

NEGOTIATING THIRD SPACE PERSONAE

构建第三空间人格：

Foreign Professionals in Modern Chinese Workplace
中国职场的外国专业人士

The
Third
Space
Lab

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SUMMER PROJECT

Research questions:

- *What role does one's heritage background play in navigating a "foreigner" identity in the professional Chinese workplace?*
- *How does the image of "foreigner" in Chinese discourse, namely the image of foreigners as western and white (Mao 2015), impact the way white non-native speakers are perceived by native Chinese speakers compared to their non-native heritage speaking counterparts?*
- *How does this image impact non-native individuals' motivations for studying Chinese?*

Methods

1) Recruitment of participants

- Selection criteria:
 - Non-native speaker of Mandarin Chinese who now speaks Chinese at a high level in a professional workplace (either in China or elsewhere)

2) Recorded Zoom interviews

3) Interview transcription

4) Data Analysis via NVivo 12

FINDINGS

1) Double standard

Those who appear to be vaguely of Chinese descent (whether or not they actually are) are assumed to be native speakers of Chinese and those who appear to not be of Chinese descent are assumed to not know any Chinese.

2) Motivation

Non-heritage non-native subjects were more likely to be **intrinsically motivated** throughout their language learning journeys.

Heritage subject's learning motivations were more heavily influenced by both **familial pressure and professional ambitions**.

3) Negotiation of Third Space Personae at the workplace

- 3 subjects' reasons for switching back and forth between English and Chinese appeared to be **highly context-specific and dependent on their personal expectations** for the given interaction.

- Subjects who had lived in China for longer were more skilled at switching back and forth between these personae without experiencing internal conflict to the same degree as the subject who had lived in China for the least amount of time