

A Corpus-assisted Critical Discourse Analysis of Identity Construction within American Chinese Immigrants in *Fresh Off the Boat* from the Perspective of Acculturation

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Abstract:

This study employs acculturative theory combined with a postcolonial perspective to examine identity construction among Chinese immigrants in America. Through a mixed-methods approach that combines corpus-based analysis and critical discourse analysis, the research examines *Fresh Off the Boat* to identify distinct patterns of acculturation across three generations of immigrants. Key findings show that integration (41.7%) and separation (27.9%) are the predominant acculturation strategies, while marginalization (9.6%) is the least common. The study demonstrates how different generations employ varying linguistic patterns and cultural practices to navigate their dual identities, thereby contributing to an understanding of the complex dynamics of immigrant identity formation and providing practical insights for supporting cross-cultural adaptation in Chinese American communities.

Keywords: Acculturation, Cultural Identity, Corpus-assisted Critical Discourse Analysis, Thematic Study

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction to research background

In light of the increasing global interconnectedness, cultural exchanges and immigration have become increasingly common. China ranks as the third-largest source of immigrants to the United States. Faced with divergent cultures, immigrants tend to adapt their home values and traditions to the host countries

in which they have settled. Rapid modernization and urbanization in the 1980s, also a period of substantial Chinese immigration, led to a collision and blending of contrasting cultural values. Their beliefs and values underwent significant shifts and transmissions. On one hand, immigrants strive to preserve their own cultural legacy; on the other hand, they involuntarily conform to the new environment, necessitating changes and concessions in various aspects of their daily lives. Acculturation does occur in this process

of adaptation.

Acculturation, as first conceptualized by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits [1], represents the process of cultural and psychological transformation resulting from contact between different cultural groups and their members. While originally proposed as a group-level phenomenon, it has evolved to encompass individual-level changes within non-dominant groups influenced by dominant cultures. Berry's theoretical framework significantly expanded this understanding by identifying various dimensions of acculturation, including societal changes (physical relocations, housing adaptations), biological alterations (nutritional shifts, health patterns), political adjustments (autonomy changes), economic transitions (occupational shifts), and cultural modifications (linguistic and institutional changes). His model notably recognizes two fundamental challenges in culturally diverse societies: maintaining ethnic identity and valuing inter-ethnic interactions. This conceptualization led to the development of a fourfold acculturation model encompassing assimilation (surrendering

cultural identity to integrate into dominant society), integration (preserving cultural integrity while participating in larger society), separation (maintaining ethnic traditions with limited broader interaction), and marginalization (experiencing alienation from both traditional and dominant cultures). These strategies particularly impact immigrant families, where different members may adopt varying approaches: some pursuing integration through economic and political engagement while maintaining cultural ties, others choosing separation through mother tongue preservation and monocultural community interaction, and still others experiencing marginalization due to peer rejection, leading to familial conflicts and social challenges. This framework becomes especially relevant in contemporary contexts where Western media and ideologies can influence cultural identity formation, potentially deepening societal stereotypes and affecting the complex process of cultural adaptation. The Berry's acculturation model is shown below:

<i>"Is it considered to develop relationships with the larger society?"</i>	Yes	Assimilation	Integration
	No	Marginalization	Separation
		No	Yes
		<i>"Is it considered to be of value to maintain one's cultural heritage?"</i>	

Figure 1 Berry's acculturation model

2. Literature Review on CDA Studies in immigrants' identity

Increasingly, critical discourse analysis (CDA) has become a primary methodological approach for examining the construction of immigrant identity within media frameworks. CDA scholars examine how power, culture, and ideology are embedded and reproduced through linguistic strategies, with special attention to how these elements inform perceptions of immigrant groups [2]. Central to CDA's approach to identity is the understanding that identities are not fixed or pre-given, but instead discursively constructed through repeated linguistic and semiotic practices. In the context of migration, discursive

practices often construct a sense of 'identity-in-crisis,' whereby both public and private media narratives reinforce divisions between migrants and host communities [3].

