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Literature Review on Identity Development of Chinese Heritage Language Learners in the Study
Abroad Context
by

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Abstract

Post-secondary institutions and their educational component—study abroad programs—often underrepresent minority students such as heritage language learners and overlooks their unique concerns and needs in study abroad experiences. Through an overview of current Study Abroad (SA) research and a discussion of the fundamental issue of identity of heritage language participants, this study provides a critical literature review on identity development of Chinese heritage language learners (CHLLs) in the SA context. This preliminary literature review shows that current SA research on CHLLs are underexplored with the few studies focusing on the significant role of identity in their SA experiences. Restricted to small samples, limited program types, and overgeneralized CHLL groups, current SA study on CHLLs present individualized findings and entail more carefully controlled and in-depth research that consider the heterogeneity of this diverse population and the complex relationships between identity and heritage language learning.

Keywords: study abroad, heritage language education, identity, Chinese heritage language learners

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Introduction

Under the impact of globalization and internationalization of higher education, studying abroad started gaining great momentum in the late 20th century. Every year hundreds of thousands of students around the world leave their homes to participate in a temporary educational sojourn in a foreign country. In the United States, the number of college and university students studying abroad has increased by approximately four times since the 1990s (Institute of International Education, 2020). The proliferation of study abroad programs is gaining increased research attention across disciplines. In the field of applied linguistics, particularly on second language acquisition, studying abroad is typically conceptualized as a language immersion in the native speech community integrated with formal classroom learning for “foreign” language learners (often Anglo-American, middle-class students) who have no personal or familiar connection to the target language or culture (Kinging, 2013). This conceptualization, however, neglects one important fact that for some learners the target language may not be only spoken in the foreign destination but also be used at their own homes (Diao, 2017). According to Institute of International Education, the number of non-White U.S. students studying abroad has grown from 15.7% in 2000/2001 to 31.3% in 2018/2019; Among them, Hispanic and Asian/Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders heritage students constitute a major part (with 35% and 28% respectively, IIE, 2020). With an increase in the ethnic and racial diversity of U.S. students studying abroad in recent years, Study Abroad (SA) research has begun to pay attention to these Heritage Language Learners (HLLs) who have an ethnolinguistic affiliation to the target language or culture with a range of proficiency in oral or literacy skills (Shively, 2018).

Beginning with comparisons of linguistic development between foreign language learners (FLLs) and HLLs, a few SA researches on HLLs are now moving to another focus on learners' socialization and identity that play significant roles in their SA experiences. In particular, the concept of identity, employed in many fields as an "anchoring" tool for an analysis of a related social phenomenon, has been closely connected to HLL's SA experience given the ethnolinguistic affiliation of HLLs. However, current SA study on the issue of HLLs' identity is still underexplored, and it is also limited to a few commonly taught foreign languages in North America such as Spanish. Little research has considered the issue in less commonly taught foreign languages such as Chinese, although Chinese is considered the most spoken language in the world and the Chinese community in North America is the largest overseas Chinese community outside Asia. Since both the population of Chinese HLLs (CHLLs) in North America and the number of CHLLs studying abroad in China are rapidly increasing (IIE, 2020), it is fundamental to have an understanding of CHLLs' experiences so as to design SA programs in China that are inclusive of all students and maximize desired learning outcomes. Therefore, this study attempts to provide a preliminary literature review on CHLLs' identity development in the SA context and to shed light on the scope of current research on CHLLs as well as to offer directions for future SA practice and research.

Given the subject of this study, the following pages start with an overview of current SA research, followed by a brief introduction of existing SA research regarding HLLs in general and the topic of identity in particular so as to provide a context to locate CHLL research in the SA field. A critical review of current research about the identity issue of CHLLs in SA constitutes the core of this study, with a highlight of the trends and gaps in the literature and some implications and directions for future research.

