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October 2019

AN EXAMINED LIFE OF A LANGUAGE TEACHER OF CHINESE: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC INVESTIGATION INTO AGENCY

Ying Zhang

AN EXAMINED LIFE OF A LANGUAGE TEACHER OF CHINESE:

AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC INVESTIGATION INTO AGENCY

A Dissertation Presented

by

YING ZHANG

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 2019

College of Education

An Examined Life of a Language Teacher of Chinese:

An Autoethnographic Investigation into Agency

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Approved as to style and content by:

_____
Theresa Y. Austin, Chair

_____
Maria Jose Botelho, Member

_____
Zhijun Wang, Member

_____
Jennifer Randall
Associate Dean of Academic Affairs
College of Education

DEDICATION

To my daughter,
a phenomenal woman of a kind,
an inspiration of my life,
whose growth and success promote my thorough understanding
of agency and its role in human development

To my husband,
whose love, tolerance and patience sustain my faith in my capability
to accomplish anything great

Also, to all kinds of lifelong agentic learners, who
take ownership of their own language education

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Austin, a most knowledgeable and insightful advisor and friend who practices deep listening

Community members of LLC, College of Education at UMass, and other communities I am with

Kindness, the heartfelt love I get from every generous person in professional and personal life

Nature, caretaker of my soul, especially mountains, trails, lakes, rivers in Pioneer Valley

Openness, one of the distinct characteristics of America's multiethnic and multicultural society

Wang, the happiest, most optimistic and passionate Chinese linguist, scholar who smiles a lot

Lisa, a most loving, funny, thoughtful, resilient intellectual friend, one of the strongest women

Enlightening authors, poets, artists and athletes in East and West, in ancient and modern times

Dialogues, inner or external, my way of living to explore self and others, human and non-human

Grit, my own passion and perseverance to pursue newness and bring about changes

Maria Jose, the most poetic professor, who knows love, diversity and justice deeply

Each person, whoever I met, I saw, I read, I heard and I asked for help, positive or negative

Nomad lifestyle, unlimited possibilities for me to extend territories, thinking and understanding

Technology, a formidable force to generate change personally and socially

Social theories and social aspects of all kinds of phenomena, opening up fantastic landscape

My life has been a poem of thanks
I would have written
But I count every blessing I have

In everything
I give thanks!

用一生谱写

感恩的诗歌

感谢生而为人的一切

谢天谢地　谢万事万物

I had not intended to write a traditional statement of acknowledgement that seemed like everyone else's, giving an exhaustive list of all kinds of people whose contributions deserved to be recognized. It would be very possible for me to have overlooked some names worthy of mentioning because so many people, students, friends, colleagues, occasional perfect strangers all had helped me and shaped me to become who I am and where I am now from the beginning of my doctoral journey. Therefore, I had chosen to write in the form of an acronym poem to show my heartfelt gratitude to all the loving people and non-human things. Their names and assistance are preferred to be kept at my heart, a land filled with poetic appreciation.

Towards the end of my doctoral journey, I had been so fortunate to have quite a few people who gave me enormous support and encouragement that had sustained me to cross the finish line after some emergent personal crises. Without their presence and ongoing generous assistance, I cannot imagine how I could collect myself to forge ahead to put an end to my struggle during a very depressed period time of my life. I am very grateful to have their timely help, strong faith, moral and emotional support, caring reminders, and inspiring suggestions and radiant thoughts. They are my counselor, physical therapist, neighbors, LLC members and alumni, old colleagues and friends, graduate program director and his secretary.

I also wish to thank my friends and colleagues in the Language, Literacy and Culture program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst for providing me with such a supportive intellectual home. Again, I am deeply indebted to my committee chair, Dr. Theresa Austin, for her admirable openness, fruitful suggestions, challenging questions, encouraging push towards in-depth criticality, unstinting belief in my scholarly

tracks and fields are all different every time when I visit them and I catch different thoughts and develop new ideas each time. The forces from environment and vast space impact on me deeply and enable me to generate unforgettable memories.

One last thing to mention again is I appreciate the contribution made by the autoethnographers whose joint efforts build up the autoethnographic literature to enlighten, encourage, and move readers and practitioners into a new understanding of lives and world and inspire people to make changes. Thanks to the brave pioneering torchbearers of autoethnography unstoppably march ahead and blaze new trails in unchartered territory. It is their efforts that make more voices heard and make more uniquely lived experiences preserved so as to add humanity to history and enrich the human narrative. Those who have alternative narratives are all hidden gems.

ABSTRACT

AN EXAMINED LIFE OF A LANGUAGE TEACHER OF CHINESE:

AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC INVESTIGATION INTO AGENCY

SEPTEMBER 2019

YING ZHANG

B.A., CENTRAL CHINA NORMAL UNIVERSITY, CHINA

M.A, WUHAN UNIVERSITY, CHINA

Ph. D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Theresa Y. Austin

There is a paucity of research about and done by L2 Chinese educators regarding the theoretical construct of agency. It is also noted that the qualitative inquiry is marginalized in L2 Chinese research field, let alone the narrative study of the agency of experienced by L2 Chinese-teachers. In this dissertation research, I aim at filling in the gap by conducting a longitudinal autoethnography which captures over a decade (1997-2017) of my personal and professional development with an agency perspective. The highly personalized autoethnographic accounts open up my personal and professional life as an experienced, college-level, transnational, early 40's female native Chinese teacher from mainland China. Using socio-cultural sensibilities and ecological approach of agency to scrutinize the paradigm shifts and behavioral changes over extended periods of time, I strive to make visible my active sense-making of affordances and constraints of diverse societal and educational surroundings in Indonesia, the US, China and the US again. I hope to exam the personal world and intellectual, professional trajectory over a long time to extend readers' sociological understanding (Sparkes, 2000) of the rich and

complex life of a language teacher. The critical reflexive analysis, deep reflection, and writing as analysis inquiry of my own transformations are demonstrated in multiple shifting identities over time and across different milieu, from English as a foreign language teacher, to Chinese as a second language teacher within China and to Chinese as a foreign language teacher outside Chinese-speaking context, from a teacher-researcher, teacher mentor, teacher educator, to a lifelong teacher-learner. The manifestations of various forms of agency-as-achievements and the evolvement of agency-as-capacities have also been examined. One of the main impetuses of this autoethnographic project is creating an alternative narrative of a nonconformist so as to challenge the existing stereotypical narratives of Chineseness in work-abroad native-speaking China-born teachers as well as traditional development trajectory of language teachers. My concrete experiences as a transcultural, bilingual, and bicultural (L1 Chinese, L2 English) language educator together with intellectual biography exhibit a unique personal, scholarly and professional growth in a postmodern, globalized, multicultural era through various social identities and evolving agency development. Using the power of autoethnography, I make explicit the multiplicity of self-representation and critically self-reflective learning about agency. This work hopes to inspire reflective and reflexive practices in other L2 educators, especially experienced in-service language teachers, to destabilize their ideologies and beliefs regarding L2 education and reflective practice, to educate their attention to social aspects of language learning and teaching, and to humanized language education. Ultimately, readers are encouraged to move into action to explore the notion of agency and use the power of autoethnography in language education and on language education.

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PROLOGUE

Have you ever seen the paintings of enlarged flowers by Georgia O'Keeffe, the American pioneering female artist? They never fail to fascinate me. For me, O'Keeffe is truly a mindful painter with inventive eyes and unparalleled courage to reveal boldly the amazement and the intricate marvels of the universe just through a single blossom. She once writes, "Nobody sees a flower, really - it is so small - we haven't the time, and to see takes time." But she is the one who deliberately takes time to see and seek great meaning in each blossom. She uses her extraordinary original creations to demonstrate how one could look at flowers with larger purposes: artistic, aesthetic, and spiritual. Her artistry captures viewers' attention and evokes an awakening in them to look for and see with fresh eyes what is enchanting about flowers. If anyone is willing to stop and smell the flowers, and does the utmost to look and touch them with full attention and heart, they will definitely discover the existence of a symphony of colors and patterns, not to mention a rich palette of aromas and textures.

It is also true with any one single human being, say a teacher, and his or her life. Not many teachers' lives have been closely looked into in such an attitude that O'Keeffe has adopted to study flowers. I believe that one teacher's life can be endlessly captivating in the same way as O'Keeffe's flower paintings, as long as the viewer slows down and looks inside this teacher's inner life together with his/her external lifeworld over some time. In this autoethnographic project of myself as a teacher, a teacher of language(s), I attempt to paint with words a series of self-portraits, using a variety of shot's perspectives, lighting, locations, or other qualities to achieve certain effects, from close-up view to long shots. By presenting

changes in my self-portraits over time, I make visible what I hope others to see and show the world how I perceive myself. If I can capture the essence of my own self, I am confident that I have the capability to capture the essence of someone else. Just like self-portraits, the introspective art form, autoethnography requires individuality and uniqueness of style and produces something that no one else ever has previously. I desire to inspire other language educators to make their own self-portraits, tell their own stories and personal histories in their own words and design, using their own interpretations and self-representations, and to reflect deeply upon their own ever-evolving selves. There is great value indeed in an intimate look inside one's self or multiple selves that have been living in and with changing socio-cultural surroundings. There is also genuine joy in a conscious act of deliberating one's own inner forces of thoughts and external societal, cultural and environmental forces across different times and spaces. The discovery of newness in each deliberate effort is fairly rewarding.

Personally, this kind of attentive noticing can easily be associated with Socrates' calling for examination, the Greek philosopher (469 BC–399 BC), who strongly states that 'the unexamined life is not worth living.' He emphasizes the most significance of the critical evaluation of life and the engagement in discussions of how to create a better world. It is his calling that has motivated people to question the human mind and behavior, to challenge the beliefs and norms of the time, and to think for themselves. Following this inquiry spirit and this form of questioning, Waltz (2004) also suggests to amend this quote for the sake of teachers' critical reflection into "the unexamined life makes unworthy teaching." This necessity of reflection and examination of teachers and their lives is one of the impetuses for this autoethnographic study of me as a teacher, an experienced language educator and a researcher of L2 learners.

Using an autoethnographic examination, I intend to challenge accepted views about silent authorship, where the researcher's voice is not included in the presentation of findings (Holt, 2003) and also rarely-heard language-teacher-as-researcher's innermost voice. By opening up my personal and professional life, and revealing highly personalized accounts that draw upon my own life history, I hope to offer an alternative narrative that deviates from the mainstream. I intend to preserve a particular kind of teacher's life and also help readers extend sociological understanding (Sparkes, 2000) of the complexities of one language teacher's personal and professional development of identities, capacities to enact agency and achievements of all types of agency. The demonstrated process of critical self-examination and self-analysis hopefully broadens and deepens readers' cognition and operation of their own narrative learning and reflective practices. This dissertation aims to make visible the process of becoming of a critical reflective language teacher.

Ralph Waldo Emerson's quote "Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist …. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind." has conveyed his faith of the individualist and the recalcitrance of man to all doctrines and systems of thought. In his 1841 essay "Self-Reliance," he makes another beautiful and convincing statement about trusting individual's inner voice: "To believe our own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men, -- that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost."

Emerson makes the need significant for each individual to avoid conformity and false consistency, and follow their own instincts and beliefs. He also advocates the individuality and uniqueness of each human being in his 1837 essay "The American Scholar":

> The one thing in the world of value is the active soul, —the soul, free, sovereign, active. This every man is entitled to; this every man contains within him, although in almost all men obstructed, and as yet unborn. The soul active sees absolute truth and

utters truth, or creates. In this action it is genius; not the privilege of here and there a favorite, but the sound estate of every man.

All these precious insights and wisdom have greatly empowered me to trust my own thoughts and appreciate the value of my own conviction as a veteran Chinese-language teacher. I dare to believe the profound vision: what is most personal is most general. When I am speaking in the truest, authentic, most intimate voice about my own personal life and teaching career, I am speaking with the universal voice.

Reflecting upon my life impacted and constrained by entanglement of collectivist thinking and a culture of conformity in mainland China for many years, I feel so encouraged and supported by Emerson's strong message of ultimate reliance of man upon himself. He always reminds me of the dignity, sovereignty and worth of my own self. This kind of educated attention to individualism might be one of the best benefits of my immersion in the US society and culture. Even though due to my non-mainstream/non-conventional ways of thinking, I stand a little aloof some time and suffer from being marginalized by Chinese-language education circle, I am not intimidated. By doing this autoethnographic investigation, I want to share this kind of quest of freedom and individual voice, and speak of the joy and responsibilities of a nonconformist. I self-consciously choose not to identify with the prevalent positivist, modernist perspective, behaviorism, or cognitive, psycholinguistic oriented Chinese-language education. L2 Chinese education, based on my participant-observation and first-hand experience, has not yet caught up with the social turn and has not recognized the urgency and significance of attending to social aspects and sociocultural issues of L2 Chinese development. The nationalism discourse and native-speaker mindset to promote the ownership of Chinese by Chinese-speaking people will not help with language

learners. The awareness of the current status of L2 Chinese education compared with research of other world languages has made me do what I want to do in this work.

At the end of Winifred Hunsbuger (2009) 's narrative of A Recursive Path, she shared a question asked by the head of school after her doctoral studies: "How can we get teachers to change their practice, to move away from their need to cover the content, and to engage their students in meaningful inquiry?" Her answer was: "We would have to engage them in an inquiry of their own, into their own teaching." She explains that:

> We do not get teachers to change their practice. We cannot control that performance. Yes, we can support and encourage, provide time and resources, even organize professional development that allows for experimentation, reflection and reconstruction...As Parker Palmer would say, "We teach who we are" (1998). Therefore, when we ask teachers to change their practice we do nothing less than ask them to change who they are.

Her words to urge teachers to understand who they are, and to examine the various kinds of external influences contributing to the uncovered self resonate with me deeply. Following her words, I would like to share this recursive path that led me to get a fuller picture of my thoughts and acts in the past years, and how I opened up spaces for transformations and improvements through the art of autoethnography. As an autoethnographer, I am an insider in the field of language teaching, who can draw from my own language educator experiences to perform research in a way that an outsider is not able to.

E.B. White once emphasizes that a writer has the duty to be good. Writers do not merely reflect and interpret life; they inform and shape life. By investigating one life, my life, I hope we together make sense of one particular kind of life. Furthermore, I hope my pioneering act of making an autoethnography can be stimulating just like O'Keeffe's innovative ideas. It will help me fulfill the duty to shape others' life and lift others up.

I conclude my prologue with a researcher's poem: Who I Am Not.

Poetry is always a powerful form to enable me to touch the essence of things and dep experiences. It provides space for exploring the art of possibilities. It has been used in this dissertation as a great expressive medium.

From the following poem, readers will have some first impression of an autoethnographer's self-image, which does not fit the wide-spread image of a language teacher, stereotypical image of a Chinese, and that of a teacher of Chinese. By using a poem, readers are prepared to have some preliminary understanding of me as the researcher and the researched. Now please get ready to discover some new and unknown aspects of a language teacher's lives as well as the complexity and richness of a teacher's personal and professional life-worlds.

<div align="center">Who I Am Not</div>

> I am not from Japan, Korea, or Singapore
> Not from Taiwan or Hong Kong
> I am not the Chinese who speaks Cantonese living in Chinatown
> But I am from central part of mainland China
> who speaks mandarin Chinese and Wuhan dialect
>
> I am not the Chinese woman with braided hair
> Whose father smiles with big buck teeth in blue outfit
> Working in the fields with a cone-like straw hat
> But he is tall and handsome
> And he reads, writes and sings well
>
> I am not from a remote rural village
> Suffering from lack of food and shelter
> But I was raised in a metropolitan city
> Now having over ten million people
> I have stories about happy childhood in urban neighborhood
> And the love of beauty but not living with mice
>
> I was not growing up in a political climate when
> Mao's policy and ideology mistakenly oppressed the intellectual
> I am not the generation of scholars
> who were ready to share stories of chaos during Cultural Revolution

I am not a communist party number
I don't have stories about human rights issues in China
But I witness many great achievements the party and its leadership have made
I am not ready to allow external discourse to practice brain-washing on me
I cautiously listen to and compare many sources of description and
commentary
I represent no party as an independent member of society

I am not the one who learns by memorizing as a habit and
Only wants to sit, wait and to passively listen
My education was not mainly about communist or socialist ideology
I studied English words from the third grade and
read about world literature and the latest scientific development

When I teach and share what I know
I am not a serious sage giving orders and weaving power
I am not inclined to transform my students before transforming myself
I do not distance myself but to make all kinds of possible connections

I strive to act as a passionate enabler
to make learners want to take ownership of their learning
I am not the type of controller and act as serious authority
My purpose of education is not to condition anyone with the known
But I am consciously working to achieve inner liberation
Which means absolute and unconditional freedom of mind

I am not the one who accepts prescribed curriculum or coursebook
without questioning and critique
I like to challenge the Status Quo and invite Imagination to sit with me
and open to new ideas and solutions
I never fail to find engaging ways to fascinate
I attempt to provide resources and scaffolding support as much as I can
I am not the one to give up my efforts to encourage personal meaning-making

If you ask me about modern China
I am not confined to topics about Tibet, Taiwan, and Tiananmen Square
If you allow me to introduce the cultures of China
I promise you will learn more than dumplings, chopsticks and panda
I have much to share after having travelled near and far
And please let me lead you to extend your understanding outside
Biased media representations of China
I am ready to use critical thinking and let my independent opinions heard

I am not one-dimensional middle-aged woman
Only having one life-time job at one position

But I am a transnational educator
who visits museums, galleries, and shows around the world
I run to be a marathoner with a running community

I create as a painter with many medium
I write and translate and publish to produce
Especially poetry and three-line poems, in Chinese
I explore the mountains and blaze my own trail every week
All of these I want to be seen in addition to be a language teacher
This is also why I can see other human beings in language learning

I am not the type who conforms but problematizes
I love difference and advocate diversity
I am not easy to accept the static knowledge but I welcome space to create
I am not afraid to belong to the small number
But I pursue truth and embrace multiplicities of realities
I am not satisfied with one perspective but many points of views

I am a thinking mind connected with
an emotional body and soulful spirit
Philosophizing and interpreting the world in my way daily
I truly practice the technology of self

My name sounds like the character pronounced for an eagle
I call myself an eagle of a kind
who welcomes challenges and wins hard struggles
I am not restricted by a nationalist discourse
I am a free eagle flying in this part of planet
Above the valley I have been living and loving

Let's get ready to fly high
Seeing the life-worlds with fresh eye,
Enjoying many dimensions of view freely
Put down the bias, prejudices, and preconceived images
See what I see and see what you can see
Trust everyone's individual and personal truth

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this first section, I introduce the current status of L2 Chinese education (L2 Chinese is hereafter used as an umbrella term that refers to Chinese (Mandarin) as a second language, a foreign/world language, a heritage language and an additional language, etc.) as well as issues of stereotypical images of L2 Chinese teachers. They mainly represent two extremes: either negative depictions by BANA-based (i.e. Britain, Australia, and North America) researchers or positive images by report writers serving mainland China's media and audience. I also elaborate on the "why" of my autoethnographic research and autoethnography as the underpinning philosophy of the overall ethnographic project of self.

 I introduce the unexpected choice of an emergent non-traditional scientific research methodology to conduct research for dissertation in the era of reflexive education research, when qualitative inquiry rises as an alternative way of doing research in social sciences. This has been decided as a determined choice when my inner desire of self-discovery and self-exploration has been nurtured and expanded. I long to exercise the power of autoethnography to acquire a personal voice and offer my life stories of development as an alternative narrative to existent narratives of language teachers' life and professional development. I have already had preliminary experiences of doing small-scale autoethnographic studies before this dissertation research. I aim to achieve higher purpose to provoke new interpretations, perspectives and discovery of more unknown aspects of multiple selves of a language teacher. Through investigation of a teacher, I grow into a better version of myself.

I write up this autoethnographic study using my life as raw materials for creation. Autoethnography is not about the writer's self, being narcissistic and navel-gazing, but it is deeply about placing self within social context (Reed-Danahay, 1997). It reflexively inserts

the researcher's biographical experiences into the ethnographic investigation of teachers' lifeworld. I assume the responsibility to make it also about other people, as this endeavor is actually about consciousness and awareness. Writing autoethnography itself is an interpretive event, a way of projecting understanding about the self and its situations and experiences (Denzin, 2003).

By reading an autoethnography, the reader can experience something new so as to feel, to learn, to discover, to co-create (Ricci, 2003). I hope to motivate readers into their own exploratory actions. This research contributes to existing literature about longitudinal autoethnography, studies about experienced in-service language teachers and also about the research about agency. There are great significance and implications for critical reflection of teachers' development and narrative learning through the methodology of autoethnography. The overview of all the chapters of this dissertation is also described at the end.

1.1 Dominant Images of L2 Chinese-language Education and L2 Chinese Teachers

1.1.1 A Brief Introduction of L2 Chinese and L2 Chinese Teaching

It is no doubts that China has become the world's fastest-growing major economy, which has ranked the second largest in the world. As China's economy and exchanges with the world have seen rapid growth, there has also been a sharp increase in the world's demands for Mandarin Chinese learning and teaching. As Duff (2008) observes, Chinese is being learned in the 21st century in both formal and informal educational contexts by people representing a much wider range of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds and age groups than ever before. It shifts from being a language learned by non-native adult learners primarily for literary, political, and historical scholarship, to one now being learned throughout the world for a much wider range of purposes: for oral and/or written communication in

commercial, academic, touristic spheres, and within diasporic families and communities, as well as for other scholarly purposes (Duff, 2008). With a large increase in the number of Chinese speakers, L2 learners and L2 users around the world, from preschool or kindergarten through university, and beyond, from interpersonal communication to online and other mediated interactions, the impact and reach of Chinese has grown significantly. Chinese has been kept growing into an international language.

It is a well-known fact that it often takes many years of study for non-native speakers to achieve the expected proficiency in such a hard, non-letter-based language as Mandarin, identified by Foreign Service Institute (2009). Both learning Chinese and teaching Chinese are considered rather tough jobs. For new learners of Chinese-language, there are a number of new things to get accustomed to and make sense, such as tones, the phonetic and morphological system, vocabulary structure, grammar rules and writing culture, which are very different from alphabetic-languages. Any learner of Chinese would agree upon the fact that "learning to read and write in Chinese is a labor-intensive endeavor, one that requires significant reserves of time, patience, discipline, and perseverance" (Everson 2008). Complicating this by overwhelming learners with excessive amounts of characters has always been proved to be a recipe for failure. Chinese-language teachers are expected to make efforts to understand the theory and practice behind L2 literacy development so as to help their students find effective and efficient ways to overcome barriers along the challenging journey.

The Chinese writing system is qualitatively different than non-character-based languages. The teachers usually understand and anticipate their students to learn at a slower rate; however, they cannot slow down to address students' actual needs in reality as the

textbook and syllabus agenda are usually built up more for teachers' sake, especially when one instructor teaches multiple classes using the same curriculum and the same exams for evaluation at the same semester.

In terms of specific teaching strategies, there are many practices expected of instructors. For example, when teaching orthography, it is better to introduce characters together with purposeful background regarding the characters' etymological background, information and analysis of their radicals, and examples of the words as used in different contexts as these are proved to be far more powerful in terms of student retention than rote memorization (Shen, 2004). As for the reading skill, what is suggested is to develop in students a desire to read interesting material that is not too far above their level, thus engaging them with extensive reading. Moreover, the reading materials are advised to be accompanied by appropriate cultural and historical context so the students can relate their own language and experience. All of the above-mentioned pedagogical advice are some examples that are mainly related to cognitive aspects of L2 Chinese instruction. They have not yet involved social and critical perspectives yet, which are still new to many teachers or programs in L2 Chinese education. There are many challenges any Chinese program and individual teacher has to face.

I once interviewed an advanced Chinese learner who had study-abroad experience years ago. I asked her why she considered that students who committed themselves to the study of another language, history, and culture as different as Chinese had "something special in their heart". She responded,

> I meant that these people are unusual in the degree of curiosity and respect that they have for peoples and cultures drastically different from their own. Chinese script, music, arts are so very intriguing and those who wish to travel the steps needed to cross the bridge to really communicate and understand Chinese are a committed and special group of people.

L2 Chinese learners and teachers all have to pay special efforts and persevere to achieve their personal and higher goals. It requires mutual dependence in the entire development and collaborative process. It is worth probing deeply how to facilitate authentic learning and teaching happen in real-world instructional contexts.

1.1.2 A Steady Increase in Beginning-level Enrollment and Drop in Higher-level

Over the recent years, although the number of beginning students of Chinese at college level has been steadily increasing, an obvious slowdown of this trend has already been observed (Jiang, 2017). Goldberg, Looney, & Lusin (2015) points out that the increase in Chinese enrollment has gone through a dramatic decline from 50.4% (2002- 2006) to 16.5% (2006-2009) to 2.0% (2013). They also call attention to the fact that the makeup rate of advanced Chinese during the same period is still relatively low compared to the average rate of all languages. It is not a new fact to the insiders of Chinese language program that existing Chinese programs have experienced attrition in enrollment numbers, as learners progressed from beginning to intermediate to advanced (Jiang, 2017). There are some key factors identified to explain the enrollment drop phenomena. For example, Dupuy (2000) and Dupuy & Krashen (1998)'s studies indicate that material selection and pedagogy-related problems rooted in the advanced foreign language curriculum are the major issues. Preference to grammatical and syntactic approaches to language teaching and learning and less attention on students' personal and social purposes in language learning are frequently observed. The conceptualizations of learning on the part of Chinese-language teachers are still conventional one that place more value on acquiring, accepting, and putting together deeper, more valid and fixed facts about the language and the world. Language teachers have more authority and power in a language classroom. Inner contradictions, self-movement, and agency from below

are all but excluded from language teaching and learning process in formal settings. An effective and attractive advanced level Chinese program is supposed to take all these learners' characteristics into consideration and strive to maximally meet their needs (Jiang, 2017).

For teachers of Chinese to maintain learners' interest, they are confronted with many emerging problems and constant challenges. Teachers have the responsibility to develop their professional capacity to reflect upon their own teaching and take initiative to make connections with students' actual needs and be responsive to students and specific situations.

1.1.3 Discourses about Chinese-Language Education and L2 Chinese Teachers

As Shi (2010) points out, Chinese language education is undergoing unprecedented development in K-12 schools across the United States. The rise of China and the improved social status of Chinese language have been closely associated with more economic and social capital. Chinese language has also been regarded as critical language of financial and social security since 2006 in the US. The expanding Chinese program together with the shortage of quality Chinese teachers has been claimed as the key bottleneck to building capacity in Mandarin education (Asia Society, 2005; Asia Society & the College Board, 2008; Wang, 2007), which depicts the prevailing image of Chinese language education in the US.

Throughout America and many other countries, the burgeoning interest in Mandarin Chinese and the cropping up Chinese programs have dramatically changed the landscape of language education. However, the demand for certified, qualified and effective Chinese language teachers in all kinds of institutional settings has been so great that it's outstripping the ability of schools to locate adequate number of quality teachers to teach culturally diverse language learners. Generally speaking, the main human resource of Mandarin teachers come

from traditional or accelerated intense certification programs and guest teachers from China or Taiwan. This is because it is not realistic to produce a large number of non-heritage Chinese teachers within short time to satisfy the needs of teaching force. The majority of the Mandarin teachers consists of foreign-born immigrants, visiting teachers or international students, who are ethnic native Chinese and have received their formal education in mainland China or Taiwan. Chinese Guest Teacher Program, sponsored by the Hanban (Headquarters of Confucius Institute) in China in a partnership with the College Board, has placed around 1200 guest teachers in K-12 schools across 32 states to help thousands of US students since its inception in 2007 (The College Board, 2017). There is also a small number of guest teachers sent by the Taiwan government. All the guest teachers are not necessarily having majors related to Chinese linguistics and literature or degree about teaching languages, but they have received some pre-service training and hold some kinds of certificates in China or Taiwan. Most of them already have a few years of classroom teaching experience before they come to the United States and some are novice language teachers without any kind of classroom teaching experience. Guest teachers often receive two weeks of training to get familiarized with Mandarin linguistic knowledge and pedagogical grammar knowledge, classroom management strategies and English-speaking culture prior to their actual teaching outside China. They usually work in assigned US host schools no longer than three years. Teachers for college-level language programs are mostly holding master's or doctoral degree from the accredited US colleges and universities majoring in Chinese linguistics, literature, Asian Studies and other China-related disciplines. But some adjunct teachers do not necessarily have a relevant graduate degree.

There are contrasting, or even polarized to some degree, images of frequently seen stereotypical images of Chinese-language teachers by different evaluators representing

different cultural backgrounds and communities. On one hand, the China-related management personnel and reporter writers for Chinese media and China organizations present the successful teachers and the program effectiveness. The teachers reported and presented to the public are portrayed to have greatly contributed to student learning of Chinese as an additional languages and enriched school culture and afterschool programs. They are very adaptive and collaborative, and their students are enthusiastic to learn from them as they are very loving, caring, and try every means to engage the learners. This kind of narratives are mainly written in Chinese and feed the Chinese-speaking readers. The general features and genre moves of these types of articles introducing teachers and their work outside China are written in almost formulaic, prescribed patterns. What had been produced ten years ago could sound similar to what is written now in recent months. The examples can be found on the Chinese media platform or news articles to praise the great achievements and success to spread the Chinese-language and culture.

On the other hand, non-China-based and non-China-educated researchers mainly talk about problem-focused evaluation about Chinese teachers. Most of them are about unsatisfactory teaching performance and limited student outcomes, unrealistic expectations of classroom behavior, lack of cultural perspectives and insufficient intercultural competence, or inadequate critical consciousness or awareness of social issues. The list can go on to problems in selecting instructional materials and their manner of delivering language lessons. Take Orton(2011)'s observations as an instance, she comments about native Chinese teachers' teaching of tones and says that teachers from China are described as 'lovely' but their lack of familiarity with the English system of discipline, target setting etc. is a problem. They also tend to have different, perhaps unrealistic, expectations of pupils. Additionally, the teachers in Chinese program are observed as being "concerned(with) the building and maintenance of a

Sinophone identity" (Wang and Kirkpatrick, 2012) and boosting of national identity (Wang and Adamson, 2014). Zhou (2018) also points out many problematic practices like teachers' inability to use English to explain the characters to true beginners effectively, overlook of heritage learners' cultural background and their needs of appropriate level teaching materials, little use of content-based reading materials, disengaging and monotonous classroom culture, outdated textbook materials and other issues.

In many cases, the discourse about teaching of Chinese-language and culture of teaching by Chinese teachers are somewhat stereotypical, problematic and negative. Wang (2007) identifies some barriers faced by the Mandarin speakers who come to the United States as immigrants, such as their legal status and tests of English proficiency. She is also concerned about their inadequate understanding of US socio-cultural-educational expectations and institutional practices to impede the success of becoming effective teachers in the US. Everson and Xiao (2008) also argue that Mandarin teachers who go through educational systems in Mandarin-speaking countries often hold different views toward education and teaching practices from their American counterparts. Chinese-language teachers are depicted as those who lack in an understanding of one's teaching context, environment, and particular school culture. Chinese- language programs run the risk of failing because they are not matched to the goals, needs, and desires of a particular setting, or because they have not taken into account the makeup of the various students whom they are trying to serve (Everson, & Xiao, 2008).

Wang (2012)'s survey of 26 international Chinese-language programs developed in countries from five continents revealed similar concerns. The results manifested that a large majority of the investigated programs were taught by native Chinese speakers and these programs had experienced some common problems - quantity and quality of teachers were not

adequate at all. He concluded that Chinese-speaking teachers' unsuccessful acculturation into

local educational context resulted in continuous adoption of conventional teacher-controlled

classroom teaching, little care of interpersonal interactions and less consideration of learners'

true needs. According to his survey study, the incompetence and deficiency on the part of

native Chinese teachers have been the negative factors that have impacted the maintenance

and sustainable development of internationally cooperative language programs.

China-based researchers also share their concerns about the quality of the L2 teachers,

which include the quantity of qualified teachers, their narrow knowledge structure, inadequate

knowledge of Chinese language and little experience of teaching non-Chinese speaking

learners, little awareness of becoming researcher and limited academic research ability (Cui,

2013). The recruitment of new teachers directly from newly-graduated four-year and two-year

college students without teaching practice also raise the concern of the quality of the novice

teachers.

1.1.4 My Firsthand Observation and Personal Views

I have been in the field of L2 Chinese for over ten years within and outside China. For

quite a long time, I act as an observation-researcher of the above-mentioned notable

incompetence and deficiency on the part of language teachers, and as an insider of Chinese

teaching and training programs. They are not new problems. I often talked and interviewed

with Chinese language teachers with positions in liberal arts college, public university,

prestigious private university and ordinary private institutes. I asked them if they can tell the

difference in the recent ten years in terms of formal class instruction. Most of them told me

there have not been great changes and the noticeable progress were mainly manifested in the

use of technology to aid teaching and interactions. The essential teaching philosophy had

remained the same and it seemed that it would never be challenged due to the habitual thinking of what effective and efficient teaching in.

With my increasing social-theory-informed ethnographic eye and deepened understanding of language and its use, learning as a social practice, and more exchange with in-service teachers, I can generate and outline a list of possible reasons. To name a few, it could be teachers' inadequate subject or content knowledge (both Chinese linguistics and China-related cultural knowledge) as well as limited language proficiency of English or low level of students' first languages. Without a solid knowledge base, pedagogy content knowledge and verbal communication skills, teachers cannot easily express themselves and convey ideas clearly and efficiently. Moreover, it could also be attributed to little consciousness and lack of practice of building a community of learning, or neglected attention of students' L2 identity constructions and other social identities, and learner agency. Sometimes it might be caused by not many practices of in-depth reflections upon their own pedagogical practices, professional selves and multiple layers of teaching content and materials, as well as insensitivity to providing space for students' negotiation and claiming ownership of their own learning process.

There is an urgent need for teachers to humanize Chinese language education and to discover complex social beings in language classrooms. What is needed is teaching that is responsive to students and situations, which requires teachers to know who they want to become (i.e., self-knowledge) and to be both proactive and skilled in navigating places for themselves as teachers (i.e., agency). It is not about teaching the language as subject and content but engaging language people as holistic human beings. If language students are treated as only one single dimension of deficit learners and with less power, they cannot have opportunities to make personal meaning out of their learning experiences. It would be hard to

sustain their interest to produce effective learning outcomes. If teachers can learn to reflect

upon themselves using agency perspective and satisfy students' needs for agency as a basic

human need, and respect students' linguistic and cultural background and their individualized

purposes, the quality of teaching can expect hopefully great changes. Language teachers need

the knowledge and reflective practice about agency and other related constructs like identity

and power so that they can truly become enablers for language learners and help them succeed

and want to advance.

1.2 The Major Concerns of Current Teacher Research and L2 Chinese-Teacher Standards

In mainland China, TCSOL (Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages) are

still focusing on the linguistic aspects of Chinese learning. According to Lin (2005), in a

preface for a book about TCSOL research,

L2 Chinese-language teaching is a branch of linguistic research. No matter what perspective is adopted to do research, it is imperative to use the theories and methodologies of linguistics. Among the branches of linguistic studies, ontology research of Chinese language is mostly intimately related to teaching L2 Chinese. The achievements in the linguistic studies of Chinese will enable the teaching of Chinese to be more scientifically accurate. The achievements accumulated from experiential teaching of L2 Chinese can direct the research of Chinese linguistics to be deeper, more specific and pertinent.

(Original text: 对外汉语教学又只是语言学领域中的一个分支，无论从什么角度进行研究，又都必须以语言学的理论和方法为基础。在语言学研究的各分支中，汉语本体研究和对外汉语教学关系最为密切，汉语本体的研究成果能使对外汉语教学更加科学准确，对外汉语教学的研究成果能使汉语本体研究更加深入细密。)

The dominant orientation of studies in Chinese-language education field observed

from the scholarly publications and presentations at academic conferences can be distinctly

labeled as linguistic (e.g. morpheme studies, phonology, grammar, error analysis), and

psycholinguistic (research into interpretive strategies, cognitive processes, acquisition

sequence, learning styles, etc.). It is also noticed that there is a large increase in the amount of

pragmatic pedagogical studies that have been performed with the focus on how to teach and what to teach in Chinese-language classrooms, such as practical instructional strategies and teaching methodologies, and useful teaching techniques of different aspects of Chinese language, for instance, phonology, morphology, characters, vocabulary, culture and things like that. However, there is a great need to re-conceptualize the language teaching and learning and rethink the social meaning of learning a language, the meaning of being a language learner and teacher, and other important questions in this field, just like what other languages have done in the recent decades.