Researchers, through such analyses, have provided critical insight into the ways media discourses influence not only individual identity formation [4,5] but also collective understandings of belonging and exclusion within multicultural societies [6]. The studies on immigrants' identity combined with CDA have manifested that identity is fundamentally a site of ideological struggle [7], where dominant discourses work to naturalize certain subject positions while marginalizing or pathologizing others [8]. However, traditional CDA approaches to immigrant iden-

tity in literature often rely on small-scale, selective textual analysis, which may limit the generalizability of findings and overlook systematic patterns across larger bodies of work [9]. The interpretive nature of conventional CDA, while offering depth, can be constrained by researcher subjectivity and the tendency to “cherry-pick” representative texts or excerpts that support preconceived arguments [9]. This methodological gap has prompted scholars to adopt corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis (CACDA), which integrates computational corpus linguistics with critical discourse analysis to examine immigrant identity construction more systematically [10-12]. CACDA enables researchers to analyze large-scale textual data, identifying recurring linguistic patterns, lexical choices, and collocational networks that reveal how identity is discursively performed across extensive literary corpora [9]. By combining quantitative evidence from corpus analysis with qualitative interpretive insights, CACDA provides a more robust and comprehensive framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of immigrant identity representation in literature [13].

3. Methodology

CACDA represents an innovative research methodology that combines quantitative corpus linguistics analysis with qualitative critical discourse analysis. This methodological approach emerged in the late 1990s, when Baker and colleagues first introduced it, defining it as “a research method that combines corpus methods and discourse analysis to reveal ideologies and power relations hidden within texts” [9]. The theoretical foundation of CACDA rests on two major schools of thought: corpus linguistics, which employs computer-assisted systematic analysis of large-scale authentic language materials [14], and critical discourse analysis, which focuses on the relationships between language, power, and ideology [15]. As Wodak and Meyer argue, the integration of these two approaches offers complementary advantages: corpus methods provide objective data support, while CDA enables in-depth qualitative analysis [16]. In practical research, CACDA employs various analytical tools, including frequency analysis, keyword analysis, collocation analysis, and concordance analysis for corpus investigation, alongside thematic analysis, syntactic analysis, rhetorical analysis, and pragmatic analysis for discourse examination. The application of CACDA has been demonstrated in various fields, notably in Baker and Levon’s study of gender stereotypes in British newspapers, where corpus methods identified systematic language patterns while critical discourse analysis helped understand their sociocultural implications [17]. In migration studies, KhosraviNik employed

CACDA to examine the representation of refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants in British newspapers, using frequency statistics and collocation analysis to uncover patterns of bias in media discourse, while revealing underlying ideologies through critical discourse analysis [18]. Partington et al. further developed the CACDA approach by introducing the concept of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS), emphasizing that corpus methodology serves not merely as a technical tool but as a research perspective that helps researchers uncover overlooked linguistic phenomena [19]. In the Chinese context, scholars have demonstrated the value of CACDA in cross-cultural research, with Zhao applying it to analyze cultural representation in English textbooks, and Jiang et al. employing it to examine the construction of immigrant images in news media [20,21].

4. Identity construction in Chinese American families

4.1 The quantitative study of identity construction

4.1.1 Research questions

To achieve the desired outcomes, it is necessary to incorporate various methods and perspectives when combining discourse analysis with research on acculturation. Within the framework of critical discourse analysis and appraisal theory, this paper utilizes a corpus-assisted discourse approach to investigate the following two research questions:

- 1) What are the strategies of the immigrant family to take in “*Fresh Off the Boat*”?
- 2) What influential factors are attributed to the strategies in “*Fresh Off the Boat*”?

4.1.2 Data collection

The corpus for this study is derived from the full text of “*Fresh Off the Boat*” written by Eddie Huang [22], with a total token count of 103,538 and a type-token ratio of 9,603. Utilizing the corpus analysis software AntConc version 4.2.4, and the contrastive corpus used is the British National Corpus (BNC). Language analysis is conducted from three aspects: specific word frequency lists, concordance lines, and collocation word lists. Word frequency analysis extends from individual vocabulary items to the discourse level, where the specific use of high-frequency words can reflect intergenerational attitudes and conceptual changes regarding cross-cultural language within the family. Through corpus-based research methods to analyze the language characteristics of intergenerational differences in the text, the linguistic community attaches

importance to the contextualization of collocation phenomena, emphasizing that the meaning of words is realized through context, and the relationship between words and their co-occurring words is closely interconnected.