Overview of Study Abroad Research

The activity of studying abroad, “broadly defined as an academic experience that allows students to complete part of their degree program through educational activities outside their country” (Sanz & Morales-Front, 2018, p. 1), can be traced back to the Grand Tour in the 17th century, which was a feature of aristocratic education for the British nobility and designed to broaden the horizons of their young family members through exposures to European cultural legacy such as language, art, and geography (Gore, 2015). Though it has an old pedigree, studying abroad was little studied by scholars until the early 1990s (DeKeyser, 1991; Freed, 1995; Lafford, 1995). Since then, according to Sanz & Morales-Front (2018), the Study Abroad (SA) research yields only about one hundred publications on various effects of studying abroad, among which one fourth are journal articles, another fourth are book chapters in edited volumes dedicated to the topic of study abroad, such as Freed (1995) and DuFon & Churchill (2006), and others are some monographs coming out in recent years, such as Kinginger (2009, 2010), Savicki & Brewer & Whalen (2015), Doerr (2019), and Isabelli-García & Isabelli (2019).

It has long been assumed that studying abroad as a combination of formal classroom learning along with immersion in the native speech community indefectibly creates the best environment for learning a second language (Freed, 1995). Influenced by this popular assumption, many teachers and students, administrators and parents believe that students studying abroad will make the most progress and ultimately have mastery of the language they are learning. This myth has been questioned since the 1990s when Freed called for “carefully-controlled” and “in-depth” research that investigates the actual linguistic impact of study abroad, rather than generally describing the overall benefits of study abroad as previous publications did (Freed, 1995, p.5).

Following Freed's (1995) seminal volume, a number of SA researchers began to conduct empirical studies on the linguistic impact of study abroad by contrasting the SA context and the traditional foreign language classroom (i.e. At-Home [AH] context; e.g. Guntermann, 1995; Lafford, 1995). In these studies, many specific aspects of language skills are examined, such as oral fluency, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and dialect features, pragmatics, listening and writing. However, these studies often overlook both individual differences and SA context differences that interact to shape learner's linguistic development (Sanz & Morales-Front 2018). Since the 21st century, SA research is thus moving to another focus on both learners' individual characteristics and program variables that account for differences in SA learning outcomes. More and more researchers are interested in investigating a wide array of variables related to learner characteristics (motivation, gender, age, national identity, personality traits, for example) and context characteristics (such as lengths of programs, types of courses, extracurriculars, living arrangements, tasks and assessments) for a better understanding of learner's language and personal development in the SA context (e.g. DuFon & Churchill, 2006; Grey, Cox, Serafini, & Sanz, 2015)

Furthermore, the excessive research emphasis on comparisons of language learning outcomes between SA and AH groups has been questioned in recent years. Although it includes control groups (i.e. the AH group), the SA vs. AH comparisons lack experimental randomization since the SA group are not randomly selected but self-selected to participate in a SA program (Marijuan & Sanz, 2018). Therefore, some SA scholars have attempted to conduct other types of learning outcome comparisons, such as within-subject or longitudinal studies demonstrating learner's linguistic development before and after studying abroad, comparison between SA programs of different lengths, of different levels of proficiency, of different curriculum

approaches (i.e. language-based vs. content-based), and of different student populations (e.g. second language learners vs. heritage language learners) (Marijuan & Sanz, 2018, Sanz & Morales-Front 2018). These attempts take into account individual characteristics and program variables, and “have the potential to help disentangle the role that internal variables and external variables play in language and intercultural development” (Marijuan & Sanz, 2018, p. 189).

With the shift of research focus, a variety of research methodologies and theories have been applied in the SA field. Sanz and Morales-Front (2018) summarizes that there is no “SA theory” and the field of SA is a research base relying on a variety of borrowed theories and methodologies. As an offshoot of Applied Linguistics in general and Second Language Acquisition in particular, the SA field was at first dominated by cognitive theory that attempts to explain learner’s differential results of immersion by the role of learner’s cognition, and it now flourishes by sociocultural theory that emphasizes the roles of learner’s social interaction and identity in their SA experiences, experiential learning educational frameworks that encourages reflections on experience to develop new knowledge and way of thinking, as well as postcolonial and critical discourse perspectives that highlight the negative impact of “commoditization” and “exoticization” of SA (Marijuan & Sanz, 2018).

