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**Chinese as A Foreign Language: A Narrative Inquiry into Canadian Teacher
Candidates' Reciprocal Learning in China**

By

Yuhan Deng

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Faculty of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Education
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2019

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Chinese as A Foreign Language: A Narrative Inquiry into Canadian Teacher

Candidates' Reciprocal Learning in China

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January 11, 2019

Declaration of Originality

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Abstract

This narrative study investigated the Canadian teacher candidates' Chinese language learning and their cross-cultural experiences in China related to participating in a three-month study-abroad program between a university in Canada and a university in China. This study focuses on four participants' Chinese as a foreign language learning, and the findings show that the teacher candidates have not only developed a higher language tolerance for the learners who are non-native speakers of English, but also developed a better pedagogical understanding with regard to how to teach English as a foreign language to non-native learners by learning Chinese and teaching in China. In addition, by studying and using Chinese in China, the teacher candidates have developed an appreciation for the different cultures, which can help them appreciate multicultural education while teaching in Canada.

Keywords: Canadian teacher candidates, reciprocal learning, Chinese as a foreign language, learning strategies

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Chapter One

Introduction

Background of the Study

As a teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL) teacher, my first teaching experience started in December 2008. It was a warm winter in Pattaya, Thailand, and I had volunteered to teach Chinese to grade-eleven students at a local high school. I had been participating in a three-month international program that was organized by my university in Kunming, China. The longer I taught, the more I became interested in teaching Chinese, and the more I become aware of how cultural differences can inhibit language learning.

This was exemplified to me on a bright sunny morning when some of my students were practicing on the blackboard. I was surprised when I noticed that a Thai girl named Jane was writing the Chinese characters following the order from bottom to top which was opposite to the right order. The student did not realize what was wrong when I asked her why she wrote the Chinese characters in that way. She just looked down at the board and at her notes from time to time to make sure there were not any mistakes in her writing. Finally, after I made the correct demonstration on the blackboard, she realized the difference, between our approaches and told me that she habitually wrote the Chinese characters in the Thai way because the order of writing the Thai word is from bottom to top. This made me realize that Chinese, as a unique language, has its own characteristics. I became more interested in Chinese teaching via the three months' experiences. However, I was aware that both my Chinese language proficiency and teaching skills needed to improvement in order to be a qualified teacher. Therefore, I applied to the

Master of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language program at Yunnan Normal University in Kunming, China.

While studying at the university, I had more opportunities to teach Chinese to foreign students, mainly from Asia and Europe. Because most of these students already had a degree of Chinese language proficiency, I used to teach the students by using the book called *New Practical Chinese Reader Textbook* and mainly focused on reading comprehension, pronunciation, and Chinese grammar. Moreover, I was confident in my ability to be an effective teacher to teach Chinese as a foreign language because both my language proficiency and teaching skills had improved through years of learning and the teaching experiences. However, many of my pedagogical approaches did not prove effective when I came to Canada.

Two weeks after I came to Windsor in early 2016, I volunteered to teach Chinese in a local Chinese heritage language program, which was supported by the local Chinese community. The purpose of the program was to help local Chinese-origin children and anyone who was interested in China to learn Chinese and the Chinese culture. Two language courses were offered in this program: one was for children who were of Chinese origin with either one parent or both parents originally from China; the other one was for any non-Chinese adult learners who were interested in the Chinese culture and the Chinese language. With my experience teaching Chinese as a second language, I thought I would be an ideal candidate for this position, but when teaching the children of Chinese origin in the program, I came across some significant challenges.

Some of the students were born in Canada, and some came to Canada at a very young age, but each of them had at least one parent who was from China. This did not

mean, however, that they were proficient in Chinese. Therefore, when I first introduced myself in Chinese, only a few students could understand me. I heard some of them whispering in English to one another, asking what I had said, so I re-introduced myself in English. This time, the students responded differently, offering greetings and introducing themselves. I realized that their English was far more proficient than their Chinese and that although Chinese may be their ‘mother tongue’, English was their first language. I had prepared a detailed teaching plan in advance and hoped to teach the students as much as I could, but when I started to lecture, I noticed that the students quickly lost interest in the class. When I found that only a few students were able to follow my lesson, I had to stop what I was teaching before the situation became even worse. The situation improved after I took out some small elephant-shaped souvenirs and passed them around the students. The students became interested and kept asking me the questions: what was that; what was it made of; did I bring them from China? I answered their questions one by one, and this time, the students followed me this time when I tried to teach them some relevant Chinese words. Although I did not fully understand why the students lost their interest when I gave the lecture to them, I realized that I had to adjust my teaching methods in order to suit the needs and expectations of Canadian students.

In order to overcome the challenges that I faced as a Chinese-language teacher in Canada, I realized I needed to learn more about Canadian pedagogies and Canadian culture. Moreover, because English and French are the two official languages in Canada, I still need to learn about the unique needs of Canadian additional language learners, particularly with respect to those learning Chinese. Thus, I applied to the Master of Education at the University of Windsor (UW) in 2016, where I personally experienced

the different teaching methods and learning environment. Luckily, in early July of 2017, I applied for the graduate assistant (GA) position under Dr. Shijing Xu, whose specialty is in second language acquisition. This provided me with an opportunity to work as a GA for the Reciprocal Learning Program (RLP), an international pre-service education program where teacher candidates from China and Canada spend a certain period of time in each other's country to learn about teaching other cultures and seek to benefit the both educational systems (Xu & Connelly, 2017). According to Xu and Connelly (2017), the teacher candidates from both countries would be engaged in auditing courses, receiving special training workshops, and participating in other insightfully cross-cultural events. The RLP was developed by Dr. Xu at the University of Windsor with Shijian Chen at Southwest University in China (2010), and is a part of the Social Sciences Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Partnership Grant Project (Xu & Connelly, 2013) between Canada and China.

Purpose of the Study

As I learned more about Canada and its education system, I began to think about different areas of research that might be beneficial to my area of interest, and after taking the *Research in Education* course, I realized that a qualitative study would be an ideal approach for me. Moreover, as a GA for the RLP, I have had more opportunities to communicate with the UW teacher candidates who applied to the RLP and planned to visit China in 2018. I had known their general impressions of China and their questions about China, especially about Chinese culture and things related to Chinese education. In addition, some of them were curious about the Chinese language. I was excited when Dr. Xu offered me the opportunity to teach the Chinese language to these teacher candidates

with her before their departure to China. At the same time, I was challenged by the task that I have to rethink both Chinese and English teaching strategies, and consider which approaches would be more suitable for the teacher candidates to learn Chinese more efficiently and effectively. This was the inspiration for my research.

After reviewing a number of studies, I knew that innumerable cross-culture programs benefit teacher candidates around the world (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Quezada & Alfaro, 2007; Stachowski & Visconti, 1998; Williams & Kelleher, 1987; Wilson, 1993). Most research analyzed the structure and nature of cross-cultural educational experiences for preservice teachers, affirmed the value of the overseas programs (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Quezada & Alfaro, 2007; Stachowski & Visconti, 1998; Williams & Kelleher, 1987; Wilson, 1993) and identified a wide range of benefits. However, there is insufficient systematic documentation regarding teacher candidates' international experiences in the research area (Cordeiro, 2007; Zeichner, 2002). Additionally, few studies examined how the teacher candidates' language acquisition influenced their learning and teaching life in the host country and their consequently multicultural awareness.

According to Zhao et al. (2009), studying and teaching in China to learn the basic language and culture of China benefit Canadian teacher candidates' life during the internship and also promotes the development of one's concept of multiculturalism profoundly. Therefore, learning the Chinese language would provide the participants with some of the rudimentary tools they need to navigate in China, and also enhance their understanding of Chinese culture. In order to maximize the efficiency and benefits of the program, it is important to identify what specific topics of the Chinese language were the

most helpful for the students from University of Windsor. In addition, it is important to analyze how the teacher candidates' Chinese language proficiencies could promote their cross-cultural learning and personal growth.

Therefore, the purpose of my study is to investigate the Canadian teacher candidates' Chinese language learning while participating in the RLP and to explore their cross-cultural experiences during their stay in China. I also seek to determine which teaching strategies that are most effective and efficient with respect to teacher candidates' Chinese acquisition. I hope to gain insight into how the teacher candidates perceive Chinese culture when immersed in a Chinese language environment, and my eventual findings seek to provide insights for both foreign language teachers and teacher candidates. In addition, I intend to identify more useful strategies and suggestions about learning specific Chinese language for more teacher candidates' future use by the end of my study.

Research Questions

To achieve these goals, the current study seeks to answer four central research questions:

1. What role does Chinese language learning play in the Canadian teacher candidates' reciprocal learning in China?
2. What are the teacher candidates' motivation, attitude, and strategies in learning the Chinese language before departure and during their China visit?
3. While in China, what language acquisition strategies do the Canadian teacher candidates find most effective?

4. How do the Canadian teacher candidates learn about Chinese culture when immersed in a Chinese language environment?

Outline of the Thesis

The first chapter offers an overall introduction to my thesis in which I situate my academic context and motivations, discuss the research problem, outline the purpose of the study, and list the research questions. The second chapter presents a review of existing research on language itself, overseas learning programs for the teacher candidates, the importance of cross-cultural experiences, and Chinese as a foreign language learning and teaching. The third chapter details the methodology of the current study and justifies the utilization of narrative inquiry before detailing the current study's research procedure and methods. The fourth chapter outlines the findings through core narrative stories shared by the study's four participants. In the fifth chapter, I discuss and analyze the value of the participants' Chinese learning and their cross-cultural experiences. The concluding chapter details the significance of the cross-cultural learning experiences with regard to the teacher candidates and offers a summation of the study's key findings and conclusions.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

In order to understand the findings and implications of the current study, it is critical to have an understanding of its context. This requires an investigation into second language acquisition and second language learning, particularly with respect to the differences between first language and second language learning, as well as the differences between second language and foreign language. This necessitates an understanding of cross-cultural learning, particularly as it relates to the cross-cultural experience of teacher candidates, which shapes and can be enhanced by transformative learning. Though this will provide a broad overview of language learning, it is critical to likewise understand the specifics of teaching and learning Chinese as a foreign language, which is influenced by learning motivation.

Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning

Second language acquisition (SLA) has become a popular topic attracting increasing interest across the globe since the 1960s (Cook, 2010, Ellis, 1994; Selinker, 1972; Skehan, 1991). SLA refers “both to the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their first one as young children” (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 2), and it is the process through which people learn or acquire a language in addition to their native language(s). Although the terms “second language learning” (SLL) and SLA are used interchangeably in many studies (Gass, 1997), actually these terms do differ (Ellis, 1994; Krashen, 1981). According to Krashen (1984), SLL refers to the conscious process of learning a second language and spending a certain period of time to learn the language with a specific purpose. Alternately, SLA refers to the acquisition of

a language subconsciously or naturally with little or non-formal training or learning (Abukhattala, 2013). In addition, SLA is interchangeable with foreign language acquisition (FLA) and foreign language learning (FLL) in some studies (Gass, 1997). Hence, it is necessary to get a better understanding of some relevant key terms.

First language and second language. First language (L1) is a language that a person initially contacts and acquires after being born. It is often referred to as one's "native language", "primary language", or "mother tongue" (Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015, Sinha et al., 2009). Although L1 and L2 are closely related to each other, they are not completely identical (Saville-Troike, 2006). Just as its name implies, L1 which emphasizes more on the order of language acquisition, usually corresponds to second language (L2). L2 refers to an additional language that a person gains after acquiring the L1 (Stern, 1983), and it is "typically an official or societally dominant language needed for education, employment, and other basic purposes" (Saville-Troike, 2006, p.4). Moreover; L2 refers to a language that people use most, and it is as important as L1 or sometimes even surpasses the status of L1 in some social context (Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015; Stern 1983).

Second language vs. foreign language. Both L2 and Foreign language (FL) are the languages learned or acquired by people in addition to their L1 (Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015). In the past, L2 and FL have been used synonymously in many contexts; however, there are some distinctions between the two (Ellis 1994; Stern, 1983). L2 is a language that "somebody learns to speak well and that they use for work or at school, but that is not the language they learned first" (Oxford Dictionary, nd). Based on the definition, L2 does not simply refer to "the chronology of language learning"; it also used

to indicate “the level of language command in comparison with a primary or dominant language” (Stern, 1983, p13). Moreover; Derakhshan and Karimi (2015) address the importance of an L2 and its status in a social context. In contrast, Saville-Troike (2006) defines FL as a language that is not commonly used in the learners’ immediate social context and notes that most people learn an FL in a formal classroom, and often with a specific purpose, such as future travel and other cross-cultural communication. Therefore, one of the crucial conditions used to distinguish between an L2 and an FL is to consider whether it owns a good language environment (Ringbom, 1980; Moeller & Catalano, 2015). Moreover, Stern (1983) states that an FL does not have an official status or an identified function within a country, whereas one’s L2 does.

Although SLA and FLA both describe people learning a language in addition to their L1, there are some distinctions between SLA and FLA. SLA should be differentiated from FLA based on the purposes of learning the languages and the learning environment (Hawkins, 2001). As a result of those two factors, learners’ learning motivations vary correspondently (Dornyei, 2008). According to Håkansson and Norrby (2010), foreign language learners often show a stronger motivation than the L2 learners because of the target language environmental impact. The environment of the L2 learners is better than the FL learners’ so that they learn and acquire the language not only during the class but also from outside of the classroom. Hence, the L2 learners show a lower motivation comparing to the FL learners who basically learn the target language in an environment that lacks regular interactions with the target language community (Ringbom, 1980; Schmidt et.al, 1996).

Second Language Learning and Cross-cultural Learning

Nelson Mandela once said that “If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart” (as cited in Chabalala, 2018, para. 7). When people communicate with each other via different languages, the cross-cultural communication and learning start simultaneously. Cross-cultural learning refers to the process of adaptation to a new environment and its requirements by gaining the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Hannigan, 1990). The SLL is usually associated with cross-cultural learning; moreover, foreign language learning is also linked with understanding to a foreign culture as language and culture cannot exist without each other. An increasing number of studies explore and demonstrate the importance of cross-cultural learning in foreign language learning, business, and other fields (Huang, 2010; Ji, Zhang, & Nisbett, 2004; Watkins, 2000; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004). Kayes et. al. (2005) conducted a literature review research on cross-cultural learning and identified 73 skills that clustered into ten thematic cross-cultural learning competencies. According to Chang, et al. (2011), cross-cultural learning research over the past fifty years has primarily focused on the differences between Eastern and Western cultures.

English, as an international language, has been used in almost every country (Bailey et. al, 1986), and is an L2 in many countries and has its own official status (Stern, 1983). As a result, a large number of cross-cultural studies compare and analyze the differences between English and other languages, which is considered as the dominant language in the world. Moreover, the research on English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) has been frequently discussed in both cross-cultural

and intercultural communication (Irving, 1984; O'Neill, 2011; Prodromou, 1992; Tan et al., 2010). Liaw and Johnson (2001) analyzed Taiwanese EFL students' e-mail writing through the cross-cultural communication process and found that the cross-cultural e-mail correspondence allowed the students to realize the cultural differences between English and their L1 and enhanced their cross-cultural understanding. Fageeh (2011) also claims that EFL cannot be isolated from its culture and discusses how to foster Arabic students' cross-cultural awareness in EFL learning and teaching.

