged marriages, and feudalism, which had shaped Chinese life for millennia, disappeared over a century ago, but the Chinese national identity endures now stronger than ever. However, this identity is not always salient and may remain latent until the situation (i.e., an ethnographic interview or being among out-group members) triggers its salience. Because identities are multidimensional and exist on different time scales (Blommaert, 2015), the identity options interlocutors index can vary from situation to situation. Obviously, in a research context such as mine, the participant's national identity is foregrounded, but in other situations, other facets of their identity may be more relevant to the interaction, and the national identity would not be deployed. In this way, one's identity is

more of a multifaceted repertoire than a unidimensional, cross-situationally consistent entity.

This situationally specific deployment of various identity options is consistent with narrative and performative theories of identity, both of which show how social actors use the socially available symbols, discursive regimes, scripts, personae, genres, and registers to index their subjectivity as the need arises. While the metaphor of repertoire may seem to render identity disjointed and incoherent, this need not be the case. As in modernity the stranglehold of ascribed identities loosens (Giddens, 1991), individuals become more reflexive and are therefore empowered with a greater ability to narrate their own life stories into a unified sense of self. This reflexivity enables them to encapsulate the varied subjectivities in their repertoires into an overarching and coherent narrative.

Though not focused on contemporary globalization, Barth, like Appadurai (2003), strongly believes that human groupings are not self-contained wholes with each member being an absolute reflection of the hypothesized cultural traits, but rather that cultural variation exists along a continuum with much overlap between different cultures. Because feelings of distinctive groupness cannot be predicated upon absolute contrasts between cultures, Barth asserts that the phenomenological interpretation of intergroup differences is based upon the interactional construction of otherness through the maintenance of symbolic (not actual) group borders.

This phenomenon of cultural overlap is of great practical and heuristic utility for scholars in SLA. It challenges the foundational presuppositions of classical intercultural communication theory: the notion that each person's cognitive and communicative style is a direct and unmediated reflection of his or her cultural background, and that the resultant communicative difficulties between members of different cultures stem only from cultural differences. In contrast to this discreteness, Barth's work shows that there is a great deal of overlap between cultures as well as a significant amount of variation within nominally categorized cultural groupings; therefore ethnographers (and teachers) should not expect each

individual's personality and learning style to be identical to all others within his group nor categorically distinct from outgroup members. Instead, each individual, while always being embedded culturally, can exhibit a wide variety of cognitive and personal characteristics that may vary from situation to situation.

Barth's work is also significant because it presaged many of the ontological and epistemological themes and postures of later work in poststructuralism and postmodernism. Instead of the hypostatic reification of Durkheimian "social facts," of culture as a thing, Barth and later scholars came to view culture not as a fixed entity but as a process. In terms of contact between members of different language groups, the more traditional scholars "commonly assume one-to one correlation between language and ethnic identity" (Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004, p.5); however, contemporary scholars in intercultural communication and L2 education have adopted many of the tenets of post-structuralism and view cultural identities as inherently unstable, contextually variable, and interactionally dynamic. Post-structuralism also arose in defiance of the positivistic determinism of previous theorists who asserted a causal and unilinear relationship between culture and individual group members. Instead, contemporary social theory takes as axiomatic the presupposition that "identities are fluid and constructed in linguistic and social interaction (Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004, p.8). Instead of conceptualizing individuals as passive vessels of cultural traits, post-structuralism views social actors as active participants in the construction of their own identities. Drawing on the groundbreaking ethnomethodological phenomenology of Ervin Goffman and his emphasis on the strategic intentionality of individuals, post-structuralist theorists, while still incorporating the role of socio-structural determinants into their theories as one set of variables amongst others, view individuals as being capable of resistance to the dominant culture and its elitist narratives. By stressing human agency, poststructuralism emphasizes the ability of formerly colonized ethnolinguistic groups to forge their own cultural space through the creation and maintenance of agentic counter-narratives in their own voice.

CDA and “intercultural research”

By problematizing the previous presuppositions concerning the absolute correspondence between the aggregate traits of respective cultures and the individual members, poststructuralist scholars have called for a paradigm shift in the field of intercultural communication and L2 pedagogy. These scholars assert that given the increasing global integration of the world and the massive movements of peoples from the developing world to the developed world (and the concomitant deterritorialization of ethnolinguistic identity), the notion of discrete, culturally autonomous, ethnically homogenous nation states is no longer logically tenable. However, while nations may not be homogenous, and while they may be “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1991), as I pointed out in the discussion on psychological essentialism, national identity is often subjectively experienced as real and authentic, often viscerally so, especially in countries like the U.S. and China in which the discursive regime of nationalism is so potent and widespread. This begs the question: how does an outsider such as myself humanistically and ethically engage in the “cross-cultural communication” necessary to accurately collect and write up my data? As one can see from my use of the scare quotes around the term, we first need to interrogate the foundational premises behind the use of the term cross-cultural communication itself.

CDA and communicating across cultures

Some scholars, such as the prominent practitioner of CDA, Barbara Johnstone (2008), have gone as far as to call for the dismissal of the term intercultural communication itself. Because the construct of intercultural communication is predicated upon the notion of isomorphism between language, culture and individual identity, Johnstone instead calls for a radical reconceptualization of the notion of communication across supposedly bounded social groups upon which the term intercultural communication is founded. Drawing upon Foucault’s (1973) ontological decentering of the individual (the idea that each individual cannot be reduced to one fundamental identity or discourse but rather that

each person is embedded in a multitude of different, often contradictory cultural ideologies and discourses), Johnstone proposes the term multicultural communication to replace the term intercultural communication. Because in today's world people are exposed to multiple languages, cultures, and ways of being, individuals are not bound by rigid strictures of monolingualism and monoculturalism. Instead, cultures are viewed as being inherently diffuse and hybrid, with each person developing a repertoire of sundry cultural and sociolinguistic identities, each of which is deployed according to the contextual demands of each social situation:

Normal speakers are ones with multiple competencies. Explanatory concepts which work well in this framework include the idea of linguistic resources, rather than native or second language varieties, that at least some people may not have one strongly dominant way of being, acting or talking, but might instead draw regularly on multiple cultures and languages. (Johnstone, 1999, p. 34)

Consequently, Johnstone critiques the notion of communication across social group boundaries (especially the prefixes in the terms intercultural or cross-cultural communication); in place of these terms, she advocates for the term *multicultural communication* and its corollary that different cultures exist within each person: "Nations, people, and cultures are not in one-to-one correspondence, but instead individuals draw on social and linguistic resources from many cultures. As a result, different ways of acting and talking meet within individuals rather than at social boundaries or within social groups" (Johnstone, 1999, p. 25). Instead of the old inter-cultural paradigm of one culture equals one language equal one people, Johnston points to the fissures, internal contradictions, and complex variation within each ethnolinguistic group. Incorporating Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossic discursivity-the idea that each person and each language contain a multitude of discourses and ideologies and that these differing codes and registers or texts constantly interact with each other-Johnstone problematizes the notion of a unitary, monolithically spoken language. By combining Foucault's decentering of cultural identity with Bakhtinian intertextuality and polyvocality, and by emphasizing the contextual variability

of language, Johnstone's work advocates a radical ontological break with the static, essentializing cultural narratives exemplified by classical scholars such as Herder and Durkheim.

Moreover, by stressing the strategic competence and intentionality of individuals as rational as well as expressive agents, Johnstone's work offers a much more humanistic portrait of human beings, one that should serve as a counterbalance against the facile stereotyping of EFL students that many TESOL professionals employ. By arguing for a "less deterministic relationship between culture and linguistic behavior than is suggested in the frameworks of cross-cultural or inter-cultural communication" (Johnstone 1999, p. 25), Johnstone's approach calls for the individualization of each person on the part of the teacher or scholar. Johnstone, while not dismissing the causal influence of cultural variables entirely, shows that each student's cultural and linguistic identity is a unique combination of a plethora of factors, and that no two people are alike.