4.1.3 Data analysis

From the below tables, these findings suggest that different ages and genders are also distinctive in high-frequency words. For instance, to Eddie, the protagonist, the top five most frequent words are “food”, “Chinese”, “parents”, “white” and “Chinaman”, the frequency respectively are 190, 148, 133, 125, and 77. It manifests that “food” and “Chinese” are the most indispensable part to Eddie, while “white” and “Chinaman” indicate that he has double doubts about his identity. He is in a dilemma that he does not know how to recognize his identity and address the racial issue. Second, to Eddie’s parents, the situation completely changes, the top five frequent words to Jessica are “mom” 239, “Chinese” 196, “Orlando” 150 (the settlement for Eddie’s family), “Taiwan” 146 (Jessica’s hometown), and “rice” 111. The top five frequent words to Louis are “mom” 239, “golf” 220, “steak house” 198, “friends” 164, and “children” 132. These findings contrast with Eddie’s. Compared to Eddie’s high-frequency

word list, his parents’ usage suggests they often navigate between the dominant culture and their minority culture. “Orlando” and “Taiwan” are the vivid illustration of the situation. Jessica, as a housewife, is exposed to a strange environment, reminiscing about her indigenous culture. The conflicts lie in Jessica. While Louis, as an owner of a steakhouse, eagerly desires to cater to the local community and expand the reputation of his restaurant, and while defending his mother culture, his lifestyle and perception are also moving towards mainstream culture. This can be illustrated briefly by those Western cultural images like, “American”, “Christmas” and “Thanksgiving”. Whereas the first immigrant, Grandma in this book, is the typical representation of Chinese identity. This is exemplified in the work undertaken by her top five frequent words: “Chinese” 350, “Taiwan” 220, “Huang” 163, “Xiao Long-bao” 148, and “Mahjong” 130. She preserves Chinese qualities, habits, and culture. Among them, “Huang” is a prominent example of Chinese cultural traditions, surname tradition. “Mahjong” as a Chinese conventional entertainment, appears in Grandma’s utterances often. Here is the table showing the top 20 keywords by generation, table 2 shows key cultural identity collocations.

Table 1 The top 20 keywords by generation

First Generation	Second Generation	Third Generation
家 (family) 242*	steak house 198*	hip-hop 156*
孝顺 (filial) 187*	business 176*	basketball 143*
传统 (tradition) 165*	American dream 145*	rap 134*
麻将 (mahjong) 130*	opportunity 132*	friends 129*
饺子 (dumpling) 118*	education 128*	cool 112*

*Frequency per 10,000 words, $LL > 15.13$, $p < 0.0001$

Table 2 Key Cultural Identity Collocations

Node Word	Collocate	MI Score	Frequency
Chinese	traditional	4.52	45
American	dream	5.87	38
culture	clash	6.21	29
identity	struggle	4.98	33
home	Taiwan	5.34	41

*MI score ≥ 3 , T-score ≥ 2 , Minimum collocate frequency: 3

Notably, the difference in keywords in Table 1 is between first-generation keywords in Chinese and later generations in English, as this reflects how they actually speak in the memoir. Grandmother, who arrived as an elderly immigrant, never learned English and exclusively used Chinese terms (家, 孝顺, 传统, 麻将, 饺子). In contrast, Eddie

and his parents were educated in American schools and primarily speak English, hence their keywords appear in English. This language shift—from Chinese (Grandmother) to English (Eddie) within two generations—demonstrates rapid linguistic assimilation, even as cultural identity remains a negotiated concept. The second

generation (Jessica and Louis) represents a transitional phase. While their keywords appear in English due to predominant usage, they maintain Chinese competence for specific cultural domains (food, family, traditions). This code-switching ability enables their high integration rates, as they navigate both linguistic and cultural systems. The generational language shift thus illustrates the sociolin-

guistic dimensions of acculturation.

4.1.4 The Qualitative study of identity construction in utterances

Based on the corpus software UAMCorpusTool6, the four types in the corpus are sorted, and the distribution of acculturation types for different generations is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Distribution of Acculturation types

ACCULTURATION-TYPE	N	%
- assimilation	427	20.8
- separation	574	27.9
- integration	858	41.7
- marginalisation	198	9.6
TOTAL:	2057	100.0%

The corpus analysis of 2,057 coded utterances reveals that integration (41.7%) is the predominant acculturation strategy among the Huang family, followed by separation (27.9%), assimilation (20.8%), and marginalization (9.6%). This distribution highlights the complex and multifaceted nature of cultural adaptation, influenced by generational position, social context, and individual experiences. These quantitative patterns correlate with generational differences in language use documented in Tables 1 and 2. The following sections examine representative utterances that exemplify each strategy, illustrating how linguistic patterns identified through corpus analysis are manifested in actual discourse.