Methodologically, quantitative studies have analyzed a wide range of internal (i.e. individual differences) and external variables (i.e. program characteristics) as predictors of language improvement abroad. For instance, Baker-Smemoe, Dewey, Bown, & Martinsen (2014) quantitatively examine which of the following variables predict language gains: gender, age, personality, social networks, intercultural sensitivity, and amount of second language use. Qualitative studies have analyzed these same types of variables as constructions, such as the social construction and interpretation of identity and gender associated with themes found in the

data (e.g. Diao, 2017; Du, 2015; Jing-Schmidt, Zhang & Chen 2016). Other studies employ mixed methods that use both quantitative and qualitative data to elucidate each other. (e.g. Du, 2018; DeKeyser, 2010, Taguchi, Xiao, & Li, 2016).

With advances of technology in contemporary societies, SA research tends to go beyond the approach of test-based data exclusively used in its early stages and moves to employ multiple techniques within the same study. More novel techniques from the fields of psychology and neuroscience, such as eye-tracking, response time, and event-related potentials, are adopted to quantitatively investigate the cognitive processes of language learning and use (for a more detailed review of the technology being used in the SA fields see Marijuan & Sanz, 2017). Other new technological resources such as blogs, online survey, e-journals, and social media are also employed, especially in non-cognitively oriented studies that qualitatively address questions related to learner's motivation, attitude, identity, and intercultural competence. With the help of new technologies, SA research methodology have greatly improved some important limitations that have long been criticized by SA scholars, such as lack of randomization, small samples, generalizability of findings, and coarse tasks implemented failing to detect subtle changes in language and personal development (Kinginger, 2009; Sanz & Morales-Front 2018).

Overall, as language development is a complex phenomenon encompassing various linguistic aspects (e.g. pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics) and psychosocial variables (e.g. motivation, attitudes, aptitude, identity), the theoretical approaches and research methodologies to investigate SA are hence complex and varied, and more SA scholars have chosen a multidimensional approach to SA. However, the very complexity of SA leads to the fact that the findings generated by SA research are essentially mixed, even contradictory. These inconclusive findings, along with rapid development of novel technologies, socioeconomic

challenges of globalization and internationalization of higher education, and an explosion of new varied SA program designs and diversity of SA participant population, leave the SA field many questions to be explored and answered.

Identity and Heritage Language Learners

As mentioned above, since the beginning of the 21st century, SA research has turned its focus to the sociocultural context which impacts and shapes language learning. This social turn in SA theory and research puts an emphasis on learner's individual differences such as identity and social interaction in their SA experiences. In particular, the study of identity has drawn much attention of scholars in second language learning since learning a new language involves new ways of being and it provides a fruitful arena to study identity that can be instantiated in discourse (Leeman, 2015). Unlike traditional essentialist views that perceived identity as a static entity that individuals have, social constructivists conceive of identity as a multidimensional, multifaceted dynamic construct that is no longer fixed but instead is shifting and shaped by the sociohistorical contexts in which political ideologies and power relations come into play (Leeman, 2015). From a poststructuralist perspective, identity is also regarded as "negotiation of difference" and "a contested site of struggle involving challenges to one's habitus" (Kinginger 2013, p.341). Situated in such poststructuralist account of identity, Block (2007) defined identity as follows:

“[identities]as socially constructed, self-conscious, ongoing narratives that individuals perform, interpret and project in dress, bodily movements, actions, and language...identities are about negotiating new subject positions at the crossroads of past, present, and future. Individuals are shaped by their socio-histories, but they also shape

their socio-histories as life goes on. The entire process is conflictive as opposed to harmonious, and individuals often feel ambivalent” (p.27).

For Block, the negotiation of identity often takes place in such contexts as the SA setting where exist unequal power relations and unfamiliar sociocultural practices, thus challenging and destabilizing individuals’ identities. In the SA immersion environment, learner’s identity is mediated to strike a new moral and emotional balance, a “third place” in which the past and the present “encounter and transform each other” in the “presence of fissures, gaps, and contradictions” (Block 2007, p.864). This negotiation of identity in the SA setting can generate negative feelings such as discomfort, anxiety, and ambivalence, but it can also yield positive outcomes such as empathy, intercultural awareness, and global civic engagement (Kinging 2013), which in turn spark discussions on design and implementations of SA programs.