Another paradox? Anti-imperialism and English

In addition to the paradox discussed above, there is another seeming oxymoron in the data: How is it that, for the most part, the youth in contemporary China seemingly embrace neoliberalism and English, yet still maintain an anti-colonial nationalism? How is it that in a country that still legally enshrines Marxism as one of its official doctrines, most urban youth wholeheartedly accept the ideology of capitalism and the language of Anglo-American colonists? How could China, a country characterized by a deep and almost mystical sense of nationalism, warmly welcome English, a colonial language that has been a linchpin of British and American cultural imperialism? While at first glance the fervor for English in contemporary China may seem ironic, once we go beyond the overarching metanarratives and broad categories and labels and get down to a more nuanced, empirically grounded approach, it is not paradoxical at all. While in the anti-imperialist discursive regime of Chinese Maoism, English represented an alien imposition from the "the foreign devils," it is now generally viewed as an emblem

of modernity and a necessary tool for upward mobility. Mao's dogmatic communism has given way to an ideology mixing a few tenets of socialism with free market capitalism; as the culture and economy have changed, so has the semiotic appropriation of English.

However, in the time since I concluded the data collection in 2017, there have been changes in China's approach to globalization in general and English in particular. Since these changes mostly occurred after my data collection, they do not form part of my analysis, but I think they are at least worth pointing out as they represent a sudden shift away from stressing the importance of English. In that year, China lessened the percentage that the English score counts for on the Gao Kao, the crucially important national collegiate exam, and in the last meeting of the Congress of the Communist Party in March, there was a proposal to eliminate English as a required subject in primary and middle schools (Cawthorpe, 2021). Apparently, leaders in the party feel that due to the fact that middle-and upper-class children's parents can afford expensive private tutors for English, the language has been contributing to the skyrocketing levels of inequality in the country. Inequality runs counter to the still official doctrine of socialism with Chinese characteristics and could, in the Party's eyes, represent a potential threat to the what is euphemistically referred to as country's "peace and stability." Whatever the reason, I feel that reducing the role of English is a healthy development; as this very research project has shown, L2 English in China likely contributes to the growing socioeconomic gaps in the country. As one of the goals of CDA is to promote justice, I humbly hope that research such as mine can awaken others to the role English has in furthering class oppression in China.

Narrativity, CDA and self-positioning

In this dissertation, I have employed a narrative-theory inflected CDA. As I have already pointed out, narrative theory fits the data well, but it fails to consider the asymmetrical power relations that differentially distribute the cultural and symbolic capital that serve as the necessary resources to craft a

narrative that facilitates upward mobility. By combining CDA with narrative theory, we can see that “narrative is essentially joint production” (Simom-Moeda, 2011, p.47). Subjects are positioned and position themselves through discourse, and as this positionality entails a move away from totalizing conceptions of identity to a locally contingent one, and it deconstructs the notion of stable authentic self (though it is often experienced as such). In this way, in the utterances of the participants do not spring from some authentic “core self” but rather are connected to the identity they wish to construct in this particular context. In fact, the dramaturgical nature of ethnographic interviews has long been recognized by postmodern and poststructuralist anthropology, so much so that one leading anthropologist advocates “thinking about fieldwork as the collaborative performance of an enabling fiction between observer and observed, between knower and known” (Conquergood, 1991, p.190). In the case of the follow-up interviews conducted for this study, the identity performances may have been affected by the fact that the informants were former students of mine. Although I have always striven for a non-hierarchical relationship with my students, teaching by definition entails an asymmetry of power and perhaps in these interviews the participants performed the roles of diligent and ambitious students.

Interviewing as a joint performance

The consequences of a performative approach to cultural identity are far-reaching and must therefore be approached with caution. If indeed identity is performative, then essentialist approaches to culture must be discarded. However, what happens if the participants, such as the ones in this study, themselves experience their culture in an essentialist manner, as an immutable and firm foundation of their core selves? In fact, this is how the participants in this study expressed their cultural selves: they projected a core Chinese self with no postmodern fluidity, no poststructuralist fragmentation, and no decentering found in their utterances. If the participant themselves couch their culture identities in a primordialist way, we as researchers working from an inductivist perspective must not be so quick to ascribe chic

theories of shifting and mutable subjectivities to all individuals. To do so would be to adopt the etic perspective of the researcher. As a consequence, I argue that the repertoire theory of subjectivity discussed above that Johnstone advocates for (2008), is the probably the most appropriate way to address these paradoxes. The repertoires themselves are fairly stable and enduring, especially after childhood, but the way they are inflected and deployed is in constant flux and can exhibit tremendous variation.

Moreover, the particular findings from my data, while somewhat unique to this context, also seem to jive with previous research (i.e., structural anthropology) that has found that much of human thought is premised upon binary thinking—the cognitive tendency of the dividing the world through rigid ontological and epistemological dichotomies. In fact, some researchers go as far to claim that people must organize reality through “distinctions, the omnipresent human potency of thinking in polarities, oppositions and antinomies” (Markova, 2003, p.26). Some psychologist also argue that that human reality is made more manageable through binarization: “Social representation theory emphasizes the importance of dualistic principles at work in virtually any cognitive activity” (Staerkle, Clemence, & Spine, 2011, p. 760). In the utterances of the participants, it is precisely the use of polarities between out-group cultures and “Chineseness” that structure their self-positionings as authentic Chinese subjects.

Whatever similarities the findings of this study may have with previous research, as was stated in the introduction, this paper makes no pretense of generalizability as the data generated in my interactions with the participants should be seen as unique to that context. It is for this reason that most scholars working out of a narrative paradigm avoid the positivist terms “collecting data” or “data collection,” as if the researcher had direct access to an objective, unmediated reality. In this manner, “data’ is created, not discovered, through social interaction: “Narrative inquiry has its roots in what philosophers of science call a ‘constructionist epistemology,’ a theory of knowledge that suggests that we know the world not by objectively observing an external reality, but by constructing how we understand it with others”

(Dodge & Ospina, 2005, p. 289). In this way, narrative inquiry is interpretivist not explanatory. Instead of validity and reliability it emphasizes “credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability” (Dodge & Ospina, p. 290). In a nutshell, these four concepts do not mean that any particular study’s findings can be generalized to different contexts, they only imply that other similarly qualified researchers would reach the similar conclusions that the author him or herself did. Nonetheless, in narrative inquiry, conclusions are never definitive; all conclusions are tentative and provisional interpretations; there is never closure in this type of research.

Limitations

As I have repeatedly pointed out the weaknesses of my study throughout this dissertation, it almost feels redundant to have a separate section for it here. But in the interests of genre consistency, here I go. Though I tried as much as possible to hew to an emic perspective, I have of course imposed my own perspective on the data (as does every researcher). Although I am fully aware of the dangers of imposing the etic perspective of the researcher, the goal of narrative inquiry, inductivism is always impossible as there is no transcendental, neutral vantage point, and the researcher always brings his or her own presuppositions to the process. The existence of raw, uninterpreted data is a myth; data never “speak for themselves” and always come pre-structured: “There is no Archimedean view from nowhere: in contrast to those who posit a presuppositionlessness, the mind is never free of pre-commitment. There is no innocent eye, nor is there one that penetrates aboriginal reality. There are instead, hypothesis, versions, expected scenarios” (Bruner, 2004, p.709).