Within mainland China, there are many articles discussing the qualities of excellent Chinese-language teacher. Chinese teachers are expected to be "the soul of teaching activities. He can be the designer of the activities, implementer of the activities. He is the master of knowledge who have a lot to offer and the coach of students' language practice. He is the creator of the classroom art and the encyclopedia in students' eyes (Cui, 2010)". Cui (2016) talks about his view of preparing good Chinese-language teachers:

> The Chinese language teachers should first develop their strong sense of responsibilities and sense of calling. They must have a deep understanding of the significance of TCSL. Then, they should develop professional knowledge and skills which include knowledge about Chinese, linguistics, educational psychology, Chinese culture, Chinese history and geography, Chinese society, encyclopedia knowledge. Other skills refer to comprehension abilities and communication skills, classroom teaching skills, intercultural abilities, the capability to apply modern technology and diplomatic capacity.
>
> (Original text: 我们培养的汉语教师首先应该具有高度的责任感和使命感，对汉语教学的重要意义有深刻的认识，然后才是专业的知识和技能，包括汉语知识、语言学知识、教育心理学知识、中国文化知识、中国历史地理知识、中国社会知识、百科知识，以及语言理解和表达能力、课堂 教学能力、跨文化交际能力、现代教育技术应用能力、外交能力等等。)

There is much emphasis in breadth and depth of knowledge base about China and essential capacities as well as passion and responsibilities required of this job. To be a good

Chinese-language teacher means to be a well-informed, all-round learned person. He or she

will be the viewed as a major source of knowledge and many talents that can present Chinese

cultures and arts. Similar description of expectations of teachers goes like this:

> For a qualified Chinese teacher, the first thing is to love and understand Chinese
> culture. Teachers need to have a good command of Chinese historical culture, Chinese
> literature and arts, Chinese folk customs, the major philosophy and religion, and
> Chinese current affairs. Teachers have the ability to corporate the cultural knowledge
> into teaching. They also need to know the features and history of Chinese and foreign
> civilization, the difference between Chinese and foreign political regimes, legal
> systems, the world religion and the main schools of thought in philosophy.
> Additionally, Chinese language teachers need to know and respect the country they are
> teaching in and do not resist the foreign culture. (Zhou, 2012)

> Original text:要成为一名合格的国际汉语教师，首先就应该热爱和了解中华文
> 化。 教师应掌握中国历史文化、中国文学与艺术、中国民俗、中国主要哲学与
> 宗 教、中国国情等基本知识，并用之于教学。教师还应了解中外文明的特点及
> 历史，中外政治体制、法律体系的主要异同，世界主要宗教派别与世界主要 哲
> 学思想流派。此外，国际汉语教师还应该了解和尊重各国文化，不可盲目排斥
> 他国文化。(Zhou, 2012)

If we give a brief review of International Standards for Chinese Language Teachers by

Hanban/Confucius Institute, it is obvious that the emphasis is placed on teaching about

languages and expose to learners static cultural knowledge about China. They have not shown

concern about teaching through the language to make changes in the world and to achieve

higher social purposes of equity and social justice, in pursuit of inner emancipation and liberty

of mind.

Here are the five major standards which are said to be made based on the latest

research in the field of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages):

(1) Linguistic knowledge and skills, including two standards: "Chinese linguistic

knowledge and skills" and "foreign language linguistic knowledge and skills";

(2) Cultures and communications, including two parts: "comparisons between Chinese cultures and between Chinese culture and foreign cultures", and "cross-cultural communications";

(3) Theory of the second language acquirement and study strategy;

(4) Teaching methodology, including four standards: Teaching Method of Chinese Language, Testing and Evaluation, Curriculum, Teaching Program, Text Book and Its Supplement, and Modern Education Technique and Its Application;

(5) Overall quality, mainly including the descriptions of a teacher's professional quality, professional development ability and his/her professional ethics.

CLASS (The Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools) Professional Standards for K-12 Chinese Teachers in the US also have their expectations for Chinese-language teachers. They encourage teachers to take care of various needs from different learners and create a positive learning environment for learners. But critical awareness and critical pedagogy have not been introduced and advocated among Chinese teachers. Here are the 12 standards:

Standard 1: Language Proficiency; Standard 2: Linguistic Competency; Standard 3: Cultural Knowledge; Standard 4: Second Language Acquisition; Standard 5: Child Growth and Development; Standard 6: Diverse Learners; Standard 7: Learning Environment; Standard 8: Instructional Planning and Strategies; Standard 9: Assessment; Standard 10: Communication Skills; Standard 11: Technology Knowledge and Skills; Standard 12: Professional Development.

The requirements for the selection and recruitment of College Board Guest Teachers for year of 2019 and after, with the support of Hanban and emphasis include a Bachelor degree, knowledge about the Chinese-language, teaching experience, some knowledge and

experience about teaching, basic survival skills, like English, driving, for work-abroad intercultural competence.

To sum up, in the landscape of Chinese-language education, there are a few notable major issues: 1) Dominant public discourse/academic discourse regarding Chinese teacher quality is concerned about teaching-centered, teacher-focused and teacher-controlled classroom instruction. Research about learners and learning are comparatively secondary or even overlooked unknowingly. The number of learner-focused research is very rare and the attention on learning and learner's personal worlds is inadequate among teachers of Chinese. 2) Prevalent modernist discourse and traditional language teaching cannot keep up with the new era and emerging diverse needs of Chinese-language learning. 3) Lack of deep understanding and consideration of globalization and multiculturalism' impact as well as individual agency's role in influence of the macro-context. 4) The knowledge base of teachers of Chinese are not enough and rather narrowly limited to becoming a good ambassador and embodied image of Chinese culture. Teachers need expansive learning to stretch their existing major knowledge and competences so as to relate more with students and provide more assistance to students' pursuit of their interested questions.

In terms of extant research about teachers of Chinese, there are very few researches regarding social aspects. This is mainly because Chinese L2 education has not realized the sociocultural turn and maintained the conventional understanding of teaching language as discrete skills and linguistic components. The focus remains on grammar, vocabulary, basic drills and skills training. The definition of knowledge base excludes the sociocultural factors of learners and their individual personal history and their rich personal life worlds. Teachers have predominantly been trained in cognitive or psycholinguistic paradigm and they possess little knowledge and recognition of social-theory-informed perspectives of language, literacy

and culture. There is inadequate adoption of sociocultural view of learning because prevailing pedagogical practices are still confined to teacher-controlled and transmission mode of learning about language. Teachers have not yet been exposed to discourses about language as a means to achieve social or personal purposes but mainly about the instrumental function of language as a communication tool.

A review of existing research written in Chinese language published in Chinese academic journals within China also showed that teacher research of Chinese-language teachers is very limited and under-explored. There are many under-researched topics and many research methodologies to be adopted. What's more, the reflective teaching practice is not well-researched. Xu (2019) reviewed 98 articles relevant with Chinese-language teacher in recent 15 years (2004-2018). According to the frequency of research topics, he identified the following emergent heated research areas: (in the order of the frequency) teacher quality, teacher discourse, Chinese culture, professional development, teaching practice, role identification. After the eyar of 2009, more teacher research has been conducted. But only half of them are empirical studies, primarily using survey data, video data, observation studies, and case studies. The major themes are abstracted as 1) teacher preparation mode; 2) teachers' discourse in teaching; 3) consciousness of culture; 4) the process of professional development. Xu (2019)'s observation is that there is a trend that the paradigm is shifted from focus on being technical to being reflective. Individuality in teachers' cognitive styles and actual teaching strategies is gradually given attention. In recent years, mixed methodology and case studies have been taken up by a couple of researchers. But generally speaking, there is a great lack of research about teachers as learners, researchers and knowledge makers. Teacher agency has not gained adequate recognition and there is paucity of research about

teachers' professional life and personal life. The prevalent discourse is largely about the recurring discussions about teacher quality, knowledge base and skill set requirements.

My growth towards a critical reflective teacher, and my process of becoming a teacher researcher, a teacher mentor, a teacher educator and other social roles are countering the dominant narratives of either not well-prepared or so-called high-achieving Chinese teachers. I want to use my lived experience in my personal life and professional life to show a non-mainstream and unconventional teacher career trajectory, especially in terms of agency perspective.

1.3 Unintentional Research: Autoethnography as a Form of Qualitative Inquiry

Back in China in 1990s, when I was prepared to be an English-language educator in my undergraduate and master program, I was not offered any specific research methodology course. I was trained to be a language teacher with major expectations and responsibilities of helping my future language students to acquire English-language skills and expand their cultural knowledge related to English-speaking countries through classroom instruction. The dominant discourse about the main objective of foreign language education around that time in the early nineties emphasized the acquisition of communicative competence. The teaching practices were mostly about enabling students to be fluent in oral language (listening and speaking English) and proficient in literacy skills (reading and writing English) so that students could use English as a valuable instrument and a form of economic and sociocultural capital to increase employability on domestic and international job markets. Usually, successful English learners were also supposed to be capable readers of British and American literature and their teachers must have either a literature background or a linguistics background. Doing research was never a priority at all for average language instructors but a

possible means of voluntary personal improvement. It was viewed as a luxury and seemed

rather surreal for novice, young teachers who were burdened with rather heavy workload.

However, my curiosity motivated me to expose myself to academic research by

initiatively reading available journals mainly from the US and the UK in linguistics, applied

linguistics, second language acquisition and language education. This kind of self-imposed

academic socialization and self-study in the initial years of my college EFL (English as a

foreign language) teaching helped me acquire foundational knowledge about 'a traditional

social scientific approach (hypothesis-test-conclusion), which was a linear causal predictive

view of reality, or a positivist neo-positivist paradigm grounded in prediction and control'

(Poulos, 2009) prevailing experimental studies or empirical research. My deeply rooted

understanding about scientific research was quite limited to tangible numbers, surveys and

questionnaires, statistics, quantifiable data, objective facts and hypothesis. I don't think back

then in my teaching career, I had opportunities to get to know more about the inner workings

of any of the so-called quantitative, qualitative and other methodologies, let alone

ethnographic studies and new emergent methods. Later on, I expanded my language teaching

experience from English instruction to mandarin Chinese instruction. I became even more

curious about what and how research can be done about language educators to understand the

problems, challenges and promises of language education fields, especially the underexplored

field of Chinese-language teachers who teach Chinese as a second and foreign language

within and outside China contexts.

In the fall of 2010, at the time of entering the doctoral program, I had imagined that

with years of learning and practice, I would be able to ultimately present a conventional

scientific dissertation research using quantitative data and analysis, written "in ways that use

highly specialized vocabulary, that efface the personal and flatten the voice, that avoid

narrative in drench to dominant theories and methodologies of the social sciences" (Modjeska, 2006), just like most of what I had read before about experimental studies, and research using quantitative data. However, things have changed greatly. Up till now, I am strongly aware that I have been living in a quite different era. The paradigm shift from a predominantly quantitative research approach to a more qualitative approach is well on the way and to the direction of ''reflexive education research'' (American Education Research Association, 2009). Many researchers are trying to understand lives by conducting research that capture experiences which are unable to be meaningfully expressed solely through conventional "scientific" ways.

After my extended immersion in and becoming familiar with all kinds of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies, for my dissertation research, I deliberately chose to write myself, like other autoethnographers, into my own work as the major character. This was also enlightened by the observation made by Riemer (1977):

> "social science researchers too frequently neglect 'at hand' knowledge and expertise they alone possess in the engineering of their research ventures. They often ignore or treat as ancillary their own unique biographies, life experiences, and situational familiarity when these could opportunistically serve as important sources for research ideas and data" (p.467).

I came to realize that autoethnography is such a kind of approach to qualitative inquiry in which a researcher pays particular attention to 'at hand' knowledge, recounts his/her own personal experience, coupled with an ethnographic analysis of the cultural context and implications of that experience. It offers a way of giving voice to personal experience for the purpose of examining the meaning of human experience and extending sociological understanding (Sparkes, 2000). From the individual's perspective, it is apparent that "every view is a way of seeing, not the way" (Wolcott, 1999, italics in original).

Unlike an autobiography, an autoethnography emphasizes more on a critical enquiry pertaining to himself or herself (McIlveen, 2008). An autoethnographer attempts to look inwards to discover things about themselves as researcher that were perhaps unknown or unexplained until examined (Preston, 2011). It strives to convey a "patchwork of feelings, experiences, emotions, and behaviors that portray a more complete view of . . . life" (Muncey, 2005).

Autoethnography with its increasing popularity has been adopted as a form of post-positivist narrative inquiry research in various disciplines such as the arts, psychology, health, illness, general education, racial identity and ethnicity, journalism, law, education and even business management and information science. It has been adopted in diverse fields like death and dying research (Richardson, 2007), critical race theory, feminist theory, sexuality studies, identity development, praxis of care (Visse & Niemeijer, 2016), and queer theory (Holman Jones, 2016), to name just a few.

However, the application of qualitative research method and autoethnographic approach in language teacher research and language teacher professional learning is still relatively new, especially in the case of Chinese-language. Research about the notion of agency in the field of L2 (including both second and foreign language) education and L2 teacher research is also comparatively rare. In the sub-field of L2 Chinese education and L2 Chinese teacher research, it is observed that there is a paucity of research about agency and underreported autoethnography. This is why I attempt to initiate new exploratory knowledge creation process through the innovative mechanism of autoethnography in this writing project.

1.4 Deliberate Choice: Autoethnography as a Powerful Approach to Examine Life

Autoethnography creates a space for a turn, a change, a reconsideration of how we think, how we do research and relationships, and how we live (Tony, 2013). I recognize the importance of reflexivity, criticality and personal experience in research and am willing to take risks to share my professional and personal growth, my identities and commitments, in relation to others as this constitutes the very chance of becoming human. By writing, telling and living the story of my autoethnographic project, I use the powerful approach for theorizing the daily workings of social cultures I have been in and capturing nuances of my epistemological development and maturity in many aspects. I desire to create work that brings about changes. These changes take place in me, others and the field of language education as well as language teacher education, including L2 Chinese.

The idea to make my professional and personal life stories central to the dissertation initially seems both daunting and intriguing. But I know I have the determination not to suppress my desire of self-expression to represent my own multiple selves fully as a professional and as an individual. I really want to present my own critical reflections and explorations of agency manifestations, agency development and achievements in my social interactions with others in L2 Chinese education field. By using my personal voice, I present a series of self-portrait of my lived experience as a language teacher and language teacher educator. In this ethnography of self, I also attempt to challenge the stereotypical image of the professional community of language teachers and L2 Chinese teachers. Using my counter-narrative of teacher development, I would like to promote the understanding of complexity and richness of language teachers' lives in the era of globalization and superdiversity. I would also like to problematize official ideology and normalized formal practice of Chinese language teacher preparation and development.

As a middle-aged, non-US-born, transnational native-Chinese woman teacher,

doctoral student, researcher, teacher educator, and mentor, I have been strongly compelled to

reflect upon my multiple identities, various kinds of social positions in the past and in the US

doctoral program. With more theoretical resources and practical experience of interpretation

and representation of human experiences, I have come to terms with who and what I was, as

well as to rethink my personal and professional aspirations. I am propelled by an urge to bring

back the memories of past years, to recognize, analyze, to heal, to confess, to reconstruct, and

to move ahead.

We all have our stories that we live by. We need stories to maintain our balance and

our identity, and to express who we are (Cleaver, 2002). Through an ethnographic eye, I am

sharing my storied selves as a L2 Chinese teacher and my transformative experiences of

professional and personal development at both ideology and practice level. The

autoethnographic research investigates the process of my understanding, recognizing,

analyzing, exercising and fostering human agency in teaching and learning across different

educational contexts of language instruction.

1.5 Research Focus Shift: from Ethnography of Language Student to Self

Coming to the decision to do an autoethnography project did not happen suddenly. It

took time and the idea was formulated and enhanced by many factors. I took the courage to

choose to conduct it and my committee members also had to be convinced the significance

and feasibility to do it. I have been very thankful for their openness and trust in my capability

to implement it. The following were selected from a brief report to my committee members

back during proposal writing stage:

> I have experienced great changes and shift in what I want to do from
> investigating learner agency to teacher's agency, and from doing ethnography to

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autoethnography. For me, without the critically reflective practice and reflexive process to learn about many selves in me at different times and educational settings, I would not be able to totally understand and care about the complicated social lives and identities that learners bring with them, and those of other student teachers and teachers. With little understanding of agency and teacher agency, the possibility and desire to foster agentic learning environment and create opportunities for students to exercise their agency would be very slim.

I want to bring to surface my individual experiences, experiments and reflective thoughts of unknowingly being, becoming and consciously acting as an agentive person so as to challenge the stereotypical image of China-born, woman, Chinese-Language teacher and teacher educator. I will research and reconstruct my life that embraces, negotiates and challenges Chineseness and make meaning out of it to contribute to language teacher development and preparation and enrich the understanding of teachers' personal and professional identity development and agency achievement.

… I had thought I would end up doing a longitudinal study of a white student veteran learning two Asian languages. I had followed him for a couple of years. I had been interested in deeply investigating a L2 Chinese learner's identity formation and construction and how complicated a learner could be as a social being besides one dimension of being a language student. With the passage of time, I realized by working with him, I deepened understanding of my own initiatives and agency during the whole interactions as a researcher. I realize that "all research is research yourself" (Walford, 2001) and "ethnography is, to some degree at least, always already autoethnographic." (Granger, 2011)

In the past few semesters, I had made several conference presentations in a roll and the proposals I submitted were all related to short-term autoethnographic investigations. I felt like I had heard a "calling" and it occurred to me that my own personal life and lived experiences across many cultures, identities, and different transformative time periods are worth writing about deeply, analytically, and creatively. This is I want to go in for and "carry on the auto ethnographic movement in academia", and meanwhile "carry the torch of and for autoethnography into the future" (Ellis, 2013). For my professional background, I mean especially in the fields of language education and language teacher education.

Personally, my doctoral life has been a self-searching journey. The longer I have immersed myself in it, the more I feel what Caroline Ellis (2013) described her examination of life: I have thrived as a result of living the auto ethnographic life. It is truism for me too that sometimes it has saved my life. I have been writing in both Chinese and English in many forms to accumulate my life, in which I develop myself as a maturing teacher, teacher educator, researcher, philosopher, life-long learner, L2 English user, productive blogger, writer, interpreter, runner, artist, counselor, dedicated parent and wife, etc. I never stop researching, and practicing what my education and research has oriented me to. I take high pride in myself and what I have achieved so far.

Without the privilege of slowing down, I will never become who I am now. Without the thirst of self-knowledge and aspiration to make sense of the transformative and transient time, I would never be as deep as where I am now.

1.6 Purposes: Provoking Insights, Critical Self-reflections and Explorative Actions

Autoethnography seeks to evoke, to 'nurture the imagination' (Bochner, 2000) and to 'put people in motion' (Jones, 2005). As a research genre, it offers me the possibility of putting other teachers/teacher educators 'in motion', of generating a 'space of dialogue, debate and change' beyond the confines of individual educational context. It also supports my ongoing engagement with writing that is, in St Pierre's (1997) words, 'not only inscription but also discovery.'

This autoethnography records my professional and personal development in different time and sociocultural spaces as a teacher of Chinese. It attempts to challenge the existing discourse and pedagogical practices in Chinese-language education and bring overlooked issues to surface through my own lived experience. By investigating actual teaching life, research process, supervision practice and deliberate explorations of agency-based learning, I want to make my alternative praxis of teaching, researching and student supervision visible and accessible. My objectives also include discussions about how identity, cultural factors and individual capacity (including beliefs, values and framework) afford and constrain agency manifestation, negotiation and achievement.

In this self-reflexive research, I explore what agency means and does, and what being an agentic language educator, teacher-learner and fostering others' agency mean. Understanding of selves and others help me grow into a more broad-minded educator in teaching career and I can share this process with other educators so that they know what and how to reflect upon their personal history and interrogate their own intellectual development. I want to make people see what I choose to attend to and what I see and uncover what they may have overlooked and discover more new unexplored territory.

In my self-reconstruction process, autoethnography works as a mode of inquiry of capturing what conceptual and behavior change can produce. Using the power of this approach to reveal, record, interpret and position, from an insider's perspective, I intend to examine closely the subjective and reflexive personal experience of my performing multiple identities so as to gain a deeper understanding of my shifting theoretical perspectives, socialization process, professional growth, emotions, voices, and actions towards agency-based education.

Additionally, there are more reasons that motivate me to conduct this autoethnographic investigation:

Firstly, I want to locate and identify human agency in language learning and teaching process through my seeing, doing, helping, thinking and writing. Through my critical reflection, I hope to demonstrate a practice of gazing upon one's own evolving self and awakening the self-consciousness and mindful agency in educators. Secondly, this is an opportunity for me to practice the autoethnography as a research methodology and a way of being. It improves my self-knowledge and informs readers some practices about how to interrogate their multiple selves. It helps me understand my researching, teaching and learning processes and my background in terms of finding the answers to the question: Who am I? The research will also help me transform myself into an educator who respect self and others' needs for agency and consciously exercising agency. Thirdly, I aim to inspire other educators to critically reflect upon their own lived experiences in relation to the autoethnographic tale being told (see Spry, 2001). There are many teachers who have common professional experience with my learning and teaching experiences. They can relate to their own professional learning. The application of this approach will encourage more educators in L2

field to adopt it as a new approach of qualitative research in their own individual context. I hope to encourage their own narratives in their own words and voices.

Autoethnographic methods offer a way of working through the complex situation and free writers from writing dry descriptions or reports of lived experiences. The product of the process thus becomes "something to be used; not a conclusion but a turn in a conversation; not a closed statement but an open question; not a way of declaring 'this is how it is' but a means of inviting others to consider what I (or they) could become" (Bochner & Ellis, 2003). Denzin (2014) repeatedly states that the purpose of autoethnography – and of his work in general – is to change the world, not just to describe it (p.82; citing Marx, 1983). Denzin's goal is to encourage action, though – as he acknowledges – the action demanded of a piece of work is not often obvious or predictable (p.74). I strive to evoke readers' own self-examination and considering changes in beliefs and practices.

1.7 Significance: Personal and Social Meaning

Personally, it has been a most meaningful and rewarding study for me and it also makes it possible to connect the dots of my various kinds of experiences in my professional trajectory. This autoethnographic investigative process is definitely pivotal in the development of my scholarly identity and practice, as it can be the peak of "epistemological and ontological growth" (Murakami-Ramalho, Piert, & Militello, 2008). At the personal level, this study is a self-re-search, self-understanding, local knowledge making about theorizing agency, assigning meaning to my lived experiences. It adopts socially informed theoretical perspectives that can make new contribution to the research tradition in world language education, and specifically Chinese as a foreign/second language, where the dominant

knowledge base disproportionately relies on psycholinguistic, cognitive, and formalist theoretical linguistics.

I searched ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database and language education related e-journals using descriptors like "autoethnography", "auto-ethnography", "autoethnographic study", among the authors of researchers who have adopted this autoethnography as research methodology, it is rarely seen names of Chinese scholars and researchers from China and it is also true with ethnography and other qualitative studies as research methodology. The narrative inquiry remains uncharted territory in L2 Chinese fields. I strive to contribute to the extant literature regarding how to conduct this kind of research using my unique position. Investigating journal articles in L2 education and in the field of SLA and applied linguistics, the number of studies about the social aspects of language learners in L2 Chinese-field is relatively small and still behind other L2 languages. There is no wonder that there is even less about researching, fostering and understanding of agency, identity and power struggle, and other social cultural issues. My research attempts to make a significant contribution to this field.

I bring a special perspective to both the L2 teacher education and L2 Chinese teacher education and provide insight for methodological and pedagogical practice of teacher development. I want this study to inform teacher preparation and teacher education programs in order to improve pre-service and in-service practices. I call for attention to social aspects and dimensions of world language learners and learning. This shift in focus will ultimately change learners' lives and the quality of classroom experience, which in turn, will make teachers more successful agents of change.

I also wish I can use my study to reach people with an interest in education, teacher research, research methods, identity and agency, life history and other research topics.

Bochner and Ellis (1996) posit that one major goal of autoethnography is to "open ethnography to a wider audience, not just academics but all people who can benefit from thinking about their own lives in terms of other people's experiences" (p. 18). By producing more engaging and accessible texts, autoethnographic research holds the potential to reach more diverse audiences than does traditional research, and thus make personal and social change possible for more people" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, p. 3).

1.8 Potential Scholarly Contributions

After searching the category of autoethnography dissertations in extant database of ProQuest Dissertations, I found that this kind of research had been rarely conducted in language teacher development and language education field. There is also a lack of longitudinal study and study focusing on seasoned language teachers and their professional trajectory development. This gives me comfort that I could use my work to address this gap and demonstrate some possible ways of doing this kind of research. If we narrow down review of research about language teachers and Chinese-language teachers, there is a paucity of journal articles and books investigating language teachers' life and their life narratives, even less the type of work written by teachers themselves in their own words. If you put the keywords "autoethnography" and "language teacher," there are very small number of results, which indicates the lack of this type of teacher research. In the case of Chinese, a rising popular world language, the research is mainly about the linguistic exploration of ontology of Chinese-language, language pedagogy, and uncovering the learners' acquisition of this language itself, and little attention has yet been given to the study of teachers. The frequently seen descriptions of teachers of Chinese were about the concerns of the quantity and quality of Chinese language teachers and inadequate preparation of foreign-born teachers and their

failure of acculturation. It is still untouched territory about teacher research in L2 Chinese education, not to speak of the deeper look at the teacher development and teachers' life. This is where I can step in.

In my literature review project investigating agency in L2 education for Comprehensive Exam, the results showed that agency is also still an under-researched construct in language education, either about learner agency and teacher agency, or about personal agency and professional agency. These are untouched territory that agency is related to. My work will explore and theorize agency using my own analysis and synergy of theories. Hope it can open some possibilities and set a direction for future research.

My education in the doctoral program has enlightened me to the alternative ways of knowing, focusing on representing educational events from multiple perspectives and through multiple means, including literary and aesthetic ones. Autoethnography enables me as a source of legitimate knowledge and unique insights. It is also a means of redefining my professional identity, of outlining directions needed to follow, and of emphasizing the responsibilities inherent in the preparation of language teachers. As an autoethnographer, I am asked to rethink and revise our lives, making conscious decisions about who and how we want to be. Autoethnography offers me the potential to expand scholarship about human experience (Ellis, 2009), construct legitimate knowledge and advance autoethnographic knowledge.

This investigation attempts to make meaningful contributions to existing discourse surrounding agency of language educator and autoethnography as a mode of qualitative inquiry by means of "investigating subjectivity" and "engaging in research on lived experience" (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992). I hope this study can also contribute to language teacher education including making the need visible to practice critical reflection and acquire

knowledge of teachers' selves, and the urgency to attend to social aspects of learning and classroom teaching, the necessity to treat self and others as complex human beings in certain social cultural contexts, understanding education as a means to satisfy the basic human need for ownership and agency of learning about self and the world.

1.9 A Brief Overview of the Chapters

Finally, to help the reader better navigate this dissertation writing, I describe here this overall organization to give a brief overview of all the chapters.

I start with a prologue that prepare readers to understand the significance of a close-up view of one single teacher's life and the social meaning of personal truth which can tell about the general. I justify the importance of speaking about individual conviction from lived experience and affirm that "the unexamined life makes unworthy teaching."

In the first chapter, I have discussed the dominant discourse about Chinese language education program and the fixed and stereotypical unfavorable image of teachers of Chinese or the impartial report of only advantageous side of some programs at surface level. I also introduce my choice and determination to conduct a longitudinal autoethnographic project researching self as well as the purpose and significance of this qualitative research. There are potential contributions to academic discourse and underexplored field of teacher research and teachers' life. I wish to encourage more story-telling and alternative narratives from teachers themselves in their own words and together rewrite Chinese teachers' achievements and development so as to ultimately change the image of this professional group. Letting various kinds of narratives heard can be equally as impactful.

The following chapters are about understanding, theorizing and researching agency. Chapter 2 is about the demonstration of a broad and deep understanding of the notion of

agency and its application in many fields like in general education, in the digital era, in L2

Education and in language use. Chapter 3 is about theorizing agency, investigating the

different theoretical discourses and multiple theoretical approaches. Deepening the

understanding of varied definitions, nature, and features of this theoretical concept and its

relationships with other relevant theoretical constructs help solidify the foundation of

investigating agency in real life worlds and actual lived experience. It is also useful for

analyzing when developing and selecting critical instances and vignettes. Chapter 4 concerns

the ecological approach to agency and the overall research design and detailed explanation of

the research methodology of autoethnography.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the selected theoretical resources and tools that inform my

writing and writing as analysis. They are the major discourse power that have shaped my

thinking and have helped my interpreting and explaining of my changing values, beliefs,

ideologies and behavior. They are the resources from my discourse community in my doctoral

studies that afford my evolvement and promote my becoming more agentic, reflexive and

proactive.

Chapter 6 is a preceding chapter of my autoethnographic accounts and it mainly

introduces my education and career biography. The way to describe myself and the image I

depict about myself is different from the traditional teacher story-telling. I present a full

portrait of me as a language learner, teacher of languages and an autonomous, curious lifelong

learner. They are helping readers to get some idea of who I was before the long view of my

life starting from first-time overseas teaching and continuous teaching and academic

socialization and professionalization during the doctoral program.

Chapter 7 and 8 are the main autoethnographic accounts, which have embedded

analysis with writing. There are two main parts: Part I before entry of doctoral program from

the beginning of 2007 to summer 2010, which include my first work-abroad experience in Indonesia, full-time Chinese instructor for home university in China, and first experience as a visiting teacher for English-speaking country like the US; and Part II after entering doctoral program from the fall semester, 2010, where I experienced many more identities from learner to researcher, from supervisor to teacher educator. As a contemporary nomad, I live a transnational life experiencing and expanding my personal and professional identities. The close-up view of my life in a chronological order reveals the evolution of me as a critical reflective multi-dimensional person.

Chapter 9 is further analysis of agency developed over time as increasing capacities and achievements as well as many types of agency manifested. Chapter 10 is about reflecting upon the creative process and sharing the enriched understanding of doing and making autoethnography. It also summarizes the research and findings of investigations of agency over time. It presents a fuller picture of the use of this type of research and also points out the future possibilities to use duo- or team autoethnography.

In the epilogue, I call for the action on the part of readers to take on their autoethnographic journey and seek benefits from this kind of inquiry by themselves. The ultimate goal is to understand and tell others' truth after experiencing and learning about one's own lived experience.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING AGENCY

In this chapter, I mainly discuss what I am going to examine using this autoethnographic research. It is all about the research topic of agency, the development towards a broad and deep understanding of this theoretical construct. It offers a new perspective to look at personal development and professional development.

2.1 Getting Acquainted with the Notion of Agency

The origins of the term 'agency' lie in the legal and commercial distinction between principal and agent, in which the latter is granted the capacity to act autonomously on behalf of the former (Biesta & Tedder, 2007). To put it another way, an agent is one appointed to transact business and to make contracts with third persons in place of and on behalf of the person appointing him, known as the principal (Thorpe and Bailey, 1999).

If we think about how the term 'agency' is used in everyday life, we can figure out what agency means in common sense. For example, travel agencies, advertising agencies, issuance agencies, detective agency, Central Intelligence Agency, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the European Space Agency, and other organizations and institutions. Ironically, the everyday understanding often connotes a lack of capacity to act because the common definition of agent involves acting on behalf of someone else, not oneself (Ahearn, 2000, emphasis in the original).

However, what scholars mean in the academic world differs considerably from the above-mentioned commonsense notion of the English word agency. In research community, the term 'agency' is polysemic and it is quite a slippery concept. It can refer to enactment, choice, will as well as invention, strategies, authorship, institutional power, identity,

subjectivity, practices, and subject positions, among others (Campbell, 2005). Emirbayer & Mische (1998), based on Mead (1932, 1934), abstracted one view of agency that emphasizes the ability of individuals developed through social means and human experience to consciously choose, influence, and structure their actions. This capability to act independently despite the immediate situation, engages habit, imagination, and judgment.

2.1.1 Two Lead-in Stories

In order to help readers to approach the abstract notion, the 'complex and ambiguous agency' (MacLeod, 1992, qtd. in Ahearn, 2001) in an easy and comprehensible way, I would like to start with two small stories that had sparked my curiosity and interest in the notion of agency. The two main characters' actions and outcomes of their choices helped me generate many questions surrounding agency, conditions, transformation, goal-achieving and others.

2.1.1.1 Story #1: Owning a Cow-turned-pony

The first one is about a German teenager girl who saddled up her cow and rode it like a horse (Huffingtonpost.com, 2011). Regina Mayer always wanted to have a horse of her own but her parents rejected her request all the time. On knowing that her parents would not agree to buy her a horse, she decided to take the cow, Luna, and was determined to train it into the top-class riding companion of her dreams. She could have whined, sulked or stormed off angrily but instead, she put all the effort on her cow. After two-year training process, the transformation from a stubborn farm animal to a trusty steed became reality. Regina and Luna took on long rides together through the countryside. They even did jumps. Actually, she was not the only one who successfully made a cow jump. In recent years, a girl from New Zealand shared her video on social network showing riding a cow-turned horse.

Being and owning a cow-turned-pony were not easy. Regina had demonstrated her will, her determined action and creative agency, taking control of her own learning about training animal. She did not allow the mere lack of a horse to derail her equestrian goals. Her story of agency shows that the average person has the ability to follow his or her will to do something and to shape his or her own life, based on the individual's sense of skills, knowledge, potential talents, and available resources. The conditions and limitations do not necessarily mean impossibilities.

Can you imagine how people react when s/he is told what s/he cannot do if s/he has not developed such a sense of personal agency? To passively accept it, or fight back, or try to negotiate, or choose non-action? S/he always has choices of action, non-action or other options for herself/himself. What impact can the external constraints have on an individual's actions and decisions? Is there always potential for individual to transform the situated context to achieve personal purposes? These questions are all about exercising agency and being agentive.

2.1.1.2 Story #2: Claiming the Ownership of Math Learning

The second story is about my daughter, Catalina. When she was 12 years old in the year of 2013, she 'officially' claimed to be a self-instructed math learner at home after rejecting her father's authoritative parenting in math learning.

Catalina's father Andy was a science major and attached much importance to the subject of mathematics. He invested a lot of time in that summer to help Catalina with more advanced level math. Andy arranged Catalina to do many quizzes, tests and practice sheets with the hope to speed up her computing skills. Catalina was expected to repeatedly practice the wrong problems until she got all of them correct. When Catalina could not achieve her father's expectations, Andy got very impatient and upset and took away her daily iPad time.

Some weeks later, Catalina felt her summer vacation was dominated by math learning and she was not enjoying the hours of worksheet practice at all. She did not find any pleasure and meaning in doing work assigned by father. At some point of time, Catalina burst out into tears and shouted to her father, "I don't want you to teach me anymore!" She said she would never work with him on math at home again because she strongly disliked his instructional style. Catalina decided that she would rather learn from YouTube instructional videos and online courses with Khan Academy on her own. She declared that she loved math but she just disliked the way she was taught at home, which was boring and making no sense to her. That was not authentic learning at all in her eyes. She also told her father that she was the type of students who would like to raise her own questions rather than answer others' questions.

Catalina finally spoke up and freed herself by choosing to be a self-instructed student through watching the teaching videos all by herself. She was really bold to challenge her father's authority and the conventional way of doing math and spoke up "No!" in a loud voice to oppose her parent's will. Catalina voiced out her decisions that she denied the chance of her father to teach her and she would rather become an autonomous student at home.

I witnessed the whole incident at home and felt very happy and proud that Catalina turned herself into an agentive learner by taking up her oppositional agency. But I kept wondering whether Catalina could have a voice and a choice at school when she disagreed with the teaching set-up, teaching philosophy, assessment strategies, and other issues at other formal educational contexts. I am also eager to know whether other students at school are allowed to say "No!" to their powerful teachers and official curriculum. Will they have the opportunity to decide upon their own ways of learning? How can they find ways to manifest and achieve their agency? How about the situations of L2 language learners? How about learners of mandarin Chinese?

2.2 Recognizing the Critical Importance of Agency

Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) referred to learners as "people [with] human agency [who] actively engage in constructing the terms and conditions of their own learning" (p.145). The above two stories depicted a very vivid picture of agentive learners and how they took control of their learning and made use of the available resources for their own purpose even confronting against the disadvantageous realities or limitations of conventions or power over them. They both started with a strong desire to do something for their own benefit, either a dream horse or a favorable way to do math. They were very engaged in the process of constructing their own learning conditions.

I would like to lead readers to think a little further about the abstract concept and better understand the importance of it in our everyday life. Undoubtedly, on a daily basis, we actively use our capacity and propensity to take purposeful action. Albert Bandura tells us that

> Through agentic action, people devise ways of adapting flexibly to remarkably diverse geographic, climatic and social environments; they figure out ways to circumvent physical and environmental constraints, redesign and construct environments to their liking . . . By these inventive means, people improve their odds in the fitness survival game.

There are essential types of agency we encounter and perform in daily lives. For example, "existential agency" called by Hitlin and Elder (2007) refer to every human being's free will, meaning existential capacity for exerting influence on our environments. They also identify "pragmatic agency" which involves alternative responses to circumstances that habits or routine behaviors are inadequate to respond to. For instance, the car we use every day is broken and we probably want to look for an Uber or rent a car or an alternative transportation to go to work to expresses pragmatic agency. Identity agency is also something we may build easy connections. We all develop commitments to some social identities or constellations of things that we believe or want to believe about ourselves or the ways that we wish to be

perceived by others. We take actions to maintain, develop, or communicate our identities and these kind of doing are expressions of what Hitlin and Elder (2007) term "identity agency." Here is an example. A graduate student fails a course, then she tries to influence classmates to believe that it was because she had no time, and put in low effort, and not because of low research ability and academic skills. The student is trying to sustain a social identity as an intellectual learner. One more type, "life-course agency" categorized by Hitlin and Elder (2007), refers to the actions that we take to affect future outcomes. For example, we take internship opportunities and work very hard to accumulate skills, professional experiences, striving for higher appraisal, exploring new career options, which are all expressions of life-course agency for graduate students.

