Chinese Students' English Name Practices
and Their Identities

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the relationship between Chinese students' practice of adopting and/or using an English name and their identities. I am concerned with why Chinese students agreed or refused to adopt an English name at the inception, how their attitudes towards their English name(s) have changed over time, what criteria they used when choosing their English names, and what the relationship is between their English name(s) and their identities. I understand participants' practice of adopting an English name as the result of the habits of adopting *ming* and *zi* in the Chinese naming culture. Participants' English name practice is also in accordance with the collectivist culture that is dominant in China. Participants use an English name in the effort to avoid being a problem for the group in which they are involved because they view the content of self as social categories. Examining the social and political contexts, the social influence from Hong Kong and Taiwan and the carrying out the Reform-and-Open-up policy in mainland China are also important factors that have contributed to the popularity of adopting and/or using English names among Chinese people. From the second language learning perspective, participants' English name(s) sometimes may be their investment in imagined communities. Participants' criteria for choosing an English name are similar to some common criteria for choosing a Chinese name. Participants' narratives reveal that there is a direct and close relationship between participants' English names and their identities. They associated their English name with their actualities and realities, such as their life goals and their ideal personality qualities.

Résumé

Cette étude qualitative explore la relation entre la coutume des étudiants chinois d'adopter ou d'employer un nom anglais et leurs identités culturelles. L'objet de l'étude concerne surtout pourquoi les étudiants acceptent ou refusent l'adoption d'un nom anglais, quels sont les critères qui influencent leurs choix, comment leurs attitudes à l'égard de leurs noms anglais ont changées à travers le temps et comment qualifier la relation entre leurs noms chinois et leurs identités propres. Je comprends la pratique des participants d'adopter un nom anglais comme étant la réflexion de la coutume de faire l'usage de *ming* et *zi* dans la culture de la nomenclature chinoise. Cette tradition est aussi en accord avec la culture collectiviste qui est dominante en Chine. Les participants font l'usage d'un nom anglais afin d'éviter d'être un problème pour le groupe dans lequel ils sont, parce qu'ils ont une perception d'eux-mêmes comme étant étroitement lié à des catégories sociales. En examinant de plus près le contexte sociopolitique chinois, on s'aperçoit que le Hong Kong, le Taiwan et les réformes chinoises concernant l'Ouverture sur l'Occident ont beaucoup contribué à la popularité d'adopter ou d'utiliser un nom anglais dans la Chine continentale. Du point de vue des étudiants de langues étrangères, leurs noms anglais sont parfois un investissement dans des communautés imaginées. Les critères pour choisir un nom anglais sont semblables à leurs critères pour choisir un nom chinois. Les témoignages des participants révèlent qu'il y a un lien étroit et direct entre leurs noms anglais et leurs identités. Ils associent leurs noms anglais à leurs réalités personnelles et à leurs rêves, tel que leurs objectifs de vie et leurs traits de personnalités idéaux.

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Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter One: Setting the Scene

Would a rose by any other name smell at all? (Alia 2007:11)

当你的情人已改名玛丽，你怎能送她一首菩萨蛮?
When your lover has changed her name to Mary, how could you write her a love poem in the form of Pusaman[1]? [My translation] (G.Z. Yu, 1965)

In this introductory chapter, I lay a general groundwork for my thesis by presenting the contexts in which I carried out my inquiry on the relationship between Chinese students' practices of adopting and/or using English names and their identities. I introduce my subjective link to this topic, how I became interested in it and why I chose it as the theme of my thesis.

Personal Contexts: Subjective Link with the Issue

My initial interest in the possible relationships between one's personal name and his/her cultural, social and ethnic identities derives from my personal experience as an English learner and an adult Chinese immigrant in Canada. I immigrated to Canada four years ago. Two years later, I began my graduate studies at McGill University, an English Canadian university in Montreal. Now, I work as a Mandarin teacher at some local Canadian colleges. My own profound personal life changes provoked questions such as "Who am I? Why am I doing what I am doing? What do I really want to do?" These

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[1] Pusaman: Also known as Buddha Man, "Midnight Song", "Hua Yi", "the overlap." During the Tang dynasty, a group of exotic women visited China on behalf of their own country. These women wore tall hair and golden decorations. The Tang dynasty's royal musicians then composed a special tune to commemorate this event. The name of the tune later became a special tune to which ci (词) poems are composed.

questions appeared to me with such a strong force that I became confused. I kept on asking myself such questions, but I had no real answers to them. Then, I confronted the "name puzzle" phenomenon: many Chinese people chose to use an English name at some point in their life.

The following is a typical example of a name-exchange conversation that took place between me and my previous francophone neighbors when I first arrived in Montreal:

Conversational exchange

"Hi, what's your name?" my neighbor asked.
"My name is Queen." I answered.
"Quinn?" Her voice rose a little bit.
"Er, Queen, Q-U-E-E-N." I spelt the name.
"Queen?" a puzzled look on her face.
"Yup." I felt awkward and sorry for the confusion I brought to her.
"Hi, Queen, I am Marie-Noël." She said.
"Excuse me, Mary what?" I raised my tone.
"Marie-Noël." A little bit more slowly but still not clear to my ears.
"Mary No Ella?" Puzzled, I asked for clarification.
"Yes." She looked satisfied.
"…" I felt more puzzled.

I cannot date this conversation because such conversations were by no means rare when I first settled down in the Plateau area, a Francophone Montreal community. At the time, I did not feel that there was anything unusual with my English name which was Queen. Nor did I think about why I chose to use my English name when I introduced myself. One day, my husband and I were chatting with my husband's newly-acquainted friend, a half-Chinese-half-Australian young man. A neighbor passed by and greeted my husband: "*Bonjour, Jack (Good morning, Jack)!*" After he left, our friend looked puzzled and asked my husband "*Who's Jack? Are you Jack?*" My husband replied, "*Oh, Jack is my English name.*" Our friend, who knew my husband by his Chinese name, Jin, still felt

puzzled and asked "*But, why do you use an English name? You are Jin, not Jack.*" "*Well, yes.*" My husband echoed. I noticed that we used our Chinese names with him. However, when we gave other people our English names, we were also sincere in doing so. We assumed that using an English name was the *natural* thing to do in Canada. We definitely did not mean to give people a fake name. Our English names are names that we carefully chose years ago and we have continued to use thereafter. We designated them to be used in English-speaking contexts.

Why did we adopt English names? We had never even thought about this question before. It seems that there is no reason. Using an English personal name in Canada seemed quite natural. We have had our own English names for so many years and we sincerely believed that they could be our REAL names. But why didn't we give our English names to this friend? Maybe, it is because he is half Chinese. However, is this a sufficient explanation? I had no clear answer to this puzzle, but I could sense that it confused all three of us. I continued to struggle over both my two names for a while. I would definitely not give up my Chinese name; however, I felt that it would be hard to abandon my English name, which I had used for almost ten years in China. I decided that since I was still a new immigrant to Canada, it was better to straighten everything out from the beginning, including my name, so as to avoid any possible future problems or confusion. I buried my English name in my memory and chose to use only my Chinese name. I had some vague, unsettling sense of "betraying" my English name but somehow, my mind was at peace for a while.

This name issue did not resurface again until the first day I sat down in a classroom at McGill as a graduate student. Since it was the first class of the semester, we were

asked to introduce ourselves. When the first Chinese student took her turn, she said, "*I am ZHANG, Song, but you can call me Susan. I am from China.*" Then, the exchange went like this:

> Conversational exchange
>
> *"Excuse me," the professor politely interrupted, "What's your name again?"*
> *"Oh, Susan."*
> *"Sorry, but what is your Chinese name?" the professor clarified.*
> *"Song, but you can call me Susan." the Chinese student sincerely offered.*
> *"Well, I would like to try your Chinese name first. Is it SOONG?"*
> *"Err, Song."*
> *"Song?"*
> *"Yes."*
> *"Thank you Song."*

Other Chinese students did not say anything, but after Song, they all introduced themselves only by their Chinese names.

I did not think about it at that time and merely assumed that they did not have an English name, until one day, I was invited to a party by one of my Chinese classmates. I had never been to his apartment before and was not sure if I was at the right place. Then, I met two young Canadian fellows at the entrance to the apartment building. They told me that they lived there.

> Conversational exchange
>
> *"Does Yu-qing live here?" I asked.*
> *"Who?" They looked puzzled.*
> *"Yu-qing, the Chinese international student." I specified.*
> *"Oh, you mean Gene?" They asked.*
> *Now, it was my turn to be puzzled and their turn to explain, "You come for the party?"*
> *"Yes." I replied. I came for a party and at least, it seemed that there was a party there.*
> *"Gene is on the second floor. Come on with us." They offered.*
> *"Who is Gene? Am I in the right place? Is Yu-qing Gene?" I silently asked myself.*
> *Soon we saw Yu-qing on the second floor, waiting for his guests.*
> *"Hi, Gene." The two Canadian men greeted him.*
> *"Hi, Gene." I greeted him, emphasizing his English name on purpose.*

"Hi," he smiled and made no comments on my "unnatural" way of greeting him.
"Why Gene?" I later asked him in Chinese.
"Well, I used this name with all non-Chinese speakers here except in our classroom." Yu-qing casually replied in Chinese.

Yu-qing was also the first participant whom I interviewed when I began to collect data for this thesis. I asked him with whom he would use his English name. He said, "*Well, here, in Canada, I use my English name everywhere with every non-native-Chinese speaker except in our classroom because, you know, our professors sort of prefer our Chinese names. I use my Chinese name with non-native-Chinese speakers only in our classrooms.*" Later, he told me that he felt that his English name could perfectly represent him as who he was and his English name was almost of equal importance to him as his Chinese name. Yu-qing's case is different from mine. I liked my English name, but I never gave my previous English name such a significant value.

Such experiences aroused my interest in understanding Chinese people's English names. I googled and discussed this name issue with people of different origins. One day, Yasuko, my Japanese classmate, excitedly came and told me that she coincidentally saw our Taiwanese friend's passport and she found that her English name was officially printed in her passport. I did follow-up research and noticed an interesting phenomenon which I called the "passport name" among Chinese people in/from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore.

Regional Contexts: "Passport Name" and "Daily Communication Name"

The "passport name" refers to the name printed on one's official documents such as one's official passport; the "daily communication name" is the name a person chooses to use in his/her daily life. I found that one's daily communication name was not

necessarily the same as one's passport name. When I compared the names of ethnically Chinese people from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore, I noticed some interesting differences.

A regular Chinese passport issued by the People's Republic of China (PRC) only includes one's Chinese name, followed by its Pinyin form. Pinyin, as the most common Standard Mandarin Romanization system in use, means "to spell the sound". Take my passport as an example. In the center of the name page, my name is printed in the Chinese characters, 王潘, and on the next line, right below these characters, follows the corresponding Pinyin form, WANG, PAN. As far as my official documents are concerned, there is no place for an English name. However, having and/or using an English name in one's daily life is not a rare practice in mainland China, especially among young generations living in big cities or for people who work for foreign, Hong Kong, or Taiwanese companies in mainland China.

On the passport of Taiwanese people, besides the regular "姓名/Name" section, there is also another line for "外文別名/Also known as". However, in reality, this "Also known as" is not a literal translation of the "外文別名", which should literally be translated as "foreign language alternative personal name." Presently, the most popular foreign language in Taiwan appears to be English. Therefore, their English name seems to be "officially" legitimized, at least in their passport.

One's name on the passport of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of PRC can be found in two different places. One is at the central place of the page, spelled in both Chinese characters and the characters' phonetic alphabet that is not necessarily Pinyin. The other is right below the passport holder's photo, which is an area for "one's

English name". This "English name" is often the same as one's Chinese name in phonetic alphabet. One participant, Zhizheng studied for three years at a university in Hong Kong before she came to study at McGill. The following excerpt from her narrative revealed a Hong Konger's name practice:

> *Hong Kongers always put their English name in between their Chinese given and family name. Their English name is not their middle name; it is also their first name. For example, on their ID card, there are spaces for four characters of one's name. Hong Kongers' Chinese names usually have three characters, two for the Chinese given name. They put their Chinese given name into the first two characters' spaces, followed by their English name, and their family name comes last. This is what is on their official ID card. When they went to study abroad and wrote their names down, they often wrote a long cluster of names. When their non-Chinese-speaking tutors saw their names, they did not know how to pronounce their Chinese given name. When they suddenly saw the English name there, the one they knew, such as Danny or Jerry, they would always snatch it and call them accordingly. (ZHANG Zhi-zheng, Interview, September 16th, 2007)*

It is necessary to clarify that the concept of an ID card in mainland China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is different from that in Canada. In Canada, ID cards can be the Health Insurance card, the driver's license, or even one's student ID card. In mainland China and Hong Kong, the government issues one special identity card that is called the ID card. This is the only card that can be officially considered as one's ID card, which functions as one's passport inside China or Hong Kong.

In the case of Singaporean Chinese, their practice can be still different. Tan (2001), a Singaporean, explained his own name like this:

> *For example, my name, as it appears in my identity card, birth certificate and passport, is Peter Tan Kok Wan. Many readers will already express surprise at my family name appearing in the middle of my list of names. Most Singaporeans, when encountering my name, will definitely recognise it as a Chinese name… They will also definitely recognise that this is not the name of someone from China. If probed further, they will also go on to say that this is not the name of someone from Taiwan or Hong Kong either. They might, in addition,*

make certain assumptions about my social background, my religion,
perhaps even my educational background and my age. (Tan 2001: 45)

In Tan's case, when he writes his name on official documents, he puts his English name first, followed by his Chinese full name that is ordered in the traditional Chinese way— his Chinese family name precedes his Chinese given name.

After having briefly compared the different name practices among ethnically Chinese people in the greater China region, I realized that Chinese people's English name might not be a simple issue, especially when considering its popularity among Chinese people. Will the present name practice in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore be the future practice of mainland China? Chinese people imbed so many meanings in their Chinese given names. How will this name change influence their identities? I felt that qualitative research methodologies might enable me to discuss an issue rooted in people's personal life experiences, and it might enable me to learn the deeper reasons for people's personal preferences for their names. Through writing this thesis, I have come to realize that this process is also the process of understanding my own identity, in which I struggled to seek possible answers to the question of "who I am".

English Name and English Class

English is presently a compulsory course in most public and private schools in China, including elementary, secondary schools and also universities and colleges. For many Chinese students, the English class is the place where they first received their English names. After having adopted an English name, they tend to use it not only in their English classes, but also outside the class with other people, especially those who do not speak Chinese. My own case can serve as a typical example.

I chose *Queen* as my English name at the request of my native-English-speaking English teacher when I was an undergraduate student in mainland China and majored in English education. That teacher asked each of his students to choose an English name. All my classmates accepted his proposal without question. Actually, I felt excited about having a new name. I racked my brains and decided to name myself "Queen". This name was after a heroine of an American TV series, Dr. Quinn. While watching the TV series, I did not pay any attention to the short vowel in this family name, Quinn, and I thought it must be the word I knew, Queen. I told my English teacher that my English name would be "Queen" and the teacher said, "Wow, this is a very powerful name." I felt positively encouraged and "Queen" therefore became my English name. I felt satisfied also because the Chinese equivalent of this word (queen) was "nü wang", which was close to my Chinese family name, "WANG". Before I became acquainted with people from other countries, I had seldom been addressed by my Chinese first name by anybody including my family members who would sometimes address me by my pet name. In mainland China, it is far more commonly accepted to be addressed by one's family name or full name than to be addressed by one's given name because the latter usually indicates some romantic or rather intimate relationship between interlocutors.

I once thought about changing this English name because it was difficult for the Chinese tongue, including my own, to pronounce the long vowel "*ee*" in this word precisely. However, I gave up this idea because many people had already known me by this English name. When I was in China, I used my Chinese name with other Chinese people and my English name with people from other countries. All non-Chinese

speaking interlocutors that I met in China accepted my English name and addressed me accordingly.

*** Geographical Contexts ***

When I began to collect data for this thesis, I conducted all interviews and questionnaires in two cities: Taiyuan and Montreal. Taiyuan is the capital city of Shanxi province in China and I studied and worked in this city for twelve years before I came to Canada. Montreal is a bilingual, French and English, metropolis of Canada. I landed in this city as an immigrant and have lived here for four years. I chose these two cities because of my personal interest and ease of access to target participants, undergraduate or graduate Chinese students, in these two cities.

Taiyuan, Shanxi

Taiyuan is located in the central region of Shanxi province which is famous for its natural resources of coal deposits. Geographically, Shanxi province is isolated from neighboring provinces by mountains on all four sides. In the north of the province, there are the Heng Mountains; in the east, there are the Taihang Mountains; in the south, there are the Zhongtiao Mountains; and in the west, there are the Lüliang Mountains. The Yellow River flows through the province along the west side. The landscape of this province is prominently mountainous. Most cities in this province are located in the basins among these mountains.

Figure 1: A map of China
Source: http://www.chinatour.com/maps/maps.htm

Figure 2: A sketch map of the location of Taiyuan in Shanxi province
Sources: Wikipedia website: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiyuan

Figure 3: A topographic map of Shanxi province.
Sources: Google satellite map

Taiyuan is one of the cities in China that have a recorded history of more than 2,500 years. Its politically prosperous period was the Tang dynasty (618 AD – 907 AD), a time when the royal family of the dynasty originally flourished. Dynasties following Tang marginalized the city and the whole province was more of a military importance as a region near the border of the country. In the 19th and the 20th centuries, Shanxi became the richest province of China. Untill the beginning of the 20th century, Shanxi was still the most important center of finance and trade in China (Q.Y. Yu, 2002). Shanxi gradually lost its leading financial position in the 20th century and since the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Shanxi is considered as a province of natural resources. According to the Statistics Bureau of the Chinese government, out of the 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities in mainland China, Shanxi's nominal GDP in 2005 was 412.12 billion yuan, ranked sixteenth in China.

The main ethnic population living in this province is the Han people who occupy up to 99.7% of the whole provincial population. Therefore, this province is overall monolingual (mandarin) and mono-ethnic (Han people). Han people makes up the dominant ethnic group in China and this name, Han, comes from the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – 220 A.D.). It was in the Han Dynasty that China, as a country, began to establish its ideology of being a great nation both in its giant geographical area and in its powerful influence on the surrounding countries or ethnic groups, and that Chinese people started to build up a sense of belonging to the same ethnic group and sharing the same ancestors, 黄帝炎帝 (Huang Di and Yan Di, literally, Emperor Huang and Emperor Yan), and the same culture, represented by Confucius, Buddhism, and Taoism. In 2001, out of the whole population of the 31 provinces on mainland China, the population of Han people

was 1,159,400,000 and made up 91.59% of the whole population; the population of various minority peoples was 106,430,000 and made up to 8.41% of the whole population. Han people forms the largest single human ethnic group in the world.

All participants in the China group are from two universities located in Taiyuan. Due to its national economic positioning as a province of natural resources, Shanxi does not have as much interaction with other countries as eastern provinces do. Many participants in China claimed in the interview that they did not have many opportunities to speak English with native-English speakers and some of them felt that they actually did not use English at all in their daily lives.

Montreal, Quebec

All Chinese participants in the Canada group reside in Montreal, the biggest city in the officially unilingual French province of Quebec and the second largest city in Canada. Although the federal official languages are English and French, the only official language of Quebec is French. Montreal is actually a bilingual area. Both Canada and Quebec "encourage immigrants and visible minorities to participate in the life of their country and province, respectively, and both strive for greater inclusiveness" (Ross, 2004:11). However, promises of inclusion are more like a political rhetoric and many visible minority people are still economically and politically being marginalized (Ross, 2004).

There have been several waves of immigration in Canadian history. For the first sixty years of the 20th century, European nations and the United States were the primary

sources of immigrants to Canada. The 1990s saw a huge wave of immigrants from Asian countries (Table 1).

Table 1: Place of birth by period of immigration, Canada, 2001

	Period of immigration									
	Before 1961		1961 - 1970		1971 - 1980		1981 - 1990		1991 - 2001[1]	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total immigrants	894,465	100.0	745,565	100.0	936,275	100.0	1,041,495	100.0	1,830,680	100.0
United States	34,805	3.9	46,880	6.3	62,835	6.7	41,965	4.0	51,440	2.8
Europe	809,330	90.5	515,675	69.2	338,520	36.2	266,185	25.6	357,845	19.5
Asia	28,850	3.2	90,420	12.1	311,960	33.3	491,720	47.2	1,066,230	58.2
Africa	4,635	0.5	23,830	3.2	54,655	5.8	59,715	5.7	139,770	7.6
Caribbean, Central and South America	12,895	1.4	59,895	8.0	154,395	16.5	171,495	16.5	200,010	10.9
Oceania and other countries	3,950	0.4	8,865	1.2	13,910	1.5	10,415	1.0	15,385	0.8
(1) Includes data up to May 15, 2001.										

Source: Statistics Canada http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/ analytic/ companion/etoimm/tables/canada/period.cfm

During the ten-year period from 1991 to 2001, around 1.8 million people immigrated to Canada, out of which the People's Republic of China was the leading source country (Table 2).

Table 2: Top 10 countries of birth, Canada, 2001

	Immigrated before 1961			Immigrated 1991-2001[1]	
	Number	%		Number	%
Total immigrants	894,465	100.0	Total immigrants	1,830,680	100.0
United Kingdom	217,175	24.3	China, People's Republic of	197,360	10.8
Italy	147,320	16.5	India	156,120	8.5
Germany	96,770	10.8	Philippines	122,010	6.7
Netherlands	79,170	8.9	Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region	118,385	6.5
Poland	44,340	5.0	Sri Lanka	62,590	3.4
United States	34,810	3.9	Pakistan	57,990	3.2
Hungary	27,425	3.1	Taiwan	53,755	2.9
Ukraine	21,240	2.4	United States	51,440	2.8
Greece	20,755	2.3	Iran	47,080	2.6
China, People's Republic of	15,850	1.8	Poland	43,370	2.4
(1) Includes data up to May 15, 2001.					

Source: Statistics Canada http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/analytic/ companion/etoimm/tables /canada/pobtop.cfm

During the same ten years, according to Statistics Canada, the census metropolitan area of Montreal was home to 215,100, or almost 12% of, immigrants who arrived during the 1990s. Not only is Montreal one of the largest cities, along with Toronto and Vancouver, to have attracted the largest number of new immigrants in Canada; it also hosts an important population of international students. Because of past and recent immigration trends, Montreal boasts great ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity (Table 3).

Table 3: Population by selected ethnic origins, by census metropolitan areas (2001 Census) Montreal

	Total responses	Single responses	Multiple responses
Montréal		Number	
Total population	3,380,645	2,473,370	907,270
Canadian	1,885,085	1,244,580	640,505
French	900,485	293,185	607,300
Italian	224,460	154,050	70,405
Irish	161,235	27,295	133,945
English	134,115	29,195	104,920
Scottish	94,705	14,420	80,290
Jewish	80,390	52,090	28,300
Haitian	69,945	61,930	8,010
Chinese	57,655	47,510	10,145
Greek	55,865	44,615	11,250
German	53,850	13,180	40,675
Québécois	44,965	30,225	14,735
Lebanese	43,740	32,405	11,330
North American Indian	42,655	7,210	35,450
Portuguese	41,050	31,550	9,500
Polish	38,615	17,140	21,475
Spanish	35,245	14,950	20,295
East Indian	32,370	25,760	6,615
Vietnamese	25,605	21,650	3,955
Arab, not included elsewhere	21,545	15,835	5,710
Russian	20,495	7,155	13,345
Ukrainian	20,050	8,035	12,010
Filipino	18,985	16,050	2,935
Belgian	18,695	5,935	12,760
Armenian	18,445	13,710	4,735
Romanian	17,315	11,500	5,815
Moroccan	16,130	10,495	5,640
American (USA)	15,520	2,045	13,470
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population. Last modified: 2005-01-25			

Source: http://www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/demo27h.htm?sdi=montréal

While I was working on this chapter, one article published in a local newspaper, *The Gazette,* on October 25, 2007 caught my attention. This article, "Bill 195 - a landmark in the annals of narrow-mindedness", authored by Henry Aubin, describes two separate news stories that took place simultaneously in Montreal. I feel that the article

effectively reflects, at least in part, the complexity of the inclusiveness and multiculturalism situation in Montreal:

> *One news story is that city hall and the Quebec Liberal government have, with Ottawa's support, been trying to get the United Nations to move its headquarters to Montreal from New York... the initiative epitomizes Montreal's ambition to be open to the world... You'll also see it in the successful efforts of all three levels of government to attract such international agencies as ICAO, IATA and Dick Pound's WADA... But it's a vision that collides head-on with last week's other tell-tale event, the Parti Quebecois's tabling of a bill to create Quebec citizenship - Bill 195. It's a landmark in the annals of narrow-mindedness... The bill would prevent newcomers to Quebec - including Canadian citizens from other provinces - from becoming citizens of the province unless they speak French. Such non-citizens would not be able to run in municipal, school or provincial elections, nor could they make political donations. For a jurisdiction that is not a country, it is breathtakingly undemocratic and discriminatory. It typifies the siege-mentality nationalism that undermines the efforts of those who want to open up Montreal to the world. (The Montreal Gazette, October 25, 2007)*

The author then points out in the same article that:

> *political leaders sometimes say outrageous things in private or off the cuff, when they haven't had time to ponder their words. They duly 'clarify' what they meant, and the news cycle moves on. However, when a political party states controversial ideas in draft legislation, those ideas possess solemnity. They come from not one person but many... (The Montreal Gazette, October 25, 2007)*

In the era of globalization, people are realizing that multicultural education plays an important role in the realization of harmonious co-existence amongst people of different origins. Most present conflicts in the world are directly or indirectly rooted in the lack of understanding of each other's culture, religion, or identity. In Montreal, the increasing number of immigrants can be an ideal setting for multiculturalism but can also be the source of ethnic, cultural, and/or religious conflicts. A case in point is the on-going debate about reasonable accommodation in Quebec since 1985. The traditional

legal conception of equality used to take the principle of uniform treatment as its basis. As an increasing number of immigrants come to Canada who inevitably bring with them their own cultures, religions, customs, the law gradually comes to recognize that "rule of equality sometimes demands differential treatment"(Bouchard & Taylor, 2008:23). Reasonable accommodation is a concept that reflects such attention on differential treatment:

> *It is intended to counteract certain forms of discrimination that the courts have traditionally qualified as indirect, i.e., which, without directly or explicitly excluding a person or a group of people, nonetheless bring about discrimination in the wake of a prejudicial effect because of the rigid application of a norm. (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008:24)*

For example, the dress code of a company can be adjusted in the case of pregnant workers. Some parking spaces are reserved for people with disabilities. Such adjustment of rules may "prevent individuals from being put at a disadvantage or excluded and their right to equality to thus be compromised" (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008:24). Meanwhile, the duty of accommodation has its limits. For example, a request may be rejected if it leads to "unreasonable cost, upsetting an organization's operation, infringing the rights of others, or prejudicing the maintenance of security and public order" (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008:26).

Montreal provides an optimal stage on which multiple cultures, religions, and ethnicities meet as a common daily reality, where governments' efforts to be inclusive and cases of some local groups' struggle to keep the important features of their own identity/identities are present almost every day and everywhere. To learn and respect different identities is a task that concerns us all; all people should have their own voice heard in the efforts to build our home into a happier one. In Heidegger's words, this is

described as a *poetic home* and in Chinese Taoist philosophy, it is called *harmonious co-existence*. Since I have been living in this city, I have heard from various media that not only Chinese people but also many other people from visible minorities are adopting English or French names when they try to assimilate into the "mainstream" society or when they look for a job. It cannot simply be taken for granted that people *should* "do as Romans do when they are in Rome." What are people thinking and how do they feel about changing or sticking to their names? How will their decisions on their own names influence their children and how will such influences affect the children's lives? What are their life stories telling us?

As my first step to examine this English name issue, I chose to focus on Chinese students in China and in Canada. All participants were full-time university students when they participated in my research. By analyzing their English name practices, I try to discuss questions such as why they agreed or refused to adopt an English name, how they chose their English names, and what the relationship is between their identities and their English names.

Summary

In this chapter, I introduced my subjective link with the theme of this thesis—Chinese students' English names and their identities, how I became interested in this topic and why I decided to choose it as the theme of my thesis. I presented the geographic contexts in which I did my inquiry. In the next chapter, I review the literature on Chinese people's English names and their identities, and then, I present the conceptual framework that supports this present research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

All participants who have an English name received their first English name during their English learning process, either at the request of their English teachers, or as a result of their peers' suggestions, or out of their personal interest. Participants in the Canada group have the experience of studying in different countries, at least, both in China and Canada. Although many participants in the China group have not really crossed borders between countries, China's modernization has also granted them access to learn about or contact different cultures. Each and every one of them is making efforts to integrate their understandings of different cultures with their Chinese roots. In this process, they have their own stories about their English names to tell and all these stories are related to their English learning experiences. In this chapter, I first define the two central concepts of this thesis: identity and name. Then, I review literature on the relationship between name and identity, especially Chinese people's English names and their identities. I present the notions and theories that I employ to frame my discussion.

Definitions: Identity and Name

In this section, I define two basic concepts in this thesis, name and identity.

Identity

This new century is called the *era of identities* by many modern philosophers. In a strong sense, identity means too much; in a weak sense, it means too little; and it might mean nothing at all due to the sheer ambiguity of the concept (Brubaker & Cooper,

2000). Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004:19) see identity as "social, discursive, and narrative options offered by a particular society in a specific time and place to which individuals and groups of individuals appeal in an attempt to self-name, to self-characterize, and to claim social spaces and social prerogatives." They further distinguish three types of identities: "*imposed identities* (which are not negotiable in a particular time and place), *assumed identities* (which are accepted and not negotiated), and *negotiable identities* (which are contested by groups and individuals)" (Pavlenko & Blacklege, 2004:21). From the perspective of evaluating one entity's different identities, Korostelina (2007) introduces three aspects of identities: *actuality* (situation-dependent identities realized in the process of comparison between ingroup and outgroup features, in threats or in conflict), *salience* (situation-independent identities that are core identities), and *valence* (positive or negative connotations of a particular identity). Actuality is at awareness level and salience indicates both awareness and centrality. Actual identities do not have to be salient but salient identities are definitely actual. Social identities are of positive valence when they can provide a sense of security, self-esteem, and a degree of certainty; otherwise, they are of negative valence. While examining Swat Pathans' identities and their maintenance, Barth (1981) argues that social identity is a product of the border formation process, established and modified by the contrast between 'them' and 'us'. At the boundaries, people articulate and distinguish their own identities from others.