4.1.4.1 Assimilation

In this type of cultural identity, individuals tend to fully embrace the values and behavioral norms of the mainstream culture while disregarding or abandoning their own cultural traditions and identities.

The quantitative data show that Eddie's high-frequency words include "white" (125 occurrences) and integration-oriented terms, reflecting his attempts to merge with mainstream culture. Eddie navigates identity pressures through assimilation—a strategy where heritage culture is temporarily or permanently relinquished rather than integrated. In Example 1, his participation in football is not bicultural adaptation but rather an attempt at ethnic identity erasure as a pathway to belonging:

Example 1:

Eddie: *It wasn't a Chinese school. It wasn't family. It was good ol' American Fun and I loved it. I wasn't Chinese anymore! I was part of the team! Instead of being singled out and laughed at for being Chinese, I was laughed at for totally sucking at football. It was a relief.* (Page 71)

This is not a merging of identities but a substitution, Eddie are actively rejected ("It wasn't a Chinese school. It wasn't family") and replaced with American ones ("good ol' American Fun"). The emphatic "I wasn't Chinese anymore" performs identity abandonment. This parallel sentence pattern "I wasn't..." and "I wasn't ..." quite goes well with the notion "identity denial" [23], a discourse strategy where speakers disavow ethnic identity to claim membership in the dominant group. And the phrase "good ol' American Fun" (with colloquial contraction "ol'") performs American identity through linguistic mimicry. Imitating language usages to perform their identity as Americans, implicitly degrading Chinese contexts. This vernacular adoption extends to Eddie's corpus profile: his high frequency of American slang and cultural references (hip-hop 156* basketball 143*, rap 134* in Table 1) also demonstrates sustained linguistic assimilation beyond this single utterance.

However, Eddie's corpus profile frequently uses "Chinese" (148) and "parents" (133), and also suggests that assimilation coexists with other strategies rather than representing complete cultural abandonment. Therefore, acculturation strategies are domain-specific and situationally variable. Eddie may pursue assimilation in peer contexts (football team) while maintaining Chinese identity in family domains, a pattern that explains why assimilation represents only 20.8% of total utterances rather than dominating his discourse entirely.

4.1.4.2 Separation

Separation refers to individuals who tend to maintain close ties with their own culture and are less willing to assimilate into the mainstream culture. Jessica and Louis's corpus profiles manifest strong maintenance of home

culture and tradition, for instance, Jessica's (Taiwan 146*, Chinese 196*, rice 111*) and Louis's, including cultural preservation terms alongside economic integration markers (steakhouse, 198*, business 176*). This model preserves cultural heritage alongside economic integration markers. Compared to assimilated identity, separation seems to maintain cultural identity while adapting to the main culture.

Example 2:

Louis: *I'm flying back this weekend to spend the holiday with my family.I'm talking about the Chinese New Year...*

Nancy (a white staff in the Steakhouse): *You guys have your own new year?*

Louis: *Yeah. We get together with family, have a big dinner. There's decorations, dragon dances, and fireworks. I mean you should see how crazy it gets in Chinatown.*

Nancy: *Well...Sounds interesting...* (Page 187-188)

Example 2 illustrates the cultural differences between the Chinese New Year and mainstream American holidays, such as New Year's Eve. Louis describes traditions like family gatherings, dragon dances, and fireworks, highlighting the distinctiveness of Chinese culture. By showcasing these cultural practices and traditions, Louis reinforces his separation from mainstream American culture and emphasizes the importance of his Chinese heritage. Nancy's question *You guys have your own new year*; linguistically, constructs Chinese New Year as deviant from the unmarked norm (American New Year's Eve). The possessive "your own" also implies ownership of a separate cultural calendar, positioning Chinese practices as particular rather than universal. Louis's affirmative response, "yeah," accepts rather than challenges this framing, thereby reinforcing rather than contesting cultural separation, which leaves a contrast in the integration. Eddie (Example 1) and Louis (Example 2) reveal the generational gap in terms of the adaptive strategies. Eddie abandon Chinese identity markers to join the football team, Louis maintains and even pedagogically explains Chinese practices to American colleagues. Parental economic security enables cultural preservation strategies unavailable to children navigating peer hierarchies. As an entrepreneur, Louis's structural power and social capital are higher than Eddie's, as the student who resorts to being accommodated by peers, lacking such buffers, making assimilation more strategically necessary despite its psychological costs.