In documenting the rise of identity as a construct in second language acquisition, Block (2007) also interpreted identity in terms of traditional demographic categories such as nationality, gender, and social class. Based on Block’s categorization, Kinginger (2013) offered a more detailed list of identity categories best represented in the SA literature: national identity, foreigner identity, gender, linguistic identity, age, and ethnic identity. Among them, linguistic identity has particularly attracted augmented interests from SA researchers and practitioners in recent years due to the rapid growth of heritage language (HL) education in North America since the 1990s. According to Block (2007) and Kinginger (2013), linguistic identity can involve several dimensions, which include expertise in language use, affiliation with users of the language, and language inheritance. The latter dimension, language inheritance, specifically focuses in research on the experiences of heritage language learners (HLLs) studying abroad.

Leeman (2015) noted that the recent rise of heritage language education in the U.S. could be attributed to several main factors: one is significantly increased immigration that has led to a large percentage of residents who speak languages other than English at home, with simultaneous trends in the US toward recognizing linguistic rights and valuing multilingualism, and the other is increased federal needs and support for developing advanced language proficiency in critical languages to meet US national interests understood as security and international competitiveness (e.g. since the first Gulf War in 1991). Although non-English languages such as Spanish, Chinese, and German have been used for centuries as the medium of instruction in schools run by religious institutions and local communities in the US history (Fishman, 2001; Wang, 2008), it was not until the 1990s that heritage language education has become a distinct subfield of applied linguistics and language pedagogy (Valdés, 2005). Meanwhile, the emergence of the new label and category “heritage language learner” has gone hand in hand with the founding of heritage language education as a study field (Leeman, 2015).

For the term of “heritage language learner”, there are various definitions and interpretations in research, largely depending on whether the primary focus is on the language itself, individuals’ linguistic proficiency, their social status, or even mixed among these factors (Leeman, 2015). For instance, in Canada, while heritage languages refer to “languages other than the official languages (English and French) or Indigenous languages” (Duff & Li 2009, p. 4), the construct of heritage language learners gives greater weight to “the sociopolitical status of a given language or to the collective rights and needs of the speakers of that language as a group” (Leeman 2015, p.103). On the other hand, the definition constructed by researchers who focuses more on educational policy and curriculum design are generally more attuned to linguistic proficiency and cultural affiliations (Leeman, 2015). Therefore, when examining the topic of

“heritage language learners” (as well as “heritage language learners of a particular language”), it is unavoidable and fundamental to clarify its definition and context in the first place. Meanwhile, it is noteworthy that the term of “heritage language learner” is not simply an objective category but rather a social construct of identity, largely conceptualized by researchers, educators, and school administrators rather than by heritage language learners themselves (Doerr & Lee, 2013).

When discussing the category of heritage language learners in the context of study abroad, SA researchers generally tend to place emphasis on linguistic proficiency and cultural connections to define them. Kinginger (2013), for example, described a heritage language learner as a student “with some degree of communicative ability in the language and a familiar or cultural affiliation to the language” (p. 349). For this study, heritage language learners in the SA setting are conceptualized as SA participants who have an ethnolinguistic affiliation to the target language or culture with a range of proficiency in oral or literacy skills (He, 2011; Diao, 2017).

The SA research on heritage language learners mainly focus on two aspects: one is comparison of linguistic development and learning outcomes between non-heritage language learners and heritage language learners who are regarded to have linguistic and cultural advantages in their SA experiences (e.g. Draper & Hicks, 2000; Wilson-Oyelaran, 2006; Davidson & Lekic, 2012); the other aspect qualitatively studies on the psychosocial features relevant to heritage language learners such as motivation and identity (e.g. Miyahira & Petrucci, 2007; Beausoleil, 2008; Mukesh Gandhi, 2010). Since heritage language learner is constructed as an identity, identity has become central in heritage language educational discourse. As Marijuan and Sanz (2017) observed, looking at identity helps explain the extent to which heritage language learners can benefit from the SA immersive experience particularly in a heritage language-speaking country in respect of both language development and personal growth.