Identity used to be understood as intrinsic and inherent. Modern research views it as socially constructed. Postmodern theories further claim that identity is in an evolving state of flux (i.e., Korostelina, 2007; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Kanno, 2003;

Norton, 1995, 2001; Butler, 1990). Giddens (1991:52-53) stresses that identity has to "be routinely created and sustained in the reflective activities of the individual". Kellner (1992) probes into the roles that public media played during the Persian Gulf War between the U.S. and Iraq in 1990. He argues that individuals' gaining identity is a process of first choosing among socially predetermined norms, customs, and expectations, and then learning to adapt to them and/or reduce them. Similarly, Barth (1969) maintains that one's identities are generated, confirmed, and transformed in one's interaction with groups. Bauman (1999) also states that identity is not anything obvious or given, and in the modern trend of globalization, "it began to look like something problematic and a *task*" (Bauman, 1999:29).

Either as a flux, or a task, obtaining identities is examined as a process that is frequently termed as *identification*. Identity is a state while identification is a process that leads to this state. As identities are in an evolving state of flux, the identification process is consequently incomplete and open.

Social Identity, Individual Identity, Cultural Identity, and Ethnic Identity

The majority of identity researchers agree that the *self* is a composite rather than a unitary entity. A multiple "*I*" can be analyzed from various aspects, such as social identity, individual identity, cultural identity, ethnic identity, national identity, gender identity, collective identity, individualistic identity, personal identity, group identity, core identities, and peripheral identities. "Identity becomes actual only in the process of comparing an ingroup with an outgroup or a specific category" (Korostelina, 2007:20). For example, one's ethnic identity becomes actual when s/he interacts with people from

another ethnic group; one's national identity enhances when s/he begins to live in another country. Considering the complexity of the issue, I faced the task of choosing some identity definitions as the basic concepts in my research.

According to Korostelina (2007), identity formation is the processes of both individuation and social identification. Individuation differentiates "Me" from "Not Me" and identification acknowledges similarity between "Me" and "other people" and "My" connections with groups:

> *Individuation leads to the perception of the social world as composed of a set of varied objects (individuals), and thus this process creates the differential system "Me-Others." Identification, on the contrary, eliminates the distinction between objects and forms a conception of the "self" as identical or similar with others. If the notion of group becomes the leading cognitive category, the social world is divided into ingroups and outgroups, and this process forms the differential system "We-They." (Korostelina, 2007:42)*

To define identity concepts is to define the relationship between an individual and others or various groups.

Social identity is important for individuals because it "provides individuals with a sense of protection from the risk of interpersonal opposition and saves them from solitude by establishing boundaries and a sense of a common space within a group" (Korostelina, 2007:15). People adopt a strong social identity to overcome fear and uncertainty (Bauman, 2002). Reid and Deaux (1996) reviewed the distinction between social and personal identity:

> *Self-categorization theories (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel, 1981; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) contrast personal identity, in which the stress is on personality characteristics and behaviors (e.g., intelligent, hardworking) that differentiate one from others, with social identities that derive from group memberships (e.g., African American) and provide the basis for common identification.(Reid & Deaux, 1996:1084)*

Korostelina (2007) asserts that a result of individuals' social identification process is the sense of "we-ness"; that is, individuals are depersonalized in the process of assimilating with the prototypes of a social group.

Korostelina (2007) considers cultural identity as a key to understanding the problem of the interrelations between social and individual identity. Cultural identity, according to Korostelina (2007), is an important dimension of both individual and social identities; both social and individual identities are rooted in and influenced by cultures. Therefore, cultural differences surpass the boundaries of communication processes. Norton (1997:420) sees the relationship between social identity and cultural identity as "fluid and the commonalities more marked than the differences":

> *Social identity refers to the relationship between the individual and the larger social world, as mediated through institutions such as families, schools, workplaces, social services, and law courts. Cultural identity refers to the relationship between individuals and members of a group who share a common history, a common language, and similar ways of understanding the world. (Norton, 1997:410)*

This feature of *sharedness* is also emphasized in Heller's (1987) definition of cultural identity. According to Heller, the cultural identity is shared ways of speaking, shared culture and knowledge serving as a shared social identity, and a shared identity consolidates the social network in which in-group members live.

Sharedness is also a most salient feature of *ethnic identity*. Compared with other components, such as language, culture, religion, and ideology, "a shared history is the most important component of the meaning of ethnic identity for representatives of two ethnic groups" (Korostelina, 2007:5). "While ethnic identity should be taken to refer to a notion of shared ancestry (a kind of fictive kinship), culture refers to shared representations, norms, and practices" (Eriksen 2001:43).

Despite the differences with each other, all these identities connect and interact with others and compose the multiple "I" together. Some identities are in disaccord or even contrary to each other though they co-exist within one person. For example, an ethnically Chinese person might find his/her identity culturally Western, socially North American, and religiously Muslim. In my research, I take social, personal (or individual), ethnic, and cultural identities as the basic concepts of identity. Other identities are discussed on the basis of these identities.

Understandings of Identity in Chinese and Western Knowledge Systems

After having defined some basic concepts of identities, I examine and compare what identity means in Western and Chinese knowledge systems.

According to Chen (1996), the studies on identity in China are always embedded in the research on the concept of 人 (ren, literally man[2]), and this modern Chinese concept of *man* is actually a Western man, not a genuine Chinese man. That is, the Chinese word *man* now contains an imported connotation (Western identity) from the modern Western philosophy and such discrepancy is also reflected in how modern Chinese people define modern and traditional:

> *I will simply point out one fact: in China, many people have drawn the line according to geography, that means these people regard 'modern' as 'western', and 'traditional' as 'Chinese'... As a matter of fact, this definition is also accepted by a number of sinologists and western historians... they are only discussing at what point in Chinese history western influence became significant. (Chen, 1996:17)*

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[2] Chen (1996) translates 人 as *man*; however, the Chinese character 人 itself does not show any gender tendency. I would prefer to translate it as *person*. However, to make the discourse more coherent and easier to read, I choose to use Chen's (1996) translation though I do not quite agree with his translation.

According to this argument, a comparison between China and the West always ends up as a comparison between modern and traditional This, however, partially explains why both modern Chinese and modern Western researchers tend to compare classical Chinese philosophers' thoughts, especially Confucianism and Taoism, with modern Western thoughts when they discuss issues related to the Chinese culture or Chinese people.

Hansen (1985) examines the conceptual structure of Chinese thought and proposes that "the contrast which informs most of Western philosophy is the one-many contrast", whereas "philosophical Chinese has a part-whole structure" (Hansen, 1985:36). In other words, the western interpretation of *man* is constructed against the dichotomy of one-many, and the Chinese understandings of *man* are based on the part-whole structure. Individuals in the one-many structure are treated as interchangeable units with a fixed size and are only externally related. "Thus, with individuals comes the notion of a fixed unit—the atom, the quark, the person, the U.N. member, and so forth. To increase the scope of reference we increase the number of units or individuals." (Hansen, 1985:36); individuals in the part-whole structure, on the contrary, are of variable size because some parts may be parts of another part and "one can refer to more and less inclusive parts of the same whole" (Hansen, 1985:36). We may better understand this part-whole structure through Chen's (1996) articulation:

> *In a monistic perspective, 'man' … does not have an independent existence. Therefore, 'man' can only be identified or defined through such relations with the cosmos or with other objects in the cosmos. This is the common basic idea that traditional Chinese philosophies share and build their concepts of 'man' upon, even though these philosophies have different ways of defining the cosmos or the organic whole. (Chen, 1996:27)*

Agreeing with Hansen's (1985) conceptual dichotomy, Chen (1996) holds a similar opinion that traditional Chinese *man* defines himself as a part of the whole:

Ibsen[3] would place individual man above the nation and society, would regard the freedom of man as more important than the freedom of the nation, whereas few Chinese 'individualists' would go to this extreme. (Chen, 1996:21)

While analyzing the structure of narratives in collectivistic and individualistic cultures, Korostelina (2007) claims that in collectivist cultures with a predominant social identity, the most significant goals for a person are interdependence, group success, and social recognition; while in individualistic cultures, the most significant concepts are independence, personal growth, individual achievements, and close relationships with one's partners. From a socio-psycho perspective, Korostelina (2007) examined why collectivist philosophers tended not to pay much attention to exploring the scope and ranges of the concept of *man:*

The identities of representatives of individualistic cultures are realized after individual reflection. The identities of representatives of collectivistic cultures contain group beliefs and values that are adopted unscrutinized and are therefore not well realized and partly unconscious. (Korostelina, 2007:46)

Identities are understood in different ways in Chinese and Western knowledge systems. Hansen (1985) explains such discrepancy from a historical, cultural and constructionist perspective:

The point is that we should maximize agreement in beliefs only where we share background assumptions. Conversely, when we attribute a theory to Mencius which is different from our own, we should argue that Mencius' background beliefs could lead us to develop a similar theory… Chinese philosophy is nonindividualistic in the sense that it is more coherent to interpret it via a part-whole rather than a one-many contrast… If one mistakes this bland observation about explaining doctrines for linguistic

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[3] Henrik Johan Ibsen (1828 – 1906), a major 19th-century Norwegian poet and playwright of realistic drama.

determinism, it can only be because one supposes that all explanations are deterministic" (Hansen, 1985:40).

Identities and name are both important concepts in Chinese and Western knowledge systems. People have been examining and understanding them in different social, historical, and spatial (Soja, 1996) contexts. In the following section, I introduce understandings of *name* in Chinese and Western contexts.

Name

Almost all Indo-European languages have the word "name" in some linguistic form. The Chinese equivalent for 'name' is 名字 (mingzi). To identify somebody or something, we usually first mention their name. Many researchers agree that one's name is at the core of one's identity (i.e., Alia, 2007; Chen, 1996; Makeham, 1994; Nicolaïsen, 1974, 1980).

Nicolaïsen (1974) claims that there are three levels of meaning in a name: lexical (dictionary meaning), associative (particular lexical or onomastic items used in the naming process), and onomastic (the meaning of a denotative name as a name). "Words become names by association" (Nicolaïsen, 1974:104) and "names identify features" of a given entity (Nicolaïsen, 1980:42). As for which features are to be identified, Nicolaïsen (1980) argues that it is predetermined by different cultures.

Some other researchers argue that name is merely a classification and/or identification convention. Algeo (1985), for example, argues that names are simply words used to address someone or something by and are mere linguistic products minus any social, political or psychological context. Ziff maintained that "there is nothing in a proper name. It has information content but even so, it is all sound and if the sound is

changed the name is changed" (Ziff, in Zabeeh 1968:24, cited in Alia, 2007:11). However, the existence and importance of written language and sign languages also show that names are not merely acoustic. For a Chinese name, written form (Chinese character form) is at least as important as, if not more important than, the sound form. Chinese names which have the same sound but different Chinese character(s) are considered as completely different names.

As a central notion in ancient Greek philosophy, name is also a core concept in classical Chinese thoughts, which refer to the period around 500 B.C. to 150 B.C. (Makeham, 1994). However, this concept is interpreted quite differently in these two philosophical systems.

Hansen (1992) suggested that Classical Chinese philosophers were less concerned about the scope and range of the descriptive meaning of a *name* and they were more concerned with defining *referents,* which would match the *signifié* designated by the *name* in question. This, in Chen's (1996:27) interpretation, is attributed to the theory of Confucianism, a theory of "human relation supervising people's behavior" and "the kernel of this philosophy is *ren* (仁)." This *ren,* interpreted by Mencius, another Confucianist sage, is *airen* (爱人, to love people). From this understanding, Chen (1996) exemplifies the Chinese way of naming as follows: a man can be defined as father when he has a relation to another man as son, as an emperor when he has a relation to another man as subject; furthermore, there should be affection between father and son and righteousness between sovereign and official. This affection and righteousness are determined by Heaven (天 tian), which is a final judge and occupies the supreme position in Confucius' value system, higher than that of the feudal emperors who are actually

addressed as 天子 (tianzi), the Son of Heaven. Therefore, a father should behave like a

father and a son should behave like a son. So is the case for an emperor and his officials.

"These prescriptions place restrictions on 'man's' behaviour" (Chen, 1996:29).

Makeham (1994) considers *ming* (*name*) and *shi* (*actuality*) as "a key polar concept

in early Chinese thought" (Makeham, 1994: xi). This *shi* (实, actuality) refers to "a state

of development peculiar to an entity or state of affairs by virtue of which that entity or

state of affairs is what it is" (Makeham, 1994:7). According to Makeham (1994), early

Chinese thinkers, represented by Confucius, hold a prescriptivist view on the

relationship between name and actuality:

> *While at one level Confucius presented names as being important because they served to represent and demarcate socio-political distinctions, their real value lay in the fact that they could be used to prescribe, and not simply describe, those distinctions. The idea that ming could and should be used to prescribe shi was at the heart of Confucius' rectification of names programme. ... by the Eastern Han, it was believed that Confucius' rectification of names referred to all sorts of things, not simply ruler, minister, father, and son. (Makeham, 1994:47)*

Makeham (1994) categorizes Confucius' 正名 (zheng ming) theory, rectification of

names or correction of names, as the earliest example of a nominal prescriptivist

philosophy in classical Chinese thought. Although both Confucius and Western

nominalism agree that one entity should have only one intrinsic name, there are still

some significant distinctions:

> *[Confucius' rectification of names theory claims that] If the correct name of some entity is not apprehended, then the actuality of that entity will not be correctly discerned. And if the correct name for the correlating actuality is not employed "then things will naturally be in a state of collapse". This is quite different from the Greek position as represented by Cratylus. (Makeham, 1994: 88)*

> *[W]hen Cratylus asked, "How could anyone saying that which he says, not say that which is", he does not mean that any sound uttered by a man for any*

object is correct. An object only has one correct name and anyone who tries to call it anything else is not naming it at all but only uttering "a piece of voice." (Kirk, 1951:242; cited in Makeham, 1994: 88)

To recapitulate, many Classical Chinese philosophers, represented by Confucius, tend to define somebody or something by placing them in a net of all kinds of referents. They believe that a name both describes and prescribes the actualities of a given entity and an improper name may have a risk of undermining the nature of the name-bearer *per se*. Nominalist thinkers in East Han (名教, ming jiao) even encouraged men to pursue personal reputation so as to secure their office (Makeham, 1994). Such emphasis over a name later contributed to an "unbridled pursuit of reputation by the scholar gentry (士, shi) class in East Han Dynasty" (Makeham, 1994: xviii) and developed into a tradition of attaching great importance to a name, which still functions in modern Chinese population. As a result, whether a name can genuinely describe the actuality of the entity is not the main concern of these early Confucians because they believe that in secular human practice, there can be a discrepancy between a name and actuality; that is, one's name is more to prescribe one's actuality rather than to describe it, and the correctness of a given name would finally be judged by Heaven. Taoism holds even more radical opinions on this point. Lao Zi, the founder of Taoism, claims that "the name that can be named is not a permanent name."

Confucius' definition of name is based on his hierarchical system of father-son, ruler-minister, which is at the heart of Confucianism. This system is a power system. Confucians believe that behaving according to canons of this system leads to the establishment of an ideal social order (i.e., Chen, 1996; Feng, 1948).

Although power is a central topic in Western literati, as far as onomastics is concerned, power relations have long been on the margins of most modern Western works (Alia, 2007). Only a couple of sociologists have examined name and naming practice in a power system. Pierre Bourdieu (1991:105) points out, "there is no social agent who does not aspire … to have the power to name and to create the world through naming". He compares the 'official' power of naming to "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu 1991:239). Alia (2007) perceives naming practice as a political behavior in political structures. She claims that "naming is inseparable from other political phenomena and is an important key to analyzing power relations" (Alia, 2007:7). Enlightened by Speech Act theory — to *say* something is to *do* something and *I name* indicates an illocutionary act, an act of doing something (Austin 1962) — Alia (2007) claims that "once names are placed in sociopolitical context, as speech acts, a predictive theory is possible" (Alia, 2007:8). "To interfere with the names is to risk destroying a people. To respect a name is to respect a people" (Alia, 2007:66).

What Alia (2007) qualifies as *predictive* is close to what Confucius defined as *prescriptive* in the relationship between one's name and one's identities. They both associate a name with the future development of an entity. Confucianists' prescriptive Nominalists go one step further by arguing that people's behaviors should be in accordance with their names and when the name is improper, it is important to correct the name so as to achieve some desired development of an entity, which would finally contribute to the formation of an ideal social order.

Besides similarities, there are also differences worth noticing between Western researchers such as Bourdieu (1991) and Alia (2007), and the Confucians and Classical

Chinese Nominalists. Bourdieu and Alia, like other modern Western sociologists, emphasize the eligibility of the power-holder. They are concerned with questions such as, who has the power to name, why they have this power, and how they use this power. But Classical Chinese thinkers concentrate more on the power of the name *per se*; that is, Chinese Nominalists are concerned with whether a given name is proper or not and what a name can bring about. For classical Chinese Nominalists, a proper name is the premise of a proper actuality; a proper name contributes to, if not leads to, an entity's development along a proper direction and an improper name will end up in undermining the nature of the given entity. As for who has the ultimate power to determine the correctness of a name, Confucians leave it to the 天 (tian, Heaven), Daoists leave it to the 道 (dao, Way) or 自然 (ziran, Nature). Chinese Buddhist monks abandon their personal names because in the eyes of Buddha, everything is 空 (Kong, void).

To recapitulate, although modern Western researchers may differ from each other in their understandings of what is in a name, they do focus more on the *scope* and *range* of the *lexical, associative,* and *onomastic* meanings of a name. Names are generally believed to be able to reflect the cultures of people's living communities and names are to describe rather than to predict the future features of a given entity. Some sociologists have begun to explore *name* from different perspectives. For example, based on sociolinguistic theories of speech acts and power theories, Alia (2007) argues that a predictive theory on name is possible. Albeit name in Classical Chinese philosophy is also a controversial topic, Classical Chinese thinkers comparatively concern themselves more about relations between a name and its referents. That is, a given entity is named in a net of its relationships with other entities. Confucius' rectification of name theory

places more emphasis on prescriptive than descriptive functions of name. After Confucianism became esteemed as the orthodox philosophy, ever since the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) (Chen, 1996), name has been invested with such an importance that it is believed to be able, in a large sense, to serve as a power to obtain and maintain social order, and in a small sense, to secure personal office.

The following is an interesting paradox that is by no means rare: many modern notions or concepts that are widely employed as academic or conceptual "common" ground are actually based on Western knowledge systems; however, these terms do not necessarily have the same connotations when they are employed to discuss issues outside this Western system. For example, L.X. Wang (1998:6) noticed this paradox in his study on the issue of sovereign rights:

> *"Sovereign rights" is commonly regarded as one of the topmost sacred concepts in the modern world ... The concept per se and its theories are generated in the West and were gradually accepted by the East and China in the past century through a process of conflicts between the East and the West. However, the introduction of a new order also brings about a misunderstanding in the Eastern world—Eastern people and countries usually employ the criteria for "Sovereign rights" when they articulate their own history and explain their relationship with each other... however, such employment would inevitably result in new confusion and entanglements. The history of the East comes into being in accordance with its own system. When the East examines its own history by using other people's system, those concepts have already extracted from their living soil and become dead concepts, which would easily transform serious arguments into word games, sophistries, or lame excuses. [My translation] (L. X. Wang, 1998:6)*

Such a paradox becomes more obvious when it comes to basic concepts such as identity and name. In the following section, I discuss the concept of name.

English Names and Chinese Names

The forms of personal names can be sorted by origin as English, Irish, Hebrew, French, Greek, Celtic, German, Italian, Indian, Arabic, Spanish, American, Native American, Latin, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, etc. The list can go on and on. One name may be derived from diverse sources. For example, the English name "Julie" is a French name ultimately derived from Latin and it is a name which frequently appears in the North American cultural context. Some traditional Chinese names, such as Lian and Mei, are now entering the English name repertoire and appear in some English name dictionaries. Names, especially English names, have numerous variations which are transformed from names of other languages. This makes it even more difficult to tell which name is "purely" English or Chinese. In order to draw a rough picture regarding English and Chinese names, I will borrow Tan's (2001) terms, "*Chinese-based name*" and "*English-based names*". Consequently, Chinese names in this thesis refer to Chinese-based names that are derived from Chinese characters, and English names refers to English-based names that are derived from native English speakers' given names or names based on the English language. Therefore, I do not count the Chinese names spelt in Pinyin as English names. I treat them as variations of Chinese names. English names and Chinese names are very well established in both cultures. To articulate either one of them requires a huge amount of serious work, which is beyond the scope of what I can do in this thesis. What I present here are only some features of these two types of names that are related to this thesis from my own perspective.

First of all, English and Chinese names are names in different languages. Chinese personal names consist of Chinese characters, which usually bear some specific lexical

meaning(s) in Chinese; an English-based name is written in the Latin alphabet and frequently is "lexically meaningless" (Nicolaïsen, 1980:39). There are also some *word names* in the English-based given name repertoire, such as Lily, Rose, Stone, Winter, etc., but the majority of English given names are not lexically meaningful English words and usually cannot be used in contexts other than for names. For instance, "elephant", "dolphin" and "talent" are English words, but are usually not considered to be English names. Neither can David or Peter be used in various contexts as other common nouns can. Chinese personal given names, on the contrary, consist of Chinese characters that can usually be used in different contexts. For example, one of the most common Chinese given names, 伟 (wei, literally means Great), is also a character that can be widely used to compose various words and phrases, such as 伟大 (weida, great), 宏伟 (hongwei, magnificent), 伟岸 (wei'an, tall and robust) etc. In this sense, most Chinese names are word names. Due to this difference of names with or without lexical meaning, English and Chinese languages use different verbs to describe the behavior of naming. In English, people usually say to "choose a name"; in Chinese, it is often to 起名 (qi ming), literally, to *create* a name.

Both English and Chinese names consist of a surname (or family name/last name) and a forename (or given name /first name). The difference is that there are thousands of different family names but only a few hundred common given names, while Chinese have only a few hundred common family names but thousands of given names (Xu & D.H. Nicolson, 1992). Also, an English name sometimes includes a middle name, which is usually initialed and functions to "at best … represent a tie to the child's family history. At worst … serve as a kind of graveyard for unwanted names" ("The Best",

2007: 3). For example, the former president of the United States, George Walker Bush, whose middle name *Walker* is always initialed as W. If the person wants to, s/he can also choose to be addressed by his/her middle name. Chinese names usually do not have middle names, though they sometimes (not always) include one (only one) generation character, which is generally shared by males of the same generation within the same paternal family. The combination of this generation character and another character serves as one's given name. They cannot be used separately; that is, neither of them alone can be used as one's given name.

In a Chinese name, the family name usually precedes the given name. Many Chinese people reverse this sequence when they emigrate or live in a western country in order to be in accordance with the Western tradition that one's given name normally precedes their family name. The sequence of Chinese people's names has long been a headache for technical processing, cataloging, and bibliographic searching in the library in the Western world mainly because Chinese characters have tones and the way ethnic Chinese people arrange the sequence of their name elements are different; in addition, many of them embed an English name somewhere in their name (i.e., Lin, 1988; Zhang, Medievski, Lawrence, & Song, 2002). In this thesis, I avoid using words like 'first name' or 'last name' in order to reduce confusion; I will use "family name" and "given name" to refer to the components of names.

Both English names and Chinese names have genderless names, a name that can be used as both boy's and girl's name. The difference lies in the percentage of such names. Most English names show gender difference, but distinguishing gender is not an important function of a Chinese name. Take the participants as an example. Two male

participants, 戴玉清 (DAI,Yu-qing) and 周旻珉 (ZHOU, Minmin), admitted that their Chinese given names were somehow feminine; at least five participants' given names, 蒨 (Jian), 至正 (Zhi-zheng), 简言 (Jian-yan), 泠 (Ling), and 正一 (Zheng-yi), do not show any salient gender features.

Naming children after relatives, family members or friends is a common practice in many cultures. For instance, European Jews and Inuit people prefer commemorative naming, and value and honor the namesake connection. Inuit people see the "namesake relationship as a way of continuing people's lives" (Alia, 2007:6). Some Inuit would even give their own names to their favoured people during their own lifetime (Alia, 2007). People following such naming traditions often choose to endow their children with the given name of their relatives, grandparents, or friends. This nomenclature custom is also well-accepted in North America. However, Chinese people seldom name their children after their own relatives, family members or their friends. Generally, most Chinese people try their best to avoid such namesake practices because such practices might risk distorting generation order in their eyes.

A large number of given names in English are known as the "Christian names", especially Biblical names. These names are used as people's personal names in all fields of their lives and a person whose name is Mary does not have to be a Christian. When it comes to Chinese names, religious names and secular names are two independent name systems. After becoming a monk, one follows Buddhist disciplines, gives up one's ties with the secular world, and is no longer considered as belonging to one's original family. As a result, such people have to abandon their original secular name (both the family name and the given name) and adopt a religious name. Becoming a monk, in Chinese, is

called 出家 (chujia) that literally means leaving one's family. Generally speaking, Chinese people's given names are overall non-religious names.

Modern Westerners are accustomed to being addressed by their given name, which is believed to facilitate establishing an egalitarian basis for interpersonal communication (Li, 1997). Choi, Hanley and Dale (1993) find in their research that Chinese people are more sensitive to their family names than to their given names. In mainland China, people prefer to address each other by family names (plus a certain title if necessary). Chinese people's given name is usually confined to a limited area, especially, within the family. Generally, even parents would not call their children by their given name. As far as Chinese in mainland China are concerned, calling another Chinese person by their given name always indicates quite an intimate relationship, such as husband and wife, or lovers. Female friends sometimes call each other by their given name to show their closest friendship.

A common trend in onomastics shared by both Chinese and English names is that modern people increasingly tend to endow their chidren with unusual names. A much greater diversity emerges in modern Chinese people's names than was found two decades ago. Similarly, according to *Best Baby Names for Canadians,* a book giving suggestions for Canadian parents on how to choose an English name for their babies, in the 1960s, nearly 40% of all boys and about 26% of all girls had one of the top 20 names and at that time, "schools were awash with Daves, Mikes, Marys, Sues, and Lindas" ("The Best", 2007:19); however, by 2005, the top 20 names made up less than 19% of all boys' names and only around 14% of all girls' names. Parents now increasingly prefer to endow their babies with more unusual names and "with so many unusual

names being given, standing out may actually help a child to fit in" ("The Best", 2007:20).

Han People's First Names — 名 (Ming), 字 (Zi), 号（Hao）

The system of family names and given names did not emerge in China until the Han dynasty (206 B.C. - 220 A.D.) (Q.G. Wang, 1988). Since ancient times, Chinese people's "address terms" have been a complex system. Before the 20th century, the English expression, "given name", could be the equivalent of three different Chinese words, 名(ming), 字(zi) and 号(hao) — *Ming* was one's first name recorded in one's family tree, *zi* was given at the age that a person was considered as an adult, and *hao* generally equaled to assumed name, alternative name, or literary name. These three characters (名、字、号) served different functions in actual use. One's *ming* (名) was usually used in two social contexts: first, by the *ming-bearer* for self-reference in order to be modest and to show respect to others; second, by the interlocutor who was senior either in age or in social status to the addressed. Addressing or referring to someone by his *ming* was usually considered as impolite or would indicate an unequal social status between the addressors and the addressed. One's *ming* was mainly used within the family or used by oneself as a way to show one's modesty. For example, Confucius always referred to himself as "Qiu", his *ming*, with his students and other people to show his modesty and politeness. One's *zi* was more broadly known and used between people of a similar age or social status to show respect to each other. Adopting a *zi* (by no means indicates an abandoning of one's own given name) used to mark the transition between childhood and adulthood. The main social function of one's *zi* was to indicate

interlocutors' egalitarian positions in a hierarchical addressing system. When a person matured, s/he could adopt *hao(s),* names that could be chosen much more freely by oneself or proposed by other people. It could reflect one's understandings of self, or of the world. Throughout one's life, Chinese people used to have one *ming*, one *zi* (in some cases, two *zi*'s), and several *hao*'s. One's *zi* was often related to one's *ming*, but it was not a must.

In present Mainland China, especially after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), people now usually use only the *ming* during their lives. The present census registration law in China makes it rather difficult to officially change one's name. Since the national population increased radically in the past century, many present Chinese registration departments of the Chinese government now follow an unwritten rule that a given name should at least consist of two Chinese characters. To control the increasing tendency of using rare characters as personal names, the Chinese government has been planning to launch a 《人名用字表》 (ren ming yong zi biao), "The List of Characters Used as Personal Names", since 2003, but this is a list of Chinese characters that can be used as component(s) of a virtual first name. It is not a name repertoire.

Literature on Chinese People's English Names and Their Identities

A man's own name is not, say, like a cloak, which merely hangs from his shoulders and can be pulled and tugged, if need be. Rather, it is a perfectly fitting garment, nay, it is grown tight to him all over, like his own skin, and one may not scrape and pare away at it without wounding the person himself. (Goethe, cited in Gutbrodt, 1995:629)

Goethe, the great German poet, equates one's name to one's self. Name even becomes a cause of the tragedy of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Juliet cried, "'Tis but thy name

that is my enemy; … O be some other name! What's in a name?" Romeo answered his lover by saying, "I take thee at thy word: Call me but love, and I'll be new baptised; Henceforth I never will be Romeo" (Shakespeare, cited in Gutbrodt, 1995: 579). What is in a name? What is the relationship between one's name and one's identities?