Among a large number of EFL learning studies, many researchers have studied language learning and teaching strategies. For example, Purdie and Oliver (1999) examined 58 primary school-aged students' language learning strategies in the cross-cultural environment and found that students' language efficacy correlates with their use of language learning strategies. Chlopek (2008) lists some examples of unsuccessful cross-cultural encounters, and then discusses the importance of the intercultural approach in EFL classrooms, and provides some suggestions for different stages of intercultural activities. Due to the development of new technology and the internet, students' reading patterns have changed. Huang et al. (2016) state that the various reading resources that students have read closely connect to the cross-cultural context. The study also notes that it is important to foster the students' cross-cultural perspective during English reading practice.

Cross-cultural experience of teacher candidates. Cross-cultural experience plays an essential role in the growth of teacher candidates and when used in conjunction with teaching experience, it can broaden teachers' worldview and improve their teaching skills. Moreover, incorporating intercultural experience into the pre-service education

systems can help teacher candidates adapt to the challenges of multiculturalism in their own country (Ateskan, 2016). Many universities and colleges around the world offer a number of international programs for preservice teachers, especially in America, Canada, Australia, and a number of European countries. These study-abroad programs usually take the form of student exchange programs, short study programs, teaching practicums, immersion programs, or even brief school placements. Research indicates that such experiences are valuable to the teacher candidates in terms of enhancing their knowledge and skills, worldviews, and awareness of global issues (Brindley, Quinn, & Morton, 2009; Kabilan, 2013; Rodriguez, 2011; Unlu, 2015). The programs cover a wide range of issues, and their duration varies from weeks to months. Moreover, some programs may be reciprocal, while others are one-way (Olmedo & Harbon, 2010; Xu & Connelly, 2013). Therefore, the teacher candidates' cross-culture living and studying experience can differ to some extent.

Numerous teacher candidates participate in different cross-cultural programs provided by a variety of schools every year (Wilson, 1993). Most research examined the structure and nature of cross-cultural educational experiences for teacher candidates and affirm the value of these programs and identify a wide range of benefits (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Quezada & Alfaro, 2007; Stachowski & Visconti, 1998; Williams & Kelleher, 1987; Wilson, 1993). However, there is an increasing recognition of insufficient systematic documentation of teacher candidates' international experiences (Cordeiro, 2007; Zeichner, 2002). Because global perspectives gained from the cross-cultural experience will ultimately influence their students, the current study seeks to develop a more thorough understanding of three phenomena: teacher candidates' cross-

culture living and studying experience, the ways in which the international programs influence their teaching skills, and how study-abroad experiences are meaningful to their lives.

Transformative learning. Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory has been used to analyze how teacher candidates engage in cross-cultural learning and teaching programs in many different countries (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Ostermark, 2011, Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011). According to Mezirow (1991), transformative learning involves being critically aware of one's own assumptions and how they shape the ways in which people perceive, understand, and feel about the world because challenging these structures can facilitate more inclusive and integrative perspective that reduces discrimination. Trilokekar and Kukar (2011) argue that this lens provides a way of seeing how teacher candidates make meaning as they engage in learning and teaching activities abroad.

O'Sullivan (2003) defines transformative learning as a process that involves "a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions" and fosters a dramatic shift in the way people view their relationship in the world (p. 327). This shift involves five aspects: 1) how people understanding themselves and their locations, 2) how they understand their relationships with others and the natural world, 3) their awareness of their bodies, 4) their sense of justice and happiness, and 5) their understanding of power relations in intersectional structures of class, race, and gender. A thorough review of the literature on transformative learning suggests that teacher candidates are depicted through a self-designed concept map (see Figure 1). The home culture shapes teacher candidates' perspectives, framing the way they see the world.

After entering a different cultural context, they encountered the disoriented dilemma to some extent (Taylor, 1998). This cross-culture learning experience can change their views on education and challenge their opinions of their own values, intelligence, and potential. At the end of the transformative learning process, teacher candidates should ideally form the new worldview that will impact their future life and work.

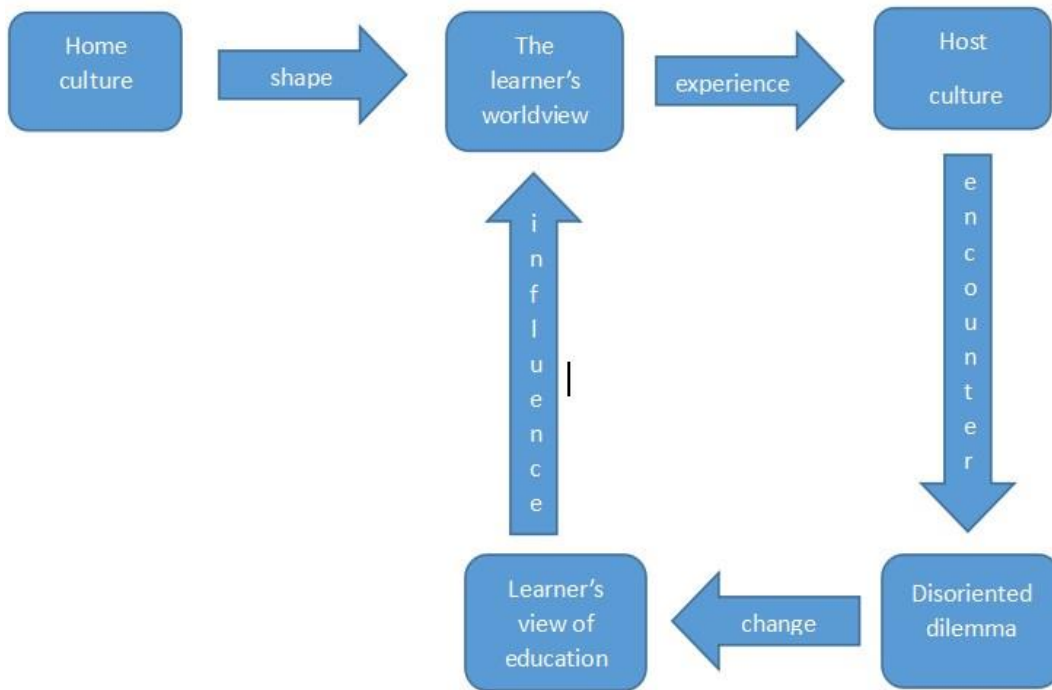


Figure 1: Transformative learning process of the teacher candidates

Chinese as a Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

Chinese is the most common language in the world, with 1.28 billion people, approximately 16 % of the world's population, speak some forms of Chinese as their first language (McCarthy, 2018). In addition, around 70% of Chinese people speak Mandarin. Chinese is also one of the oldest languages in the world and has been carrying the Chinese culture for thousands of years. However, Chinese does not have the same social status and a recognized function as English, especially in SLL. According to Saville-

Troike (2006) and Stern (1983), Chinese learning and teaching in some countries should be considered as a foreign language learning and teaching instead of a second language. For example, Canada is a linguistically and culturally diverse country that recognizes English and French as its two official languages. Hence, following the arguments put forward by Saville-Troike (2006) and Stern (1983), the current study suggests that the Chinese language should be considered as a foreign language for the teacher candidates, and this framing of the language would be more appropriate in the social context.

Chinese (Mandarin) as a foreign language learning (CFLL) and teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL) are not recent phenomena. China has interacted with many other countries around the world and has been actively engaged in globalization since the late 1970s. During this time, China has made a significant effort to improve English competence in China (Hu, 2005). However, with the rapid growth of the Chinese economy in last 30 years, the Chinese language has become increasingly important and has led to a growth in CFLL in and outside China (Moloney & Xu, 2015). More than 40 million foreigners are learning Chinese around the world, and that number is increasing (Chen, 2010). Moreover, according to Ramzy (2006), the number of students in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland doing advanced-level exams in Chinese climbed by 57% from 2000 to 2004. Although both CFLL and CFL teaching are parts of foreign language studies, it was not highly regarded and discussed until the 1990s.

CFLL and TCFL have aroused an increasing number of researchers' interest in recent decades. Many studies have covered a wide range of research areas: the nature of Chinese language, the approaches and strategies on both CFLT and CFLT, and the influence of Chinese culture on CFLL (Chang, 2017; Chisoni, 2015; Moloney & Xu,

2015; Ramzy, 2006; Taft & Chung, 1999). One of the biggest differences between Chinese and other kinds of languages is that Chinese is a tonal language. In Mandarin, there are four tones: the rising tone, where the voice raises on the syllable; the departing tone, which drops at the end of the syllable, the level tone that neither drops nor raises on a syllable; and the checked tone, which drops in the middle of the syllable and then raises at the end. Pouncing the one syllable with each tone will give that syllable four different meanings in Mandarin, though in English the meaning would remain constant regardless of the tone being used. Moreover, unlike the phonetic, Latin alphabet used in English, Chinese use logographic characters, which cannot be read phonetically (Taft & Chung, 1999). These characters are comprised of ‘radicals’, which are a graphical component of the larger logographic character, and using radical as a teaching tool can be helpful in the context of CSLL. As language and its culture are inseparable, it is vital to understand the importance of culture in second language learning and its significant influence on CSLL (Mushangwe & Chisoni, 2015). Chang (2017) not only introduced the development of the test of Chinese as a foreign language (TOCFL), but also discusses the four challenges encountered by the TOCFL research team when it sought to improve and maintain a standardized CSL/CFL tests. However, although CFLL and CFLT have become increasingly popular topics in language learning research, based on the analysis of some of the leading mainland Chinese journals, most of CFLL or CFLT studies employ non-empirical research; thus, the research methodology is often poorly executed in these studies (Ma et, al. 2016).

CFLL Motivation. Motivation is a key factor in foreign language learning and has been studied for many years. Norris-Holt (2001) defines that motivation as the

orientation of a learner with respect to the goal of learning a second language, and divides it into “integrative motivation” and “instrumental motivation”. Instrumental motivation would lead to a significant effort in learners’ second and foreign language learning, thus achieving a greater language competence (Dornyei, 1990; Dornyei, 1998; Veronica, 2008). Moreover, the learner’s attitudes and motivation both are important for the second language acquisition (Dornyei, 2001).

Ruan et al. (2015) suggest that Chinese is often regarded as a difficult language to learn in Western countries, and argue that it is therefore necessary to increase the motivation of the learners especially for the beginners with low language skills when conducting a task-based class. Rueda and Chen (2005) purport that cultural differences can influence the assessment of motivational processes in second and foreign language learning. This is validated by Yu and Watkins (2008), who conclude that the learners from Western countries and the learners from Asian countries are significantly different in terms of their motivation for learning Chinese as a second language. Motivation plays an essential role in learning CSL; students could easily lose their interest in Chinese learning if without the appropriate teaching methods and criteria not effectively utilized to stimulate the motivation of the students (Hettiarachchi, 2016; Mkize & Chisoni, 2015). Moreover, not only intrinsic motivation like cultural interest can promote CFLL of the students, but the external conditions such as learning environment, teachers, peers can influence the CFLL learners (Hong, 2012).

Chapter Three

Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate Canadian teacher candidates' Chinese language learning while participating in the RLP and to explore their cross-cultural experiences during their stay in China through narrative inquiry. Therefore, this chapter defines narrative inquiry and discusses the reasons why it is an effective research methodology for addressing issues related to the teacher candidates' cross-cultural learning and their Chinese learning. The research procedure, participants, and research methods of the current study will also be discussed.

Narrative Inquiry

What is a narrative inquiry? Narrative inquiry is a qualitative methodology that studies “the ways humans experience the world” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). It is based on the premise that people understand or make sense of their lives through narrative (Bruner, 1991). The many definitions of narrative inquiry all have one common element: storytelling. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) argue that “humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives” (p. 2). In short, people live with stories. As the development of narrative research, Xu and Connelly (2009) define narrative inquiry as “a way of thinking about life” (p. 221) that is not simply telling stories. In other words, narrative inquiry refers to understanding and inquiring into experiences through a “collaboration between researcher and the participants, over time, in the place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). Moreover, a narrative inquiry is “more than the uncritical gathering of stories” (Trahar, 2009). This is supported by Xu and Connelly (2010), who

state that “story is not so much a structured answer to a question, or a way of accounting for actions and events, as it is a gateway, a portal, for narrative inquiry into meaning and significance” (p. 356). Thus, narrative inquiry is defined not simply by storytelling, but by the critical reflection and analysis of stories that offer insights into the practical experience of people immersed in the social context of a given subject.

Narrative inquiry is an ideal methodology for education research as it explores pedagogical issues by analyzing the experiences of individuals. Clandinin and Connelly (1990) were the first to provide an overview of narrative inquiry in educational research. Dewey (1938) discusses life is education, emphasizing the importance of experiential education. Based on his theory of experience, Clandinin and Connelly (1990) claim that there was a strong connection between life, experience, and education. This promoted the development of narrative inquiry as an approach of studying through individual’s stories. An increasing number of narrative studies have analyzed some specific domains of education, such as music education, mathematics education, and teacher candidates training. In this way, the practitioners were no longer “silenced in the research relationship” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990). Moreover, the practitioners, “who may also become co-researchers” (Huber et, al., 2013, p. 220), have more space to talk about their own experiences. Besides the interview, ones’ journals, self-reflections, field notes, and other records can be used as methods to conduct a narrative inquiry.

Suitability. In this study, the participants are the teacher candidates who applied to the RLP of the University of Windsor in 2017- 2018. Although they come from the same program, they differ with respect to categories such as cultural heritage, major, learning background, and teaching experience. All the individuals have their own unique

experiences. According to Conle (2000), the narrative inquiry focuses more on the individual stories rather than a border view. This applies to the participants of the current study, who have unique experiences and stories while visiting in China. Every teacher candidate who attends the program holds different understandings and expectations with regard to this trip to China. In addition, they have displayed different degrees of motivation, attitude, and strategies while learning the Chinese language. Given these factors, the experiences of the participants might be transcribed quite differently. Thus, the narrative inquiry will be an effective approach with respect to the teacher candidates' cross-cultural experiences through their own stories.

Research Procedure

Since September of 2017, I have been working with Dr. Xu as a graduate assistant and I have been involved in recruiting the RLP applicants from the pre-service education program of University of Windsor. After recruiting a number of RLP applicants, we helped them secure a Mitacs Globalink grant for their internship in China from March to June of 2018. As a member of the program, I visited China with the group of teacher candidates together for three months. Before departure, the teacher candidates had attended nine weekly planning work sessions since January 2018, during which they had taken regular Chinese language classes. Luckily, I was engaged in teaching some 'survival Chinese' to the teacher candidates for preparation, so I was able to observe how they learned Mandarin in this class.

As an RLP team member, I was able to observe these teacher candidates for Dr. Shijing Xu and Dr. Michael Connelly's (2013-2020) SSHRC Partnership Grant Project, and my research is contextualized in the RLP. After receiving the approval from

the Research Ethics Board (REB) of University of Windsor and the consent from the participants, I had the opportunity to focus on observing the participants' Chinese language and culture learning during their stay in China. At the end of the trip, I did individual interviews with the participants and did the follow-up Chinese language assessment after receiving consent from them. All the data I used in this study were accepted by the participants.