Although identity is a fundamental theme in HLL discourse, it is only recently that researchers have begun to explore HLL's conception of themselves and how their identities are constructed, performed, and represented in the SA setting (e.g. Petrucci, 2007; Beausoleil, 2008; Moreno, 2009; Parra, 2016; Shively, 2016; Quan, Pozzi, Kehoe, & Menard-Warwick, 2018). Furthermore, current SA study on the issue of HLLs' identity is still underexplored, and it is limited to only a few commonly taught foreign languages in North America such as Spanish, French, German, Russian, and Japanese. According to Leeman (2015), secondary and postsecondary heritage language courses in the U.S. first appeared in Spanish. As the most commonly spoken non-English language as well as the most commonly studied foreign language in the U.S., Spanish has dominantly become the primary target language of research in the SA field (e.g. McLaughlin, 2001; Moreno, 2009; Parra, 2016; Shively, 2016; Shively, 2018; Quan, Pozzi, Kehoe, & Menard-Warwick, 2018; Burgo, 2020). Little research has considered the identity of HLL of less commonly taught foreign languages such as Chinese, although Chinese is considered the most widely spoken language in the world and the Chinese community in North America is the largest overseas Chinese community outside Asia.

Due to the influx of Chinese immigrants since the 1980s, Chinese has rapidly risen to be the second most spoken non-English language in the U.S. over the past decade. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). With the emergency of China as a superpower in the global economy in recent years, a rapid expansion of Chinese language learners has been seen in American post-secondary institutions and Chinese has become the second fastest-growing language in language learning (Wong & Xiao, 2010). While China was ranked as the eleventh most popular SA destination during 1997- 1998, it became the fifth on the list of most popular SA destination for American students from 2008 to 2014 (IIE, 2020). Therefore, study on Chinese language teaching and

learning, regardless as a foreign language or as a heritage language, can no longer be ignored. According to McGinnis (2008) and Wang (2008), Chinese heritage language education in the U.S. can be dated back to the 1800s, when community-based schools provided the Chinese language as the medium of instruction to Chinese immigrants and their children. Since Chinese heritage language education have existed for centuries and both the population of Chinese HLLs (CHLLs) in North America and the number of CHLLs studying abroad in China are rapidly increasing (IIE, 2020), it is fundamental to have an understanding of CHLLs' experiences in SA contexts so as to better attend to the concerns of CHLLs and design SA programs in China that are inclusive of all students and maximize desired learning outcomes.

Literature Review on Identity of Chinese Heritage Language Learners in Study Abroad

1. Defining the Term of Chinese Heritage Language Learners

Before examining current literature on identity issues of Chinese heritage language learners in the SA context, it is crucial to discuss and clarify the term “Chinese heritage language learners” as this term potentially overgeneralizes the diverse population and overlooks its sociolinguistic complexity and heterogeneity.

As Chinese language programs in North American schools and universities generally offer Mandarin, the official and standard Chinese language in China, most of current studies on Chinese heritage language learners in both HL education context and SA contexts adopt an all-inclusive approach by assuming Chinese as a singular language (i.e. Mandarin) and broadly defining CHLLs as someone who have had exposure to Chinese outside the formal educational system (typically in their home or community) with a range of proficiency in oral or literacy skills (e.g. He, 2006; Wu, 2008). This approach, nevertheless, overlooks an important fact that many Chinese immigrants and communities in North America don't speak Mandarin at home or

in community but speak Cantonese or another of Chinese dialects that are mutually incomprehensible. While Mandarin is based on the Northern dialect, overseas Chinese diasporas mostly originated from Southern China where other six major linguistic varieties of Sinitic languages are used: Yue (e.g. Cantonese), Min (e.g. Taiwanese), Wu (e.g. Shanghainese), Gan, Hakka, and Xiang (Wong & Xiao, 2010; Diao, 2017). According to the US Census Bureau's report on Chinese diasporas (2019), in Canada, for instance, 35 percent of Chinese speakers use Cantonese at home and 40 percent report speaking "Chinese" without further clarification of dialect whereas only 23 percent speak Mandarin. Hence, when researchers, educators, and administrators include both Mandarin and dialect speakers in the same single term "Chinese heritage students" or "Chinese heritage language learners", their construct of Chinese mismatches students' supposed or imagined heritage language with their actual home language. As Leeman (2015) pointed out, such constructed label "erase the geographic, social, and stylistic variation that they encompass", which is inadequate for understanding the experiences of heritage language learners as well as their relationship to the language of study (p.108). Accordingly, for Chinese dialect speakers whose linguistic or cultural affiliation may not be represented by Mandarin, their "Chinese" identity development become more hybrid and complicated when they study abroad and entail more careful and thorough investigation in research.