Agency also involves the knowledge, experience, and the ability to achieve one's goals. It is typically evoked as a response to and challenge to the determination of social structuring. Social theorists such as Giddens (1984) have tried to theorize the interrelationship of structure and agency. Connell (1987) writes of people as constituting the social relations they live in, yet with human action seen as involving invention within structural constraints. Such a position presupposes both the person as agent and the formative role of structure in shaping and constraining possible agency (Baynham, 2006).

Mercer (2012) says that whilst an individual's capacity to act is widely accepted as being socioculturally, contextually and interpersonally mediated, it also needs to be understood in terms of a person's physical, cognitive, affective, and motivational capacities to act. This corresponds with Gao (2010)'s understanding that agency is conceived as involving an individual's will to act as well as their capacities to act. In addition to abilities to act, individuals' autonomous beliefs and actions, as suggested in Billett (2006), can be seen as a reflection of personal agency. He believes that actions can also emerge from subjects'

personal histories so attention can be focused on individuals' prior experiences, to avoid overemphasizing the role of situational factors.

When I first got acquainted with the notion of 'agency', it was associated with the word "agent" at the start of the doctoral program in my readings about the advocacy of teachers being "agents of change" (e.g. Fullan, 1993; Lipponena & Kumpulainen, 2011; Sannino, 2010). Initially, I did not truly understand what it meant to be an agent of change as an ordinary language teacher, especially what and how a teacher can do to make what kind of change happen and for what? Gradually, I came to the realization that fundamentally, teacher's agency refers to the determined will and the initiative to be a learning person, to grow, reflect and execute changes for the betterment of others' life quality. It can only be realized when teachers stoically construct their professional identities, build up capacity to act, and consciously attend to the possibilities of particular situation or create new space for agency as achievement. In the following autoethnography, by unfolding my journey in which I understand, research and use the power of agency in my and other's life, I demonstrate the critical examination and analysis of the manifestations of agency both as capacity to act and agency as achievement of agentic actions.

2.3 Exploring a Range of Discourses about Agency

Agency has been extensively debated within a range of different academic disciplines, including sociology, philosophy, economics, anthropology, psychology, etc. It has been theorized according to differing intellectual traditions, including postmodern, post-structural, sociocultural, identity and life-course perspective, to just name a few. This concept has been contested in contradictory and overlapping ways. Agency is one of the most fundamental characteristics of general human behavior (Gao, 2010), which has been discussed in a number

of disciplines in social sciences for years. The debates illustrate the complexity of agency and the slipperiness in the usage of this term.

As a theoretical concept, agency was developed by social theorists as a corrective to an overemphasis on abstract social structures, like Giddens (1979) and Bourdieu (1990). They reacted against structuralism's failure to consider the actions of individuals and tried to define a theory of social action and reproduction of social systems and thus overcome the structuralist and Marxist tendency to see human action as produced by a logic (in structuralism) or historical laws (in Marxism) that human subjects can neither control nor understand (Duranti, 2001). Linguists have been dealing with agency as a semantic notion since the mid-1960s, but are concerned with no social issues. The term of agency has gained currency since poststructuralist theory has introduced new ways of thinking and nowadays it has become a very popular and essential term in social-theory informed research, considering the greater number of books on agency in social sciences.

2.3.1 Agency as One of the Goals of Education

Lipponen and Kumpulainen (2011) synthesize the definition of agency as the capacity to initiate purposeful action that implies will, autonomy, freedom and choice. The idea that education should support people to develop their agency still pervades the normative discussion about what education should achieve or produce (Biesta &Tedder, 2007; Ecclestone, 2007). Instead of merely reacting to and repeating given practices, people should have the capacity for autonomous social action during which they intentionally transform and refine their social and material worlds and thereby take control of their lives (Lipponene & Kumpulainen, 2011).

2.3.2 Agency in the Digital Era: Learners as Designers

Do you still remember Time designated 'you' as Person of the Year 2006? The editors paid tribute to the millions of anonymous web users who dedicate their creative energy to a booming web culture. The cover story heralded the many volunteers filling so-called user-generated content (UGC) platforms. After decades of vilifying the passive couch potato, ordinary users are depicted as active participants in digital culture.

Agency is obviously a distinct aspect of the current digital learning environment where everyone has been immersed in as consumers and producers of information. It is also defined as one of the most important dimensions of new media, which represent a significant break from the earlier modern regime of communication using metaphors of transmission. Cope and Kalantzis (2010) state that people are now living in an era where things have changed in the social relations of meaning-making. Learners can be consumers and creators at the same time. New forms of subjectivity and new kinds of personality are created by the transformation. Learners can draw on a variety of available resources – digitally accessible information, in their community and environment – in which they actively make knowledge in its various modes and permutations. Learners as designers would not be reinventing the world any more or less than an expert does. They would be just reliant on knowledge sources but be rebuilding knowledge themselves in an active, engaged way as if they were an expert. In this new educational landscape, control by others has become self-control; compliance has become self-imposed (91). Cole and Pullen (2010) have also explored how the embodiment of agency can create meaningful literacy experiences. They describe new options for agency of multiliteracies and provided examples of how individuals and groups of learners can use and appreciate the ability to personalize and adapt technologies to suit their own individual and cultural purpose. The notion of agency in a multiliteracies framework enables the user or

instructor to tailor the teaching and learning experiences to suit their particular requirements

of the learning situation (120).

2.3.3 Agency in L2 Education Field

In the field of linguistics, linguists have been dealing with agency as a semantic notion

since the mid-1960s, but are concerned with no social issues. Many scholars attending to

rhetorical agency emphasize that agency is comprised of extra-discursive acts and it is the

language that motivates people to act (Trience, 2000). Agency also raises questions of voice,

power, economic, and cultural issues (Hauser, 2004). The concept of agency has become

widely used in learning research, especially in studies addressing professional and workplace

learning, but also in policy discussion on how to promote individually meaningful careers and

life-courses amid rapid changes in working life (Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, Hökkä and

Paloniemi, 2013). The term of agency has not gained currency until poststructuralist theory

has been recognized as new ways of thinking. In the present-day research community, agency

has become a very popular and essential term, and is very much featured with regularity in the

writings of social-theory informed research, considering the greater number of books on

agency in social sciences (Callinicos, 2004).

Agency entered Applied Linguistics since Firth & Wagner (1997)'s seminal work in

conjunction with Sociocultural Theory (Benson & Cooker). Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001)

were among the earliest scholars who suggested that rather than viewing language learners as

devices for processing linguistic input and the learners' 'human agency' should be

appreciated. They argued that "as agents, learners actively engage in constructing the terms

and conditions of their learning" (Lantolf and Pavlenko, 2001). Within Second Language

Acquisition (SLA) field, growing recognitions of more socio-constructivist understandings of

learners acknowledge the agentic interaction between learners and their environment and

learning context (Mercer, 2011). The prominence of the concepts of learner-centeredness and autonomy also emphasizes on the role of the learner as an active key agent in language learning processes (Benson, 2001). As Fogle (2012) indicates, studies in second language learning have begun to take an 'agency' turn. The focus of language teaching has gradually shifted from linguistic inputs and mental information processing to the things that learners do and say while engaged in meaningful activity (van Lier, 2007). Donato (1994), Ohta (2000) and Swain (2006) began to take up the notion of agency in the context of project-based approaches and investigations of social interaction and collaborative learning in classrooms. van Lier（2007）proposes action-based teaching which puts agency at the center of the language learning process. He also examines situated aspects of agency such as issues of power and control, democracy in the classroom, and the relationships between structure and process.

Miller (2012) also calls for a need to explore agency in language learning and its sociocultural nature to be mediated and relational.

> ……the advent of sociocultural perspectives to language learning (Firth & Wagner 1997; Zuengler & Miller, 2006) and the use of poststructural approaches in considering the centrality of identity, power relations, and ideologies in language learning processes (Pavlenko 2002; Pennycook 2001) have highlighted the need for second language researchers to incorporate learner agency in their theoretical and pedagogical considerations. That is, just as language learning is no longer regarded as solely a cognitive and individual phenomenon, so too agency in language learning is increasingly understood as mediated and relational.

2.3.4 Agency in Language

Turnbull (2004) conceives of agency as a fundamental property of rhetoric and links agency to language. He contends that the rhetorical turn supports an increased capacity of agency in the use of language to construct identity and to relate to others. Duranti (2004) states that any act of speaking involves some kind of agency, as by speaking we establish a

reality that has at least the potential for affecting whoever happens to be listening to us, regardless of the originally intended audience. His reasoning is that through linguistic communication, we can display our attitudes, feelings, beliefs, and wishes. Lucaites (2003) notes that "every rhetorical performance enacts and contains a theory of its own agency - of its own possibilities - as it structures and enacts the relationships between speaker and audience, self and other, action and structure" (Lucaites, 2003). Foss et al. (2007) argues that a change of interpretation substantially changes the speaker's orientation, options, and outcomes. They suggest a non-traditional approach to teaching of rhetoric which involves teaching students how to use the mechanism of agentic orientation to make rhetorical choices to create their intended outcomes. For example, upon receiving a grade, if the student states "my professor gave me an F on the paper," he or she positions himself or herself relatively powerless and his or her agency and efficacy are dependent on someone else's granting of her request. But if a change is made to the statement and it is reworded like "I earned a grade of F on the paper," he or she interprets structural conditions as resources that are available to him or her. This change in interpretation positions the speaker in a different agentic orientation, makes available different options, and generate different outcomes. As a result, the students enable herself more options such as asking for extra credit, pleading with the professor to change the grade, complaining to the chair or dean, and others. The use of language can impact the interpretations, orientations, options and outcomes.

Ahearn (2001) stresses the importance of 'look[ing] closely at language and linguistic form', including 'both its grammatical structures and its patterns of use', to understand how agency of selfhood and the social world are (re)constituted in social practice. Such an approach treats language in use as a form of social action in itself, but also strives to conceptualize a link between how agency is encoded in linguistic constructs (agency in

language) and human action in the social world (agency as action) (Miller, 2012). Duranti (2001) contends that 'there are a number of claims made on agency based on language use and language structure that can be integrated with a social theory of language.' Harré (1989) encourages researcher instead to turn to grammar, to how we talk about actions as we produce accounts in which every action is displayed as intended. Likewise, Ahearn (2010) adds that an investigation of how people talk about agency – how they talk about their own actions, how they attribute responsibility for events, how they describe their own and others' decision-making processes' through using available linguistic resources can help us gain insight into 'people's own theories of agency' in ways that direct observations of actions often will not.

2.4 An Enriched Understanding of Agency

In previous parts, I have introduced the concept of agency first by using two lead-in stories and then discuss the importance of agency in daily life, general education and linguistic agency embodied rhetoric power. Agency can start with a strong desire to do something for one's own interest or benefit, for instance, either a dream horse or a favorable way to do math. An agentic person is willingly engaged in the process of constructing his or her own situated conditions.

Agency involves the knowledge, experience, and the ability to achieve one's goals. It is typically evoked and mediated as a response to and a challenge to the predetermined nature of external social environment. It is a purposeful action and intention to create change and work towards transformation and ultimately greater achievements.

There are many extant discourses around agency in general education, digital learning era, L2 education and social theory of language use. As one of the important goals of education, nurturing and enabling environment should be provided and created to empower

students to develop their agency and capacities to refine and change realities. In the new digitized educational landscape, control by others has become self-control. Other -regulation has been resisted and people enjoy self-directed activities. Compliance has been turned into self-imposed and self-initiated action to do something for their own interest. Studies in second language learning (TESOL) also have taken an 'agency' turn. Linguistic inputs and mental information processing give way to the things that language learners do and say while getting engaged in meaningful activities in real-world social interactions and collaborative learning in classrooms. Language in use is viewed as a form of social action in itself and agency of selfhood and the social world are (re)constituted in social practice. There is a link between agency in language and agency as action. In the following chapter, I will focus on the theoretical perspectives to theorize and research agency.

CHAPTER 3

THEORIZING AGENCY: A THEORETICAL REVIEW

In this chapter, I will introduce different theoretical perspectives of investigating agency in a deep and broad manner. It is mainly about theorizing agency, investigating the different theoretical discourses and multiple theoretical approaches. Understanding what agency is about is the powerful knowledge and cognitive capacities that lay solid foundations for making choices and decisions when confronted any situation in our life. Developing a thorough understanding of varied definitions, nature, and features of this theoretical concept and its relationships with other relevant theoretical constructs help solidify the process to investigate agency in real life worlds and actual lived experiences. It is also useful for conduct analysis when developing and selecting critical instances and vignettes. They all give me appropriate language to address relevant problems regarding agency and to interpret them.

3.1 Historical Discussions: from Enlightenment to Late Modernity

For a long time, agency has been linked with education and seen as an aim, ideal and as the desired outcome of the educational process. It could be dated back to Kant's claim of "Sapere Aude!," a Latin phrase meaning "dare to be wise," or more precisely "dare to know," as the motto for the entire period of Enlightenment. Kant encouraged the courage of individuals to follow Sapere Aude and exercise their own understanding. Enlightenment thus entailed a process of becoming independent or autonomous. Kant also argued that the "propensity and vocation to free thinking" was not a contingent, historical possibility, but should be seen as something that was an inherent part of human nature. It was man's "ultimate destination" and the "aim of his existence" (qtd. in Biesta, 2012). For Kant, education is the process through which human beings develop their rational capacities so that

they become capable of independent judgment, which, in turn, forms the basis for agentic and autonomous action (Biesta & Tedder, 2007). This can explain why educational arrangement and interventions have their place to impose the impact on the individuals and contribute to develop their rational faculties to make them independent thinkers.

Modernization, understood as the erosion of structuring traditions and frameworks, also makes agency increasingly necessary and forces individuals to become more agentic and 'take control of their lives' (Evans, 2002). As Giddens (1991) has put it: "in the context of a post-traditional order, the self becomes a reflexive project." Bauman (2000) also agrees that modernity forces individuals to 'take charge' of their own lives. He writes that modernization has always implied individualization, that is, the overcoming of the all-encompassing influence of social, cultural and religious traditions. Individualization, in his eyes, consists of transforming human identity from a given into a task and charging the actors with the responsibility for performing that task. Life in postmodern societies becomes less and less something that is 'given' and 'pre-structured' and increasingly turns into a 'task' for the modern individual (Biesta & Tedder, 2007). Living in the late modernity and with pluralism, the modern men are confronted with myriad choices and need to take control. Agency is expected from every single person in modern life but not just elite people who were empowered to possess it.

3.2 Multi-disciplinary Discussion about Agency

There are several important scholars' writings on agency having proved to be thought-provoking and extensively referred. Firstly, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) gave a 'situated' definition, seeing agency as the capacity of actors to critically shape their own responsiveness to problematic situations. They conceptualized agency as a temporally embedded process of

social engagement, informed by the past but also oriented to the future and toward the present. Agency is seen to actualize in certain contexts and relations, where individuals interact with other people, meaning or events. This view shows how past experiences, future aspirations and the present environment combine to shape agency.

The social theory of Margaret Archer (2000, 2003)'s work allows us to undertake an analytical separation of culture, structure (i.e. social forms), the natural or material world, and the individual. All these theories help to theorize how agency is shaped over time and which factors are instrumental in its shaping. The following will be about the main discussions in multiple disciplines.

3.2.1 Relations between Social Structure and Individual

Understanding the relationship between structure and agency remains one of the most deep-seated problems in social sciences. The debate is argued to be stale and increasingly irrelevant in the (post-) modern world. But it keeps recurring in various guises—whether it is a concern about the relationship between micro and macro levels of analysis, voluntarism and determinism or individuals and society (Bakewell, 2010). The structure-agency debate has been rekindled after the structural paradigm was challenged by those who wished to re-introduce the 'individual' into the discipline of sociology. Côté & Levine (2002) note that much of this challenge claims that people are capable of 'agentic' or intentional behaviors, even though they are often constrained by normed social structures (either subtly through socialization and enculturation or coercively through force). Recognition of controversy over the issue of agency helps us to understand the concept in a comprehensive manner.

3.2.2 Over-socialized View vs. Under-socialized View

Fuchs (2001) suggests that there has been a tendency in social research to either focus on an over-socialized, macro view of agency - thus ignoring the local and specific - or to concentrate on overly individualized notions of agency. This view is grounded in the influence of society over the individual, seeking to supplant agency with structure. An individual is perceived as shaped and moulded by his social context (Archer, 2000b) and little more than an epiphenomenon of society. On the contrary, an under-socialized view of man, characterized by Archer (2000a) sees agency as autonomy and causal efficacy and contends that people operate relatively unimpeded by social constraints, and society is epiphenomenal to the individual or group. She conflated agency with the concept of autonomy and treated agency as a form of freedom from constraints. Similarly, Usher and Edwards (1994) sees humans as 'self-motivated, self-directing, rational subject(s), capable of exercising individual agency'.

3.2.3 Centralist View: Structuration Theory

Giddens' theory of structuration proposes an elegant compromise and is most influential for understanding the agentic individuals. He argues that structure has a dual nature as both 'the medium and the outcome of the social practices they recursively organize' (Giddens,1984). Structure not only shapes social practice but is in turn reproduced and possibly transformed by this practice. Hence, social structures are seen not just as constraints on individual actors but also enabling their actions. Social actors are self-aware in the sense of continual monitoring of the effects, both intended and unintended, of action and the modification of their behavior accordingly. While their actions may be constrained, people's agency ensures that they always have some degrees of freedom - some room to maneuver.

For Giddens (1984), the social order is not seen as external to or imposed on social action but as both shaped by and shaping social action. Structure and agency are mutually constitutive and shaping, so that there is the possibility of transformation of larger social structures through situated social actions, which often involve discursive practices. Instead of being seen as solitary actors in processes of meaning making, participants are seen as social actors who actively adjust, change and transform their available semiotic resources in their interactions. Kirchberg (2007) interpreted that with Gidden's utility-oriented view, structures are not only dependent on agency-driving individuals; they are the results of social interactions, particularly those interactions that become routines with the highest degree of accountability. The ability to repair social surroundings is perhaps the best definition of 'agency' in Giddens' sense of the word (Kirchberg, 2007).

However, as an earlier centrist approach, Giddens's (1984) notion of the 'duality of structure' was attacked by Archer, who put forth criticism that it provides no easily discernible distinction between conditions and actions. This dualism assumes that all actors enjoy an equal measure of transformative freedom. But in contradistinction to this assumption, Archer (1988) believes that social acts are not equally fettered by the system, and in turn, they do not each have the same degree of effect on the cultural and structural systems. Due to the emergent properties, social structure can exist at any time regardless of the agency of any social actor. The concept of structuration suggests that structure is always contingent on the activity of social actors, but it fails to take account of the temporal disjuncture, when the activity of a social actor today contributes towards the future form of social structures, which will shape the context for social actors in the future. Archer argues that social structure pre-exists the individual, whereas Giddens assumes 'this society because of these people here present' (Archer,1995). There are two major problems raised by Archer (1982). She analyzed

that first, structuration suggests that agency is 'hyperactive.' It always has the option to be transformative and at certain points actors can elect to act in a different way, whether to bring about change or maintain the status quo. Second, if agency and structure cannot be separated in any way, it makes it impossible to explore the relationship between structure and agency; therefore, it has little to offer empirical research (Gregson,1989).

3.2.4 Evolvement of Agency: Dimensions and Dynamics

There are two ways to understand the dimensions of agency: one-dimension view and multidimensional view. The view of agency as a uni-dimensional concept is a linear view of agency in which actors display different levels of agency on a continuum ranging from the ability to take strategic action either to transform social structure or maintain the status quo (Battilana and D'Aunno, 2009). This approach sees agency represented on a continuum whose extremes correspond, respectively, to the highest level possible (active agency) and to the lowest level of agency possible (passive agency) (Oliver, 1991, qtd. In Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009). This one-dimension view is a simplistic one and neglects the relational dimension. It may overlook the evolvement of agency and regard it as an individual attribute.

The multidimensional view can be easily understood through the elaboration of temporal dimension of agency introduced by Emirbayer and Mische (1998), utilizing the chordal triad of elements. They conceptualize agency as a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect, e.g. knowledge and values that people bring with them to everyday problems), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and towards the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects with the contingencies of the moment). Though actors may participate in the habitualized routines and practices that reproduce institutions, they often do so with awareness and purpose, rather than simply acting as institutional

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automatons. This way of understanding agency provides space for the agentic orientations of people to differ in different contexts and times and allows development of agency over time through a continual process of engagement and emergence (Priestley, Robinson and Biesta, 2013).

Agency is not static; instead it is a continuously fluid concept that is negotiated in light of changing social circumstances (Renegar and Sowards, 2009). Agency in itself is dynamic, and the course of history is unpredictable (Pavlenko, 2002). Changes take place in people's potential for agency in both positive and negative ways as they accumulate experience and as their material and social conditions evolve. The development is an ongoing process and has its root in present activity (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Archer (2000b) states that 'our sense of self is prior and primitive to our sociality', but the emerging sense of self is heavily influenced by social interaction and by other experiences. The emergence of capacity for agency occurs as individuals interact with the social (which contains both cultural and structural forms and other people), practical and natural worlds (Archer, 2000a).

Agency can be understood temporally as well as spatially; thus analysis of agency should include insights into the past experiences and the projective aspirations and views of agents, as well as the possibilities of the present (Priestley, Robinson and Biesta, 2013). With this line of thought, in terms of language learners' language development, it makes sense to attend to the learners' past life stories, prior learning experiences, funds of knowledge from outside of the schools, and goals of language learning, and other sociocultural factors.

3.2.5 Contrasted Views: A Property vs. a Relationship and Capacity vs. Behavior

According to Biesta & Tedder (2007), the origins of the term 'agency' lie in the legal and commercial distinction between principal and agent, in which the latter is granted the capacity to act autonomously on behalf of the former. Within the humanist discourse that

predominates in the social sciences, agency is synonymous with being a person. It is used interchangeably with such concepts as freedom, autonomy, rationality and moral authority. Individuals are conceived as being in relation to something external to themselves which acts forcefully upon them and against which they can pit themselves. In Dictionary of the Social Sciences (see Calhoun, 2002), 'agency' is defined as 'the capacity for autonomous social action' or 'the ability to operate independently of determining constraints of social structure'. In A Dictionary of Sociology, agency need be no more than the simple individualism of autonomous actors exercising their power over the world beyond (Scott and Marshall, 2009).

Sewell (1992) also accepts agency as an attribute of all members of society. He posits that agency is implied by the existence of structures. For him, agency refers to the capacity for social actors to reflect on their position, devise strategies and act to achieve their desires. In his view, agents are empowered to act with and against others by structures: they have knowledge of the schemas that inform social life and have access to some measure of human and nonhuman resources. He writes, to be an agent means to be capable of exerting some degree of control over the social relations in which one is enmeshed, which in turn implies the ability to transform those social relations to some degree (20). Agency arises from the actor's knowledge of the schemas, or the actor's control of resources, which means the capacity to reinterpret or mobilize an array of resources in terms of schemas other than that constituted the array.

This view of agency as an attribute within persons is not accepted by scholars who see the dynamic relations between the social context and the individuals and attend to the impact of the situatedness of actors' choices of actions. Archer, Biesta and Tedder (2007) claim agency as a relational effect of the ecological conditions instead of a property or possession residing in individuals to be exercised according to a rational choice. Therefore, in their view,

agency is a matter of personal capacity to act, combined with the contingencies of the environment within which such action occurs. It is something to be achieved by people through particular actor-environment transactions, drawing upon their own capacities and working within their environment (utilizing available resources). Actors are strongly connected to the contextual condition. They deem that even if actors have some kind of capacities, whether they can achieve agency depends on the interaction of the capacities and the ecological conditions. It is possible that an individual may exercise more or less agency at various times and in different settings. To put the premise simply, agency is a phenomenon that emerges from particular transactions between the actor and his/her environment. This position is similar with Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) who stated that "agency is never a 'property' of a particular individual" but rather, "a relationship that is constantly co-constructed and re-negotiated with those around the individual and with the society at large" (p. 148).

Raymond Smith (2017) explores the relationship between agency and work-related learning from socio-personal perspective. In his research, he proposed three interrelated constituent aspects of agency (a) agency as property, (b) agency as relationship and (c) agency as transformation. Goller (2017) in his literature review of agency and work context also suggests two different perspectives of agency (a) agency as something individuals do and (b) agency as a personal characteristic of individuals. For example, agency is practiced in work context when professional subjects and/or communities exert influences, make choices and take stances in ways that affect their work and/or their professional identities" (Etelapelto et al., 2013, p61). Other agentic actions are proactivity to seek feedback and information, proposing new and innovative methods or procedures, deliberately working with others to achieve some shared goals and other observable actions.

Goller (2017) further derives three distinct facets of agency as a personal characteristic: (a) agency competence, (b) agency beliefs and (c) agency personality. Agentic individuals frequently exercise agency and therefore actively take control over lives and their environments. In contrast, less or non-agentic persons tend to react and to comply with external conditions and behave in a passive way.

Lask (2005) offers an extended discussion which defines agency as both individual capacity (for example, beliefs, identity, knowledge and emotional well-being) and social influences (such as language, policy, norms and social structures). Lasky views individual agency to change a context is possible in the way people act to affect their immediate settings through using resources that are culturally, socially and historically developed (ibid., p.900).

Edwards (2005) discussed the notion of relational agency and views it as 'a capacity to offer support and to ask for support from others' and an ability to draw upon social capital, which implies both the notion of agency as the personal capacity to draw upon social capital (relational resources) and the extent to which such resources exist in the first place.

Personally, I will take the stance that agency is based on shifting capacities that the ecological conditions constantly impact, either to enhance or diminish individual's capacities. There is a social nature of capacity. It is not fixed but opens to change depending on the possibilities the environmental forces can feed or constrain.

3.3. Multiple Theoretical Approaches

3.3.1 From a Sociocultural Perspective: Situatedness and Mediation

From a sociocultural perspective, agency needs to be understood as being synonymous with a person's way of being, seeing and responding in the world and as being embedded in contexts of activity and interpretive practices (Edwards, 2000). Within the view of

sociocultural theory, agency is both unique to individuals and co-constructed with other agents and the wider society; it is historically and socially constructed, shaped by an individual's history and mediated by physical tools and socio-culturally and socio-historically constructed semiotic artifacts (of which language is the most important), as well as by social interaction (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001).

Ahearn (2001) emphasizes the situated nature of agency and the role of mediation by defining agency as the socioculturally mediated ability to act. Deters (2013) also define agency as the mediated ability of individuals to act according to their goals and desires. They both understand action as potential, mediated by social, interactional, cultural, institutional, institutional and other contextual factors. Wertsch (1998) also indicates that a dialectic relationship exists between agent and mediational means. This view of situatedness of agency explains why theorizing agency as the capacity to plan, implement and evaluate the attainment of a goal, as originating in the individual or in a collective is insufficient for understanding the mediating role of agency.

I want to elaborate more using Vygotsky's argument of agency as originating in the use of external artifacts to reach a redefinition of a situation. Vygotsky described this artifact-mediated nature of intentional action and agency as follows.

> "The person, using the power of things or stimuli, controls his own behavior through them, grouping them, putting them together, sorting them. In other words, the great uniqueness of the will consists of man having no power over his own behavior other than the power that things have over his behavior. But man subjects to himself the power of things over behavior, makes them serve his own purposes and controls that power as he wants. He changes the environment with the external activity and in this way affects his own behavior, subjecting it to his own authority." (Vygotsky, 1997)

Vygotsky (1997) pointed out that voluntary action has two phases or 'two apparatus.' The first one is the design phase in which the mediating artifact or "the closure part of the

voluntary process" is, often painstakingly, constructed. The second one is the execution phase

or "actuating apparatus" which typically looks quite easy and almost automatic, much like a

conditioned reflex. Through the mediational role of agency, we can see the important relations

between actor and their active use of available resources. It is important to note that the

second stimuli, the mediating means, were not necessarily given to the subjects in any ready-

made form. When Engeström talked about Vygotsky's theory of mediation, he gives an

enlightening example of cheating on an exam. Cheating is viewed as a form of agency. By

preparing good cheat sheets, students achieve better learning outcomes.

3.3.2 From Structuralist to Poststructuralist Theory

As a hypothetical construct, as we have seen from many debates, it is very difficult to

be assigned a conclusive, widely-accepted definition due to its inherent complexity. Differing

definitions tend to reflect varied theoretical perspectives. The following will introduce

specifically how structuralist theory and poststructuralist theory conceptualize agency.

Structuralist linguists posit that people see and understand objects and relationships

only as those understandings are given to them through language. They relocated the

production of meaning within the network of relations that was language itself. Structuralism

involved a move away from understanding meaning in language as derived from the

connection between linguistic referents and real things, and toward a focus on language as a

system of signs that have meaning by virtue of their relationships to other signs. People do not

use language to achieve their purposes; rather, languages create actors' purposes. In this view,

agency is both hidden and untenable (Shilling, 1992).

Through overriding concern with the relationships between social phenomena and the

impersonal structures that work behind people's backs (Atkinson, 1985; Evans, 1990),

structuralists viewed human agency as overdetermined by broader social structures, in which

agency was tended to be written off. Accounts of actors were simply not required as they could be deduced from the determining effects of social (Shilling, 1992). Bernstein (1986)'s structuralism also tends to be strong on analysis of linguistic and (other) social structures, while underplaying the importance of human agency. Bernstein's analyses tend to dissolve the importance of human agency.

Poststructuralism is a broad label referring to a range of theoretical positions developed, following the structuralist linguistics of Saussure, in and from the writings of Derrida, Lacan, Kristeva and Foucault (Shilling,1992). These writers have a common concern with the importance of language and representation (Weedon, 1987). Language creates all meaning we have of the world instead of reflecting a pre-existing world, and conditions. Language is constituted by a multiplicity of signs and signifiers whose meaning is ever slipping and resistant to interpretation. Further, it is impossible to gain access to any interpretation of the world separate from language (MacDonald, 1990). This is because the language itself is a system of arbitrary signs which derive their meaning not from an intrinsic connection with 'reality', but as a result of their difference from other signs.

In post-structural theory, just as language is fundamentally social, all human knowledge and action is the product of socially constructed values and understandings. Therefore, human agency is limited as individuals are subject to existing societal discourses that position and constrain them. The notion is dismissed that the individual can "abstract herself from her peculiar circumstances, her particular engagements, her specific tastes and preferences" (Schlag, 1997). In feminist poststructural theory, human agency is afforded through the use of discourse to challenge positioning and to affect change. No "self" can exist prior to and autonomous from its social context because a self that is outside a social context is meaningless.

Agency is both individual and social with poststructuralist view. The poststructuralist account of agency is that agency is not a matter of acting in a way that is unconstrained by power, but rather consists of working within power, understood as both enabling and constraining. As Butler (1993) puts it, power both subjects us (constrains) and subjectivates us (makes us subjects, empowers). Poststructural subjects are constantly shifting and can change positioning within discourses, but cannot be agents outside of the discourses that produce them (see Butler, 1993). Neither are the individuals with independent consciousness who can exercise free choice, but rather are always produced through discourses available.

3.3.3 Forms of Agency: Resistance, Oppositional, Lack of Agency and Dialogic Agency

Ahearn (2001) critiques three different approaches to agency across disciplines. The first approach is a traditional one which views agency synonymously with free will. Agency is conceived as something located inside the mental processes of individuals within this approach and, thus, it fails to recognize the intricate connections between selves and societal factors. The second is the approach that equates agency with resistance. This oppositional agency is more often found in feminist theories, as a person sometimes has to choose to resist the traditional, patriarchal structures in order to exhibit agency. Resistance remains only one part of agency as a social construct. The third approach is about the question of the existence of agency - the very lack of agency. It is well articulated by Michel Foucault's work on power (Foucault,1977).

An extreme reading of Foucault is that omnipresent impersonal discourse so thoroughly pervade society that no room is left for anything that might be regarded as agency, oppositional or otherwise (Ahearn 2001). In some poststructuralist writings, the notion of power is separated completely from individual subjects. This approach doesn't explain how power is embodied, for example, or how personal resistance remains opaque. For example, in

some computer games, the users act according to what is specified by mechanics or more pervasive commercial bureaucracy and protocol in real life.

Vitanova (2005) offered a dialogic approach to agency using Bakhtin's view of self as a unique human being and, at the same time, a dialogic phenomenon. He suggested that Bakhtin's dialogic philosophy of human consciousness and his emphasis on active, creative answerability can help bridge the larger domains of social activity and individual ways of authoring subjectivities. For Bakhtin, dialogue is a socially embedded, meaning-making process. It is impossible to voice self without appropriating other's words. An important aspect of agency is manifested by this appropriation of discourses and making one's own. As Hicks (2000) writes, agency entails the ability to take the words of others and accent them in one's unique way. Using Bakhtin's view, to be a person is synonymous with having a voice, being heard, addressed, and responded to.

3.4 Various Related Theoretical Concepts

Identity, agency, and power are closely related to agency. In this section, I continue to discuss how they play roles in discourse community briefly.

3.4.1 Understanding Discourse Community

Discourse communities are groupings of people not only face-to-face or actual in-the-moment groupings, but also ideational groupings across time and space that share ways of knowing, thinking, believing, acting, and communicating, or, in Gee's (1996) word, Discourses.

Linguist John Swales defined discourse communities as "groups that have goals and purposes, and use communication to achieve their goals." According to him, Individuals may belong to several discourse communities, and they will vary in the number of discourse

communities they belong to and hence in the number of genres they command. Swales also offers three categories of discourse community: local, focal and folocal. He asserts that many people are occasional members of more than one discourse community.

Learning occurs in and is about having access to discourse communities. Learners move from legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) to expertise or central participation as they learn, and that in most communities of practice, learning is constituted by this movement (Lave and Wenger,1991). Some participants in discourse communities may have better access to or control of tools, resources, and identities necessary for full participation and control of Discourses and material goods. Not only the expertise but also qualities of difference such as race, gender, sexual orientation, or economic status, depending on what aspects of difference matter most or are most marginalized in a given discourse community can impact the access or control. I can use home discourse environment as an example. From 10 years old, I socialized my daughter into the academic discourse that I was familiar due to doctoral courses. I used many vocabulary and language from my coursework and explained to her what I was reading and thinking about. Gradually, she had become used to using anthropologist's eye to observe and wear a sociologist's hat to make sense social issues. I am moving her with me into a new discourse community at my college. I brought her to academic conferences, and sometimes she sat in the same classroom with me. She took up the academic language gradually and used them in her writing unknowingly. I also tried to learn new skills to enter her artist world and took up common language with her about art making, art history and art appreciation, documentary about artists. When she talked with other professional artists, I felt like I understood artist community's ways of seeing and saying things. I invited her into my world and she invited me into her special group. This happens because of the egalitarian culture and available time and other resources.

People move across discourse communities, seeking to gain entrance, while at the same time, existing members may be seeking to retain control over the community or to retain the community's power and access to resources, vis a vis other competing community. People within discourses communities are not always viewed or treated equally. Gaining access to a community's discourses "learning across discourse communities" is always a power-imbued process. Reflected upon my status in multiple discourse communities from EFL, ESL, to CSL, CFL, to sociocultural theory, critical pedagogy, social justice and others, I experience having power and also being marginalized. I want to explore this power play and my agency development, control and breakthrough.

3.4.2 Understanding Learning from Lenses of Identity, Agency and Power

Learning means possibilities which has the potential to make and remake selves, identities, and relationships. Lave (1996) and Gee (2001) have argued that learning can be conceptualized as shifts in identity; that is, one learns to take on new identities along with new forms of knowledge and participation. Deep, participatory learning involves learning not only the concrete disciplinary, subject knowledge but also how to think and act something like an expert. The learners not only acquire conceptual distinctions, but also demonstrate an awareness of a particular kind of practice and discourse, and distinguishing it from that of laymen without insider knowledge. With this particular awareness of discursive practices, people can strategically enact an identity of personal choice while moving across communities. Take my case as an instance, I had never attended academic conferences before I came to the US when I was 3o something. I had never thought about going to conference to present my technology-aided teaching. The first opportunity was an invited speech to a annual conference and I had an experienced co-present with me to design, practice, and formally present. I was a layman and learned from my teacher friend who had more experiences. I tried

to learn to think and act like him before I could develop my own way. The distance between us was motivated me to learn. I wanted to build up a new identity – a sophisticated presenter like him as this was part of the teacher-researcher, or scholar identity, to share and spread new knowledge.

Learning involves both awareness of differences and distinctions and, ultimately, an act of subject formation, i.e., identification with particular communities. These identifications with can be demonstrated through the enactment of particular identities one knows will be recognized as valuable in particular spaces and relationships. That is, as people acquire, appropriate, resist, or reconceptualize skills and knowledge within and across discourse communities, they continue to be formed as acting subjects. Equally important or perhaps more important is the idea that as people move across different discourse communities, they enact identities that will be recognized in particular ways by those communities (Gee, 2001). Learning shapes subject formation, which shapes identity enactments that allow for different types of agency. But the power of that agency still depends on recognitions of identities, which draw heavily from physical and social features of the person and the discourse community the person is trying to enter.

However, the process of people navigating across discourse communities also has the potential to change the discourse communities themselves. Learning is thus not only participation in discourse communities, but is also the process by which people become members of discourse communities, resist membership in such communities, are marginalized from discourse communities (or marginalize others), reshape discourse communities, or make new ones. When learners have the space and support for agentic action, they will have opportunities to make and remake themselves, their identities, their discursive toolkits, and

their relationships on the basis of the new ideas, practices, or discourses learned through their participation in a learning activity.