Given this inevitable bias, it is best to conceptualize the concepts we use not as independent but as sensitizing concepts:

A definitive concept refers precisely to what is common to a class of objects, by the aid of a clear definition in terms of attributes or fixed bench marks.... A sensitizing concept lacks such specification of attributes

or bench marks and consequently it does not enable the user to move directly to the instance and its relevant content. Instead, it gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances. Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look. (Bloom, cited in Bowen, 2006)

This notion of sensitizing instead of operationally defining is somewhat similar to Weber's ideal types that I discussed in chapter 3; it implies that any research concept may have some general similarities, but that in each context it will vary somewhat so that it is ever the exactly the same as it circulates. For instance, as I pointed out in my analysis of neoliberalism, the variant in China differs from its American counterpart in that the neoliberalism in China is impacted by Confucian familism and socialism with Chinese characteristics. Many grounded theorists prefer to utilize the concept of sensitizing because as an inductive paradigm, it tries to be open to the ideographic nature of each research encounter. This points to the possibility that my research concepts may be too American-centric to be of much use in the Chinese context, but given all the pains I have taken to adapt my study to the Chinese setting, I would hope that this is not the case.

Obviously, this points to another shortcoming of this study: my outsider status. The participants themselves pointed out the importance of face in Chinese culture; to criticize someone of higher social status or their culture, especially someone in a position of authority such as a teacher, would be taboo. Because of this constraint, in all likelihood an insider would have generated different data in his or her interviews with the participants than the data I co-constructed with the participants. I am speculating here, but I also feel that the participants may have tempered their expressions of nationalism so as to not come off as arrogant to an outsider such as I. We already saw how Greg, in one of the in-person follow-up interviews, appeared physically uncomfortable and tentative before asking me, "Is it ok to say proud?" in response to my question about how he relates to being Chinese.

Further research

CDA, when combined with narrative inquiry, offers a rich and textured ‘thick description’ of the lived experiences of the people studied. Unlike the etic approaches of positivist research, narrative research shows how “world making is the principal function of the mind, whether in the sciences or in the arts... Indeed, one important way of characterizing a culture is by describing the narrative models it makes available for describing the course of life” (Bruner, 2004, p.694). The field of SLA would be enriched by a fuller, more phenomenological understanding of the flesh-and-blood people who are actually learning and living in an L2 context. By exploring the stories these learners tell, researchers can gain important insights into the thinking processes of L2 learners because “eventually, the culturally shaped cognitive and linguistic processes that guide the self-telling of self-narratives achieve the power to structure perceptual experience, to organize memory, to segment and purpose-build the very ‘events’ of a life (Bruner, 2004, p.693). In the end, we become the autobiographical by which “we tell” about our lives. In this way, more research using the narrative paradigm would greatly benefit the field of SLA, especially when fused with an approach that theorizes power such as CDA. I can say this not only from a scholarly perspective, but also as an L2 learner of Chinese who personally experienced being positioned as a deficient speaker of the dominant language in my daily interactions in China.

When researchers account for the role social structure plays in L2 development, they can see that social class and power crisscross cultures, and the notion of insider/outside becomes even more complex as even a cultural insider can be a social-class outsider. Instead of the static essentialism of Herder, I adopt the position of theorists of globalization such as Appadurai (2003). An Indian-born anthropologist, Appadurai argues that the contemporary world is marked by overlapping flows of peoples, ideas, and images; consequently, virtually no culture is isolated and separated from all the others, and the result is that people have more identity options than ever. Their cultural identities are usually hybrid, fluid and situation-specific. Nonetheless, as I have stated several times, my data showed that the participants

experienced their Chinese subjectivity as solid, not liquid; as pure and authentic not hybrid and constructed. What gives? The theory of collective memory, which I discuss in the following section, is a fascinating field of research that may be able to account for these puzzling discrepancies, and as such, it is an avenue of research that should be further explored in SLA.

Collective memory

Within the field SLA one of the most ideal ways to bridge the cognitivist vs. social divide and the essentialist vs. socially constructed divide is through the utilization of the paradigm of collective memory. This approach unites the universal properties and operations of the human brain (cognitivism) with the cultural-dependent symbols, narratives, and myths that organize people's thoughts and actions (the social approach). This approach can also help explain the ability of my participants to use Chinese history as a resource. Writing in the early part of last century, the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1992) was the first prominent scholar to challenge the reduction of memory to internal mental process. Whereas the dominant approach to memory had been carried out from a cognitivist perspective that reduced it to psychological variables within the brain of each individual, collective memory posits the socially mediated nature of all cognition. Analytically distinct from individual memory, collective memory investigates the mechanisms through which "every group develops the memory of its own past that highlights its identity vis-à-vis other groups. These reconstructed images provide the group with an account of its own origin and development, and thus allow it to recognize itself through time" (Zerubavel, 1995, p.4). In other words, any given culture is constituted by the stories it tells of itself (Morgan & Coombes, 2004; Wertsch, 2004; Regan Calhoun, 2007; Tileagă, 2011).

Given wide range of paradigms and disciplines from which it is studied, the concept of collective memory is resistant to precise definition. According to two prominent scholars in the burgeoning field of memory studies, Wertsch and Roediger, write that the only "generally agreed upon feature is that

collective memory is a form of memory that transcends individuals and is shared by a group” (2008, p. 381). Wertsch and Roediger criticize the reifying and homogenizing connotations of the term collective memory; they advocate for a more processual and dynamic approach that avoids static nominalizations, and thus coin the term collective remembering. While Wertsch and Roediger’s assertions that the label collective memory presupposes an illusory social and political consensus, the approach taken in this dissertation is founded upon the idea that all the foundations of any society, including collective memory, are divided, to some degree along at least one of the following poles: socioeconomic, racial, regional, gender, generational, ethnic, or linguistic.

These stories are the cultural narratives which form the foundation of any culture’s identity (Norman, 1991; Schwartz, 1996; Taylor, 2003). The narratives that constitute collective memory are publicly shared rituals, images, monuments, museums, legends, scripts, schemata, poems, novels, and modes of thinking that infuse the memories of each group member. Building upon Durkheim’s work on the socially mediated nature of all knowledge, Halbwachs (1992) argued that memory is shaped if not determined by the cultural context in which the remembering takes place. In terms of my study, the collective memory of China is triggered by the nature of the research context in that their national identity is foregrounded.

Just as Durkheim had challenged the universality of the Kantian categories-arguing that each culture cognized differently-Halbwach’s wrote that each epoch, each social group, remembers differently; there is no objective, photographic memory of past “events” (I use scare quotes because even our way of defining units of analysis such as eventhood is culturally conditioned). Halbwach’s work, showing how memory is both a cognitive and a *cultural* phenomenon, directly challenges psychologists who biologized memory by reducing it to the mental operations of isolated individuals and ignored its cultural roots (Assman, & Czaplicka, 1995).

As collective memory consists of the schemata which are shared to some extent by all the members of any given social group, and which are sensitive to environmental cues, it is an ideal way to problematize the boundary between the cognitive and the social. The study of memory, which has increased exponentially in the last 15 to 20 years, has been carried out from an extremely broad range of scholarly disciplines and paradigms: from the most micro-level-the neurological and biochemical- to the most macro-the sociological and historical level. Very few other areas of inquiry are studied by so many different scholars in different fields: biology, history, anthropology, and so on. In this way, SLA which is already characterized by interdisciplinary nature and variety of vantage points should further engage in this dynamic field.