2. SA literature on Chinese HLLs

For this literature review, studies on Chinese HLLs were searched by using keywords "study abroad" and "Chinese heritage" through the following online databases: ERIC, JSTOR, FRANCIS, Scopus, ProQuest Educational Journals, Linguistics & Language Behavior Abstracts, and China Academic Journals (CAJ, CNKI). In addition, the scholarly journal *Frontiers: The*

Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad that deals exclusively with study abroad issues were also consulted via its online open access. Given the author's linguistic resource and geographical location, only publications written in English or Chinese in the North American context were considered. This search process identified 7 potentially relevant studies (see the following Table 1 for a summary of existing SA literature on CHLLs).

Given the nature of this work and the small number of relevant studies found, the method of qualitative analysis is predominantly adopted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the domain in question and to provide detailed, in-depth information for future research.

Furthermore, as the topic of this work is about identity of ethnic minorities, a social construction that shifts and varies in time and context, the qualitative method allows us to understand the process and dynamics (Maxwell, 2012). It also allows for "inclusion of participants' differences in beliefs, values, intentions, and meanings, as well as social, cultural, and physical contextual factors that affect causal relationship" (Mertens, 2015, p.238). The qualitative analysis was conducted by assessing similarities and by comparing themes across sample.

The search for SA literature on Chinese HLLs shows that several works in recent years have begun to specifically address identity issues of Chinese HLLs studying abroad in China, although their number remains small: Ding (2015), Jing-Schmidt, Zhang & Chen (2016), Diao (2017), Du (2018). Among them, Ding (2015)'s case study on interactions between language learning and identity of CHLLs cannot be examined due to its unavailability for future publication purpose, and thus the other three works are the foci of this literature review.

Table 1. existing SA literature on CHLLs

Author (year)	Participants (number)	Country of Heritage	Research Questions	Theoretical framework	Instrument

Van Der Meid (2003)	L1 English speakers vs. HLLs of Asian languages such as Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. SA group=78 AH group=75	China, Japan, Korea, Indian, Vietnam, Thailand, others	reasons to study abroad: factors influencing study abroad participation	N/A	Questionnaire, interview
Le (2004)	Three ethnic groups of American college students studying in China for the spring and summer semesters (a total of 133):	Chinese-background groups includes students with any Chinese family backgrounds from any countries and areas	1. What are the motivations, beliefs, anxiety toward learning Chinese among three subgroups?	1. Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) 2.The Foreign Language Classroom	Survey

	<p>Non-Asian (N=76); Non-Chinese Asian (N=20); Chinese- background (N=37)</p>		<p>2. What factors contribute to their motivations, beliefs, and anxiety among three subgroups?</p>	<p>Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)</p>	
<p>Moreno (2009)</p>	<p>HL learners (N=17): Spanish (N=7) Hebrew (1) Tigrinya (1) French (1) German (1) Korean (1) Cantonese (1) Mandarin (4)</p>	<p>For CHLLs: China (N=2) Hong Kong(N=1) Taiwan (N=2)</p>	<p>What are HLLs’ motivations to study abroad, their beliefs about HL learning? How do they talk about themselves as HLLs both in the U.S. and abroad?</p>	<p>Discursive psychology</p>	<p>Interview, Written email reflection, Blog entries, Focus group</p>

Ding (2015)	N/A				
Jing-Schmidt, Zhang & Chen (2016)	CHLLs studying in China for one year (N=4)	China with different dialect background	How does CHLLs view and approach study abroad int their ancestral homeland?	1. The Theory of Communities of Practice 2. Self-Categorization Theory	e-journal
Diao (2017)	Non-Standard Mandarin speakers studying in China for at least one semester (N=3)	China (N=1) The U.S. (N=1) The Middle East (N=1)	1. How do speakers of transnational Mandarin become aware of the culturally embedded concept of standard Mandarin? How do they negotiate their existing	The Language Socialization Theory	Audio recording, Interview, Survey, Questionnaire, Field observation

			non-standard accent and (re)interpret the meanings associated with the accent while in China?		
Du (2018)	African American (N=2) and Chinese American college students studying in China for one academic year (N=3)	Southeast Asia (N=1) China (N=2)	Is the experience of ethnic minority American students in China similar to that of White Americans? If not, how are their experiences different and what are	N/A	Proficiency test, Questionnaire, Audio recording