Power is produced and enacted in and through discourses, relationships, activities, spaces, and times by people as they compete for access to and control of resources, tools, identities. Foucault's (1980, 1984) theorizing about power as "productive," a result of interactions and relationships, rather than an entity that is possessed by some and desired or resisted by others. Some groups are dominant over others, but this dominance is sustained through "processes of different origin and scattered location" (Foucault, 1977) that regulate minute details of space, time, and bodies, thus producing and normalizing bodies to enact prevailing relations of dominance and subordination (Bordo, 1993). Foucault believes that power is produced in and circulates among people and regimes or systems of power exist. He suggested that it is through micro-practices of power that systems and regimes are produced and reproduced. In other words, people can participate in creating differentially valued subject positions, even when attempting to challenge or subvert oppressive power relations.

Working from sociocultural perspectives on power, the process of learning is more than a matter of accumulating, assimilating, and accommodating knowledge in structures coordinated by the brain. It is social and concerns the acquisition or appropriation of ideas (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986), and resistance to and/or reconceptualization of skills and knowledge. This acquisition, appropriation, resistance to, and reconceptualization of skills and knowledge is a process that may involve taking up and taking on existing discourses or disrupting and transforming fixed discourses (Lewis & Ketter, 2004).By complicating the understanding of the learning process and making connections between learning and agency, identity, and power, I will be able to look deeper about my professional learning and factors that impact the exercise of agency in different contexts.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCHING AGENCY:

AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AS RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I use ecological view to help me generate guiding research questions for my autoethnographic investigation about agency over time and different contexts. Therefore, in this part, let me introduce the development of this ecological view and what the model of understanding I will adopt to inform my data collection, selection and analysis.

4. 1 Researching Agency with an Ecological Approach

4.1.1 An Ecological Approach to Agency

In the previous discussion about different views of agency, I mentioned one way to approach agency is related to the ecological conditions and environmental, societal and cultural forces. A fundamental premise of the ecological approach to agency is that agency is a situated achievement whereby actors act by means of their environment, rather than simply in it (Biesta and Tedder, 2006); their agency is achieved through 'the interplay of individual efforts, available resources and contextual and structural factors' (Biesta and Tedder, 2007:137). This view helps me shift away from the typical sociological perception of agency as a variable in social action to a view of it as an emergent phenomenon (Priestly et al., 2015).

It was first put forward by Biesta and Tedder (2007), who posit the notion that agency is achieved under particular ecological conditions. According to this view, if actors have some kind of capacities, whether they can achieve agency depends on the interaction of the capacities and the ecological conditions. Rather than agency residing in individuals as a

property or capacity, it becomes construed in part as an effect of the ecological conditions through which it is enacted. In this way, agency is positioned as a relational effect and it is achieved by combining both personal capacities to act and the contingencies of the environment within which such action occurs.

In this formulation, agency is something that can potentially develop over time through a continual process of engagement and emergence. According to Archer (2000a), the capacity for agency emerges as individuals interact with the social (both cultural and structural forms as well as other people), practical and natural worlds. Thus, people's potential for agency changes in both positive and negative ways as they accumulate experience and as their material and social conditions evolve. In line with the insights provided by Emirbayer and Mische (1998), such a development is an ongoing process and has its roots in practical-evaluative activity.

> They develop a temporal theme to agency as
>
> a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and towards the present (as a capacity to contextualise past habits and future projects with the contingencies of the moment) (p. 963).

Utilizing this chordal triad of the iterational (past), projective (future imaginings) and the practical-evaluative (present) elements makes it possible to characterize the particular "tone" of people's engagement with events in their lives. This way of understanding agency provides space for the agentic orientations of people to differ in different contexts and times.

Inspired by this kind of chordal triad, for the purpose of investigating teacher agency, Priestly et al. (2015) develop a model of ecological understanding of agency. In this model (Figure 1), teacher agency is positioned as an emergent phenomenon, rather than an innate capacity possessed by an individual. It highlights the importance of looking at individual

teachers and what they are able or not able to do, alongside cultures, structures and relationships that shape their particular ecologies.

I consider this approach as appropriate one to help me look at my agency achievement across temporal dimensions and in different situations because my self-study is a longitudinal across several contexts. It also aligns with Archer's idea of reflexivity in that individuals are seen as influenced, but not determined, by society and are able to make choices. This perspective helps me to understand how humans are able to be reflexive and creative, acting counter to societal constraints, but also how individuals are enabled and constrained by their social and material environments.

4.1.2 Understanding the Chordal Triad

The iterational dimension frames how teachers might respond to dilemmas and choose to maneuver between repertoires. It comprises of life/professional histories, professional and personal knowledge/skills/attitudes/values/beliefs and habit and expectation maintenance (Priestly et al., 2015). Selective reactivation of past patterns of thought and action are 'routinely incorporated in practical activity' (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) which links the iterational dimension to that of the practical- evaluative (PE). The PE dimension is the day to day navigation of present contexts for action based upon practical and evaluative considerations i.e. judgements of risk. It has a 'major influence on agency, powerfully shaping (and often distorting) decision making and action, offering both possibilities for agency and inhibiting it' (Priestly et al., 2015). The projective dimension encompasses the visualization of other futures and the development of aspirations and which affect the achievement of agency (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998).

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The achievement of agency may be stymied by the influence of one temporal dimension for example, whilst teachers may have substantial capacity as a result of their iterational experiences, as well as strong educational aspirations which form their projective dimension, innovation within the P-E dimension may be too problematic or risky to enact, rendering agency impossible (Priestly et al., 2015). Furthermore, each can ultimately have a defining impact on the others as today's P-E contexts will both be the iterational domain of the future, as well as help define the projective dimension of tomorrow (Priestly et al., 2015). It is therefore important to consider the impact of current contexts on the years to come as those which inhibit agency today also hinder the development of the sorts of experiences that enhance agency in the future and might lead to a truncated development of future aspirations and expertise which cyclically affects achievement of agency within the P-E dimension. Conversely, rich iterational experiences may equip people better to 'develop more expansive orientations towards the future' and thus projective aspirations which enable greater levels of agency (Priestly et al., 2015). This ecological approach will be very helpful in my analysis and theme identification.
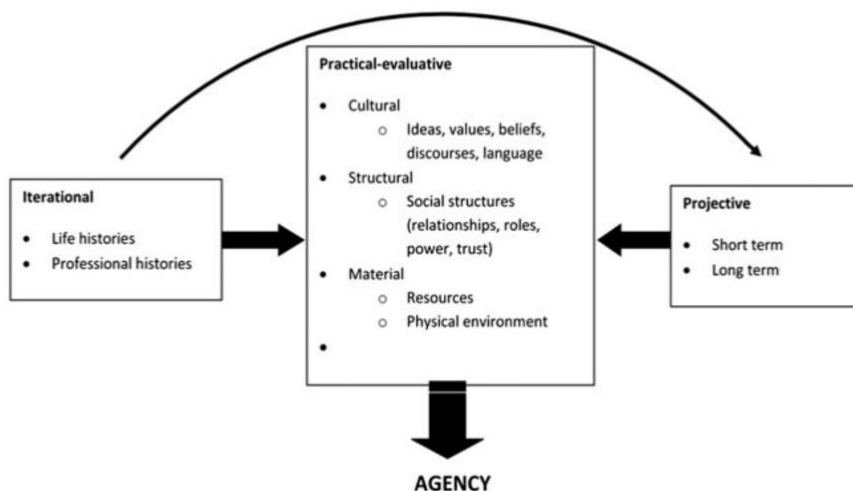
Figure 1 A Model of Understanding Ecological Agency

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4.2 Guiding Research Questions

My view of agency is that it is something to be achieved by people through particular interactions with the environment, drawing upon their own capacities and making use of available resources to transform or repair and respond to the reality. There are dynamic relations between the contextual condition and individuals. Individuals are strongly connected to social surroundings and whether they can achieve agency depends on the interaction of the capacities and the ecological conditions. An individual may exercise more or less agency at various times and in different settings because capacities are contingent upon beliefs, ideologies, material situations, and other impactful factors. I deem that agency is a phenomenon that emerges from particular transactions between the individual and his/her environment.

There are some important insights from the view of ecological way of agency. It is strongly connected to the contextual conditions. Agency is achieved in particular (transactional) situations. And agency can be understood temporally as well as spatially, which include inquiry into the past experiences and the projective aspirations and views of individuals, as well as the possibilities of the present. There are many causative factors to investigate, for example, the influence of the capacity (e.g. beliefs, ideologies) of individuals on a particular instance of agency, as well as the influence of contextual or ecological factors (including social structure, cultural forms and the material environment).

I formulate the following questions to guide my self-examination and self-analysis in this autoethnographic study after I align myself with the ecological view of agency:

1. How are agency-as-achievements manifested in researcher's personal and professional life? How has agency-as-capacity changed over time?

2. What are the affordances and constraints of different social, cultural, individual conditions that enable and restrain the development and enactment of agency?

These questions work as compass for data collection and selection in the process. Criteria for inclusion and selection of data are largely dependent on whether the identified critical events and stories are related to agency and its related concepts like identity, power, discourse, historical, sociocultural, situational and individual factors to facilitate or constrain agency.

4.3 A Multi-paradigmatic Research Design

A multi-paradigmatic research design space is developed for this research. This hybrid and integrative space entails more than one research paradigm, therefore enabling me as a researcher to explore otherwise excluded realities, to take multiple ways of knowing, and to embrace a set of value dimensions (Luitel, 2012). With interpretivism, criticalism, and modernism, I aim to develop a rigorous understanding of my ways of living, being and process of becoming.

4.3.1 The Paradigm of Interpretivism

Interpretivism is a paradigm for construction of context-based subjective meaning (Denzin, 1997), seeing lifeworld as a subjective space for making sense of experiences from the vantage point of the living person. The context is viewed as a network of space, time and persons (J. Willis, 2007). It emphasizes a reality that is subjective and continually changing, allowing for the exploration of knowledge as a subjective entity.

Interpretivism attempts to "interpret" and construct meaning from the social world. Contrary to positivists who work under the assumption that the reality of the social world can be discovered and explained with objective realism, interpretivists rely on the promise that

reality and the social world are elusive and ever-changing. Interpretivist research aims to understand a phenomenon in the holistic context in which it exists. The centrality of relationships and construction of meaning by researcher and research participants is paramount in the interpretivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Using the question suggested by Patton (2002), it may be best to summarize the interpretivist paradigm: "How does my own experience of this culture connect with and offer insights about this culture, situation, event, and/or way of life?" (p. 84).

Using interpretivism, the particular form of lived experiences and the rich details of context are portrayed. The prior and emerging assumptions are monitored. For example, in different periods of lifetime, some knowledge and skills like critical thinking and research methodologies as emergent phenomena. This paradigm facilitates the development of my interpretive sensibilities to account for potential layered meanings of experiences in varied roles. In the process, there are many perspectives such as socio-cultural theory, constructivist theories, learning as identity, and others for researcher to avail of. The paradigm of interpretivism makes use of a "mix social and radical constructivist epistemological knowledge claims, for claiming to know is an adaptive, interactive and active process of meaning making" is used as a referent space to achieve this objective as well (Luitel, 2012).

4.3.2 The Paradigm of Criticalism

This paradigm provokes thinking about questions like:

Whose interests are being well-served by a particular form of lived experience?

It motivates the researcher to contest the hegemony of culturally decontextualized language education and helps with critical examination of distortions and false consciousness as well as the unexamined values and beliefs embedded in teaching and learning. This paradigm emphasizes critical selfhood and self-consciousness and enable the researcher to act

as an agent for change and develop innovative pedagogical practice. It also promotes the process of critical self-reflection and critique macro socio-political ideologies and mainstream discourses. With this criticalism, researchers can reflect upon restraining forces that result in meaningless and non-participatory pedagogy.

4.3.3 The Paradigm of Postmodernism

Using postmodern research paradigm, I attempt to add both pluralism and liveliness to the auto/ethnographer's work, providing a rich repertoire of modes of inquiry (Taylor, 2013). I use "epistemic pluralism" which challenges the one size fits all notion. Utilizing arts-based sensibility from poetry and creative writing to photographic expressions, expressions of emotional scenes and stories, and different "modes of thinking and expressing" (Luitel, 2012), this paradigm enables me to achieve portrait of rich, colorful, playful, detailed and nuanced accounts of lived experiences. It opens to growth, expansion and transformation.

4.4 Autoethnography as Research Methodology

As an evolution of qualitative inquiry that reflects renewed appreciation for the centrality of narrative in human experience, autoethnography addresses criticisms of earlier approaches to ethnography, and is in keeping with the contemporary focus on identity and sharing of personal stories for meaning making that is a hallmark of the Internet era (Lapadat, 2017). Through this methodology, researchers may fully express their subjective truth, or their perception of the truth of their experience, in relation to the social and cultures. It offers the opportunity for personal experience to be valued and expressed in relation to the social world that may not typically value that expression. I am fully attracted by this kind of opportunity to acknowledge and increase the value of my experience.

Tedlock (2005) describes autoethnography as research that tries to "heal the split between public and private realms by connecting the autobiographical impulse (the gaze inward) with the ethnographic impulse (the gaze outward)". It showcases the interplay of self and society (Spry, 2001). Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) write that narratives such as this may be "structures through which [we] make sense of [our] world, locating [our] particular biographical experiences in larger historical and sociological contexts". Through dialogue, autoethnography enables the "self" (writer) and the "other" (reader) gain insight and increased understanding (Spry, 2001). I intend to unfold this kind of dialogue using my individual position and particular situation to get a new understanding.

4.5 My Encounters with Autoethnography

There is every reason to say that I was caught and called by autoethnography. I have witnessed myself to mature as an ethnographer since the fall of 2011 after taking classes introducing ethnographic methods to language and literacy studies. From then on, I developed an ethnographic eye for the world I investigate and contemplate upon. Even in the fall semester of 2016, I had imagined I would be continuously engaged with my longitudinal ethnographic case study of a white student veteran to the end. However, in the interactions with the students over time, I felt like my researcher agency played a very important role and I always shared with him my stories of being aware of agency, with the aim to promote changes on the part of my participant. I consciously observed what I observed and what I wanted to change through my study. I was a very active participant observer in the ethnographic case study.

In the past semesters, I had a couple of autoethnographic presentations about my bilingual and bicultural identity development, artistic experience, teacher agency. Right after

presenting and storytelling, and writing personal narratives, I felt an inner voice that I had been acting more as an autoethnographer. I would rather connect all my past research experience, critical incidents in my professional learning and socialization experiences into social science circle by using autoethnography to reveal a Chinese language educator's paradigm shift, and pursue the study of agency, and tell stories of agency-based learning and teaching. I got the calling and listened to it.

My experiences undoubtedly have affected what I observed, what I wrote, and how others would interpret and react to what I wrote. By definition, autoethnography enables me to tell personal stories of professional growth and incorporate individual views, thoughts, analysis. Using autoethnography permit my experiences to play a valid role in the study, because the genre includes the researcher as a participant. As Gergen and Gergen (2002) eloquently stated, "In using oneself as an ethnographic exemplar, the researcher is freed from the traditional conventions of writing. One's unique voicings - complete with colloquialisms, reverberations from multiple relationships, and emotional expressiveness - is honored" (p. 14). Therefore, autoethnography allowed me, in various identities, to add my views and thoughts of the experience to enrich the story for readers (Smith, 2004).

4.6 Integrative Use of Evocative and Analytic Autoethnography

Autoethnographers reflexively explore their personal experiences and their interactions with others as a way of achieving wider cultural, political or social understanding (Pace, 2012). The term autoethnography has multiple meanings (Reed-Danahay, 1997) but largely refers to both the method and product of researching and writing about personal lived experiences and their relationship to culture (Ellis, 2004; Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). It involves the "turning of the ethnographic gaze inward on the self (auto), while maintaining

the outward gaze of ethnography, looking at the larger context wherein self-experience occur"
(Denzin, 1997). Autoethnographers research themselves in relation to others to make sense of
who we are in the context of our communities. The stories of autoethnographers are reflected
upon, analyzed, and interpreted within their broader sociocultural context. (Chang, 2008).

There are two general schools of contemporary autoethnographic thought.
Accomplished autoethnographers of the first orientation of "evocative Autoethnography"
(Ellis & Bochner, 2006), according to Ellis (2009), "do not proclaim how things are or how
life should be lived, but instead strive to open up a moral and ethical conversation with
readers about the possibilities of living life well [in the hope that] readers continue that
conversation with stories of their own". These conversations are started, continued, and/or
enhanced through the sharing of evocative autoethnographic narratives produced from the life
experiences of the author (Bochner & Ellis, 2002; Ellis, 2004; and Ellis, 2009).

Anderson (2006) is an advocate of analytic autoethnography, which moves beyond
mere evocation in order to "contribute to a spiraling refinement, elaboration, extension, and
revision of theoretical understanding" (p. 388) in order to make an explicit scholarly
contribution through the sharing and subsequent analysis of autoethnographic data. Anderson
(2006) defines it as: Ethnographic work in which the researcher is (1) a full member in the
research group or setting, (2) visible as such a member in the researcher's published texts, and
(3) committed to an analytic agenda focused on improving theoretical understandings of
broader social phenomena (p. 375).

To put it simply, the former is deeply concerned with the individual experience, where
the researcher is researched; while the latter is more about the social world, where the
researcher intimately in tune with the context and provides data of "vital aspects of human
experience that cannot be accessed using other available methods." (Vryan, 2006, p.407).

Evocative autoethnography is a "cognitive awareness," which includes "emotional, bodily and spiritual reactions" (Ellis, 1997, p.116). According to Ellis (2009), it does "not proclaim how things are or how life should be lived, but instead strive to open up a moral and ethical conversation with readers about the possibilities of living life well [in the hope that readers continue that conversation with stories of their own." What evocative ethnography does is to deliver a narrative accessible to a larger and more varied audience, and not confine it to a small number of people. By doing this, the 'silenced voices will have a chance to be heard and speak up for themselves.

In evocative autoethnography, the readers will read

struggle, passion, embodied life, and the collaborative creation of sense-making in situations in which people have to cope with dire circumstances and loss of meaning. Autoethnography wants the reader to care, to feel, to emphasize, and to do something, to act. It needs the researcher to be vulnerable and intimate. Intimacy is a way of being, a mode of caring, and it shouldn't be used as a vehicle to produce distanced theorizing. What are we giving to the people with whom we are intimate, if our higher purpose is to use our joint experience to produce theoretical abstractions published on the pages of scholarly journals? (Ellis & Bochner, 2006).

To this effect, the ways of writing are unconventional like 'a creative non-fiction,' where dialogue with the self and/or others is presented and other literary devices are employed, which are not allowed and employed in traditional social science scholarship. Ellis and Bochner (2006) said, "I want ethnography to make a difference in the world and, where necessary, to change people," I say. "I believe autoethnography does that".

Analytic autoethnography, also referred to as auto-anthropology, autobiographical ethnography or sociology, personal or self-narrative, is claimed to have five features:

(1) complete member researcher (CMR) status, referring to the immersed position of an ethnographer within the context under examination; (2) analytic reflexivity, which "involves an awareness of reciprocal influence between ethnographers and their settings and

informants," entailing a "self-conscious introspection guided by a desire to better understand both self and others through examining one's actions and perceptions in reference to and dialogue with those of others" (p. 385); (3) narrative visibility, which, in traditional ethnography, may be lacking because an ethnographer would typically take on an invisible stance - maintaining an omniscient presence while being in the context and while narrating about the context.(4) having a dialogue with informants beyond self, which involves becoming intimately knowledgeable of the context and the data, lest the researcher slips into indifference. (5) commitment to theoretical analysis refers to the larger goal of an ethnographic study, which is to see how issues found in the research site are pertinent to broader social phenomena, instead of merely representing an emic perspective of an individual or a social context.

Autoethnography uses the self as data. The value of autoethnography lies within its "usefulness to others" (Vryan, 2006). The appeal of analytic autoethnography is about its ability to theorizing and abstracting personal experiences, evocative ethnography relies on the process of empathy of familiar emotions. Evocative writing relies heavily on personal subjectivity. In spite of differences, Vryan argues that the proposal of distinguishing autoethnographies into two types is unnecessary. Both evocative and analytic can be descriptive and theoretical when it is done well (Burnier, 2006).

For this current autoethnography project, I combine both features of the major two types of writing so as to be strong at theoretical analysis and meanwhile resonating with many readers. I write in a way to grab the attention of and evoke emotions in readers, and meanwhile, bring analytic perspective into the narrative. Moreover, while I am hopeful the data and analysis will open up conversations with readers about the possibility of better learning and teaching and inspire readers to continue the conversations. My ultimate goal in

employing autoethnography is to engage in "reflexive self-awareness" (Muncey, 2010) in order to analyze my own self-narrative for the purpose of making an original contribution to the study of agency in hopes of developing more agentic educators and learners.

4.7 Doing and Writing Autoethnography

Chang (2008) points out the autoethnographic research sets the goal to achieve ethnographic intent. Like ethnography, autobiographical ethnography pursues the ultimate goal of cultural understanding underlying autobiographical experiences. Autobiographical ethnographers undergo the usual ethnographic research process of data collection, data analysis/interpretation, and report writing. As the ethnographer of self, I follow the practice of ethnographic investigations: collect field data by means of participation, observation, interviews, and document review, gathering past writings, verify data by triangulating sources and contents from multiple origins, analyze interpret data to decipher the cultural meaning of events, behavior, and thoughts and write ethnography (Chang, 2008). Meanwhile, I take writing as analysis and adopt some creative analytic practices.

4.7.1 Collection and Creation of Qualitative Materials

Memory reveals only partial truth and it is very possibly tending to be unreliable and unpredictable. Change (2008) observes that memory sects, shapes, limits and distorts the past. Some distant memories remain vivid while some other recent memories fade away quickly, blurring the time gap between these memories. Considering these characteristics, she advises taking a systematic but stepwise approach, the core of which is chronicling the past. Other useful techniques suggested include inventorying and visualizing the past. Some of these advices are included in five requirements for data collection of an autoethnographic inquiry offered by Bade and Major (2013): 1) chronicling the past; 2) undertaking an inventory of the

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self; 3) using approaches that enable visualizing the self; 4) undertaking self-observation; 5) collecting self-reflective data. These five requirements guide my inquiry because they influence the credibility, trustworthiness, validity, and reliability of autoethnography itself (Savin-Bade & Major, 2013).

I adopt the chronicling technique for the purpose of memorizing my experiences about change and progress in self- development and professional development. To achieve the purpose of chronicling the past to collect personal memory data extending over several years, I produced chronological autobiographical timeline in which I tried to write down events, happenings and incidents that are related to research questions. Then the exercise proceeds with the selection of events, happenings and incidents that have led to cultural self-discoveries in my life.

In addition to making timeline, I follow similar approaches to collecting data as ethnographies, by collecting personal narratives. This form of data collecting is an interpretive story or narrative about cultural contexts. Other qualitative materials refer to the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials - case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural texts and productions; observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

4.7.2 Description of Qualitative Materials

My research process begins by focusing on collecting and creating narrative, textual, and visual data from my life experiences starting from my first overseas teaching experience in 2007 in a university in Indonesia to the last parts of my doctoral program in 2018. It covers my teaching experience within China, outside of China, and during my doctoral program in the US.

In order to construct autoethnographic accounts, I intend to consider the use of both existent and created data sources, with textual and visual data informing the creation of narrative vignettes. The critical events and epiphany moments emerge by looking through the data source and evaluated under the guidance of the research questions.

Textual data will include the collection, assembly, and production of primary data sources such as:

Teaching materials, artifacts about teaching activities, course materials, selected course paper, previous ethnographic and other research studies by me, field notes and research memos, research journals, conference presentation proposals and papers, documents, artifacts, images, collection of email messages, personal journals, online data (e.g. blogs, social mediate interaction), anecdotes, etc.

To develop a robust depiction of the various social and cultural contexts of my educational experiences, I would like to complement primary data sources with multiple forms of secondary textual data such as periodicals, newspaper articles, scholarly articles, online texts, cultural event posters, and other sources of background and historical data.

Visual data such as photographs, student artifacts, videos, cultural artifacts, artworks, student teachers' recorded teaching, etc. were used to inform my self-study. Visual materials are helpful to inform and enrich narrative creation, and to be presented alongside text as a standalone layer calling for readers to scrutinize images for the discourses image-makers take for granted.

Muncey (2005) has suggested that the use of snapshots and artifacts can be "important [for the legitimation of autoethnography] if memory and its distortions appear to be critical features of the process" (p. 1). Similarly, Duncan (2004) has called for the use of multiple

sources of evidence to support personal opinion, suggesting the need for "hard" evidence to support "soft" impressions.

According to research topics manifested in my course papers, conference papers, studies for comprehensive examination papers and other academic writings, some categories emerged. Under each category, I prepare and compose autoethnographic accounts. Here are some major categories based on varied identities: agency as a cultural torchbearer; agency in teaching learners with diverse backgrounds; experiencing agency in discourse communities; researching about agency and with agency; supervising to raise awareness and foster agency; mentoring others to help them exercise and achieve agency.

I craft autoethnographic accounts throughout the entire exploration process. Writing autoethnography makes me feel liberated as it allows spaces to integrate and utilize interdisciplinary knowledge and multiple theories to explore complexity and multiplicity. I do not feel confined to use some language particular to any particular discourse community. My perspective and language use are valued and validated. In order to structure the data collection phase of research, I chronicle my past educational experiences with a detailed autobiographical timeline. I sort out appropriate texts, images, and artifacts in connection to the timeline. The collected materials are to be used to inform initial reflective writing, reflective journaling, and memos about my past experiences.

Construction of new data are results from the examination of textual and visual data, reflective writing, reflective journaling, and retrospective observations of my educational experiences. I synthesize and write about the majority of my educational experiences from a first-person point of view to create a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like representation of my understandings, images, and interpretations of the world.

In data production, I attempt to stay true to the different perspectives, values, and beliefs I held at different points in my educational career, while acknowledging present day understandings, conflicts, and growth. The dual nature of my role as both subject and object of this research will be manifested in my reflective writing after reading my past writings and collect from the "self-interview" and mutual interview. I believe the combination of textual, visual, and narrative data enriches the autoethnographic discussion of agency, identity and power in a way that one data source alone could not.

I draw on a particular model of critical reflection from the work of Macfarlane, Noble, Kilderry, and Nolan (2006) to help me with reflective writings. The model incorporates four stages and provides opportunities to think deeply about problems of practice, to make links between theory and practice, and to think about other possibilities for educational practice (Henderson et al., 2013). The four stages of the model – deconstruct, confront, theorize and think otherwise – offer a useful framework for making sure that the reflection goes beyond the superficial and is meaningful, active and critical.

One of the main domains in autoethnographic research is self-knowledge. Self-observation and self-reflection are important data source. They affect each other in constituting a dynamic process of searching for understanding of meaning. Self-reflective process can be carried out during and after self-observation. I already collected reflective writing data and analyze some of them as I carried on in the past years.

"An autoethnographic self-interview involves dialogue between one's past and present selves, at times actively with others as well, in which memories and understandings about the past are constructed anew" (Anderson & Glass-Coffin, 2013). I produce and add more reflection notes by "self-interview" and possible mutual interview (related participant). The

questions of auto-interview are formulated along the writing process to fulfil the purpose to get more out of the past, compare the different contexts and let the changes over time emerge.

4.7.3 Analyzing Qualitative Data

Data analysis followed a three-step process: (a) reducing the data, (b) identifying distinct experiences or critical incidents, and (c) exploring the categories of description. These steps were at times engaged simultaneously.

With all categorized materials ready, I move onto writing which is viewed as analysis and interpretation, where I scrutinize all data, building connections through literary conventions, adjusted narrative layering, and critical analysis of narratives. This is a cyclical process and not a linear process. Content analysis, thematic coding, discourse analysis and necessary strategies have been integrated in the writing process.

I examine raw and emotive accounts or reflective writings with a stronger analytical eye, probing the structures and processes present in my accounts. I pull back from the personal and identify the organizational patterns found within my narrative accounts in order to gain insight into social and cultural processes at work in my lived experiences.

Chang (2008, pp. 131-132), for instance, outlines ten different autoethnographic analysis and interpretation strategies, which focus on: (1) recurring topics, themes and patterns; (2) cultural themes; (3) exceptional occurrences; (4) inclusion and omission; (5) connecting present with past; (6) relationships between self and others; (7) comparing yourself with other people's cases; (8) broad contextualization; (9) comparing with social science constructs and ideas; and (10) framing with theories. The first ones are more focused on analysis and the later ones on interpretation. I write up my ethnographic accounts by selective using some of them.

4.7.4 Writing as Analysis and Creative Analytical Practice

Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) disrupted notions of conventional qualitative research methods - "structural (and positivist)" practices that included coding, sorting, and categorizing data (p. 970) - when they asserted writing as a method of inquiry. "For me," St. Pierre wrote, "writing is thinking, writing is analysis, writing is indeed a seductive and tangled method of discovery" (p. 967). They pointed out that to qualitative writers, there were two important ideas: 1) it directs us to understand ourselves reflexively as persons writing from particular positions at specific times; 2) it frees us from trying to write a single text in which everything is said at once to everyone. Writing is validated as a method of knowing. (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2008).

The act of creation is in the doing, and the creative state of mind. Writing is such a creative act and we construct it as we write such that 'not until we had written this down did we quite know what we knew' (Van Manen, 1990). It can be seen as a 'coming to understand', a way of checking out and making sense of what we think we know (Rolfe, 1997). In the process of writing, knowledge is transformed into understanding and it is also a means to learning.

This analytic function of writing is also observed by Richardson (1994) who argues that 'writing is now to be seen as a method of inquiry, a way of finding out about yourself and your topic'. Writing is also a way of 'knowing' - a method of discovery and analysis. By writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it. Form and content are inseparable. (p.516).

St. Pierre (2011) also notes, "When one must bring to bear on writing, in writing, what one has read and lived, that is thinking that cannot be taught. That is analysis" (p. 621). "What we think wit when we think about a topic...during analysis" are data, too (p. 621).

She writes,

I imagine a cacophony of ideas swirling as we think about our topics with all we can muster—with words from theorists, participants, conference audiences, friends and lovers, ghosts who haunt our studies, characters in fiction and film and dreams—and with our bodies and all the other bodies and the earth and all the things and objects in our lives—the entire assemblage that is a life thinking and, and, and . . . All those data are set to work in our thinking, and we think, and we work our way somewhere in the thinking (2011, p. 622).

The arguments about 'writing as analysis' deeply resonates with me. I can relate to my own research endeavors and the dilemmas that I confront around the rigid prescriptive conventions in scholarly writing. Writing called as 'textual labor' by Van Manen (1990) is viewed as an essential part of the research act by him. During the laborious process of my interaction with empirical data, I experience the 'cacophony of ideas swirl'[ing] through my mind, and I consciously know that many of the insights that I write down in this study actually developed out of my thinking with and through the textual materials or self-observation and dialogue with self.

And in recognizing that this type of work represents "the entire assemblage that is a life thinking," I also acknowledge that there is a close relation between my preconceived assumptions grounded in my life experiences and those that stem from my intellectual engagement with the theoretical literature that inform my thinking. Furthermore, I have come to realize that the daily encounters with all kinds of people and other interlocutors in real life and their way of doing and living and insights from their life altogether contribute to crucial additional layers that enrich my understanding of the research focus.

As St. Pierre (1996) points out, "these others...provide researchers with response data which may never be officially mapped and accounted for but which can produce significant reconstructions of meaning as the research project progresses" (p. 535). These assemblages of

thoughts also remind me that the analysis process is always both deductive and inductive, and not just one or the other.

Writing as synthesis, the building up of something new from a variety of components. The act of 'interpretation' in interpretative sociology is as much an act of writing, of the organization of sociological texts, as it is a matter of cognitive process of understanding (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p.209).

4.7.5 Creative Analytical Practices

By challenging the boundaries between writing, analysis and interpretation, researchers such as Denzin (2005, 2006) and Ellis (1995, 2004, 2008) clearly search for new ways of knowing besides the scientific knowing that we are familiar with in academia. In recent years, alternative ways of knowing emerge and are often related to postmodern, poststructural, feminist and practice-based theorizing (Tsoukas and Knudsen 2003).

Denzin (2006, p.420) reminds us that autoethnography has close connections to ethnographers that are produced through 'creative analytical practices.' Besides autoethnography, these include: fiction-stories, poetry, performance texts, polo vocal texts, reader's theatre responsive readings, aphorisms, comedy and stare, visual presentations, allegory, conversation, layered accounts, writing stories, and mixed genres, creative nonfiction, performance writing, mysteries, memories, personal histories and cultural criticism (Denzin 2006; p. 420; see also Muncey 2010).

The purpose of creative analytical practices is not to produce traditional scientific knowledge, but to 'write messy vulnerable texts that make you cry' (Denzin 2006) and 'change the world by writing from the heart' (Denzin 2006). The main point of creative analytical practices is to produce knowledge that is not primarily cognitive but emotional while emotional knowledge is not based on traditional scientific analysis of the data, this

mode of writing is not necessarily golfed by analysis that could be separated from the writing. In this type of autoethnography, writing cannot be separated from analyzing and interpreting. Aligning with this point of view, the fragments, sketches, vignettes I created could be considered as autoethnography without a separate act of analysis and interpretation. In this case, however, they would also be evaluated on the basis of their ability to relate to alternatives of knowing which actually would still require much more work.

4.7.6 Writing Autoethnographic Accounts

Holman Jones et al. (2013) describe the characteristics that make personal narratives autoethnographic: (1) purposefully commenting on/critiquing of culture and cultural practices, (2) making contributions to existing research, (3) embracing vulnerability with purpose, and (4) creating a reciprocal relationship with audiences in order to compel a response.

According to Chang (2008), the product of autoethnographic research is typically a retrospective prose narrative produced by a real person concerning his/her own existence, focusing on his/her individual life, in particular on the development of his/her personality. In general, writing autoethnography is a way of doing reflection of the past and provides an overview towards the future. This is also one of the main reasons I want to do at the end of doctoral education and share with more people who cannot take the risk or adventure to pursue a doctoral degree.

Ellingson & Ellis (2008) claims that the practice of autoethnography becomes "space in which an individual's passion can bridge individual and collective experience to enable richness or representation, complexity of understanding, and inspiration for activism" (p.448). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) affirms that finding some stories and experiences as significant and other as insignificant was how qualitative researchers incorporated their own voices and values in the research. Similarly, Wolcott (1994) states that "in the very act of construction

data out of experience, the researcher singles out some things as worthy of note and relegates others to the background" (p. 13). Thus, using autoethnography as the methodology for this study, I single out more significant things and this writing process is part of analysis. In the whole process, I archive my own writings, notes of my thinking, and cultural understanding through analysis and interpretation. The focus is not just about self alone, but also about searching for understanding of others (culture/society) through self.

Autoethnography is not just a factual recount with details. Experience is assertive, intentional and creative. The idea is to recreate the researcher's experience. The writing of autoethnography is a combination of writing and doing reflection of the past and provides an overview of the future. It is also not a one-sided activity. It offers readers opportunities to make a contrast with lived experiences of their own, so as to discover new dimensions in readers' own lives.

In a post-structural autoethnography, 'the writing writes the writer as a complex (im)possible subject in a world where (self) knowledge can only ever be tentative, contingent, and depending on situation. In these ways, autoethnographic writing can be simultaneously personal and scholarly, evocative and analytical, descriptive and theoretical (Burnier, 2006). Ethnographic methods provide an added layer to a study because they involve the researcher in self-reflexive work, begun with the writing of fieldnotes and continued throughout the study through the writing of memos, a researcher's journal or other forms of writings.

4.8 Addressing Critique

Some researchers 'may value autoethnography but had concern over its vigor.' (Prince, 2006). Some even don't regard autoethnographic research as scientific studies.

Indeed, traditional criteria used to judge quantitative research may not be suitable for autoethnographic research. Following issues will be addressed in this section.

4.8.1 Self

I remind myself that this autoethnography is not going to be only self. Self and others are interconnected concepts. The reflection of any critical incident in this study, careful attention will be given to those 'others' (present physically or in the awareness of me) who are affecting or interacting with the 'self.' Students, teachers, family members, people from social life were interweaved in my narration.

4.8.2 Generalizability

On the subject of generalization, Ellis argues that it is possible to generalize from an autoethnography, but not in a traditional manner. The generalizability of an autoethnography is tested by readers 'as they determine if the story speaks to them about their experience or about the lives of others they know' (Ellis 2004). The autoethnographer does not privilege traditional analysis and generalization. Ellis argues that autoethnographies do contain analytic elements in the sense that 'when people tell stories, they employ analytic techniques to interpret their worlds' (2004).

My objective for sharing my experiences is not only about self-exploration and discovery of self-truth. I was more interested in raising awareness and reaching out to a wider audience than in generalizing the results of my study. I highlight my subjective truth. I have no intention of making statements that could be considered objective, or scientific truths.

For me, the personal and cultural analyses will be reported with rich essential details so that readers find meaning from my experience and reflection and they can associate the importance into their experience. They may resonate with my professional and life experience

or they may not, and judge how much my story and interpretations can be generalized to their own cases.