Unfortunately, almost all the research in memory is SLA has been performed from decidedly cognitivist perspective; the social part has been somewhat left out. Imitating the procedures and methods of experimental psychology, scholars in SLA who study memory have attempted to isolate memory from all the “confounding variables” of the outside world. The major shortcoming of this approach is its lack of ecological validity: people don’t live in psychology labs; they think-and remember-in the “real world” (Baddley, 1994; Neisser, 1994). In fact, the critique that experimental psychology lacks external validity goes back to Bartlett (1932), whose pioneering work exposed the lack of ecological validity of most work in cognitive psychology. While Bartlett initially approached the study of memory from a resolutely cognitivist paradigm (Garr, 2000), he soon realized the weakness of this approach. The experiment for which Bartlett most became famous consisted of a retelling of a Native-American narrative. When the subjects retold the story, they radically modified it in accord with the dominant presuppositions of their own culture. For example, the British subjects, perhaps because of their upbringing in a culture dominated by the discursive regime of empiricism, tended to distort the story by asserting that the character believed he saw a ghost when in fact in the original story the

character had actually seen the ghost. In the delayed posttests of the experiment, the stories became even more schematized; even the syntax the participants used reflected their native language: The British subjects retold the tale using more subordination in comparison to the original, which was syntactically more reduced (Beals, 1998). In this manner, Bartlett's seminal experiment suggested that memory and reasoning are strongly influenced by culture.

Repudiating

In fact, Bartlett disliked the term "memory" viewing it as reductive and simplistic, "because to him it implied some fixed mechanical faculty inside the mind" (Beals, 1998, p. 4). Instead, he advocated using the term "remembering" because it more accurately captured the dynamic, active, processual and context-sensitive nature of what he viewed as a practical, ongoing cognitive operation, not a static mental ability. Unlike previous (and unfortunately, current) theories of memory which sever it from the outer, lived world and conceptualize it as a mechanism passively recording incoming stimuli, Bartlett viewed brain and world and inseparable. Bartlett criticized the way cognitive psychologists had been studying memory in the laboratory, where they reduced it to the retrieval of nonsense syllables and numbers. He strongly advocated conceptualizing memory in particular and cognition in general as adaptive tools used by people to cope with the environments on which they find themselves in.

Bartlett's groundbreaking has important implications for SLA research. Firstly, Bartlett's findings that memory is mediated by cultural-bound schemata undermines the universalizing pretensions of the cognitivists. If each cultural group remembers differently, it becomes untenable to posit universal properties of the brain, including those involved in L2 learning. Secondly, his work challenged the work of experimental cognitive psychology, the model upon most studies of memory in SLA are based upon, on methodological grounds; specifically, because the studies attempted to isolate memory from other variables, they lacked ecological validity. Later research confirms Bartlett's findings that a salient group

identity affects memory in a significant way. For example, Sahadra and Ross, (2007) found a statistically significant relationship between group identification and historical memory thereby supporting Bartlett's contention that memory is not a cross-culturally consistent phenomenon. Memory cannot be studied in the same manner as physics or chemistry because the latter are invariant properties of the world while the latter is culturally and situationally variable.

Also, in direct contrast to the computationalism of classical cognitive science was Bartlett's emphasis on the role of external artifacts such in memory, "remembering for Bartlett was not simply the recalling of experience, but rather, a fundamentally symbolic process both rooted in and constitutive of culture, forming and formed by symbols and meanings transmitted in texts and pictures," (Edwards & Middleton, 1987, p.79). Because the raw ingredients of memory-artifacts, symbols, signs, social categories and words are culturally mediated, memory is never completely individual.

Perhaps most importantly, Bartlett's findings leave a small opening for reflectivity and agentic action. Unlike behaviorism, which reduces individuals to passive responses, or cognitivism, which posits biological determinism, Bartlett's work showed that schemata are not fixed mental structures but vary in accord the context in which the individual finds him or herself (they are cue-dependent). While Bartlett still held to a somewhat essentialist notion of cultures, operationalizing them as unitary and homogenous, his work, because it allowed for the mutability of cognition, showing how present circumstances combine with preexisting schemata to enable individuals to construct new ways of thinking. Moreover, by emphasizing the way cognition was predicated on subjective meaning, Bartlett's work serves as a challenging to the cognitivists' reduction of the human mind to an information processing device. If cognition is mutable and culturally mediated and not universally invariant, then it is amendable to agentic adaptation.

In this manner, collective memory is the interface where individual cognition mixes with the semiotic

and material resources provided by the surrounding culture (Wertsch, & Roediger, 2008). As humans need some sort of shared framework in order to reason together and to communicate effectively, collective remembering is critical in that it reduces nuance and ambiguity through an overarching conceptual framework that “ignores counter-evidence in order to preserve established narratives” and “relies on implicit theories, schemas, and scripts that simplify the past and ignore substantiated findings that do not fit the narrative” (Wertsch & Roediger, 2008p. 321). Collective memory provides the language and categories of thought that shape individual memory through framing and simplification.

As culture consists of loosely organized, narrativized schemata, people’s ability to actively shape their own remembering strategies enables a new paradigm that avoids the determinism of primordialist approaches to identity that posit a mechanistic and linear relationship between culture and behavior. Instead of asserting a one-to-one correspondence of ethnolinguistic identity and behavior, contemporary scholars study the ways individuals can strategically appropriate different cultural identities, even one drastically different from their “native” ones: “there is a multiplicity of selves that we remember” (Neisser, 1994, p. 9). This reconceptualization away from essentialism entails a shift away from the idea that culture inheres in each individual member to the notion that cultural identities are performative, context-specific appropriations. This paradigm shift also entails a more semiotic approach to SLA research

Accordingly, adopting a more semiotic approach (Tochon, 2013) in SLA and world language education, research in SLA, such as this dissertation, is better able to delve into previously unexplored dimensions of L2 learning. By incorporating a semiotic component into the analysis of the relationship between English and social class, and by not merely reducing it to the mere economic, I hope this dissertation continues to build upon a growing interdisciplinary research tradition showing that humans are indeed the “*Symbolic Species*” (Deacon, 1997). In this manner, I hope to add to the increasing

acceptance of interdisciplinarity into the field of SLA.

Furthermore, as English in China has come, for many middle-class people, to symbolize globalization, national and personal competitiveness, cosmopolitan identity, even one's self-worth, my project ties together many different areas of research ranging from L2 motivation theory to globalization studies to cultural anthropology to critical theory. Finally, I hope to contribute to previous scholarship in the field by incorporating the methods and empirical findings of social stratification research into SLA, and hope to uncover the way the introduction of English into certain contexts can hinder the goals of social justice.

Given the stress on social justice in my study, and given the ways in which class domination is in part achieved through the manipulation of symbols, ideologies and narratives, my approach is decidedly critical; I attempt to show how English functions as a type of cultural capital in China, a capital that is implicated in the inequitable intergenerational transmission of social class. However, the role of English proficiency in the perpetuation of social stratification of Chinese society can only be achieved if it carries with it a sense of being an impartial criterion for social mobility and elite status:

What is at stake in symbolic struggles is the imposition of the legitimate vision of the social world and of its divisions, that is to say, symbolic power as worldmaking power, to use Nelson Goodman's word, the power to impose and to inculcate principles of construction of reality, and particularly to preserve or transform established principles of union and separation, of association and disassociation already at work in the social world such as current classifications in matters of gender, age, ethnicity, region or nation, that is, essentially, power over words used to describe groups or the institutions which represent them. Symbolic power, whose form par excellence is the power to make groups and to consecrate or institute them (in particular through rites of institution, the paradigm here being marriage), consists in the power to make something exist in the objectified, public, formal state which only previously existed in an implicit state, as with the constellation which, according to Goodman, begins to exist only when it is selected and designated as such. When it is applied to a social collective, even one which is potentially defined in the manner of the cloud, the performative power of naming, which almost always comes with a power of representation, brings into existence in an instituted form, i.e., as a corporate body, what hitherto existed only as a serial collection of juxtaposed individuals. (Bourdieu, 1987, pp. 14-15)

In the data I collected and in the official documents I examined, English did, to some extent, seem to

exert symbolic “wordmaking power,” in that mastery in it appeared to be taken up by some of the respondents to help constitute an upwardly mobile, cosmopolitan subjectivity. For example, Gina, an economics major, described the motives behind her seemingly strong motivation for learning English:

Paul: Tell me about how you started studying English

Gina: I like learning English, and I have been studying since I was 5 or 6 years old. My parents thought it necessary for my future especially as China opened up to the outside world. I am grateful my parents had me study English as it is not always easy to get a good job in China, and to be good in English will help me find a better job.