Making a name one's own is an important part of individuals' self-identification (Nicolaïsen, 1984). Nicolaïsen (1980:42) proposes the paradox that "we cannot name what we do not perceive, but we do not properly perceive a thing until we have named it." As a result of this paradox, he assumes there is a direct, close, and knowable relationship between the name and the feature (or person) named. While examining names in literary works, Nicolaïsen (1984) noticed an interesting fact: a protagonist's name can be as common as Jack or Jane, but "one cannot be a princess or beautiful or both when one bears humble or even ugly names" (Nicolaïsen, 1984:261). He argues that when a name is both given and used, even if it is a name intended to hide rather than to reveal one's identity, it will invariably lead to recognition, which is a determinant of one's identity formation.

From a socioeconomic perspective, Li (1997) examined the semantics and functions of Western names as they were used by Chinese Hong Kongers as preferred address forms, both when communicating with Westerners and among themselves. He argues that Western-style English first name adoption functions as acquiring a "borrowed identity" so as to realize an "involvement strategy" (Scollon and Scollon, 1995). In other words, Hong Kongers prefer to use an English name because the first-name address enables these bilingual Hong Kongers to communicate with their interlocutors on a more egalitarian basis and quickly develop interpersonal friendship

and intimacy. Such an egalitarian basis and quick development of friendship and intimacy are not encouraged in the Chinese addressing tradition but is somehow crucial in modern multicultural business transactions.

Blum (1997: 365) asserts that in China "people are accustomed to being addressed and referred to by an assortment of names, and they do not necessarily retain any of them as their 'real' name or as the one that they feel reflects their identity." However, Edward (2006) suggests that the case is much more complex. Edward (2006) investigated Chinese international students' adopting or not adopting an English name while they studied in Great Britain. Adopting an English name, according to Edward (2006), might be a result of three factors. First, it is a way to mitigate the contradiction created by the "symmetrical solidarity", "power" and "face" in the classroom on the students' part. Chinese students make efforts to keep a balance between original and new identities. Second, it is an identity "investment" that can confer a kind of symbolic capital in students' target language and target culture learning. Adopting an English name or not might be both strategies of compliance and resistance on the students' part. Third, students might be victims of linguistic imperialism operating on the level of names.

Tan (2001) borrowed the term "Englishisation" from Kachru (1986) to refer to "the way South Asian and other languages are being influenced by English in terms of their phonology, syntax, lexis and collocations" (Tan, 2001: 45). He probed into the use of English and Chinese given names in ethnic Chinese Singaporeans and found that "Chinese names in Singapore are being hybridized in the direction of Englishisation"

(Tan, 2001:52). He attributes reasons behind this social practice mainly to the power of English in Singapore:

> *Clearly, the increase in literacy and, more importantly, the use of English in the home and other private domains, suggests some level of acceptance of English as a first language amongst some sections of the ethnic Chinese population. ... In such a situation, the Englishisation of names seems not surprising. (Tan, 2001:52)*

Another reason, according to Tan (2001), is the increasing population of Christians in Singapore.

As for when identity can be counted as a relevant notion for investigation of language use in multilingual contexts, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) claim that in contexts where collisions of multiple interpretations or meanings have led to power struggles to decide whose voice is louder, identity is an especially salient concept. However, identity might not be a relative concept in contexts where power relations are relatively stable. "As a result, linguistic practices in these contexts may be better understood in sociopolitical and economic terms, rather than in terms of identity" (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004:19).

Gao, Zhao, Cheng, and Zhou (2007) explored the relationship between English learning motivation types and self-identity changes among university undergraduates in the People's Republic of China. They found that in mainland China, the focus of researchers' attention was dominantly on English learners' linguistic achievement, instead of non-linguistic achievement such as learners' identities. They account for such a phenomenon as a result of the foreign language context (English is a foreign language in mainland China) and the unstated assumption that learners' self-identities change only

when related with English-as-second-language (ESL) contexts where target-culture exposures are abundant.

Is identity a relevant topic in English education in modern China? Gao, Zhao, Cheng, and Zhou's (2007) answer is positive. Their argument is that the increasing power of English in China and its influence on English learners' individual identities have been interactively connected with the national/regional identity transformation and the modernization/globalization processes in China. In their research, they categorize the phenomenon of Chinese undergraduate students' using their English name and their Chinese name in different situations as an example of *additive identity change* which means that "the coexistence of two sets of languages, behavioral patterns, and values, each specified for particular contexts" (Gao, Zhao, Cheng, & Zhou, 2007:139).

Conceptual Framework

In this section, I introduce the theoretical concepts that I use to analyze and discuss my data.

Identity in Second/Foreign Language Acquisition Theories

Second and foreign language teaching has made many efforts to "decenter" the language learning process away from the authority of teachers and textbooks and to move towards focusing on learners' actual needs and viewing a learner as a whole person of "a complex social history and multiple desires" (Norton, 1995:17-18). Today, researchers generally agree that there are intrinsic links between languages and identities (e.g., Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Higgins, 2003; Norton, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2001; Kanno, 2003). Since the late 1960s, SLA researchers began to agree that second/foreign

language learners should be viewed as intelligent, creative beings, rather than producers of malformed, problematic language. It is not until 1980s and 1990s that SLA researchers began to argue that the second and/or foreign language learner should be treated as a whole, real person with a myriad of social and identity needs. Since the last decade of the 20th century, SLA researchers have shown an increasing interest in identity, and some researchers claim a necessity of reconceptulizing SLA theories in order to establish a comprehensive theory based on learners' identities (Maguire & Graves, 2001; Leung, Harris, & Rampton, 1997; Norton, 1995).

In light of the sociologist Bourdieu's (1991) view that language is a social-historical phenomenon with symbolic capital, Norton (1995) replaces the traditional concept of *motivation* with a new notion of *investment* in order to capture the complex relationship between language learners and their target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to speak it. "If learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources" (Norton, 1995:17). In other words, learners' investment in English may yield legitimacy for them, which allows them a more comprehensive participation in their societies, with all necessary resources. In her later work, Norton (1997) reveals that second language learners' investment in the target language may finally lead to a sense of *ownership*. She notes that learners would not be able to consider themselves as "legitimate" speakers unless they can claim ownership of this language. Consequently, she declares that "there is an important relationship among language, identity, and the ownership of English" (Norton, 1997:422). Similarly, while examining language

learners' language ego, Brown (2000) points out that a learner's acquisition of new language competence is often accompanied by his/her obtaining of new identities.

Investment in Imagined Communities

Anderson (1991) coined the term *imagined communities* to describe what were generally called *nations*. "The members of the even smallest nations will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson, 1991:6). Lave and Wenger (1991) raised the concept of *communities-of-practice*, communities of people with shared practices. They argue that learning includes learning to participate in these shared practices in order to become a member of these communities. Therefore, "learning transforms who we are and what we can do, [and] it is an experience of identity. It is not just an accumulation of skills and information, but a process of becoming — to become a certain person or, conversely, to avoid becoming a certain person" (Wenger, 1998:215).

Inspired by the concepts of "imagined communities" and "communities-of-practice", Norton (2000, 2001) and Kanno and Norton (2003) examined second/foreign language learners' identity "investment" in imagined communities in their language learning process. Identity, in Norton's (1997:410) words, is "how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future." It exists not only in the real world but also in imagination (Norton, 2001; Kanno & Norton, 2003). Imagination is "a process of expanding oneself by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves" (Wenger, 1998:176). *Imagined communities*

"include future relationships that exist only in the learner's imagination as well as affiliation…that extend beyond local sets of relationships" and might "even have a stronger impact on their [learners'] current actions and investment [than the communities in practice]" (Kanno & Norton, 2003:242). They maintain that learners' learning trajectories may be affected by *imagined communities*.

A Socio-historical Perspective: Habitus

Norton and Kanno (2003) claim that language learners' investments in imagined communities are *rule-based* though these rules are not necessarily explicit. These implicit rules are what Bourdieu (1991) defines as *hatitus*, or a set of dispositions, which "incline agents to act and react in certain ways. The dispositions generate practices, perceptions and attitudes which are 'regular' without being consciously coordinated or governed by any 'rule'" (Bourdieu, 1991:12). These dispositions are acquired through a gradual procedure of learning, training, and practicing, and ultimately become an individual's "second nature".

Habitus is a concept that Bourdieu borrowed from Aristotle who used this concept to refer to a set of dispositions which inclined agents to act and react in certain ways (Bourdieu, 1977). Practices, perceptions and attitudes generated by these dispositions are so *regular* that the agents are not consciously aware of being governed by any *rule*. Bourdieu claimed five basic features of habitus: inculcated, structured, durable, generative and transposable. Being inculcated means that the dispositions are acquired through a gradual process of inculcation. Through one's life experiences, especially early childhood experiences, through training and learning, individuals acquire

dispositions that would function to mould the body and gradually become one's second nature. These dispositions are structured and therefore durable because they reflect the social conditions in which they exist. They function pre-consciously and are not readily amenable to conscious reflection. Habitus is also generative and transposable because these concepts can generate various practices and perceptions in a diversity of fields in individuals' lives.

Bourdieu (1991) understands human practices in socio-historical contexts. He compares the human body to a site of incorporated history. The habitus gives individuals a "'feel for the game', a sense of what is appropriate in the circumstances and what is not, a 'practical sense'" (Bourdieu, 1991:13). A practical sense, according to Bourdieu (1991), is a state of being; "[it is] because the body has become a repository of ingrained dispositions that certain actions, certain ways of behaving and responding, seem altogether natural" (Bourdieu, 1991:13). Viewing the human body as a site of incorporated history, Bourdieu (1991) points out that humans' particular practices or perceptions should be seen as the product of the relation between the following two factors: the habitus and the specific social contexts in which individuals act.

Symbolic Power and Political Factors in Naming

"Linguists are right in saying that all languages are linguistically equal; they are wrong in thinking they are socially equal" (Bourdieu, 1977:652). In our life, it is by no means rare to hear some "petit-bourgeois" speech, which in Bourdieu's (1991) interpretation, is:

> *The sign of a class divided against itself, whose members are seeking, at the cost of constant anxiety, to produce linguistic expressions which bear the*

mark of a habitus other than their own. For members of the lower classes, whose conditions of existence are least conducive to the acquisition of a habitus which concurs with formal markets, there are many occasions in which their linguistic products are assigned, by themselves as well as others, a limited value. (Bourdieu, 1991:21-22)

According to Bourdieu (1991), *symbolic power* is an 'invisible' power which is so well woven into the norms of a society that it is usually "recognized" as something legitimate. In other words, power is exercised through the symbolic exchange, which always relies on a foundation of shared belief. "The efficacy of symbolic power presupposes certain forms of cognition or belief, in such a way that even those who benefit least from the exercise of power participate, to some extent, in their own subjection" (Bourdieu, 1991:23). Bourdieu (1991) analyzed how the policy of linguistic unification, choosing one language to be the official language, would function to benefit those who already possessed this language and devalue those who spoke only a local dialect. Borrowing the notion of language as a symbolic capital, Kanno (2003) extends the study to the value of being bilingual. She argues that "the market value of a particular language – or bilingual proficiency – depends on the language ideologies of the society" (Kanno, 2003:5).

Official naming is "a symbolic act of imposition" (Bourdieu, 1991:239). In light of Bourdieu's power theory and sociolinguistic theory of speech act, Alia (2007) interprets naming as a political behavior and political structures. She re-examined the *disc number system* that the Canadian government once employed in Nunavut in the 1940s:

In 1944 Census fieldworkers received identification disc and each newborn [the Inuit who inhabited in the north part of Canada] child would receive one soon after birth. Identification numbers were to be used after the names of any Inuit referred to in correspondence and were to appear on all birth, marriage and death certificates. The discs issued were of pressed fibre. (Alia, 2007:55)

Alia (2007) notes that referring to a person by a number is always an indignity that carries a negative connotation such as referring to a prisoner in a prison. Naming "embodies and creates relations of privilege and power… [It] is inseparable from other political phenomena and is an important key to analyzing power relations" (Alia, 2007:7). She concludes that "to interfere with the names is to risk destroying a people" and "to respect a name is to respect a people" (Alia, 2007:66).

Capital

Capital is the concept that Bourdieu (1990, 1991) used to analyze *power*. According to him, there are four forms of capital — economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital. Economic capital refers to the capital that can be directly changed into money. Property, shares, cars are such capital. Language is a typical example of a cultural capital which includes one's education, skills, access to training, etc. Social capital refers to socio-cultural connections, group membership, and access to group members or institutions such as universities, classes, etc. For example, getting a high score in TOEFL usually opens doors to many well-paid jobs; as a result, a high TOEFL score is social capital that can be transformed into economic capital and meanwhile, cultural capital, a language, is also changed into economic capital. Symbolic capital refers to socially recognized power that has been legitimized. Postures, gestures, and the way that one dresses are all examples of symbolic capital. These four forms of capital are available and obtainable, and they are interconvertable with each other (Bourdieu, 1977).

Third Space

Many different concepts have been developed to describe a learner's second or foreign language learning system, such as *interlanguage* (Selinker, 1972), *approximative system* (Nemser, 1971), *idiosyncratic dialect* (Corder, 1971), and *radical middle* (Pearson, 1996; Pearson & Johnson, 1978). These theories hypothesize that language learners are establishing their own self-contained linguistic system which is neither the target language system, nor the native language system, but is between these two language systems.

Borrowing from Homi Bhabha, Soja (1996) develops the concept of *third space* to argue against binarisms by pointing out that "There is always an-Other view" (Soja, 1996:314):

> *[Third space is] a space of extraordinary openness, a place of critical exchange where the geographical imagination can be expanded to encompass a multiplicity of perspectives that have heretofore been considered by the epistemological referees to be incompatible, uncombinable. It is a space where issues of race, class, and gender can be addressed simultaneously without privileging one over the other; where one can be Marxist and post-Marxist, materialist and idealist, structuralist and humanist, disciplined and transdisciplinary at the same time. (Soja, 1996:5)*

In her longitudinal narrative qualitative research about four Japanese returnees, Kanno (2003) examined the development of bilingual and bicultural identities. One of her participants, Sawako felt that she could not have the sense of being at home in either Western or Japanese contexts, but she felt comfortable in the place in-between. Kanno (2003) admits that "Since belonging to a culture was assumed to involve such a heavy alignment of one's identities to the norms and expectations of the culture, active participation in two cultures was deemed impossible" (Kanno, 2003:135). As a result, she argues that there exists a third space where "it is possible for bilingual youths to

reach a balance between two languages and cultures" (Kanno, 2003:135). Understanding the second/foreign language learning process from the perspective of third space, Kramsch (1993) also asserts that language learners might be forever "betwixt and between", and neither the host culture nor their original culture could provide them with a real sense of being at home. Girvan and Li (2004) note that language learners' target culture acquisition should also be viewed as the "third place", which would liberate language learners from the impossible mission of becoming "native". More importantly, the language learner could be treated as a multi-competent individual who is not merely a sum of two cultures.

Identity as an Evolving System

Korostelina (2007) understands individuals' identities as an evolving and dynamic system that evolves by means of two basic processes: 1) assimilation and accommodation (new identities being restructured into the system), 2) estimation (comparing and evaluating the importance and values of new and old identities).

> *The progressive development of an identity system is a contradictory process in which new emergent identities can be incompatible with some preexisting identities or can challenge the hierarchical structure of the identity system. The joining of new groups, the formation of new outgroups, and changes in the status and power of ingroups and outgroups all lead to the reorganization of the identity system. The formation of new identities and the resulting contradictions between disparate identities cause changes in an individual's social behavior… During the first stage, the process of identity reconstruction affects the subsystem of short-term identities, but relationships within the overarching identity system are not fundamentally altered. During the second stage, major changes in multiple identity subsystems lead to critical changes in the entire identity system. (Korostelina, 2007:113)*

The identity system is an evolving system, in which there exist mechanisms of competition between identities, which allows individuals to select new identities and breaking the established identity system (Korostelina, 2007).

Summary

In this chapter, I first discussed the concepts of identity and name in my thesis. I then reviewed the literature on Chinese people's English names and their identities. Also, I presented the main theoretical concepts that framed my data analysis and discussion. In the next chapter, I present the methodology and methods I employed to do my research.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Methods of Inquiry

My study focuses on the relationship between Chinese people's English names and their identities. It is rooted in the ways the participants, undergraduate and graduate Chinese students, who are studying in mainland China or in Canada, perceive their life experiences of their own name(s), their English learning, their understanding of Chinese and Western cultures, especially North American, and their own identities. These perceptions emerged from interviews and questionnaires I conducted on the campus of universities located in Taiyuan and Montreal over a period of eight months, from August 2007 to April 2008.

In this chapter, I focus on the qualitative research methodology and methods I used in this research. I describe my roles as a researcher, the locations where I did the research, how I gained access to participants, and their backgrounds. I present my research questions and the two tools of inquiry I used, interviews and a questionnaire. When mentioning their full name, I capitalize all letters of the family name to distinguish it from the given name and the Chinese family name is put before the given name to keep in accordance with the way participants addressed themselves in interviews. I do not use a comma between the family name and the given name; I put a hyphen between the Chinese characters of one's given name if it consists of two Chinese characters. For example, I write the name of a participant as ZHOU Jie-mei; ZHOU being the family name and Jie-mei the given name.

Methodology

This exploratory phenomenological inquiry of naming and identities focuses on Chinese students' perceptions of their naming experiences. I initially tried to calculate the possible correlations between English name practices and identities. I found in my inquiry that what appeared superficially to be the same reasons given by participants for their choice could actually come from rather complex and different reasons. For example, when participants answered on the questionnaire—how they would feel if a native-English-speaking Caucasian introduces himself/herself by a Chinese personal name, some of them chose "D: intimate". However, their explanations vary from "that's the way it should be, a natural thing", "s/he is earnest (in making friends with me)", to "s/he knows some Chinese culture and this arises my sense of intimateness". Also, the same reason might lead to quite different rationales for their choices. For example, to the previous question, out of the same reason — "s/he is earnest in making friends with me" — one participant chose "intimate", while another felt "strange... not necessarily have any sense of intimateness". These discrepancies between different students' choices and reasons for their choices motivated me to discuss the issue further with each participant. A qualitative inquiry is most appropriate to understand this "naming" phenomenon. I employed the explanatory phenomenological inquiry approach, which, as Husserl (1964) defined, is to explore and examine the lived experiences of individuals. This methodology enables a researcher to unassumingly, yet systematically, examine participants' life experiences and concentrate on participants' responses to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences (Cross, Stewart, & Coleman, 2003). I used one-to-one interviews and questionnaires as the main research tools because they enabled me to

carry out a deeper discussion with participants on the *quality* of their lives, their personal understandings and reasons embedded in their personal social interactions, especially regarding which name they use in daily communication with others. My inquiry focuses on participants' personal narratives and is rooted in individuals' perceptions of their personal life experiences and preferences.

My Ontological and Epistemological Stances

Researchers hold different opinions about the nature of reality. Positivists believe that pure objectivity is possible while post-positivists hold that only partial objective accounts are possible. Structuralism, informed by the constructive scientific vision of identifying both social and linguistic order, claims that any system is made up of oppositional categories. Post-structuralists decenter the notion of an individual as a self-aware condition of being a subject. They question the value and existence of the metaphysical notion of a human being or conscious subject as a datum. Post-modernism maintains that no method is privileged and reality has multiple layers. Constructivists generally reject the concepts of scientific realism and scientific objectivity that believe that accurate representations of the way the world really is possible. In contrast, constructivists argue that knowledge of the world is not a simple reflection of what there is, but a reflection of what we make of what there is. Social Constructivists mitigate the radical constructivists' opinions by not concluding that there is no material reality "out there" that is studied by natural scientists, instead; they examine how that reality is transcribed by the activities of scientists (Cetina, 1995). While discussing questions such as, "what is represented in a text, and how should it be judged," Denzin and Lincoln

(2005: xv) claim that "we have left the world of naïve realism, knowing now that a text does not mirror the world, it creates the world. Further, there is no external world or final arbiter—lived experience, for example—against which a text can be judged."

I took a relativist stance which believes that any so-called *truth* about naming practices actually has "multi-layers" and is actually interpretations of interpretations. I framed my research from both a post-modernist worldview and a constructivist perspective. I generally believe that reality has multiple layers and is constructed by human beings through human activity in particular contexts. By employing the principles of an ethnographic interpretive qualitative research methodology, I position participants' personal life experiences at the center of this research. I argue that participants' personal viewpoints about their own interactional, social practices of choosing names are smoothly linked with "being there", with reality.

In this process, I have come to realize the intimate relationships between myself, what I am studying, and the situational constraints that shape my inquiry. There is no value-free inquiry. What I am seeking are answers to how this social experience of adopting an English name (or not) is created and given meaning by these Chinese participants who are respectively studying in universities in mainland China and in Canada. I am interested in probing into what commonalities and differences there are between these two groups and the reasons why they do or do not use an English name and what possible social, cultural, and historical factors might have contributed to these commonalities and/or differences.

Roles of the Researcher and Background

Researchers may take multiple contextual roles in their process of conducting a research study. A researcher needs to be aware of his/her different roles and evaluate how these roles might influence the research, which are identified as "Subjective I's" by Peshkin (1988). He claims that researchers should systematically seek out their subjectivity, not retrospectively when the data have been collected and the analysis is complete, but while their research is still actively in progress. Data collection is therefore a recursive process.

My Various Contextual Roles as a Researcher

Many theories in the fields of second language education, sociology, and politics emphasize the importance of contexts where a conversation, a speech act, or a social event takes place. Figure 4 shows the factors to consider in examining researchers' roles in various contexts. Researchers interpret their research through various lenses, which include their own ideological, ethnic, ontological, epistemological, and methodological stances, the methods they choose to use, whom they speak for or who are the sponsors of a research, and how research is evaluated. Denzin (1989) argued that all research is really about the researcher. My research is also about me, my family, my friends and the people with whom I identify.

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┌─────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐
│   Epistemologies    │   │   Epistemologies    │   │   Epistemologies    │
│ Paradigms & Perspectives │   │ Paradigms & Perspectives │   │ Paradigms & Perspectives │
└─────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────┘
            │                         │                         │
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Knowledge issues ways of knowing  Ethical and value issues  Knowledge/Socialization
                                                                 issues
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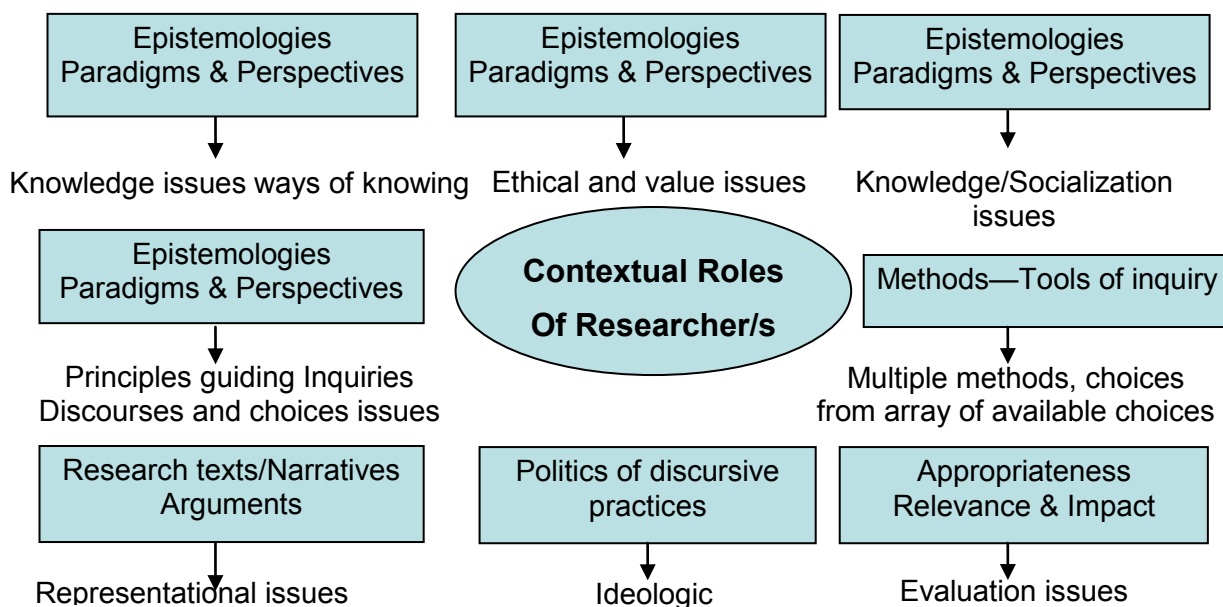
Figure 4: Contextual roles of researcher/s (Adapted from M. H. Maguire, 2003, EDSL 630 (Qualitative and Ethnographic research methods graduate course)

Having been born, raised and educated in mainland China, I am generally a patriot. Korostelina (2007:183) distinguishes Patriot from nationalist by arguing that the former holds "the positive stereotypes of one's own nation" but this does not necessarily cause any "negative stereotypes and attitudes toward the other nations". My fascination with the Chinese language, its literature and culture, and my love of the land and people make me feel that I will always be part of this country, and China's achievements and sufferings are always my deepest concerns and can easily touch the softest part of my heart.

Bearing a Chinese face and a Chinese name, speaking English somehow with a Chinese accent, my ethnic identity is obvious. Although I used to travel a lot, both in China and abroad, I lived in the Shanxi province of China most of my life before immigrating to Canada. I grew up in a generally monolingual (Mandarin) and mono-ethnic (Han people) region. I majored in English Education and later worked as an

English teacher in a university in this province. However, I did not have a lot of opportunities to use English for the purpose of real-life communication in my daily life before I came to Canada. Also, due to my obsession with learning and maintaining the Chinese language and culture, I worked as a Mandarin teacher for several years and taught either Chinese culture or Mandarin as a second language to overseas students in China. This experience later helped me to work as a Chinese language teacher in Canada.

My parents and my husband are all Han people. They speak Mandarin and generally do not speak any other Chinese dialects. After I came to Canada, especially after I began to study at McGill in Montreal in 2006, I was more exposed to North American English and North American cultures. During the past four years as a new immigrant to Canada, like most immigrants, I experienced a "culture shock" period. I once felt that almost everything here was different from what I had been used to in China. One funny example is when the tutor of one of my local university courses returned my homework, I found so many crosses, "✗'s", in my workbook. I felt upset because at that time, my only interpretation of an "✗" was that something was incorrect or wrong. However, I later learned from the tutor that her interpretation of these ✗'s and ✓'s were exactly the opposite of mine.

Cultural differences between East and West, and my efforts to identify myself in the process of assimilating into North American society intensified radically over this period. As a positive result, switching perspectives between different cultures became both necessary and possible for me. Being geographically far from China, generally "immersed" with North American, native English speakers, and especially, pursuing

graduate studies at an international English university, awarded me the opportunity to develop both an outsider's and an insider's stance from which to view these two cultures.

Studying at McGill exposed me to various discussions about China with people from different countries, which directly or indirectly led me to doing some relevant research about China. While doing research, I had opportunities to exchange opinions with my classmates, friends and professors. The theme of this thesis, Chinese people's English names and their identities, is also partially a result of such discussions. This inquiry was thought-provoking and helped me to revisit my insider's stance as a Chinese woman and to develop an outsider's perspective. The co-functioning of these two stances enables me to have a look at the name and identity issue from wider and deeper panoramic perspectives.

Participants' Voices and My Voices as the Researcher

Narrative thinkers debate about the nature of narrative. Some researchers emphasize the difference between *a life lived* and *a life told* (Freeman, 1993; E. M. Bruner, 1984). Mink (1970: 557) claimed that "Stories are not lived, but told. Life has no beginnings, middles, or ends". From a poststructuralist perspective, Wood (1991:4) maintained that since one of the central products of narrative is narrative identity, "that makes identity somewhat unstable, insofar as many stories can be woven from the same material". Other researchers hold that individuals' separate events and actions become meaningful only in the context of a plot of which they were a part (J. Bruner, 1986, 1990; MacIntyre, 1981). Admitting that more coherence and connections are worked into a life told than the life lived, Kanno (2003:9) argues that that "narrative

understanding is an inherent part of what we call everyday experience". She points out that narrative is indispensable not only for individual experiences, but also for researchers' understanding of their own identities and those of others. In this study, I take the position that individuals' experiences and their narratives are inextricably intertwined.

Although subjectivity is unavoidable, researchers should try to identify what aspects of their subjectivity are awakened in a given research setting (Peshkin, 1988). In Chase's (2005) description, a researcher's voices include an authoritative voice, a supportive voice, and an interactive voice. An authoritative voice, in Ochberg's (1996:98; cited in Chase, 2005:663) articulation, means that "interpretation reveals what one [the narrator] might say if only one could speak freely but we can see this only if we [researchers] are willing to look beyond what our informants tell us in so many words." No participant initiated discussion about questions such as why they agreed to adopt an English name at the inception. Some of them even said that it was *not* a question at all in their eyes. Others felt that to adopt an English name was a *natural* practice. In the process of negotiating meaning with participants, I probed into the details of their daily practices about when, how and with whom they use their English name and then, participants later agreed that adopting and/or using an English name might not be as *natural* as they initially assumed. For example, at the end of the interview, Yu-qing said, "yes, why didn't I ask this question [why adopt and use an English name] before?" The supportive voice means that it is researchers who make decisions about how to transcribe and/or translate the narrator's story, which parts to be used in the final product, and how to organize and edit those parts. I transcribed and translated most of

the interviews that I did with participants. I compared their narratives, sought their opinions, and chose to use some parts of their narratives to support my argument. The third voice, an interactive voice, is the intersubjectivity — between researchers' and narrators' voices (Chase, 2005). A case in point is the emergence of the political theme in participants' narratives. When quite a few participants interpreted Chinese people's adopting an English name as a sign of *having an open mind,* I suspected that this *open* might not be a common adjective. Participants and I worked on what they meant by *open*. Then, we found that it was closely associated with the national political policy in mainland China—the Reform and Open-up policy—that encouraged Chinese people to learn science and technology (and later management methods) from developed Western countries, especially the United States. Thus, this political theme became an important finding of my inquiry. Researchers need to examine their voices in such perspectives as their subjective positions, social locations, interpretations, and personal experiences— through the refracted medium of narrators' voices. The "Subjective I's" in this research are my insider/outsider stances, my frequent presence in this research, and how I, as a researcher, listened to participants' voices –both during the interviews and while interpreting them, that is, my voice as a researcher.