4.8.3 Validity and Reliability

Cho and Trent (2006) differentiate between transactional (truth-seeking) and transformational forms of validity, explaining that transformational validity in qualitative research is a progressive, emancipatory process leading toward social change that is to be achieved by the research endeavor itself. They contend that autoethnography and other personal research formats require "a deeper, self-reflective, empathetic understanding" and self-assessment of experiences in order to change the existing social condition (Cho & Trent, 2006). When considering how to assess validity in narrative autoethnography, accounts should be viewed as "descriptive… [a] dialectical view of truth as becoming… that there are always emerging possibilities which are not yet included" and should probe "meaning" by asking "is it useful? and is it illuminating?', as opposed to considering 'is it right?'" (Reason and Rowan,1981).

'Validity within an autoethnographic study may be determined by whether or not it increases communication between readers and someone other than themselves' (Prince, 2006). In other words, if readers can communicate with the researcher during an autoethnographic study and resonant with the researcher's study as the research reflects parts of the reality, we then can logically conclude there is validity in the research. In order that readers can make such judgment, the key is to provide multiple-level description and argumentation.

Hence, in this research, I included a variety of field texts: interview, memory, reflection, evaluation and observation so that the whole study is not just narrating a story on a single level of abstraction or from a single perspective. The research in fact presents to

readers a vivid and lived experience to the readers and they can judge how far the description resonates with their experiences.

For the benefit of thought generation and checking of validity and reliability, I will systematically look inward and outward, forward and backward of my experiences. In other words, I would frequently have internal dialogue, seek advice from others, and give retrospection to the critical incidents and plan for future improvement. I utilize multiple sources or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings (Merriam, 1988, 169). Multiple methods for data collection included introductory phone calls, individual interviews, observations and pictures, and post-interview reflections.

To ensure internal validity of the study, I also use crystallisation (Richard, 2002; Ellingson, 2009), which can be achieved through multiple sources of data such as interviews, field notes about those interviews, document research, printed materials. Richardson and St. Pierre posit that mixed-genre text combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations ...Crystals grow, changer, alter .... Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, arrays, casting off in different directions" (Richardson, 2000).

Ellingson (2009) postulates that crystallization is a post-modern, qualitative research approach that features in-depth multiple genre descriptions as a way to integrate themes and patterns of life experiences. Her representation of multiple realities holistically captures the bigger picture of the participants' internal and external experiences. Due to the complexity of self-reported dialogue; however, crystallization requires a strong researcher/participant relationship built upon trust, honesty, and empathy in order to establish the path to illumination, representation, and understanding of their worldviews.

For reliability, as suggested by Ellis and Bochner (2000), strictly speaking there is no such thing as reliability in autoethnographic research, because even in one's own life, no experience can repeat happening in exactly the same way. I tried my utmost to contact participants involved and seek member check if possible.

4.8.4 Subjectivity

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), an important characteristic of autoethnography…is that the writer does not adopt the 'objective outsider' convention of writing common to traditional ethnography. Instead of objective detachment when studying other cultures, the autoethnographer is involved in subjective interaction. Denzin (1997) aptly describes the process: it entails the incorporation of elements of one's own life experience when writing about others through biography or ethnography.

It is generally agreed that the reality is understood through human perception and the interpretations of such perceptions. First of all, as a researcher I will be truthful to my perception meaning that what reported should be something that really exists in my personal and cultural experience, and not my imagination. External data such as process records and learning artifacts could provide support to self-base data so as balance the subjectivity.

In autoethnographic research, the primary source of data is self's past and present together with self-observation. Meanwhile, I will use literature review as a useful method to guide my topics. As suggested by Chang, 'literature is a useful resource when searching for researchable topics, theoretical perspectives....' (Chang, 2008). It also helps the researcher to recollect and gather certain aspects of their lived experiences, which they may not have noticed as relevant before. Besides literature review can provide competing conceptions in interpretation of the data.

Subjectivity is not something we can get rid of (but rather the thing we wish to understand) and what matters is I need to know my subjectivity. I will on purpose give my writing a period cooling time and get back to it so as to do justice to my experience.

4.8.5 Narration

There is an intertwined relationship between narration and autoethnographic study. To understand the lived experience, narration is necessary to bring out the full picture of my lived experience in order to bring about an in-depth reflection. In fact, good effective narrative skill is necessary in autoethnographic studies as it helps to grasp all the related events and stories and present them to the readers.

In autoethnographic research, there may be the temptation of overemphasis on narration; thus, researcher may neglect the domain of analyzing and interpreting the autoethnographic work itself. Here, I know clearly the purpose of narration is to help me have a thorough understanding of the phenomenon so as to give a more thorough analysis. In this research, the narrative and analytic writings are planned to be organized explicitly into different chapters to safeguard against overemphasis on either narration or analytic elements.

4.8.6 Ethical Consideration

Our stories are not our own. In the process of writing about ourselves, we also write about others related to our experience. The relational ethics of a professional's practice is emerging as a growing area of interest across a range of fields and professions with implications for all members of a researcher's social network whether intimates, clients or colleagues identified as characters in a telling (Ellis et al., 2011). Relationships with others may change over time with consequent changes in ethical obligations. Process consent is suggested at each stage of a project (Ellis, 2009). And autoethnographers are obligated to

share their accounts with others who are involved in their texts and to open the space for others to talk/speak back (Ellis, 2000; Pratt, 1991). Devices that are intended to protect participants' identities in autoethnographic accounts include fictionalizing (Clough, 2002) and the use of symbolic equivalents. Protective writing devices such as a composite characterization (Ellis, 2007) and pseudonyms are adopted in an effort to respect the privacy of those portrayed in personal narrative.

I have been very careful not to neglect ethical standards when others were included in the presentation of others. To protect the right of privacy, I use code of confidentiality or false names or pseudonyms offered by my participants to protect the privacy of others. Other alternatives are also used to cover the real identity of the researcher and the others. Besides, as much as possible, if there is a necessity, I always have informed consent from 'indirect participants' so as to follow the rules of ethical research.

4.9. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the ecological approach and the multi-paradigm design of the overall investigation. I make known my take on the definition of agency in this research is about agency-as-capacity and agency-as-achievement. Capacity is not static but has a social nature and emergent depending on the entire web of internal and external factors, including temporal dimension. The available discourse and material resources can promote people's capacity. The past beliefs and aspirations toward future all contribute to the capacity to act. The achievement of agency may be stymied by the influence of one temporal dimension, fearful of failure and frustration like the unusual experience or strong desire for new experience. Using autoethnography can help me to understand my agency development and what impact my capacity and what kind of achievement I can attain or not. What are the

possibilities afforded by particular context and how the constraining factors failed to enable to achieve certain conditions. I also introduced autoethnography as methodology and as a product. Writing up autoethnographic accounts needs writing-as-analysis. Writing itself is creative process and inquiry methods. It is changeable due to many emergent forces. The following chapters will bring you to unfold a long view of me as a transnational teacher and cosmopolitan learner, keep growing and seeking self-transformation through various kinds of experiences.

CHAPTER 5

THEORETICAL RESOURCES AND CONCEPTUAL TOOLS

Autoethnography is interested in personal experiences in contexts, and these inevitably take place and are informed by shared cultural practice, the analysis and understanding of which can provide insight into shared cultural practice. In this longitudinal autoethnography which cover over ten years from 1997 to 2018, in the process, the past selves have continuously undertaken ongoing changes and the respective ontology and emergent epistemic learning. I have to prepare many available theoretical resources and conceptual tools to help me construct different parts of storied lives and analyze along the writing processes.

Boylorn and Orbe (2014) note that autoethnography encourages the researcher to apply "a critical lens, alongside an introspective and outward one, to make sense of where we are in the context of our cultural communities" (p. 17). In writing autoethnography, the researcher moves back and forth between personal introspection and critical reflection. It is analytically reflexive; it presents a "visible narrative presence" while "engaging in dialogue with informants beyond the self" in order to improve our "theoretical understandings of broader social phenomenon" (Anderson, 2006, p.375). In addition to writing about the personal and cultural, autoethnography scholarship strives to address existing theory, practice, methodology, and research results.

Brookfield (1995) proposes four critical lenses for educators to reflect upon their practice: 1) our autobiographies as learners and teachers (self-review); 2) our students' eyes (student review); 3) our colleagues experiences (peer review); 4) theoretical literature (benchmarking). The fourth and final lens is about using existing theoretical literature to

enhance educators' practices. Those literature and theories can often equip us with an enlarged vocabulary to describe and understand our practice. Such literature offers multiple perspectives on familiar situations and "can provide multiple interpretations of familiar but impenetrable situations. It can help us understand our experience by naming it in different ways, and by illuminating generic aspects of what we thought were idiosyncratic events and processes" (Brookfield, 1995). According to Brookfield, consulting the literature can become a psychological and political survival necessity, through which teachers come to understand the link between their private troubles and broader political processes.

In this chapter, I will introduce the conceptual resources and theoretical choices I made for my ongoing interpretation and analysis. They afford me theoretical language with its insights to explore the detailed ethnographic accounts and improve my ability to see a broad view of the social and historical background in time and space. All the following major theoretical literature together create a theoretical landscape and context for me to guide my sense-making of what I observe of self and others and equally important, what are not observed. They provide theoretical perspectives and foundations for the reconstruction of my identity and agency work in every step of the process. Identifying the following not others show my agentic choices in using available resources and actually this kind of identification is an analytic process by nature.

5.1 Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism enables me to understand an ever-evolving self. It is a theoretical framework that posits the self primarily as a social construction. It holds that humans are social beings and that who we are is a product of our social interactions with

others. In this sense, who we are as persons is not fixed or static; rather, who we are is continually shifting and evolving over the course of our lifetime.

Regarding the nature of symbolic interactionism, Blumer (1986) put forward three premises. The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings the things have for them. According to him, such things include everything that the human being may note in his world. They can be physical objects, other human beings, institutions, guiding ideals, activities of others and such situations as an individual encounter in his daily life. The second premise is the source of meaning. Meaning is not intrinsic to the thing but generated in the process of interaction between people. As a social product, meaning is created in the context with social other. And this leads to the third fundamental premise put forward by Blumer, which is the meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process. Thus, interpretation becomes a matter of handling meanings. It is considered as a formative process in which meanings are used and revised as instruments for the guidance and formation of action.

The focus of symbolic interactionism is about how humans construct/ reflect/ shape/ empower/constrain our sense of self/identity in social interactions. It draws on Mead's (1934) notion of the "self" and Cooley's (1902) notion of the "looking glass self," a self in process, constantly constructed and reconstructed in interaction with others. For Mead, there was no essential, inner unchanging "I" or self; instead, the self was constantly in process given its ongoing reflexivity in the social world. Cooley's metaphor also posits that self is formed and ever-evolving in the context of our daily social interactions.

Goffman (1959) make the self a visible, sociological phenomenon. He explored the quotidian aspects of social life using the metaphor of the theater. The world or society is a real-time theatrical performance in which each of us is a performer. People are constantly

performing our self complete with roles, masks, and scripts. This necessitates a continually evolving social self as the audience varies in response to each performance.

Goffman sees different kinds of stages: a "front stage" with the main audience/public and a "backstage" area where we relax and drop our roles and masks. He observes that even at back stage we are still performing to interact with a different kind of audience. Our performance involves both the impressions we intend to convey and those inadvertently conveyed through body language and facial expression. Those roles/selves vary because the performance is always an interaction between the performer/self and that particular audience. Consequently, our self is continually co-constructed in the context of social interaction.

For Goffman, acting was an "existential metaphor" that illuminates the ways each of us, as selves/performers is constantly managing how others see/experience us. The dramaturgical metaphor highlights the premise that we must continually negotiate our identity across varying relational contexts. Goffman (1959) tells us that personal identities are not concrete/essential things "to be possessed and displayed;" instead, they are "something that must be enacted and portrayed, something that must be realized."

My autoethnography will use symbolic interactionism as a theoretical framework to present the self in different educational and cultural contexts, constrained by different types of identities and discourse communities. From an interactionist approach, all roles are not fixed but instead continually negotiated between individuals in particular historical and social contexts. Interrogating autoethnographic accounts alongside relevant theoretical literature, I attempt to make sense of how and why I have come to understand the notion of agency and how I exercise and achieve my agency successfully or unsuccessfully constructed and negotiated in varying times and contexts.

5.2 Poststructuralism

Poststructural thoughts liberate researchers from demands of be(come)ing 'neutral', and avoiding bias. The rejection of fixed meanings, general theories and explanations in favour of "[…] local narratives and piecemeal and contingent understandings" (Davis and Watson, 2002) allows a relational 'understanding' of self, identities, agency, power. After understanding 'crisis of representation' (Denzin, 1994), my preconceived belief in reality or truth in language, power, experience, understanding, was replaced with a realization of multiple realities, of simultaneous and contradictory meanings, of partial and temporary evocations of experience, of complex subjectivities.

In terms of the view of language, poststructuralists consider that language is not the result of one's individuality; rather, language constructs one's subjectivity in ways that are historically and locally specific. What something means to individuals is dependent on the discourses exposed to them.

5.3 Sociocultural Theories of Learning

In the wide framework of the sociocultural traditions, human activities are seen as socially mediated and, thus, learning is seeming more as a matter of participation in a social process of knowledge construction than as an individual endeavor (Vygotsky, 1978). Knowledge emerges through the network of interactions and is distributed among those (humans and tools) interacting. As stated by Lave and Wenger (1991), learning is a process that takes place in a participation framework, not in an individual mind. By emphasizing both processes of enculturation and transformation, an agentic learner is positioned as a member of a community whose capacities are afforded and constrained by the cultural tools they can access within their social setting. Culture itself has been theorized as a shared way of living within communities that is continuously being reconstituted through the use (invention and

reinvention) of cultural tools, technologies, artifacts and concepts. In a sociocultural framework, learning is not just a matter of epistemology, but also a matter of ontology, the development of identity and agency (Wenger, 1998).

5.4 Transformative Learning Theories

Grabov (1997) sees transformative learning as an "intuitive, creative and emotional process;" Mezirow (1978, 1990, 2000) views it as a rational process leading to experience a paradigm shift that alter ways of thinking, believing and knowing, and being in the world (Palmer, 1998). Boyd (1989, 1991) holds that it is an extra rational process leading to raise consciousness and develop wisdom (O'Sullivan, 2012).

The concept of transformative learning is still evolving, but the core philosophical idea remains that changes in mind-sets shift how individuals see the world. Early scholarship emphasized a change in references, frames, and perspectives (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). As more research emerged on transformative learning, philosophical differences began to take shape; and today, two primary thoughts are most prevalent (Blalock and Akehi, 2018). One approach is critical reflection, the center of the process of making meaning as a learning process (Mezirow, 2000). The second approach is attributed to Dirkx who elevates the role of imagination and emotion during transformative learning experiences (Dirkx, 2014).

The early theory emerged from the work of adult education by Mezirow (1978). It essentially refers to a qualitative change in the perception and construction of meaning by students in a specific learning experience in which the student questions or redrafts their assumptions or habits of thought. According to this theory, adult learners improve their understanding of the world by revising their "frames of reference," which include their habits

of mind (e.g., broad, abstract habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and acting) and points of view (e.g., specific attitudes, values, beliefs, or judgments; Mezirow 1997). Frames of reference are initially shaped by social and cultural influences (e.g., parents, peer groups, etc.), but are amenable to modification when individuals solve problems (instrumental learning) or discuss problems (communicative learning) while critically reflecting on (or "reframing") the assumptions upon which interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view are based (Mezirow 1996).

> Mezirow (1997) defines transformative learning as
>
> the process of effecting change in a frame of reference. Adults have acquired a coherent   body of experience (...) frames of reference that define their life world. Frames of reference are the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences. They selectively shape and delimit expectations, perceptions, cognition and feelings. They define our line of action (Mezirow,1997).

According to this view, actions and behaviors will be changed based on the changed perspective (Cranton, 1994). There are several key elements of the transformational learning process. It can be a disorienting dilemma, or "an activating event that typically exposes a discrepancy between what a person has always assumed to be true and what has just been experienced, heard or read" (Cranton, 2002). As Cranton (2002) claims a single event or a series of events that occur over a much longer period could be "catalyst for transformation".

Cranton (1994) explains, "Transformative learning theory leads us to view learning as a process of becoming aware of one's assumptions and revising these assumptions". Basic assumptions are not challenged, then change will not take place. Sokol & Cranton (1998) further explain, "As transformative learners, they question their perspectives, open up new ways of looking at their practice, revise their views, and act based on new perspectives".

Critical reflection is necessary so that learners can recognize frames of reference and use their imaginations to redefine problems from a different perspective.

Sterling (2010–2011) highlights that learning may involve and affect different levels of consciousness by introducing the idea of "levels of knowledge". The highest order, called epistemic learning, involves a change in epistemology or operative ways of knowing and thinking that shape people's perceptions of the world and their interaction with it. Learning within paradigm does not change the paradigm, whereas learning that facilitates a fundamental recognition of paradigm and enables paradigmatic reconstruction is by definition transformative. This highest level of learning is consistent with a drastic shift of consciousness. "In brief, an expansion of consciousness and a more relational or ecological way of seeing arises, inspiring different sets of values and practices" (Sterling 2010–2011).

The aforementioned second thought about the role of emotion and imagination incorporates soul images, and intuition into transformative learning so as to make this learning theory more holistic. Dirkx (2008) states transformative learning encompasses more than cognitive level awareness and it occurs deep within our minds. It is perceived as a deep process reaching at the level of the soul and both imagination and emotion are required in the process referred to as "soul work," "a hard, emotional, messy, uncertain, ambiguous, and ill-structured process, with no pat strategies, methods, or specific models to guide the way." This kind of thought provides an opportunity to consider different ways of knowing and meaning-making.

Dirkx (1997) observes that soul beckons to a relationship between the individual and his or her broader world and it has to do with authenticity, connection between heart and mind, mind and emotion, the dark as well as the light. As Blalock and Akehi (2018) summarizes, it is a unique aspect of personhood that is in a sense separate from other people,

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but it exists and perhaps is best perceived in connection to others and the outer world. It is better served by being thought of as an integrated whole, a whole that contains identity, history, meaning, and the emotions that are present within us (Blalock and Akehi, 2018).

Transformative learning is not simply the critical reflection upon a transformative event and realize the cognitive change in perceptions of the world but also the ongoing dialogue of transformative experiences with self, others, and the world. This theory is a useful guide for my critical reflection and helping me trace my changes in beliefs, values and worldviews over time. I also would like to observe the 'soul work' and identify what facilitate or constrain this kind of transformational processes.

CHAPTER 6

THE ETHNOGRAPHER OF SELF

In this chapter, I introduce myself as the autoethnographer, the ethnographer of self. I display my self-knowledge through educational biography and I discuss my individuality and uniqueness, my disposition to write about myself, and my view of autoethnography as a way of living. They together make up the main philosophy foundation for doing and making autoethnography. It also briefly describes the brief history of my educational and teaching career so that readers know better about me, the storyteller, as a whole person, before getting to the years I closely investigate in the following chapters.

Life can only be understood backwards, but must be lived forwards. What a straightforward claim by the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard! When we contemplate about life and the way we tend to think about it, Kierkegaard reminds us of what we already know from the past life. We can only really understand our lives by looking back on things we've already done and performed. But we can't spend all our time living in the past, so we need to take what we've learned from our experiences and use it to make new decisions in the future. Past can inform where the present is from and where the future might be going.

6.1 The Vision of Holism: The Teacher as Whole Person

Before going directly to my own educational and professional history, I would like to discuss the vision of holism of seeing every person and teacher as unitary human beings. I want to borrow some ideas from holistic nursing research first to explain the significance of this perception. In my eyes, teaching and nursing have many commonalities in terms of caring, life giving, human-human encounter, working with others, responding to others' needs and subjective inner world, and so on. Rogers (1986) puts forward a radical view of nursing

that shifted focus from the reductionist shadow of deficit models of illness to enabling people to learn through health crises and realize their human potential. The nature of nursing is recognized as enabling the other to realize recovery and growth as expanding consciousness through appropriate caring-healing responses. Care-takers are active and committed participants in enhancing growth towards health but not simply supporting machine. Human beings cannot be reduced to parts without losing their humanness. People need to be responded to as a whole to gain a higher degree of harmony within the mind, body, and soul which generates self-knowledge, self-reverence, and promotes self-control, choice, and self-determination. The beliefs, attitudes, actions and experiences of both care givers and receivers are valued and play roles in the interactive process.

This paradigm shift in nursing definitely may encourage the change of views of teachers and teachers' work. A narrow understanding of teaching and teachers is increasingly reduced to technical-rational conceptions of them who are increasingly viewed as technicians. Traditional teacher education "views teachers as passive recipients of transmitted knowledge rather than active participants in the construction of meaning … and which does not take into account the thinking or decision-making of teachers" (Crandall, 2000). Teachers also perceive themselves and their students being treated as fungible costs of production, cogs in a bureaucratic machine (Bruno, 2018). But we can move beyond and embrace the view that teachers are whole persons and teaching is multi-dimensional, including moral, ethical, aesthetic, nuanced, and complex). Teachers contribute to more than academic performance of students but also reinforcing good citizenship, resilience and social skills (Bruno, 2018). Working with students is from a sense of commitment that this teacher and students' life experiences are of great importance. Teaching is also about expanding consciousness and growth in knowledge just like nursing, which is a mutual process of giving self to the other

and realization of love, compassion and therapeutic potential. If teachers can see themselves as committed participants and unitary human beings, they can also practice the thinking of students as holistic persons.

Thomas Farrell (2015) who reviews 116 articles about reflective practices in TESOL fields and points out the results that are overwhelmingly positive about the transformative potential of engaging in Reflective Practice and the power of awareness of who we are, what we do, how we do it and why we do it. In an interview, Farrell (2016, 2018) shares that his findings saying many of the studies are concentrated with the principles, theory and practice domains of reflection. There are relatively small number of studies about reflections on who they are as teachers as they articulate their philosophy of practice as well as the context they are reflecting in. He calls for the action to not only look at what works and does not work in the classroom and why but also include the teacher as whole person (we cannot separate the teacher from the teaching) and the impact of the social, moral, ethical, and political issues on our practice (Farrell, 2016, 2018).

In the reflective practice in my autoethnography, I answer the call to reflect upon my biography and life experiences. I value myself as a unitary person and perceive myself as a complex social and cultural being. The different contexts are investigated while reflecting.

6.2 Individuality and Unique Position of the Autoethnographer

This section discusses the philosophical foundation of the research methodology of autoethnography, to put it simply, the motivation of using autoethnography. My enthusiasm to do autoethnography has been affirmed and inspired by Frankl's (1946) Man's Search for Meaning. His existentialist emphasis on the particular takes the form of a preoccupation with the value of individual uniqueness (Esping, 2010). His publication is an autobiographical

account of his experiences as a psychiatrist imprisoned in Auschwitz, Kaufering and

Türkheim death camps in the years 1944 and 1945.

His first-hand experiences as a social scientist and sufferer allowed him to fuse the

personal and the scholarly in a way that might not have been possible for other psychiatrists

(who were not also prisoners) or prisoners (who were not also psychiatrists). It was the

possibility of eventually publishing and lecturing about his direct experiences with life and

death that had genuine survival value for Frankl, and he believed that his dedication to this

meaningful goal kept him alive when physically stronger individuals perished (Esping, 2010).

Just like Carolyn understood the benefits of an insider understanding,

> Who knows better the right questions to ask than a social scientist who has lived
> through the experience? Who would make a better research subject than a researcher
> consumed by wanting to figure it all out? (Ellis, 1991)

Frankl embraced the individual subjectivity as a valid way of understanding and representing

the world. Esping (2010) comments on Frankl's publications for his assertions that each

human being's uniqueness results from three things: (1) The individual's disposition, or

natural talents and limitations (2) the individual's situation, or external circumstances and

environment and (3) the individual's positions, which are the chosen attitudes and actions s/he

chooses with regard to her or his (potentially unchangeable) disposition and situation.

Each person's unique position relative to their disposition and situation means that he

or she will perceive and represent internal and external phenomena only in his or her

particular ways. No human being has access to universal truth and complete reality. Each

individual's perception of reality is lived through the experiences of a partially-observed

object in relation to surroundings.

With the erosion of the positivist paradigm in social science, more and more ethnographers have become increasingly comfortable letting their own voices be present in their scholarly writing and some authors start to turn their ethnographic lenses inward explicitly. Autoethnography, as a more extreme version of this reflexivity, makes it possible that individual's own lived experience can be the primary focus of study from the outset (Ellis, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 1996).

When autoethnographers disclose intimate details of their personal lives, they do so with the expressed purpose of connecting their private lived experience to the larger psychological, social, cultural, and/or political worlds shaping it and being shaped by it (Ellis, 2004). They are allowed for both personal and cultural critique.

Because people's lives and ideologies are influenced by multiple cultural dimensions and relationships (Boylorn, Orbe, and Ellis, 2013), I can make use of this dissertation study to make my unique voice heard and my professional growth visible. By using my personal voice, I present a self-portrait of my lived experience as a language teacher and language teacher educator. In this ethnography of self, I can also create an alternative narrative to promote the understanding of complexity and richness of language teachers' lives in the era of globalization and superdiversity. I also intend to problematize official ideology and normalized formal practice of Chinese language teacher preparation and development.

I know that I possess my own individual uniqueness in the above mentioned three things: 1) disposition as an ethnographic writer; 2) situated in non-conventional and non-modernist paradigm; and 3) my positions to promote agency and focus on the learner and learning as the center of education with agency perspective.

6.3 My Disposition as an Autoethnographic Writer

On March 26, 2017, my high-school classmate Liang in my native city in China finished the task at my request to share with me all the scanned images of my 14 handwritten letters to him during my four-year undergraduate collegiate life. He was my pen pal at that time studying at a different university and we always shared with each other news and happenings on respective campuses. I did not preserve any of his letters but luckily, he saved all the letters from me to him. I am so grateful that some of precious records of my life narratives have been preserved safely by him. I enjoyed my own writing and appreciated plain descriptions and narrations by myself of an English major's language education, campus life, daily activities, travel writings, intellectual explorations as well as philosophical dialogues about many aspects of life during the 90s. They were really useful texts that help me understand who I was and how I grew from the start of formal college language education.

My own writing pieces dated over twenty years ago revealed chronicle changes in my personality, emotions, beliefs, attitudes, and values. I could easily identify one distinct core characteristic that kept building up, namely, intrapersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1989). My habit of recording and writing my life had always acted as both a mode of reflection and inquiry (Richardson, 1994) to gain a better understanding of what had happened and what I would like to interpret them, and imagine for the future. I realize that I have been very reflective with distinct affective awareness, ethical awareness, self-regulation, and metacognition up till now.

Even though back to 20 years ago, it seemed that I had not explicitly and consciously employed autoethnographic approaches to share my life stories and interpret my existence. But actually, starting from the age of 18, I have enhanced the behavior of introspection through thoughtful writing and deliberate contemplation. This capability to deal with emotion

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as well as a capacity to be reflexive (Ellis, 1999) combined with developing writing and thinking skills have enabled me to form a long-term habit of connecting inner world and external world, self and society, individual stories and meta-narratives, under whatever circumstances in whatever identities. This kind of rich experience of self-examination, self-observation, self-introspection and using self to get to culture (Pelias, 2003) make my present autoethnographic study possible and feasible.

6.4 My Interest in Autoethnography as a Way of Knowing

During the year from 2007 to 2018, I have noticed great changes in my understanding or raised consciousness of sense of agency, practice of agency in language teaching and learning. I can see myself now intentionally acting as an enabler and fosterer of various forms of agency.

In my memory, right after my first presentation as a novice ethnographer titled Social Aspects of L2 Learning Through the PRISM of Classroom Culture at 34th Annual Ethnography in Education Research Forum in 2013, I was asked to tell how I changed my perspective from looking at only cognitive aspects to attending to social aspects of language learning. The questioner was interested in my talk of re-conceptualizations of learning and language, and she wanted to know more about how the shift could take place as she hoped her fellow teachers could adopt the same practice.

I did not give complicated answers but responded to her with an immediate reply, "by reading, reading a lot of articles and research literature." I think I had wanted to emphasize self-socialization into academic discourses in social theory and embracing new meanings, both epistemological and ontological, after close study of relevant texts. I did not have enough appropriate language to compose a convincing answer at that time as a novice ethnographer. I

also knew that this kind of question also did require some manifested evidence. I wish I could answer questions like this about ever-evolving nature of thoughts more fully now by providing selected critical personal narratives, discourse analysis and empirical manifestations in real-world practice.

In the following chapters, I intend to make use of autoethnographic accounts to demonstrate it is possible to better understand the possibilities of and implement changes in thoughts and actions under all kinds of situated learning scenes. This autoethnography itself will be an act of exercising my agency as a first-person narrator and researcher whose subject and object is self in many identities such as a teacher, a teacher-learner, a researcher, a supervisor, and an advocator of multiliteracies and others. It is my personal mission to show the attainment of one language educator consciously living among different languages and diverse cultures with a focus on agency.

I have been consciously writing reflectively, sharing my narratives, and using email communication to document my experience. In the past years, I had saved all of the qualitative and ethnographic projects files. There has been a treasure house for me to explore and reconstruct past experiences. I continue to feel that I am doing work that is a "calling", and I am also inspired by accomplished autoethnographers to carry on the autoethnography movement in the language education field. It is not simply a way of knowing about the world; it has been a way of being in the world, one that requires living consciously, emotionally and reflexively.

6.5 My Educational Autobiography as a Language Learner and Teacher

I would like to begin with words by Doecke (2015) before I write as a participant observer of self:

"To engage in autobiographical writing at certain stages in your life – to conduct an 'inventory', as Gramsci puts it – is a key way of identifying and critically engaging with those conditions, and of developing an awareness of the partial nature of your standpoint as a social and historical actor."

In this section, I will give a brief review of my personal history experiencing many stages of development and different identity prototypes so as to answer the question: What kind of socio-historical background I, the investigator, had that could impact the evolving present selves and what I can see now? This is a deliberate practice of reflexivity, a process of self- examination and self-disclosure about aspects of my own background, identities or subjectivities, and assumptions that influence all my data collection and interpretation.

Pinar (1981) captures the essence of writing autobiography for ourselves as movement:

> … in order to cultivate our capacity to see through the outer forms, the habitual explanations of things, the stories we tell in order to keep others at a distance. It is against the take-for-granted, against routine and ritual we work, for it is the regularized and habitual which arrest movement. In this sense we seek a dialectical self-self relation, which then permits a dialectical relationship between self and work, self and others.

In writing this self-inquiry, I am at the very core of the narrative commencing self and then. The story of my involvement has been never ending and it started from a highly active autonomous young learner of L2 English but ready to conform to an unknowingly agentive college student practicing oppositional agency and choosing unofficial literacy practice out of class curriculum, from a L2 teacher with an awareness of student-centered and learning-focused instruction to a lecturer most of time yielding to institutional constraints and conventional pedagogical practice, from a narrow-minded applicant with trust in raising teacher quality to change to a very conscious doctoral student researcher and teacher educator

equipped with trans- disciplinary theoretical background and social-theory informed discourses.

6.5.1 A Passionate Young Learner of English

Looking back upon my lived educational and work experience, I can see clearly that the majority part of my life has been related to learning L2 English earnestly, to be more exact, English as a foreign language(hereafter EFL), teaching college-level EFL passionately and tirelessly to English majors and non-English-majors, and later teaching wholeheartedly my native Chinese language (meaning mandarin in my case) as a second language (hereafter CSL) to international students at my university within China and Chinese as a foreign language (hereafter CFL) outside China context (e.g. Indonesia and US). I had never stopped pursuing the specific goal of bettering my own and other people's life through the development of L2 literacy and increasing socio-economic power by means of adequate L2 linguistic competence and performance. Before coming to doctoral program with concentration in Language, Literacy and Culture, I was already aware of the enormous pragmatic value of an additional language, especially English as a global language, that could enhance the competitive power and marketability of EFL learners and broaden their social life into English-speaking culture as well as possibilities of entering and understanding of a new world. It was the same with those who aspired to achieve a high level of Chinese fluency and desired to seek new possibilities in China or Chinese-speaking communities, a new rising world economic super power and an increasingly important world language.

I was so fortunate to study English in an extra-curricular program when I was a third grader in China back in 1984. I really took pride in having this kind of uncommon opportunity of learning English in out-of-school context as a young learner in a period of time when English was just beginning to spread internationally and designated as a major foreign

language in all-level institutions in China. Although the content in my memory was only about learning to speak simple everyday expressions, basic sentence drills and some objects' English equivalent names, and the dominant instructional practice was always chanting together repeating after a teacher, I remember I was engaged and interested in imitating something that was quite different from my native language. I did not doubt that I was quite conscious even from elementary school that I was accumulating a kind of special power, which was social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) I can name now, that not many students had access to at that time. I did not think I had ever questioned the teacher authority and her teaching practice at all, as anyone who had any amount of knowledge of English would be cherished and worshiped in those historical contexts. The English-language teachers would control whatever they wanted to teach and the ways of doing things. I am certain that at the early stage of EFL learning, I was a happy follower and faithful imitator of any person who knew English.

6.5.2 Autonomous Learner of English Subject throughout Secondary School

I had been voluntary in my investment (Norton, 2000) in much more time, money, and energy in learning the subject of English than other fields since I went to middle school. I was very attentive in my English classes and loved the teacher deeply because of the love towards the language. I bought books to self-test my English skills in addition to school workload and I also followed my enthusiasm to consistently listen to independently radio programs teaching English by English-speaking teachers. I will never forget how I was not afraid of the difficult travel to the Radio Station Building to purchase the designated textbook and tapes and closely follow the daily evening classes in the air in a hot lonely space without air-conditioner. My self-directed learning and diligence helped me build up a solid foundation of English learning. My excelling in learning the subject of English made myself convinced that my future career

and life opportunities would be related with this most useful international language. Using English to make a difference in my own life and other people's life had been my aspiration. In my high school years with the clear life goal, I immersed myself in model exams and test skills training for national entrance exam and thrived in all kinds of English examinations. At this young adult period of life time, I did not critically think anything was wrong with the formal classroom learning of English, which had two primary focus: rote memorization and test preparation. Multiple choices, cloze test and reading comprehensions seemed never exhaust me. I was proud of my high scores in English tests. By this stage, I had acquired an intermediate level of L2 English reading and writing and confidence to accomplish more.

6.5.3 Majoring in English and Teaching College English Learners

I was then successfully admitted into a strong program in English-language education in a leading university in China. Five days a week at the first two years, small class size of 25 students took one-hour BT (basic training) course by young/novice English-speaking teachers in their twenties. And we were offered other skill-getting courses like listening, comprehensive English, and others. At the junior year, there were some courses about British and US cultures, English and American literature taught by visiting professors from English-speaking countries. The rest of other English-related curriculum were taught by local Chinese teachers. During the four years of undergraduate program, I remembered that I felt bored, not engaged and even chose to skip classes occasionally. I did not affirm and was satisfied by the native English- speaker teachers' teaching just because English was his/her mother tongue. I felt discouraged by the traditional grammar translation of advanced level English class. Regular quizzes, tests and examinations were the major theme of the program study. Reflecting back, I would appraise myself as a legitimate L2 user and an intentional player of this language as I could write biography of historic figure in ancient China and translated

ancient poems into English without problem. From my freshmen year, I had been a very active performer and leading actress in English drama society. I was an important editor for the campus broadcasting and other societies. There were conflicting images of my selves. On one hand, I was one of non-conformists in my cohort fellow students to resist teachers' instruction by non-participation and not going classes; on the other hand, I participated extensively in extra-curricular English activities. Now I know that, as a matter of fact, I unconsciously exercised my oppositional agency and unknowingly manifesting my agentic learning behavior through unofficial out-of-school curriculum. My affective needs, personal meaning making desires, and sociocultural background had been overlooked but I had developed certain sense of self-awareness and agency as well as critical thinking questioning conventional L2 English.

Regarding my understanding of language, I had not been exposed to the social aspects of language use and but the concentration was on literature and translation of literature. The use of language was mainly confined to literary English. My B.A. thesis was about the translation theory and analysis of several translated versions of a famous Chinese prose. I started to teach EFL right after I was hired in a university English program. I tried to take care student needs and their learning styles into serious consideration. I would never overlook their aspiration and appreciate their personal history related to EFL learning. I made it clear to my student that I was only a learner with more years of experience and my role was to support and facilitate their learning. At the early years of my teaching, as long as you were considered a fluent English speaker and demonstrated a high level of mastery of English and helped with students' preparation for mandated College English Test Band-4, Band-6 and Test for English Majors Band 8, you were a well-respected teacher. In order to improve my L2 English proficiency, I was doing my MA degree at weekends in another leading university in China.

My MA thesis was about literary analysis of an American novel. English literature and some formal training in linguistics were the major concern in the graduate level programs. Until this stage, I was confined to the understanding of language within the literature and linguistic circle and I had not awakened that I could take the initiative to join in the larger conversation of international EFL teaching to become a dialogical communicator. As a teacher having higher power of possessing more experience and a degree in English literature, I played the dominant role in a teacher-led classroom. But I gradually developed my research interest in applied linguistics, SLA (second language acquisition) and L2 development during a decade of college-level language teaching and working as administrative personnel, language program designer and coordinator.

