Identity, Good Language Learning and Chinese Learners in America

Abstract
Significance of the study
This study examines the process of linguistic and cultural identity formation as experienced by the Chinese language learners in America who consider themselves as highly proficient in Chinese and in favor of the Chinese culture. While previous research of good language learners mostly focus on learner characteristics and learning strategies, this study addresses the question of what good language learners have in common by determining how they negotiate linguistic and cultural identity in personal and professional life. It contributes to the research on good language learners from a sociolinguistic perspective, taking into account the learning context and human agency. Furthermore, there is little in the literature on identity construction of learners of languages other than English.

Theoretical framework/background
There have been increasingly more theories in exploring how social and cultural contexts affect good language learning. In this article, I draw on the poststructuralist critical pedagogy as they relate to "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1991; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2003) and "multilingual competence" (Cook, 1999; Pavlenko, 2003), and sociocultural notion of "community of practice" (Lave and Wenger, 1991) to capture essential steps in the journey of linguistic-and-cultural-identity construction experienced by learners of Chinese as foreign language in America.

Research procedure
A research design is developed in which 10 participants are selected as good Chinese learners and are asked to write about their Chinese learning experience, which is followed up by interviews. Therefore, data are collected in two stages. First, participants are asked to provide a Chinese language learning account with a prompt. After the narratives are coded and analysed, I contacted each participant to set up an individual follow-up interview. Each semistructured interview last about an hour. All of them are recorded and transcribed.

Major
findings
Three common strategies emerged as important in the journey of identity construction from the written narratives and interviews with good Chinese learners in America: generating a counter-discourse, gaining access to native speakers' social networks and adhering to an imagined community of multilingual bi-cultural individuals.

References