Participants

Ten teacher candidates participated in the Reciprocal Learning Program from March to June 2018 in China with me. I selected four teacher candidates in my research with the advice from Dr. Xu after receiving the consent from them. In this study, the participants are pseudonymously called Jamie, Carmen, Linda, and Tony. Two female and two male teacher candidates were chosen as participants for the study. Jamie and Carmen are both Caucasian, while Linda was originally born in Pakistan and immigrated to Canada when she was young, and Tony was born in Canada, though his parents immigrated to Canada from Vietnam. All four participants are Canadian citizens. Although they were all teacher candidates from the same university and visited China in the same program, each of them had a unique experience in China that provided a lot of meaningful data for my study.

Research Methods

Clandinin and Connelly (1990) note that a “number of different methods of data collection are possible as the researcher and practitioner work together in a collaborative relationship” (p. 5). After learning about the research methods implemented by Xu and Connelly's (2013) SSHRC Partnership Grant, I chose to adopt similar research methods:

pilot Chinese language proficiency assessment, participant observation, individual interview, field notes, and post-Chinese language proficiency assessment.

Pilot Chinese language proficiency assessment. The UW teacher candidates took the survival Chinese lessons weekly from January to late March 2018. They learned some basic Chinese language over the course of three months. Based on the current study's research questions, I conducted a written pilot Chinese proficiency assessment for the participants to develop a basic understanding of their Chinese language proficiency before departure. I believed that the pilot assessment was meaningful to my research as it was an important part of the research data that evaluated the participants' learning motivations and attitudes. The pilot assessment took approximately 10 minutes for the participants and was conducted in both English and Chinese during the class. After completing the pilot Chinese Language proficiency assessment, verbal feedback was privately provided to the participants.

Participant observation. As a graduate assistant for the University of Windsor's RLP, I accompanied the group of teacher candidates, including my study participants, on their trip to Chongqing, China. Therefore, one of my research methods was participant observation. According to Xu and Connelly (2010), "the purpose of observation is to describe situations as they are, not how situations respond to observation" (p. 364). During their stay in China, I observed the participants' reaction and how they interacted with different people—such as the local teachers and students—in a cross-cultural environment. Moreover, I observed the participants' Chinese language and culture learning during their practicums in the local elementary and secondary schools in

Chongqing and during their participation in reciprocal learning cultural activities hosted by Southwest University.

Individual interview. I used individual interviews as an inquiry method for my study as the interview is an important method that can provide more details regarding the participants' experience (Creswell, 2012) and their personal insights and thought process. I provided interview protocols in the consent form to the participants beforehand, and after obtaining their consent, I used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to conduct the interviews. Each interview was approximately 60 minutes and was conducted primarily in English, though Mandarin was used for some questions. In addition, I arranged the interviews to be suitable for the schedules of both parties and selected locations that the participants were comfortable with. After the interviews, the transcripts were sent back to the participants for revision and verification.

Field notes. Clandinin and Connelly (1990) state that field notes are one of the primary methods for narrative inquiry. Having participated in various events and activities related to the RLP in 2017 under the guidance of Dr. Xu, I have had the opportunity to learn how to record a comprehensive and effective field note. I wrote down the information and the settings of each conversation, meeting, and event with program participants and other relevant people including time, weather, location, and background. As noted by Xu and Connelly (2010), thorough and insightful field notes are valuable as they can help the researcher think narratively. In this study, the group of UW teacher candidates, including the four participants from the current research, engaged in many different events and activities while in China, during which time I took field notes that have allowed me to recall the participants' stories.

Post-Chinese language proficiency assessment. The UW teacher candidates continued learning Mandarin while in China. They had opportunities to attend the Chinese cultural workshops and activities, which were offered by the Southwest University in the three months. In addition, the participants learned more Chinese when immersed in the Chinese language environment. Therefore, a post-Chinese Language proficiency assessment served as an ideal tool to assess the participants' Chinese language proficiency after three months of language learning in China. After obtaining consent from the participants, I conducted the post-language assessment when these participants finished their practicum in China and returned to Canada. The post-Chinese language proficiency assessment was conducted in both English and Chinese and took 10-15 minutes to complete. After the post-assessment, verbal feedback was sent back to the participants individually.

Chapter Four

Research Findings

Introduction

In this chapter, four participants shared their stories and experiences regarding their Chinese learning and cross-cultural communications during their participation in the Reciprocal Learning Program from March 22 to June 21, 2018. Carmen, Jamie, Linda, and Tony (pseudonyms) visited China for 93 days along with the other six members of the Reciprocal Learning Program. During their stay, they booked a four-day group tour of Beijing in the beginning of their trip, then they participated in many activities and workshops arranged by Southwest University after they arrived in Chongqing. Some took place within the University and some were held in locations throughout the host city. These arrangements included observing college courses, participating in Chinese cultural workshops, taking field trips, and observing schools affiliated with Southwest University. In addition, they completed placements at local primary schools in Chongqing, China. The data were gathered through a brief pilot Chinese-language-proficiency assessment, extensive observations of the participants, detailed field notes, in-depth interviews, and a comprehensive post-Chinese-language-proficiency assessment. This chapter will describe the data which were retrieved from the five data collection methods.

Departure Day

At approximately 9:00 am, on the morning of March 21st, I knocked on Linda's door. When she answered, she was weighed down with a large backpack and two heavy suitcases. She had been up late into the early morning and was tired and sore due to a

lack of sleep and back pain, but she was excited to leave Canada and travel to China for the first time.

Linda was a 24-year-old education major who had joined the RLP as part of her bachelor's degree in education. Though born in Pakistan, she moved to Canada with her family at a young age. When she first came to Canada, she barely spoke any English. Due to the language barrier, she was misunderstood by teachers and was treated as a student with special needs when she first transferred to a Canadian school. Linda was bilingual and she told me that one of the most important reasons why she wanted to become a teacher was that she hoped to help future immigrant students avoid similar tragedies happening again. Though raised in Canada, she is a big fan of Asian culture and has travelled to Japan several times.

After five-hour drive, we finally arrived at Toronto's Pearson Airport, and Jamie was already there to greet us. Lina and I waved at Jamie excitedly, and he welcomed us with his usual casual demeanour before introducing us to his mother, who had driven him to Toronto. Jamie was born in a city about two hours away from Toronto. He had his primary and undergraduate education in that city; he graduated with a double major in Political Science and History in 2017. At the time of the study, he was studying for his Bachelor of Education degree with two teachable subjects: political science and history. At the beginning of September 2017, Jamie was the first person to join the RLP, and he was interested in this program because his brother had taught in China before and shared some great experiences with him. Thus, when the departure day finally came, he looked ready to start the journey to China.

While we were feeling both tired and excited and were about to check in, I received a picture from Carmen showing that she was still enjoying a family meal at home as she lived only 20 minutes away from the airport. She told us that she was sleeping in while we were complaining about the rush in the morning. Carmen was confident and seemed everything was under her control. Carmen was also a 24-year-old student in the Faculty of Education; she has a major in drama. She completed her kindergarten to Grade 12 in and graduated from a secondary school in Toronto. Then, she moved from home and started her undergraduate studies in Windsor. Before joining in the RLP, Carmen was recruited as a teacher teaching in an international summer camp in a city of Alberta. In addition, she liked travelling and was passionate about exploring new things.

One hour after checking in, Tony and another RLP participant came and found us at the food court of the airport. He wore his routine outfit: a jacket with a hood, a regular backpack, and a pair of headphones. Compared to other group members, Tony looked more like a person going on a one-day field trip instead of a three-month visit. He also told me that he only brought one piece of luggage for this trip, and there was still some space left after helping me carrying several books of mine.

Tony was born in Canada and was originally from Vietnam, and his parents immigrated to Canada in the late 1990s. Tony studied in a gifted program from grade three through grade eight at a primary school in a city in Ontario. He graduated from a university in the same city with a double major in English Literature and Creative Writing in 2017. Though Tony did not join in the RLP at the beginning of the September 2017, he started to attend to our regular weekly prep sessions after he was invited to join

a cultural event hosted by the Chinese RLP participants in late November 2017. Shortly thereafter, Tony became one of our group.

After ten RLP participants and I assembled at the airport, our journey to the East began.

Chinese Survival Training

In preparation for their sojourn to China, Linda, Jamie, Tony, and Carmen had each attended the Chinese survival classes that Dr. Xu and I had conducted in the months prior to their departure, and each offered different levels of engagement and motivation.

Jamie's Engagement. Jamie showed a strong interest in learning Chinese as soon as he joined the RLP. The first time we spoke was during the program orientation on September 20th, 2017. I asked him why he would like to visit China, and he told me that he was interested in the political sciences in China and that his brother had taught in China years ago and shared of his teaching and living experiences in China with him. When I told him that I would teach the RLP group how to speak some Mandarin before leaving for China, he told me that learning Mandarin would be “awesome” and that he could not wait to start learning the language (September 23, 2017 field notes). Before going to China, Jamie attended every class and arrived early to learn Mandarin. He always brought a neat and organized folder with him and kept all the learning materials—such as Chinese character writing practice sheets, handouts, quizzes, and personal notes—in that folder. He had even downloaded some free application software programs (apps) to learn Mandarin on his cell phone.

Carmen's Engagement. Carmen also showed a strong interest in learning Chinese before departure. As she took the French class in her high school and earned a

high grade, she was open to learning a new language. Carmen attended almost every class on time and was prepared, and she treated the learning materials given by Dr. Xu and me seriously. While teaching the survival Chinese to the teacher candidates in the class, Dr. Xu and I also helped all the teacher candidates practice Mandarin after class by using WeChat, a Chinese multi-purpose messaging and social media app. Carmen was an active responder in the WeChat group discussion. She had sent her voice message to me to help her with the pronunciation. One day before the survival class began, Carmen came earlier and showed me her practice sheet with the Chinese character. She asked for more sheets to practice with as she thought the Chinese characters were “cool” (February 05, 2018 field notes).

Linda’s Engagement. Linda participated in the RLP program from the very beginning. She was such a warm-hearted student and cared about everyone. When she heard that a group of 18 SWU students was visiting the University of Windsor, she told Dr. Xu that she would like to help them learn more about Canadian people and Canadian culture. Two weeks before departure to China, with the help of the team members and the nine teacher candidates, we co-planned a homestay activity for these Chinese students. Linda invited the SWU teacher candidates with their guide teacher and the UW students to her home. Linda helped serve the food to the Chinese students and shared her family pictures with the new friends. Although Linda was engaged in all the RLP activities and motivated to visit China, she did not make much effort to learn Mandarin during the prep sessions. She confirmed this herself in the individual interview I had with her at the end of the trip. Linda told me that she did not think it was necessary to learn the written language, though she planned to go to China for three months. In addition to being busy

with the tight course schedule, she also seemed more interested in learning Korean and Japanese. Therefore, she was dedicated to coming to the preparation sessions but not dedicated to learning the Chinese language (Interview with Linda, June 10, 2018).

Tony's Engagement. Tony had attended our regular weekly survival Chinese classes since January 2018. Because of his Vietnamese background, Tony had a better understanding of Asian cultures than other participants did, and he knew more about China than they did. However, he did not show a strong interest in learning Chinese. During the interview, Tony told me that he had a good memory, which helped his language learning. Also, because he was bilingual, he was familiar with second language learning. Tony's ability to quickly pick up the tones and accents gave him more confidence than the others. Though he attended the classes, he did not learn any Mandarin after class or practice Mandarin in the WeChat group before departure (Interview with Tony, June 11, 2018).

Overall Engagement.

Being privileged to be a team member for the RLP, I was able to both get involved in teaching Mandarin to the teacher candidates and observe their overall engagement before departure. Based on the observation, the findings reveal that all the participants in the current study engaged in the weekly preparation sessions before departure, but each participant showed a distinct attitude toward learning the Chinese language and a different motivation in learning Mandarin. I was curious to find what role the participants' Chinese language proficiency would play while staying in China and how their learning motivations and attitudes would influence their Mandarin learning. Moreover; I was eager to observe what kind of learning strategies they would use when

living in China. Therefore, in order to get a preliminary understanding of the participants' Chinese language proficiency after attending two months' survival Chinese classes, we conducted a pilot-language proficiency assessment for them.

Pilot-language assessment. The week prior to departure, the four participants and other six group members were excited about the trip to China, but they also felt a little nervous. They wanted to ensure that they had everything necessary with them for the trip. The Chinese language handout was one of the items, and when it was given to the participants, they became curious as to how much Chinese they had understood after several weeks of lessons. Therefore, a quick assessment for everyone was done during class. The participants first needed to match the Chinese greeting words with the correct English meanings. Then, they needed to distinguish the Chinese characters from zero to ten. Lastly, they needed to match the Chinese words with the corresponding pictures. The result turned out fairly well. All the participants did well for the Chinese greeting words and they were able to recognize the Chinese characters from zero to ten. However, only two participants matched the Chinese words with the pictures correctly.

Carmen was the first person finished the assessment. She got excited that she knew every word. While Jamie was matching the Chinese greeting words with the correct English meanings, he spoke the words out. During the class, he was not sure about two words and their English meanings, so he asked me to read these two words for him, and then he was able to determine the correct answers. Jamie told me that speaking the Chinese words helped him find their correct English meanings. He was glad that he was able to remember so many Chinese words. However, he also mentioned that he did not have enough time to remember all the words he learned during these weeks. He wished

he could learn more when he arrived in China. Tony and Linda tried to match as many words as they could. Tony thought that some of the words looked familiar to him, but he just could not remember them during that assessment. Linda, who had low expectations for the assessment, was happy with the result because she knew that she had been able to at least learn some Chinese words during the three months (March 12, 2018, field notes).

Journey to the East

While we were on the plane from Toronto to Beijing, Linda, Carmen, and Tony were still in English-speaking mode; however, Jamie was eager to start utilizing the knowledge he gained in the survival Chinese classes, though he was sure to do it in a calm and relaxed way that suited his personality. When the Mandarin-speaking flight attendant asked Jamie if he wanted anything to drink, he requested a beer, but asked for it in Mandarin: “我要啤酒 (I want beer)”. He even used the correct tonal pronunciation. After the flight attendant gave the beer to Jamie, he said: “谢谢 (Thank you)” (March 23, 2018 field notes). I was impressed by Jamie’s motivation and initiative, which he explained to me later in an interview:

I remember I was in Ecuador once for a student activist festival, and I could not even speak any Spanish. I felt bad, I cannot speak the country’s language. So I feel like when you are in the country, you should at least try. I felt I have not tried enough, I should speak more. So I think it's important to make that effort, very important to make the effort to learn the language of the country where you are in (Interview with Jamie, June 11, 2018).

Based on how Jamie explained his past experience, it is clear that learning motivation can be facilitated by cultural sensitivity and respect. Thus, fostering cultural sensitivity has the potential to play a key role in language learning.

After Jamie has used Mandarin to order a beer, I was surprised to see that the other members of the group, who seemed to express a subdued astonishment, began to practice their Mandarin (March 23, 2018 field notes). For example, Carmen brought out a small portfolio she created from her notes and a PowerPoint she had printed off from the Chinese survival training. She told me that she had printed all the Chinese handouts out and would start to learn more when we arrived in China (March 23, 2018 field notes). This narrative demonstrates that when peers engage with language learning in a public setting, it can help raise the motivation and engagement of those around them by establishing a higher expectation of engagement.

It took us about 13 hours to get to the Beijing airport and it was almost 9:00 pm in Beijing time. Although everyone felt tired after the long journey, all the teacher candidates were excited about entering a new country. Though, I personally felt more relaxed when coming back to my home country, the ten teacher candidates felt overwhelmed to some extent when initially, being immersed in an unfamiliar environment. Tony happened to leave his earphone on the plane; Carmen and other Caucasian teacher candidates received many curious stares from strangers, and all of the RLP participants noticed that the dominant language at the airport was Chinese rather than English. As soon as the teacher candidates arrived in China, their cross-cultural learning lives began.