6.5.4 Teaching Chinese as CSL and CFL within and outside China

Another turning point of my life was I started teaching mandarin Chinese from 2002 as a second language (CSL) to foreign students in my university while teaching EFL. As the number of language teachers with national qualification to teach Chinese was quite small, I enrolled and passed the qualification test and was granted one, Then I started teaching Chinese-language mainly and worked with university students from all over the world coming to China to pursue degrees or for the purpose of Chinese-language improvement. From 2007, I was sponsored by government to teach advanced Chinese literature and medium level Chinese at a university in Bandung, Indonesia and then I was selected by Hanban to a university in Rhode Island to teach all-level Chinese and run Chinese-related programs at private and public K-12 schools. My creativity and teacher agency have been greatly fostered when working with learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In both CSL and CFL instructional context, I was very innovative in teaching practices so as to engage

students and effectively help them. The understanding of language education have been expanded largely.

Even though I reminded myself to be a highly efficient language educator and take actions to nurture the love of Chinese in my teaching, I knew that I needed further education regarding theories of language and learning deeply about L2 education. I applied for the doctoral program with a long proposal about researching teacher qualities. I had imagined if every teacher had developed a set of high performing qualities, L2 teaching and learning would be transformed at a faster space to produce better outcomes.

6.5.5 Developing as a Social Theory-Informed Educator

I did not seriously develop myself as a researcher and a teacher educator until I came to the doctoral program, where I took my time to make sense of and socialized myself into social- theory oriented discourse regarding L2 education. I had never predicted that I would be able to acquire an anthropological and sociological perspective to look at L2 education and rethink the development of language learning with ethnographer's eye. The knowledge and understanding about social theory, cultural studies, education research, teacher preparation and language research made me reflect upon various aspects of language, learning, and language learning that I would not have the awareness or capacity to attend to before this doctoral education.

Before my doctoral program, I did not have experience to prepare language teachers in a systematic way and had little experience to conduct well-designed teacher training but it was through the supervision experience and research studies along the doctoral journey, I witnessed myself to become a teacher-educator and L2 researcher focusing on sociocultural perspective of learner, learning, and social aspects of language and language use. It has been the interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary reading and thinking that have opened my mind

and enable me to enter more academic discourses that I could apply them to my reflection and studies.

6.5.6 Recognizing My Multiple Identities and Privilege

There are two ways to construct an identity: as a stable entity or as always in flux. Those who view identity as a stable construction believe identity is unchangeable and fixed within a specific time and context. Karen Tracy and Jessica Robles (2013) explained stable identities can be described as a category approach, wherein individuals are identified by the different groups they fall under, such as their ethnicity, social class, and sex, etc. (p. 20). In contrast, identity can be seen as socially constructed, at which point a person's identity is created through their actions and interactions with others (Tracy & Robles, 2013, p. 20). From postmodern perspective, identity is fluid and actively constructed by the individual on an on-going basis. In Harvie Ferguson (2019)'s words, it is not like a splinter of wood or a shard of glass; a piece broken off from an intrata and uniform whole. The fragment is a detached portion that takes on a life of its own and may even gain the appearance of self-sufficiency as something unlike its parent body.

The fragmented identity takes on a life of its own through a process of becoming - a process that is continuous, non-linear and unstable. It is less preoccupied with the formation of a durable identity. Recognizing this incomplete, amorphous and dynamic nature, I feel there is much space for me to explore past, present and future selves.

When viewing identity as socially constructed, identity can also be defined as being intersectional. It means a person has multiple identities that work with one another to form an individual's self-concept. An intersectional approach to identity makes clear that all facets of identity are integral, interconnected parts of a whole. Therefore, a person's identity cannot be

separated from the other identities they hold, such as their ethnicity, sex, socio-economic class, citizenship, religion, etc.

I am now at my early-forties, a wife but physically separated from husband, a mother of a college undergraduate, a full-time doctoral student in the US, and have experienced many other identities from language student to teacher of English and Chinese, from a teacher within Chinese educational context to a transnational educator in different countries, for graduate student to teacher educator, long-term alien resident in Eastern Coast of US and many other newly developed identities like administrator, translator, bilingual writer, runner, traveler, artist, etc. They all give me different social positions and unique perspectives to see the world and professional spaces. Each identity is restricted by certain external factors and also individual markers such as agency. By means of each identity, I engage myself with critical self-reflection and evaluate mine and other's cultural value and develop a global cultural consciousness that has the potential to enrich and eventually transform my life.

In particular, I would like to mention the influence of becoming poet and painter on my understanding of people and things. I will demonstrate some stories in the autoethnographic accounts but here I want to use the words of Van den Berg, translated by Van Manen (1997) to tell the uniqueness of these two identities.

> [Phenomena] have something to say to us - this is common knowledge among poets and painters. Therefore, poets and painters are born phenomenologists. Or rather, we are all born phenomenologists; the poets and painters among us, however, understand very well their task of sharing, by means of word and image, their insights with others - an artfulness that is also laboriously practised by the professional phenomenologist.

During the practice of writing, reading and appreciating poetry and making people see what I can see using painting, I do acquire different eyes and can see phenomena at a deeper level. I attend to different things and form the habit to shatter the way average people see

things. I would like to affirm that an ethnographer with an artist's eye can depict more and make more connections. Aesthetics is always valued and the pursuit of aesthetic and artistic value is very natural for me. I make everything a kind of art. Practicing arts also enhance my understanding of the history, society, cultures and different worlds. Through various forms of arts, I understand people and their activities even deeper and enrich my educational practice in a more humane way.

Another important external factors that enabled my development of multiple new identities are attributed to two things I have the privilege to enjoy - one is the rich cultural life and highly educated artful liberal community in western New England; the other is the safe and stable financial state.

In my family, my husband has been working overseas for a giant international technology corporation. He is the main sponsor of me and my daughter receiving US education, in addition to my teaching assistantship and project assistantship opportunities. Without the money resources and available time dedicated to full-time study and living, I would not be able to to socialize my daughter and myself into the world of arts, acquire rich museum learning, take art lessons, purchase art supplies and tickets to all kinds of cultural events. To some degree, I enjoy great privilege due to the stable socioeconomic status. I did many things that not many people could do or afford the time and money to do.

Back to the previous parts of my educational and personal history, I would like to conclude that regarding my L2 English development, I had experienced four identity prototypes proposed by Gao's (2014): faithful imitator, legitimate speaker, playful creator and dialogical communicator. But as an EFL teacher and ESL supervisor, as well as CSL and CFL instructor, I had been impacted by competing theories of teaching practices and traditions. On one hand, I want to teach the effective and efficient ways by transmitting and using the bank

mode leading to immediate results, on the other hand, I want to give more power to students to make sense of their L2 learning and attain their personal goals beyond acquiring linguistic knowledge.

CHAPTER 7

CURATING A LIFE (Part I) (2007-2010):

TEACHING CHINESE AS A FOREIGN OUTSIDE CHINA

AND SECOND LANGUAGE WITHIN CHINA

In the following autoethnographic accounts, the reader is invited to break through the preconceived stereotypical images, assumptions and possible prejudices about language teachers' personal and professional experience and to use the ethnographic eyes and ears to see more and learn deeply about a transnational teacher's lived experience in Indonesia, the US, and back to China and then back to the US. Stewart (2010) argues that "a single story told strategically and in the spirit of narrative inquiry, can contextualize complex social actions for the reader, and bring the cultural complexity of a cultural phenomenon… out of the realm of experiential chaos and into the realm of orderly, and immediate, and critically discursive exploration". I intend to tell this kind of good story then to make sense of my transformation and gradual growth in agency as capacity and agency as achievements in various kinds of macro-contexts and micro-contexts over time outside and within China.

7.1 Native Speaker of Chinese in Indonesia: First-time Overseas Teaching (Jan.- June, 2007)

7.1.1 Obtaining a Teaching Position in an Indonesian University

Indonesia is the country with the world's largest Muslim population. In the beginning of twenty first century, it became an emerging economy, a regional power, a G-20 member, and assumed important roles on issues ranging from climate change to terrorism to geopolitics, etc. under the leadership of democratic leader Dr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

Back in the summer break of 2006, I was 31 years old then. I brought my 5-year-old daughter with me to spend nearly 2-month summer holidays with my husband who then worked abroad in Jakarta and another city of X in Java Island in Indonesia. It was my first time to go outside China and contact people from a different culture, different natural landscapes and a Muslim country. I enjoyed sightseeing and liked traveling to get my first-hand experience with Indonesian cuisine and south-Asian culture very much.

In Jakarta, the capital city, we stayed in a residential neighborhood above a large-scale modern shopping center with many high-rise apartment buildings, where Indonesian Chinese and families took up the most population there. It was really a well-developed rich part of the city with shopping malls, supermarkets and all kinds of facilities. I was so excited to see cars driving into buildings and parking inside the multi-levelled parking garage, which was rarely seen in many cities of China at that time in the beginning of the 21st century. I could also find many new commodities and famous brand imported western cultural products in Jakarta. The living conditions were pretty satisfying and we had lived quite a comfortable material life. Quickly, we were tired of urban life as it was really similar to our everyday life in a metropolitan city of Wuhan, China, my hometown.

Fortunately, we spent half of the time in another medium size city of X, where we lived in a nice villa surrounded by trees and hills. That house had two housekeepers. The elderly woman called Juju was the maidservant helping with cooking, doing laundry and ironing, and other housework. Her son Handa was mainly responsible for the maintenance work and running errands. When Handa played with my daughter and accompanied her, I spent much time learning to speak conversational Indonesian language from Juju. As a language teacher, it was my natural inclination to acquire a new language. I had bought language books and desired to practice diligently with Juju while she was doing her

housework. As the Latin alphabet was employed to write Indonesian and it was no problem for me to do some self-study. Whenever I saw some opportunities, I approached Juju with endless questions using the help of the book and wanted to repeat after her reading aloud some sentences from the book. To my surprise, Juju could not really teach me much about speaking Indonesian language at all. Now when I recalled my stay with her, I understood that she did not speak all the expressions written on the book as she had her own native language of birthplace. If she did not get school education, she may not necessarily know how to speak her national language which was first spoken by only 5% of the population. Frankly speaking, in my daily life outside the house, there was little use of the official Indonesian language for me and English and body language could always help when we needed to communicate with local people.

I had little knowledge about the history of Indonesian language when I was there. Only when I conducted this writing project, I did some research and learned that the official Indonesian language was just identified as a national language since the declaration of independence in 1945 to unite the nation. It was regarded to be easily spread and used in many public sectors. During my stay in Indonesia in 2006, I had assumed that it was the official language so that average people could speak and converse in it. Years after till now, with more education and nurtured interest in socio-political aspects of language, I started to find out more about the colonial period of history in Indonesia, and tried to understand more about the language policy and political choice of the language. As a tourist in the summer of 2006, I did not develop adequate interest in knowing much about the history and stories about colonization. Even though I witnessed the huge gap between rich neighborhood life and poverty and were exposed to very backward and wretched conditions of the inner cities, I saw

everything with an eye for newness and faced the reality as it was. I did not think I was sensitive enough as I was preoccupied by tourist attractions.

We traveled to active volcano, beautiful islands, the ancient historical wonder Borobudur and other tropical well-known tourist sites. The comfortable climate, fascinating natural scenes, fantastic folk-dance show and pleasant personality of local people all made me want to come to this country to work for some time when my husband was there. I started looking for academic or teaching job in the cities where we might live.

Soon after the family decision to get together overseas, my husband started searching for teaching job for me. It turned out that a director of a Chinese department was looking for an instructor and he was a fast friend of my husband. My qualification and background were introduced to Chinese program and my long-term experience of language teaching and working with international students won me a job offer to work as an adjunct lecturer for the Chinese language program. I applied for some travel grant from Chinese Scholarship Committee (CSC) and got approved to get the fund to sponsor my round-trips to Indonesia. Everything went well. At the end of the fall semester 2006, I had well prepared to go for the job - my first-time overseas teaching.

With my home university in Wuhan, China, I taught English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to English majors and non-English majors mainly and international students as a part-time job. Going to the Indonesian University, I would only teach Chinese and all-level Chinese language and cultural courses. I was quite appreciative of this wonderful opportunity to expand my teaching experiences. It was truly a turning point of my teaching career as I became a full-time Chinese-language teacher, teaching Chinese not as a secondary job but the main job. I got the opportunities to establish my identity of a teacher of mandarin Chinese.

But frankly, not many people were as excited as I was. They thought it was so insecure in this country due to persistent anti-Chinese sentiment and anti-minority sentiment in Indonesia at that time, especially after the riots in 1988. Those tragic incidents caused the death of over 1,000 people and enormous property damage among Indonesian Chinese people. Scores of ethnically Chinese women and girls were raped. It was no wonder that some people who knew about that part of history in Indonesia were worried about my teaching job there.

I also learned from my husband and his friends who had stayed in this country longer that some of the hostile sentiments stemmed from the rumors that Chinese-Indonesians controlled 70% of the economy, in spite of the fact that no comprehensive research to back that up. Chinese-Indonesians usually concealed their identity, keep low public profiles and went by their Indonesian – not Chinese – names. There were good reasons for me a person from China to use caution and be vigilant. But things seemed change greatly under the president Susilo whose administration promoted Indonesian pluralism. Under his leadership, ethnic Chinese had been able to express their heritage and abandoned the assimilation policy. Chinese New Year was a public holiday and Mandarin and other dialects were spoken openly in some areas. However, the iron fences remained, some with fresh spikes added on top.

In my initial stay in the city of X, I lived in the same house with Juju and Handa, where I spent the summer with them the year before. And then I moved to an apartment complex with many college students and some other language teachers from another university in China.

7.1.2 Personal life and Teaching life Seen from Correspondences

Before my trip to Indonesia, I searched many names and hoped to get in touch with some resourceful persons. I wrote to the author of Indonesia at the era of post-Suhato and

asked for advice about working in Indonesia and teaching mandarin Chinese for local

learners. He had lived in the X city before going back to Guangzhou, mainland China. In

2006, he was in his sixties. I was happy that he replied all my enquiries and gave some of his

private opinions. Guangzhou city, where he was living, has always been a leading wealthy

metropolitan city with high economic achievements and a rich culture. Comparatively

speaking, life in Guangzhou is better and the city is already well-developed and pretty

prosperous.

He wrote in his email to me,

"it was really a good thing that your husband was sent to Indonesia to work. I
appreciated it as it was good for the promotion of the Sino-Indonesia relations and
improvement of its economic recovery. In Indonesia, there was a great need of
Chinese teachers. It would be a good thing to be able to teach at X University. But you
already have a very good job of college English teacher. It was advisable to calculate
all kinds of benefits and lost. After many thoughts, you can make a good decision. The
problem is your kid's schooling and education. Your kid's learning will be impacted if
you work in Indonesia as the local conditions are not that good and it would not be
good for her future growth. I think you can take advance of the holiday time and teach
Chinese temporarily and experience more before making a final decision." (translated
from Chinese, dated 9/25/2006)

He also introduced ways to get to know more about the national culture of Indonesia,

where to get the books for self-study. From his words, I could tell he may not want me to

bring my daughter with me before settling down due to not that ideal situations. Actually, I

had no plan to bring my daughter with me and just wanted to have the new experience of

teaching Chinese overseas. I passed an interview selective process and I knew that I would be

selected and sent to a US program to work starting from the summer of 2007. This temporary

job at the first half of the year of 2007 would be wonderful teaching experience for my future

long-term teaching.

This excitement was expressed in the email to the director of the Chinese program

(See Appendix A: samples of my correspondences in Chinese):

I feel so honored to be able to work with you at your school. I am really excited and pleased. I will plan my visit to X city in a very detailed and considerate way. On one hand, I will learn from you and get to know more about Indonesian college learners' language learning status and find new learnable things; on the other hand, I will bring my own experience, teaching experiments, and the latest teaching strategies and educational conceptions together with me and promote mutual exchange. I will do my utmost to acculturate myself into your work environment and become a member of your team. I am looking forward to greatly broadened horizon because of our cooperation, inspired new thinking, and bringing back to China good experience that I have learned from here. I will be glad to the ambassador of two cultures. I do hope my presence and joining add blood to your team. (translated from Chinese, dated 11/23/2006)

I emphasized the cooperation and mutual learning in this email. And soon after, I

contacted him again to propose material development projects:

I have an idea. I do want to cooperate with your department to compile or write appropriate learning materials for local students. It can be textbooks for crash courses or dictionaries. I propose to use three languages to develop the materials: Chinese, English and Indonesian language. What do you think about it? If you like the idea, I will start collecting and sorting out some materials.

I will finish up my teaching job here soon. I am eager to come earlier. I cannot wait to fly into the arms of summer and enjoy the sunshine and green of X city to the full… Hahahaha … (translated from Chinese dated on 12/26/2006)

I came to the department very confidently and with a big ambition of a book writing

project. Meanwhile, I wrote to the head of the program at my home university to update him

my departure soon as I got a temporary overseas position.

"My husband is currently working in Indonesia. I contacted a local university and applied for a program that sponsored international travel by CSC (China Scholarship Committee). I will be a visiting scholar teaching some courses related to Chinese language and culture. I would get an offer soon in this month. By doing so, I will help with building a harmonious family, make more friends, and get to know more Chinese teaching situation outside of China. I expect to accumulate more experience in non-Chinese sociocultural environment and realize both professional and personal development. I will not be able to continue to assume teaching jobs. Please understand the reasons." (translated from Chinese, dated on 1/5 /2007)

Towards the end of fall semester, I got an email from M University informing my

course load.

"We have assigned you three courses: Chinese Culture Survey (6th semester, 2 credits), A survey of China (4rh semester, 2 credits) and Comprehensive Chinese (4th semester, 4 credits). Please feel free to bring some China-related materials. Especially for the Survey of China, the instructor has much freedom to develop their own course materials based on textbooks. We have an LCD projector. The textbooks are available too for the rest of two." (translated from Chinese, dated 1/10/2007)

Actually, when I got to the university at X city, I started teaching both 4th-year Chinese major students and 2nd-year students. Altogether, there were 3 language courses and one culture-related introductory course. It was a private Christian university and many Indonesian-Chinese went there to receive higher education. Most of my students were Chinese heritage learners. Their grandparents and parents spoke some Chinese dialects or little mandarin Chinese. Teaching them mandarin Chinese language was not challenging for me at all. Especially, I taught intermediate and advanced level students. I used mandarin Chinese freely and functioned as a good source of language input. This is how I described to my colleague, a long-term pen friend: "You know, this is a Christian University and admitted mostly Chinese Indonesians. Students here seem like Chinese students in China, except that they are still learning to speak the language. I am "the foreign expert" here, hahaha…" But I once talked about the features of the local Indonesian school students.

"The students here seem like live under less pressure. They still blossom and flourish. They are active, having independent thoughts and opinions. Just sitting there learning will make them feel bored. I found that people here are quite creative. Just by looking at the logs of all kinds of buildings, all the design of the gardens and yards and the overall appearance of their houses, I can tell that they love to be different and be unique. This is what I admire and pay particular attention. I wish my child in the future will be confined with what is known and exercise imagination boldly. But perfectionist are always living a miserable life, the outcomes may not necessarily good. Realists always get more of what they want." (translated from Chinese language)

I designed many language games and activities, used task-based teaching, and organized teaching in a very engaging way. As a veteran language teacher, especially one

who has practiced all kinds of teaching strategies in EFL classrooms, I took the initiative to

make use of all kinds of games and tricks to ensure students' participation. I enjoyed my

classroom life with the students. The students loved me too.

From the following email exchange, it was undoubted that I had quite a balanced life

and did not feel much overwhelming workload although there was a lot on weekdays

regarding teaching responsibilities. It seemed that I still spared some time to do book writing.

> After teaching for weeks, I do have a lot of new thinking and experiences. I discover some imperfect places and research topics that are worth further studying. Meanwhile, I am working on a pamphlet to help Chinese learners as an aid. So, at this stage, I feel pressed for time. Teaching, studying, reading, writing books, having conversations with students, and I can list more activities. I feel really busier than the first few weeks. But once I can spare the time, I will swim, walk, and go to bar listening to music, doing some sports. Compared with domestic life, I would say here the pressure is less. Let me enjoy life to the full and corrupt. (3/16/2017)

The major topic had been repeated that I was engaged in teaching job and writing

book for Chinese learners. I also made use of the library resources to read original English

books. Additionally, I mentioned that I had many ideas and plans but was regretful that I did

not have much time to myself to implement them.

> "I spent most of the time on teaching Chinese. Many hours of teaching. Four courses. Especially the Chinese Culture and introductory course of China will take more time. Additionally, I am working on a book together with the local teachers with the aim to help learners. I take some time to read some original English books on linguistics. The library resources is good enough and better than what we have at the School of Foreign Languages. As pressed for time, with a lot of plans in mind, I sometimes felt it hard to start anything. I have ideas for Chinese, English, Pedagogy, I am quite overwhelmed and get lost easily. (4/20/2007)"

A month later, the book seemed finished in May, 2006. And the project went well and

would be supported by the school and publishing house. I would successfully get a contract to

publish. I was quite efficient and productive during my stay in X city.

> "Here I have a busy life. I work a lot and also study a lot. I gain a lot. Although it is not a developed country, I still have the chance to broaden my eyes, update my perceptions of some things and also improve my teaching practice. Compared with my home university, campus culture, administration, learners' characteristics are all different. Only from difference, I can learn something new. The university library here is pretty good. I found an original English academic literature, so I benefited from it.

Time is very limited, otherwise I wanted to do much more. I have created learning aids and also developed a book. For this book, I invited local teachers to do Indonesian translation. The head of the Faculty of Letters and School Publishing house will give full support. Although it won't come out before I leave, I will sign contact with them. (translated from Chinese, dated on 5/20/2007)"

Some other good things could be read about was the writings about the weather and scenery. I expressed my satisfaction to live in a new culture and have rich life experience in new places

"I have been here for two months. As I spent the past summer in Indonesia, all the feelings of newness are gone. I do not have a stranger's eye anymore. But everything is still beautiful. Especially the first month, we spend the weekends at the beach, hot spring, or big shopping malls. Very enjoyable time. I cook for myself. We play mahjong, poker cards, watch films, not much pressure. Really enjoys everything. We went to Bali, diving, and got to know more about Bali culture. To put it simply, I am leading a pig's life.

Truly old trees, green and tall. Perennial flowers bloom every season. The ocean. The seabed. The Balinese Hinduism. I understand the world that was new to me before. I extend my territory, and has been amazed by unexpected wonderful things. It makes me feel so good to step out of the long-term old life conditions. Now everything is different and I have a widened mind and opened eyes."

I developed a few literary pieces describing my detailed observation and my love of the tropical weather. This kind of writing would not be possible if working long hours and had been preoccupied by many other roles and responsibilities in China as lecturers.

"The weather here is so delightful. I always travel between Jakarta and X city. I don't think there is another city with such beautiful climate. It is currently a rain season, Every day I can hear the rain batter the roof and drum window and then the sun will come out right after the thunderstorm. The blue of the clear sky is dazzling the eyes. Then the color changes to tar-black and the large clouds were moving rapidly towards the roof. Then the rainfall became heavier and you only hear the pit-a-pat. Puddles begin plinking as the rainfall is getting heavier. A few seconds later, sun comes out. Then in the evening the moon comes out. The stars are following. I enjoy the highest satisfaction from everything. On one occasion, you witness the rain pouring down with the clouds spitting out their beads of water crazily. Every bullet-like bead is as strong as the momentum gained by a soccer from afar and flying into the eyeball. On the other occasion, the sun is burning like fire. Very rarely, you can feel the gentle and light drizzling rain. The air is extremely fresh. Temperatures remain fairly constant year-round with averages of 23-25°C throughout the region.

That's why you don't have reason to complain. You just feel overly pleased and content."

I did describe some cultural observations and wrote about true feelings towards the powerful megaphones and broadcast five times a day. For a non-Muslim, it took some time to get used to the loud sound in the early morning. I mentioned mosquitos, and heavy course workload and little time to work on the book project.

> "When you are in good moods, everything that greets your eyes is perfectly beautiful. However, there are some unpleasant things. This is a Muslim country with over 90% population are Muslims. The public call to prayer from the mosques at every city sets the rhythm of the day for the entire population, including non-Muslims. This prayer timetable gives Muslims the pattern of their day. Do you know the five set times of the day- dawn, before sunrise; midday, after the sun passes its highest; the late part of the afternoon; just after sunset; between sunset and midnight. The big megaphone was quite loud and every few hours, you can hear the broadcast. Also, the mosquitos attacked me and the red and swollen is scary. And the course loads are heavy. Altogether there are four courses including Intermediate and Advanced Chinese, Survey of China, Survey of Chinese Culture. Every weekday, the preparation time will take up a big chunk of time. Once I wanted to concentrate on book writing, I got distracted by other things."

7.1.3 The Life Beyond the Correspondences

It was interesting to observe that I did not mention some other Chinese teachers sent from mainland China working as visiting language instructors too. They were one middle-aged woman teacher of associate professor title and her two female senior students coming to this language program to do their practicum. They were from the same university which had a partnership with this particular private university in Indonesia. Each year this partner university in China would send some teaching staff as supportive personnel to strengthen the teaching and academic competence of the developing Chinese department. We lived in the same apartment buildings so we could see each other and get connected in the evening.

In 2007, the internet speed was pretty slow at where I was living. I went to the library, internet bar, office building or cafeteria more often than staying at the apartment. I did not remember the other teachers and student teachers talked about teaching and collaboration. We did have some social talk sometime but generally speaking, we were pretty busy with all kinds of jobs. I put priority on the completion of the book-writing project, so I reduced my social time. At weekends, I took shuttles to Jakarta where my husband's work was. It was a pity that the other visiting teacher and two student teachers and I did not form a learning community. We could have talked about the students, the curriculum, classroom teaching, and our shared experience of Indonesian culture. I invested much more time in my own projects.

I did spend time with some female Chinese-Indonesian students who took the initiative to befriend me outside classroom. One girl had her own used car and drove me to a building where all the small and medium sized retail shops gathered. Her mother was selling children's costumes there. Through her, I learned much about the real life of Indonesian Chinese community. I learned that local ethnic Chinese in many cases got married with Chinese and lived closely in certain closely-knit neighborhood. They went to Christian church and they observed all the Christian religious holidays. They desired to go back to China to look for great opportunities and get further education after undergraduate program study. One girl student who practiced calligraphy since young for years had won many awards for her great calligraphy artwork. I knew about making calligraphy art and how to appreciate them. The girl student would bring her work to my room at weekend mornings and we discussed about her creative pieces. She chose to write the phrase that was really typical Chinese wise saying like "上善若水 shang shan ruo shui" meaning the highest level of kindness is like water. I felt so moved by their strong desire to master Chinese language and its culture in every way. After getting along with the girls who had frequent contact with me and develop a

close friendship with me, we started going to local restaurants together to eat and chat and also practice for their language improvement.

One memorable thing was the adjustment to the sleepy noon time. Some advanced classes were arranged between 12pm -2pm. For me who had a habit of taking noon nap, it was so hard to adjust my energy level. In China, from 12pm -2:30pm, most people or school students left their job or classes and had a couple of hours rest at home or taking a nap in the workplace. In the tropical weather, teaching at the noon time when the temperature was high for me was challenging to concentrate on instructional content and struggled to stay high in spirit. The weather just made me so drowsy at noon.

Teaching four courses was energy-consuming, Part of the reason I had a heavy workload was due to the big class size. I had many students' written homework to grade and no assistant to depend on. I spent a lot of time reading and giving corrective feedback to each student's written assignments.

When I looked back at the one-semester time in Indonesia, I felt like I was preoccupied with the goal to produce some publications, develop my own Chinese learning materials and my own book about spoken Chinese. I always had a notebook to collect the authentic sentences and expressions native Chinese frequently used. As an English teacher who was familiar with all kinds of English learning aids, I was quite enthusiastic to write some Chinese learning books with English translation and other language equivalence. Teaching was just a daily job for me but writing books engaged me much more and gave me more pleasure and fulfillment. I also knew clearly that I was pressured by preparing for my application for associate professor title. If I could produce more books, I would be in a favorable position.

Living in the city of X in Indonesia, I did not have a car and driving on the left side was scary for me. GPS was also quite a new technology and not used by ordinary people in daily life at all. My parameter of life was quite small. I walked on foot but not far away from my apartment building and school. And I did not feel comfortable to take the small van within X city alone as it was run by local people and no Chinese took the van. I did not know any non-Indonesian-Chinese except the housemaid and her son. Being separated from my child, after living months living abroad, I could not wait to return to China and get ready to start working for the programs in the US.

7.1.4 Summarizing My Professional Experience in Indonesia

In addition to the tourist sites, what I knew about the local culture were no more than local Indonesian people's food, eating habits, using hands to eat food, using spoon and fork but rare with knife, trash seen everywhere from the street in front of their houses to rivers and hills. My knowledge regarding the social status of ethnic Chinese was limited to the well-known fact that the economic success of the ethnic Chinese group's small elite had led to repeated bouts of resentment, discrimination and even violent assaults. The heritage Chinese students were mostly descendants of the original merchants and other Chinese who had arrived in this country since. Chinese lived together as strong communities and led a different religious life compared with Indonesian Muslims.

I was hired as a native speaker who had authentic relationship to the Chinese language and culture, but didn't necessarily know the bicultural identities of the students nor the intellectual tradition of their school systems. Just like the native teacher of English teaching in China with the title of "foreign expert", I acted as a respectable authority figure in Chinese classrooms. I represented China and I was a performer and embodiment of Chinese language

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use and culture. My teaching of linguistic content and Chinese modern-society and its contemporary culture was considered as one of the major sources of dependable real knowledge. Almost all students were descendants of Chinese and they had their Chinese family name and given name and English name. They had a strong drive to master the Chinese-language that may bring about more educational and economic opportunities in China or careers related to activities to China or Chinese communities.

 After completing the teaching tasks, I put more priority on my own book writing as I used the time as somewhat writing retreat to some degree. Teaching Chinese to heritage Chinese students at intermediate and advanced level as a native speaker of Chinese was much easier than teaching English as a non-native English speaker. What I transferred from English language teaching was the emphasis on communicative competence, conversational skills and language as the main component of language classes. Intercultural competence was still not given much emphasis and not integrated into the language-focused class.

Chinese was pursued as a foreign language which could bring new economic, cultural and social capital in Indonesia, especially for Chinese immigrants in this country. When China is rising as a strong economy, its language also acquires a higher social status. When I was in Indonesia, I felt very proud and more respected.

My teaching was loved by my students. What made my teaching stand out was my rapport with the students and the way to connect with young people. I possessed the interpersonal skills, sense of humor, enthusiasm, commitment and other qualities. On my last day with one course, I was presented with a gift photo with frame. The picture was taken a couple of days before on my birthday. On the back, it said:

"Shall we go to Ms. Zhang's Thursday Comprehensive Chinese class on Thursday? But where are you? We can't find you anywhere … Oh, we forgot … Ms. Zhang has gone back to China. But why do we still feel that Ms. Zhang is still with us?

Dear teacher, for us, you are the best!

This is not a lie. Do you know why?

Because we consider that you are the one who knows our personalities best.

Thanks for your understanding.

Thanks for your help.

Thanks for your instruction.

Many thanks!

Figure 2 Group Photo and The Back of the Frame

The experience in Indonesia was very special and productive. I treated the heritage Chinese students as mainland Chinese young people who lived in another city. I did not see them as international students at my home university. I shared with them my love of China and classroom teaching. I tried to use the textbooks wisely and created tasks that enabled them to practice more using the book materials. With almost ten years of college EFL teaching experience, I was very skillful to teach Chinese as a foreign language. This was why I did not take the teaching seriously.

7.1.5 Critical Reflection upon My First Experience of Working Abroad

The wider effects of globalization in all its manifestations and the opening of China to the world has been making the international flow of work force possible. I took advantage of my husband's transnational work experience and through his networking and recommendation, I obtained such a wonderful teaching opportunity. I became one of transitional teachers and cosmopolitan citizens. Although the migration was transient, I benefited from a broadened outlook and worldview, expanded social, cultural and professional identities, in-depth intercultural encounters, increased cosmopolitan competence and international awareness, and a reflexive understanding of self in the wider world. Stepping out of China and teaching about Chinese culture stimulated a much stronger sense of being Chinese and an emergent self-consciously international outlook at the same time. I studied more than before about history, societal culture, and other aspects and became more knowledge about Chinese backgrounds than those who had not experience living abroad. I saw more cultural difference and also was more appreciative of my own cultural traditions and values. This very first working and living abroad experience became a precious gift that strengthened my professional background adding my employability. I believed that the one-semester overseas teaching increased my competitiveness and qualifications so as to enable me to be considered as the competent teacher for the upcoming US program appointed by Hanban and my home university. My choice to work abroad during my husband's transnational company's business expansion and internationalization led to more opportunities related to transnational job opportunities.

However, reflecting back at my teaching practices as a Chinese-language teacher of all levels, I could see how limited view I held towards my native language, the new culture, and the meaning of being a language teacher. I also see how I was not exposed to discourses about

colonialism and linguistic imperialism and other language use related to socio-political aspects of language. I didn't pay particular attention to all the advantages I had as a middle-class college language teacher from China with a spouse working for a global corporation. Having cross-cultural experience was not new for me as learning English from English-speaking natives from young and working with English-speaking teachers at college plus teaching international students around the world, I took the opportunities to interact with people from other cultures for granted.

The socioeconomic status of Mandarin Chinese has increased as China's economic, political and global impact has gone up towards the end of the 20th century and the start of the 21st century. The linguistic power, social capital, and symbolic capital associated with mandarin language were gradually felt internationally. In a developing country like Indonesia, there was a great need and rising passion to acquire the language especially among Indonesia Chinese heritage community. I came to Indonesia as a both socio-economic elite and the educated elite, unknowingly positioning myself from a superior language and culture and enjoyed many privileges without much recognition back then. The M University paid me $500 per month four courses for multi-level Chinese learners, and I did not negotiate and expect more. At that time, I valued the experience more than monetary gains. My husband had been a very stable financial support so I was not worried about the cost of living. Without much consciousness at that time, I held a lot of power in the classroom regarding teaching content and organizing instructional activities and I was paid high regard among the Indonesian teacher of Chinese colleagues.

If I could step back into the past, I would like to see myself invest more in working with the students caring what they knew and wanted to know more about mandarin language and culture and not just focusing on the prescribed curriculum surrounding the textbooks

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published in China. I would be more interested in knowing more about their bicultural and bilingual identity and personal history. I also would like to get them talking more about the civilization and culture of Indonesia. Although I implemented task-based teaching skillfully and knew how to engage with students and maintain their attention in the language classroom, I could do more to enlarge the cultural relevance and capitalize students' "funds of knowledge" and make the language class not just about teaching what I wanted to teach but enable them to become critical thinkers who evaluated the textbook materials critically and wanted to challenge the existing curriculum embedded with native-speakerism and imperialism. If I could go back and restart my visiting professorship again, I wanted to treasure more knowledge the local teachers could share with me. I did ask several teachers to join my book project and asked them to do the translation job but failed to invest more time to build up learning community with them. I even did not remember I worked with other visiting teachers and student interns and I thought at that time I took much pride and viewed myself as a capable teacher and knower. I was really limited to a narrow view of teaching, learning and being a teacher of language.

During that period of time, I was more concerned with my own book projects which would serve for potential learners and build up credentials for my prospective associate professorship. I clinged to one aspect of mandarin language - the linguistic aspect; and trained students for their communicative skills just like what I did with EFL learners.

To sum up, using a critical eye to look at my experience in Indonesia, I fulfilled a wonderful job of being a competent transmitting knowledge of language and culture, I had not been able to make choices to extend my teaching outside the assigned curriculum, textbooks, and materials embedded ideology Chinese book writers wanted the students to know. When I did not have the awareness to be critical and practice in a critical way, my students would not

be able to get space to exercise their agency to design their own learning and investigate their interested language and cultural topics.

Speak of other kinds of growth in awareness during my first transnational teaching experience, I actually realized more about the global spread of English and the social function of English as an international language. I could see how English-speaking culture impacted Muslim country in many ways. It was in Indonesia; I had more access to see English as lingua franca and exerted influence on people's life. I did not use Indonesia but English to meet my basic communication needs.

In this part, I described my life in Indonesia, in both personal and professional areas. I represented myself as a privileged, middle-class native Chinese woman who taught Chinese as a job and sought new teaching experiences outside China. I reflected upon my previous position of myself as a native teacher with a lot of pride and power and overlooked my issues deserving deep examination. But limited to the institute and my own purpose, I did not achieve as much as I could imagine now.

7.2 Teaching in the US University and Grade-schools (June, 2007- June, 2009)

For an English learner and English teacher for nearly ten years, it had always been a dream to experience in person the English-speaking society and its culture and living with people who speak the language. If the country happened to be the United States, the richest country and most developed nation through the media, that would be the best arrangement. The instructional technology and the widespread of internet development in these two years were still comparatively advanced in the US than the developing countries. The possibility to use YouTube and Google had also opened new doors to many worlds and learning resources for me.

During the year of 2007, it was still a rare thing for the young college teacher to have an opportunity to go abroad to developed countries. I felt so fortunate to have one. I worked very hard to earn this opportunity through my good teaching performance and other qualifications.

I passed a difficult examination to get a certificate for teaching Chinese as a foreign language (Advanced). I taught with College of International Education at my university and I went to Indonesia to get more overseas teaching experience. Most importantly, I did very well in an interview with the program director from the US, the group interview by Hanban (the colloquial abbreviation for the Office of Chinese Language Council International), all kinds of psychological questionnaire for cross-cultural life and living abroad, teaching demo, etc. I was selected to go for my school's partner university in Eastern US, the Island University (pseudonym), for the setting up of a Confucius Institute and support the Chinese program at the Department of Modern Languages. Right after concluding my teaching with the university in Indonesia, I could not wait to embark on the new journey and start a new chapter of life in the US.