The Sites of Research

I conducted this research in two contexts, mainland China and Canada, which stems from my interest in knowing what similarities and differences might exist between Chinese people in and out of China. Participants are undergraduate or graduate students who are presently pursuing their study in universities. I chose universities located in

Taiyuan and Montreal as the sites of this research mainly due to my personal access to potential participants in these cities.

The universities I chose in Taiyuan are two comprehensive universities under the authority of the provincial government. All information about the student population of these two universities is based on participants and my own personal knowledge about these two universities because I could not find any official statistics about student populations from the public official websites of these two universities. Students studying in these universities are from different provinces of China with a large percentage from the local population. It is hard to tell who are from minority ethnic groups because most people on campus do not wear special ethnic apparel. All participants in these two universities are English learners and they have or had the experience of endeavoring to pass English Band 4 and/or 6 tests[4]. Most graduate and undergraduate students are asked to take certain English courses and to pass relevant examinations, which is similar to the situation throughout the country. However, due to the comparatively lack of connection with other countries, the Shanxi province does not provide its students with many opportunities to practice English with non-Chinese-speaking, English speakers.

Participants in the Canada group are all from McGill University, an international English university located in Montreal, Canada. The main language of instruction in this university is English. Being located in Montreal partially determines the prevalence of native French speakers in this university (up to 18.1% of its population). Students from the U.S. represent the largest percentage of international students. Figure 5 and Table 4 present the composition of students who studied at McGill University in the year 2006.

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[4] Band 4 and Band 6 tests are also known as CET 4 and CET 6 in China. They are two English proficiency tests in universities in China for non-English major university students.
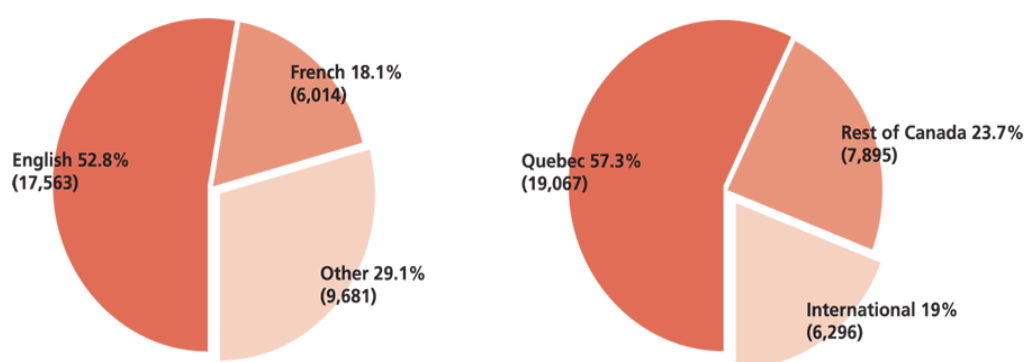
Figure 5: McGill student enrolment by mother tongue and place of origin (2006).
Source: http://www.mcgill.ca/about/quickfacts/students/

Table 4: McGill students: international students

International students - top 20 countries based on citizenship (Fall 2006)	Fall 2006	Rank
USA	2,255	1
France	575	2
China	421	3
India	211	4
South Korea	207	5
Saudi Arabia	176	6
Japan	165	7
United Kingdom	119	8*
Mexico	119	8*
Pakistan	115	10
Germany	112	11
Iran	100	12
Australia	80	13
Lebanon	70	14
Turkey	69	15
Oman	59	16
Brazil	56	17*
Jordan	56	17*
Israel	55	19
Colombia	52	20
All 153 countries	6,296	

* denotes a tie in ranking
Source: McGill website: http://www.mcgill.ca/arr/registration-statistics/#INTERNATIONAL

Participants

Two groups of students participated in my inquiry. I recruited one group of ten students in China and the other group of nine in Canada. Members of the Canada group did not leave mainland China until they were at least 18 years old. All participants are undergraduate or graduate students who were born and received formal education in mainland China, or at least have completed secondary level education there.

In order to recruit participants in China, I contacted my previous colleagues and friends in China to ask for their help. I carefully explained to them the theme of my research over the phone and through e-mails. I emphasized that all participants should be volunteers and that all potential participants should definitely be allowed to voluntarily decide whether they would like to participate in my research or not. My colleagues and friends found many students who they assumed matched my criteria. I conducted all one-to-one interviews in China without the presence of my colleagues or friends. In the Canadian context, I found nine participants. My personal connection to Chinese students on campus and the kind help of my friends contributed to my obtaining access to participants in Canada. I first sent my potential participants an invitation letter by e-mail. Some agreed to participate in my research and then, we arranged an appointment to do the interview and questionnaire.

I followed the same procedure to conduct all one-to-one interviews with participants in both the China group and the Canada group. I first asked participants to decide on a place where they felt completely comfortable to meet and talk with me. Most of them chose their dormitory or a quiet corner on campus. When we met, I first presented them with my invitation letter (appendix 2) and explained the focus of my

thesis. After answering their questions about my research, I gave them consent forms for both an interview and a questionnaire. They had sufficient time to read these forms so as to make sure that they perfectly understood their rights and what they were going to do should they decide to participate. I explicitly informed them that they could withdraw at any time without having to give me any reason and there would not be any negative consequence. After they indicated that they had thoroughly understood these forms, they signed and dated the forms. All participants showed a high level of cooperation during the interview.

Fontana and Frey (2005:699) claim that the North American society is an "interview society":

> *One cannot escape being interviewed; interviews are everywhere in the form of political polls, questionnaires about visits to doctors, housing applications, forms regarding social service eligibility, college applications, talk shows, news programs—the list goes on and on. (Fontana & Frey, 2005:699)*

However, this is definitely not the case in present day Chinese society. My personal memory of ever having been formally interviewed in China is so vague that I found it hard to recall any such experience. There is only one participant from the China group, 刘国梁 (LIU, Guo-liang), who mentioned his experience of being interviewed by his previous high-school friends who were then studying in some universities in Beijing (the capital city of China); however, he was not asked to sign any consent form before.

Overall, present Chinese society is not as much of an interview society as North American society. Even for participants of the Canada group, none voluntarily offered to be interviewed though some of them were my friends and had already known of my theme beforehand. One of them, being quite nice and cooperative during the interview, wrote me two emails after the interview to make sure that her real name would not

appear in my final text, even though before we started our interview, I had clearly and formally explained to her my consent form in which I articulated that I would use pseudonyms for all participants. Participants were prudent and serious about their decision, they would not agree to participate until/unless they trusted me and this trust also enabled and empowered me to interpret the experiences and opinions that they narrated in the interviews and questionnaires.

Because of Chinese people's hesitation to participate, I chose to depend on my personal connections with Chinese students and my friends' help while looking for participants, instead of posting advertisements on websites and offering to pay potential participants by the hour. I found that the interpersonal relationship as teacher and student helped me to gain access to participants in China and also helped to build up a sense of trust between them and me. Most participants in the China group are my previous colleagues' students. They trusted their teachers. As a result, they trusted me, a good friend of their teachers. Kanno (2003) also noticed in her research that her status of being a teacher helped her to build up trust between her and her participants.

I had a difficult time finding participants in Canada. Many Chinese students are cautious about accepting interviews to talk about their own life experiences. I had expected to find around 10 Chinese participants in Canada with male and female ratio of 50:50. However, at the end of the eighth month of looking for participants, I had to accept the fact of having nine participants with three males and six females. This gender ratio might partially result from my gender as a female. There are altogether nineteen participants in my inquiry. They are all Han Chinese. The male and female ratio is 5:4. Their personal features are presented in Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 5: Distribution of Chinese participants' age, gender, college year, and major

	Major		Age			Gender		Undergrad/Grad	
	Arts	Science	18-22	23-29	>30	Male	Female	Undergrad	Graduate
China group	1	9	2	7	1	5	5	4	6
Canada group	6	3	4	3	2	3	6	3	6
Total	7	12	6	10	3	8	11	7	12

* They once majored in English but are now pursuing a different major.

Table 6: Participants biographical information

	NO.	CHINESE NAME (PIN YIN)	PRESENT ENGLISH NAME	GENDER	AGE	EDUCATION LEVEL	SOURCE PROVINCE	COLLEGE YEARS
CHINA GROUP	1	向彤 (Xiàng, Tóng)	Sophia/Joanna	Female	18-22	Undergraduate	Hubei	4th
	2	王丽 (Wáng, Lì)	Lily	Female	18-22	Undergraduate	Shanxi	4th
	3	刘成鹏 (Liú, Chéng-péng)	No English name	Male	23-29	Undergraduate	Shanxi	4th
	4	杜国梁 (Dù, Guó-liáng)	Genius	Male	23-29	Undergraduate	Shanxi	4th
	5	段慧娟 (Duàn, Huì-juān)	Jerry	Female	23-29	Graduate	Jiangsu	1st
	6	刘秀秀 (Liú, Xiù-Xiù)	No English name	Female	23-29	Graduate	Shanxi	1st
	7	周婕美 (Zhōu, Jié-měi)	Jessica	Female	>30	Graduate	Shanxi	1st
	8	薛耀文 (Xuē, Yào-Wén)	Thomas Joseph White	Male	23-29	Graduate	Shanxi	1st
	9	徐森 (Xú, Sēn)	Victor or Vic	Male	23-29	Graduate	Shanxi	1st
	10	马云龙 (Mǎ, Yún-lóng)	Pony	Male	23-29	Graduate	Henan	1st
CANADA GROUP	11	许海雁 (Xǔ, Hǎi-yàn)	Helen	Female	23-29	Undergraduate	Hunan	2nd
	12	何正一 (Hé, Zhèng-yī)	Cathy	Female	23-29	Undergraduate	Liaoning	4th
	13	周泠 (Zhōu, Líng)	Gavin (no longer in use)	Male	18-22	Undergraduate	Liaoning	2nd
	14	戴玉清 (Dài, Yù-qīng)	Gene	Male	23-29	Graduate	Beijing	1st
	15	赵雪 (Zhào, Xuě)	Shelley	Female	23-29	Graduate	Shanghai	2nd
	16	张致正 (Zhāng, Zhì-zhèng)	Bertha	Female	23-29	Graduate	Beijing	1st
	17	张蓢 (Zhāng, Jiǎn)	Anna	Female	>30	Graduate	Beijing	2nd
	18	王简言 (Wáng, Jiǎn-yán)	No English name	Female	>30	Graduate	Beijing	3rd
	19	周旻珉(Zhōu, Mínmín)	No English name	Male	23-29	Graduate	Jiangxi	2nd

The ten participants (four undergraduates and six graduates) in the China group are from two universities in Taiyuan. They are from different provinces of China. Their age ranges from 21 to 36, with a mean of 24.6 and a standard deviation of 4.2. They majored in a wide range of different areas, such as Chinese literature, management, architecture, and coal chemistry. Seven are from Shanxi and three are from other provinces, such as Hubei, Jiangsu, and Henan.

The nine participants of the Canada group include three undergraduates and six graduates with a male to female ratio of 1:2. Their age ranges from 22 to 32, with a mean of 25.9 and a deviation of 4.19. Their majors include Education, East Asian Studies, Political Science, Management, and Physics. None are now majoring in English though three used to major in English in their undergraduate-level studies in China. They are all studying at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Four are from the Beijing area and the other five are respectively from Jiangxi, Shanghai, and Liaoning.

To Find Pseudonyms for Participants

This is a study on names. I have to choose at least two pseudonyms, one Chinese name and one (in some cases, two or three) English name, for most participants. This naming process *per se* turned out to be challenging for me.

Participants' Chinese names are all literally meaningful and have stories behind them. Some participants' English names are related to their Chinese names either in sound or in meaning; some participants' English names are related to celebrities or fictional characters; still some chose their English name due to its literal or original meanings. Choosing pseudonyms for participants challenged my own knowledge

concerning Chinese names and English names. I had to do extensive research on what a certain English name might mean, how to associate it with a Chinese name and make it coherent with participants' narratives about their names. In this process, I found that my knowledge about English names was fairly limited. My campus professors and schoolmates offered their generous help by introducing many English names and telling me their own naming practices. Following their suggestion, I also bought a dictionary on English names.

I felt it especially hard to find an English name for participants who adopted an abnormal or obsolete English name. For example, according to Zhi-zheng's narrative, her English name came from a fictional character in one of Dickens' novels. It is an old but authentic English name. She used this English name with most non-Chinese speakers in Canada. Initially, I had no idea how to choose a pseudo English name for her. I consulted my teachers and schoolmates. They offered me a few obsolete English names. Then, I had to examine whether one of these obsolete names could be associated with a fictional female character of a rather positive image in a novel written by a great English writer who was also quite famous in China. This process took me seven months. When I finally decided on using *Bertha*, I was so excited that I phoned Zhi-zheng to ask her whether I could use Bertha as a pseudo English name for her. Zhi-zheng said that it was okay. She also said that she would have let me use her real English name if she had known that it would be such an exhausting work for me to choose pseudonyms for her. It was generous of her to make such an offer, but it is my responsibility to protect each and every participant's identity, which is also an important part of this inquiry. I did not tell all participants which pseudonyms I chose for them, but I made efforts to find

appropriate pseudonyms for every participant. Throughout the process of writing this thesis, I had to change some participants' pseudonyms from time to time so as to find appropriate names for them. When I finally settled down with choosing pseudonyms, it had taken me almost one year, even longer than the time I spent on collecting data for this inquiry. In this process, I learned a lot about English and Chinese names.

Research Tools

My research tools are interviews and questionnaires. The interview and questionnaire questions are a combination of structured and open-ended questions. The interview is a one-to-one, face-to-face individual interview with 40 focused and open questions. My interview questions have four sections: 1) bio-data information and questions on participants' names, their Chinese names and, if applicable, their English name(s); 2) questions examining in what contexts they use their English name and in what contexts they do not and their attitudes towards this; 3) information about their English learning experience; 4) questions on identities. Participants decided whether they would like to use English or Mandarin in their interview and while answering the questionnaire. All chose Mandarin though code-switching more or less occurred in interviews with almost all participants in the Canada group. Also, all participants were well-informed that the interview would be audiotaped and I would later transcribe and translate the interviews and their answers to my questionnaire into English.

Here is an example of an excerpt of an interview, which I translated into and transcribed in English:

玉清：我们学校因为是外语学校，一个人的英语名字要跟很久，初中是什么就是什么。
潘：没有让你们自己选么？
玉清：一般都是老师选，老师都是按照你的汉语名字来选的。比如说我的名是：玉清，所以就取：Eugene。后来我大了以后觉得太长，就改成了 Gene。(戴玉清，访问, 2007 年 8 月 16 日)

Yu-qing: Because as a foreign language school, our students' English name would be used for a long time. We settled down with a name in junior middle school.
Pan: You couldn't choose for yourselves?
Yu-qing: Generally, teachers chose one according to your Chinese name. For example, my given name is Yu-qing, so the teacher chose Eugene. When I grew up, I felt that it was too long. I changed it to Gene. (DAI Yu-qing, Interview, August 16th, 2007)

The questionnaire has five sections. The questions in the first four sections are similar to the interview questions. The fifth section includes two sets of multiple choice questions. These multiple choices are designed to negotiate participants' attitudes on how they would introduce themselves in different contexts and how they would respond to some possible strategies which a non-Chinese-speaker might employ while doing a self-introduction. They were asked to provide a two to three line explanation in response to each question. Because all participants did one-to-one interviews with me, I did not ask them to do the first four sections of the questionnaire. All participants did the fifth section of the questionnaire.

For example, one of the questions in the questionnaire is: *When other people introduce themselves to you in an informal English party, how would you feel if a **native English** speaker says to you, "Hi, I am 赵钱孙."* To answer this question, participants needed to mark out his/her location (in Canada or in China); then, they needed to choose one from the four available options and write one to two lines to explain their choices. If they felt that none of the four options suited their case, they could choose the option of (e) and write down their own answer. Here is how Zhi-zheng, a participant from the Canada group, answered this question.

Your location: in Canada
Your choice: B
a. awkward   b. strange   c. acceptable   d. intimate.   e. other____
Your comments:
Because my intuition told me that foreign people are supposed to have a foreign name. The first time s/he does a self-introduction, s/he should tell me: My name is blablabla, BUT, I have a Chinese name which is blablabla. Then, I would feel that it was natural. But if they directly told me: my name is blablabla [a Chinese name]. I would think that there must be a story behind it. There must be a reason. Maybe, s/he grew up in China, or some other reason. So by only giving a Chinese name, I would feel surprised.

Research Questions

In this thesis, I attempt to address the following three research questions. (1) Why do many modern Chinese people in or from mainland China choose to adopt and/or use an English name? When, how, with whom, and why do they use it? (2) How do they decide on a particular name? What kinds of English names do they choose? (3) What are the relationships between Chinese students' English names and their identities?

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the qualitative research methodology and the methods that I employed to do this research. I described my contexts and my roles as a researcher, the two sites where I did this research, my two groups of participants, and how I obtained access to these participants. I also presented my research topic, issues, and my research questions. In the next chapter, I present excerpts from participants' narratives on why and how they adopted their English name(s), their criteria for choosing a certain English name, and when they used/use their English name in their everyday experiences.

Chapter Four Participants' Narratives on How They Adopted Their English Names

In this chapter, I introduce participants' experiences of adopting their English names. I refer to participants by their Chinese given names. None of them have namesakes, people who have the same name, in either group.

Participants in the China group and the Canada group showed many similarities in their English name practices (Table 7). The proportion of participants who presently have an English name, who have given up their English name, and who never had an English name is interestingly similar in these two groups. There are two participants in each group who never had an English name, one in each group who gave up their English name in senior middle school and have had no English name thereafter, and the remaining seven participants in the China group and six participants in the Canada group presently have an English name. Another commonality is that there are four participants in each group who adopted an English name out of their own desire and all of the others stated that it was suggested to them to choose an English name by their English teachers or their peers.

Table 7: Some similarities between the two groups

Group / Features	China group	Canada group
Participants who currently have an English name	7	6
Participants who gave up their English name in senior middle school in China	1	1
Participants who never had an English name	2	2
Participants whose previous English teacher suggested that they have an English name	6	6
Participants who adopted an English name out of their own interest	4	3
Total number of participants	10	9

The salient difference between these two groups is that participants in the Canada group have the experience of using their English name in daily communication with non-Chinese speakers in Canada. Four participants in the Canada group were confronted with this English name issue when their local non-Chinese speaking friends posed the question of why they used an English name with them.

Participants and Their English Name(s): the China Group

There are ten participants in the China Group: four undergraduate and six graduate students. They are all from universities in urban Taiyuan, China. The female to male ratio is 1:1. No participant presently majors in English. Table 8 shows the English names that participants in the China group have had, their ages when they adopted a given English name, and the number of years they have kept this English name. Table 9 presents information about their first English name, including when they adopted it, how they chose it, and who initiated this English-name-adoption practice.

Two undergraduates, Tong (female) and Guo-liang (male), and two male graduates, Yun-long and Sen, volitionally adopted an English name. Tong has two English names. She chose her first English name, *Sophia*, in her second year of university:

彤：我记得我在电脑上教我的小弟弟学英语，我突然间看见一个资料上写的是，Sophia 原来是"智慧"的意思，就是说它原意是那个意思。我觉得我非常喜欢，我就要叫这个名字。我就自己给自己起了。没怎么用过[笑]。(向彤，访问，2007年6月16日)

Tong: I remember that [when] I taught my younger brother English on the internet, I accidentally found that "Sophia" originally meant "wisdom". That is, its original meaning is that. I felt that I liked it very much and really wanted it to be my name. I therefore adopted it, I seldom used it though [giggle]. (XIANG Tong, Interview, June, 16th, 2007)

Table 8: The China group participants' English name(s)

China Group	No.	Chinese name (Pinyin)	Present English name	Total years of keeping an English name (years)	The first English name			The second English name			The third English name		
					1st English name	Age of adopting this name	Years of keeping this name (years)	2nd English Name	Age of adopting this name	Years of keeping this name (years)	3rd English name	Age of adopting this name	Years of keeping this name (years)
Undergraduate	1	向彤 (Xiàng, Tóng)	Sophia, Rachel	3	Sophia	Undergrad, Year two	3	Rachel	Undergrad, Year three	2	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	2	王丽 (Wáng, Lì)	Lily	10	Lily	Junior middle school, Grade one	10	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	3	刘成鹏 (Liú, Chéng-péng)	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	4	杜国梁 (Dù, Guó-liáng)	N.A.	3	Genius	Junior middle school, Grade one	3	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Graduate	5	段慧娟 (Duàn, Huì-juān)	Jerry	9	Jerry	Junior middle school, Grade two	9	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	6	刘秀秀 (Liú, Xiù-Xiù)	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	7	周婕美(Zhōu, Yè-hóng)	Jessica	15	Jessica	Undergraduate, Year one	15	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	8	薛耀文 (Xuē, Yào-Wén)	Thomas Joseph White	11	Thomas Joseph White	Junior middle school, Grade one	11	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	9	徐森 (Xú, Sēn)	Victor	8	Sam	Senior middle school	3	Scorpion	Undergrad	3	Victor	Grad	2
	10	马云龙 (Mǎ, Yún-lóng)	Pony	9	Pony	Junior middle school, Grade three	9	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Average years of keeping a certain English name			6.7		6.3			0.5			0.2		

Note: N.A.: not available

Table 9: The China group participants' first English name

	No	Chinese name (Pinyin)	1st English name	Adopting age	Why (why not) agreed to choose an English name	Name giver	Who initiated	Criteria/reason for choosing their first English name
Undergraduates	1	向彤 (Xiàng, Tóng)	Sophia	Undergrad	The meaning of the name was associated with her desired personality quality	Self	Self	To prescribe the personality quality Tong dreamed of—having wisdom
	2	王丽 (Wáng, Lì)	Lily	junior middle school	Passive acceptation of this English name as a nickname	classmates	Junior middle school classmates	Phonetic similarity to Li's Chinese given name
	3	刘成鹏 (Liú, Chéng-péng)	N.A.	N.A.	Little interest in oral English	N.A	NES English teacher	N.A.
	4	杜国梁 (Dù, Guó-liáng)	Genius	junior middle school	For fun, from a childhood superstitious worship of the moon	His elder sister	Self	To choose a name that means the "God of the Moon"
	5	段慧娟 (Duàn, Huì-juān)	Jerry	Junior middle school	To satisfy her then NCS English teacher's suggestion	Self	NCS English teacher	Her personal passion over an American animation character and her own Chinese zodiac birth pet
	6	刘秀秀 (Liú, Xiù-Xiù)	N.A.	N.A.	Willingness to satisfy her then NCS English teacher's suggestion but lacking confidence in her knowledge about English names	N.A.	NCS English teacher	To choose an English name that is beautiful in literal meaning
	7	周婕美 (Zhōu, Yè-hóng)	Jessica	Undergrad	Passive acceptance of her NES teacher's suggestion	NES teacher	NES teacher	N.A. (passively accepted a name given by NES teacher without clearly knowing the reason)
	8	薛耀文 (Xuē, Yào-Wén)	Thomas Joseph White	Primary school	Passive acceptance of this name as a nickname	Childhood peers and classmates	Childhood peers	The name of a character of an English TV program designed for chidren.
Graduates	9	徐森 (Xú, Sēn)	Sam	Senior middle school	For fun; personal admiration of a protagonist of an English-speaking TV play	Self	Self	A hero's name; the phonetic similarity of this English name to his Chinese given name
	10	马云龙 (Mǎ, Yún-lóng)	Pony	Junior middle school	For fun when thumbing through an English dictionary	Self	Self	The similarity of the lexical meaning of this English name to the meaning of his Chinese family name and his then nickname

Note: NES stands for Native English speaking; NCS stands for Native Chinese Speaking.

Tong claimed that she would prefer to use "Sophia" with non-Chinese speakers, though she also had another English name, "Rachel", which was given to her by a friend she met on a train journey during her third undergraduate summer vacation. There happened to be a young South African man sitting next to her. They exchanged names and Tong gave him her Chinese full name, XIANG Tong. Tong recalled that her English name, Sophia, did not pop up on the spot.

However, although they both had tried hard, that young man's pronunciation was still quite awkward in Tong's ear:

彤:两个音都[别扭]，主要还是"向"拼得不太标准…比如说他拼成"香"，我一听，一下子就觉得[笑]觉得很搞笑…但是还是告诉他拼了半天。后来，他告诉我，他有个妹妹，他挺想他的妹妹，他的妹妹就叫那个名字[Rachel]，然后建议我可以叫这个英文名字如果我想要的话。就这样。(向彤，访问，2007 年 6 月 16 日)

Tong: Both sound [awkward], especially "xiàng" [the falling tone, her family name] was incorrect… For example, he pronounced it like "xiāng [the flat tone, it sounds like "yummy" or "tasty" in Chinese]. It sounds so funny [laugh]… However, I still taught him for quite a while. Later, he told me that he had a sister whom he missed a lot. His sister's name was that one [Rachel]. He then suggested that I take it as my English name, if I liked it. That's the story. (XIANG Tong, Interview, June, 16th, 2007)

Thus, Tong had her second English name. Tong never bothered to ask herself why she decided to adopt an English name. She comfortably kept her English names and imagined that she would use them someday in the future. She insisted that she had English names despite the fact that she seldom used either of them in her immediate life. She did not have any regular contact with non-Chinese speakers. Few of her Chinese schoolmates know that she has English names.

Similar to Tong, Sen also coincidentally "ran into" his first English name. Sen watched an English TV series while in senior middle school. The male protagonist in

this series was Sam who was a hero in Sen's eyes. Sen noticed that Sam and Sen sounded similar to each other. So he adopted Sam as his English name. Although he seldom used this English name, Sen kept it throughout senior middle school and undergraduate university. He once intended to change his English name to *Scorpio* because he learned that his own zodiac constellation was Scorpio. However, he quickly gave this idea up because he worried that Scorpio might not sound quite like a human name and it was also difficult for other Chinese people to pronounce. Sen preferred to have an English name that could easily be remembered by other people. In his first year of graduate school, Sen changed his English name to *Victor*. He argued that, as a name, *Sam* did not have any literal meaning. In her words, "*It cannot convey my feelings.*" For Sen, the meaning of a name is much more important than the sound. He hoped to be a successful man in the future and he believed that the meaning of Victor must be associated with *victory*.

Although Sen changed his English name twice, he held a serious attitude toward his English name. He said that he would carefully reconsider his English name before he graduated from school. This attitude is partially due to his sister's influence. "*My sister works for a Hong Kong bank,*" Sen said, *"where her colleagues address each other by an English name."*

Yun-long's English name is Pony. He found this English name while he was flipping through an English dictionary in grade three of junior middle school. Grade three of junior middle school is equivalent to grade 9 in the Canadian schooling system. Coincidentally, he saw that the word, *pony*, meant "*xiaoma*" in Chinese which happened to be his nickname at that time. At that time, Yun-long was short and his family name

Ma could mean *horse* in Chinese. *Xiaoma* can be literally translated as *short horse* in Chinese. Yun-long liked his nickname. Therefore, he immediately decided to take *pony* as his English name. He seldom used his English name in his real life and he disagreed with the practice of frequently changing one's English name just for fun:

> *Because, after all, a name is like a label. If you always changed it, there would be no emotion between you and the name. If today, your name is this one, but after a couple of days, you feel that you don't like it any more and change it. Still another couple of days, you change it again. In this way, there would be no emotion between you and your name. I've never changed my name because there's an emotion there. If somebody suddenly asked me to give up this name and to find a new one, I myself would, first of all, find it hard to accept this [new] name. To accept this new name would take time even for me, let alone for other people. (MA Yun-long, Interview, June 15th, 2007)*

In Yun-long's opinion, there should be emotional attachment between a person and his/her English name.

Guo-liang's story showed a strong desire to adopt an English name. The following is an excerpt from Guo-liang's narratives about how he received his first English name:

> *My English name is cheesy. I can tell you that it is Genius. When I was in Grade one of junior middle school, a friend and I were both quite interested in the Moon and we thought that how wonderful it would be if we could have a name that meant "the god of the Moon". We were a little superstitious at that time. However, we failed to find any English name that had such a meaning because our English vocabulary repertoire was rather limited at that time. I then tried to resort to an English-Chinese dictionary, but I did not know how to use it yet. So I asked my eldest sister to look up in a dictionary for me. She had just entered senior high school at that time. She found a word, "Genius", which, she said, was related to "god" and it meant "genius, and some exceptional capability". Then, I said, "I'll take it."(DU Guo-liang, Interview, June 18th, 2007)*

Since the senior middle school, Guo-liang gradually gave up this English name. First of all, he said that he had few opportunities to use it. More importantly, he increasingly felt awkward telling other people his English name because he was afraid that his English name might indicate that he thought himself a genius. Now, Guo-liang still wanted to

have an English name; however, he did not quite know how to choose one that could both satisfy him and not sound too weird.

Li and Yao-wen are undergraduate students. Li's English name is *Lily* and Yao-wen's English name is *Thomas Joseph White*. Their English names were given to them by their childhood peers. Li and Yao-wen both began to study English in grade one of junior middle school which is similar to grade seven in the Canadian education system. Their English names both came from their first English textbook. In Li's first English textbook, there was a character named *Lily*. Li's classmates felt that the sound of Lily was similar to Li. Thus, they chose Lily as Li's English name. Li also accepted this English name thereafter. Yao-wen's English name initially came from an English TV program that Yao-wen and his primary school peers watched together. *Thomas Joseph White* was a character in that program. His peers teased him by calling him Thomas Joseph White. Soon, they were accepted by the same middle school. To their surprise, they found that there was a character in their first English textbook whose name was also Thomas Joseph White. Quickly, Yao-wen's friends spread the story about this English name and Thomas Joseph White became Yao-wen's English name thereafter.

