

Participant P1

Background: Diverse public school

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

Response:

My name is Jiang Yuhan. I came to the United States during the summer before ninth grade. I have now graduated from high school and completed all four years of high school in the United States.

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

Response:

The biggest challenge was language. The American English I heard was very different from the English I had learned in China, both in pronunciation and speaking speed. I often could not understand what people were saying because they spoke too quickly for me to process the information.

3. Can you describe your experience learning English?

Response:

Throughout ninth grade, I rarely spoke English unless it was necessary, such as communicating with teachers. My English gradually improved during the second semester of tenth grade. My English teacher knew that my English foundation was weak and was very supportive. At the same time, I happened to share the same lunch period with a friend I met in French class. We talked together every day during lunch, and through these daily conversations, my spoken English gradually became much better.

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

Response:

When I first arrived in the United States, I spoke quietly, my pronunciation was unclear, and I had a strong accent. Many people could not understand what I was trying to say and often asked me to

repeat myself. Sometimes I had to repeat the same sentence three or four times, and they still could not understand me, which was very embarrassing.

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

Response:

Overall, I think my way of expressing myself and my thinking process are similar in both Chinese and English. However, there are still subtle differences because English is not my native language. I cannot naturally use American jokes, slang, or cultural references like native speakers. When speaking Chinese, I feel much more fluent and comfortable communicating with others.

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

Response:

Moving to the United States has not changed my understanding of being Chinese. I have always believed that being Chinese means having Chinese heritage, growing up in China, and personally identifying with that identity.

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

Response:

I feel most Chinese during traditional festivals such as Chinese New Year. In the United States, some supermarkets are decorated with Chinese New Year decorations, schools have Chinese clubs, and Chinese students celebrate together. When I hear people speaking Chinese and see Chinese signs around me, I feel especially connected to my cultural identity.

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

Response:

I actually feel most American after returning to China. Many people tell me that my way of speaking and thinking is no longer like that of a typical Chinese person, but more similar to an American. They also notice that my daily habits have become more American, such as staying in air-conditioned rooms, wearing tank tops and shorts, and drinking cold beverages.

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

Response:

Yes. I find it difficult to fully fit into either culture. In the United States, I often cannot relate to the popular trends, games, or everyday topics that local students discuss because I did not grow up there. At the same time, when I return to China, I realize that many things have changed while I was away. I am unfamiliar with new technologies, mobile payment systems, and online services, and I have even been criticized for not knowing how to use them. I also find it difficult to reconnect with old friends because I missed many years of their lives. Overall, I understand both cultures but do not feel that I completely belong to either one.

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

Response:

Even though I spent four years of high school in the United States and may continue living abroad in the future, I still consider myself Chinese. Chinese is my native language, I strongly identify with China, I love Chinese culture, and I will always see myself as Chinese.

Participant P1 (中文整理稿)

学校经历: 多元化 (Diverse) 公立学校

1. 请简单介绍一下自己, 以及你是什么时候来到美国的?

回答:

我叫姜玉涵。我是在九年级前的暑假来到美国的, 到现在已经高中毕业, 在美国完成了完整的四年高中学习。

2. 刚来到美国时, 你遇到的最大挑战是什么?

回答:

刚来到美国时, 我遇到的最大挑战就是语言问题。美国人说的英语和我以前在中国课堂上学的英语, 无论是发音还是语速都有很大的差别。我经常听不懂、听不清别人讲话, 当地人说话速度太快, 我的脑子跟不上, 没办法及时理解他们表达的内容。

3. 你能描述一下自己学习英语的经历吗?

回答:

整个九年级, 我几乎不会主动用英语和别人交流, 只有在和老师沟通等必要情况下才会开口。我的英语水平是在九年级下学期才逐渐提升的。当时我的英语老师知道我的英语基础比较弱, 一直很照顾我。同时, 我和法语课认识的一位朋友在九年级下学期换到了同一个午餐时间。我们每天一起吃饭、聊天, 长期交流让我慢慢提高了英语口语能力。

4. 你是否记得某个因为语言而感到被排斥、尴尬或被误解的时刻?

回答:

刚来到美国时, 我说英语声音比较小, 发音不够清楚, 而且口音很重。很多人听不懂我在表达什么, 经常让我重复。有时候我重复三四遍, 对方还是听不懂, 当时会觉得特别尴尬。

5. 当你说中文和说英文时, 你觉得自己是同一个人吗? 为什么?

回答:

我觉得整体来说是同一个人，我的表达逻辑和说话方式没有太大区别。不过还是会有一些细微差异，因为英语不是我的母语。我没有办法像美国本土学生一样自然地使用美式俚语、网络梗或一些文化表达。相比之下，用中文交流时，我会更加流畅，也更加自在。

6. 来到美国以后，你对于“中国人身份”的理解有发生变化吗？

回答：

没有太大的变化。我一直认为，中国人身份意味着拥有中国血统，在中国长大，并且自己认同这份身份。来到美国之后，我对中国人身份的理解并没有发生改变。

7. 在什么情况下你最能感受到自己是中国人？能举个例子吗？

回答：

我最能感受到自己是中国人的时候，是在美国过春节等中国传统节日的时候。有些超市会布置充满中国元素的装饰，学校也有中文社团，中国学生会一起庆祝节日。当身边的人都在说中文、周围能够看到中文标识时，我会觉得特别亲切，也会更强烈地感受到自己的中国人身份。

8. 在什么情况下你最能感受到自己像美国人？能举个例子吗？

回答：

我反而是在回国之后最能感受到自己变得比较像美国人。很多人都会说，我的说话方式、思维逻辑已经不像传统意义上的中国人，更偏向美式思维。还有人觉得我的生活习惯也变得比较美国化，比如喜欢待在空调房、穿背心短裤，以及习惯喝冷饮。

9. 你有没有感到自己夹在两种文化之间？可以分享一个相关经历吗？

回答：

有。我觉得自己很难完全融入任何一边。在美国，我很难真正融入本土社会，因为当地学生喜欢的潮流、游戏和聊天话题，我很多都不了解，也很难产生共鸣。回到中国之后，我又发现自己同样很难完全适应。由于长期生活在海外，我对国内很多新的生活方式并不熟悉，比如移动支付、线上点餐等，甚至因为不会使用这些功能而被店员责备。与此同时，我和以前的朋友也很难像过去一样聊天，因为这些年我缺席了他们的生活，很难参与他们现在的话题。总体来说，我了解中美两种文化，却又无法完全融入任何一方。

10. 如果让你用一句话描述自己的身份认同，你会怎么说？

回答：

即使我已经在美国完成了四年高中，未来也有可能长期生活在美国或其他国家，我仍然认为自己是中国人。中文是我的母语，我认同中国，也热爱中华文化，我始终愿意以中国人、华裔的身份来定义自己。