A four-day trip around Beijing was booked before departure, and so Jane, our tour guide for this trip, took us directly to a hotel after exiting the airport. Around 7:30 a.m. the next morning, five teacher candidates including Jamie and Tony, were already having breakfast in the canteen of the hotel when I arrived. The jet lag did not affect the group that much as they all looked excited. The hotel served both Chinese and Western styles breakfasts. Besides the Chinese cuisine, there were also served bread, cake, and coffee. The group was sitting together at the big round table with a lazy Susan on the top of it. While some of the teacher candidates were still eating bread with coffee, Tony and Peter had tried the Chinese cuisine. Tony told me that he liked the Chinese food here because it was quite similar to the food he usually ate at home. One interesting thing happened during the breakfast was Tony and some of the RLP participants told me that they did not like the coffee here because one person tried the “weird coffee” as he put some “weird cream” in it. However, the “weird cream” turned out to be yogurt as a jar filled with yogurt had been left out near the coffee and looked similar to the jars that would typically contain milk or cream in Canada. The participants told me a jar of yogurt would never be put next to the coffee in Canada, and yogurt would never be kept warm (March 23, 2018 field notes). This narrative demonstrates that when being immersed in a cross-cultural environment, it helps to enhance the cross-cultural awareness of the teacher candidates and that navigating the different eating habit can also help the participants’ cross-cultural learning.

Having a Chinese name. On the second day of the trip, some of the participants found it interesting that a store clerk was selling stamps that were made of jade in the Forbidden City. They were fascinated by the fact that the clerk could carve customers’

names onto the jade to make the stamp. Jane explained that Chinese names are made up of Chinese characters and that they, therefore, carry specific meanings. Even though the names might sound the same, they could be different Chinese characters. The reason why she chose “Jane” as her English name was because her given name was called “Jie” which sounded close to “Jane”. Jane liked her Chinese name because “Jie” was written as “洁” in Chinese, which means clean and pure in Chinese. After the explanation, Carmen and Tony were interested in having their own Chinese names so that they could have the special stamps as souvenirs. With the help from Dr. Xu, the participants had their own Chinese names. For example, Tony’s Chinese name is 滕泰瑞, which sounds similar to his real name. Tony’s Vietnamese family name is also a Chinese family name. His given name sounds like 泰瑞 in Mandarin, which means “peace, good luck, and blessings”. 滕泰瑞, would wish him good fortune and blessings (March 24, 2018, field notes).

All the participants kept their Chinese names throughout their time in China. Carmen and Tony thought the stamps were amazing when they finally received their own stamps, which had both their English and Chinese names carved into it. Carmen sent me two photos via WeChat after she brought the stamp. One photo was the stamp with both her English and Chinese names on it, and it looked really beautiful. The other one was the autobiography of her Chinese name. She told me that she copied her Chinese name from the stamp and liked her Chinese name very much (March 27th, 2018, field notes). Moreover, when the participants were taking the Chinese calligraphy class and Chinese painting class, I saw all the participants had written their Chinese names on their works (April 12, 2018, field notes). The participants liked their Chinese names so much and they kept their Chinese names throughout their time in China.

The Arrival at Southwest University

It was a dull, drizzly night when we first arrived in Chongqing city. After the four-day group tour in Beijing, the 2018 Spring Cohort and I finally arrived on March 26th, 2018. Even though it was wet and dark outside, the temperature was much warmer than in Beijing. Two teachers from the Southwest University greeted all of us warmly as we arrived. To their surprise, Jamie, Carmen, Linda, Tony, and some other teacher candidates were able to greet back to them in Mandarin.

During their stay in Chongqing, I worked as a research assistant with Dr. Xu, providing extra support for the Canadian Cohort even though the Chinese university provided a support system. I observed them participating in many activities and workshops arranged by Southwest University. Some took place within the university, and some were held in locations throughout the host city. These arrangements included observing college courses, participating in Chinese cultural workshops, taking field trips, and observing schools affiliated with Southwest University. In addition, they completed placements at local primary schools in Chongqing, China.

Through observation, individual interviews, and other research methods, I was able to categorize the four participants' Chinese learning process into three sections. The first section identifies the motivations of the participants on learning the Chinese language. The second section identifies the participants' attitudes toward learning language, and the last section identifies which learning strategies were effective for them when learning the language. Furthermore; based on the findings in the three sections, I was able to explore the role that Chinese language proficiency played in the four participants' reciprocal learning when emerged in the Chinese language environment.

Learning Motivations

The participants' level of motivation to learn Chinese fluctuated during their trip due to four factors: the difficulty of the Chinese language itself, the intensity of their schedules, the personal emotions of each participant, and their survival needs as sojourners.

Language difficulty. With respect to the difficulties participants faced when learning Mandarin, there were two issues. First, as a tonal language, Mandarin mainly utilizes four different tones, which proved challenging for the teacher candidates when speaking. Second, Mandarin is also difficult because it does not employ a phonetic alphabet. This meant that the learners could not recognize Mandarin characters by sounding out their pronunciation, which was a key language learning strategy that they each relied on when learning English. Therefore; the participants preferred to use Pinyin to help remember the pronunciation of the Chinese words.

Scheduling. The participants' intensive schedules also affected their level of motivation. Because the students had unique schedules, there was no mutual time when they could each attend Chinese language classes, the critical arrangement in their Chinese language development prior to their visit to China. Consequently, Southwest University did not offer Chinese language classes as they had in the past, and I was unable to schedule classes that suited all of their respective schedules. In addition, the teacher candidates attended many different activities hosted by Southwest University and completed placements in the local schools during their stay. This proved fatiguing and gave them limited time to develop Chinese language proficiency in their own time. Thus,

their busy schedules and the lack of a stable learning time inhibited the participants' level of motivation to learn Mandarin.

Emotional context. The participants' personal emotions also shaped their learning motivation, both positively and negatively. Many of the participants developed friendships with people from the host community, and communicating with them seemed to bring joy to the participants. Thus, the desire to communicate with local friends in Chinese encouraged them to learn more Mandarin, thereby intrinsically boosting their motivation. However, a number of issues fostered negative emotional responses that dampened their motivation. For instance, the intensive schedule also made some of the participants feel overwhelmed, creating stress and anxiety. This anxiety was compounded by the apprehension associated with being in a new environment, navigating unfamiliar eating habits, and adjusting to a foreign climate. Thus, rather than prioritizing language learning, these participants had to address their anxieties. Moreover, some participants became ill and were exhausted or frustrated. For example, four participants had different degrees of sickness when they tried to adapt themselves to the new environment. These students, then, prioritized their health issues and related anxiety over language learning. These experiences demonstrate the critical role of emotional and physical health in maintaining learning motivation.

Survival needs. Lastly, the participants' need for surviving also motivated them to learn the Chinese language. During their stay, the participants had to overcome the fact that English was rarely used in local people's lives. For instance, the local map, road signs, and bus stops were only written in Chinese (both Pinyin and the Chinese characters). Thus, practical needs associated with travelling motivated the participants to

learn Mandarin. Moreover, besides the Chinese instructions and menus, many clerks at the local stores and restaurants were not able to speak English. Therefore, the necessity to order and communicate with store clerks also prompted them to learn more.

To develop a more comprehensive understanding of how these four key factors influenced the participants' level of motivations, it is critical to explore each participant's learning motivation.

Jamie's motivation. Jamie showed a high level of motivation during the initial lessons before departure and during this trip. He engaged in many public settings of learning and practicing Mandarin. His learning motivation was influenced by his brother as he had taught in China several years before Jamie's own journey to China. Jamie explained how this influenced his motivation: "I think I'm interested [in learning Mandarin] because my brother speaks Chinese" (Interview with Jamie, June 11, 2018). However, Jamie also reported that his motivation "went up and down" during this trip (Interview with Jamie, June 11, 2018). He mentioned that his busy schedule and the stress associated with it caused his learning motivation to fluctuate during the trip:

I had higher motivation, even my Dad even sent me an email like a week ago being like 'You should come back and take a year to learn Chinese in China,' but... [My motivation] was really high at the start, and then went down in the middle, and it's back up by practicing a little more, but it was not enough. It went down. I think it was because I felt a little bit overwhelmed after the trip. Maybe I am overwhelmed by being in a new country. Maybe just a bit over stressed about small things like teaching and stuff, so it went down when I was a bit overly stressed and then it has gone up a bit (Interview with Jamie, June 11, 2018).

This passage demonstrates that even when one is highly motivated to engage in language learning, outside factors and one's emotional context can still inhibit learning motivation.

Carmen's motivation. Like Jamie, Carmen also showed a strong motivation at the onset of the trip, which she was surprisingly able to maintain even when ill. Carmen learned considerably after arriving in China. For example, on May 7th, 2018 and Carmen was sick during the school placement. I came to the school to do the observation and to see if she was okay, but I found Carmen in the school's dormitory when I arrived. When I asked how she felt, Carmen explained apologized: “对不起，我生病了，我吐了，我不能去学校了 (I am sorry that I am ill. I vomited, so I was not able to go to school; May 8, 2018, field notes). I was surprised by her perfect Chinese sentences and also curious about when she learned them. Carmen was happy that she surprised me, and she told me that she had learned the phrases from Dr. Xu, who taught it to her so that she could tell the teaching assistants her condition on her own. Although the teacher assistants knew English, Carmen wanted to show politeness and genuine regret to them for not being able to teach at the school during that time. Although Carmen tried to learn Mandarin when she was sick, she did not learn much due to her sickness. Carmen's health status also affected her learning motivation negatively. Carmen's narrative demonstrates that, like Jamie's narrative, how the respect for others can facilitate learning motivation as she wanted to communicate her illness to her Chinese colleagues in their native language to convey respect, even though they were able to understand English. Moreover, rather than her learning motivation being dampened by her illness, she used it as an opportunity to learn more Mandarin words.

Carmen noted that her motivation was inhibited to some degree by the difficulty of Mandarin, but she observed that her motivation became stronger after she came to China:

It's hard. I have motivation because I know that I am good at learning languages, but I say that because I was good at high school French class. It's easy to get discouraged when learning Chinese. It's discouraging because it's so hard. It's very different because like dumplings, is “饺子”. There is nothing similar about the two words, there is nothing even close to it. Like “我要” and “I want.”

Nothing there connects the two. So you just straight memorize it, like really learn it and understand it. So even if I had the motivation, it is easy to lose it just because of how different the language is. I still want to learn it especially now that I have that base of a few words. Dr. Xu told me that ‘If you can learn 300 words in Chinese, you can read the newspapers; you can probably have a solid conversation.’ It is funny because it is true that there are words that I learned “今天”, that I learned on my own. And then when I was in the Conference, I would hear people saying “今天”. I thought ‘Oh, that’s about today.’ So I picked up on words that like ‘Oh, yeah, I know that word!’ then I knew the rest because I picked up on these words. So I feel I am more motivated now that we are about to learn which I did not have before, and that is interesting (Interview with Carmen, June 11, 2018).

Carmen’s insights emphasize how learning motivation can be inhibited by the difficulty of learning a language that does not use a phonetic alphabet, like English does, or that does not share commonalities with Latinate languages, as French does. However, her

narrative also demonstrates how these challenges can be overcome by becoming immersed in the culture of the target language, which is an essential component of multiliteracies approaches.

Tony's motivation. Unlike Jamie and Carmen, Tony did not demonstrate a strong motivation to learn Mandarin during the initial lessons. As he can quickly pick up the tones and accent, he was more confident than the others. In addition, Tony believed that with the help of technology, he was able to communicate with local people more efficiently:

It's more motivation to survive, basically...Again, I know language won't be that big of a deal because I'll find ways to work around it... The thing I used the most is my phone... looking things up on Pleco or Google Translate (Interview with Tony, June 11, 2018).

Tony had no intrinsic motivation to learn Mandarin, and with apps on his phone helping him engage with locals, neither did he have the external motivation to learn the language. Thus, even though he intuitively learned some of the Chinese language with greater ease than the other participants, he made little progress overall at the beginning of the trip. However, after living and learning in China, Tony found many Chinese people assumed he was also Chinese many times due to his Asian appearance. As a result, he had more opportunities to communicate with local people, which increased his learning motivation slightly. Moreover, helping teach other preservice teacher candidates new Mandarin words that he learned from the locals also increased his motivation to some extent.

Linda's motivation. Linda, also had unique experiences that shaped her learning motivation. She was originally from Pakistan and started to learn English after she moved

to Canada. During the interview, she noted that she did not have any interest in learning Mandarin before she came to China because she was more interested in learning Korean and Japanese. However, her motivation was stimulated when she arrived in China. Linda was surprised by the hospitality of the people in China, so she started to learn Mandarin by making a concerted effort to remember people's Chinese names rather than their English names. As a result, Linda made many Chinese friends during this trip and was surprised by her learning motivation:

In the beginning, I didn't have the motivation to learn [Mandarin]. But now I really want to go back and take the Survival Chinese classes, and when I can, watch more dramas, and actually listen to the words. And you know, I was thinking if I ever go to a Chinese restaurant, I'm going to order in Chinese, and I don't want them to use English. So definitely, my motivation to learn the language is a lot more (Interview with Linda, June 10, 2018).

Though Linda, like Tony, was not initially motivated, external factors sparked her motivation in China, and she soon found herself intrinsically motivated, which increased her overall motivation.

Attitudes toward Learning Chinese

The participants' attitudes towards learning Chinese varied from one to another, in large part due to their different learning motivations. Carmen, Linda, and Jamie started to change their attitudes towards learning Chinese after they arrived in China. They appreciated the Chinese language more after they knew more about Chinese culture and made more Chinese friends. However, Tony did not significantly change his attitude towards learning Mandarin when he stayed in China. Overall, the participants developed

a higher appreciation towards learning Mandarin while teaching English as a foreign language in China.

Carmen's attitude. Carmen initially considered English to be an international language and Chinese to be unnecessary, but she changed her attitude towards learning Mandarin after staying in China:

I think we didn't realize the importance of our Survival Lessons of Chinese until we came here. English is kind of a snobby language and... we just assumed that everyone knows English because it's so 'universal'. Go to Europe, people know English. Go to the States, obviously, English is their official language. So we just assumed that people in China would speak English. And then we got here. In Beijing, there were a lot of people who did know English. And then we got to Chongqing, all the signs are in Chinese. And everyone knew that we were full in China now. And it's funny because we didn't really appreciate how much the survival lessons were going to help us. I brought my book of all the survival lessons in Chinese, and it's funny how I review it now, and I see how many words were used and how much we struggled the first month-and-a-half and we didn't know how to even say “我要 (I want)”, or “这个 (this)” and “那个 (that)”. We did not realize that we needed to know that! And now looking back, it's like by using all these words, and if I just focused on the beginning, then I feel like I could have learned a lot more here. I think the survival lessons were so much more important than we assumed they were. And I wish that we would have appreciated them more before we were living in China (Interview with Carmen, June 11, 2018).

Thus, after seeing the practical value of learning Mandarin, Carmen's attitude changed. Motivated by external and pragmatic factors, she also came to realize the flaws of her own Anglo-centric perspective. This highlights how being immersed in a foreign culture can promote transformative learning with regard to cultural sensitivity and awareness.