At the beginning, I only got one-year contract. I was supposed to return to School of Foreign Languages to teach English after one-year mission. But my teaching performance won high praise and would play an important role in the first few years of the newly built Confucius Institute and college-level Chinese courses, after coordination and my negotiation with my home university, I got extension. And I successfully asked to be transferred to the Foreign Affair Office and International College of Education within my home university. From that moment, my identity of being an English teacher had officially been changed to a teacher of Chinese with my home university in China.

7.2.1 Daughter of Woods: Learning from Solitude and American Country Lifestyle

My family was not with me at the beginning two months. My daughter came with the delegation led by president and other top leaders from my home university in China in mid-September. During the first few months, I was on my own. I remembered one night when the super noise thunderstorm with continuous hours of lightening attacked the village, I was so scared and helpless, crying to myself and missing home so much.

My colleague Mr. J brought his son with him. He just got divorced and the son was traumatized and unhappy. We were arranged to live in the school property in the same house. It was next to the campus and with a couple of families on the same road. The campus actually was located in a quiet rural area with not many residents around. It was like an isolated island for me. The school assigned us one office, small and no window. I seldom used it and most of the time if Mr. J occupied the space, I would never want to go there. I would rather use the school library and other open space in the rotunda on campus.

We came for the June StarTalk program for two weeks. The time from July to September was very hard for me as we were underserved during the summer. No phone. No TV. No internet. No Car. This was rather different from what I had imagined upon watching many Hollywood movies with city scenes and interesting people and TV shows like Friends. When we were brought to the bumpy country road on the first night, I realized that I was in a different America.

I still had access to the internet if I wanted to walk down to the campus and sat outside some office building. I had no network to use at the house. That was how I spent my time when the campus was so empty. I occasionally went to the library and took a walk by myself. My colleague was a very loving Dad but not patient with a six-grader who was addicted to computer games and chose not to talk to his Dad. In the house, there were always verbal

fights, loud quarrels that tired me so much. I experienced much depressed emotion before

school starts. I did not speak too much at that time and started to explore nature around me.

The quiet woods, hills, and the other side of the campus. This was the beginning when I

started to have many inner dialogues and reflected upon my life before and looked for

meaning for my future life. I had so much time to myself than ever.

I think it was from that period of time I restarted my literary writing in Chinese. In the

previous years, due to the heavy workload and other roles and responsibilities, I could not

spare time to write, to slow down and think, and to purge myself. Finally, this period of

solitary time gave me a wonderful opportunity to start a self-search journey. I made friends

with solitude and started reading Thoreau and Emerson, and other naturalist literature. Then I

gradually fell in love with the tranquil life which was so different from the previous urban life

I had in my home city in China and the crowded scenes in Indonesia. I walked a lot along the

road and enjoyed the sightseeing around and appreciated the local houses, farms, gardens,

trees. On foot, I explored as far as I can.

The writings from that time was charged with emotions. I was so sensitive to the

weather, animals, nature objects and inner feelings. My letters to friends made them tearful. I

gained back the power of writing and continued to write to live. Diaries, emails, journals were

very productive. The following was translated from my original blog:

> "The lightning was non-stop and glaring. I wanted to use my hand to cover my
> eyes. I buried my head under the blanket and just waited for whatever bad things to
> occur. The lightning brightened up the whole room and I was feeling like a newly
> detected wild man or a sinner under countless flashbulbs from journalists' cameras.
> Continuous thunderbolt and blare seemed to release enormous energy to flatten and
> smash the whole world. Lightening, thunder, pouring rain, they were so close just
> under my eyelid.
> This rainy night was so torturing my heart. It was endless attacks after attacks.
> I felt like an earthquake, debris flow, flood would come at me all at one. Lying on the
> cold bed, inside the wretched wooden house, I closed eyes and missed the warm

scenes when my child and family were together. There was nothing you could do about it but cry, silently and not knowing what was going on." (blog, August, 2007)

When my daughter came to the US to get together with me and went to the local elementary school, the diameter of my life started to be broadened. We had more activities when she came back home from school, but generally during the day, I was still on my own preparing for my teaching, doing some reading and writing. Life was quite simple. The school equipped us with a car. Without state license at the beginning, we could not drive around. It took several months for us to practice and then passed the tests to get the license. The time I could be confident to drive nearby was more than half a year later, in spring 2008. Sharing a car meant that I and Mr. J had to plan the use of the car ahead of time and to avoid time conflicts.

Generally speaking, the first part of my personal life in the US was not as exciting as I had expected. But I was so glad that I learned to live with solitude and got used to so closely observing myself and listening to my inner voice. That was a benefit and I could be an introverted person although I could be an outgoing and a very talkative person. The deeper relationship with nature also meant a lot for me. Whenever I got frustrated, I knew there was a way out with mother nature. This was why I could not live a life without hiking, mountain climbing, walking into woods any more. I was so dependent on the quietness and wisdom from the silent nature. I have the attentive awareness and appreciation of the precious open space.

When writing came back to me, I started to explore the power of my own native language. When one is abroad, she or he usually has more intimate relations with this language consciously. Having much time to myself and space enabling me to be more conscious about the language use and creative power of the language. I believe the power of

slow pace lifestyle and quietness help me to have time and mind to discover the magic of

mother language to create and become a literary writer.

7.2.2 Teaching All-level Learners of Diverse Backgrounds: Heritage and Non-Heritage

The first program I taught was StarTalk summer program. It was a federal program

which sought to expand the teaching of strategically important languages in the United States

and created under the National Security Language Initiative (See Wikipedia). Mandarin

Chinese was named as a critical language. That year was the first time Island University

organized the summer program for the school age Children who had interests in learning

about a new language. The teachers help with language curriculum and cultural components. I

was assigned to teach the advanced level class, comprised of twelve Chinese-American high

school students, and one female adult learner. Mrs. Roslyn, who had learned Chinese before.

They had some Chinese proficiency from home and weekend schools. I developed age-

appropriate reading materials, speaking activities, and all kinds of tasks to engage them. They

liked me and I brought fun and new facts about China to them. It was an enjoyable experience

for both teacher and students. All the materials I developed and the way I taught were new

and I could see myself expanding my teaching skills and practical knowledge of teaching.

Whenever I read the message, I was so proud:

> "It was a great challenge for me to read, write, and speak Chinese again during
> the summer program. But I had a great teacher, you!!!, who made our classes a lot of
> fun and the language very real. The language, readings, and communication in class
> was much more natural than what I had experienced in my previous formal classroom
> experiences."

The final presentation for this advanced class was a play I designed for them based on

the famous Children's book The Giving Tree. I invited everyone to get involved in rewriting

the story and found their own roles. I helped with the language part, especially the expressions and dialogues. I allowed them to take ownership of this play and all the students were so dedicated to planning the costume design, the stage property creation, the procedures, choreography and other elements for the stage play. It was so eye-opening to see their organizing skills, event-planning coordination abilities and interpersonal communication skills displayed so well. I facilitated the entire development process and the final performance was impressive. The details were so beautifully attended with joint efforts. I was so proud for my very first project with the advanced adolescent learners. My creativity nurtured their creativity and I did not impose any official curriculum at all during the summer program.

I became good friends with the only adult learner, Mrs. Roslyn, who adopted a Chinese girl from her 11-months old and a Malaysian girl at her 4th year. We spent some time in the summer together. She told me stories about her learning history and work history. She had a school librarian job and designed some cultural courses offered to high school students. Through her, I learned much about average American family's life. She also invited me to give a talk about China in her afterschool programs through institute at Island University.

When school started in September, 2007, I had more teaching tasks from college-level intermediate Chinese reading course to the training program for study-abroad students and faculty who would travel to China. I ran many language programs within Island University and outside the University. The learners were from all walks of life and different ages. Their backgrounds were so different from what I had taught before in China and Indonesia. In the past, I worked mostly with undergraduate program students in their early adult years to mid-twenties. International students from African Countries, Eastern Europe, East Asia, were also adult learners coming to my home university to do graduate degree or bachelor degree. Coming to the US, I taught every age level from preschool children to retired people. Even

babies. Some parents wanted once a week mandarin exposure to the child from babyhood. The learners came to me partly from official program and some for private lessons.

From the wife of top management personnel, to the kid from the interracial marriage, from South Korean family pre-school boy to the local Chinese family children, from adoptive Chinese girl to the senior preparing for AP Chinese, I got chances to work with linguistically and culturally diverse students during my stay with Island University. Working with diverse learners with different kinds of motivations, I learned about diversity through them and enjoyed the extensive and varied teaching experience. The close contact with each individual enabled me to understand the individual meaning to every single learner. They didn't learn an additional language for credits and cognitive skills but for various kinds of social purposes. For each individual learner, I develop specific teaching materials for them and used personalized instruction. I treated each of them as a friend and guided them in the journey of learning a new language addressing their needs and interests.

My friend Mrs. Roslyn said only those who had something special in their hearts would choose to study such a hard language. I appreciated every Chinese learner who took the challenge and wanted to support them. Developing learning materials and language games using technology and web resources were my daily jobs. I show my respect to learners' special commitment to this language by giving them the best quality teaching time.

During my stay in the US, I came across all kinds of learners with their special history with learning Chinese -language and memories about China. They shared with me their love and enthusiasm towards an Eastern language. This gave me strong motive to be a passionate teacher too. This was selected from an email message to introduce my first encounter with Quaker Friends Camp in Island University in the summer of 2007. The learners' stories made me want to do more and better as a resource person, being the teacher of native Chinese.

Friends Camp 是一个叫 Quaker 的教会组织举办的新英格兰地区的年会，大概有几百人从附近的五个州赶过来。看上去，这个活动更多意义上是人和人，朋友和朋友，家庭和家庭的聚会。我在校园里得以碰到很多家庭和各个年龄层次的人，与他们有些简单的谈话。没想到总有人给我惊喜，不是说大学学过汉语，就是说去中国旅游时候学过，再就是领养孩子时学过一点点，有的还说想今后进修教汉语呢。还有一位 80 高龄的老人更绝，提起他 1947 年学汉语的事情，竟然还为我唱了《静夜思》这首歌，吐词都挺准呢。我深受鼓舞，找到他们主管年轻人活动的负责人，我想免费给年轻人组织汉语言文化相关的活动。

Self-Translation:
Friends Camp is an annual gathering organized by Quakers in the New England area. It attracts hundreds of people and families from five nearby states. It seems like a reunion of human beings, friends, and families. I encountered many families and participants of various ages, and had brief conversations with them. I was always greeted with pleasant surprises. Some of them told me that they had taken some Chinese courses in college; some mentioned that they learned a little bit Chines when planning travel in China; some learned Chinese because they went to China to adopt Chinese kids; and others said that they wanted to further their Chinese-language education so as to teach this language. What impressed me most is an eighty-year-old man who said that he studied Chinese in the year of 1947. He even sang a song with the most famous Tang poem as the lyrics, Jing Ye Si (Quiet Night Thoughts). Each word he sang sounded very clearly. I was so inspired by the learners and looked for the organizers. I proposed to run program for the young people learning Chinese language and culture.

7.2.3 Collaborative Projects in Outreach Programs: Performing and Designing

I came to the US as a visiting scholar and a teaching professor for a university and had taught at college level for years before coming to the US. I took much pride to be a respectable college lecturer. However, coming to the US, I was becoming a teacher for grade-schools and was running around the state for 6 or 8-week afterschool enrichment programs and some self-developed lunch learning program. For some time, I did not want to tell people back in China that I taught children Chinese and for the general public in China, preschool and K-12 teachers did not require talents and capabilities as high as a college professor. Teaching college means higher socioeconomic status. I encountered a kind of identity confusion or crisis after a few months working with elementary and high schools. At the beginning, I wish I had more courses to teach college students and interact with more adult

learners so that I felt more self-worth. Especially, Mr. J was assigned a more challenging course besides teaching languages. I felt devalued a little bit and had some self-doubts that I was not qualified to teach content courses. However, as time went on, I created much more innovative and impactful programs and contributed much more to bigger community. This made me confident of my self-efficacy again.

For each program, I had a lot of freedom to design themes and components. I knew that I was supposed to bring kind of exotic cultural and language to the school children so I had to make it fun, physical, and hands-on playable. Most of my time I self-taught craft skills and integrated them into the learn-by-doing projects. I also made a lot of teaching materials by myself. Each time, I brought a big box of supplies and China-related objects, put on pretty oriental flavor costumes, and entered the classrooms like a performer. I presented a wonderful image of myself, of ancient China, and was in high spirits to teach children basic Chinese language. I knew I was totally forgetting that I was a professor teaching literature, linguistics, English for Special Purpose, thesis writing, translation theory, and other subjects back in China.

I turned myself into a very pretty, happy, inspiring teacher from China introducing new things to the school and children in the school space. I was a female actress in front of the American grade-school students and parents. When I stepped out of the school, I was not performing, I was back to myself and eagerly wanting to pursue higher intellectual challenge. Teaching children things about exoticism was not satisfying for me frankly. I liked the teaching with my 300 level courses at college, in which I could do more and cultivate more deep learning there.

Chances came when people approached me for collaboration. One time at an afterschool program, a custodian Mr. G approached me. He was actually a cartoonist who was

crazy about making aviation learning materials. He won awards for his creative cartoon plane

figures teaching materials. He was once a mechanics for Korean military base and spent a

couple of years in Asia in the seventies. He had some ideas to develop Chinese materials

combining his strong cartoon artmaking to engage kids. He had his philosophy that learning

had to be fun and using some novel things to make the learning interesting. My creative mind

was kindled when I was brought to his studio and saw all of his creation and the plane models

with clay eyes. He showed me his creative process, the computer program he used, and the

images he created. I collaborated with him immediately and was very productive together

with him to make a series of learning flash cards, using easy phonetic guides, Chinese

characters and some English equivalent or explanation.

We became fast friends and worked together on many ideas later on. Mr. G was my father's

age, then in his sixties. But he was very engaged with educational programs and enjoy

creating something novel. I admired his passion to make things. This changed me greatly and

I started creating many learning materials that I would never imagine possible. I thought the

power of quietness and the models people set up around me helped.

Figure 3 Skywords Project
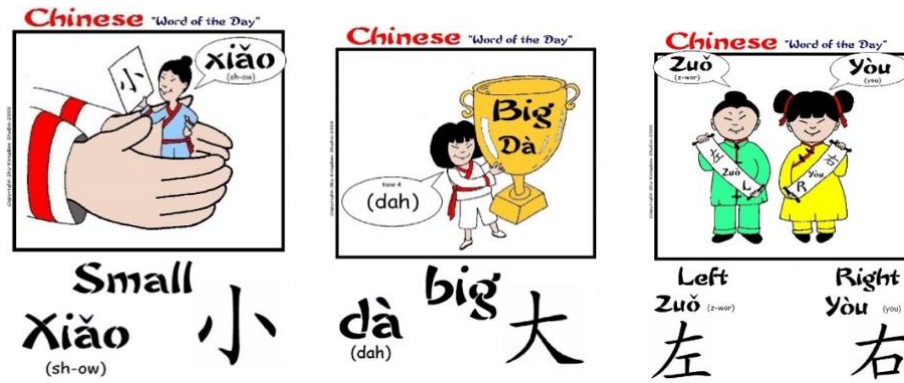
Figure 4 Big Flash Cards

We used the novel big-size learning cards for a self-initiated lunch program at a local school. It was called A Cafeteria with a View of China.

Figure 5: A Lunch Program: The Cafeteria with a View of China

We bought art supplies together and I spent overnight at his studio and made huge display boards. For 8 weeks, I went to lunch time to teach some basic expressions, using the beautiful cards we made together. I also designed every possible space for the wall, window display, transparent closet at the lobby of the school. I was so motivated to bring Chinese elements to the school. It was a great success. But I knew that for kids, they saw something new and got the message that there was another world in another half of the earth.
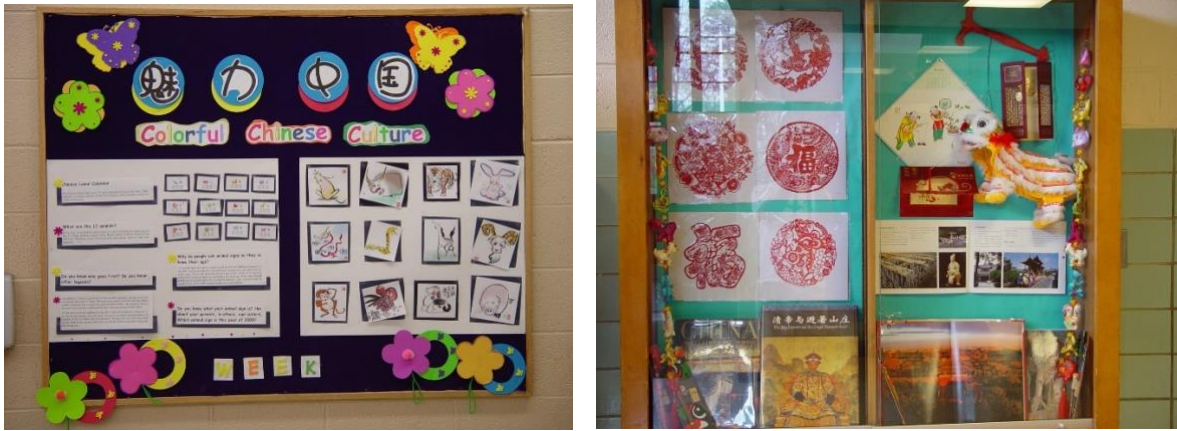
Figure 6 Decoration Using Elements of Chinese Culture

I was also invited to run programs for charter school, middle school, private and public high school. Some were about calligraphy, some about shadow play, some about politics, and some about basic language and modern China. With time passing by, I was so used to teaching after school program when kids were still eating snacks. I was so skillful to set up everything rapidly, or a great show for them. I was a caretaker, performer, entertainer and a different art teacher teaching about China in my eyes.

I had collaborated with different school teachers during my stay and provided resources for them, materials and first-hand research knowledge. I always enjoyed making anything new and working with local schools made me feel good that I could always present something different using my expertise. I changed my attitude later on that getting to know all kinds of schools, different school environment, varied campus culture, and versatile teachers, and the reality of US education. I began to see more. I later realized that it was really good to get to know your adult learners' education before college and how they were educated. There were so many differences from the image of American education presented in Chinese media, which was typical American private school education, between the public schools.

No matter what I saw myself teaching for the community and the school children, I knew I performed like a Chinese female actress very well for each role. I clearly knew my job to be the cultural ambassador and the torchbearer for my country and government, I hid many other selves at the backstage.

7.2.4 Broad Academic Socializations: Book Writing, Conference Presentations, and Research Proposal

When compared with the US university professor and those originally from China who accomplished a PhD degree and located a teaching job with an American higher institute, I felt so inadequate and unfulfilled in many ways. I devoted the majority of time to teach and left less time for myself to do research and read extensively research papers. I always wanted to join the academic community to extend my academic life and have deep intellectual discussions towards many societal and educational phenomena in modern society. As a language instructor, I felt kind of discrimination from outside and towards myself. I wish I could do more than regular language teaching job and got to know more about publication, writing high level academic papers and going to professional conferences.

I had a chance to work under a chief editor who was in charge of compiling a series of Chinese extensive reading books. I was assigned a few chapters to write Chinese stories and legendries after I submitted the chapter proposal. I also helped with another book to replace another author. Seeing my name on books published by the US publishing house was a true joy and although it was still about learning materials, it was a creative activity to develop new learning materials and using my own writing skills.

An education specialist at Island University also came to me to go to an annual SCOLA conference to talk about the use of technology resources in supporting Chinese learners. SCOLA receives and re-transmits foreign TV programming from around the world

and provides other foreign language resources, language lessons, and learning material on this website. I would co-present with the Korean male staff to introduce how technology was used well as a learning aid. It was an invited presentation. It was also the very first time I attended a conference to present papers (never before within ten years before coming to the US in China) and an English-speaking conference. I was so honored and excited. Working with Mr. E during the whole process from outlining to labor division to rehearsal of presentation, I learned a lot to be a truly professional. Collaborative project was really worthwhile. I was insistent going for the conference even it might not be reimbursed. Experience was more important for me. It was the first time I visited Iowa and Nebraska. We went to see the educational sites and facilities. That educational trip for me was a breakthrough. I did well at the presentation and was more confident that I would be able to present academic content in English without problems.

The end of two-year teaching contract was approaching, I was in love with the US and wanted to look for doctoral program or any teaching positions. Due to the visa status, I could not do more but had to plan to go back to my home university. But I would go home with a great research proposal. Before the application season, I contacted a student through a professor at a University in Hong Kong and got to know life of a then PhD student. She shared with me some tips and samples to write an acceptable research proposal and I learned about the genre features of a research proposal and the overall structure.

My imagined research would be about language teacher effectiveness and teacher quality. During the years of teaching Chinese, I observed many problems with teacher background and teacher quality issues. I noticed two important qualities missing that had impacted the quality of classroom teaching: the English verbal ability to achieve effective

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communication of instructional contents and cultural issues; and the cultural sensitivity as well as understanding of learners' culture and learning styles. At that phase of my career, I was highly interested to know L2 teacher education. The proposal was titled The Characteristics of a Good Teacher of Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages from Teachers' Perceptions.

I first found out from general education about Seven Principles of Good Practice (Chickering and Gamson, 1987), which have been a guiding light for quality undergraduate education, and represent a philosophy of engagement, cooperation, learning community, interaction, quality, and efficiency. The seven principles refer: 1) Faculty-student contact ; 2) Reciprocity and cooperation among students; 3) Active learning; 4) Prompt feedback; 5) Time on task; 6) High expectations; 7)Respect for diverse talents and ways of learning. Then I did broad review about "good foreign language teacher" and used it as the background knowledge of my understanding of the "good teacher of Chinese language".

The notion of language teachers' characteristics is complex and multi-dimensional. Hammadou and Bernhardt (1987) discuss "the unique art of being a foreign language teacher". Simon (2006) also studied the distinctiveness of foreign language teachers. His study suggests that to be a language teacher is different to teachers of other subjects in terms of the nature of language, the content of teaching, the teaching methodology, teacher-learner relationships, and contrasts between native and non-native speakers.

Girard (1977) presented a list of good language teachers based on the views of language learners and which included items such as: make his course interesting, teaches good pronunciation, explains clearly, speaks good English, show the same interest in all the students, makes the students participate and shows great patience. Pinthon (1979) stated that "language,"" teaching," and "love" are all important qualifications for good teachers. Allen (1980, cited in Brown, 2001, p. 429) listed nine competencies for "good language teachers": competent preparation leading to a degree in TESL; a love of the English language; critical thinking; the persistent urge to improve oneself; self-subordination; readiness to go the extra mile; cultural adaptability; professional citizenship; and a feeling of excitement about one's work. In addition to the three competencies that Met (1989) identified (namely, "competencies in the general areas of education, interpersonal skills, and professional education" (p.177)), Peyton (1997) recognized seven more competencies including a higher-level

proficiency in the target language, knowledge of the cultures and societies of the target language, knowledge of technologies, pedagogical knowledge, and so forth. Yet another example of the types of qualifications identified for competent English language instruction can be seen in the "Elementary School (K-8) Foreign Language Teacher Education Curriculum" developed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the Center for Applied linguistics (1992). This document identifies 14 separate competencies for curriculum department for teacher education. Similarly, Brown (2001) created a checklist for teachers in which thirty competencies were identified.

The following criteria have been extracted as being required in the EFL context.

1) Proficiency-based competencies and qualities (e.g, proficiency in the targeted language in listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

2) Knowledge-based competencies (e.g., knowledge of pragmatics, knowledge of language acquisition and linguistic theories, knowledge of the targeted society and culture, and (for English teachers in particular) knowledge of global issues and of the broader world).

3) Instructional competencies: language instruction skills and general instructional skills (e.g., skills in employing various pedagogical methodologies, classroom management skills, etc.)

4) Personal and interpersonal-based competencies (e.g., a friendly personality, flexibility, a sense of humor).

More research can be identified like Prodromou (1991) 's list of characteristics valued by learners; examples cited were friendly, gave good notes, played games, told jokes, didn't push weak learners and was more like comedian. Brosh (1996) identified five desirables characteristics of the effective language teacher in his study:

1. knowledge and command of the target language;
2. ability to organize, explain and clarify
3. ability to arouse and sustain interest and motivation among students
4. fairness to students by showing neither favoritism nor prejudice;
5. availability to students

However, it is easily noted that the majority of features of good language teachers embody characteristics of the teaching profession more generally. (Sherman, 1987; Feldman, 1988; Hay McBer, 2000; Walls et al. 2002). The five characteristics have been regularly and consistently associated with excellent teachers: enthusiasm, clarity, preparation/organization, stimulating, and love of knowledge. Particularly salient here in good language teachers are references to teachers' personal characteristics, knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Freeman (1989) describes language teaching as a 'decision-making process based on four constituents: knowledge, skills, attitude and awareness.' Looking into these four elements of language teaching may shed some light on the question of what makes a good language teacher. We probably all know more or less successful teachers who are more or less knowledgeable about English and the background to language learning and teaching, and who are more or less skillful at giving instructions, managing classroom interaction, presenting and practicing language and so on. If good language teaching is related to attitude and awareness, it may have to do with having a positive and inquisitive stance toward ourselves, the profession of

teaching, and the learners, which in turn will lead to increased awareness in all respects.

In the US, many states set standards for second language teachers and foreign language learning. The one in North Carolina describe the knowledge, skills and characteristics teachers have to meet expectations for quality instruction. The standards reflect a strong emphasis on target language competence and cultural knowledge; a dedication to a philosophy of pedagogy that serves the needs of all students; an appreciation and respect for diversity; and the importance of continued professional development.

International TESOL accrediting authority also issued The Code of Ethics list foreign language/second language teachers' 12 responsibilities to his students, 14 to his colleagues and the teaching profession. Instructors have become increasingly aware of the paradigm shift between providing instruction and produce learning (Barr&Tagg,1995). Good teaching involves the interweaving of content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and a knowledge and appreciation of the widely divers profile of students. Personal characteristics are integral to have a good rapport with learners.

In my proposal, I wrote about my reasoning about the importance of identifying the required attributes of a good Chinese-teacher to speakers of other languages. I described the design of a web-based survey study whose questions fell into five domains: cognitive abilities; social/inter personal skills; professional and instructional abilities; personal qualities; professionalism. I attempted to collect as many teachers' perceptions as possible. My design was about a quantitative study using semantic differential and factor analysis complemented with qualitative interviews of focus groups plus comparative studies between teachers outside mainland China and inside mainland China.

The following was selected from my proposal about the significance of the proposed study:

The characteristics list will provide a basic framework for teachers' self-evaluation and define the direction of self-development. It will provide a tool for teachers as they seek to improve their effectiveness in delivering high-quality, productive learning experiences for all students. The cases of teachers' growth, first-hand experience and perceptions of good qualities will open the mind of teacher educators who design the teacher preparation program and inform the teachers' needs, anxiety, curiosity and convince them to involve personal development and reflective evaluation into to pre-service teachers training. The in-service teachers' experiences will enlighten the conception of building up highly effective teacher programs.

Ultimately, the quality of Chinese teachers improve will lead to effective teaching. The whole great project will move on rapidly and smoothly. There will be more and more successful Chinese language programs around the world. More and more Chinese speakers will be produced. As long as the Chinese teachers' quality can be assured, the sustainable development of highly effective programs will be made possible. Chinese will be learned and promoted and spoken widely in the near future.

My imagination developed during that period of time was limited to providing some useful guidelines for selection and preparation of qualified Chinese-language teachers. I had thought as long as a list of specifications is developed for a qualified teacher, there is possibility to formulate a teacher into a good teacher. I held a static view of teachers' abilities and neglect the dynamic process of a whole teacher-as-a-human's development and the socio-cultural influence as well as other critical issues worthwhile of noticing. The product-based thinking or the industrialized modernist perspective of education narrowed my views and beliefs of education.

Unfortunately, the professor I contacted and would follow changed to work in another country. I lost a chance to do a PhD in Hongkong, which was near mainland China. But I did not regret that I took the time to write up many pages academic paper. That was a somewhat achievement for me and a good fruit I obtained from US working life. I used it for other US doctoral program applications and it helped me to get offers.

7.2.5 Continuous English Learning and More Self-study About China

The first faculty meeting I attended made me realize that my English was not enough. The Dean's voice was low and the topics he discussed were new to me. Due to the limited English proficiency and background knowledge, I did not catch all the words and I felt so tired because of the cognitive load to process much challenging vocabulary. I started to re-evaluate my English four skills and told myself I still needed to improve in order to survive and thrive. I clearly knew that in order to communicate deeply in academia, I needed to work

harder and to be engaged at a deeper level. I wrote to the director of the Confucius Institute and said, ' I felt like I was still in China and most of the time, I teach and speak Chinese.' I requested to access to more resources and permit to audit some English courses. Was it funny that I was living in the US and felt like living in Chinese culture. I pushed myself to explore me on my own. I went to the library and used all kinds of opportunities to increase my exposure to English.

I was invited by a professor to speak as a guest speaker to a class answering some students' questions, expressing my opinions towards Chinese social problems. That was the beginning weeks after new semester resumed. I felt my English was so inadequate to communicate freely what I wanted to say. I felt bad that the English I learned before in China had not necessarily prepared me well for high level intellectual conversations. Furthermore, I had many questions and requirements talking about China, and Chinese history, modern China problems. I found out it was not about language skills. It was related to my very limited knowledge about my own country and culture. It was only when one steps outside his/her culture and look from an outsider's view, one can see more and identify more to deeply study. I started reading about China in both Chinese and English, the way China was presented and how truthful stories about China were. I developed my critical thinking on my own through self-education.

7.2.6 Brief Summary of the First Time US Experience

In 2014, my teacher friend who were sent by Hanban to teach in a university in Berrushia wrote to me that during her visit at Hanban in Beijing and she saw my pictures. The images of my class and my program at the US was still up there in books and in some propaganda materials. I was an exemplary teacher teaching overseas to some degree. The

following paragraphs could show that I was doing something different and represented a new generation of language teachers.

> "You were a very different language teacher than my previous teachers. You were very energetic and enthusiastic and gave us real life communication challenges. You represented a whole new generation of Chinese women and instructors with a 21st century vision. From you I learned how much China had changed since my studies and travel there almost 40 years ago. Wish I could have been a student of yours for much longer!!!!" (Email interview with Roslyn. See the Appendix)

But teachers' life stories were more than what they saw from those pictures presented during spring festival or moon festival. They had very rich personal and professional life and aspirations. The inner life was worthwhile of inspection to support and to improve their quality of life and career development.

The two year in the US was memorable and I taught at more than 6 grade schools and many kinds of programs from weekend heritage students teaching to young learner program, sophomore study abroad preliminary program to summer teacher track training program. Being a parent of an elementary school students, sending her to piano training, swimming and skating programs, getting to know her school, all helped me socialize into the broad US social life and become a better teacher in the US. I designed and created so many hands-on learning materials and teaching Chinese culture in ways that I would never be able to practice in previous educational contexts. I did learn a lot about my potential and explored some unknown fields in learning and teaching.

I was becoming a much more fluent English speaker and strong English writer after the two-year living in the US. I became more knowledgeable about China and aware of topics of interest to westerners about China. I was better prepared for academic research and develop sensitivity to research questions. Additionally, I was so used to quiet idyllic scenery and

rediscover the poetic creative self in me. This was what I missed most when I returned to city life in China.

At the Appendix, you will be able to read some reflective writing I submitted to Hanban as a conclusion of my two-year experience in June, 2009. It was about sharing thoughts about living in the US and thoughts on Quality of Teachers. I interviewed the other teacher's similar experience but at different time. You will understand some differences about different type of agentic choices under similar work and living conditions.

7.2.7 Reflections on Language Teaching after 2-year Teaching at the US

Before coming to the US, I worked with adult learners at college level. The new experience working with elementary and secondary American students gave me chances to explore teaching at lower level and how to connect with younger people. There are many good lessons I obtained from my first-hand experience with learners of all ages and levels.

This is also selected from my report submitted to Hanban written in June 2007. I placed more emphasis on students and advocated the opportunities for students to present their learning. The lessons from the American DOLLAR are a very novel way to talk about the gains from my K-12 teaching experience. D- Doing; O-Observing; L-Listening:

Children learn by seeing, listening, touching, tasting and smelling to obtain new experience. As a teacher, s/he engages students by giving them opportunities to do and observe. Careful observation and listening are approached to build up connections, maintain memory and apply the learned knowledge.
L-Loving: A classroom is a loving space that makes the children to feel safe, grow constantly and build up more confidence and self-esteem.
A-Assessing: Students need to have an evaluative feedback to how well they have mastered the required skills or knowledge.
R-Reflection: When a student reflects upon what s/he has learned in public; this is viewed as a way of sharing his/her knowledge. The learning outcomes are enhanced

Figure 7 The teaching ideas from American DOLLAR

7.2.8 Critical Reflection upon the Second Time Transnational Experience

Unlike my adjunct instructor experience in Indonesia as a native Chinese teacher, I experienced a lot more in the multicultural and multi-ethnic US society where I was more conscious of my social identities: low-income, minority, transnational migrant, Chinese, woman, mother, etc. In Indonesia, I spent most of my time with Indonesian Chinese and felt not much difference from living in China as in South Asian culture share many common features with Chinese culture. Coming to immerse myself in Western culture for the first time, I felt more urgency and desire of my needs to get to know more of the western thoughts and

cultures. The US socio-culture was positioned by me higher than Chinese at that time when China was still developing. My presumed prejudices about American culture was it represents the world's most innovative, advanced, civilized and humanized culture through the media socialization. I acquired an attitude to look up at American ways of thinking and doing things and learning English more as an advanced L2 English learner enhanced the American values in me.

The physical space I was placed at was a very rural house on the verge of the university campus. Compared with the workload in China, I had much more free time and small classes. Except for engagement with after school program, college Chinese course and other cultural programs, I had free quiet time at my own disposal. I was quite marginalized and spent a lot of time doing my own work and learning. I had opportunities to work with all kinds of learners but I did not have enough theoretical knowledge and research skills to develop good research making use of my teaching experience.

7.2.9 Seeing More about Self through Another Teacher's Reflection

In order to seek a better understanding of my own experience during the 2-year stay in the US, I sent emails two time to interview a teacher who had a similar experience with me working at the Island University for several years supporting Confucius Institute. She was my colleague from School of Foreign Languages at my home university in China and did not teach college-level language courses at Island University but only ran community cultural programs, teaching Confucius classroom and Taiji classes, some administrative issues, etc.

Please go to Appendix D to read the email questions and her responses. I emailed her two times after her return to China: half of a year and one year after return. In her two emails, the answers to the same questions did not change much. The key points about her reply

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comparing work abroad experience and returnee's life was like this: 1) during the US years, being close to the natural landscape, she developed the love and appreciation of the quietness of suburban life and did not feel much pressure to produce publications and professional development. When you had so much self-time and not many competitive and pushing discourses around you, you felt you were in control of everything. I shared the same feelings. 2) The new cross-cultural experience enabled her to see the reality of the US and first-hand experience of American culture and English-speaking people. She improved the communicative competence in English, and would share more cultural knowledge with students. 3) Teaching back in China has remained the same as what it was when she left the US, she returned to her old style of teaching and life just like four years ago. Compared with the other teachers who made use of the time to produce publications, she felt pressure immediately. Fortunately, nowadays, Chinese university can provide good opportunities and resources for teachers. The difference between me and her was I had been very active to pursue opportunities to create, collaborate, and get involved in social events. I was younger than her, and had more aspirations for future development. I was more opened up to new experience and getting to know more people. I aspired to make changes.

7.3 Back in China (2009-2010): Returned Sojourner Teaching International Students

I was so uncomfortable at the beginning to go back to the crowds and noises of urban lifestyle in China. From the airport in China, I already felt a kind of counter-culture shock. For two years, I lived in the small city at Southern New England and did not pay visits home. I became used to the quiet suburban life. The first day I went back to my home university, the Chinese program with the College of International Education, not the English Department at School of Foreign languages, I was very excited. I had my own office and would be in charge

of the language program working as a coordinator. I was also a part of the Office of Foreign

Affairs and participated in intercultural events. I was expected to use what I had learned from

the US to initiate good changes and lead the Chinese program. I did not belong to the School

of Foreign Languages any more and I was not an EFL teacher but a formal fulltime Chinese

as a second language teacher. The students I was working with were linguistically and

culturally diverse students from all over the world. Most of them depended on Chinese

government scholarship and some of them paid for their own tuition.

7.3.1 Physical Space Innovation and Requesting More Resources

With the expanded work experience I had accumulated in the US, I decided to

decorate the physical space of learning at the building where the international students were, I

was very passionate to renovate the space for my office, the information center, the message

board for Chinese program and some classroom for language students. To humanize the space

and to create heart-warming, welcoming and friendly atmosphere became my first job. I

believed this was part of work culture and statements to international students that they were

cared for and respected. I used up the supplies I brought back from the US and bought new

things out of my own pocket. I just wanted the space to have some character and personality.

This was what I loved about the US public and private space design.

I also requested funds to purchase some necessary devices for teachers, including

books, cassette-player, speaker, etc. The facilities and resources were not enough to serve the

teaching. I was quite proactive to apply for money and advocated for the benefits for

international students. I had the experience of suffering at the material level at my initial

stage. I hoped I could do something to make the international students coming to China easier.