			possible explanations?		
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In their study on identity development in the ancestral homeland from CHLLs' perspectives, Jing-Schmidt, Zhang & Chen (2016) employ a narrative inquiry to examine the lived experiences of identity development of four CHL students from 4 cohorts of advanced learners of Chinese participating in a year-long SA program in China. These four participants were all born and grew up in the U.S., speaking different Chinese dialects at their homes: one uses Taiwan-based Mandarin, one uses Beijing-based Mandarin while another two speaks Cantonese. Although it notes their individual difference in the use of home language, the study mainly presents CHLLs' perspectives on American-ness with racial invisibility in the local community without going deeper to explore the impact of their linguistic varieties on identity development. Similarly, in Du's (2018) study on three Chinese American college students studying in China for one academic year, it categorizes all three CHLLs into the homogeneous group and presents the same issue of racial invisibility as Jing-Schmidt, Zhang & Chen (2016) does.

In contrast, Diao (2017)'s study provides an analysis of CHLLs' experiences and negotiations with different linguistic varieties, dialects, and accents. Following Duff (2015)'s suggestion of conceptualizing languages such as Spanish and Mandarin as "transnational languages" that are not only spoken in one foreign country but also among overseas diaspora communities, Diao (2017) uses the term "speakers of transnational Mandarin" rather than "heritage language learners" to illustrate sociolinguistic complexities of Chinese languages. However, rather than focusing on learner's use between Mandarin and other Chinese dialects such as Cantonese, Diao's study largely examines the use of accents between standard Mandarin

and non-standard Mandarin that exists in Chinese diasporas families and communities (e.g. Taiwan-based Mandarin in the U.S.) but deviates from Beijing-based Mandarin standards. By collecting data from three focal participants through mixed methods such as audio recordings, interviews, surveys, language awareness questionnaires, and field observations, Diao finds that transnational Mandarin speakers with intimate family and community ties in Chinese diasporas may not be limited to Chinese heritage but also come from other ethnic backgrounds through a range of connections such as interracial dating/marriage and childcare services, and thus calls for a reconsideration of the conventional definition of CHLLs that usually excludes transnational Mandarin speakers of non-Chinese heritage.

3. the Relationships between Heritage Language Learning and Identity

Diao (2017), Du (2018) and Jing-Schmidt, Zhang & Chen (2016) all shed light on both race and political racialization dimensions involved in negotiations of identity in the SA context. As the conception of identity is multi-faceted and complex, the exploration of identity in the SA research entails multidimensional approach. Many scholars in heritage language education contend that heritage language learning is a way for students to fulfill not only linguistic needs but also identity needs (Carreira, 2004), therefore, research on identity in the SA field, especially in the post-structural and post-colonial frameworks, have assumed a linear relationship between identity and heritage language learning and primarily conceptualize identity development as a variable of language development (Block, 2007; Kinginger, 2009, 2013; Jing-Schmidt, Zhang & Chen, 2016). However, Both Jing-Schmidt, Zhang & Chen (2016) and Du (2018) finds that CHLLS' identity development and subjective experiences are not commensurate with language development measured by test scores. While Du (2018) shows that factors such as personality, prior cross-cultural experiences, expectations, and language proficiency interact with each other

in complex ways to influence the students' identity development and SA experience, Jing-Schmidt, Zhang & Chen (2016) argues that language learning is merely one of many aspects of the students' SA experiences and that the students should not be viewed just as language learners but more holistically as whole persons whose identity development are influenced and shaped by a wide array of internal and external factors "specific to the given spatial, temporal, social, and emotional contexts of SA" (p.798).