Jamie's attitude. Jamie showed a positive attitude towards learning Mandarin throughout this trip. Not only had he been influenced by his brother, who taught English in China, but he was also fascinated by Marxism in China. Before going to China, Jamie attended every class to learn Mandarin. He always organized his notes, handout, and other items in his folder and had even downloaded some free apps to learn Mandarin on his cell phone. After we arrived in China, Jamie continued to learn Mandarin by himself. He sent messages to me and asked some questions regarding the new words or phrases he had learned. In addition, he asked his Chinese friends to help him practice Mandarin. During the interview with Jamie, he showed me a free Mandarin-learning app called "HelloChinese" that he used for practice when he was on the way to his placement school. In addition, he helped the Southwest University students with their English and asked them to help with his Chinese. He also said that he should ask for help from the Chinese students more (Interview with Jamie, June 11, 2018). This reinforces Carmen's experiences in that being immersed in the culture facilitated her interest, motivation, and learning. It also highlights how integrating technology and learning tools that the learners are comfortable with, such as smartphone apps, can reinforce learning motivation and facilitate learning.

Linda's attitude. Linda also changed her attitude towards learning Mandarin after she came to China. During the interview, she told me that she did not learn much

Mandarin from the Survival Chinese lessons because she was tired from her tight course schedule in Canada. In addition, she had been more interested in Japanese and Korean, so she was not dedicated to learning Mandarin at the beginning. However, she became more interested in learning Mandarin after she came to China:

That's something that has surprised me. Because I was kind of happy with my Korean, my Chinese is slowly getting better, and I have made good friends with the kind university students...I used to be shy in Canada...but I become more social now in China...Before I was more interested in learning Japanese and Korean. I didn't really want to learn Chinese, but now that I've learned some of it, I don't want to lose what I have. I actually am interested in keeping this language (Interview with Linda, June 10, 2018).

Though Linda eventually became quite excited to learn Chinese, her busy schedule prevented her from engaging in the survival class. Thus, even when students have the aptitude to excel in language learning, and even when it is a language they find engaging, external factors, such as outside obligations and scheduling, can inhibit motivation.

Tony's attitude. Despite the low amount of motivation that Tony showed towards learning Mandarin, he maintained a positive attitude towards the language when he stayed in China. Due to his Asian background, he was often confused for a Chinese person during the trip; therefore, he had more opportunities to practice his Mandarin. Tony was glad that he could learn Chinese from Chinese people. Tony even got excited when he spoke Mandarin to local denizens, and they thought he was Chinese. In addition, Tony developed a higher appreciation for the Chinese language and culture. For example, he showed a strong interest when he learned how to write the Chinese calligraphy in a

cultural seminar offered by Southwest University. Tony and other group members learned how to use bamboo brushes to write Chinese characters for the first time and even learned the history and different styles of Chinese calligraphy. Moreover, they learned how to appreciate its beauty. Beforehand, Tony told me that he did not understand how calligraphy could be studied at the university level and how people could get degrees in the subject, but after learning a bit of the detail behind the art, Chinese calligraphy started making much more sense to him. He learned how to appreciate Chinese calligraphy after hearing that “the stroke of each line is more about the artist’s character rather than the Chinese character itself” (April 12, 2018, field notes). He asked me about the name of the calligraphy style that they practiced during the class and told me that it was his favorite style of Chinese calligraphy.

Tony’s experiences offer two important insights. The first is the role that perceived race can play. Because many Chinese people perceived Tony to be Chinese, they were more likely to engage him in conversation, which afforded him more opportunities to learn the language. In a classroom context, the kinesthetic learning broadened Tony’s appreciation for and interest in Chinese. This was reinforced, not with a language lesson, but with a history lesson. This demonstrates the importance of multi-literacy approaches, such as including activities and framing language lessons with narratives.

Learning Strategies

The observation and the individual interview with the four participants demonstrate that they tried many different learning strategies during their stay in China. The most effective strategies for them to learn Mandarin can be divided into three

aspects. The first category is oral language practice, which all participants focused on, relying on memorizing the Pinyin instead of Chinese characters. The second category is the application of software and social media, which were frequently used by some of the participants to help with their Mandarin learning. The third and final category is direct, practical communication. This is demonstrated by the fact that the participants preferred to learn Mandarin by conversing with friends, assistant teachers, and Southwest University students.

Chinese literacy. All the participants addressed the difficulty of learning Chinese characters. They attempted to copy and memorize Chinese characters at the beginning of the semester; however, it was too difficult for them to remember the characters without any guidance or instruction. For example, Tony admitted that he used to copy the Chinese characters from a menu he took from a restaurant and practice them. But it was so difficult that took him about two weeks to memorize the Chinese character for “meat” (肉). In addition, from the participants’ motivations and their attitudes towards learning Mandarin, it was clear that survival was the primary motivating factor that encouraged them to learn Chinese. The demand for practicing their oral speaking was stronger than their need to improve their reading and writing skills when they stayed in China. Therefore, they primarily focused on practicing oral Mandarin. Instead of memorizing the Chinese characters, the participants preferred to memorize the Pinyin versions of words to help them remember the pronunciation. This allowed them to remember the English meanings of the words more easily. For example, Jamie said, “I think the Chinese characters are overwhelming now...I focus more on pronunciation and Pinyin than the Chinese characters for sure” (Jamie, personal communication, June 11, 2018). Moreover,

Tony observed that because Chinese is not a phonetic alphabet, like English, his development was slow (Interview with Tony on June 11, 2018). Thus, the participants relied on Pinyin when they read and wrote Mandarin most of the time. This highlights the importance of providing students with tools that make the target language more accessible, but it also highlights the negative effect of mother tongue transfer.

Media engagement. While the use of pinyin helped some overcome the challenges phonetic learners encounter when learning a logographic language, Linda overcame this barrier by learning orally. She did this primarily by watching Chinese drama films. Due to her low level of motivation, Linda did not learn much initially; however, after discovering her love for romantic dramas, I recommended several Chinese romantic dramas to her. She started to watch the Chinese dramas and enjoyed the stories immensely. She watched the dramas when she was having meals and invited me to join her. The more Linda watched, the more she became interested in learning Mandarin. During the interview with Linda, she explained her language learning process:

I started to listen to the dramas. I watched dramas and that helped me because listening is how I learned. I watch shows. For example, I pick up the words “你在哪里呀?” which means “Where are you?” I learned it through a drama (Interview with Linda on June 10, 2018).

Being immersed in the culture of the target language is a critical component of a multiliteracies approach, and Linda’s experience seems to validate this claim and underscores how such approaches can increase internal motivation.

Language learning apps. Each of the participants relied on application software and social media to learn Mandarin to various degrees during this trip. Jamie and Tony

used language applications the most extensively the three months in China, and they used WeChat to practice Mandarin. Jamie frequently used the apps that I had recommended to him before he came to China to learn as much Mandarin as possible within the three months. During our interview, Jamie showed me the learning apps on his cell phone and articulated how much he had achieved with one of the apps. He said,

I have been using *Pleco* as an English-Chinese dictionary, and sometimes I used *HelloChinese*. Actually, I have gone pretty far with it. I have learned the clothes, directions, some food, time, and dates (Interview with Jamie on June 11, 2018).

Although Tony also used application software to assist his Mandarin learning, he rarely used the Mandarin-learning apps at the beginning of the trip. The most frequently used app that Tony applied in the early days was Google Translate, which he thought was efficient (Interview with Tony on June 11, 2018). However, Tony has developed a high appreciation for Mandarin learning at the end of the trip, and instead of using these apps as a translation tool, Tony started to use them to learn Mandarin. He said, “I use apps a lot. I used Google Translate for figuring out what characters mean if I have the time... But it's mainly *Pleco* actually. I love it now” (Interview with Tony on June 11, 2018). He reported that he frequently used apps, such as Google Translate and *Pleco*, to determine the meaning of certain characters (Interview with Tony on June 11, 2018).

Carmen likewise used apps for learning; however, she used WeChat’s social media app rather than a Chinese learning app. For example, when Carmen had a question one evening, she messaged me through WeChat:

Carmen: How can I ask a question like “Can I have...”

Me: qǐng gěi wǒ... (请给我...)

Carmen: qǐng gǎi wǒ kuài zi.

Me: Not gǎi. It's gěi. qǐng gěi wǒ kuài zi.

Carmen: qǐng gěi wǒ kuài zi. qǐng gěi wǒ kuài zi.

Me: *Applause emoji*.

Carmen: Thank you! (May 26, 2018, field notes)

Carmen told me that even though she learned that “我要 (I want)” was not a polite way for her to ask for something. She expressed a desire to learn to speak in a way that is similar to “what Canadian people usually say in their daily life” (May 26, 2018, field notes). Carmen also said that she was glad that she learned this Chinese expression and could apply it later. In addition, she thought that WeChat was advantageous for learning and practicing Mandarin (Interview with Carmen on June 11, 2018).

These collective experiences with language learning apps demonstrate how important a student-centered approach can be. When students are provided with tools that accommodate their learning preferences, they can learn on their own terms and take learning beyond the classroom, as demonstrated by Carmen’s late evening message to me.

Social engagement. WeChat’s app proved more advantageous than Chinese learning apps as it further enhanced participants’ Mandarin learning by helping the participants interact with local people so that they had the opportunity to communicate and improve their Mandarin in a practical setting. All of the participants claimed that they learned Mandarin by conversing with local friends. For example, Jamie made some Chinese friends when he arrived in China, developing some reciprocal language-learning friendships: he helped them practice their English; they help him improved his Mandarin.

Moreover, Carmen believed that the most effective way to learn Chinese was by asking those surrounding her. She learned Mandarin not only from me, but also from Southwest University students, which she saw as more beneficial than simply using apps:

There are a couple of sentences I used Google Translate for. I would just listen to them over and over again. And I looked at the pinyin to practice. That's okay, but asking Chinese students here has been the most effective way, because they will be able to tell you right away if something's wrong. Google can't tell you that.

There are some words that I am a little bit off with, but I need to ask somebody to spell the [pinyin] in order to really get it. So in the end, it came down to talk with a Chinese student got me the best result for sure, and the fastest results (Interview with Carmen on June 11, 2018).

Carmen's experience demonstrates how effective social relationships with native target language speakers can be in promoting language learning.

Linda also agreed that asking friends nearby was an effective way to improve her Mandarin. In addition, consistent repetition and practice could enhance the knowledge she gained. During the interview, Linda said:

When we first met [a Chinese student], I could not say her name at all. In the beginning, I just called her by her English nickname, and then I started calling her [Chinese name]. Now, it's so easy for me, not because I hear it more, but because my tongue and my mouth are able to say and move in a way that Chinese words require. I know the four different tones. I have been practicing and practicing. For me, the learning method has always been listening to someone doing it, and saying it constantly with my friends...When I was saying something wrong, Tony

would fix me, I learned it right... And then I talked to Tony, he would say something wrong, and I would fix him (Interview with Linda on June 10, 2018).

This not only reinforces Carmen's narrative, which underscores the value of friendship with the Chinese speakers, but also highlights the value of peer learning. When peers engage in learning together, they can build on each other's knowledge.

Tony also learned from "everyday conversation and speaking" (Interview with Tony on June 11, 2018). In addition, he claimed that observing locals and mimicking what they do could improve his language skills as well. During the interview, Tony said:

It's basically just listening and then mimic what [the local people] do here. You know the cliché phrase "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." It is basically the same thing, when we look up ourselves to stop the shuttle bus. We use "停 or 停一下(Stop)". But then the locals say it differently, I follow the locals do. And now I am familiar with that, I understand what the locals are saying exactly, so they say "location+ 有下 (get off)". That is my favourite example (Interview with Tony on June 11, 2018).

Tony's experience illustrates how important contextual learning can be. Not only is he immersed in the target language's culture and environment, but he is able to see how language is employed in the native setting, giving him a more practical understanding of language.

The Role of participants' Chinese Language Proficiency in China

In order to understand the participants' learning progress, it is critical to understand their respective language proficiency, which varied among each other.

Jamie's Chinese language proficiency. During the teacher candidates' school placement, I was able to observe how Jamie conducted a grade-one English language class at a local primary school. On May 2nd, Jamie taught his class English greetings using a PowerPoint that juxtaposed English words and their Chinese translations. In order to verify whether the students remembered the words, Jamie told the students that he would speak Chinese and that they would be required to respond in English (May 2, 2018, field notes). Then Jamie began the dialogue:

Jamie: 早上好.

Students: Good morning.

J: 下午好.

S: Good afternoon.

J: 晚上好.

S: Good evening.

J: 晚安.

S: Good night. (May 2, 2018, field notes)

Jamie then engaged in another activity with the students. He brought signs that featured each of the four different greetings to class and handed them out to four student volunteers. These students were then instructed to come up to the front of the classroom with their respective signs and line up in the chronological order that the greetings would be offered: "Good Morning," "Good Afternoon," "Good Evening," and "Good Night." (May 2nd, 2018, field notes). The students interacted with each other, trying to help the volunteers decide upon the correct order and getting excited when they saw their English teacher could speak the Chinese words.

Jamie shared his story and experience about how learning Chinese helped him teach the English language to the Chinese students:

It has been helpful like in the school, the students will come up to you and ask you a lot of questions. Like I will say, ‘我是历史老师 (I am the History teacher).’ Even I say it poorly, but they like hearing small things like that a lot. So it has been helpful for Canadian teachers connecting with students. The students seem[ed] to like [it] a lot when I said ‘非常好 (very good)!’ ... I think maybe it helps the students [to be] willing to take more risks to learn English, and it maybe helps to lighten the class because sometimes the students are very shy when there is a foreign teacher in the class. So maybe it lightened [them up] I would say. When I did a lesson[, I] just asked the students to figure out all the different sports and named them in English. They got a big crack out of me saying the sports in Chinese. So I think that help[ed] make the lesson much better. Yeah, it improves the relationship between me and the students. I can tell that the teachers also appreciate[d it]. Definitely, it could help get closer with that. One thing I should [have] done really much better is Chinese names, but this was so hard for me, but learning Chinese is useful (Interview with Jamie, June 11, 2018).

This passage outlines several important details. Firstly, Jamie assumed that the students were reluctant to participate because they are ‘shy’, attributing their behaviour to personal characteristics that they each happen to share. However, this reluctance to speak in class is actually the results of two cultural phenomena. One is known as 要面子 (Yàomiànzi, or ‘saving face’). Chinese students are reluctant to share their thoughts or questions for fear that they may embarrass themselves in front of their peers. Likewise,

China's Confucian pedagogy mandates that students be respectful of teachers and listen to them rather than speaking out or asking questions. Moreover, their participation might have been a result of the fact that their teacher was so open about his limitations, thereby giving them permission to expose their own limitations. It is critical to identify what the motivating factors are with respect to behaviour so that teachers can develop an effective approach to enhance student outcomes. Failure to understand this may actually impede teachers' ability to address barriers of learning even if they see some success.

Tony's Chinese language proficiency. While being interviewed, Tony, who completed the school placement at the same primary school as Jamie, shared a similar perspective:

My Chinese, it helps my school practicum with... connecting. Students can make connections, but like even outside of the classroom, a way of teaching students like words and phrases in English because always make soon interaction like a teaching moment, right? So I didn't know what [the Chinese word for] a Frisbee was, so I showed it to the students, [and] the student[s were] like '飞盘', 'Oh, 飞盘, I am learning it now.' A great connection with the students, especially outside of the classroom. I will say we have a good time (Interview with Tony, June 11, 2018).