An interesting episode occurred in Yao-wen's interview. I asked him if he would mind being called Mr. White. He realized that I treated "White" as his family name. "*Wow, this is a rather serious problem then*" he said. Yao-wen had never been aware that his English name might give other people the impression that *White* was his family name. This awareness disturbed him for a while, but he soon tried to defend his practice. When I asked him if he would add his Chinese family name at the end of his English name, Yao-wen refused to do so:

潘：*Thomas Joseph White XUE?*
耀文：*如果这样的话，我肯定不会加那个"薛"，姓 White 也不要紧。［笑］。不能说我起个英文名字，加了个英文姓就是对不起祖宗，我觉得这是无稽之谈。(薛耀文，访问，2007 年 6 月 13 日)*

Pan: Thomas Joseph White XUE?
Yao-wen: If this were the case, I would definitely not add that "XUE". It wouldn't matter to take White as my family name [chuckle]. You cannot say that I betrayed my family just because I adopted an English name and added an English family name. I would say that it is nonsense… (XUE Yao-wen, Interview, June 13th, 2007)

Yao-wen tried to legitimize his English name and insisted on not mixing up his two names. Meanwhile, he admitted that he did not know much about English names and was not sure whether his English name was appropriate or not.

Hui-juan and Jie-mei are two female graduate students. They adopted their English names following their English teachers' suggestion. They did not feel the importance of their Chinese name being challenged by their English name in any sense. They never seriously thought about the question of why they needed to have an English name. They occasionally used their English name in their daily lives. Hui-juan used her English name, Jerry, in her present foreign English teacher's class. Jie-mei used to be an English teacher. She used her English name, Jessica, at work. Then she switched her graduate research interest to Chinese literature and now seldom uses her English name.

I asked Hui-juan if she would mind that Jerry was often considered to be a boy's name. Hui-juan replied that she did not mind and she would not change her English name only because of this reason. What she emphasized is the story behind this English name. It was her junior middle school English teacher who suggested that she adopt an English name. With little hesitation, Hui-juan chose Jerry because she was a fan of the American animation *Tom and Jerry*, a cartoon about a cat named Tom and a mouse

named Jerry. Hui-juan loved the cute little mouse in the animation. Also, she was born in the year of the Rat according to the Chinese lunar calendar, which also contributed to her personal penchant for the image of the mouse.

Jie-mei majored in English education in her undergraduate university where for the first time in her life, she learned English from native-English speakers. Her second native-English-speaking teacher suggested that Jie-mei's class have an English name. He chose *Jessica* for Jie-mei. As for why it was *Jessica*, Jie-mei assumed that *"Maybe, because it sounds like my Chinese family name [ZHOU]. I'm not sure."* Curiously, she did not notice that Jessica actually sounded more similar to "Jie", the first character of her Chinese given-name.

Xiu-xiu, a female graduate student, and Cheng-peng, a male undergraduate student, have never had any English names, though they both once had an English teacher who suggested that they adopt one. Xiu-xiu's undergraduate university English teacher, a young Chinese lady, asked Xiu-xiu's class to choose an English name that she would use to address them in her class. Xiu-xiu did not try to clarify with her English teacher why she had to have an English name. Instead, Xiu-xiu felt that it would be interesting to have an English name. However, she did not quite know which English name would suit her. She did not want to choose an English name at random. She felt that she should know the meaning, especially the literal meaning, of an English name before she adopted it. She did not know, however, how to find the meanings of English names. She decided that she would rather wait if she could not find an English name with a beautiful meaning.

Cheng-peng is the only student in the China group who explicitly expressed his refusal to adopt an English name. In his high school, he used to have an oral English teacher who was from Canada. That teacher suggested that Cheng-peng's class choose an English name. However, Cheng-peng did not take that suggestion seriously. He insisted that people should be sincerely interested in the language and/or its culture before adopting a name in that language.

To recapitulate, although no participants in the China group frequently used their English name, they all shared the following two points in common. First, they all admitted that they had never thought about the question of why they needed to have an English name before. Second, those who have an English name claimed that their English name was also their legitimate name in their eyes and they used or would use it in their real life communication with other people. Although their Chinese name is more important to them, none of them thought that it would be a problem if they viewed both their English name and their Chinese name as their names in their real lives. They agreed that one could choose to use one's English name in certain contexts.

Participants and Their English Name(s): the Canada Group

There are nine participants in the Canada Group, three undergraduates and six graduates. They are all students at an English university located in urban Montreal, Canada. The female and male ratio is 2:1. Table 10 presents the English names that participants of the Canada group have had, along with their ages of adopting a certain English name and the years that they have kept it. Table 11 shows information about participants' first English name, including when they adopted it, how they chose it, and who initiated this practice.

Table 10: The Canada group participants' English name(s)

Canada Group	No.	Chinese name (Pinyin)	Present English name	Years of keeping English names	The first English name			The second English name			The third English name		
					1st English name	Age of adopting this name	Years of keeping this name	2nd English Name	Age of adopting this name	Years of keeping this name	3rd English name	Age of adopting this name	Years of keeping this name
Undergraduate	11	许海雁 (Xǔ, Hǎi-yàn)	Hellen	10	Helen	Undergrad in a university in China	10	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	12	何正一(Hé, Zhèng-yī)	Cathy	12	Catherine	Primary school, Grade two or three	10	Cathy	Undergrad in Canada, first semester	2	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	13	周泠 (Zhōu, Líng)	N.A.	8	Gavin	Primary school, Grade three	8	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Graduate	14	戴玉清 (Dài,Yù-qīng)	Gene	11	Eugene	Junior middle school, Grade one	9	Gene	Undergrad 4, while doing a part-time job	2	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	15	赵雪 (Zhào, Xuě)	Shelley	12	Mary	Junior middle school, Grade one	4	Shirley	Senior middle school	8	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	16	张致正(Zhāng, Zhì-zhèng)	Bertha	6	Sissi	Senior middle school	1	Jane	Undergrad, First year	1	Bertha	Undergrad, Second year	4
	17	张蕑 (Zhāng, Jiǎn)	Anna	20	Anna	Junior middle school, Grade one	20	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	18	张未名 (Zhāng, Wèi-míng)	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	19	周旻珉 (Zhōu, Mín-mín)	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Average years of keeping a certain English name			8.78	6.89			1.44			0.44			

Note: N.A.: not available

Table 11: The Canada group participants' first English name

	No	Chinese name (Pinyin)	1st English name	Adopting age	Why (why not) chose an English name	Name giver	Who initiated	Criteria for choosing this first English name
Undergraduates	11	许海雁 (Xǔ, Hǎi-yàn)	Helen	Undergrad	First undergrad university (in China) English teacher's suggestion and students' efforts of using each other's EN in and after class	Self	NCS English teacher in China	Phonetic similarity with her Chinese full name; to avoid namesake with her classmates.
	12	何正一 (Hé, Zhèng-yī)	Catherine	Primary school, Grade two or three	Her English private tutor's suggestion	Self & Private English tutor	Private NCS English tutor	The longer an English name is, the better it should be.
	13	周泠 (Zhōu, Líng)	Gavin (no longer in use)	Primary school, Grade three	For fun and a belief that one should use an English name while learning English; ceased to use it when the first zeal in English name was gone	primary school NCS English teacher	primary school NCS English teacher	Accepting a name offered by his then English teacher who is Chinese
Graduates	14	戴玉清 (Dài,Yù-qīng)	Eugene	Junior middle school, Grade one	His English teacher's suggestion; the implicit code of his middle school; For fun.	NCS English teacher	NCS English teacher	Accepting a name offered by his then English teacher who is Chinese
	15	赵雪 (Zhào, Xuě)	Mary	Junior middle school, Grade one	Her English teacher's suggestion	Self, from her first English textbook	NCS English teacher	A name available in her then English textbook and easy to pronounce for her.
	16	张致正 (Zhāng, Zhì-zhèng)	Sissi	Senior middle school	For fun, interest in reading English novels, and experiences of going to the United States as an exchange student	Self	Self	Her appreciation of the almost perfect screen image of the Sissi in the movie series, "Princess Sissi".
	17	张蕑 (Zhāng, Jiǎn)	Anna	Junior middle school, Grade one	Her first English teacher's suggestion	Self	NCS English teacher	Her personal appreciation of Princess Diana; a mistake caused by her beginner's level of English.
	18	张未名 (Zhāng, Wèi-míng)	N.A.	N.A.	A personal interest; an awareness of a lack of knowledge about English names	N.A	Self	Being unique, with beautiful literal meaning, but not weird; preferring some plant's name.
	19	周旻珉 (zhōu, Mín-mín)	N.A.	N.A	Studying science; personal insistence on using Chinese name; personal criteria for choosing a both unique and common English name	N.A	Self	Being both unique that means to be different from others and common that means to be a regular name.

Note: EN stands for English name, NES stands for Native English speaking, and NCS stands for Native Chinese Speaking.

Hai-yan is a female undergraduate at a Montreal English university. She is working on a bachelor's degree which will be her second undergraduate degree. Her first bachelor's degree was in English and was obtained in mainland China several years ago. Hai-yan has had only one English name, Helen. She adopted it in her first undergraduate semester *"because I majored in English, every student gave their teacher the English name that they would like to adopt in the first semester."* Hai-yan had originally thought of choosing another English name, which sounded exactly like her Chinese given name. However, when she learned that one of her classmates had already chosen it, she changed her mind. She looked in a dictionary for a name initialled by H, the first letter of her Chinese given name. Then, she chose Helen as her English name. She used this English name with her university schoolmates and teachers, and later, with her colleagues in the Hong Kong and Taiwanese companies that she had worked for before she immigrated to Canada. After landing in Canada, Hai-yan once worked for a local company run by local Canadians, where she found that her colleagues called her H.Y., the initials of her Chinese given name. "*It seems to be the custom of that company,*" Hai-yan said, "*but I am not sure.*"

Zheng-yi and Ling are two undergraduate students. They adopted their first English name, respectively Catherine and Gavin, in primary school in mainland China. Zheng-yi adopted her English name due to her private English tutor's suggestion. *"He gave me several English names to choose from."* She said, *"I chose Catherine because it was the longest one."* At that time, as a beginning learner of English, Zheng-yi assumed that the longer a name was, the better it must be. She kept this English name for more than a decade until she came to Canada as an international student where, to her surprise, she

found that "*Canadians and Americans actually preferred a short name!*" The following

excerpt from Zhing-yi's narratives reveals changes in her attitudes on this English name

issue over time:

> *Local native English speakers feel that long names are inconvenient. They'd like to shorten a name. Tough they did not explicitly say so, they asked me, "why do you use such a long name?" In my first year here, I especially discussed this name issue with my then neighbor, a white Canadian girl, named Cathy. She said that if I liked her name, I could take it. So since the second year, I began to use Cathy as my name with all non-Chinese speakers no matter whether I knew them before or not. However, my attitude towards this name issue actually keeps on changing. Now, I ask people to call me "Zheng-yi" again [chuckle] because, frankly, after so many years [four years] living here [Canada], I realized that I should still use my Chinese name. Using an English name gives me a sense of insincerity, no good. Also, foreigners would sometimes think that my Chinese name was interesting. To use my Chinese name is also associated with the development of China. China becomes increasingly more powerful and there are more and more countries that recognize China as an important country. Before, people [non-Chinese speakers] might wonder what kind of country China was. Before, China was a weak and poor country, so you had to adapt to other people. (HE Zheng-yi, Interview, October 16th, 2007)*

From adopting her first English name, to shortening her English name to Cathy, to

switching back to her Chinese name, Zheng-yi experienced changes in her attitudes

towards English names.

Ling claimed that he did not have any English name now, though he used to have

one, Gavin. He recalled that this English name was chosen by his primary school

English teacher at random. When answering why he agreed to accept an English name,

Ling said, "*Just for fun and you should use an English name when taking an English*

class." He kept this English name till grade three of the senior middle school when all

emphasis of English teaching and learning was on preparing for the national university

entrance examination. "*Everyday, only grammar and examinations.*" Ling said.

Gradually, he no longer felt it interesting to use an English name. So, he dropped his

English name. When I asked him if he had an English name now, Ling said, "*No. I AM Ling. All people call me Ling.*" Ling said that most people could pronounce his Chinese given name properly, though non-native Chinese speakers often had difficulty in pronouncing his family name which was ZHOU. "*It's okay if they could not pronounce [ZHOU]."* He said, *"I also have accent when speaking English. It's okay… Most people can accurately pronounce Ling.*" The McGill campus addressing custom among students is generally to call others by their given name. Ling did not have any problem in recognizing his name when a non-Chinese speaker called him. Now, Ling did not think it necessary to have an English name any more.

Yu-qing, a male graduate student, and Xue and Jian, two female graduate students, adopted their first English names at the request of their English teacher in Grade one of their junior middle school. Yu-qing's present English name, Gene, derives from his first English name Eugene which was chosen by his first junior middle school English teacher who is Chinese. Yu-qing said that to adopt an English name was an unwritten rule in his middle school in mainland China:

潘：为什么要给你们取英语名字？	Pan: Why did they give you an English name?
玉清：我们要求是必须有英文名字。	Yu-qing: Our regulation was that one must have an English name. .
潘：是学校规定吗？	Pan: Was it a school code?
玉清：是学校规定。	Yu-qing: Yes, it was a school code.
潘：是明文规定吗？	Pan: A code explicitly written down?
玉清：不是明文规定，但是就是这么规定的。因为我们那个学校，怎么说呢，就是，"崇洋媚外"一些，就是那个习惯。(戴玉清，访问，2007 年 8 月 16 日)	Yu-qing: Not explicitly written down, but there was such a code. Because that school is, how to say it, well, a little "blindly worshiping the foreign stuff", it just has such customs. (DAI Yu-qing, Interview, August 16th, 2007)

All Yu-qing's then classmates adopted an English name. Even his then roommates' parents called him Eugene. Yu-qing kept this English name throughout his schooling until he started to work in a foreign language school as a part-time English teacher when he was a senior undergraduate student. He found that it was not easy for his Chinese students to pronounce his English name. He therefore shortened Eugene to Gene. Yu-qing now uses Gene with all non-Chinese speakers in Canada.

Xue's first junior middle school English teacher suggested that she choose an English name. Her first English name was Mary. She chose it from her first English textbook because it was easy for her to pronounce. Five years later, after having entered a senior middle school, Xue decided to change her English name. This time, her decision had nothing to do with her English teacher. Here is an excerpt from her narratives regarding why she gave up her first English name:

> *I gave up Mary as my English name only because I found that the world was flooded with "the Mary Notebook". "The Mary Notebook" is a name [trademark] of a notebook. I just felt: Why should I have the same name as a notebook? (ZHAO Xue, Interview, August 16th, 2007)*

Xue referred to the English name list attached to an English-Chinese dictionary. She decided to find an English name initiated by "Sh" because it would sound similar to her Chinese given name, Xue. Thus, she chose "Shirley". Similar to Yu-qing, Xue also uses her English name with most non-Chinese speakers in Canada. Xue said that she did not care about the literal meaning of her English name because, "*Since it is already a name, it must have some good meaning. So, I don't have to worry about that.*"

Jian was excited when she heard that her first English teacher in her junior middle school, a Chinese lady, asked the class to adopt an English name. *"I was not as shy as*

my classmates," she said*, "and I immediately raised my hand and tried to tell my teacher an English name."* Jian was excited because she had some early interest in English, long before she entered middle school. Jian dreamed of becoming a diplomat since she was a primary school girl. She learned from her father that a diplomat has to be good in English. Why she agreed to adopt an English name had never been a question for her. She did not even think that it could be a question.

Jian's English name is Anna. It comes from Princess Diana who was Jian's idol since childhood. When her English teacher suggested that the class choose an English name, Jian could not wait to raise her hand to tell her teacher that she would like to take the princess' name as her English name. However, as a beginning learner of English, Jian was then barely able to recite the 26 English letters and it was not until she stood up that she realized that she did not remember the exact name! The little girl was at a loss and all she could remember was that there was a sound like "anna" in that name. She made a sound similar to "Anna". Her then English teacher immediately confirmed that Anna was a good English name. Thus, Anna became Jian's English name. Now Jian uses her English name with most people in Canada, no matter whether they speak Chinese or not. Jian is the only participant who uses her English name with other Chinese people from mainland China.

Zhi-zheng is the only participant in the Canada group who initiated and then managed to adopt an English name for herself. Throughout her schooling, no teacher had asked her to adopt an English name. Neither had anybody else explicitly suggested that she do so. She adopted three different English names in sequence, which were Sissi, Jane, and Bertha.

Zhi-zheng began to read English novels in senior middle school. Her favorite novel character was Bertha, a character in one of Charles Dickens's (1812-1870) Christmas novels, *The Cricket on the Hearth*. "*She is an angel in this novel,*" Zhi-zheng said. Bertha was always one of her English name options; however, she did not choose it at the inception. Her first English name was Sissi, a name came from a movie series, *Princess Sissi*, shot in the 1950s and starring by the Austrian actress Romy Schneider (1938-1982). The almost perfect image of the princess in the Sissi movies deeply rooted in Zhi-zheng's heart. When she went to a summer school in the United States as an exchange senior middle school student, Zhi-zheng introduced herself as Sissi. However, she noticed that local American people raised eyebrows when they heard this name. She did not know why, until one day, she received a card from a friend. On the card, it said, "To Sissy", instead of "To Sissi". Looking it up in a dictionary, she found that "sissy" meant "womanish man" in English. Zhi-zheng decided to choose another English name right away.

The following year, Zhi-zheng was accepted to a university in Hong Kong where she found that most Hong Kongers introduced themselves by an English name. Zhi-zheng chose *Jane* as her English name, due to its phonetic similarity to her Chinese given name. During the first year in Hong Kong, Zhi-zheng introduced herself as Jane. However, one day, one of her Hong Kong classmates told her that her way of pronouncing *Jane* was incorrect because she failed to glide her lips when pronouncing the vowel *a*. Zhi-zheng was embarrassed to learn this. She felt that she should not use a name if she could not pronounce it properly.

The next semester, Zhi-zheng went to the United States as an exchange student. This time, she decided to adopt Bertha as her English name because she associated it with a fictional character she liked and it was not a regular English name. When she introduced herself as Bertha to a local American classmate, that person said that Bertha was a nice name and it was his grandmother's name. Zhi-zheng understood his remarks to mean that it was a good name. The next semester, when she went back to Hong Kong, she asked people to call her Bertha, though it turned out to be a troublesome task because some of her friends had already been used to calling her Jane. However, she managed to make the change. I asked Zhi-zheng if she would mind that Bertha was a name that had long been out of use. Zhi-zheng said that she would rather not change her English name any more. "*I don't want to make trouble anymore,*" she said.

Wei-ming, female, and Min-min, male, are two PhD students. They have never had an English name. Wei-ming is 32 and Min-min is 26. Throughout her schooling, no teacher asked Wei-ming to have an English name. *"I [also] feel strange because many people said that their English teacher gave them an English name. However, no teacher never ever said so to me."* She said. Wei-ming's father and her younger brother went to the United States in the early 1980s. However, Wei-ming did not like studying English. The next excerpt from Wei-ming's narratives describes her experiences of learning English.

> *My grandpa's logic is: learning a foreign language would help you understand some different people that you would otherwise not be able to know. They asked me to learn English since childhood. However, I didn't like English even then. It's just because I do not have any interest in foreign stuff. In my childhood, when reading story books, I would not touch those foreign stories even though they had already been translated into Chinese. My family asked me to listen to English radio, but it did not help. However, anyway, I had a fairly better basis on English than most kids. I always did well in*

writing English examinations, but I was nothing when it comes to speaking and listening. In my undergraduate university, I majored in Chinese. Students in the Chinese faculty are generally not good at English. So my English kind of stood out. Our university once selected some students and offered us to minor in English. I rejected. My family was mad at my decision. However, at that time, I only thought that I finally, finally did not have to study English any more. When I came here, I felt it so painful that I was not good at listening, speaking, reading, or writing in English. I've been here for 3 years but I still cannot understand what people say. It's not a problem of diligence. Individuals are different. One of my classmates said that it took her half a year to fit in. It took my younger brother 5 years to fit in. He was a teenager when he went to the States. So, I tell myself not to worry too much. Worrying would not help anyway. (ZHANG Wei-ming, Interview, October 23rd, 2007)

Wei-ming concluded her English learning experience by saying that "*I learned that except a little bit of talent in learning Chinese literature, I am just good at nothing else*".

Wei-ming does not like studying English, but this does not hinder her from looking for an English name. *"I like choosing names. It's very interesting,"* she said. She had chosen many different names either for herself or for the characters in her novels. She picked up a Japanese name when she learned Japanese. She had the idea of adopting an English name after she started to study at the University of Toronto, where when introducing herself, she found that she was sometimes in an awkward situation:

未名：就比如说：他／她说：what's your name? 我说："未名"。有的时候，有的人就会愣一下："什么？"因为他／她不知道我在说什么，他／她甚至不知道我是在告诉他／她我的名字。那种时候我觉得挺别扭的。(张未名，访问, 2007 年 10 月 23 日)

Wei-ming: For example, they said: what's your name? I said, "Wei-ming." Sometimes, some people would be at a loss [and asked], "what?" because they did not know what I was talking about. They even did not know that I was telling them my name. In such situations, I'd feel rather awkward. (ZHANG Wei-ming, Interview, October 23rd, 2007)

Wei-ming said that she understood non-Chinese speakers' difficulty in uttering a Chinese sound, but she could not help feeling embarrassed. However, the following

excerpt from her narratives indicates that her efforts of choosing an English name turned out to be a difficult task:

> *I could choose a Japanese name because I knew which names were beautiful in Japanese. The Japanese culture is similar to our own. But I am not familiar with the western cultures. I'd like to have a special [English] name, but as I said before, it should be not only special, but also not overtly so. To use a word now in fashion [in China], the name should not be too "shiny"; that is, it should not make people feel that you're trying to make a stir. I don't want that kind of name. So I hesitated and did not know which name to choose. I felt that if I could not find a good one [English name], I'd rather not choose any. As time goes by, I become accustomed to such situations. My mind also changed, though. Now I feel that this is my name; if you don't understand, I can repeat it. It's okay. (ZHANG Wei-ming, Interview, October 23rd, 2007)*

Now, adopting an English name is no longer to avoid embarrassment for Wei-ming. She said that if she could "find" a good English name, she would still like to adopt it.

Wei-ming did not like studying English, but at least, she always did well in English examinations. Min-min also did not like English throughout his schooling in China; however, he often failed his English exams. Surprisingly, Min-min was not upset by his failure in exams. Min-min was rather picky in courses in middle school. He was excellent in subjects such as Physics, Biology, and Mathematics but always failed in other subjects such as Chinese and English. Being picky in courses is often considered as a serious problem in China because it would result in such students' not being able to pass the national entrance examination to universities in China. Min-min said that he was always the negative example in his middle school teachers' eyes mainly because of his pickiness in courses. Min-min was excellent in science courses but always failed in arts courses. When he told his parents that he dreamed of studying in Beijing University, one of the best universities in China, his parents thought that he was day-dreaming. His outstanding performance in a national physics contest in senior middle school granted

him the access to enter Beijing University. In the university, Min-min found that many students had an English name. However, *"at this age,"* he said, *"nobody would ask you to adopt an English name."*

Min-min does not have an English name, which he partially attributed to the low quality of English teaching and the *"remoteness"* (his own words) of his hometown. Similar to Wei-ming's case, after arriving in Canada, Min-min also encountered problems when he introduced his Chinese name to local non-Chinese speakers:

旻珉：别人一般的反应就是，"min-min?" 反问一下是不是真的，[我]觉得[人们]不是太相信这个，就是，[他们]觉得很奇怪。一般人的反应都是这样。(周旻珉，访问，2008 年 4 月 10 日)	*Min-min: People's general reaction was, "Min-min?" They tended to confirm. [I] felt that [they] were not quite sure about it; that is, [they] felt it strange. People generally responded this way. (ZHOU Min-min, Interview, April 10th, 2008)*

However, Min-min soon gave up the idea of adopting an English name. Three main factors have contributed to this decision. The first one is his criteria for choosing an English name. Min-min planned to find a name not only unique but also common, which is, in his words, *impossible*:

旻珉：比较有独特性的吧。不是说随便一个英文名字。 *潘：可是 unique 以后就变得......* *旻珉：[接话] 对，就变得不再像是一个英文名了，就失去本身的意义，所以我觉得[取英文名字]就变得没有意义了，还不如就用原来的，[我的中文名字在加拿大]已经很 unique 了，所以就 ok 啊[笑]。(周旻珉，访问，2008 年 4 月 10 日)*	*Min-min: It should be unique, not a carelessly-chosen name.* *Pan: But being unique might make it...* *Min-min: [Taking over the turn] yeah, no longer like an English name and it would then lose its real sense as a name. Therefore, it becomes pointless [to choose an English name] and it'd be no better than using the original one which is already very unique [in Canada]. So it's okay [Chuckle]. (ZHOU Min-min, Interview, April 10th, 2008)*

Min-min's second reason is to avoid potential problems brought on by using two names:

旻珉：干什么要麻烦再弄一个名字，干吗搞得大家[麻烦]。其实我觉得真的[用英文名字]，其实会更麻烦一点。因为我还要 deal with 两个名字，别人叫我的时候，[我]还要对另一个名字起反应的话，那，还需要时间适应。(周旻珉，访问, 2008 年 4 月 10 日)	*Min-min: Why bother to take another name and why make it [complicated] for everybody? Actually, it would be more complicated if I really used [an English name] because I would have to deal with two names. When other people call me, I'd also have to react to the other name. Then, it would take me some time to get used to it. (ZHOU Min-min, Interview, April 10th, 2008)*

Because more and more people know him by his Chinese name, Min-min no longer deemed it necessary to adopt an English name. As a science student aiming at becoming a scientist, Min-min did not think that his future scientist colleagues would make a fuss over his name. Min-min thought that a science student was different from an arts student because he would not have to participate in so many different social activities as arts students would have to. Therefore, whether people can remember his name or not is not a crucial issue for him. Min-min is the only participant in my research who claimed that he would not mind if other Chinese people used an English name with him.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented all nineteen participants' stories on how they decided to adopt (or not) their English name. In the next chapter, I present the main themes that emerged in their narratives and discuss the three research questions I presented in chapter three.

Chapter Five: Discussion on Participants' Lived Experiences

In this chapter, I present the central themes emerging from participants' narratives. I discuss these themes within the conceptual framework I introduced in chapter two. My discussion revolves around the three research questions that I proposed in chapter three. The themes that I present in this chapter are mainly:

- Definition of participants' English names from their own perspectives
- The habitus of adopting *ming* and *zi*
- An investment in imagined communities
- A phonetic difficulty and a typical collectivistic act
- Political factors —the Reform and Open-up policy, the power of English, capital
- Adopting and/or using an English name and the involvement strategy
- The social influence of Hong Kong and Taiwan
- Participants' confidence in their Chinese roots
- Knowing the meanings of an English name
- The tendency of choosing a meaningful and unique English name
- A third space between English names and Chinese names
- Assumed, negotiated, and imposed identities
- The relationship between an English name and one's actuality
- A social identity that may establish boundaries and common space

Definition of Participants' English Names from Participants' Own Perspectives

How do participants refer to their English names? Can their English name be classified as an available category?

First of all, participants' English names are not pseudo names. They are names that will be used not only in an English class, but also in participants' real life outside school. Sixteen participants who presently have or would like to adopt an English name claimed that they viewed their English name as their real name. Neither are their English names pet names or nicknames. In the English naming culture, pet names and nicknames are usually circulated among family members, friends, or peers. One's nickname is usually a

truncated form of one's original name. Participants' English names are used or intended to be used to introduce or refer to a person in various contexts. They are not short forms of participants' Chinese name. All participants clearly conveyed the message that *their English name was their English name and their Chinese name was their Chinese name.* Some of them showed a strong negative attitude toward the idea of shortening their Chinese given name. In Zhi-zheng's words, "*If you just called me 'Zheng', I would rather you directly call me Bertha.*" Shortening their Chinese given name would arouse a feeling of changing their Chinese name, to which participants showed a reluctant or negative attitude. Participants would prefer to use a totally different name, such as an English name, rather than make any changes to their Chinese name. I claim that participants' English names coexist with their Chinese names, they are also their real names circulated in their social lives, and they are backup names to be used in certain contexts with certain groups of people.

How do participants perceive this *dual* name situation?

Before using their English name with non-Chinese speakers outside China, participants in both groups comfortably kept both their English name and their Chinese name. They did not mention any confusion or challenge to the legitimacy of their English names. Some experienced using their English name in work or at school in China with non-Chinese speakers and they did not have any confusion resulting from using these two names. It is when they came to Canada that some participants confronted questioning voices from local people who did not speak Chinese.

How, then, do participants in the Canada group view this "dual" name issue? Five participants, Ling, Yu-qing, Xue, Jian, and Wei-ming, did not think that there would be

any problem if one used his/her Chinese name with Chinese people and his/her English name with non-Chinese speakers. One participant, Zhi-zheng, expressed her concern over having "dual" identities as a result of using two names in her life. However, she tended to ignore this vexation. She said, *"It [her dual name practice] works well so far. Why still bother to solve it? Let it go."* The other three participants in the Canada group, Hai-yan, Zheng-yi, and Min-min, were concerned with the potential confusion that might result from using different names with different people. Min-min never had any English name. What worried Hai-yan and Zheng-yi is not the practice of adopting an English name *per se*; instead, they were apprehensive about the discrepancies in the understandings of what a name was between local Canadian people and themselves. Although they admitted the legitimacy of Chinese people's English name, they learned that not all non-Chinese speakers were ready to admit this name legitimacy. Zheng-yi and Hai-yan thought that other people's questioning voices over their English names might be partially because they were Chinese who were supposed to have a Chinese name instead of an English name, and partially because it was not the name printed on their IDs. Zheng-yi said, *"Those whose name is Emily or Stephanie are all White, but I am not White."* As a result, she resorted to her Chinese name. Hai-yan tended to use her Chinese name in Canada because she felt that non-Chinese speakers would not treat her English name as her real name. Noteworthy is that she gave her new-born baby a name that consisted of both a Chinese name and an English name. She expected to avoid this legitimacy confusion over name in her baby's future.