Paul: So, you just view English in practical terms?

Gina: Well, I guess that is the most important thing, but I also feel English helps put me in touch with the outside world, and I think that my English level is good enough that I can communicate with foreigners.

Paul: How does being able to communicate with foreigners make you feel?

Gina: I feel like...um...happy...not all Chinese people can talk with foreigners.

In this excerpt, one can see how Gina’s attitude toward English goes beyond the instrumental level to include an emotional sense of pride at feeling more international. This pride is in large part enabled by her parent’s privileged class position (they come from the top quintile on my scale in terms of education and income). As was discussed in the previous section on cosmopolitan subjectivity (Igarashi & Sato, 2014), this type of international sophistication is a contemporary form unequally distributed cultural.

Subjunctive thinking and the denaturalization of culture

Subjunctive thinking is the ability to analyze things from other perspectives, from worldviews different from that of our native cultures. It entails taking “the imaginative leap that will enable learners to imagine cultures different from their own” (Kramersch, 1996, p. 2). By taking a more narrative and performative approach to culture, students and scholars alike can mitigate the seemingly natural tendency

to facile stereotyping (Brubaker, Loveman, & Stamtov, 2004) and come to see that all nations and all cultures are stratified either by class, race, religion, tribe and thus are constituted by competing not unitary, narratives. Because cultures and nations are not internally homogenous, each sub-group within articulates its own version of the national narrative. For example, in the U.S., most whites adhere to a narrative of freedom and individual liberty; African and Native Americans are more likely to see stories of genocidal rapaciousness and mass enslavement. In China, being that the party controls the national narrative, there are fewer competing discourses, but this does not mean that China is homogenous.

Balancing social constructivism and structuralism

Performative and narrative-inflected approaches to analyzing L2 subjectivity can also help L2 scholars avoid the essentializing approaches to identity that often characterize conceptualizations in the field of SLA (Kramsch 1988; Pennycook, 2001). The “trait and place” approach to culture discussed in the literature review it is often premised on naturalized and stereotypic conceptualizations of culture. In contrast, narrative and performative approaches are capable of incorporating the more fluid and constructivist conceptualizations of identity that have come about since the introduction of poststructuralist and postmodernist paradigms into applied linguistics (McNamara, 2019).

However, if the pendulum swings too far, and all identity is viewed as performative and transitory, researchers run the risk losing the ability to theorize the structural origins of power. This is why I strongly advocate for the incorporation of critical theories such as CDA into mainstream SLA theory. While the phenomenological experience of identity may fluctuate and mutate, the socioeconomic divisions of contemporary capitalist societies are remarkably stable (Bourdieu, 1977). By primarily focusing on the subjective and context-sensitive fluctuations that sense of self constantly undergoes, the intergenerational transmission of social status is often ignored:

We argue that the prevailing constructivist stance on identity - the attempt to ‘soften’ the term, to acquit it of the charge of ‘essentialism’ by stipulating that identities are constructed, fluid, and multiple - leaves us without a rationale for talking about ‘identities’ at all and ill-equipped to examine the ‘hard’ dynamics and essentialist claims of contemporary identity politics. ‘Soft’ constructivism allows putative ‘identities’ to proliferate. But as they proliferate, the term loses its analytical purchase. If identity is everywhere, it is nowhere. If it is fluid, how can we understand the ways in which self-understandings may harden, congeal, and crystallize? If it is constructed, how can we understand the sometimes-coercive force of external identifications? If it is multiple, how do we understand the terrible singularity that is often striven for - and sometimes realized - by politicians seeking to transform mere categories into unitary and exclusive groups? How can we understand the power and pathos of identity politics? (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p.2)

In fact, the authors show that the debate on whether identity is fixed, enduring and centered or whether it is mutable and fluid, and is an ancient one, going back as far back as Heraclitus, who famously declared that all is flux, versus Plato, who conceptualized ontology in terms of underlying unchanging essences. In much of the contemporary social science literature, there appears to be a polarization between “strong” and “weak” versions of identity. According to Rogers and Brubaker (2000), in the strong version, identity is conceptualized as a thing individual have by virtue of belonging to bounded, internally homogenous groups. Nonetheless, given its association with the increasingly stigmatized charge of essentialism and stereotyping, the strong version of identity has been losing ground to the weak version, which they criticize as "cliched constructivism."

Weak or soft conceptions of identity are routinely packaged with standard qualifiers indicating that identity is multiple, unstable, in flux, contingent, fragmented, constructed, negotiated, and so on. These qualifiers have become so familiar - indeed obligatory - in recent years that one reads (and writes) them virtually automatically. They risk becoming mere place-holders, gestures signaling a stance rather than words conveying a meaning. (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p.11)

Brubaker and Cooper go on to question why proponents of this “soft” approach to the concept of identity use the term at all; they argue that the term itself by definition refers to something stable and enduring. Furthermore, by stripping the term of its everyday denotation, Brubaker and Cooper accuse “clichéd constructivism” of robbing “identity” of its explanatory power. By placing near exclusive focus

on micro-interaction, the social constructivists also fail to consider the “symbolic power” (Bourdieu, 1977) nation-states possess in naming, categorizing and defining groups, not to mention the power to set language policy. Despite all the talk of globalization, nation-states are still the defining sociopolitical structures which literally enforce boundaries between peoples (Calhoun, 2006). As such, national governments have the symbolic power to grant legitimacy to the discursive regimes they favor and to stigmatize and even ban opposing ones.

In the case of English in Mainland China, English is imbued with exactly this type of state-sanctioned symbolic power as the it is a required subject in all public schools (the grade at which it starts can vary from province to province), and, as mentioned previously, it is a required section of the *Gao Kao*, the national collegiate entrance examination which is, in most cases, the sole criterion for admission to university. In intensely competitive contemporary China, attending an elite institution of higher learning is a critical predictor of career success and a degree from the C-9 (a group of the most prestigious universities in the entire country) school bestows its holder with a great deal of cultural and symbolic power. However, as my study has shown, the appropriation of English in China is subsumed into the overarching narrative of Chinese nationalism so its role in furthering socioeconomic disparities has remained hidden (though as I pointed out, since the time my data collection finished, this is slowly changing).

As for the situated, contingent and interactional dimension of self-understanding, Rogers and Brubaker argue that as an alternative to the term identity, this micro-process should be termed “situated subjectivity” (2000, p.17). Unlike the “homogeneous, bounded, unitary” self posited by Western philosophers such as Descartes, the mutable and context-bound nature of situated subjectivity can account for the flux and fluctuations of self-understanding. Because “semantically, ‘identity’ implies sameness across time or persons,” Rogers and Brubaker (p.18) argue situated subjectivity would be a

more precise term for the micro-internationally derived sense of self. As the methods I employ in this dissertation do not involve the observation and analysis of naturally occurring interaction, my focus will not be on this type of situated subjectivity; in this sense my data, like all data, is limited and partial.