Tony's experiences outline the importance of finding a cultural or linguistic bridge between teachers and students when there is a cultural or linguistic divide between them. This also demonstrates how learning about the students' culture, in this case learning the Chinese language achieves two key positive outcomes: it helps make the relationship between the preservice teacher candidates and the local students more

intimate, and it promotes the connection between the participants and their teaching assistants. Tony's incorporation of the Frisbee also demonstrates how immersing students in the actual culture and including exercises and visual aids can facilitate learning.

Carmen's Chinese language proficiency. Carmen, who completed the school placement at different schools, also shared her stories about how her Chinese helped her interact with both the students and the teachers at the local schools:

Even being able to say a couple of words, the student connects them to you. So I remember I borrowed a pen from somebody, and then when I gave it back I just said '谢谢 (Thank you)', and one of the first things we learned was saying thank you. So she was like "Wow!" Then, the students automatically showed that expression. Chinese students usually are shy to practice English, and you put yourself out there, and you practice Chinese. They really want to connect with you more because you have the ground point, you are both learning a new language.... I feel [students] really appreciated when I tried to learn their language. It's pretty respectful I find, so I think it really helped in the schools that I've tried to learn more words, and I'm willing to try them out and embarrass myself in trying it. And in the beginning, people said 'Your Chinese is so good!' I do not believe you. ... and then eventually when enough people say 'Your pronunciation is good.' and they have the look of shock and it's good then, okay, I am actually being good then (Interview with Carmen, June 11, 2018).

This reinforces the experience of both Jamie and Tony. When students see the teacher is willing to show their weaknesses, they are willing to show their own: this was consistent with Jamie's narrative. Likewise, she found that being willing to learn about the students'

culture, particularly their language, allowed her to form a connection between herself and the students, as well as other teachers, a finding consistent with both Jamie and Tony's narratives.

Carmen's narrative offers additional insights, demonstrating how this process can enhance teachers' confidence:

So sometimes I say 'Oh, how to say that in Chinese?' and I will try. Then the students will say "Wow!" even it was not right. The students were really encouraging you to try, so the students tried to speak more English. So I think being able to say thanks in Chinese, and other Chinese are really impressive to them. Even to the teachers, like to Mr. Zhang. In the morning, I would try to say something in Chinese. He was like 'Wow, really good Chinese! That's really cool!' and I told other teachers, the other teachers said 'Hey, your Chinese is really improving!' It's really cool because they really want you to keep trying. So, put it to that ground level, if you come here and are not willing to try to speak Chinese and practice more, it was [only] one-way learning (Interview with Carmen, June 11, 2018).

She also shared a story about her social engagement:

Actually, in the ancient town, super funny, we went there the second time, just us. And actually, I was the translator for [another teacher candidate]. So I asked how much things were. She will tell me, and I translated, I would say how much [it was]. Then she says something then I translate. People were laughing because they were like 'You are her translator, but you are white.' So, this is just so funny, because I was the translator for people in my group, even though I am still

limited. But numbers are really easy for me, really cut down the numbers quickly (Interview with Carmen, June 11, 2018).

Not only did Carmen impress the students, other teachers, and myself, she also impressed herself. Her narrative demonstrates how improving teacher confidence in inter-cultural settings can improve their engagement.

Visiting a local middle school underscored other lessons. For instance, when Carmen and some other teacher candidates visited the school on May 22, 2018, I went with them to help translate. It was Carmen's first time at the school, and after the director of the school welcomed the teacher candidates, he said to me, in Chinese, that he would show them the classrooms and introduce their teacher assistants to them later. Before I started translating, Carmen said, "Did the director just say he will show us the school and introduce our teacher assistants to us then? Am I right?" (May 22, 2018, field notes). I was looking at her with an expression of disbelief. I asked her how she could understand what the director was saying. She told me with a confident smile that it was because she could grasp some Chinese words like "我(I)", "他们 (them)", "他们的 (their)", "老师 (teacher)". Thus, she knew he was saying something related to them and their teachers and could consequently grasp the understanding. This demonstrates how being immersed in the culture of a language one is learning can facilitate a more rapid learning, underscoring the value of a multi-literacies approach.

Linda's Chinese language proficiency. Although Carmen, Jamie, and Tony expressed that learning Mandarin helped their school placements, Linda, who completed the school placement at the same primary school as Jamie and Tony, held a different perspective with regard to the utilization of the Chinese language at school:

I did not want to use Chinese because I am an English teacher. So for me, I didn't use any language of Chinese in the classroom or at the Chinese school at all. So it was not very helpful for me because it's not where I want to use it. I think the most English I spoke is in [the primary school]. We speak more English. And well, we try to speak more Chinese when with our buddies, when we were in the school, I mean in Southwest University. But in the school, it was as much English as possible because you wanted to improve everyone's English there. We learned "Good morning," "good afternoon," and "goodbye." So basically, their lessons, because [one teacher candidate and Jamie] were teaching...the greetings. It worked for them to know the greetings, so they would say it, and then their students will say the translation. So for them, I think it might have been more, but for me it was not. I didn't use any Chinese to converse it all, and if they didn't understand me, I would use my body language to explain it, or like you know like I didn't want any Chinese to be their little hint "Oh, that's what she means." I want them to learn the English." (Interview with Linda, June 10, 2018).

Though Linda saw how speaking Mandarin helped the other teachers, she opted not to use it under the pretense that the students were in that class to learn English and that English should therefore be the only language used in that context.

Though the participants had similar experiences while in China, their perspectives regarding the utilization of Mandarin were quite different; therefore, it is critical to determine what factors led to these divergent perspectives. One potential factor is their respective Chinese language proficiencies. Based on the data, three main aspects shaped

their Chinese proficiencies and views about Chinese learning: motivations; attitudes towards learning Chinese and strategies for language learning.

Learning about Chinese Culture

While the participants were staying in China, they not only attended various cultural seminars and workshops provided by Southwest University; they also accomplished the school placement and made many Chinese friends. They learned a lot about Chinese culture when immersed in the Chinese-language environment. Learning about Chinese culture helped the participants develop a higher appreciation for the different cultures and enhanced their global awareness. All the participants considered this trip to be a life-changing experience for them, through which they developed acritical insights into cross-cultural communication. As a result, they have improved both personally and academically.

Teacher respect. As teacher candidates sojourning in China, the four participants had more opportunities to learn about Chinese education. When staying at Southwest University, they attended many cultural seminars and workshops with different topics to help them develop a basic understanding of Chinese culture and Chinese education. The topics of these seminars and workshops covered Chinese history, Chinese traditional culture, Chinese education philosophy, Chinese education reform and a variety of other topics. In addition, the four participants had close interactions with the teachers and the students during the school placement, which allowed them to develop a more thorough understanding of Chinese education philosophy, and the relationship between teachers and students.

Linda claimed in her interview that she enjoyed teaching in China because teachers are highly respected there. She learned about the relationship between teachers and students here:

When I was in the primary school, academically I learned the relationship that the teachers have here with their student; my research is on the relationship between teachers and students. It is so different [from Canada]. Students come to teachers, who are for all sources of questions. No matter what happens, the teacher is given the utmost respect. In Canada, we do not have that. So I learned just how much respect students have here for the teachers, but also how independent they are. I have learned the independence of the students is high. So if we have students [that] come from China to Canada, they probably won't be able to make purchases right away or ask for help because they are taught differently. The way they have learned is just to try to do themselves, or to try to be able to do things on their own because they are so mature. In Canada, if you need anything, there is someone you can go to ask for help. But here, you first try things yourself, then you secondly try to solve [the thing] on yourself [again]. Third, you may ask some of your friends, then go to a teacher. In Canada, [if] we have Chinese students come, you want to approach them, try to help them more than "Oh, did you need help?". Though they probably say "Oh, no not yet." [A teacher] should [say] "I have set up something to help you." and they may actually appreciate it (Interview with Linda on June 10, 2018).

This narrative offers an ideal example of how intercultural exchange programs encourage people to broaden cultural awareness and understanding. Unlike Jamie, who

assumed that students' reluctance to participate as a result of their collective shyness, Linda was able to determine how Chinese students' cultural contexts shaped their independence. It also caused her to critically examine her own preconception, which is a critical step in transformative learning.

Like Linda, Carmen also appreciated the relationship between teacher and students in China:

One thing that was surprising is in Canada, it was always a kind of expression that China's education is kind of cold, you know, like students come as machines in the school and they just do work, work, work, and then they go. It just gave me that of stereotype and did not do the proper research. But here, I actually find that in a lot of cases, teachers and students have a better relationship here than they are doing in Canada. There were two teachers that I was really close with because they treated me more as a friend [in Canada]. That was great, but here I have found that all teachers and students have a more trusting relationship than those in Canada. The teachers here trust for students; they encourage them to come and see them at any point; they stick around a lot longer; they're really dedicated to the job. I really appreciate the relationship that Chinese teachers and students have between each other. And that's what I really want to bring back to Canada. It is just the automatic trust between each other. It is not an equal playing field, because there is so much respect giving into teachers here. And there's not really a lot of respect given to teachers in Canada. but I think they gain the respect because they give the respect to the students. They don't treat them as equals, but they treat them as people who you just want to keep learning. So in Canada, I

don't know, but also I could just have a really negative experience to some certain teachers because I have a very narrow scope and because I'm not an actual teacher yet. I really only have my own personal high school experience reflect on. But yeah, the trust between teachers and students here is something that really surprises me (Interview with Carmen on June 11, 2018).

Carmen's experience emphasizes Linda's experience but in a different way. Rather than simply questioning her own preconceptions of the value of her educational background, she likewise questioned stereotypes of other cultures, demonstrating the development of her cultural intelligence. It also served as an instance of transformative learning as Carmen not only challenged her own preconceptions, but asserts that she plans on changing her behaviour, which is the ultimate aim of transformative learning.

ESL teaching. The Reciprocal Learning Program provided the four participants with opportunities to teach English as a second language to the Chinese students in local schools, and for some of the participants, is their first time teaching an ESL class. All of the participants have improved their teaching skills and accumulated teaching experience from the practice. Moreover, they developed a deep understanding of Chinese education and culture when as ESL teachers in these local Chinese schools and realized how multicultural Canada was by understanding the Chinese culture. In addition, learning Chinese as a foreign language helped the four participants develop a higher appreciation for the Chinese language.

During our interview, Linda drew on her experience in the classroom and demonstrated a deep understanding of teaching ESL:

Teaching ESL, that's something I didn't realize when I was teaching in the kindergarten. I only did a kindergarten placement so far in Canada. When I say "It is blue, or the sky is blue", all I really need to teach the kindergarteners is what blue means. I don't have to teach them "The sky is...". When I'm teaching the ESL, I thought if I got to teach colors, I only need to teach the colors. But no, I [didn't]. It was not just colors, it's the whole sentence. The students have to think of the words: "the", "sky", "is", [and] "blue". That's all new words to them... For example, I told you the story before, I was teaching them colors. I would say, "All right, everyone is going to say their favorite color.", so they would stand up and say "I like it's a blue." So then I realized that I had to teach them "it's", which [wa]s [a] whole different word. So I think, for me, it's taught me how to break down everything. When I do lesson planning for ESL here, I'm thinking so much, every detail like whether the kids understand this. If they don't, how can I explain to them more. So, it helps with the differentiated instruction as well, consistently thinking on every student's point of view and perspective. Before, I would not think about my students, but now I have the chance to think about them in a detail level, because the first few days when we went to teach, we realized our students did not understand. And in the end, they were starting to understand because we were changing how we were thinking. So I think this experience has taught me how to put myself in my students' shoes even more than before (Interview with Linda on June 10, 2018).

Linda's experience underscores how transformative this experience was as she observed that it changed that way she thought. The experience also encouraged her to embrace a student-centered approach by considering the perspectives and challenges of her students.

During their weekly debriefing at Southwest University, the teacher candidates shared the difficulties they experienced teaching ESL to the Chinese students, but they also found many interesting things during their school days. Tony found many mistakes that had been made by the students when he was checking their homework; he explained that some of the mistakes did make sense after he learned more about the Chinese grammar. He understood why the Chinese students usually mixed "he" and "she" when speaking, because "he" and "she" were pronounced exactly the same in Mandarin, *tā*, even though their written forms were different. Tony also added that he realized that the students often forgot to change the forms of the English plural nouns because there were no such rules for this in Chinese grammar (May 26, 2018, field notes). This reinforces Linda's experience with a student-centered approach. Once Tony understood the students' context, he was able to identify why they were making errors, allowing teachers to develop teaching strategies and lessons designed to meet the students' unique needs.

Jamie he noted in his interview that he developed a deeper pedagogical understanding with regard to how to teach English as a foreign language to Chinese students and became more patient with English language learners through the trip:

I feel the major thing that has happened to me is that I've grown as a teacher. I [have] become more confident...I have developed a higher language tolerance to the Chinese students who do not speak English very well. Because a few [Southwest University students] want me to teach them English, but I'm just

there, hang out [with them] as a friend, and then they say something [in English]. I understand what they're saying, [even though] they get upset when they realize they said it wrong and I didn't correct them. Also, when students were speaking English in front of the class, I would not correct them in front of the class, because I did that once and it did not go so well for this. I can tell that the student was upset. So I would try to not correct them but to correct the class for pronunciation issues. That would be helpful for new immigrants in my class in future (Interview with Jamie on June 11, 2018).

Though Jamie's narrative also reinforces how this experience fostered an appreciation for student-centered learning, it also highlights how the limits of a teacher's cultural understanding can shape how they process their experiences. When offering criticism to one student in front of the class, he failed to consider the importance of 要面子 (Yàomiànzi, or 'saving face') in Chinese culture. Though the Chinese student had responded poorly to this, it was likely made more problematic due to his cultural context. Jamie assumed that this will be the standard response regardless of where he is teaching, but in certain Canadian contexts, it might be appropriate.

After the ESL teaching experience, Carmen noted that she had not realized how multicultural Canada was until she came to China and taught in the Chinese class during the interview:

It's unforgettable in the sense of how highly we were regarded because we're white. I didn't realize how multicultural Canada was until we came to China. Even now, I'm still not used to the fact that people were shocked that we're white. They want to take their pictures and be near us, and they want to talk to us. In Canada,

we are so multicultural that really no culture shocks us. Nobody wants to go up to somebody who's Chinese in Ontario and says "Can I take a picture with you?" It's interesting to see how multicultural Canada is and the context we are in a pretty unique culture. Although we see a lot of cultures now, we are in the international building of the university. But outside, it's just all Chinese people here (Interview with Carmen on June 11, 2018).

Her experience in the cross-cultural exchange program made Carmen aware of her own cultural context, which she had never critically considered before. Being aware of this will hopefully allow her to understand the challenges that recent immigrants in Canada's multicultural classrooms might be going through.

Making Friends. All of the participants improved their interpersonal skills during their three-month stay in China. They believed that it was a great experience that helped them improve their social skills in a culture that was new to them. They gained friendships and created a number of wonderful memories with the friends, including the Southwest University students, their assistant teachers, and other international students who were also studying at the same university. Moreover, the participants each reported that they matured and became better people by participating in the RLP.

