

# Chinese Student Newcomers' Transition to a Canadian Postsecondary EAP Program: Pre- and Post-Departure Comparison

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## Theoretical Framework

- **Investment** signaled the “socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it” (Norton, 1995, p. 17).
- Chinese “**culture of learning**” as “taken-for-granted frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about how to teach and learn successfully and about how to use talk in interaction, among other aspects of learning” (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006, p. 9).
- **Selective acculturation**, identified as individuals are “choosing to retain specific aspects of their heritage culture and to incorporate only selected aspects of U.S. culture into their lives” (Schwartz, Ángel Cano, & Zamboanga, 2015, p. 145).

## Background

- In 2017 alone China had the highest number (140,530 Chinese students), which made up of 28% among the international student body in Canada (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2018).
- Canada is an especially diverse country where 18.9% of the population are born outside of the nation (Berry et al., 2006).
- Various English as a Second Language (ESL) programs across Canada are the predominant educational integration responses for cultural diversity (Burnaby, James, & Regier, 2000).
- Despite the fact that Chinese student newcomer youth is numerously significant in Canadian education system, there is still a lack of research on their transition experiences and what can be done to support them.

## Research Questions

- What are the participants' perceptions of English language education in both China and Canada?
- What acculturation strategies do Chinese students select during their transition trajectories?
- How do Chinese students invest themselves in the second language and culture?

## Methodology

- Qualitative - Education is a lived experience and school is a process
- Case Study - Interpretive case studies (Merriam, 1998) presenting detailed and thick description of the phenomenon in order to “illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to the data gathering” (p. 38)
- 10 participants – 5 male and 5 female Chinese students
- 2 rounds one-on-one semi-structured interviews

## Results

- English in China and Canada: A ladder VS a necessity
- Comparison with Chinese exam-oriented pedagogy

## Discussion

- Adjustments toward host cultural orientation
  1. Chinese-dominant biculturalism
  2. Canadian-dominant biculturalism
- Chinese-dominant biculturalism marks a simultaneous response to the host culture when participants have limited English proficiency and little contact with the Canadian larger society; while Canadian-dominant biculturalism contains a fluctuate psychological adjustment of loss-transformation-reclamation after participants experienced marginalization.