In a nutshell

Keeping in mind all the caveats about the difficulties associated with ethnographic representation discussed throughout this paper, there were some broad themes that seemed to emerge from the data. The most important finding was that apart from some minor difficulties with English, the participants seemed to be very empowered and very confident. They were able to draw upon the discourse of Chinese nationalism to project their identities as bearers of a great civilization. While they frequently expressed admiration for the openness of American culture, some were also quick to point to its shortcomings; in fact, they sometimes subtly made Americans the target of othering discourse: A few of the participants depicted Americans as being uncaring and self-centered. As for English, only a handful of the respondents expressed fondness for the language itself; accordingly, I can say that instrumental motivation was a constant theme throughout the data. Finally, the informants showed themselves to be intensively competitive, but hyper-competitiveness in China predates the introduction of free market ideology on the country, so it cannot be attributed solely to neoliberalism.

Professional responsibility

As an L2 educator I feel it is my professional duty to learn about my students and their backgrounds, not only to validate their own culture(s), but to be a more effective instructor. As a teacher, the more familiar I am with their culture, the more effective I can be in implementing a curriculum more consistent with their learning and thinking styles, which are always culturally mediated but never culturally determined. Moreover, as the field of SLA is firmly rooted in the cognitivist tradition, more social

approaches such as the one used in this study are often marginalized. Whereas the dominant strain of SLA, cognitivism- which is rooted in the positivist ideology that L2 learning can be studied in the same objective and universalizing manner as the natural sciences- downplays or outright ignores the social and contextual issues which impinge upon L2 learning, my study focused on the subjective meaning of learners themselves. In this way, I hope my research can contribute to a more balanced approach in the field, an approach that problematizes the rigid dichotomization of culture and cognition and one that adopts a firmly emic perspective of the participants themselves.

Hopefully, this study may be of some use to teachers working with Chinese students (at the risk of repeating myself, I make no claim for generalizability, and we as teachers must never stereotype our students or fix them into reified, essentialized identities). With this caveat in mind, perhaps some Chinese students may be less likely to speak in class due to the pragmatic norms regarding speech in Chinese culture. In fact, as was shown in the data analysis section, several participants indicated that Chinese people usually think before they speak; this emphasis on reflection before speaking may be problematic when these students are placed in classes utilizing the communicative curriculum, with its emphasis on extensive spontaneous speech. Nonetheless while the participants self-stereotyped in many of the interviews, teachers, invested with power over their students, should never rob the students of their individual identities by fixing them with an ascribed identity; every student should have a right to tell his or her own story, regardless of their background.

Closing remarks

Although this research project is not an autoethnography, I feel that my status as a low-level L2 speaker and immigrant struggling to learn a highly challenging tone language humanized me and made me a better researcher. With low proficiency in the dominant language, especially in the early stages of the data collection, I felt as if I were sometimes viewed through the lens of a deficit discourse. Though most

Chinese people were friendly and helpful and happy to see a foreigner at least *trying* to learn their language, some people would waive me off when I tried communicating in the language, often loudly saying, “ting bu dong” (I don’t understand), before walking off. As uncomfortable as this may have felt at the time, I strongly believe that it heightened my empathy with L2 learners everywhere. For example, after my first academic year in China, I went back to the U.S. to visit family, and I remember being in a Starbucks where a patron was struggling to make himself understood to the cashier in English. I immediately felt an affinity with this customer, whom I had never met before. I said to myself, “That is me in China!”

Although the language gap made my life there challenging in the beginning, the longer I stayed in the country, the more I grew to love it. As my Chinese proficiency increased, I was able to communicate on a deeper level with the still sizeable segment of the population who speak little or no English. China is a fascinating combination of the ancient and the modern, and I have fallen in love with the sounds of this beautiful tone language. I feel extremely fortunate to have had the privilege to teach and do research in this amazing country. I have made some deep connections with several of my students and colleagues, some of whom I still communicate with on a regular basis. To all those wonderful Chinese people I met in the course of this fascinating journey, I say 谢谢 (Xie Xie), Thank you, from the bottom of my heart!

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Appendix

Appendix A: Questionnaire

1) I like English-speaking cultures.

Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Disagree mildly 4. Tend to disagree 5. Tend to agree 6. Agree mildly 7. Agree 8. Strongly agree

2) Learning English will help me in my career

Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Disagree mildly 4. Tend to disagree 5. Tend to agree 6. Agree mildly 7. Agree 8. Strongly agree

3). Chinese culture is superior to others.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Agree mildly 4. Tend to agree 5. Tend to disagree 6. Disagree mildly 7. Disagree 8. Strongly disagree

4) I feel confident when speaking English

Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Disagree mildly 4. Tend to disagree 5. Tend to agree 6. Agree mildly 7. Agree 8. Strongly agree

5) It would bother me if a close family member married a Westerner.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Agree mildly 4. Tend to agree 5. Tend to disagree 6. Disagree mildly 7. Disagree 8. Strongly disagree

6) American culture is similar to mine

Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Disagree mildly 4. Tend to disagree 5. Tend to agree 6. Agree mildly 7. Agree 8. Strongly agree

7) Studying English gives me a sense of accomplishment

Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Disagree mildly 4. Tend to disagree 5. Tend to agree 6. Agree mildly 7. Agree 8. Strongly agree

8) I feel like a different person when I speak English than I do when speaking Chinese.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Agree mildly 4. Tend to agree 5. Tend to disagree 6. Disagree mildly 7. Disagree 8. Strongly disagree

9) I feel comfortable speaking English in class

Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Disagree mildly 4. Tend to disagree 5. Tend to agree 6. Agree mildly 7. Agree 8. Strongly agree

10) I envision in the future speaking English with foreigners

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Agree mildly 4. Tend to agree 5. Tend to disagree 6. Disagree mildly 7. Disagree 8. Strongly disagree

11) The spread of English benefits the world

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Agree mildly 4. Tend to agree 5. Tend to disagree 6. Disagree mildly 7. Disagree 8. Strongly disagree

12) To be considered an educated, sophisticated person, one must speak English

Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Disagree mildly 4. Tend to disagree 5. Tend to agree 6. Agree mildly 7. Agree 8. Strongly agree

13) Speaking English weakens my own cultural identity.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Agree mildly 4. Tend to agree 5. Tend to disagree 6. Disagree mildly 7. Disagree 8. Strongly disagree

14) Speaking English makes me feel more sophisticated and worldly.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Agree mildly 4. Tend to agree 5. Tend to disagree 6. Disagree mildly 7. Disagree 8. Strongly disagree

15) Chinese is a beautiful language

Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Disagree mildly 4. Tend to disagree 5. Tend to agree 6. Agree mildly 7. Agree 8. Strongly agree

16) Learning English is easy

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Agree mildly 4. Tend to agree 5. Tend to disagree 6. Disagree mildly 7. Disagree 8. Strongly disagree

17) I envy Chinese people who speak English very well

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Agree mildly 4. Tend to agree 5. Tend to disagree 6. Disagree mildly 7. Disagree 8. Strongly disagree

18) If I have children, I will make sure they learn Chinese.