Linda made many Chinese friends from this trip. She claimed that she not only improved herself academically but also personally. She was glad that she became a better person:

My Chinese is slowly getting better, and I have made good friends with the kind university students...I used to be shy in Canada...but I [have] become more social now in China....I am slowly changing. I was a shy person, in Canada, it is hard

for me to make friends, and even harder for me to talk to new people. However, here in China I have already made many friends...[A Chinese student's name], who I talked about earlier, she was such a good friend, after she knew that I liked to make cakes, I mean to decorate the cake, she took me to a great Chinese bakery so that I could decorate the cake. We had a lot of fun. She is my first friend in China. This is something I have found very different in myself, because in my five years at the university I was only able to make one friend and I never wanted to meet new people because it really intimidates me meeting new people. I am changing fast, and so far I think it is for the better (Individual interview with Linda, June 10, 2018).

For Linda, the journey was not only one that promoted academic and professional development but one that fostered personal growth.

All the participants told me repeatedly that they were surprised by Chinese people's hospitality when we were still in China. They received a lot of help and care from the teachers and students from the Faculty of Teacher Education in the Southwest University. For example, after getting the news that some of the participants needed to observe a local school downtown, some of the students would take the participants to the school via the subway and would travel with them. These students would help the participants with translations when the participants noticed that the classes were conducted in Chinese (April 16th, 2018, field notes). Moreover, when the teachers from the Faculty of Teacher Education heard that some of the participants got cold because of the changing weather, they brought medicine and distributed it amongst the group. One

teacher even cooked the ginger soup for them. All the participants were deeply touched by these teachers (April 24, 2018, field notes).

Return to Canada

Time flies when you are having fun. During the end of the trip, some of the RLP participants told me that they did not realize how the three months went so fast and that they wished they could stay longer. All the participants completed their three-month study trip and returned to Canada on June 22, 2018. Though the participants enjoyed coming back to their regular lives, they also missed life in China. Linda and Jamie told me more than once that they wished to go back to China again, and Linda missed her Chinese friends and students very much. However, although the participants mentioned that they enjoyed coming back to the home country, it took them several days to recover from the jet lag. Moreover, some of them addressed that they had major reverse culture shock initially when being back home. For instance, Linda told me that she accidentally said “thank you” in Chinese to her family and the store clerks for many times. Moreover, she had issues with digesting cheese and milk during this first week back home (July 2, 2018, field notes).

Post-Chinese language proficiency assessment. After returning to Canada, the participants completed a post-Chinese language proficiency assessment. The participants were excited to see how much they had learned after the three months. Overall, all the participants did very well on the assessment. For the speaking part, the participants were asked to answer four simple questions related to the greetings, their teaching subjects, their basic impression about China, and the food they liked in China. All the participants were able to answer these questions in Chinese. However, some of the questions were

repeated two or three times at the request of the participants. When the participants were asked to write down at least five Chinese characters on the paper, not all the participants did very well in their written assessment. For the last part, the participants needed to match the Chinese words with the corresponding pictures. However, because pinyin was not used, they had to identify Chinese characters, and that proved challenging for the participants.

The post-language assessment demonstrated that the participants developed a higher oral language proficiency since their departure. It also validated the participants' claims that they did not put much effort into learning Chinese characters. Because the participants focused mainly on developing their listening and speaking skills when they were in China, they were only able to write a few Chinese characters. Moreover, some of them could not write more than five Chinese characters. Therefore, the tests results illustrated that the participants maintained their pre-departure understanding of Chinese characters. Though they may have become more familiar with the Chinese characters during their stay in China, they were not able to write these words correctly. Another significant finding is that the participants relied excessively on pinyin to remember the Chinese words. Therefore, they barely recognized the Chinese characters without pinyin. For example, Linda did very well in oral assessment; however, she could only write four simple Chinese characters correctly. When matching the words and the pictures, she struggled because she could not initially recognize the Chinese characters without the pinyin; however, she achieved the full mark by listening to me pronounce each of these Chinese characters. Linda told me that the Chinese characters were too difficult for her, so she did not learn the characters in China. She could write down these Chinese

characters only because they were very easy. That said, she was good at listening, so she could remember the words after I read the words for her (June 30, 2018, field notes).

Chapter Five

Discussion

Introduction

This current project presented a narrative inquiry of four Canadian teacher candidates' Chinese as a foreign language learning and their cross-cultural learning and teaching experience during their stay in China during April-June, 2018. The analysis confirmed the general literature on the value of teacher candidates' overseas experience and demonstrated that reciprocal learning experience is beneficial to their academic and personal development. The discussion will examine the findings from the three-month observation, the stories shared by the four research participants, and the data gathered from the document analysis. The themes from the research participants' narratives and how they connect to the purpose of this particular study will be discussed as well.

Chinese Learning and Cross-Cultural Experience in China

The findings reveal the benefits of Canadian teacher candidates' Chinese learning and cross-cultural experience in China and confirm the general literature on the value of cross-cultural experience (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Quezada & Alfaro, 2007; Stachowski & Visconti, 1998). The international experience of the four participants is valuable for their personal and professional development (Conle et al., 2000; Dewey, 1938; Zhao et al, 2009). According to the findings, all the participants considered the three-month journey to be an "eye-opening" experience for them and reported that they have improved themselves in many respects. For example, the findings suggest that all the participants developed a higher appreciation for cultural differences and a better understanding of teaching pedagogies by teaching English as a foreign language in local

classrooms. Linda stated that she gained a practical understanding of Chinese education and culture by teaching EFL in local schools.

Cross-cultural learning and teaching experience can broaden teacher candidates' worldview, promote their teaching skills, enhance their confidence, and improve their interpersonal skills (Ateskan, 2016; Kabilan, 2013; Zhao et al, 2009). For example, Carmen claimed that she did not realize how diverse the Canadian culture was until she came to China. She was glad that she improved her teaching skills while teaching English as a foreign language in China and having the opportunity to communicate with the local teachers. Moreover, all the participants reported that they observed and taught EFL classes in local schools and gained firsthand experience by teaching EFL, which allowed them to establish confidence with regard to self-teaching, which is consistent with the findings offered by Kabilan (2013). These features will help the teacher candidates teach the diverse student population in Canadian schools, especially new immigrant students whose first language is not English. Thus, being exposed to a cross-cultural context enhanced their global awareness and their perspectives of cultural differences (Kabilan, 2013; Rodriguez, 2011; Unlu, 2015). Therefore, cross-cultural learning and teaching experience are important for teacher preparation (Kabilan 2013).

Although many studies confirmed the value of the overseas programs and the benefits of cross-cultural experience towards the teacher candidates (Cushner & Mahon, 2002, Quezada & Alfaro, 2007; Stachowski & Visconti, 1998; Williams & Kelleher, 1987; Wilson, 1986), few studies examined how teacher candidates' foreign language acquisition influenced their studies and teaching life in the host country or their cultural

awareness. The results presented in this study suggest that learning Chinese as a foreign language plays a significant role for the participants' cross-cultural learning in China.

Interpersonal skill development. First, research has established that learning Chinese as a foreign language helps teacher candidates develop their interpersonal skills (Ateskan, 2016; Kabilan, 2013; Yang, 2011; Zhao et al, 2009). For example, it helped the participants interact with the local community more easily. At the beginning, the intention of learning the Chinese language helped the participants easily start a conversation with the locals, such as the teachers and students from Southwest University, the teachers and students from the local placement schools, administrators, and support staff. During the learning process, the participants had more opportunities to build close relationships with the local communities so that they could have a deeper understanding of each other. The intimate relationships between the participants and the locals encouraged the participants to keep learning Chinese. All the participants said that speaking with their local friends gave them opportunities to practice Mandarin without the fear of making mistakes. Moreover, Tony developed a partnership with his Chinese mentoring teacher during the school practicum. He learned a lot from his mentoring teacher and they built a trusting relationship. They worked together and collaborated to conduct English classes. Jamie even considered the possibility of coming back to China to teach Chinese students and to keep learning Mandarin. During the three months, the teacher candidates practiced their Mandarin and enhanced their social skills.

In addition, learning Chinese as a foreign language promotes interaction and engagement within the teacher candidates' group members (Kabilan, 2013; Zhao et al, 2009). A democratic learning environment was created by the teacher candidates when

they stayed in China. They not only shared the knowledge of Mandarin they learned in terms of new words or important phrases they believed; they also discussed new ideas about teaching EFL, teaching plans, and other aspects of learning. This deepened their knowledge of other specific issues and skills. For example, Linda claimed that she learned some useful Mandarin from the group members when they had a discussion together and she felt that the interaction in such a context was beneficial. Therefore, the interactions among the teacher candidates and between them and the local community enriched the teacher candidates' practices and experiences with regard to their interpersonal skills (Zhao et al, 2009).

Pedagogical strategies improvement. Learning Chinese as a foreign language also helps teacher candidates develop a better pedagogical understanding of how to teach English as a foreign language to Chinese students (Zhao et al, 2009). Based on the findings, the participants had a better understanding of the Chinese students who were learning English as a foreign language through practice and by learning Chinese as a foreign language. Identifying the differences between English and Chinese gave them insights into some mistakes the Chinese students made due to the language issues. The participants could work directly with students who were struggling with English learning, and they were able to rethink their language learning while helping these students. Therefore; the participants were able to develop a better approach to teaching and interacting with students. Meanwhile, as both foreign language learners, the participants were able to use more effective strategies to help these students with their English, and the experience of learning Chinese and teaching in China helped the participants understand how to teach non-native English speaking learners in Canada.

Appreciation for different cultures. Learning Chinese as a foreign language likewise helped the participants develop a better appreciation for the different cultures. The findings revealed that the four participants had the opportunities to learn more about Chinese culture by learning the Chinese language and attending the cultural seminars and workshops hosted by Southwest University. The unique experience in China enabled participants to develop an empathetic disposition toward EFL students. During the three months, they enhanced their perspectives of cultural differences and awareness of the multiculturalism (Zhao et al, 2009). In addition, they gained a deeper understanding of the significant cultural difference between Canada and China. Thus, their international teaching experience allowed the participants to develop a deeper appreciation for the different cultures. and they were able to see things through a wider cultural lens because of their international teaching experience.

The study's findings also reveal that the participants only focused on their spoken Mandarin instead of learning the Chinese logographic alphabet. This was likely the result of two factors. The first is that the Chinese logographic alphabet is very different from Western phonetic alphabets (Taft & Chung, 1999; Wang, 1973). Thus, unlike the English language, the Chinese characters cannot be read phonetically. Hence, learning Chinese characters involves a lot of rote memory (Winke, 2013; Xiao, 2002) and it becomes more difficult for English natives to learn Chinese. Moreover, because the participants of this study were not taught the Chinese characters in a systematic way, they did not understand the structure of the Chinese characters and the radicals (Taft and Chung, 1999). Therefore, as demonstrated by the findings, the participants did not put much effort into learning the Chinese characters. The second reason is that teacher candidates'

motivations for learning Mandarin are primarily based on survival needs (Norris-Holt, 2001), which means that they are different from the normal foreign language learners. They learned Mandarin primarily to make living and studying in China easier during the three months. Chinese characters are used for written language, which the participants did not need to do for most of their interactions. Thus, it was not imperative for all the teacher candidates to learn Mandarin, and it did not influence their academic performance if they did not learn. Therefore, the participants tended to only focus on learning oral speaking for the daily necessity instead of practicing reading and writing.

Transformative learning. The three-month cross-cultural experience of the four participants can be considered as a process of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991; O’Sullivan, 2003). When the participants initially arrived in China, they started the transformative learning process. They experienced “a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions” (O’Sullivan, 2003). The findings suggest that all the participants encountered a disorienting dilemma to some extent after arriving in China. The participants’ comments reveal that, while staying in China, they faced a wide range of adaptation, such as language barriers, cultural differences, and different eating habits. The time that the participants spent in China made them look at China, Chinese people, and Chinese culture from a different perspective. Before this trip, the participants held some sort of negative attitudes or stereotypes regarding certain features of the Chinese education and culture, but more positive attitudes towards the structure of society and the Chinese educational system took shape in their minds during this international trip. They addressed the importance of being exposed to a new international environment, which facilitated the hands-on experience they gained through opportunities

to observe local schools, teach ESL classes, and attend cultural seminars. This was consistent with Dunn et al. (2014), whose participants shared structurally similar narratives. The stories shared by the participants also indicate that the overseas learning and teaching experience challenged their opinions of their own values, intelligence, and potential, thereby transforming their views on education and allowing them to form a new and more inclusive worldview (Mezirow, 1991; O'Sullivan, 2003).

The language barrier was one of the most significant challenges that the participants encountered in China. Their comments reveal that they did not realize that English was not widely used in the inner land of China. The frequency that they had to utilize the Chinese language by themselves was also beyond their expectations. At the beginning, the participants could not understand what the Chinese people around them were talking about. Even though they learned some survival Chinese prior to departure, it did not help much with their lives in China. To overcome the dilemma, the participants showed strong motivations for learning Mandarin.

The findings reveal that even though the participants' learning motivation fluctuated within the three months, they tried to overcome the difficulties and the challenges caused by the language barrier. In addition, some of the participants attributed their speaking improvement to the time spent with their local friends, which is consistent with the finding offered by Hernandez (2010). While learning Mandarin, the participants gradually changed their views on many aspects in terms of education, culture, and world value. At the end of this trip, the participants had new perspectives that reframed the way they saw the world, thereby reaching the transformative outcome outlined by Taylor (1998).

The participants also experienced culture shock during the exchange. The culture shock students on exchange experience differ dramatically between white and non-white teacher candidates (Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011; Vatalaro et al, 2015). Carmen and Jamie, as two white participants of the study, did not realize how many privileges they had due to their skin color until they arrived in China. According to the findings, they were highly respected in China, especially in local schools. Although these privileges made Carmen feel uncomfortable at the beginning, it challenged her to re-think racial issues and intercultural identities while being immersed in another country (Zhao et al, 2009).

Tony's Asian appearance allowed him to blend into his surroundings over time. This was consistent with a participant in a study by Zhao et al. (2009), who noted that their Chinese participant was "able to slip into Chinese culture more easily than the other participants" (p. 306). Zhao et al.'s (2009) participant "had more in common with Chinese people in terms of appearance, language food and overall culture" (p. 305), which was consistent with Tony's experience. However, Tony had to work hard to let the students know that he was a Canadian because students often identified him as Chinese in school. The experience gave him the opportunity to rethink the racial dynamics in Canada. A similar situation happened to Linda as well. Due to her non-white appearance, she did not get as much attention as the other white teacher candidates. Consequently, she was more sensitive about her racial identity. For instance, Linda noticed that she was not invited to take photos by local people as much as the white preservice teacher candidates were because she did not have the "white skin" and "blue eyes". However, instead of being uncomfortable, Linda felt that the disoriented experiences gave her an opportunity to develop a different understanding of her racial identity (Mezirow, 1991). Although the

way participants were racialized by the host community did shape the way they were treated, they all reported that they were impressed by the hospitality of the local communities. The unique experiences of the participants helped them form a new perspective of racial dynamics and multiculturalism in Canada.