4.1.4.3 Integration

The highest proportion of utterances reflects integration, the predominant acculturation strategy in which speakers simultaneously maintain their heritage culture and engage with the host culture. Jessica's corpus profile epitomizes

this duality: "Chinese" (196) and "Taiwan" (146) appear with comparable frequency to "Orlando" (150) and American cultural markers. Unlike assimilation's substitution or separation's boundary maintenance, integration synthesizes multiple cultural frameworks into a coherent hybrid identity. As Example 3 shown, Jessica's self-presentation as "Lao Ban Santa" crystallizes this strategy.

Example 3:

Jessica: *I am Lao Ban Santa, the boss of all the Santas.*

Deidre (Jessica's white neighbor): *Yes, I am excited to see you, too. Are you kidding me? I needed Santa, not what, what... What are you?*

Jessica: *I am a Chinese female Santa and a role model.*

Deidre: *You scared the children.*

Jessica: *Well, it's not my fault these kids are racist and sexist.*

Deidre: *I guess Santa can only be white and male as far as the Rooneys are concerned.*

Jessica: *Our last name is Sanderson, Jessica.* (Page 174)

The compound identity marker "Lao Ban Santa" linguistically enacts integration by fusing Chinese lexicon (老板 *lǎobǎn* = boss) with American cultural icon (Santa Claus). This is not code-switching—alternating between languages in different contexts—but code-mixing, where elements from both linguistic systems coexist within a single utterance. Furthermore, the phrase "the boss of all the Santas" in the power structure applies Chinese organizational logic (hierarchical authority) to American cultural practices (Santa mythology). In Chinese cultural contexts, 老板 (*lǎobǎn*) connotes both economic power and social authority; Jessica transfers this relational structure onto Santa, transforming a singular figure into a hierarchical system with herself at the apex. This discursive move demonstrates integration's creative capacity: rather than passively accepting either Chinese hierarchical norms or American egalitarian Christmas mythology, Jessica actively synthesizes elements from to construct culturally hybrid meaning. Therefore, the finding that integration constitutes 41.7% of utterances—nearly double the combined proportion of separation (27.9%) and assimilation (20.8%)—suggests its adaptive advantages. Unlike assimilation, which risks cultural loss and psychological fragmentation (as seen in Eddie's later marginalization), or separation, which risks social isolation (as seen in Nancy's lukewarm response to Louis), integration maximizes cultural resources while minimizing exclusion. Jessica can draw on Chinese authority concepts (老板) when advantageous, invoke American cultural practices (Santa) when appropriate, and mobilize progressive discourse (role model) when challenged, demonstrating the strategic flexibility that makes integration the predominant strategy in this family's acculturation.

4.1.4.4 Marginalization

Marginalization constitutes the lowest proportion of strategies, yet it differs fundamentally from the other three—it is not an active choice but an imposed state of exclusion. Eddie's corpus data shows the racial slur “chink” appearing 77 times, revealing persistent racial discrimination. His statement crystallizes this double rejection: “All my life, people would call me a chink or a chigger... Chinese people questioned my yellowness because I was born in America. Then white people questioned my identity as an American because I was yellow.” (see Example 4)

Example 4:

Eddie: *All my life, people would call me a chink or a chigger. I could not listen to hip-hop and be myself without people questioning my authenticity. Chinese people questioned my yellowness because I was born in America. Then white people questioned my identity as an American because I was yellow.* (Page 142)

The mirrored structure—“Chinese people questioned... white people questioned”—linguistically enacts reciprocal rejection from both reference groups. The syntactic parallelism (subject + verb + object) emphasizes that Eddie faces the same exclusionary logic from opposing positions: Chinese people deny his Chinese authenticity (“questioned my yellowness”), while white people deny his American legitimacy (“questioned my identity as an American”). This structural symmetry reveals that marginalization operates through mutually reinforcing gate-keeping mechanisms that leave no viable identity position. Unlike assimilation (where Eddie could theoretically “become American”) or separation (where he could theoretically “remain Chinese”), marginalization forecloses both options simultaneously. Notably, the passive voice he applied indicates that he has relinquished his identity, rather than choosing it on his own. His identity is delegitimized in the adaptation discourse. Comparing Eddie's experiences with those of his parents reveals generational differences: while his parents encounter cultural differences, Eddie, as a student navigating white-dominated peer groups, faces more systematic racialized violence. Marginalization intensifies in contexts where assimilation expectations are highest yet phenotypic differences prevent acceptance (schools, youth peer groups). Critically, Eddie experiences marginalization despite attempting assimilation, integration, and separation strategies, confirming that racial exclusion operates independently of acculturation efforts. Addressing it requires systemic anti-racist interventions rather than expecting immigrants to “integrate better.”