1. Strongly Disagree 2. disagree 3. Neutral/no opinion 4. Agree. 5 strongly agree

19) In terms of my future, English is more useful than Chinese

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Agree mildly 4. Tend to agree 5. Tend to disagree 6. Disagree mildly 7. Disagree 8. Strongly disagree

20) English represents a threat to Chinese language and culture

Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Disagree mildly 4. Tend to disagree 5. Tend to agree 6. Agree mildly 7. Agree 8. Strongly agree

21) English should be spoken everywhere

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Agree mildly 4. Tend to agree 5. Tend to disagree 6. Disagree mildly 7. Disagree 8. Strongly disagree

22) Globalization requires English

Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Disagree mildly 4. Tend to disagree 5. Tend to agree 6. Agree mildly 7. Agree 8. Strongly agree

23) One's ability to speak English is related to one's intelligence

Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Disagree mildly 4. Tend to disagree 5. Tend to agree 6. Agree mildly 7. Agree 8. Strongly agree

24) I feel I have to compete with my Chinese classmates and peers in terms of English ability.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Agree mildly 4. Tend to agree 5. Tend to disagree 6. Disagree mildly 7. Disagree 8. Strongly disagree

25) Your parents' total combined yearly income is RMB

1) Less than 50,000 2) 50,000-75,000 3) 100,00-250,000 4) more than 250,000

26) Your mother is a college graduate

1) True 2) False

27) Your father is a college graduate

1) True 2) False

28) How would you rate your desire to learn English: 1) Extremely strong 2) Very Strong. 3) Somewhat strong 4) Strong 5) weak 6) somewhat weak 7) Very weak 8) No desire at all

Your gender:

Your hometown

1) Why do you study English?

2) Let's discuss how you feel when speaking and learning English? How would you compare your feelings and attitudes towards Chinese with your feelings and attitudes toward English?

3) Compare your confidence levels in speaking Chinese with those of English

4) Would you have studied English, even if you hadn't been forced to do so?

5) Could describe your sense of self and how foreign language learning relates to that?

6) What are your favorite classroom activities? Your least favorite?

- 7) Do you think English should be on the Gao Kao? Why or why not?

- 8) What is your opinion of the global spread of English?

- 9) What is your opinion of Chinese speakers who do not speak English?

- 10) In what way do you think your previous educational experiences have affected your attitude and motivation for foreign languages?

- 11) Why do you think some Chinese speak better English than others?

- 12) How does the use of English relate to the way a person is perceived in China? What comes to mind when you see a native Chinese speaker conversing in English?

- 13) Do you agree or disagree with the following statement (Be sure to give reasons why or why not): Anyone can be successful in China if he or she works hard enough.

- 14) What comes to mind when you see a foreigner or hear a foreign language?

- 15) Is social status important to you? Why or why not?

Please complete the following sentence with as many words or phrases you can you may us the back of the page if necessary, **English is like....**

Appendix B

Table 5.1

Participants in the pilot study ($n=13$)

<u>Pseudonym</u>				
Bob	Hydraulic engineering	M	Han	N
Ana	Economics	F	Han	Y
Gary	Physics	M	Han	N
Alice	Statistics	F	Han	Y
Billy	Biology	M	Han	N
Linda	Finance	F	Han	N
Jill	Business Management	F	Han	Y
Joe	Electrical Engineering	F	Han	N
Katherine	Mechanical Engineering	F	Hmong	N
Phil	Mathematics	M	Han	N
Deng	Electrical Engineering	M	Han	Y
David	Computer Science	M	Han	Y
Stephen	Automation	M	Han	Y

Appendix C

Table 5.2

Second wave of data collection participants (n=27)

Pseudonym	Major	Gender	Ethnicity	social class	Tier one city
Hans	Computer Science	M	Han		N
Kevin	Automation	M	Han		N
Grace	Psychology	F	Han		Y
Bob	Economics	M	Han		Y
Siran	Computer science	M	Korean		Y
Peter	Electrical engineering	M	Uighur		N
Sally	Sociology	F	Han		N
James	Mechanical engineering	M	Han		Y
Thomas	Economics	M	Zhuang		N
Charles	Computer science	M	Han		N
Mary	Business management	M	Han		Y
Matthew	Mathematics	M	Zhuang		N
Scarlett	Chemistry	F	Han		N
Andrew	Electrical engineering	M	Han		Y
Emily	Biomedical engineering	F	Han		N
Cathy	Electrical engineering	F	Han		N
Jerry	Systems engineering	F	Han		Y
Gina	Hydraulic Engineering	F	Han		N
Gregory	History	M	Han		N
Mary	Chinese	F	North Korean		N
Aaron	Biology	M	Han		N
Olivia	Economics	M	Han		Y
Kyle	Physics	M	Thai		N
Harold	Journalism	M	Han		N

Arthur	Physics	M	Han	Y
Albert	Chemical engineering	M	Han	Y

Appendix D

Table 5.3 Parental education

FTRGR		
	N	%
0	24	60.0%
1	16	40.0%

MTRGR		
	N	%
0	29	72.5%
1	11	27.5%

Table 5.4 Frequency table parental income

		Partinc			Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	1	2	5.0	5.0	5.0
	2	8	20.0	20.0	25.0
	3	24	60.0	60.0	85.0
	4	6	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

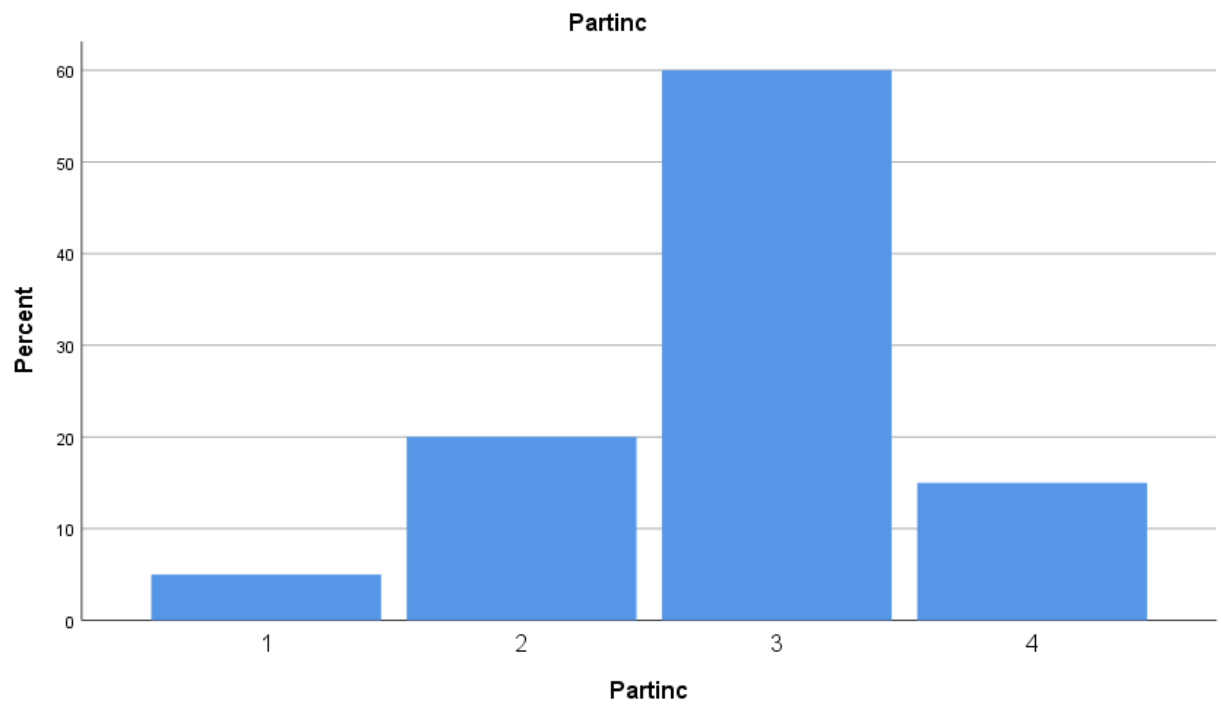
Table 5.5: Parental Income Bar chart

Table 5.6 Parental SES

		SES			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	2	3	7.5	7.5	10.0
	3	13	32.5	32.5	42.5
	4	10	25.0	25.0	67.5
	5	7	17.5	17.5	85.0
	6	6	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Tables for chapter 7