Reciprocal Learning. It is evident that the research participants in the present study showed their growing understanding of the concept of cross-cultural experiences. The findings of this study reveal that the participants shared unique stories that were strongly connected to their lives, experiences, and education. In addition to exploring the participants' Chinese and cross-cultural learning when they were immersed in a Chinese language environment, I was able to gain deeper insights into the participants' experiences and emotions. In particular, I learned about the participants' Chinese learning motivations, attitudes, and learning strategies, which were influenced by their past experience, the present mind and body, and their future intentions. The present study inquired into the participants' experiences and stories in relation to the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, which previous studies have noted are shaped by the personal and social, the past, present and future, and the place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Xu & Connelly, 2010). In particular, before coming to China, Jamie did not consider teaching EFL in a serious way. However, his unique EFL teaching experiences in China reshaped his views, causing him to reflect on his pedagogical approaches and apply his new thinking in future practice. Moreover, all the participants critically reflected on how they should conduct a multicultural class and support their future students whose mother tongue may not be English.

Through the RLP, the participants and the other group members were able to visit China where they developed themselves personally and professionally over their three-month exchange. As Connelly and Xu (2015) state, the reason that cultural exchange programs between China and Canada exist in the context of post-secondary learning in both Canada and China is that “the Chinese have things to learn educationally from the Canadians and, reciprocally, that the Canadians have things to learn educationally from the Chinese” (p. 2). Moreover, Xu and Connelly (2017) illustrate the concept of reciprocal learning and emphasize the importance of reciprocity in teacher education between Canada and China. This suggests that the overseas immersion experience of the teacher candidates is reciprocal for both local communities and themselves.

With respect to personal development, the participants, local students, and local teachers were each able to grow through their engagement in a complex and reciprocal web of social relationships with each other (See Figure 2).

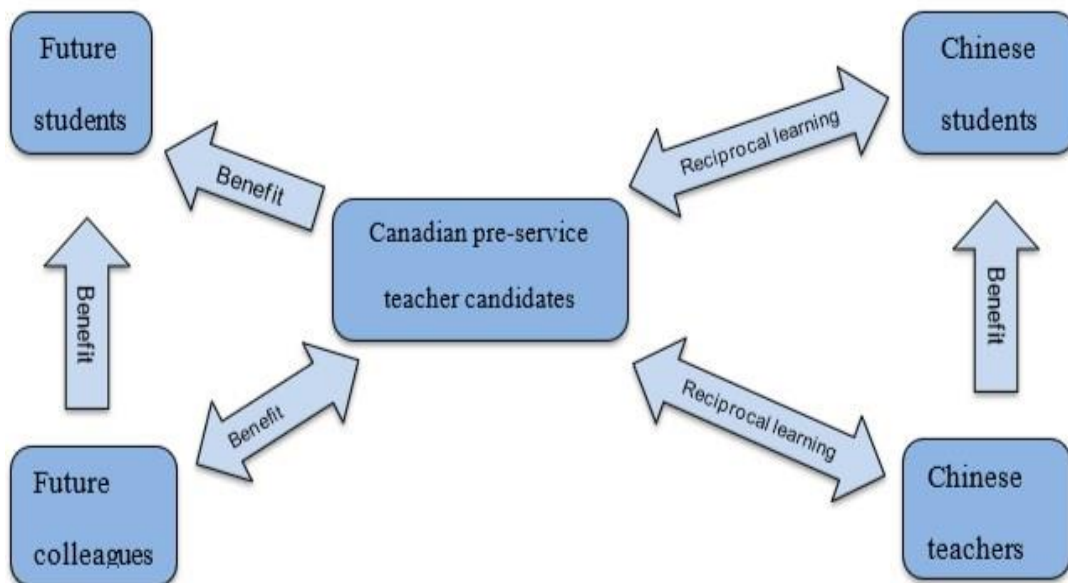


Figure 2. The Reciprocal Learning among Canadian Teacher candidates and Local Chinese teachers and Students

Participants. For their part, the Canadian teacher candidates acted as cultural ambassadors between Canada and China in teacher candidate education, which gave them a broader understanding of their position in the world. For example, during their school placement, the teacher candidates not only improved their pedagogical skills but also shared their critical thinking with the local teachers when doing the co-teaching planning. This compelled them to realize the differences between their own pedagogical models and ways of thinking and those utilized in China, underscoring cultural differences and making them more cognizant of them. This is consistent with Chinnappan et al. (2013), whose participants learned a lot of teaching methods and strategies that shared by their associate teachers. In addition, during their final week in China, the teacher candidates were given the opportunity to tell stories about their experiences in China and share their experiences with the teachers and students in the Southwest University. This encouraged the participants to critically reflect on their experiences and view their past through a new lens while considering how they can apply the cultural and pedagogical lessons they learned in the future. In this process of sharing, they also had to express themselves in a manner that the students could process, which encouraged the teacher candidates to consider the cultural and cognitive contexts of their audience, further enhancing their cultural awareness and intelligence and fostering a student-centered mentality in the teacher candidates. Thus, as Xu et al. (2015) state, international experience has the potential to improve teacher candidates' cultural awareness and competence.

Local students. Local students also benefit from these teacher candidates. As they were accustomed to the teacher-structured learning environment, the local students were challenged when initially engaged in a student-centered class conducted by the

teacher candidates. During the school placement, the local students were more willing to interact with these teacher candidates, who acted as their peers rather than schoolteachers. It helped the local students to rethink the nature of the teacher-student relationship in the teaching and learning process. They were encouraged to learn English by these teacher candidates, who themselves were simultaneously undergoing a parallel experience as they were learning Mandarin as a foreign language from the beginning level. According to Bandura's social learning theory (1978), the teacher candidates offered a "live model" that encouraged the students to improve their language learning and enhance their learning outcomes. Moreover, the local students developed a better understanding with regard to learning English as a language instead of learning English as a subject, which is to say they learned how to engage with the language in a real-world context rather than prepare to excel on an English test. They also saw the benefit of engaging in and learning through multi-literacies approaches, which the teacher candidates applied in the classrooms. The local students learned vocabulary by singing English songs and developed their ability to structure sentences and listen by engaging in drama practices and role-play. Such skills were further enhanced by participating in activities that were more connected to their daily lives. In addition, while learning the English language, the local students also learned about multiculturalism from these teacher candidates, which broadened their worldview. This is consistent with Ateskan (2016), whose participants helped the local students to learn about a new culture, especially as most of the students had never been out of their country.

Local teachers. One of the most significant benefits for local teachers is that they enhanced their teaching skills while helping these teacher candidates during the school

practicum. They also had the opportunity to brainstorm with the teacher candidates and reflect themselves while communicating together. For example, while helping the teacher candidates with their lesson planning, the local teachers reflected their own teaching approaches when the teacher candidates shared their multi-literacies approaches. Thus, just as the students had discovered they could more effectively learn English by engaging in activities such as singing, dancing, and role-play, the local teachers discovered that they could employ these strategies to enhance their teaching models. They also reflected on the position teachers held and the relationship between students and teachers during the learning process when discussing how this relationship functions during group debriefings with the preservice teacher candidates. These new experiences also inspired the teachers to re-engage with their passion for and love of teaching by breaking up the daily routines throughout their teaching careers.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

The current study explores both the cross-cultural experiences of Canadian teacher candidates in China and their Chinese language learning while participating in the RLP between Canada and China. The current research also reveals the importance and benefits of learning Chinese as a foreign language for the teacher candidates' cross-cultural experiences and their professional and personal development. The narratives in the current study offer critical insights into the participants' attitudes towards learning Mandarin and their learning motivations, which allows one to identify the various strategies that facilitate language learning among the teacher candidates. Moreover, it provides insights into how the participants perceived Chinese culture when they were immersed in a Chinese language environment. The research questions sought to identify the role of the UW teacher candidates' Chinese language proficiency when they were in China and to identify the participants' motivations and attitudes through the learning process. The study also sought to determine what learning strategies the participants found to be most effective and how they learned about Chinese culture while in China.

The findings from this study indicate that teacher candidates' cross-cultural immersion experience provided them with insights into different cultures that benefited their future teaching career (Ateşkan, 2016; Kabilan, 2013; Rodriguez, 2011; Unlu, 2015). In addition, they encountered different obstacles and challenges, such as language barriers and culture shock during the transformative learning process (Dunn, 2014). More importantly, the findings reveal six critical benefits that Canadian teacher candidates who

participated in the study derived from learning Mandarin and their cross-cultural experiences in China:

1. Chinese language learning plays a significant role in the participants' reciprocal learning in China. The learning enhanced the participants' intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, which allowed them to have deeper and more meaningful interactions with the local communities.

2. Though the participants showed strong learning motivations when they first arrived in China, their motivations began to vary for four primary reasons: the difficulty of the Chinese language, the intensity of their schedules, the personal emotions of each participant within the three months, and the pragmatics of 'survival needs'.

3. The participants' attitudes towards learning Chinese varied: two participants kept the same high valued attitudes towards learning Chinese throughout the whole process; two participants improved their attitudes after arriving in China.

4. The participants primarily focused on oral practice when learning Mandarin. Except for using the application software and social media, the participants preferred to learn Mandarin through direct, practical communication by conversing with the locals.

5. By learning Chinese, the participants have developed both a better pedagogical understanding of how to teach English as a foreign language to Chinese students and a higher language appreciation of non-native language learners.

6. The participants have developed a higher appreciation for different cultures by learning about Chinese culture, which enhanced their global awareness and cross-cultural communication skills.

The Significance of the Study

Given that Canada hosts over 250 different ethnicities (Statistics Canada, 2016), it is clear that Canada is a “progressive, diverse, and multicultural” society (Cotter, 2011). This current study enhances the general understanding of the Canadian teacher candidates and promotes the cross-culture understanding of Canadian teacher candidates in such a culturally diverse environment. The study enhanced the participants’ understanding of their cross-culture living and studying experiences and illustrates how their experiences in China influenced them professionally and personally. The findings from this study indicated that teacher candidates’ Chinese learning facilitated their cross-cultural learning and enhanced their global perspectives. To effectively serve students in Canada’s multicultural classrooms, it is imperative for Canadian teacher candidates to possess a multiculturalist mindset before starting their formal teaching career. In particular, according to Statistics Canada (2011), there are more than 1.2 million Chinese Canadians living in Canada, and this growing population is concentrated in Ontario (Xu, 2011). Thus, learning some Chinese and about Chinese culture would promote cross-culture understanding of teacher candidates in such a culturally diverse environment and help teachers offer instruction to those non-English speaking students more effectively. The current study’s participants reflected on a deeper understanding of multiculturalism and improved their personal growth.

Moreover, with the increasing number of people learning the Chinese language worldwide, the study also promotes the general understanding of the teachers who offer Chinese as a second or foreign language instruction. The strategies that the participants used while learning Chinese as a foreign language are valuable for teachers who are

teaching Chinese as a foreign language and could improve their pedagogical strategies by helping them modify their approach to teaching the Chinese language to the students with different cultural identities and with different needs. These approaches can be used to develop models for Chinese as a foreign language program for overseas studies in China for non-Chinese students. Therefore, one of the practical outcomes of the study is that it offers suggestions and insights to develop Chinese foreign language programs for overseas studies in China for non-Chinese students.

Practical Implication

This research enhances the general understanding of the teacher candidates, especially with their cross-cultural experiences by participating in the overseas immersion program. It also reveals a further need for international programs to develop detailed prep courses in order to benefit more future teacher candidates. To learn the Chinese language and Chinese culture in preparation sessions is necessary for the teacher candidates who will visit China through different international programs as it would promote their cross-cultural learning and develop their academic growth. Moreover, this study has implications for those international programs around the world. To organize relevant lessons about the host country's culture and its language before departure would benefit the international programs' development and support the recruitment of more participants. Meanwhile, the more detailed prep courses would also benefit preservice teacher candidates before and during their stay in the host country. For example, the language class associating with the relevant culture would help the teacher candidates reduce the disorienting dilemma caused by the language barrier while being in the host country. Finally, the study benefits to the TCFL teachers for their language teaching. By

learning more about the foreign learners' learning motivations, attitudes toward learning Chinese as a foreign language, and their learning strategies, the TCFL teachers could also improve their pedagogical strategies when teaching Chinese to the students with different cultural identities and different learning goals.

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Appendix A: Pilot-Chinese language proficiency assessment

1. Matching

nǐ hǎo

You are welcome.

你 好

nǐ hǎo ma?

Sorry

你 好 吗 ？

Wǒ shì jiā ná dà rén。

Bye bye.

我 是 加 拿 大 人 。

wǒ hěn hǎo

Hello

我 很 好 。

bú kè qi

How are you?

不 客 气 。

duì bù qǐ

I am fine.

对 不 起

zài jiàn

I am Canadian.

再 见

2. Please write the meaning of each character

líng yī èr sān sì wǔ liù qī bā jiǔ shí yì bǎi
零 一 二 三 四 五 六 七 八 九 十 一 百

3. Match the words with the right pictures.

大学 dàxué



银行 yín háng



中国 zhōng guó



刀子 dāo zi



男 nán



女 nǚ



Appendix B: Interview guide

Hello!

Thank you for taking part in this interview.

My name is Yuhan Deng, I am international student of Master of Education studying at the University of Windsor. I am doing my thesis on pre-service teaching and reciprocal learning for Canadians speaking Chinese as an additional language. The purpose of this interview is to investigate the UW teacher candidates' Chinese language learning and their cross-culture experience in China. I also seek to identify the various strategies that are effective and efficient for the teacher candidates' Chinese learning. The interview might last about 40 minutes and will be recorded for later transcription. You have the right to withdraw from the interview/study at anytime until the transcription and verification of interview data are done. Also, you can refuse any questions that might be sensitive to you. All the information during this interview will be kept confidential and used for the purpose of my research only.

Questions:

Individual Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your trip in China?
2. What were some of your most unforgettable experience in China?
3. What drew you to the teaching profession?
 - a. How has your own education shaped the kind of teacher you are now?
 - b. In what ways did the Reciprocal Learning Program enhance your teaching proficiency?

4. In what ways did the cross-cultural experiences prompt you think about questions that had not occurred to you before?
5. In what ways did the survival Chinese lessons you learned before your departure help you communicate with people in China?
6. What should be included in future survival Chinese lessons to make them more effective?
7. Did your Chinese proficiency helped you when you had practicum in Chinese schools?
8. What did you learn of the Chinese language while in China?
 - a. How did you learn it?
 - b. What learning methods were most effective for you?
9. What most valuable about the cultural lessons that you learned in China?
 - a. In what ways did they enhance your global awareness?
 - b. What were some of the limitations of the cultural lessons?
10. Are there any final questions, comments, or thoughts you would like to share regarding your experience with the RLP

Appendix C: Post-Chinese language assessment

Title of Study: Chinese as A Foreign Language: A Narrative Inquiry into Canadian Teacher Candidates' Reciprocal Learning in China

Notes to interviewee:

1. Thank you for your participation !
2. Confidentiality of responses is guaranteed.
3. You may skip the questions you do not want to answer and you may withdraw from this study at any time.
4. Approximate length of assessment: 15 minutes.

Post language assessment: the purpose of the post language assessment with teacher candidates is to get a better understanding of their learning Chinese as a foreign language after the trip in China

Post Language Assessment

1. Short oral conversation.

Q: 你好吗？ (How are you?)

Q: 你是老师吗？ (Are you a teacher?)

Q: 你喜欢中国吗，为什么？ (Do you like China, why?)

Q: 在中国，你喜欢什么食物？ (What food do you like when you were in China?)

2. Please write five to ten Chinese characters you have learned when you were in China.

3. Match the words with the right pictures.

左



右



公交车



地铁



停

咖啡



面条

水



教室



Vita Auctoris

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