Furthermore, as mentioned before, identity is usually viewed from the post-structural perspective as "negotiation of difference" co-constructed between self and others (Kinginger 2013, p.341). Hence, identity development involves two dimensions: self-identifications that CHLLs claim for themselves and the identities ascribed to them by members of the host country (Shively, 2016). In the existing literature on CHLLs, most studies only explore the self-identifications that CHLLs claim for themselves but lack investigations of views from members of the host country. For instance, Jing-Schmidt, Zhang & Chen (2016) mainly use the self-narratives of CHLLs to examine the construction of identity; Diao (2017) quantitatively and qualitatively analyzes data collected from interviews, surveys, questionnaires to interpret CHLLs' perspectives of identities; In Du (2018)'s research, although it examines the theme of how the concept of self was viewed by the Chinese people, the theme was just presented and reflected through the lens of CHLLs rather than directly from the local people and communities. The perspectives from members of the host country provide another lens to explore identity development more comprehensively and thoroughly. Different views from CHLLs and the local people may be of help to fully present contradictions and tensions that challenge and destabilize individuals' identities during the process of construction of identity. Therefore, the missing of

involving views from the local people and communities should be considered as a direction for the future research on identity development of CHLLs.

On the whole, in current SA study on identity development of CHLLs, it is found in Jing-Schmidt, Zhang & Chen (2016)'s research that identity development and its subjective experience are not commensurate with language development as measured by test scores, and it is suggested that identity in SA should not be subsumed narrowly under language learning but rather viewed more holistically. Diao (2017)'s case studies show that Mandarin speakers with intimate family and community ties in diaspora Chinese communities may not be limited to those with direct ethnolinguistic affiliations but come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, and their relationship with Chinese diasporas may take place in various forms, not only ethnolinguistic heritage but also interracial dating/marriage or childcare services, and Diao (2017) also highlights the need for applied linguistics to rethink terms such as heritage language learners. Du (2018)'s study provides additional evidence to show that study abroad is complex and highly individualized and that even students from the same ethnic groups might have different experiences as factors like personality, prior cross-cultural experiences, language proficiency, expectations, and self-identification interact with each other in complex ways to influence the students' SA experience.

4. Other Research Gaps and Future Directions

In addition to the controversial definition of CHLLs and the lack of views from members of the host country, the existing literature also presents other research gaps and promising research areas. First, small samples are usually used in these studies: for instance, Jing-Schmidt, Zhang & Chen (2016) includes only four CHL students in their study, and both Diao (2017) and Du (2018) focuses on three students. Furthermore, the samples used in these studies are most

convenience samples not selected randomly or by other rigorous procedures, which can display an insufficient approach to statistical analysis and yield inflated claims of significance for the results (Rees & Klapper, 2008; Kinginger, 2009). To address the problem of small sampling, SA researchers usually calls for a need of large-scale studies (Rees & Klapper, 2008; Kinginger, 2009). However, compared with other SA programs worldwide, relatively low participation in study abroad in China, especially in year-long programs, usually leads to small samples in SA studies on CHLLs. To address this issue, one potential research direction might be promising to provide more samples: short-term SA programs.

As Sanz & Morales-Front (2018) points out, most evidences in SA research come from traditional semester or even year-long programs. The literature on CHLLs examined in this study mostly conducted research through either one-semester (Diao, 2017) or year-long programs (Du, 2018; Jing-Schmidt, Zhang & Chen, 2016). However, according to Institute of International Education (2020), the most popular SA programs among U.S. students are short-term programs as well as internships and service-learning programs. Given the possible affordability issues or the pressures of completing an academic degree within a specific time frame, more and more students are hesitant to participate in a year-long SA programs (Isabelli-García & Isabelli, 2019). As a consequence, it might be difficult for researchers to recruit more students participating in the long SA programs for their SA studies. Some SA researchers have thus noted the emergence of short-term programs and called for more research attention to this promising area (Sanz & Morales-Front, 2018; Isabelli-García & Isabelli, 2019). As short-term SA programs are flourishing in North American post-secondary institutions, it is fundamental to study this type of SA programs that meets the needs of students in contemporary societies.

Conclusion

As a fundamental ideological site where linguistic norms are prescribed (De costa, 2016; Diao, 2017), educational institutions and their educational component—study abroad programs—often underrepresent minority students and overlooks their unique concerns and needs. It is important to further explore their relevant SA experiences so as to promote and democratize study abroad. This preliminary literature review shows that current SA study on CHLLs are underexplored with the few studies focusing on the significant role of identity in CHLLs' SA experiences. Restricted to small samples, limited program types, and overgeneralized CHLL groups, current SA study on CHLLs present individualized findings and entail more carefully controlled and in-depth research that consider the heterogeneity of this diverse population and the complex relationships between identity and heritage language learning.

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