Table 7.1 Extrinsic Motivation Contingency Table

Correspondence Table

EXTNT	SES						Active Margin
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	3	0	2	2	7
6	0	3	1	3	1	0	8
7	0	0	8	3	3	2	16
8	1	0	1	4	1	2	9
Active Margin	1	3	13	10	7	6	40

Table 7.2 Extrinsic Motivation and SES

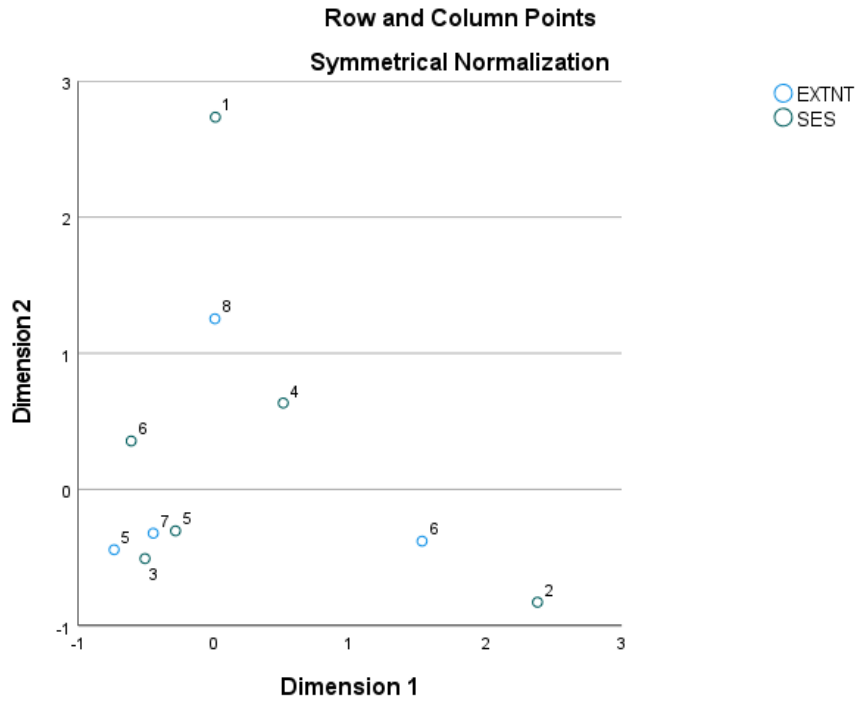


Table 7.3 significance level

				Summary
Dimension	Singular Value	Inertia	Chi Square	Sig
1	.643	.414		
2	.458	.210		
3	.200	.040		
Total		.664	26.564	.865

Table 7.4 Descriptive statistics ideal L2 self

		idealslf			Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	4	3	7.5	7.5	7.5
	5	18	45.0	45.0	52.5
	6	9	22.5	22.5	75.0
	7	6	15.0	15.0	90.0
	8	4	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total		40	100.0	100.0	

Table 7.5 Ideal Self and SES Graph

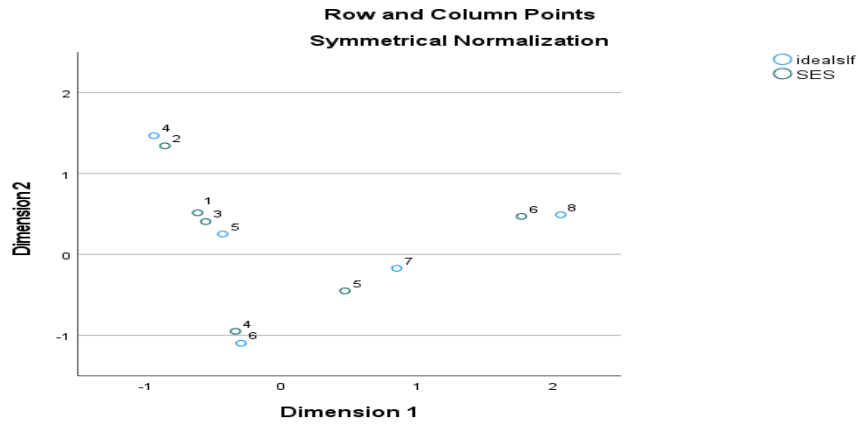


Table 7.6 English and Globalization

		Englnbft			Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	1	7	17.5	17.9	17.9
	2	13	32.5	33.3	51.3
	3	10	25.0	25.6	76.9
	4	8	20.0	20.5	97.4
	5	1	2.5	2.6	100.0
	Total	39	97.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.5		
Total		40	100.0		

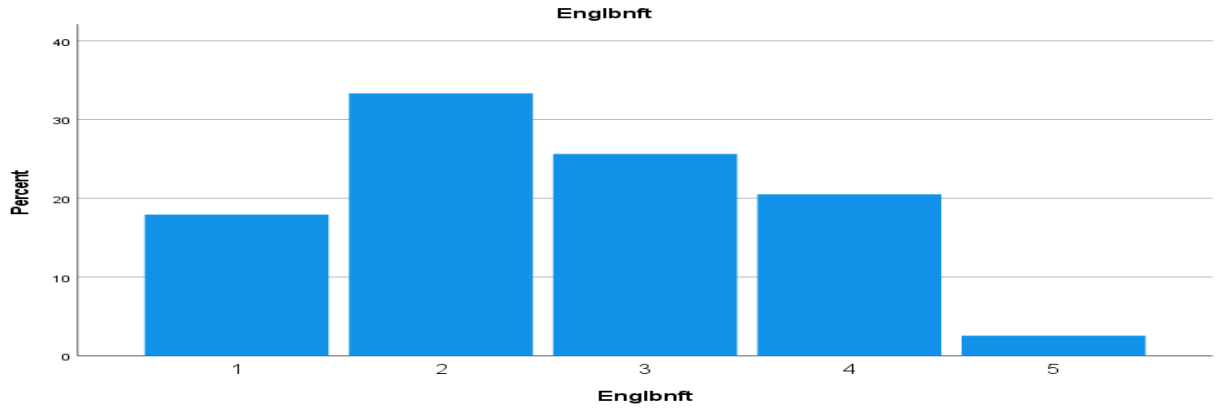


Table 8.1 macro vs. micro-sociology

Macrosociology	Microsociology
Large scale social processes	Small scale interactions
Big picture	Small picture
Explanatory	Interpretive
Quantitative	Mostly qualitative
Studies patterns and trends	Studies face-to face interaction

Table 8.2 Dimensions of social class

Dimension	Gloss
Property	Material possessions, such as land, housing, electronic devices, clothing, books, art, etc.
Wealth	Disposable income and patrimony (e.g., what owned property is worth in financial terms).
Occupation	The kind of work done: information-based or manual, specialized or unskilled, etc.
Place of residence	The type of neighborhood one lives in (poor, working class, middle class, gated community, an area in the process of gentrification) or the type of dwelling (individual house, flat, caravan).
Education	The level of schooling attained and the acquired cultural capital one has at any point in time.
Social networking	Middle-class people tend to socialize with middle-class people, working-class people with working-class people, etc.
Consumption patterns	Shopping at a supermarket that is "cost-cutting" or one that sells "healthy," organic products. Buying particular goods and brands.
Symbolic behavior	Including body movement, clothes worn, how one speaks, how one eats, pastimes engaged in, etc.
Spatial relations	The conditions in which one lives: dwelling size, bedroom size, proximity to others across day-to-day activities, etc.
Mobility	The means, disposition, time, and knowledge necessary for travel.
Life chances	Quality of life in terms of personal comfort, access to preventive medicine, life expectancy, etc.