Although having different opinions, participants had no difficulty in accepting Chinese people's practice of adopting an English name. Tong claimed that the open-

mindedness of modern China had contributed to this English name phenomenon. Li compared English names with computers and cell phones and argued that:

> *It's like that computers and cell phones are a part of common people's lives; in the future, English names would be of similar importance in interpersonal communication. At certain development level, having English name might be a sign of one's level of internationalization. (WANG Li, Interview, June 16th, 2007)*

Some participants accepted Chinese people's English name practices as other people's personal choice. In Ling's words, "*It's their decision, if they like it and feel comfortable.*"

Question 1: Why do many modern Chinese people in or from mainland China choose to adopt and/or use an English name? When, how, with whom, and why do they use it?

I argue that participants' practice of adopting English names is similar to what Chinese people did historically by adopting *ming*, *zi,* and *hao*.

The practice of adopting a *ming* and a *zi* in China existed until the twentieth century. With *ming* as one's original given name, Chinese people also used to admit the legitimacy of their *zi* and *hao*. All participants declared that their Chinese name was their most important name. Sixteen participants who presently have or would like to have an English name argued that their English name was or would be their real name too and they admitted the legitimacy of both their Chinese and English names.

As a social name, Chinese people's *zi/hao* used to be used with certain groups of people in certain contexts. Historically, compared with *ming*, one's *zi* was much more frequently used in one's daily life. Men and women received their *zi* when they were considered adults and ready to get married. Adults of the similar age or social status would address each other by their *zi's*. Similarly, participants admitted the legitimacy of

Chinese people's English name, but they preferred that one's English name be used with appropriate people in appropriate situations, for example, with non-Chinese speakers in a context of speaking English.

Participants in the China group conveyed the idea that they would accept Chinese people using an English name with each other if it was a work requirement. In the Canada group, most participants said that even in such situations, they might wonder why their Chinese interlocutor did not use their Chinese name with them since they were both from mainland China and s/he definitely had a Chinese name. Most participants held a conservative attitude towards native Chinese speakers from mainland China using an English name with each other, which would easily be interpreted as *showing off*. Nevertheless, despite their personal feelings, all participants said that they would call their interlocutor by the name s/he gave them.

One's *zi/hao* was not necessarily similar to one's *ming*. Similarly, participants chose their English names according to their personal preference. That is, although similarity in sound or meaning was a popular way of choosing an English name for many Chinese people, it was not necessarily participants' personal criteria for choosing their English name(s). Actually, many participants claimed that they would avoid having their English name similar to their Chinese name in any way. Most participants said that when they were asked to choose an English name, they were quite excited because, in their interpretation, it would be a new name and did not have to be related to their Chinese names. It seems that the idea of adopting a new name was fresh, interesting and attractive to many participants at the inception. In Yun-long's words, to adopt an English name was "*simply fun.*"

In addition, adopting *ming, zi,* and *hao* did not mean that ancient Chinese people kept on changing their names. Chinese people used to have one *ming* and one or, in some cases, two *zi(s)*. Some also had one or several *hao(s)* in their life. Participants argued against the practice of continually changing one's English name. Sen and Zhi-zheng, changed their English name three times, but their intention was to choose an English name that could satisfy their criteria for a good English name and they also clearly said that they would try not to change their English name anymore. Except Tong who has two English names, all other participants who presently have an English name claimed that they had only one English name.

Participants' English names were given by their teachers, peers or themselves. These are also the ways that Chinese people obtained their *zi/hao* in history. One's *ming* was usually given by one's family but one's *zi/hao* could be given by one's teachers, peers, or oneself.

The practice of adopting a *zi* or *hao* gradually ceased in the 20th century. However, as a tradition that had existed in China for two thousand years, its influence is still present. It is still a living memory for many modern Chinese people. For example, in the family tree of my father's family, my grandfather's *ming* is recorded as Wang Qingrong. He also has a *zi* which is Yunpu. His *zi* is not recorded in the family tree but most people only knew his *zi* and it is also the name that is printed in his official household register.

The Habitus of Adopting Ming and Zi

The most salient theme that emerged from participants' narratives is that participants showed a surprisingly common tendency of accepting Chinese people's

practice of adopting an English name. They accepted it so naturally that none of them had consciously been aware that there could be such questions as why they initially agreed to adopt an English name. Participants' common readiness of accepting this English name issue is similar to what Bourdieu (1991) defines as the habitus, a set of dispositions that incline people to act and re-act in certain ways that are so regular that people are not consciously aware that they are governed by any rule. According to Bourdieu (1991), habitus is inculcated, structured, durable, generative and transposable. Before the 20th century, Chinese people used to adopt *ming, zi,* and/or *hao.* Mingzi, the equivalent Chinese word for *name* is a combination of *ming* and *zi.* Adopting a *ming* and a *zi*, had been a common practice in China for more than two thousand years until the 20th century. This habitus used to be inculcated into children's childhood. People had to learn how to appropriately address another person and themselves. It was socially structured and was, therefore, durable. Such naming and addressing customs also generated various practices and perceptions in a diversity of fields in individuals' lives.

In modern China, throughout Chinese students' schooling, especially in Chinese courses, memorizing all different names (*ming, zi, hao*, etc.) that Chinese people, especially men of letters, in history adopted in their lives is a part of the basic knowledge that Chinese students have to master. It is important for them to do so because without such knowledge, they would have difficulties in figuring out who's who in literary works. For example, Confucius' family name is Kong, his *ming* is Qiu, and his *zi* is Zhongni. Confucius, or 孔夫子 (Kong Fuzi) in Chinese, is a respectful title by which his students addressed him. I claim that participants' readiness of accepting the practice of adopting an English name is ruled by Chinese people's habitus of adopting *ming, zi,* and

hao. Participants comfortably treated both their English name and their Chinese name as their name(s). They would sometimes change their English name if they found that it did not fit them well. But once they decided on a name, they would try to stick to it and use it in situations that they thought appropriate.

All participants who presently have an English name enjoyed their experience of adopting an English name. Many participants used the expression of "*for fun*" when they recalled their experiences of choosing or being given an English name. Even Cheng-peng also talked about his own criteria for choosing an English name. Yu-qing said that he and his classmates were excited when their junior middle school English teacher gave them their first English name. Yu-qing's English name was, in his own words, a *souvenir* of all these years of learning English. When working as an English teacher in China, Yu-qing also gave his own students an English name, which he found quite interesting. I argue that the habitus of adopting *ming* and *zi* not only contributes to participants' strong interest in choosing an English name either for themselves or for other people, but also results in their tendency of using their English names both in their English classes and in their daily lives.

Bourdieu (1991) compares the human body to a site of incorporated history and argues that humans' particular practices or perceptions should be seen as the product of the habitus on the one hand and the specific social contexts in which individuals act on the other hand. Besides the habitus of adopting *ming* and *zi,* are there other social and historical reasons that have contributed to Chinese people's English name practices?

An Investment in Imagined Communities

Jie-mei, Hai-yan, Jian, and Yu-qing's undergraduate major is English. They used their English name in school and later in their work in China. Except for them, other participants seldom use or used their English name in China because they do or did not have many opportunities to talk with a "native" English speaker outside school in their immediate lives. It is not rare to see that many participants adopted an English name and managed to keep it for around ten years without actually using it in their real lives. Why do or did they keep an almost useless name for so many years?

Besides the habitus of adopting different given names in one's life, another salient theme that emerged from participants' narratives is that they all mentioned using their English name in the future. Such future communities mainly include working for a Hong Kong, Taiwanese or foreign company in China, and living or working in English-speaking countries or regions. I argue that participants' English name is also an investment in some imagined communities.

Investment is a concept that Norton (1995) uses to replace the traditional concept of *motivation* in order to better capture the complex negotiation between the language learner and the learning context. It understands the language learner as a real person of a diversity of social identities and desires. *Imagined community* is a concept coined by Anderson (1991) who argues that what people say as nations are actually all imagined communities. Inspired by Lave and Wenger's (1991) research on learners' learning a target language in various communities in learners' immediate life, or communities of practice, Norton and Kanno (2003) argue that learners' investment in their target language may be best understood in rule-based, imagined communities that exist in

learners' imagination, extend beyond local relationships, and may have a strong impact on learners' actions and investment. According to Norton and Kanno (2003), foreign or second language learners' imagined communities include:

> *Future relationships that exist only in the learner's imaginations as well as affiliations—such as nationhood or even transnational communities—that extend beyond local sets of relationships. We suggest that these imagined communities are no less real than the ones in which learners have daily engagement and might even have a stronger impact on their current actions and investments. (Kanno & Norton, 2003:242)*

Participants assumed that there were such communities where they would use their English name one day in the future in various contexts. Tong's case is very typical of this stance. She chose not to use her English names with her Chinese schoolmate. In her words, *"I feel that my English names have nothing to do with them."* She imagined that there might be communities in her future life where speaking English and using an English name would be a popular practice. Sen articulated that he was fairly serious with his choice of an English name because there were presently many opportunities for Chinese people to either study/work abroad or work for a foreign, Hong Kong, or Taiwanese company in China, which would involve one's using an English name from time to time. Xiu-xiu, Yao-wen, and Sen in the China group and Hai-yan, Jian, and Xue in the Canada group all mentioned their friends', family members', or their own experiences of using an English name while working for a foreign or Hong Kong company in China. Take the excerpt from Sen's narratives, for example:

> *My sister works for the Beijing branch of HSBC, a Hong Kong Bank. She and her colleagues address each other by their English names. Most supervisors in her company are Hong Kongers. Hong Kongers do not use their Chinese name. They only use their English name. As a result, all employees in the company address each other by an English name. In their work, they write reports in both Chinese and English. If they want to get a promotion or go to work in Hong Kong, their boss will first test their English proficiency. Using an*

English name is a quite popular practice among people in coastal big cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhe. But for an inland city like Taiyuan, people seldom use their English name. (XU Sen, Interview, June 14th, 2007)

The HSBC that Sen mentioned is Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation, a Scottish bank, but always mistaken for a Hong Kong company. Sen's sister's experience has an obvious impact on Sen's serious attitude towards his English name. The next excerpt from Jie-mei's narratives reveals her perception of the relationship between her English name and investment:

My English name can be counted as an investment. People like me, we used to major in English. For sure, we would use English to make our living and to enter a better profession that is usually connected with your income in this society. Also, your income always represents your social status, your value. Therefore, it's okay to say that it is an investment. (ZHOU Jie-mei, Interview, June 15th, 2007)

From the perspective of investment, adopting an English name is a potentially profitable investment that participants made in some imagined communities in their future. This investment is considered to be not only interesting, but also requires a rather low cost from the investor because all they have to do is to survey the internet or flip through an English-Chinese dictionary published in mainland China where many such dictionaries include a separate appendix named "most common English names". As Sen said, *"To choose an English name won't take you a long time, but it can entertain you."*

A Phonetic Difficulty and a Typical Collectivistic Act

Eleven participants, two in the China group (Tong and Yun-long) and all participants in the Canada group, mentioned non-Chinese speakers' difficulty in pronouncing a Chinese name. Participants learned from their life experiences that Chinese names were often difficult for non-Chinese speakers to pronounce and

remember. Tong and Yao-wen described how their previous non-Chinese-speaking English teachers addressed Chinese students. Tong said, *"when they wanted to ask some students to answer questions, they just pointed at them."* Yao-wen said that he had had two foreign teachers and both of them did not remember students' Chinese names, *"They just said 'you, you, you', like this."*

Four participants, Tong, Yu-qing, Jian, and Wei-ming, felt that non-Chinese speakers' pronunciation of their Chinese name was acceptable, but they still preferred to be called by their English name if they had one. Zheng-yi and Min-min used to hold a similar opinion. Zheng-yi used to use her English name with non-Chinese speakers, but her attitudes towards using an English name changed after having lived in Canada for four years. She intended to cease to use her English name in Canada. Min-min gave up his attempt of adopting an English name because he could not find one that could satisfy his criteria for being a good English name. Ling's Chinese name is easy for English speakers to pronounce. He did not want to adopt an English name. He argued that adopting an English name for foreigners only because they had pronunciation difficulty was, in his words, to *"spoil"* foreigners. The other four participants, Yun-long, Hai-yan, Xue, and Zhi-zheng, said that they had difficulty in recognizing their own Chinese name when non-native Chinese speakers called them.

Participants mentioned three main perplexities that stemmed from non-Chinese speakers' pronunciation problems.

Perplexity 1: a Sense of Social Distance and a Desire for Belonging

Eight participants mentioned a sense of distance when they heard their Chinese name being pronounced inaccurately. Hai-yan and Wei-ming explained this sense of distance by comparing it with their feeling when a native-Chinese speaker called their Chinese name. Hai-yan said that when her name was pronounced accurately, *"I would feel more like a friend is calling me, or there might be good possibility for us to become friends."* When her name was pronounced inaccurately, she would feel a sense of distance with her interlocutors. Participants noticed the potential difficulty for other language speakers to pronounce a Chinese name, but they also thought it not quite polite to keep on correcting other people's pronunciation. Meanwhile, they would feel awkward when their Chinese name was inaccurately pronounced. Hai-yan said that *"I don't think that there would be much difference between not being able to remember one's name and always calling one's name inaccurately."* It seems that using an English name would solve all these problems.

However, in Hai-yan, Zheng-yi, Jian, and Zhi-zheng's cases, they found that the legitimacy of their English name was questioned by non-Chinese speakers to some extent. The following excerpts from these participants' narratives reveal their confusions resulted from such questioning voices.

> *I used my English name in my undergrad university in China. Also, I used my English name in Hong Kong and Taiwanese companies that I once worked for in Canada. In Canada, one day, I met a McGill classmate on campus. She was then with another young man. We exchanged our names. I told him my Chinese name but he had difficulty in pronouncing it. He asked me, "Am I right?" I felt it not quite polite to keep on correcting him. I knew that it was hard for them to make accurate Chinese sounds. So I told him that he could also call me Helen. Then we discussed about this. He said that Chinese people always gave him an English name. He wondered why they did not tell him their original name. I said that because we felt that our original name*

might be difficult for you to pronounce. We talked a lot that day about names and naming customs in China and in Canada. To our surprise, we found that we knew so little about each other's naming culture. My attitude towards my English name never changed. What changed is my understanding of other people's comprehension of names. I like both my Chinese name and my English name. If my friends here could treat my English name equally to my Chinese name, I would be very happy to be called by my English name too. If not, in the future, I might not use my English name often. (XU Hai-yan, Interview, August 16th, 2007)

Hai-yan argued that her understandings of names did not change, but she intended to cease to use her English name in Canada mainly due to "native" English speakers' questioning attitudes towards her English name. Zheng-yi said that she preferred to use her Chinese name in Canada now because many Canadians told her that they felt that her Chinese name was beautiful. Hai-yan and Zheng-yi decided to stick to their Chinese name in Canada though they did not give up their English name. However, Jian and Zhi-zheng made a different decision.

At Alberta University, I met a famous professor. I told him that my name was Anna, but he insisted on calling me ZHANG Jian. In Ottawa, none of my professors knew my Chinese name. When I wrote email to my [present, McGill] professor, I signed as Anna. However, she still called me "Zhang Jian". At first, I interpreted it as her intention of keeping distance with me. One day, I chatted with a foreign friend. We talked about a common friend of us. I said, "Well, his name is so long that I can never remember it. I never called that [his full name]. I only use the shortest form of his name." He [my friend] said, "Local professors are really nice and they call him by his full name in order to show their respect to him." Oh, I then remembered my professor. I think that what she wanted to do was to express her respect to me. (ZHANG Jian, Interview, September 26th, 2007)

I feel that they [my Canadian friends] wanted to show their recognition of my Chinese identity, or they wanted to affirm this background of mine. For example, just a couple of days ago, a friend asked me, "Why do you use an English name? Why don't you let us directly call your Chinese name?" I said, "It is too hard for you to pronounce." He asked me why. I said, "Also, you would have problem remembering it." He said, "If a person really cares about you and wants to know you, they would try to remember your Chinese name; if that person doesn't care about you, then, don't care about them either." Then, I said, "It might be the case." From one perspective, I want to simplify matters.

Just let them call me by my English name. On the other hand, I do cherish my Chinese name; I do recognize this identity; I do believe that I am Chinese. There is a paradox here, but I don't want to face it. Neither do I want to solve it. Since it works well so far, why still try to solve it? Then, I let it go. (ZHANG Zhi-zheng, Interview, September 16th, 2007)

Instead of ceasing to use their English names, Jian and Zhi-zheng decided to ignore the negative part of the challenge and kept on using their English names.

Non-native Chinese speakers' questioning the legitimacy of participants' English names was quite new to participants. They viewed such a challenge from different perspectives and reacted accordingly.

Drawing a closer distance with their interlocutors is frequently mentioned as a reason of using an English name. Li, Hui-juan, Sen, and Yun-long and Min-min held this opinion.

丽：我觉得[跟外国人用英文名字]更亲切一点，交流的时候距离更近一点。就像一个外国跟我介绍自己的时候说的是一个中文名字，我也觉得很好。我中学的时候认识一个外国人, 他叫蓝天，我觉得很有意思。他是德国人，德语的名字好难记，我也没记住。

潘：你喜欢蓝天这个名字吗？

丽：虽然觉得有点，听起来感觉很奇怪，但是感觉这个人还是挺好的，听起来特别亲切嘛…… 英文名字应该是会帮助我跟外国人交流。(王丽，访问，2007 年 6 月 16 日)

Li: I feel that [using an English name with foreigners] is more intimate. A sense of closer distance while communicating with them. Just like that I'd feel good if a foreigner introduced him/herself by a Chinese name. I knew a foreigner in my middle school. His name is 蓝天 [Lantian, literally meaning "blue sky"]. I found it interesting. He is German and his German name is quite difficult [for me] to remember, nor did I remember it.

Pan: Do you like Lantian as a name?

Li: Although I felt it sounded a little bit weird, I still felt that that guy was nice and it [the Chinese name] sounded quite intimate... An English name should be able to help me communicate with foreigners. (WANG Li, Interview, June 16th, 2007)

Such sense of distance made some participants prefer to use an English name with non-Chinese speakers. Why is this sense of distance so important to participants?

Hofstede (1980) found that most individualistic cultures flourish in English-speaking countries, represented by the United States and Great Britain, and most collectivistic cultures are dominant in Asian and South American countries. Accordingly, North America and China are representative areas of these two cultures. Based on the ideas of Triandis (1988, 1995) and Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, and Greenfield (2000), Korostelina (2007) listed salient identity features of individualistic and collectivistic cultures. According to her list, individualists tend to understand the content of self as *individual differences* while collectivists view the content of self as *social categories*; individualists stress independence and individual achievement while collectivists value interdependence and group success. Participants showed a strong desire of integrating into the local society and a need of establishing a close relationship or attachment with other members of the groups that they were in. A sense of distance from their interlocutor bothered some participants so much that they tried to solve this problem. Therefore, some of them chose to use an English name when interacting with non-Chinese speakers.

Perplexity 2: "You Cannot Remember My Name" vs. "I Am Not a Burden for the Group"

Some participants expressed a concern that it might be hard for some non-Chinese speakers to remember their Chinese name. For some, such as Tong, Yao-wen, Ling, and Zheng-yi, this assumption is repeatedly proven to be true by their personal contacts with "native" English-speaking teachers in China. Tong said,

彤：他们[外国人]有时候肯定记不住，根本记不住。因为他们的发音跟我们的根本不一样。告诉他中文名字可能他一会就忘了，不知道你叫什么。 *(向彤，访问，2007 年 6 月 16 日)*

Tong: They [foreigners] sometimes, for sure, cannot remember your name. No, they cannot at all. Because their pronunciation is totally different from ours. If you tell them your Chinese name, they would forget it in a minute and still not know what your name is. (XIANG Tong, Interview, June 16th, 2007)

Yao-wen had a similar experience. There are around 30 students in his present graduate English class. He has had two different native-English-speaking English teachers. None of them remembered students' Chinese names.

Such a concern is also associated with some participants' own difficulty in remembering non-Chinese names. As international students in Canada, Jian and Yu-qing do not mind using their Chinese names with non-native Chinese speakers; however, they assumed that a Chinese name would be difficult for non-Chinese speakers to remember. Yu-qing referred to his own difficulty in remembering a Japanese name: *"[My Chinese name is] not hard [for native English-speakers] to pronounce, but it's also easy to be forgotten. It's just like how I always forget Japanese names."*

Zhi-zheng once had a discussion with her Canadian schoolmate about whose responsibility it was to remember someone's name. Zhi-zheng said that using an English name with her schoolmates might make it much easier for them to remember her name. However, her schoolmate did not accept this explanation and argued that it should be other people's, instead of Zhi-zheng's, responsibility to try to remember her name. Zhi-zheng felt that such an argument was interesting but she could not exercise such logic. Learning from her own experience, Zhi-zheng still intended to offer other people an easier option, which in her understanding, would be polite and considerate for others.

In Korostelina's (2007) list of differences between individualism and collectivism, she showed that people employed different ways for self-actualization. In general, individualists would "do what I want" while collectivists' first concern would usually be "I am not a burden for my group". Participants recognized that their Chinese name might be difficult for non-Chinese speakers to pronounce. How do they deal with this phonetic difficulty? Their choice revealed that most of them chose not to make themselves a burden for other group members. That is, they chose to offer their non-Chinese-speaking interlocutors an easier option—an English name. Similarly, participants in the China group also conveyed their appreciation if a non-Chinese-speaking interlocutor would offer them a Chinese name in interaction.

Moreover, collectivist and individualist cultures interpret *group* in different ways:

The principle of group profit is a collectivistic norm; the principle of individual benefit is typical to individualistic norms, though it also includes recognizing the interests of others and the norms of exchange. The norms of exchange have two different interpretations: one is based on the principle of justice, while the other takes the survival of the most adated individuals as its reference point. (Korostelina, 2007:40)

Korostelina (2007) points out an interesting difference between the exchange based on the "principle of justice" and the exchange based on "the survival of the most adapted individuals." The following excerpt from Hui-juan's narratives reveals that when exchanging one's personal names, participants also show a tendency of playing fair with their interlocutors:

If my foreign friend uses a Chinese name, I'd want to be called by my Chinese name. However, if you always use an English name with me, I would also expect you to use my English name. [I want to] interact in this way. Although a name does not represent anything, I'd always feel a sense of intimacy in my heart. I would feel that we are interacting in an egalitarian way. Using names of different properties would create a sense of distance. My name is DUAN Hui-juan. Although this is my original name, a very real name, I

would feel that I am representing the Chinese culture and you are standing for a foreign culture. That is, a sense of "being as incompatible as fire and water." Although this is subjective, this is my real feeling in my heart. I won't use [my English name] with my Chinese schoolmates. Why use an English name with other Chinese people? Thus, we can integrate with each other better and play fair. (DUAN Hui-juan, Interview, June 12th, 2007)

Using an English name with "native" English speakers and Chinese name with Chinese speakers would give Hui-juan a sense of equal interaction. This sense of equality is also highlighted in many other participants' narratives.

Perplexity Three: "I Cannot Recognize My Own Name"

Some participants complained that they had difficulty in recognizing their own name when a non-Chinese speaker called them by their Chinese given name. A case in point is Xue. The following is an excerpt from Xue's narrative:

If you write my Chinese name down, many people would read it as "K-sue". I [had the experience of] stupidly standing there for a long time, wondering whose name was "K-sue" [laugh]. What other ways did they call me? Anyway, most sounds were strange. Furthermore, it's easy to confuse my name with other names. For example, I once participated in a social activity. People checked attendance in the lobby. I had to respond four to five times. Every time I would have to ask, "Did you call me?" Every time, I would find, "Well, not me." And then, I would have to hurry back [chuckle]. Also, foreigners [non-native Chinese speakers] are always so nice. Every time they see you, they would greet, "Sue, how are you?" [chuckle]. (ZHAO Xue, Interview, August 16th, 2007)

Such experiences made Xue feel rather embarrassed. Thus, she preferred to use an English name with non-Chinese speakers.

Xue's narrative reminded me of one of my travel experiences at the Vancouver airport in Canada. It was in 2007. I was on my way back to China. I had to wait at the Vancouver airport for about two hours before transferring to another plane. It was a nice and quiet early summer afternoon. Many airport announcements were being made. Some of them were last calls for passengers who still did not board. From time to time, I

noticed that there were some "strange" names, which the announcer always slowed down a little bit to read. This attracted my attention. I began to carefully listen to those last calls. Soon, I realized that many of those "weird" names might be Chinese names because many sounds were similar to Chinese family names that mostly consist of one syllable. I was excited at this finding and tried to figure out what those names were exactly. However, the result was rather disappointing. After having carefully listened for one hour at a quiet corner of the airport, I could not figure even one Chinese name out. I did not know if those passengers could recognize their own names in those airport announcements, but what I heard was always some unclear sounds that I could not make even the wildest guess about what on earth those names might be. This memory is still fresh. I learned from it how much confusion and difficulty there might be in both pronouncing a Chinese name for an English tongue and in recognizing a Chinese name pronounced by a foreign tongue.

Not being able to recognize one's own name when it is called by non-native Chinese speakers is a reason why some participants chose to use their English name; however, again, this is not necessarily the reason why they adopted their English name. Xue adopted her English name at twelve or thirteen years old when she had no idea of how other language speakers would pronounce her Chinese name. This is also the case for other participants.

Non-Chinese speakers' phonetic difficulty in pronouncing a Chinese name may have accelerated Chinese people's decision of using an English name; however, this reason alone is not enough to have Chinese people adopt an English name. Cases in point are Wei-ming and Min-min. They are the only two participants in the Canada

group who have never had any English name and they were both troubled by problems resulted from this phonetic difficulty. However, both of them gradually learned to relax and accept various ways that other people pronounced their Chinese name.

Political Factors —the Reform and Open-up Policy, the Power of English, Capital

Participants held an open attitude towards Chinese people's adopting an English name. Tong, Li, Hui-juan, Xiu-xiu, Yao-wen, Sen, and Yun-long used the term "Open-up" and argued that to adopt an English name was related with modern Chinese people's open-mindedness. The following excerpt from Tong's narratives is a good example:

> *China is practicing the Reform and Open-up policy. Permeation between different cultures is not worth being surprised about. Many foreigners also adopted Chinese names. I feel that anyway, it is a personal choice... Chinese people are quite open-minded now. (XIANG Tong, Interview, June 16th, 2007)*

Li claimed that if a Chinese person could not accept other Chinese people's adopting an English name, it might be because that s/he was not open-minded enough.

Yun-long and Sen associated adopting an English name with Chinese people's desire to learn from the West. They claimed that it was normal that many modern Chinese people wanted to adopt an English name.

"Open-up" is presently a word with positive denotation in China. It is associated with the "Reform and Open-up" policy that have been carried out by the Chinese government since the 1970s. As implied by its name, this policy consists of two parts: to reform inwardly and to open the country up to the outside world. It was considered as one of the basic national policies in China. This policy quietly started in the field of rural economy in the late 1970s. In the mid 1980s, the rural economic reform proved to be a huge success. In 1984, China's Gross National Product (GNP) exceeded $455 billion

(U.S. dollars), 13% more than the previous year (Song, 1985). In the speech delivered by Song Jian (1985), the then vice premier of China and one of the major science and technology policymakers in China, Chinese central government expressed its determination in carrying out economic reforms and opening up the country to the outside world. Since 1985, a series of thorough reforms were launched in China, including economic reforms in urban areas and reforms in the political system. By 2008, the Reform and Open-up policy has been practiced for 30 years and China is now labeled as the "world factory", the biggest livelihood product manufacturer in the world.

An important part of China's Reform and Open-up policy is to "emancipate the mind". People's minds need to be "emancipated" because they were once strictly tied down in 1960s and 1970s in China, especially during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), when anything related to the West, especially the United States, was propagandized as "counter-socialism". It was not until the late 1970s, when the Third Plenum of the 11th congress of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was held in Beijing, that mind control in China began to loosen and people were encouraged to open their mind to learn from the West.

I am not sure how many details young Chinese students know about the Reform and Open-up policy in China. However, participants' narratives show that the Open-up policy has a thorough influence in their lives and trying to be *open* or keeping an *open* mind has become a common practice in mainland China in most fields. When Ling said that his mother had more say in his family, he said, "*my family is fairly open.*"

The power of English in China also reflects the power of English in the world. Graddol (1997: 38) claimed that "in many parts of the world, English is regarded as a language of power, success and prestige."

> *The global language can be seen to open doors, which fuels a "demand" for English. This demand reflects contemporary power balances and the hope that the mastery of English will lead to the prosperity and glamorous hedonism that the privileged in this world have access to and that is projected in Hollywood films, MTV videos, and ads for transnational corporations. (Phillipson, 1998: 2; cited in Graddol, 1997:38)*

In an episode known as the Reform and Open-up times in China, English becomes a language of great power, and is increasingly endowed with economic and social values.

Languages are capital (Bourdieu, 1990, 1991). English is undoubtedly a cultural capital. As a powerful international language, this cultural capital can easily be *cashed* in on because it is always associated with more or better opportunities in the job market. For example, most government officials in China have to pass certain English proficiency tests before they can obtain a higher professional title which is also always linked with their income. Reform and Open-up policy also transfers being able to communicate with and learn from the West, especially the United States, into a social capital with high value. Being able to speak English fluently and communicate with native English speakers endows the capital-possessor with access to better jobs, to higher positions in work, and to respect or even admiration from people around. This social capital can be easily converted into symbolic capital. Sen said that his sister used an English name with her colleagues in her work because "*all supervisors in the company are from Hong Kong and they only introduce and use their English name.*" In such cases, using an English name is often deemed a sign of power. As social, cultural and symbolic capital with a high potential economic value in the job market, *being good*

at English has been enthusiastically welcome and encouraged in modern Chinese society by both Chinese government and people.

Adopting or Using an English Name and the Involvement Strategy

Li (1997) and Edward (2006) both used Scollon and Scollon's (1995) involvement strategy to interpret Chinese people's adoption of an English name in Hong Kong and in Britain. Louie (1998) quoted and agreed with L.L. Wang's (1991) opinion that most of the educated Chinese immigrants to the United States in recent decades applied an accommodation strategy while they tried to adjust to their life in the country. The involvement or accommodation strategy assumed that while trying to fit in more in North American societies, Chinese people adopted an "English/American" lifestyle in public without giving up their Chinese lifestyle and Chinese culture in private.

