

# Participant P5

**School Experience:** Diverse public school

## **1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and tell me when you came to the United States?**

### **Response:**

My name is Aisilina. I am from China and moved to the United States in August 2024. I currently live in Katy, Texas.

## **2. What was the biggest challenge when you first arrived in the United States?**

### **Response:**

The biggest challenge was language. I found it difficult to understand the local accent, the speed of conversations, and the many informal expressions and slang used in everyday communication.

## **3. Can you describe your experience learning English?**

### **Response:**

At first, I relied heavily on translation apps. Before speaking to others, I would translate what I wanted to say into English. I also listened to English podcasts and watched American television shows. As I communicated more with my classmates, my English gradually improved.

## **4. Do you remember a moment when language made you feel excluded, embarrassed, or misunderstood?**

### **Response:**

One memorable experience happened at a supermarket. The cashier asked whether I wanted "cash back," but I thought she was asking whether I wanted to pay with cash. Later I realized that "cash back" meant withdrawing cash while paying by card. Misunderstanding the question made me feel embarrassed.

**5. Do you feel like the same person when speaking Chinese and English? Why or why not?**

**Response:**

No. I do not feel like the same person because my ability to express myself is limited when I speak English. I become much more serious and reserved, whereas I feel much more relaxed and natural when speaking Chinese.

**6. Has moving to the United States changed the way you think about being Chinese?**

**Response:**

Yes. When I lived in China, I rarely thought about my Chinese identity. After moving to the United States, I became much more aware of the cultural characteristics that make me Chinese, including my eating habits, writing style, and aesthetic preferences. Living in the United States has made my Chinese identity much more visible to me.

**7. When do you feel most Chinese? Can you give an example?**

**Response:**

I feel most Chinese during traditional Chinese festivals. Although I now live in the United States, my family still celebrates Chinese New Year by having a reunion dinner, making dumplings, watching the Spring Festival Gala, and giving red envelopes. These traditions make me feel closely connected to my Chinese identity.

**8. When do you feel most American? Can you give an example?**

**Response:**

I feel most American when I notice that my daily habits have gradually changed. For example, I now like putting ice in my drinks, and I have become more comfortable eating very sweet foods.

**9. Have you ever felt caught between two cultures? Can you tell me about that experience?**

**Response:**

Yes. My American friends often think I am too quiet and reserved, while my Chinese friends think I have become more direct than before. Because of this, I sometimes feel that I am caught between the two cultures.

**10. If you could describe your identity in one sentence, what would that sentence be?**

**Response:**

I am Chinese, and both Chinese and American cultures have shaped me into a complete and independent person.

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## **1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and tell me when you came to the United States?**

**Response:**

My name is Aisilina. I am from China and moved to the United States in August 2024. I currently live in Katy, Texas.

## **2. What was the biggest challenge when you first arrived in the United States?**

**Response:**

The biggest challenge was language. I found it difficult to adapt to the local accent, the speed of conversations, and the large number of informal expressions and slang people used in everyday communication.

## **3. Can you describe your experience learning English?**

**Response:**

At first, I relied heavily on translation apps. I usually translated what I wanted to say into English before speaking to other people. I also listened to English podcasts and watched American television shows. As I communicated more with my classmates, my English gradually improved.

## **4. Do you remember a moment when language made you feel excluded, embarrassed, or misunderstood?**

**Response:**

One memorable experience happened at a supermarket. The cashier asked whether I wanted "cash back," but I thought she was asking whether I wanted to pay with cash. Later I realized that she meant withdrawing cash while paying by card. Misunderstanding the question made me feel embarrassed.

## **5. Do you feel like the same person when speaking Chinese and English? Why or why not?**

**Response:**

No. Because of my limited English ability, I become much more formal and reserved when speaking English. I cannot express myself as naturally as I can in Chinese.

**6. Has moving to the United States changed the way you think about being Chinese?**

**Response:**

Yes. When I lived in China, I rarely thought about my Chinese identity. After moving to the United States, I became much more aware of the cultural characteristics that are uniquely Chinese, such as my eating habits, writing style, and aesthetic preferences. These experiences made me more aware of my identity as a Chinese person.

**7. When do you feel most Chinese? Can you give an example?**

**Response:**

I feel most Chinese during traditional Chinese festivals. Although I now live in the United States, my family still celebrates Chinese New Year by having a reunion dinner, making dumplings, watching the Spring Festival Gala, and giving red envelopes. These traditions keep me closely connected to Chinese culture.

**8. When do you feel most American? Can you give an example?**

**Response:**

I feel somewhat American when I notice that my daily habits have changed because of living in the United States. For example, I now like adding ice to my drinks and have become more accustomed to eating very sweet foods.

**9. Have you ever felt caught between two cultures? Can you tell me about that experience?**

**Response:**

Yes. My American friends think I am too reserved and indirect, while my Chinese friends think I have become more straightforward than before. Because of this, I often feel that I am somewhere between the two cultures.

**10. If you could describe your identity in one sentence, what would that sentence be?**

**Response:**

I am Chinese, and both Chinese and American cultures have shaped me into a complete and independent person.