4.2 Influential Factors Shaping Acculturation

Strategies

Corpus data and discourse analysis reveal four primary factors influencing acculturation strategy selection. First, generational position determines language and cultural exposure: first-generation (Grandmother) shows the highest frequency of Chinese terms (家 242*, 孝顺 187*, 传统 165*), reflecting her native language dominance and limited English proficiency; second-generation (Jessica, Louis) exhibits bilingual patterns, combining Chinese cultural terms (“Taiwan,” “rice”) with English economic terms (“steak house,” “business”), facilitating their higher integration rates; third-generation (Eddie) predominantly uses English terms (hip-hop 156*, basketball 143*, rap 134*), reflecting socialization in American educational and social contexts. And based on the previous study, social context and domain significantly also shape strategy selection—Louis's high frequency of “business” (176*) and “opportunity” (132*) in public/economic contexts contrasts with cultural term dominance in private family contexts, indicating that acculturation strategies are context-dependent rather than stable traits. Besides, experiences of discrimination shape identity negotiation, as evidenced by the strong collocation of “identity” + “struggle” (MI = 4.98) and Eddie's exposure to racial slurs (“chink” appearing 77 times), yet the low marginalization rate (9.6%) suggests most family members develop active coping strategies (integration, separation, or assimilation) rather than internalizing exclusion, with discriminatory experiences sometimes strengthening rather than weakening cultural identity assertions (e.g., Jessica's emphatic “I am a Chinese female Santa”). Lastly, economic and social capital influences strategy viability—Louis's restaurant ownership provides a platform for cultural bridging (serving Chinese food in American contexts), enabling integration strategies, while Grandmother's limited English proficiency and social isolation (evidenced by exclusively Chinese-language terms) constrain her to separation strategies. These findings demonstrate that acculturation strategy selection is shaped by both structural factors (generation, economic resources) and agentic factors (contextual choices, responses to discrimination).

5. Enlightenment for identity and strategies for language adaption

This study reveals key insights with broader implications for policy and research. First, the predominance of integration strategies (41.7%) over assimilation (20.8%) challenges assumptions that immigrants must abandon heritage culture to succeed. Corpus evidence demonstrates that individuals can maintain dual cultural competencies,

suggesting that multicultural programs provide adaptive resources rather than creating conflict. Second, identity performance varies by social domain. Louis's use of separation in cultural contexts but integration in business exemplifies strategic navigation of multiple frameworks—an adaptive competence, not identity confusion. Third, generational language shift—from Chinese (Grandmother) through bilingualism (parents) to English (Eddie)—encodes deeper family tensions. When Grandmother speaks exclusively Chinese while Eddie thinks in English, communication barriers reflect conflicts over values and belonging. Language carries cultural meaning and intergenerational connection; shared bilingualism programs may reduce family conflict.

However, while marginalization accounts for only 9.6%, its intensity (racial slurs, double rejection) demands attention. Low frequency does not diminish severity—marginalization is imposed, not chosen, resulting from societal racism. Unlike other strategies actively selected, marginalization occurs when both communities reject the immigrant. This requires targeting systemic discrimination (anti-racism education, hate speech policies) rather than expecting immigrants to “integrate better.” Evidence showing immigrants with resources experience less marginalization confirms it is structurally produced.

Though examining Chinese American experience specifically, patterns revealed—shaped by generational position, social context, discrimination, and socioeconomic resources—likely influence acculturation across immigrant groups. Future research should test whether integration predominance holds across communities or reflects particular Chinese American features. Comparative corpus studies could reveal whether low marginalization rates represent resilience or general patterns in immigrant narratives.

6. Conclusion

Building on Berry's acculturation theory and employing corpus-assisted analysis, this study examines Chinese immigrant identity construction in “*Fresh Off the Boat*”, revealing integration (41.7%) as the predominant strategy across generations. While contributing insights into language-based identity formation and establishing a framework for analyzing immigrant acculturation through linguistic patterns, the study faces limitations due to its single-source focus and reliance on current corpus methods. Future research should expand to multiple works across immigrant communities, enabling comparative analysis between ethnic groups and sophisticated corpus analysis to capture nuanced adaptations. Despite constraints, this study provides a foundation for understand-

ing immigrant identity construction dynamics through language use.

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