However, as far as this English name issue is concerned, participants' narratives indicated that the case might not be so simple. Most participants already had an English name before they contacted any "native" English speaker in their real lives. Adopting an English name does not necessarily mean that participants give up their Chinese name. As Yao-wen in the China group said, abandoning one's Chinese name would always be associated with a strong sense of guilt, a sense of betraying one's family. No participant felt any sense of guilt when they used an English name in their lives. They felt comfortable with keeping both of these names. I argue that though their English name might objectively function as an involvement or accommodation strategy in an English-speaking society, Chinese people's initial acceptance of adopting an English name is not necessarily the result of such involvement or accommodation strategy. That is, to be

involved in certain communities is not necessarily an important reason for a Chinese person to *adopt* an English name, but it may be a reason for a Chinese person to choose to *use* an English name in certain contexts.

I partially agree with Blum's (1997) opinion that Chinese people in China had been used to being addressed and referred to by an assortment of names. This is a part of Chinese people's addressing customs. However, I disagree with Blum's inference that Chinese people do not perceive any of these names as their *real* name or "as the one that they feel reflects their identity" (Blum, 1997: 66). Participants' narratives revealed a different story. Participants who have or would like to have an English name declared that they clearly knew that their Chinese name was their core name, but this did not prevent them from also treating their English name as their real names. No participant felt that there could be any problem with such an attitude towards English and Chinese names. That is, they admitted the legitimacy of both their English name and their Chinese name and they argued against the practice of carelessly changing one's English name.

The Social Influence of Hong Kong and Taiwan

Li (1997) examined Hong Kong as an international commercial and financial centre. He argued that the modern Western addressing custom was to address each other by one's given name, which would result in quick development of friendship and intimacy that is crucial in multicultural business transactions. However, traditional Chinese addressing customs do not favor the quick development of friendship and intimacy. Li (1997) claimed that Hong Kongers' English name was a *borrowed identity*

and their adoption of a Western name was largely motivated by a tendency of speeding up the process of getting acquainted, both in inter- and intra- cultural encounters. Meanwhile, Hong Kongers and Taiwanese also try to legalize this borrowed identity. As I mentioned in chapter one, Hong Kongers' ID cards and Taiwanese' passports both offer a way to legalize their English names.

Eight participants, respectively four in each group, referred to the impact of Hong Kong or Taiwan on their own practice of adopting and using an English name. For example, Hai-yan had the experience of working for Hong Kong and Taiwanese companies where her colleagues all called her by her English name. She said, *"I found that Hong Kongers and Taiwanese really preferred using an English name. Sometimes, I even did not know my Chinese colleagues' Chinese name because we only used our English name with each other."* Similarly, Sen learned from his elder sister's experience of working for a Hong Kong company located in mainland China that people in charge of such companies were mostly native Chinese speakers from mainland China, Hong Kong or Taiwan, but they always only used their English names in the company; nobody knew their Chinese name or if they had a Chinese name at all. As a result, Sen said that he would rethink his English name again before graduation because his sister's experience told him that using an English name might endow one with more opportunities to get promoted in such companies.

Participants' Confidence in Their Chinese Roots

Participants expressed not only a strong desire to learn about the West, but also confidence in their Chinese roots. Emotionally, they were closely tied with their family,

with Chinese cultures, with the Chinese language. They did not think that adopting an English name would result in them being *less Chinese*. All participants emphasized the importance of their Chinese given name. They associated it with their family, their parents or grandparents, and attached great significance to their Chinese name. Compared with their Chinese name, their English name is a backup name that they would choose to use in certain contexts with certain groups of people. "*After all, my Chinese name comes from my parents, my own country, and my living circumstances.*" Tong said, "*Using my English name is the last choice.*" Dropping, or even changing, their Chinese name would always indicate discarding what their family handed down to them:

慧娟：那时候觉得我的名字太土了，[笑]。后来，想改一个比较好听一点的名字。但只是想想而已，我也没有真得想去改变。因为毕竟是我家里面的文化，教育啊，还是很传统的。所以，虽然有时候心里面不愿意，但是我觉得我可以自己去改变改变，但是真的让我去改户籍什么的，我觉得我不会。我还是很尊重家里面的意见。(段慧娟，访问，2007 年 6 月 12 日)	*Hui-juan: At that time I felt that my name was too cheesy [giggle]. Later, I wanted to change it into a better name, but that was only an idea and I didn't really want to change it because after all, it associates with the culture and education from my own family which is rather traditional. Although I sometimes don't like it, I feel that what I can change is myself, but if you asked me to change my given name, I would say no. I still rather respect my family's opinion. (DUAN Hui-juan, Interview, June 12th, 2007)*

Many participants expressed similar opinions no matter whether they liked their Chinese name or not. Zhi-zheng said that she would prefer other people to call her by her English name rather than call her by choosing one character of her given name.

Participants claimed that using an English name would not influence their sense of being Chinese. Such confidence also stems from their confidence in the Chinese culture,

which can be strongly sensed in the following two excerpts from Guo-liang and Cheng-peng's narratives:

> *I feel that Chinese culture has rich connotations. I feel that we should keep aware, but western cultures are not so threatening. Take Hong Kong as an example, it had been governed by Britain for so many years, but you can see that it is still so Chinese, even more Chinese than mainland China. In my opinion, foreign countries can never "colonize" Chinese culture, impossible. (DU Guo-liang, Interview, June 18th, 2007)*

> *I feel that Chinese people's using an English name won't reduce their sense of being Chinese because Chinese culture has always been accommodating to foreign cultures and has never been reduced. Actually, throughout history, so many dynasties have been switched in China and many dynasties were established by minority peoples. (LIU Cheng-peng, Interview, June 14th, 2007)*

It is necessary to clarify what Cheng-peng said as "minority peoples". Cheng-peng was speaking from a modern perspective. Some present ethnic minorities in China were "foreigners" in history. They established governments but gradually became *Hanized*—they accepted or became assimilated by Chinese culture. Some later classified themselves also as Han people, some maintained their salient ethnic features and became present ethnic minorities in China. For example, The Yuan Dynasty (271-1368 A.D.) was established by Mongolian people who were considered as invaders to China in history. As Mongolian people gradually accepted the Chinese culture, they were later accepted and considered as one of the five largest minority groups in China. Yao-wen considered Chinese people's acceptance of using an English name as a sign of a cultural confidence:

潘：你觉得中国人起英文名字是不自卑的表现？

耀文：［笑］。当然这个"自卑"可能是我用了一个比较重的词吧。应该是"自信"吧。

潘：中国人比较自信？

耀文：在文化上还是比较自信的吧。五千年的文化不是盖的。（薛耀文，访问，2007年6月13日）

Pan: You felt that Chinese people's adopting an English name presented that they didn't have a sense of inferiority?

Yao-wen: [Chuckle]. Of course, the term I used, "sense of inferiority", might be a little bit too strong. It should be "self-confidence".

Pan: Chinese people are confident?

Yao-wen: Fairly confident in culture. A culture of five thousand years is not only a boast. (XUE Yao-wen, Interview, June 13th, 2007)

All participants expressed a strong confidence in Chinese culture, which they interpreted as Chinese literature, Chinese moral values, and history. Partially because of this confidence in Chinese culture, no matter how they define this culture, participants did not have a strong sense of loss or confusion when they adopted and/or used a foreign name and they held a generally positive attitude towards their own and/or other Chinese people's English name practices.

Question 2: How do they decide on a particular name? What kinds of English names do they choose?

All nineteen participants have their own understandings of which English names are good. Table 12 presents participants' criteria for choosing an English name. Li, Sen, Jie-mei, Hai-yan, Yu-qing, and Xue's first English names were similar to the sound of their Chinese given name. However, this phonetic similarity does not always result in positive feelings. Li did not quite like her English name because it was too similar to her Chinese name which she did not quite like either. Sen abandoned his first English name, Sam, because he felt that it did not have any specific meaning and only being similar in sound obviously could not satisfy his criteria for being a good English name. Jie-mei now wanted to choose a new English name that could present some values that were in

accordance with her present understanding of life. Yu-qing liked his English name

mainly because he liked his first English teacher and his English name was a souvenir of

his years' experience of learning English in his eyes.

Table 12: Participants' present criteria for choosing an English name

Criteria	Subcategories of a criterion	Number of participants	Participants
Sound	A nice/loud and clear sound	5	Tong, Hui-juan, Xiu-xiu, Yao-wen, Hai-yan
	Easy to pronounce	3	Sen, Ling, Zhi-zheng
	Similar to one's Chinese name in sound	3	Guo-liang, Zheng-yi, Xue
Meaning	Knowing its literal or original meaning	8	Tong, Li, Xiu-xiu, Jie-mei, Yao-wen, Sen, Hai-yan, Wei-ming
	Similar to one's Chinese name in meaning	3	Guo-liang, Yun-long, Zheng-yi
	Other meaning associated with the English name	6	Hui-juan, Jie-mei, Hai-yan, Zhi-zheng, Jian, Wei-ming
	The name is like the person	5	Tong, Jie-mei, Yao-wen, Sen, Hai-yan
Memorability	Easy to remember	5	Cheng-peng, Sen, Yun-long, Ling, Yu-qing
Uniqueness	Not being a regular English name; a name that is seldom used by other people	12	Tong, Li, Xiu-xiu, Cheng-peng, Guo-liang, Jie-mei, Yao-wen, Sen, Yun-long, Wei-ming, Zhi-zheng, Min-min
Simplicity	A simple/short name	3	Yun-long, Ling, Yu-qing

Knowing the Meanings of an English Name

Fourteen participants emphasized the significance of knowing the meaning of an

English name, though they interpreted *meaning* from different perspectives. Eight

participants, six from the China group and two from the Canada group, mentioned

knowing the literal or original meaning of an English name before they adopted it. For

example, Wei-ming wanted to use a beautiful plant's name as her English name and

Tong chose *Sophia* because she found that its original meaning was "wisdom". However,

knowing the literal or original meaning of an English name does not mean that participants intended to literally translate their Chinese name. With the exception of two participants who said that they would like to have their English name similar to their Chinese name in meaning, other participants preferred to choose an English name that had nothing to do with their Chinese name in meaning. Wei-ming said, *"An English name is an English name; a Chinese name is a Chinese name. Don't mix them up."*

Six participants preferred to know the meaning associated with an English name, such as who else used a given English name, and what would native English speakers associate with a certain English name. Hui-juan associated her English name, Jerry, with a cartoon character that she liked. Jian chose her present English name, Anna, because of Princess Diana.

Five participants claimed that a name should be like the person. They intended to adopt an English name that could describe themselves or prescribe their future. The following two excerpts from Jie-mei's narratives present more details:

> *I think that foreign names' [meaning] might not lie in the literal meaning of a word. There might be some extra meaning associated with a name. However, the meaning of a Chinese name comes from the Chinese characters per se because each Chinese character has its own meaning. As a result, a Chinese person and his/her name has some relationships such as, one's name and one's actuality match each other. For example, you might associate the name 玉秀 [Yu-xiu] with a sense of being "traditional, nice, and gentle". Before you know a person, you might form an opinion about the person based on his/her name.*

> *Now I would be pickier in choosing an English name. I might not choose a very popular one; I might choose a more special one. But I don't know which names are special. My previous criterion might have been to choose a simple, regular, clear [English name]. Now I might choose a unique name, with more connotations, more information, representing something that I like and believe in. (ZHOU Jie-mei, Interview, June 15th, 2007)*

All participants showed some concern over the meanings of English names. Yao-wen and Guo-liang assumed that any English words could be used as one's English name. Yu-qing in the Canada group argued that most English names were meaningless, while Xue claimed that all English names must have already had some good meanings.

The Tendency of Choosing a Meaningful and Unique English Name

In the Chinese language, it is 起名字 (qi mingzi), which literally means "*generating*" a name, instead of "*choosing*" a name. Due to the features of Chinese names, it is both possible and necessary for the name-giver to specify the literal meaning of a name. All participants articulated the stories behind their Chinese names. For example, the given name Tong (彤) means "red", which is a beautiful color and traditionally a good name for girls in Chinese culture. Min-min (旻珉) looked up his name in the dictionary in primary school and found that his name meant "sky" and "jade" in Chinese. Also, all participants expressed their preference of having a unique name. Some of them, such as Jian, Wei-ming, Zhi-zheng, once googled their Chinese name to see if they had any namesakes. Some participants complained that their Chinese given names were not meaningful enough in their eyes. For example, Xiu-xiu slightly complained that her Chinese given name was cheesy and was chosen at random by her father in a hurry. Li dislikes her Chinese name because it was too common. *"If you call out 'WANG Li' outside the student dormitory, for sure, a lot of people would come out."*

"Words become names by association" (Nicolaïsen, 1974:104) and "names identify features" of a given entity and these features are predetermined by different cultures (Nicolaïsen, 1980:42). In the Chinese naming culture, what associates most

closely with one's name is the literal meaning of the character(s) that a name consists of. The literal meanings of a name always identify the features that a name-giver values as the best or most important wishes or expectations for the name-receiver. That is, a name contains the name-givers' good wishes that are usually conveyed by the literal meanings of the chosen Chinese characters. Therefore, whether one is able to generate a good name or not is considered as closely related with one's education and one's name can often reveal one's family background. For example, some participants indicated that their names reflected their parents' low education level or their family background of coming from a rural area.

When adopting an English name, participants' narratives show that they also tend to apply similar criteria. They expected their English name to be both special and meaningful. All participants of the China group and most participants in the Canada group chose the meaning of an English name as their most significant criterion of choosing an English name. Some stressed the literal or original meaning. Some emphasized the meaning associated with a name. Take Zhi-zheng as an example:

> *"Bertha" does not sound quite like a name from fiction. That is, people wouldn't directly relate this name with a fictional character. In Dickens' novel, her [Bertha's] personality is both vivid and very very nice. Then she is also very gentle, generous, and very intelligent. So I took this English name. (ZHANG Zhi-zheng, Interview, September 16th, 2007)*

Being nice, gentle, generous and intelligent, these personality traits are what Zhi-zheng values.

Besides choosing a meaningful name, participants also preferred to have a special name. It is interesting to see that most participants did not include obsolete names in their list of disfavored or cheesy names. Although local Canadians might feel awkward

to have an obsolete or stigmatized name, such as Chester, Greta, Agnes, most participants, including those who are quite proficient in English, do not feel such English names to be problematic. For example, Zhi-zheng later learned that Bertha was an obsolete name; however, she tended to ignore this problem.

A Third Space between English Names and Chinese Names

Many participants gradually noticed the discrepancies between English names and Chinese names. They became more and more familiar with the English naming culture, but the Chinese naming culture still had a powerful impact on them. They are somewhere between the Chinese and English naming cultures. Although they were not without struggle, as far as this English name issue is concerned, most participants felt comfortable in general.

Although Jie-mei's present English name, Jessica, is a nice English name, her dilemma is that she noticed that a good English name might not necessarily have some obvious literal meanings that could satisfy her, but she could not help looking forward to choosing a new English name that could be unique and literally more meaningful to her.

Hai-yan and Zheng-yi tended to cease to use their English names in Canada because they found that the legitimacy of their English names was challenged by local non-Chinese speaking people. Hai-yan said, "*My attitude towards my English name never changed. What changed is my understanding of other people's comprehension of names.*" Hai-yan made a compromise by ceasing using her English name in Canada. However, she did not give up her English name. She still hoped that local non-Chinese-speaking people might accept her English name someday in the future.

Zhi-zheng gradually learned that her English name, Bertha, was somehow obsolete, but she declared that she did not want to change her English name. She said, "*Since it works well so far, why still try to solve it? Then, I let it go.*" She used her English name with all non-Chinese speaking people in Montreal and they also addressed her accordingly. Although some people suggested that she should use her Chinese name with them, Zhi-zheng tended to ignore such voices. Her English name is not a "regular" English name in this modern time but it is an authentic English name. It is a result of the Chinese naming culture, an English novel, and her experiences of learning English for years. She said in the interview that she knew that it was not a popular English name, but she emphasized the reasons why she chose this English name. Although having a name like Bertha might make some "native" English speakers embarrassed, Zhi-zheng did not have such a problem. She was comfortable with her English name.

Yu-qing's words clearly conveyed his situation of being in a third space:

玉清：你画了一个圈嘛，我是在中国的文化圈里，但是很靠近西方的圈子。属于是，就是，如果是，怎么说呢？西方的圈是有引力的，但是我是在往反方向走。就是在这样的一种力的作用下。(戴玉清，访问，2007 年 8 月 16 日)

Yu-qing: You drew circles to represent cultures. I am in the Chinese culture circle, but quite close to the Western culture circle. I belong to, well, that is, if, how do I say it? The Western circle has its attraction, but heading in the opposite direction, I am influenced by these forces. (DAI Yu-qing, Interview, August 16th, 2007)

Yu-qing felt that he was influenced by forces from different sides. His testimony revealed that as a bilingual youth, he tried to keep a balance between two languages and cultures and he was, in general, comfortable in a third space, a space that is between and beyond the social order of one's native culture and that of the target culture (Kramsch, 1993).

Question 3: What are the relationships between Chinese students' English names and their identities?

Except Cheng-peng and Ling, all other participants either presently have an English name or would like to adopt an English name in the future.

Assumed, Negotiable, and Imposed Identities

Thirteen participants presently have an English name. Twelve participants, seven from the China group, Tong, Li, Hui-juan, Jie-mei, Yao-wen, Sen, Yun-long, and five from the Canada group, Hai-yan, Yu-qing, Xue, Zhi-zheng, Jian, claimed that they were emotionally attached to their English names. Most of them have kept their English names for 9 to 20 years except Tong (3 years) and Zhi-zheng (6 years). They all used or agreed with expressions such as, *there being emotions between me and my English name(s), my English name(s) being of similar importance to me as my Chinese name, my English name being able to represent who I am, having an English name being such a natural practice.*

Yun-long also said that he never changed his English name because "there's an emotion there." These participants accepted and never questioned the legitimacy of their English names since the inception. After having kept their English name for a long period of time, they claimed ownership of their English name(s). Even though some of them encountered questioning voices from non-Chinese speaking people, they managed to marginalize such voices and kept on seeing their English names as their own names. In Zhi-zheng's words, "*Since it works well so far, why still try to solve it? Then, I let it go.*" In these ten participants' cases, their English name is an "assumed" identity, "which are accepted and not negotiated... Oftentimes, these identities are the ones most valued

and legitimized by the dominant discourses of identity" (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004:21). Jie-mei reviewed her experience of interacting with people from other countries and claimed that "*actually, in the enthusiasm that I had when interacting with foreigners, there must be some implicit recognition and acceptance in hiding.*" These participants are comfortable with and not interested in contesting the legitimacy of their English names. Participants' narratives also reveal that having and/or using an English name is often associated with some valued and legitimized practices among Chinese people in either mainland China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan.

However, questioning voices from non-Chinese speakers have made some participants choose to cease to use their English names. Cases in point are Hai-yan and Zheng-yi. They felt that local non-Chinese speaking people assumed that Chinese people's only legitimate name should be a Chinese name. Their Chinese name is an *imposed identity,* an identity that is "not negotiable in a particular time and place" (Pavlenko & Blacklege, 2004:21). As a result, Hai-yan decided to stop using her English name in Canada though she would not give it up; Zhi-zheng tended to give up her English name because using it now gave her a sense of insincerity, which, in her interpretation, was "*not good.*" When comparing with other language speakers' names, Zheng-yi re-evaluated the *valence* of her English name and the *actuality* of her English name gradually reduced and her core identity—her Chinese name—increased. As a result, she intended to not use her English name and her English name became an identity that was *negotiable*.

The Relationship between an English Name and One's Actuality

Fourteen participants associated their English name with their personalities, their lives, their future, and/or essential values that they believed in.

Tong, Li, Hui-juan, Xiu-xiu, and Zhi-zheng associated their English names with their dream personalities. For example, Tong chose *Sophia* as her English name because the original meaning of the name was "wisdom", a trait that she desired to obtain in her life. She also maintained that a good English name should be prescriptive:

彤：[选英文名字的标准是]意境比较优雅的，比较符合自己，希望自己以后是什么样的人。(向彤，访问，2007 年 6 月 16 日)	*Tong: [The criteria for choosing an English name is] elegant in meaning. It should suit me well and [can express] what kind of people that I expect myself to be in the future. (XIANG Tong, Interview, June 16th, 2007)*

Sen and Yao-wen's criteria for choosing an English name is associated with their personal expectations about their future. Sen hoped to lead a successful life in the future. He decided to choose his present English name, Victor, because this English name meant *victory* in his understanding. Yao-wen got his English name when he was still a beginning learner of English. He said that if he chose a new English name now, he would choose a more meaningful English name:

耀文：可能是中国人的习惯，总觉得名字要带点什么意思。或者名字是代表希望。可能对自己的未来的希望，要求。应该有这些东西吧。(薛耀文，访问，2007 年 6 月 13 日)	*Yao-wen: It might be Chinese people's customs and we always hope that there should be some meaning in a name. Or a name represents hope, maybe, your hope or expectations for yourself in the future. There should be such things. (XUE Yao-wen, Interview, June 13th, 2007)*

Guo-liang and Yun-long associated their English names with their understandings of Chinese culture and their desire of learning the English culture. They tried to integrate their Chinese roots with their English names. Take Yun-long as an example:

云龙：从中国人的角度来讲，起名字有自谦的意思......这就融入了中国的文化。

潘：自谦在哪儿？

云龙：[小马有]默默无闻的意思吧。就是谦虚地表现。*(马云龙，访问，2007 年 6 月 15 日)*

Yun-long: From the perspective of Chinese people, a name could be a way to show modesty... Thus, the Chinese culture is integrated.

Pan: Where's the modesty?

Yun-long: ["Pony"] denotes working quietly and never showing off. It is a practice of being modest. (MA Yun-long, Interview, June 15th, 2007)

Similarly, Guo-liang claimed that a good name in his eyes was a name that could "anchor" himself to the related culture.

Three participants, Jie-mei, Hai-yan, and Min-min, elucidated that one's name was related to one's identity or one's actuality. Hai-yan compared her English name to a "hat":

海燕：它[英文名字]好像就是你的一个帽子啊，然后人家看到这顶帽子的时候，他知道会是什么人在戴它。我希望我的名字应该是能够表达我，而不是隐藏自己。*(许海燕，访问，2007 年 8 月 16 日)*

Hai-yan: It [an English name] is like one of your hats. When other people see this hat, they would know who is wearing it. I expect that my name can express myself, instead of concealing myself. (XU Hai-yan, Interview, August 16th, 2007)

Hai-yan expected her English name to be related to her identity. Jie-mei said that if she chose another English name now, she would most likely focus on its literal meaning:

婕美:现在可能会选择一个别致一点的，有一些更多的含义的。有更多的信息含量，有你喜欢的、认可的东西在里面。这是建立在你对这门语言的了解之上。*(周婕美，访问，2007 年 6 月 15 日)*

Jie-mei: I would now prefer a more or less unique one, with more implications, more information, with something you like and believe in. This is based on your understanding of this language. (ZHOU Jie-mei, Interview, June 15th, 2007)

Jie-mei tried to integrate her values and her understandings about life and herself into her English name.

Jian, Zhi-zheng, and Wei-ming disagreed about viewing their English name only as a symbol; instead, they directly associated their English name with their identities. Zhi-zheng felt annoyed when her schoolmate said that one's name was only a symbol. She said, "*No, for me, my name is not only a symbol. It is also an identity.*" Jian expressed a similar opinion by saying that "*A friend said that one's name was only a label. I feel that one's name is one's identity.*" Wei-ming said, *"Even if one's name were only a symbol, I would also like to have a good symbol. This is my attitude."*

What participants described as *personalities, life goals, identities,* are how they perceive themselves from their own perspectives. Even when it is their dream, such as being a successful or elegant person in the future, it is also the goal that they are working towards obtaining in their life. Participants' English names are related to their understanding of who they are in their own eyes. The Chinese saying, 名副其实 [ming fu qi shi], is to say that one's name should match one's actuality. According to Makeham (1994:7), actuality is "a state of development peculiar to an entity or state of affairs by virtue of which that entity or state of affairs is what it is." One's actuality is an important part of one's identities. As a key polar concept in early Chinese thought, one's name is believed to be related to one's actuality. In other words, it is presumed that there is a proper or correct correlation between a given name and a given actuality. Although what they meant by identity is not always specific enough, participants' narratives indicate that an English name which does not relate to one's actuality or identities or identities would not be considered a good name. This is why some participants were dissatisfied with their English name when it only imitated the sound of their Chinese name.

A Social Identity That May Establish Boundaries and a Common Space

Participants expressed the idea of not mixing their English name with their Chinese name. They tended to treat these two names as different names to be used in different social contexts. Many participants said that using an English name with non-Chinese speakers might help to have interlocutors share something in common. Except Jian and Min-min, all other participants said that they would feel uncomfortable if a native Chinese-speaker from China used an English name with them without a sound reason.

Some researchers (i.e., Korostelina, 2007; Barth, 1981, 1998; Bauman, 1999, 2002) point out that individuals' social identities may help to establish boundaries and common spaces for the group that they are in, to protect them from the risk of interpersonal conflict, and to save them from solitude. Bauman (1999, 2002) points out that the main problem for people in the new millennium is about which identity to choose and how to prepare for these changes. Participants felt that they might be isolated from other people if their name was either difficult for other language speakers to pronounce or for other people to remember. Adopting an English name means choosing a Western identity, which also reflects the current Reform and Open-up policy practiced in mainland China. From this perspective, participants' English names provide them with a social identity which helps to build up boundaries and establish some common space between native-Chinese speakers and other language speakers. In this process, people question themselves and are questioned.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the perceptions and experiences of my nineteen participants based on their self-reported narratives about English names and naming practices. I analyzed the main themes that emerged from participants' narratives and discussed my three research questions. In chapter six, I present my conclusion of this inquiry and highlight some implications and recommendations.

Chapter Six: Reflections and Implications

In this chapter, I summarize my discussion of themes and issues presented in chapter five. I reflect on my findings and the methodology and methods I employed to design and conduct this inquiry. I highlight some implications or recommendations for a better understanding of *identity* and *name* in inter- and intra- cultural contexts. I present some suggestions for second/foreign language teaching and learning in and out of language classrooms. Finally, I conclude with some potential research questions for future inquiries.

A Summary of Themes and Issues

This research has turned out to be, for me, a long and painstaking, but thought-provoking journey of examining and understanding a selected group of Chinese participants' perceptions of their identities and naming practices. The main themes that emerged were:

- In light of Bourdieu's (1991) habitus theory, I relate the participants' practice of adopting or accepting other people's use of an English name partially as the result of the habitus of adopting ming and zi in the Chinese naming culture. Although dual name practice ceased in mainland China in the 20th century, as an overwhelmingly popular practice in history and presently common cultural knowledge, this naming habitus still has its power to influence modern Chinese people's naming practices.

- The Reform and Open-up policy, as a national political policy, has become deeply rooted in the minds of modern mainland Chinese people and a national fashion of learning from the West, especially from the United States, has also played a role in participants' willingness and readiness to accept their own and/or other Chinese people's practice of adopting and/or using an English name. However, such willingness and readiness are not without limits which are articulated in participants' narratives as criticisms of those who might be perceived as showing off or 崇洋媚外 (chong yang mei wai), blindly worshipping foreign stuff.

- Social and media influence from Hong Kong and Taiwan has also contributed to modern mainland Chinese people's acceptance of adopting and/or using an English name.

- Even before participants used their English name(s) in real-life communication outside school, their English names were a kind of social investment in imagined communities of English learning or working practices.

- Participants learned from their own or other Chinese people's experiences that Chinese names were generally difficult for non-Chinese speakers to pronounce. Some participants found it hard to recognize their own Chinese name when it was pronounced by non-Chinese speakers. To avoid causing a problem for others and to obtain a feeling of belonging to certain social groups or social categories, some participants chose to adopt and use an English name with non-Chinese speakers. Such concerns about belonging to a social category bear the mark of the collectivist culture.

- Participants expected their English name to be easily pronounced and remembered. They are concerned with the meanings, especially literal or original meaning(s), of their English name. In general, participants' criteria for choosing an English name are also rooted in the Chinese naming culture.

- Participants tended to want a unique English name, which sometimes ended up with the adoption of unusual or even *weird* English names, such as Bertha, Talent, Elephant, etc.

- There is a direct and close relationship between participants' English name practices and their identities. Participants associated their English name with their realities, such as their life goals and their "ideal" personality qualities.

Reflections on Methodology, Methods, and Findings

I started this exploratory phenomenological inquiry with my questions on a social phenomenon—Chinese students' practice of adopting or refusing an English name. This inquiry turned out to be, not only a process of seeking possible answers to my initial questions, but also a pilgrimage towards understanding my own identities. I expect that reflections on methodology and methods I employed in this inquiry and on my findings could, to some extent, benefit future research on this topic.

The Importance of Defining Concepts

From a social constructivist perspective, reality has multiple layers and is constructed through human activities. How people perceive concepts is intertwined with their actual practices that construct their life stories. It is significant for researchers to define their basic concepts, especially when it is a cross-cultural investigation. In this

inquiry, the basic concepts of *naming* and *identity* are quite differently understood in Chinese culture and Western culture.

One aspect of modern academic research is that its common ground surrounding the meaning of concepts is usually based on concepts or notions that are principally derived from *Western* knowledge systems. However, these concepts or notions do not necessarily mean the same thing for people from different cultural origins. Researchers need to carefully re-examine the meanings of the concepts that they are using in their inquiries and with their participants. For example, I could only examine this English name issue from the perspectives of Bourdieu's concept of habitus and how collectivist cultures interpret personal development once I had understood the discrepancies in the meanings of the concepts of name and identity between Chinese and Western knowledge systems.

Difficulty in Defining Big Concepts Such as the "Chinese" Culture

What is the *traditional Chinese culture*? What should or should not a certain group of people who share a certain culture be like? I was confronted with such definition problems throughout the process of writing this thesis. However, such questions always end up having no answers. *Culture per se* has long been a controversial concept in anthropology. To specifically define a certain culture in this modern world is almost an impossible mission.

As far as this inquiry is concerned, I found that to define more concrete concepts, for example, the naming cultures, actually made more sense. At least, defining smaller and more concrete concepts was no longer an intangible task. As a "key polar concept in

early Chinese thought" (Makeham, 1994), the Chinese name culture provides a possible path to examine and explore a part of the mystery of the Chinese culture. Although the Chinese name culture is by no means an easy concept to clarify, it provides more detailed contexts and more specific examples for researchers, which would help to define the scope and range of this concept within Chinese contexts. Rather than lingering over controversial, general concepts such as what Chinese culture is, employing and discussing a more concrete concept, such as the naming culture, is much more tangible to work with.

To define a certain culture becomes even harder in this modern world in which people of diverse origins and cultures frequently interact with one another. The concept of a certain culture is also in an evolving state of flux. A feature of the modern world is that people are frequently between or among cultures. Sometimes, we swing to a certain culture; sometimes, we lean in another direction. Bauman (1999) argued that in this millennium, the main problem for people is no longer about how to develop an identity and make it accepted by others, but about which identity to choose and how to get ready for changes when certain social or economic conditions have changed in a particular context.

"Inconsistencies" in Participants' Narratives

My interview questions are a combination of structured and open questions. The conversations between participants and myself digressed from my structured questions and followed issues or themes that each participant raised in their narratives. Participants did not think about this English name issue until they sat down with me for the interview.

In the process of interactively negotiating meaning of their narratives, there are occasional "inconsistencies" in participants' comments. Sometimes their comments weren't congruent with what they had stated previously. This presents a dilemma in how to understand participants' occasionally inconsistent narratives.

I found that although some comments seemed to be contradictory, they were actually logical. In the process of negotiating meaning with me in the interviews, participants were actually reviewing their own life experiences and negotiating with themselves what their real opinions about a certain question were. The interviews proved to be a thought-provoking process both for me, as the researcher, as well as for each of the participants.

Take Yu-qing as an example. He confidently told me that his English name was as important to him as his Chinese name. However, when I asked him what he would do if he had to give up one, he chose to give up his English name because, in his words, "*without English, I would not die; but if I could not speak the Chinese language, I would.*" Superficially, his reasons did not at all support his answer to the question of which name he would choose because his reasoning was actually based on language choice. However, as the conversation went further, I found that his use of his English name was closely linked to his use of English. Firstly, he was against native-Chinese speakers' using English names with each other. Secondly, he was interested in Western cultures, which required him to frequently use English in his life and make many non-Chinese speaking friends. Thirdly, because he uses his English name with non-Chinese speakers, his English name is very important to him. However, he is very attached to his Chinese name which is a reflection of his Chinese identity, the more prominent identity

in his life. As a result of this long negotiation, both he and I learned that he was somewhere between these two languages, English and Chinese, and between cultures represented by these two languages. He said, "*I am in the Chinese culture circle, but quite close to the Western culture circle. I belong to, well, that is, if, how do I say it? The Western circle has its attraction, but I am heading in the opposite direction, influenced by these forces.*"

A Comfortable Relationship between the Researcher and Participants

An essential condition for a successful negotiation of meaning between the researcher and participants is that there must be mutual trust, which is the most important premise for authentic, meaningful qualitative research. Most participants in the China group are students of my previous colleagues who are also my friends. Most participants in this group also treated me as their teacher. As a previous university teacher, I am quite familiar with participants' lifestyle on campus. Participants in the Canada group are my schoolmates from the same English campus; however, I was not familiar with most of them when I invited them to participate in my research. Participants whom I had only met a couple of times generally trusted me and we established a rather comfortable relationship with each other. We are not too close— in general, I am not among their close friends or their relatives; nor are we too distant from each other—the participants and I are generally familiar with each other's lifestyles and studies, which enabled me to enter their stories easily. All participants were cooperative in the interviews. Our interviews always turned out to be gratifying for both parties. At least three participants commented on their own initiatives at the end of the interview,

saying that it was such a nice talk and that they really enjoyed it. I always shared these sentiments.

My experience echoes two points Kanno (2003) found in her research about Japanese returning students. First, Kanno (2003) used "comfortable distance" to describe the relationship between herself and her participants. Her participants used to be her Japanese language school students in Canada. She argues that teachers are usually a little removed from their students' lives but they also know enough about their students to enter into their stories easily. She claims that this comfortable distance "may be conductive to educative story telling and listening" (Kanno, 2003: 143). Also, Kanno (2003) realized the power of listening from her research — "being listened to and being the focus of attention of another person is an extremely powerful experience" (Kanno, 2003: 143).

Using an English Name Does Not Mean Devaluing One's Chinese Name

One of my initial concerns was how participants who used an English name viewed their Chinese name. Are people showing off when they choose to use an English name? If such a choice is with the intention to show off, does it indicate that Chinese students are devaluing their Chinese name?

A clear and salient opinion that participants conveyed in their narratives is that they respected their Chinese names, which they considered as one aspect of their core identities. They were so *loyal* to their Chinese name that they strongly preferred to have their Chinese name pronounced in an appropriate way. To quote Hai-yan, "*I don't think that there would be much difference between not being able to remember one's name*

and always calling one's name inaccurately." Participants admitted that they would not feel quite comfortable if their Chinese names were pronounced in a "weird" way by other people. Zhi-zheng claimed that she would feel happy if non-Chinese speakers could pronounce her Chinese name properly; however, if not, she would rather be called by her English name. *"My Chinese name is Zhi-zheng, but if you called me Zheng to make it easier for you to pronounce, I would prefer that you call me Bertha."* Such comments revealed that participants who adopted and/or used an English name viewed both their English name and their Chinese name as their own names and the choice of using one name did not necessarily indicate the devaluation of the other.

Identity is not an "all or nothing" issue. When people pick up one identity, it does not necessarily mean that they must have abandoned another. There can be a diversity of identities within one person. I am surprised to realize that though I accepted my own identities as plural and consisting of various elements, I often fail to apply the same criteria when I examine other people's identities and tend to believe that if someone is A, s/he then cannot be B. This self understanding about my own positioning surprised me.

Political and Social Influences in Participants' English Name Practices

Political factors, such as the conduct of the Reform and Open-up policy in mainland China, were not my primary considerations when I initially designed this research. However, when comments such as *"in this open-up world"* or *"keep an open mind"* frequently emerged in participants' narratives, I realized that this political policy might have also contributed to the acceptance and popularization of adopting and/or using an English name in mainland China.

Social influence from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore, especially the media influence of Hong Kong movies and TV programs, is another theme that was proposed by participants themselves. In many Hong Kong movies and TV series, the characters often use an English name. Many participants mentioned the impact of such naming practice on their real-life acceptance of using an English name. Political policies and specific social contexts in which participants acted are both influential factors that have contributed to participants' generally positive attitudes towards Chinese people's adopting and/or using English names.

To Facilitate Remembering One's Name

One concern among participants is that a name that is meaningless or phonetically difficult to pronounce would be difficult for other people to remember. What do they mean by being remembered? Their answers vary from allowing them to know and make friends with other people, better integrating with people around them, to granting them more work opportunities. Participants in the Canada group showed a high willingness and a strong desire to integrate into the local Canadian society. They might not be so active in discussing public issues such as whether it is necessary to build a grand super hospital in Montreal, but they did express a desire to be involved with people around them and especially, to make friends with local people (which again, does not mean that they do not want to make friends with other Chinese people).

During the past four years in Canada, whenever I viewed or heard Canadian English media, I did not see or hear many Chinese people's voices though there are statistically a large number of immigrants from China in Canada. When there is no voice,

people tend to believe that a certain group of people do not have full participation in that society and then, consequently it may be assumed that they do not want to actively participate in that society. In my inquiry, participants showed a strong need to know and get involved in local communities. No matter whether they tried to choose a meaningful name or a name that could be more easily pronounced by non-Chinese speakers, their goal was always to facilitate other people remembering them so as to allow more opportunities for both sides to know each other more and to establish some long term and/or close relationship with people around them.

Implications and Recommendations

When discussing the validity of action research, Greenwood and Livin (2005: 54) argued that "the core validity claim centers on the workability of the actual social change activity engaged in, and the test is whether or not the actual solution to a problem arrived at solves the problems." When I work on the implications and recommendations that I arrived at, I also expect that Chinese students, foreign/second language teachers and learners, communities, and Canadian and Chinese policy makers can also benefit from what I found in this inquiry.

Implications for Policy-making in a Multicultural Society

In the 1970s, the Canadian government tried to have better administrative control over the Nunavut territory where the native Inuit people reside. A Surnaming project was carried out as a government policy and the Canadian government tried to ascertain family names of each and every Inuit person. However, what the promoter of this Surnaming program did not know was that most Inuit families had no such thing as

family names. As a result, within the same family, children and parents adopted different "family" names. The Surnaming project ended up as a failure as the result of a misunderstanding and lack of knowledge about Inuit people's naming culture.

I was surprised when I first heard about the Surnaming project because it took place so recently and Inuit people have been living in this country before Canada was even a country with sovereign rights. The Surnaming project suggests that people might know so little about each other's naming culture that misunderstandings can take place from time to time.

Any political policy may have various impacts on individuals' life and even superficially "common" issues, such as name and identity, may be quite differently understood by people of different origins. It is important to listen to both insiders' and outsiders' voices when a government is making and carrying out a policy, especially in an age when inter- and intra- cultural communication and interaction becomes so frequent that differences attracted much more attention than they used to:

> *The need to understand 'difference' is more acute. If difference was encountered in the past it presented less of an issue, the instinctive result, we suggest, of a greater courtesy culture, embedded in polite behaviour, where only certain topics and forms of questioning were considered appropriate. Difference is embraced and protected in a more formal way now, in education, in employment law and in cultural diversity. (M. Nicolson & Adams, 2008:107)*

Barth (1998) points out that the traditional formula of *a race =a culture=a language and a society = a unit which rejects or discriminates against others* is still so widely and heatedly accepted in this modern world that it still limits people's understanding of cultural diversity. To be aware of and avoid damages brought by such a formula, it is important for policy makers to hear both insiders' and outsiders' voices in the process of making and carrying out policies.

One day, when I was watching TV at home in Canada, I saw an advertisement in which three people were doing Taiji (tai chi), a traditional Chinese martial art of slow meditative physical exercises. All of them were Caucasians. For a moment, I felt that such a scene was strange because I had expected to see Chinese people doing taiji (tai chi). Then, I asked myself, why non-Chinese people couldn't exercise with this Chinese art. In an age when non-Chinese people can do Tai chi, why can't a non-native English speaker adopt an English name and treat it as his/her real name?

Recommendations for Campus Organizations

Campus organizations aiming at enhancing multiculturalism and diversity education can play a role in helping to have insiders' and outsider' voices heard in a community. When a university has students of such a rich diversity of cultural backgrounds, it could be a wonderful place to carry out research projects with various insiders' and outsiders' points of view for political and social policies. Taking the naming culture as an example, as a rather personal issue, nomenclature is always at the core of different cultures. Insulting someone's name or making fun of someone's name can be considered as insulting or making fun of the person *per se.* However, naming is always associated with the most secret legends of a culture, a people or a language, and it may not be easy for outsiders to have access to the details of the naming culture of a group of people. Campus organizations can make good use of university students' diverse backgrounds and organize panel and round table discussions, seminars, or workshops about different naming cultures and practices among students. Such activities provide opportunities for education on diversity and would enhance inter-and-intra-

cultural understanding and tolerance among students; at least, it would facilitate an understanding between students on the campus and assist them in remembering their peers' names, making it easier for them to make friends.

However, a common problem for such campus organizations is how to reach and involve students, especially "inactive" students. In 2007, a classmate and I did a research project on cultural diversity for a graduate course. We found that there were many campus organizations that aimed at enhancing education on diversity in our university. Those organizations also gave us a lot of materials and asked us to hand them out to our classmates when we did our presentation (figure 6).
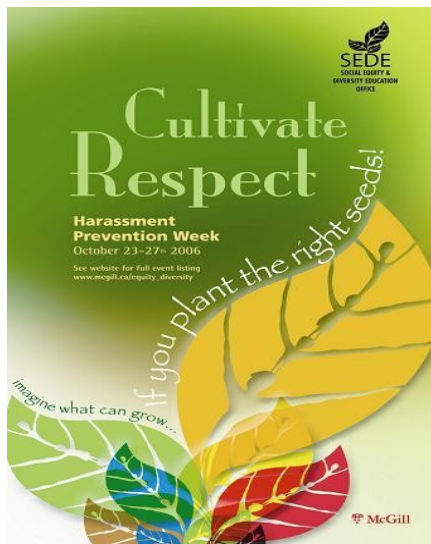
Figure 6: a post of Social Equity and Diversity Education (SEDE) on the McGill campus. Source: http://www.mcgill.ca/equity_diversity/

However, even though most of our classmates found our research interesting, few showed any real interest in participating in events organized by those organizations. Later, I was overwhelmingly busy with my own studies and those events and organizations retreated to the most remote corner of my mind. Only those colorful logos and posters would still come back to my mind from time to time. I secretly felt that since

my academic workload was heavy and I had a family to take care of, I might not be able to afford time and energy to participate in "non-academic" activities. I also heard participants' comments about their dilemma between an intention of participating in social or campus events and their limited free time, which was partially due to their level of English proficiency.

All participants in the Canada group had good marks in TOEFL or other international English proficiency tests before they were accepted by Canadian universities. However, they also conveyed their concerns about their language problems in the interviews. Wei-ming scrutinized her experience of struggling to understand lectures and to write papers in English. She said that there was a writing center for non-native English speakers in the first university where she studied in Canada and she benefited a lot from the writing center. However, when she came to Montreal, she had difficulties finding a learning center. She asked me to inquire whether someone could provide such an organization for students like herself in the university.

On the one hand, many campus organizations are in proximity to students and their workshops need students of different origins to participate. There is a political, social, and academic need to reinforce diversity and multiculturalism education in universities and students are also willing to participate. On the other hand, many students are extremely busy with their own studies. They agree that participating in campus activities on diversity education is important but they choose to prioritize their survival or success in their studies.

How can we better involve students in campus activities? Campus event organizers need to take students' immediate and practical needs into consideration. This made me

think of Wei-ming's request. For students who have various language difficulties, why not establish an hour bank for them? In this hour bank, they could choose to deposit the hours that they spend in offering to organize discussions or do presentations on various topics organized by a certain campus organization in exchange for language assistance. For example, when they need language help, they could choose to withdraw the hours they have deposited in the bank.

Recommendations for Chinese Students

Identity is an evolving phenomenon. Whether to adopt and use an English name or not may not be as simple as it first seems, especially when the Chinese naming culture tends to associate so many meanings and values to a personal name. I would suggest that Chinese students with/without an English name think about the following questions:

1. What does your English name mean to you if you adopted it at an early age without much consideration? How do you understand the relationship between your Chinese name and your English name? Why do you use (or not use) an English name in certain contexts?

2. How do you understand your own identities? When you go back to re-examine your English name usage, are there any changes in your attitudes towards English/Chinese names? If so, what do those back-and-forth changes mean to you?

3. If pronunciation is your main concern,

   a. We must realize that every language may have some sounds that are rather difficult for other language speakers to pronounce. This is normal.

b. As far as the case of Chinese names is concerned, the story may be a little bit more complicated due to the historical, political, even geographical, separation between China and the Western world for a rather long period of time. Now, it may be the time and also a good idea to give other people an opportunity to learn some of the most special sounds in the Chinese language when you offer them your Chinese name. There are so many beautiful Chinese names that involve sounds such as "x", "j", "q", "zh", "z", etc. Since we are by no means going to give up these names simply because they might be difficult for other language speakers to pronounce, we may need to say our names more clearly to give other people the opportunity and confidence to learn our names. This effort will not only be for you, but also for people who are not necessarily Chinese and have non-Western names. Yu-qing mentioned an example. He said, "*I don't know why, somehow, native English speakers are very good at remembering Japanese names.*" Also, I would like to quote another participant, Cheng-peng, who said, "*it is you who need to be remembered, not your name; if other people do not remember your name, it (may) not (be) because of your name, it may be because of you…*"

c. How much can you accept other language speakers pronouncing your Chinese name in a not quite accurate way? How accurately can you pronounce a foreign name? How much does this inaccurate pronunciation problem bother you?

d. Is it a naïve idea to make efforts to have other people remember and pronounce a somehow difficult Chinese name? How impractical or naïve is it?

4. Both China and many English-speaking countries exercise a one-name policy. To use an English name might not be so convenient in many situations. How much do you enjoy and/or suffer from a dual name practice? What do you learn from this?

These are also questions I ask myself as I continue to struggle with these name and plural identity issues.

Recommendations for Foreign Language Teaching/Learning in Classrooms

From participants' narratives, I learned that little attention had been given to the issue of cross-cultural naming cultures in most English-teaching classrooms in mainland China, or in most Chinese language learning classrooms in Montreal. Names are usually excluded from "useful" language knowledge and marginalized in foreign/second language teaching and learning. However, English name and Chinese name cultures are so different that it would be hard for language learners to figure out these differences by themselves.

A Long-ignored Issue in Foreign/Second Language Teaching and Learning

All participants lacked confidence in their knowledge concerning English names. From the following excerpt from Guo-liang's narratives, it seems that even his English teacher did not have sufficient knowledge about English names though she asked her students to adopt one:

When I was in grade three of a junior middle school, we had a new English teacher. She was young and I liked her. She asked us if we had an English name and if we did not have one, she suggested that we choose one. She asked me my English name. I told her that it was "Genius". She replied, "Oh, yup, a nice name." Nobody told me before that this name, Genius, might not be a

regular English name. I had always thought that as long as it was an English word, it could be used as an English name. I really want to choose an English name but I do not know where to choose one from. (DU Guo-liang, Interview, June 18th, 2007)

Jie-mei obtained a bachelor's degree in English education. She showed more knowledge about English names than other participants in the China group did, however, she also admitted that she did not know a lot about English names. The following is the excerpt from her testimony on how she would go about choosing an English name:

Chinese names usually connect with the literal meaning of the characters of which a given name consists. I think that the meaning of an English name might not come from the word per se; it might come from some extra meaning associated with a name. For a Chinese person, his/her Chinese name should conform to him/her per se. However, when it comes to English names, there are just those names and you just choose one from them. It wouldn't be until your English has reached a certain level of proficiency, that you would get some feeling about a certain English name. Otherwise, at the beginner level, your English name is just some semiotic code. 'Til now, I have no idea whether a certain English name is good or not. (ZHOU Jie-mei, Interview, June 15th, 2007)

Participants in the Canada group also complained about their difficulties in remembering a Western given name or non-Chinese speakers not being able to remember Chinese names. To quote Min-min, "*When they told me their first name, they always said it so fast. Before I could even figure out what it might be, they had moved on to the next topic. I had to ask again from time to time. It is kind of embarrassing and confusing.*"

Participants' previous English teachers, including native-English-speaking English teachers, did not tell them how to choose an English name even though some of them asked them to adopt one. It is a strange but rather common practice — English teachers made the suggestion that students adopt an English name, however, they did not introduce necessary knowledge about English names and the differences between English and Chinese name cultures. I argue that foreign/second language teachers should

present it differently. It would be much better and more interesting for foreign/second language students if their teachers could introduce the names and naming culture of the target language, and compare them, if possible, with names and naming cultures that students are familiar with. Teachers could then allow students to decide for themselves if they would like to adopt an English name or not. Thus, teachers would be able to better facilitate foreign language learners' familiarity with names of the target language, without imposing a strange (though maybe fresh and fun at the beginning) identity on their students. Of course, it would also be fun to help foreign language learners adopt and use a name of the target language in the language classroom if it is out of their own desire.

Second or foreign language teaching and learning should place more attention on teaching about the diversity of naming cultures. Getting familiar with names of the target culture may not be vital to improving one's oral or written language proficiency; however, it plays a crucial role in real-life interpersonal communication. Exchanging and remembering one's name is always the first step when two people try to get to know each other.

Questions for Future Inquiries

- What are the name practices of second generation Chinese people outside of China; how do they understand their names and identities over their lifetime?
- Taking the job market into consideration, what kind of naming practices will participants experience after they graduate from universities and begin working?

- How much do/will mainland Chinese people be influenced by present name practices of Chinese people in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore?

- Will teaching about name and naming cultures influence foreign/second language learners' proficiency in the target language? If so, how? Will learning about naming culture help them to be sensitive to proper nouns? If so, how? Will sensitivity to proper nouns help to improve foreign/second language learners' proficiency in real-life communication in the target language either orally or in written language? If so, how much? How much can such knowledge empower language learners and enhance their sense of ownership of the target language?

I take the metro almost every day and I always see so many different faces among the people crowded in its chamber. They speak different languages and have different skin/hair color. They may come from different places, from different cultures. I always wonder what their names might be and how many names I would be able to pronounce properly. Living in this busy world, people are hurrying in so many directions every day. Some people's life trajectories sometimes meet. The majority might forever be strangers. We all live in our own practical or imagined communities and we all head somewhere in this world. When we meet, we most likely exchange names. Some people might give me a name that I have no clue how to pronounce. Some people say their name so quickly that it won't even be able to stay in the other's ears. In my inquiry, some participants gave up their English name, while some enjoyed their English name practices; some said that they tended to offer an English name to other people in order to make it easier for

everybody—easier for other people to pronounce and easier for themselves to understand. However, to some extent, some of them felt confused because they did not want to deny their Chinese roots to which they were closely attached. Some felt it too complicated and would rather ignore such confusion. No matter what their name practices are, participants are choosing different fragments of identities. In this process, various social-historical-spatial factors are influencing their decisions. There might be no final decision. There are always different practices and various possibilities. As the oldest part of most known cultures, naming cultures always exist at the core of a culture, at the core of how we understand fundamental questions such as, who we are, where we are from, and where we are going.

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The Montreal Gazette, October 25, 2007

Appendix A: Certificate of ethnic acceptability of research involving humans

McGill

Faculty of Education – Ethics Review Board
McGill University
Faculty of Education
3700 McTavish; Room 230
Montreal H3A 1Y2

Tel: (514) 398-7039
Fax: (514) 398-1527
Ethics website: www.mcgill.ca/rgo/ethics/human

Faculty of Education – Review Ethics Board
Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

REB File #: 795-0507

Project Title : *Practice of adopting an English name and Chinese people's identity*

Applicant's Name: Pan Wang

Department: DISE

Status: MA student   **Supervisor's Name: Mary Maguire**

Granting Agency and Title (if applicable): n/a

Type of Review: Expedited✓   Full

This project was reviewed by: Stapley/Shariff

Approved by

_____, June 12, 2007
Signature/Date
Robert Bracewell, Ph.D.
Chair, Education Ethics Review Board

Approval Period: Jun/07 to June 0/08

All research involving human subjects requires review on an annual basis. An Annual Report/Request for Renewal form should be submitted at least one month before the above expiry date. If a project has been completed or terminated for any reason before the expiry date, a Final Report form must be submitted. Should any modification or other unanticipated development occur before the next required review, the REB must be informed and any modification can't be initiated until approval is received. This project was reviewed and approved in accordance with the requirements of the McGill University Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Subjects and with the Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Subjects.

6/6/07

Appendix B: Invitation letter to participants

Dear _____,

My name is Pan Wang, an M.A. student in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University. I would like to invite you to participate in my thesis research project—the relationship between selecting or choosing an English name and identity. In this research, I examine how and why you choose to or do not choose to adopt an English name.

I would like you to either answer my questionnaire (in Chinese or in English) or to accept to do an interview with me (in Chinese or in English). The questionnaire and interview questions are about your English learning and your experiences and attitudes towards choosing or not to adopt an English name. The interview will be audio-taped and later transcribed in English. If you choose to use Chinese to conduct the interview and questionnaire, your answers will later be translated into English.

I emphasize that my focus is not to evaluate you, or anybody else involved in your personal experiences. You are free to withdraw from the participation at any time without any negative consequences. The information that you choose to disclose during your participation in this inquiry will remain strictly confidential and your real name will definitely not appear in my thesis and I will use pseudonyms in my thesis.

If you have any questions regarding this research project, you may contact me by email: pan.wang@mail.mcgill.ca.

Thank you for your collaboration in this research.

Pan Wang

Appendix C: Consent form for interview participants

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by Pan WANG of the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University.

A. PURPOSE

To examine the relationship between adopting and/or using an English name and identities

B. METHODS

I give my permission to participate in a one-to-one interview with the researcher. The interview will involve questions about my English learning experiences, my attitudes towards choosing or not to adopt and English name and identities. I understand that the interview will be audio-taped. I can choose to do the questionnaire either in English or in Chinese. If I choose to be interviewed in Chinese, the interview will later be translated into and transcribed in English by Pan WANG.

C. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand the purpose of this research;
- I understand that I may decline to participate in the research without any negative consequences;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation any time without negative consequences;
- I understand that my participation in this study is confidential (i.e., the researcher will know but will not disclose my identity);
- I understand that the data from this study may be published or presented at a scientific conference; data will be reported in a way that protects each participant's identity.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.
NAME (please in the print form): _____, _____
                                              Family name   Given name

Signature: _____

Researcher's signature: _____
Date: _____

If at any time, you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact me by e-mail at pan.wang@mail.mcgill.ca

Appendix D: Consent form for questionnaire participants

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by Pan WANG of the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University.

A. PURPOSE

To examine the relationship between choosing an English name and identities

B. METHODS

I give my permission to participate in answering a questionnaire. The questionnaire involves questions about my English learning experiences, my attitudes towards choosing or not to adopt and English name and identities. I can choose to do the questionnaire either in English or in Chinese. If I choose to use Chinese, my answers will later translated into English by Pan WANG.

C. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand the purpose of this research;
- I understand that I may decline to participate in the research without any negative consequences;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation any time without negative consequences;
- I understand that my participation in this study is confidential (i.e., the researcher will know but will not disclose my identity);
- I understand that the data from this study may be published or presented at a scientific conference; data will be reported in a way that protects each participant's identity.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please in the print form): _____, _____
                                         Family name   Given name

Signature: _____

Researcher's signature: _____

Date: _____

If at any time, you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact me by e-mail at pan.wang@mail.mcgill.ca

Appendix E: Written questionnaire for Chinese participants in Canada

Please answer these questions on this questionnaire. I have left space for your comments and/or explanation. Please try to give your answer to each of these questions. If you do not have any real life experience to answer some of these questions, please try to think out a most possible answer.

Your comments and/or explanation are quite important for my research. Please do give brief comments or explanation to your answers in the space I have left for you. Thank you ☺

1. **Age**: _____   **Gender**: □ male   □ female

2. Education level: □ Secondary school   □ Undergraduate (or Bachelor)   □ Graduate

3. Your Chinese name (in Chinese characters and in print please):

_____

4. Do you have an English name? □ Yes   □ No

    If you have one, what is your English name? If you simultaneously have more than one English

    name, please list all of them._____

5. If you had to write your English name and Chinese full name together. How would you put it? You can choose one of the following choices, or you may create an answer by yourself.

    a. John Zhao, Qian sun   b. John Qian sun Zhao

    c. Zhao Qian sun John   d. Qian sun Zhao John

    e. other

Your commentary: _____

6. Suppose you were 赵钱孙 and you had an English name, **John** or **Jane** but other personal information remains unchanged. How would you introduce yourself to strangers in the following situations?

Your location: ____ □ in China   **Y**□ in Canada   □ in the U.S.A.
Choices:
    a. Hi, my name is 赵钱孙.
    b. Hi, my name is 赵钱孙 and my English name is John (or Jane).
    c. Hi, my name is 赵钱孙，but you can call me John (or Jane).
    d. Hi, my name is John (or Jane).
    e. Hi, my name is 钱孙.
    f. Hi, my family name is 赵.
    g. Other (if you choose this item, please give a brief description)

① In an **English** class, you are a **student** and your classmates are all non-native English speakers from
   different countries.

   Your Choice: _____

   Explanation:_____

② You are taking a mathematics course, which is taught in English. Your classmates
   are from different countries. How would you introduce yourself to your classmates?

   Your Choice: _____

   Explanation:_____

③ At an informal English party, there are both Chinese people and non-Chinese people
who are from other countries. How would you introduce yourself to non-Chinese people?

   Your Choice: _____

   Explanation:_____

④At an informal English party, there are both Chinese people and non-Chinese people
   who are from other countries. How would you introduce yourself to Chinese people?

   Your Choice: _____

   Explanation:_____

⑤You are now delivering a public speech to your schoolmates in a formal students'
   gathering to arouse their attention towards the out-of- school children in China. How
   would you introduce yourself?
Your Choice: _____

Explanation:_____

⑥ Introduce yourself to your landlord who is not Chinese.

   Your Choice: _____

   Explanation:_____

⑦ You go to a bar by yourself. You meet an interesting Chinese person in the bar. How
   would you introduce yourself to him/her?

   Your Choice: _____

   Explanation:_____

⑧You go to a bar by yourself. You meet an interesting non-Chinese person in the bar. How would you introduce yourself to him/her?

Your Choice: _____

Explanation:_____ _____

7. When other people introduce themselves to you in an informal English party, how would you feel if:

Your location: □ in China   Y□ in Canada   □ in the U.S.A.

① a **native English** speaker says to you, "Hi, I am 赵钱孙."
        a. awkward   b. strange   c. acceptable d. intimate.   e. other____

Your comments:_____

② a **Korean** person says, "Hi, my name is Helen / George."
        a. awkward   b. strange   c. acceptable d. intimate.   e. other____

Your comments:_____

③ a **Chinese** person says to you **in English**, "Hi, my name is Queen/Watson."
        a. awkward   b. strange   c. acceptable d. intimate.   e. other____

Your comments:_____

④ a **Chinese** person says to you **in English**, "Hi, my name is Helen / George."
        a. awkward   b. strange   c. acceptable d. intimate.   e. other____

Your comments:_____

⑤ a **Chinese** person says in **Chinese**, "你好，我叫 Helen / George. "
        a. awkward   b. strange   c. acceptable d. intimate.   e. other____

Your comments:_____