I did think about promoting the intimate relations among international students and

helping to bring the community closer than before. If I wanted to start or initiate some cultural

events and collective activities, I wanted to have a safe, respectable and welcoming space good for communication and sharing. I organized the photography contexts and writing contest and other community events. The students' art pieces were used for decoration so that they could have more close relationship with this building and its space. To assist international students own the living, learning space was my goal. Having much more intercultural empathy because of my own life overseas, I could understand them from a sojourn's perspective.

7.3.2 Supporting Advanced-level International Students

When I went back to the position at my home school in June, 2009, I did not have time to rest during summer but was designated to help prepare two advanced-level students to compete for the annual national Chinese speaking contest. It was a huge event for each university's international students' program. If some students could enter the national-level top ten, that would be wonderful advertisement for the reputation of the universities and their language programs. The competition was very tough. I had one male student from Sudan and one girl from Kyrghyzstan to work with. They passed the provincial level and got the opportunity to compete at a national level. The boy was born in Beijing when his parent was the ambassador for Sudan at that time. He came back to work for a bachelor degree in China only one year ago. He would compete with long-term Chinese learners who studied Chinese, literature and other content courses in China. The girl was also from a family with high social status in her own country and had good network with people who could speak Chinese.

I spent over one month with both of them to work on language skills, talent show related to Chinese culture, stage performance. From making Tang Dynasty costume to looking for performer coach and professional voice coach for them, I dedicated my time and

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expertise to their development. Studying the past year's competition show, taking language and cultural crash courses with me, and practicing speaking and reading every day only in Chinese, they made much progress in all kinds of areas. They came to my apartment to eat, to talk and to learn. We had very strong teacher-student relations. On August 18, 2019, after a few days show and competition in both written and spoken forms, both of them could not get into the top ten. The male student moved a little bit further at the ranking list and got much more attention. His smile and pleasant personality attracted the videographer from TV program and she pointed at me telling everyone that I was the best teacher. I wrote a news report about his emotional reactions and the whole transformative process through the contest. At the end of the article, I said, "the result of the competition is not as important as the self-knowledge gained through the competition."

Working close with them also made me see more dimensions of any language learner. They had their own personal history, background, aspirations and their efforts deserved much respect. For me, I realized it was truly workable and realistic to improve language and intercultural competence within a short period of time if the scaffolding support was appropriate and attentive. Everything was possible and the attitude towards the work process could lead to surprising results. The overall training for the annual language contest was a great success. Although they could not be shortlisted to the last few, their performance in the first few days were on the show and my university was well-represented. School official was very happy about my achievement through them. I understood that I was more skillful to get connected with other human beings and knew how to work with them treating them as very capable respectable multidimensional human beings. I did see human beings in the process of language learning and teaching.

7.3.3 Giving Engaging Lessons to All-level Students

After teaching abroad at Indonesian University and Island University in the US, I wanted to distinguish myself from other language teachers and built up a new identity for myself. I broke away from the conventional habitual ways of classroom language teaching. I took up all the strategies I used outside China and wanted to transform the prevailing teacher-fronted and textbook-based teaching. I went to the classroom with hands-on materials, developed multi-literacy projects, and designed instructional materials relevant to the actual lives of international students within China. I taught all-level Chinese to adult students. The classroom culture I led to build was about building a strong class community, but it was not the learning community of practice which I learned later on. I just followed my intuition to encourage them to have collaborative learning in out-of-school context and to depend on some Chinese students as practice partners. The best feature of my teaching was to respect each student and to enable them to maximize their learning opportunities within the classroom and after class. I did not spend the entire class time to follow the coursebook and focus on preparation for HSK examination (official Chinese language proficiency test). I did help with contextualization of the learning materials and made efforts to help them make sense of their own learning. I resisted the traditional form-focused teaching and brought back what I did with American students to the classroom teaching within China. I attempted to lead the reform of teaching.

7.3.4 Training New Teachers, Helping Foreign Affairs

Once I returned to my home university, at that time I became the only full time Chinese-language instructor in the CSL language program. The other teacher would succeed my position in the US and usually we hired graduate students or part-time teacher from the

School of Foreign Languages or neighboring university. In order to recruit high quality

teachers, I designed interviews and some written tests to select the best for the candidates.

After hiring them, I started some training workshops to talk about classroom instruction.

International students funded by Chinese government scholarship at the language

program were required to pass the language proficiency test after one year language learning

and then would be permitted to merge into the undergraduate programs. They had immediate

goals of learning Chinese. Within the classrooms, they were very anxious to prepare for the

language aptitude tests. Examination-oriented curriculum and test preparation sessions were

the main teaching tasks. There were not many things teachers could do about it. The students

needed the test scores in real life and moved on to their majors. What I could do was to make

the learning time more enjoyable. I taught entry level and advanced level students. I managed

time well so that some dedicated to the coursebook and tests, and the rest of time I could do

things unofficial from my own design. The training of teachers was also related to some basic

classroom teaching practices. There seemed no need to discuss and explore more deeper

topics.

Part of my job was also included helping design summer program for US partnership

universities in that year and helped with some foreign affairs the university got involved. For

example, holding a retirement party for some world-class scientist teaching in China for years,

interpreting for some foreign guest scientists, helping foreign experts, giving presentations

regarding intercultural exchange.

7.3.5 Low Professional Satisfaction, High Level of Anxiety

I was quite busy with office administration responsibilities on a daily basis, teaching,

training and all kinds of issues and social events consumed my time that could be given to my

reading and doing research. My daughter was not adjusting well for third grade after two years of schooling in the US. Lot of homework and pressure. She got sick more often due to the smog and quality of air. I was thinking to make use of the proposal I had to apply for doctoral programs at the university in Hong Kong or the US again. I came to visit Pioneer Valley one time and loved the spirit and natural landscape, I decided to try the only one doctoral program. I did get an offer and quit the one in Hong Kong with my proposal. I went to Macau to travel in May, 2009 and realized that I still preferred the quietness and nature in the US than the hustle and bustle in cities. Luckily, I got accepted and coming to the US was a reality.

Chinese universities have been learning from the US tenure professor system and reforming their own human resources system. The corporate culture and the neo-liberal impact was also felt by me. The job of being a college faculty was not safe and stable anymore in China if you did not have a doctoral degree. I choose to get further education not only for preparing for the future job security, but I did get tired of the regular language teaching and administrative affairs. I wanted to pursue more theoretical knowledge and equipped myself with the latest theories and research. The College of International Education where I worked was very reluctant to let me go and not happy about my choice of leaving. But they knew that getting a PhD was both important to me and to the university. I was made to sign a four-year contract.

7.3.6 Reflections upon My Teaching as a Returnee

Back to China, I was in charge of the Chinese program and made some efforts to improve the programs at that time from my understanding of a humanized learning space to the teaching set-up and tried to enrich classes using what I have learned from the US college

and grade-school teaching experience. I had both academic work and non-academic work to deal with on a daily basis interacting with international students. I was confined by the examination-oriented curriculum but I could still develop student life relevant materials. Back in China, students' learning in the classroom was limited and they had to extend their learning on their own. If I could step back into the past and relived that year with international students, I would value more of their country's culture and get them talking about their "fund of knowledge" brought into the classroom content learning and teaching. Most of them were from African countries on Chinese scholarship. Some came from North Korea and East Europe and Russia. They were definitely multilingual students using what I had learned now. It does not matter whether they will share in Chinese or English. I would not enforce Chinese only in class and will consider their mother language as a mediation tool. I think I would value their personal world and help with their self-reflect and make sense of language learning experience by themselves. My role would be more about through language learning they achieve a creative process of new selves and not necessarily to memorize Chinese and its static cultural knowledge. There is urgent need to discover human beings in language classroom. Although it would be helpful to learn everything was about China and its language and culture. It could also be about their personal purposes to do something bigger than just learning to master the language, the linguistic aspect of language itself, to prepare for future Chinese-related jobs. I could promote more student-based learning relevant to their own social worlds. Native speaker teacher has taken up more power to control students' learning. I would be a pioneer to give up the native-speakerism but see the creative use of language more than studying language as subject knowledge and skills. All in all, the younger me had not reached the level of awareness I had now. That was the very reason I wanted to leave to seek new ways of thinking, seeing and doing.

CHAPTER 8

CURATING A LIFE (Part Two):

TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE IN THE US DOCTORAL PROGRAM

Coming back to the US in the year of 2010 as a full-time graduate student was a very brave and determined act, especially at the age of 35 years old. For a woman in China in her mid-thirties, it was advisable to continue to maintain the respectable job of being a university teacher and holding the potential to take more leadership roles in not distant future. I was told by many people not to leave the good enough job and not to take risk of losing the existent socio-economic status. However, after the first-time two-year US experience and one-year working back in China, what attracted most were critical thinking, advancement of knowledge, further development of competitive capacities, in-depth understanding of self and the world as well as the surprise and joy in trying new life experiences. Another reason was that I had missed enormously the quietness of the suburban life in America and the closeness to Nature. City life and tourist trips to Macau and Hong Kong had made me tired, and I knew clearly that I would be more content and satisfied staying away from daily hustle and bustle. I wanted more time and space to myself and solitude to create. Also, for my daughter's benefits and her continuous education in the English-speaking country, a trend for the middle-class families then and now, going to the US to get a PhD degree would be a good choice. I could not wait to get back to the US university campus. This decision was not supported willingly by many including my husband, as I made the choice to give up wonderful opportunities within my home university in China, confronting stress in real life due to family separation,

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and moved to more challenging and uncertain life situations, undoubtedly with a lower socioeconomic status in the US.

To get to know more deeply about western thoughts at first hand, to largely improve my professional learning and theoretical thinking, and to pursue higher achievement inside and outside academia had always been my life goals. This imagined future self as a highly-cultured English-Chinese bilingual speaker and writer with enhanced research skills and academic literacy remained the impetus for my purposeful investment and commitment to get a US doctoral degree.

It turned out that these were the best years of my growth, in which I went through a lot of changes physically, intellectually, professionally, socially and personally. I had achieved a lot of personal and professional transformation during this period of time and I knew for sure that these changes wouldn't have happened if I had stayed in my previous job and position. The social and cultural environment outside China had afforded me different chances to renew and recreate myself as a teacher, researcher, teacher scholar and rebuild many other additional identities. I was opened to many new fields in linguistics, sociolinguistics, social sciences like anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, and psychology and educational science, research methodologies, and so on. At the same time, I was self-consciously living in struggles, under the impact of both newly learned and internalized values and old cultural expectations. Gradually as years went by, I saw myself grow into a bicultural person and take up multiple ways of perceiving and growing myself, not confined to any singular mode of judgements.

Located in the US East Coast context, from particular institutional culture to the very liberal New England college town culture, from the artful, soulful, spiritual communities to the diverse, individualistic and free-to-be-me local culture, I had evolved, expanded, and also

survived imposed and internal ideological struggles and other conflicting situations, all of which ultimately led me to a more resilient, whole person. The personal development promoted the professional learning and practices and the professional growth brought about more confidence, higher level of self-knowledge and self-esteem. The mutual impact between professional agency and personal agency had been ever present.

In this chapter, I uncover the personal world and social world of my lived experience in the US years of study, research, work, parenthood and social life. If I use my own experience to cultivate the self/personal in learning and teaching, acknowledging my own paradigm shift, identify work, agency choices, and the arts of learning things in everyday life, I recognize the humanifying process of other teachers and students' creation of personally relevant linguistic, cultural and professional worlds.

8.1 Learning to See More, Researching to Reach Deeper

I felt so privileged to have the choice to leave my teaching job to further my education abroad and go back to graduate school as a full-time sudent. This time was very different from the previous experience of working as a full-time instructor with US university. It was a great linguistic and academic environment which every major of English or English language learners had dreamed about. Moreover, it was located in one of the best college towns in the States with liberal and democratic thoughts. This New England public university was very multicultural and multi-ethnic with large student population of varied ages and diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, activist culture and social justice discourses were always around to shape community life.

I had high regard to the US higher education and aspired to be stimulated and inspired by knowledgeable thought leaders and researchers. I took many great courses that elicited

new ways of thinking and reframing of research in language, literacy and culture. The moment I entered my program, I was exposed to the repeated words like "reframe", "rethink", "neoliberalism", "dialogic", "official curriculum", "critical inquiry", "critical thinking", "social", "discourse","community","identity", "power", "critical pedagogy". And all the educational discourses about post-structuralism, postmodernism, postcolonialism and social justice issues, altogether representing totally new orientation for me. It was not an easy beginning for me who expected to learn about linguistics and cognitive science about language. The courses and readings were primarily social-theory informed and sociolinguistic research oriented. They were about multiple theories of language(s), philosophy of language and society, self and identity in language learning, sociolinguistics, experimental linguistics, reconceptualization of L2 teaching and learning, rethinking of roles of L2 teacher and learner and relationship building, and others. Professional learning came from both formal curriculum and informal learning, through collaborative talks and doing research projects, attending academic conferences. I unlearned, learned and relearned everything about second language development and literacy research together with general education.

The very first overarching "buzzword" term reappeared so many times in my readings and program surroundings was Sociocultural Theory (SCT, some scholars also uses the term Cultural Historical Activity Theory, or CHAT as a substitute), whose main aspect is that the human mind is mediated and socialized. Human do not live in isolation but live in demarcated communities with particular knowledge that is created and possessed by their community. Human higher order thinking is not only biologically shaped, but is derived from social life that is culturally and historically influenced (Vygotsky,1978; Wertsch, 1991). In other words, specific contexts where individuals perform their daily roles shape their identities. Upon being socialized into this theory, I expanded what I saw and thought about my observations of

language learners, teachers and language classrooms, including myself as an advanced L2

learner and L2 English user, graduate student and a teacher of Chinese. This also made me

distinguish the traditional practices of teaching that emphasize individual efforts and

achievements from pedagogies that value learning communities and social practices. Starting

from this mind shift, I became a different thinker than before. Educated attention to social

aspects of every kinds of learning made me look deeper down the hidden social forces and

contextual factors.

After taking qualitative research methodologies, ethnography, quantitative and mixed

methodology, I had developed really sophisticated ethnographic eyes to capture more things

under the cultural iceberg (Weaver, 1993, see the figure 8) and dynamics of hidden, or

implicit, curriculum (Giroux & Penna, 1979), and unwritten curriculum in different time and

cultural space. I conducted classroom ethnography, ethnographic investigations of classroom

culture, following student learners, and video-/audio-recorded student teacher and teacher

assistants' classroom teaching. From the third year of my program, I started to focus on

learner agency. The literature review and empirical studies about L2 learner agency had

largely informed my seeing, doing, living and supervision and counseling.
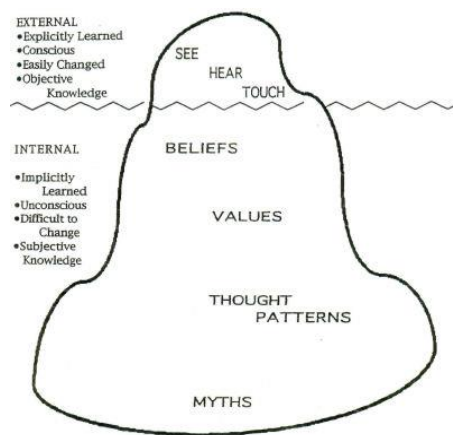
Figure 8: The Cultural Iceberg (Weaver, 1993), Source:
http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/iceberg.htm

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8.1.1 Opened up to Multiple Perspectives of Language and L2 Education

Doctoral courses and seminars had extending my thinking and reshaped my views of language beyond long-held structuralist theories of language (Saussure, 1966), which emphasized the "scientific" study of language, linguist knowledge (competence) that allowed idealized speakers/hearers to use and understand a language's stable patterns and structures. From this perspective, actual instances of language usage (performance), which could be affected by memory lapses, fatigue, slips, errors, was not the center of attention. With a redirected look outside the dominant perspective of language, I was guided to see how language could be conceptualized differently and how it could be related to self, power, identity, society and culture from the perspectives of psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and philosophers. The view of language has evolved from the substance of the mind and the very core of the social self (Mead, 1934), to situated utterances in which speakers, in dialogue with others, struggle to create meanings (Bakhtin,1981, 1984, 1986), from language seen as cultural and personal power (Bourdieu, 1991), also, to symbolic elaboration of the self (Elliott, 2011) and communication means to allow others to make sense of us and for us to make sense of the world (Durkin, 2004; Woodward, 2002). Furthermore, the recent radical one, languages are not only 'acquired' and 'learnt', but also 'lived' (Ros I Sole, 2016).

With a fresh eye, I realized that there are many aspects of language requiring attention, from linguistic code of language as a subject, to psycholinguistic aspect focusing on learning strategy and communication tool, and to social aspects that stresses sociocultural context, community support, and participation space.

From a historical point of view, there are several scientific traditions that greatly influenced theories and methods of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). They are

behaviorist, cognitive-computational, dialogical (Johnson, 2004). Behaviorism disregard the individuality of subject's intentions and stressed the external reality by means of manipulation, control and measurement of the subjects, who were treated like objects in a laboratory experiment. It was embedded in the positivist philosophy of science. The cognitive tradition stressed the importance of mental processes, to be exact, human internal processed rather than external processes. In this tradition, human beings are believed to be born with innate predisposition to evolve cognitively, just like birds' innate ability to fly. The individual is solely responsible for his or her cognitive development. This tradition disregard communicative social interaction, intersubjectivity and goal-oriented collective activity (Rommetveit, 1987) and got strong criticism and resentment by dialogical tradition. The origin of this tradition is Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, the powerful theory of the social origin of human mind (Johnson, 2004) and Bakhtin's dialogized heteroglossia (Bakhtin,1981, 1986). dialogical has also been associated with discursive (Harre and Gillett, 1994), hermeneutic (Young, 1999; Markee, 1994), socio-cognitive (Rommetveit, 1992), and cultural (Bruner, 1996). The dialogic model advocates the dialectic relations between external and internal processes that converts social processes into unique and creative internal process that, in turn, transform social realities.

With multiple perspectives, I could make sense of instructional activities at many levels and see clearly how the views of language, learning, learner, teacher, could impact the learning outcomes and teaching practices, and power relations. The following was a table I made for a conference presentation, showing my perception of the difference between the cognitive to sociocultural perspective, how perspectives could impact pedagogical decisions and teaching/learning behavior.

Table 1 Comparison between Cognitive and Sociocultural Perspective

	Cognitive / Psycholinguistic	Sociocultural
Learning	Learning is to imbue the mind with the ability to possess objectified knowledge which is infinite. It is about acquiring, accumulating, possessing or constructing knowledge.	Learning is embodied by doing, participating, developing community and constructing a new identity. Knowing is indivisible from context, and contexts don't have finite boundaries. It is about participating, engaging in a domain-specific discourse or community, developing meaning through enculturation and socialization. negotiation, practice, apprenticeship, membership
L2 Learning Process	Passive, Individual, Internal, Mental, Information-processing	Active, Interactive, Social, Collective, Co-constructive
L2 Learner Role	Knowledge receiver, listener, question responder,	Active participant, Idea-generator, Knowledge holder and producer, Question initiator, Inquirer
L2 Teacher Role	Authority, expert, linguistic policeman(woman), Didactic instruction deliverer, knowledge transmission, modification, correction	Scaffolded support provider, task-designer, teacher as a learner, teacher as a facilitator, creating space for exercising learner agency
Typical Language Teaching practice	I-R-F, I-R-E, drilling, skill-getting practice, rote-learning, chorus, textbook-based, L1 forbidden, input flood, listen to and learn from teacher, textbook, official literacy	Learner-centered, knowledge sharing and co-construction, dialogic inquiry, peer-teaching, collaborative talk, power-sharing, fostering authentic learning, connecting real-life world, active use of all resources, meaning-making, unofficial literacy

In addition to a fuller understanding of the theories, philosophies and discourses of language (including second language and foreign language), learning and teaching, I was also introduced to research about investigating broad social contexts and how the social world impact on learners' learning opportunities. Self and identity, identity and language learning,

power and identity, all of these aspects did not come easy to me who had thought I would learn psycholinguistics, theoretical linguistics, collecting data of student acquisition of vocabulary, grammar, and treating their interlanguage, analyzing their systematic errors.

The discourse community and the discourse spoken to me verbally or in books all socialized me into an unexpected field, enabling me to have a new purpose to for language education. I have more interest in using identity lens to observe the world and get to know more about self, other and human beings. Together with learners, we learn about language and learn to use language and this experience to embark on brand new personal journeys. The education which the language teacher can create have the potential to afford many opportunities to cultivate bilingual, multilingal, would-be cosmopolitan, who connect with the world in new ways. To learn a language means to increase the capacity to rebel against the long-held belief about the stable identity, to see differently and then draw their own cartographies of the world which use the force of such kind of perception (Ros i Sole, 2016). With new beliefs of language leaning and teaching, learners are opened up to create experience they find meaning in and get to know self. They will become the new generation of cosmopolitan to fashion new road-maps of the world and seek their new interpretations of life.

8.1.2 Becoming a Pioneer, Taking Risk of Being Marginalized

Before coming to the US doctoral program, I had taught college-level TESOL in China for nearly ten years; and Chinese as a second language within China and foreign language outside China for over six years. I had very good rapport with students in class and out of class and some students became very close friends with me. But I had never conducted in-depth qualitative research about learners and had little knowledge of the socio-cultural aspects of language learning. I might have not seen the meaning of doing it or no idea about

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how to do research about language learners. The main reason could be the dominant discourse and prevalent way of doing research were still mainly psycholinguistic, quantitative, and experimental. General attention and main research focus about both EFL education within China and TCSOL education in and outside China were still focusing on linguistic knowledge acquisition, how to teach and what to teach regarding linguistic skills. For example, I reviewed all the panels and sessions of the 2018 CLTA/ACTFL Conference program and put the major themes into the following categories.

> TEACHING: Pinyin; Characters; Writing; Reading; Grammar; Translation
> ACQUISITION: Tones; Grammar; Vocabulary; Pragmatics; Learning strategies; Connective devices; Compound and collocation
> PEDAGOGY: Content-based instruction; Intercultural competence; Beginner level; Intermediate and advanced level; teaching strategies; teaching culture
> ASSESSMENT; TECHNOLOGY; TEACHER TRAINING
> TEACHING OF HERITAGE LEARNERS
> SPECIAL PURPOSE: Classical Chinese and Business Chinese

It is apparent that teacher presenters and researchers' interest had not been placed on learners, their learning history and learning contexts, learner characteristics, and sociocultural issues like learner identity, voice and agency. Most of their research focus were still narrowly confined to technical issues of teaching essentialized language. The social turn has not occurred in L2 Chinese field.

Just like what was prevalent and predominant in SLA discourse in L2 English over twenty years ago in nineties, language remains conceptualized in L2 Chinese field as a cognitive phenomenon, as opposed to a social one, and acquisition as an individual accomplishment as opposed to a social one. The consequences would be: 1) the reduction of complex and nuanced social beings to the status of 'subjects'; 2) a priming of the transactional view of language over other possible views (e.g. interactional); 3) an interest in etic (relevant

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to the researched) constructions of events and phenomena as opposed to the particular; and 5) a preference for inquiry which is quantitative replicatory and experimental in nature as opposed to qualitative, exploratory and naturalistic (Firth and Wagner, 1997).

David Block published his book titled The Social Turn in Second Language Acquisition(2003), aiming to make the case for a broader, socially framed and more sociolinguistically oriented SLA that does not exclude the more mainstream psycholinguistically one, but instead takes on board the complexity of context, the multi-layered nature of language and an expanded view of what acquisition entails. Before this publication, the special issue of Modern Language Journal devoted to a debate about making SLA more sociolinguistically informed, was published in 1997. The first article by Firth and Wagner (1997) argues that the psycholinguistical view is individualistic and mechanistic, and that it fails to account in a satisfactory way for interactional and sociolinguistic dimensions of language.

I started to be socialized into social turn since 2010. In one year, another decade will pass over. However, till present, only a very tiny number of Chinese researchers had express concerns with sociocultural issues and they had taken up interest in doing qualitative research about teachers and teacher beliefs. Research about learners has remained scarcer. There is still great distance for L2 Chinese education to go before it enters into the international discourse about language and language education and makes contributions from the perspective of Chinese-language.

My advisor once asked me if I wanted to be a pioneer or another follower in the mainstream Chinese-language research. I said I would rather choose to do some pioneering work. This was why I started to do some ethnographic studies about learners.

I invite you to enter into some Chinese learners' worlds through my ethnographic eyes (Please see the Appendix). By means of students' stories and my investigation of their identities and agency, I find lots of meaning and feel the urgency in doing classroom ethnographies and conducting ethnographic observations and interviews of students. They become the center of my research interest. The more I can discover from learners and see the possibilities of humanizing learning, the more passion I develop towards growing as a teacher-researcher spending time with them.

8.2 Supervision: Creating a Culture of Mutuality and Care

I took a course named Principle of Supervision and at the same time, I supervised student teachers' teaching practice and helped with their professional development during their practicum. I continued to work for two more semesters as program supervisor and teaching assistant to support the pre-service teachers. My students came from different backgrounds and experiences. They looked for the ESL, world language program, after school program at local schools. I traveled a lot to coordinate, observe and conference with each student teacher.

> "I became very close friends with them and strived to create a caring community where everyone was happy to share their experience and willing to seek changes. I treated them as human beings first, took care of their concerns, issues, and tried to understand their personal goals and philosophy of teaching. I spent time together with them acting as a coach, a partner, a friend who acknowledged their commitment, intelligence, and dignity of being student teachers. During the whole process, I attempted to promote teacher growth than more hierarchical supervision by enhancing the relationship, student teacher autonomy and creativity. I am very proud that my effective and efficient guidance in terms of pedagogical issues, encouragement of reflection and rethinking the bigger questions, and empowerment to allow them to search their own meaning behind decision-making practice and innovative ideas have done great changes in student teachers' life and student teachers' students' classroom life."

I invested a lot of time in supervision job and paid enormous efforts to help student

teachers grow. My attention was placed not only on pedagogical knowledge and theories, but

on helping them to make connections between theory and practice. I also took care of their

inner life. I used dialogue journals with them and cultivate a safe space to exchange and talk

about concerns, problems and issues. I did not just work on techniques, methods or strategies

but the hidden theory and ideologies behind good practice. (see Appendix)

The following was a reflective report for my supervision course.

I come up with a metaphor to understand the beauty of supervision process which
compare supervision to the creation of artistic jade works. To give a new life to a stone
is the same as nurturing a new student teacher. From ordinary stones to beautiful
elegant masterpieces, the jade sculptor puts all heart and soul into the carving and
polishing process and with love, passion, dedication, imagination, creativity and
perseverance. From an inexperienced new teacher to a confident teacher with
broadened mindset and deeper thinking, the supervisor is also making a difference in
the inner world and outlook of a student teacher with all the enthusiasm,
thoughtfulness, intelligence and all kinds of positive energy. The creation and
influence process are a life-changing process. This is a beautiful cycle of life. When
the student teacher got new life, she started making transformation in the students' in
her classroom. When you can imagine and witness the different levels of growth
emerging simultaneously, you can see the beauty of supervision profession. Changing
for the better is the beauty of the supervision. Cycling of love and caring from the
supervisor to student teachers to the real learners in the school is another form of
beauty. It is the mutuality between the supervisor and student teachers that promote
the mutual development in the collaborative inquiry. This kind of magnificent work is
particularly striking and attractive. This is also why it can be enjoyable work although
it is time-consuming, energy-requiring and tiresome job.

My way of doing supervision is student-centered and intentionally in pursuit of
collective learning.

The traditional supervision in the form of evaluating observable teacher behavior is
"not sensitive to the learner-centered goals, activities, and structures that are central to
our teaching" (Paris, Cynthia and Gespass, Suzanne., 2001). The learner-centered
critical rationality stands in sharp contrast to a technical rationality that emphasizes the
uncritical performance of generalizable teaching strategies and that pervades most
professional education. Critical rationality focuses on the perception, thinking and
actions of the learner – whether the student as learner or the teacher as learner.
Shifting the teacher/learner to the center of the process and the focus from the
technical performance of discrete teaching techniques and strategies to the
development of professional thinking yielded a process of greater breadth and

continuity (Paris, Cynthia and Gespass, Suzanne, 2001). I have tried in reality to be close to practicum students and conduct solitary reflections. Through talk and writing, I established a shared task and keep planning and documenting the work. I have been actively engaged in "co-constructing and co-directing the process." I am glad to observe that I am doing the student-centered supervision and go beyond the focus on the technical pedagogy and instructional strategies.

I worked as a powerful guide and facilitated guided reflections in purposeful ways. I practiced the philosophy of being a co-learner and used my expertise to enable student teachers to things that matter to them. I listen to their real world of practice and encourage students to take responsibility. I view my role as enabled to help them to accept responsibility for self-development. "When he chooses his own directions, helps to discover his own learning resources, formulates his own problems, decides his own course of action, lives with the consequences of these choices, then significant learning is maximized (Rogers, 1969)". What Roger observed in the past was realized in my practice.

Through guided reflection and group learning (see Appendix G samples), I create learning opportunities for pre-service teachers and make sure the self-initiated learning happens. And this kind of learning involves the whole person of the learner - feelings as well as intellect - is the most lasting and pervasive (Rogers, 1969). This is a form of agency-based learning I fostered.

Compared with the conventional Teaching Assistant training sessions in formal classrooms, my ways of doing supervision and creating spaces for collective reflection were different. I brought students to various artful spaces and places to get together and embedded art making activities into the warm up reflection. Building an egalitarian group culture and encouraging everyone to talk about their teaching practice, issues and concerns, not confined to how to teach and design specific tasks, the topics and presentation covered diverse topics.

To make sure everyone feels safe to share and willing to help others was one of my goals. I promoted group learning and collective knowledge making.

8.3 Mentoring In-service and Novice L2 Chinese Teachers

I observed Chinese classroom teaching for ethnographic studies. During the process, I also worked as a consultant for the in-service teachers and a resourceful person for them. From the language use in syllabus writing to the writing assignment composition, I was an active mentor for their practice and analyzing the take-for-granted assumptions and hidden ideology behind their decision making.

One intermediate level course project design originally was very prescriptive and gave little space for students to explore (See Appendix H). I then shared my thinking about providing more options and open questions. This helped the teacher to design the task in a more engaging and open-ended manner. The key was to celebrate diversity and allow freedom to create and use students' funds of knowledge. The results turned out very good. The topics inspired students knowledge sharing and they became more active to take the tasks.

Our understanding of language and the role of language educators become part of our professional stance and, as such, influences our curriculum, planning and classroom pedagogies. I always started from discussion about what language is and what kind of stance we could take. When helping teachers to expand their view of learning, teaching and language, they have more flexibility to choose the approaches and strategies to engage students. Agency-based curriculum has been what I advocate. To place students at the center of the learning and to provide resources are teachers' roles. This is what I emphasized when I worked with them. I take the role of new discourse provider, although it was very hard for new thinking affect the practice. But I believe there is always possibility, as long as the goal is

to create a learning environment that students learn serving some personal or big purposes not for credits or teachers' expectations.

8.4 Applying Theoretical Knowledge in Community Building: PGO Parent Writing Group, Conferencing and GSOs

In order to get to know more new people, new school, and support my daughter's middle school PGO (Parent/Gardien Organization), in 2013, I responded to the email about recruiting new members for the PGO and planning for new semester's work. Fundraising was a big part and needed more parents' involvement and I agreed to join in that group. I attended weekly meetings and it was a good way for me to learn how PGO worked to be an integral part of a public-school operation. I also shared my ideas about how I valued student agency and wanted to raise money for that cause. I came up with the idea to create a parent writing group and invite parents to write about their parenting/family stories and we could put the anthology together to publish the book and sell it to China or sell it online to audience who would show interest in reading. By doing this, we built up a writing parent community to write together and tell our stories together and sell to share our stories. I named it as "Writing to Raise", Happy Writing Retreat group. This idea was welcomed and I started to organized the writing group and for the kick-off meeting, I searched some writers around and found a very supportive author who would like to give the first talk. Everything went on very well. I got twelve participants in the first meeting. Later on, I continued to organize five more meetings in the spring every other week. And I built up a website to document the meetings and discussions. At this writing group, there were many ideas, -ism, literacy practices, writing theory and other great things I have learnt from the doctoral program were shared. I also helped writers to pay attention to the agency in language and how to use and express self in writing. This was a good practice for me and other group members. Although the anthology

was not created as planned and the creative fundraising idea was not turned into reality but the

social meaning to get people write and get parents together was an unforgettable event.

Figure 9 Parent Writing Retreat and Webpage of Parent Writing Retreat

With the experience to organize a writing group, I started to take the lead in

organizing the graduate conference in 2015 at my college. For me, it was a practice to deepen

my understanding of agency and what agency could achieve. I initiated many creative ideas to

get more participants and sponsorship, and modeled mini-fundraising activities. Towards the

end of the conference day, I wrote a thank-you note to the group and shared my reflection

about doing a conference.

> I have been convinced at an earlier stage that the process has the equally important
> meaning compared with the result product of the conference itself. Ever since the first
> planning meeting in September till now, I believe every member has been changed by
> the conference experience (for the better). We go through the whole learning process
> together, seeking multiple selves and establishing new identities, exercising all forms
> of agency, trying hard to understand difference and diversity in the real world, and
> exploring the essence of multiculturalism. It is a very fruitful experience, although it
> has never been easy when pursuing our degrees. (11/25/2015)

Based on my own strength and academic interest, I was taking initiative to start up two

Graduate Student Organizations, one is called Future Educator Club to serve the student

teachers, the other is Arts and Academia Club to facilitate and support activities that meet the

academic, social, cultural, and professional needs of club participants. I defined

It strives to support graduate students to experience the liberating power of art and develop artistic talents. The club will create space for learning about arts, talking about arts and explore ways to integrate arts into respective scientific research. The objective of Arts and Academics Club is to empower graduate students with various ways of self-expression and learn to use multimodal ways to create and enrich academic life. The community will help each student to get inspiration and innovative thinking, and appreciate the creative thinking.

8.5 Learning from Other Roles in Real-world Life

In this part, I share my personal life which was weaved with professional learning. If we teachers can understand the personal parts of ourselves, we will see the personal dimension of others, and students. This is the basic of humanized education.

8.5.1 Mothering and Modeling a Daughter: Nurturing Agency at Home

I brought my daughter with me to the US to pursue the doctoral degree while my husband supported us financially outside the States working with a giant transnational company. In reality, I was experiencing a kind of single-parenting to raise a girl then from 10-year-old all by myself when working, studying, and other social life happed at the same time. I viewed the situation as a wonderful opportunity for my daughter to develop as an agentic learner with a lot of self-management and an experiment of agency-based education at home. The result turned out excellent. She graduated as an accelerated student with a valedictorian award and got accepted to a top university. She has developed into a very strong reader, writer, poet, musician, dancer, visual artist, designer, martial artist, editor-in-chief and other talents. Reflecting up my lived mothering experience, I wanted to emphasize theory-guided, principled, intentional cultivation of agency and ownership of learning at home. Her success was the combined efforts of many parties, a network of schools, in-school and out-of-school teachers, artist community, the local neighborhood, friends and other resources.

I had kept reminding me of the truth that Kohn (1993) states about child/human development and to consciously create a control-free environment for personal growth at home:

> …From the beginning they are hungry to make sense of their world. Given an environment in which they don't feel controlled and in which they are encouraged to think about what they are doing (rather than how well they are doing it), students of any age will generally exhibit an abundance of motivation and a healthy appetite for challenge.

This kind of environment gave a child increasing bids for independence and autonomy, and substantial support for their explorations and personally relevant choices. For most of the occasions, my daughter was responsible for self-determined functioning at school and at home. The egalitarian family culture and respect allowed my daughter feel comfortable to display private self and expected public self in a safe environment. Evidence in her growth made me aware of my way interacting with my students in educational contexts.

From Sociocultural Theory (SCT), I have learned that humans are understood to utilize existing cultural artifacts and to create new ones that allow them to regulate their biological and behavioral activity. Language use, organization, and structure are the primary means of mediation (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). The most important forms of human cognitive activity develop through interaction within these social and material environments. What I consciously did at home environment was to provide material resources, connect more capable other human resources and discourse environment. Language is the most pervasive and powerful cultural artifact that humans possess to mediate their connection to the world, to each other, and to themselves.

I firmly believe that things in the world are connected in visible or invisible ways. Abstract notions that I learned from books and theoretical discussions can always find their

way into my daily life. I recreated some academic discourses at home or in any space with my daughter about changing world-views, sociological theory, "identity and agency" and other theoretical perspectives to approach the world. This kind of socialization and power of particular discourse about self, self-awareness, structure and power, oppression and resistance were proved so helpful that her literary analysis in English classes and art making in various forms had stood out immediately due to the insights and individuality. She was educated to be a very independent thinker from early years and enjoyed a lot of freedom for her own choices and actions on a daily basis. This kind of liberty at many levels helped her to take ownership of many activities and become cognizant of her own personal meaning-making in every single event she was engaged with.

My daughter has always been an optimistic girl with positive thinking. As a mother who emphasized an egalitarian relationship with child and was particularly cautious of the oppressive power use, I would not fit for any of the stereotypical categories of pushing and controlling Asian parents, strict tiger Moms, or helicopter parents. What I did was to build up a good ecological system for her, depending on people around me and material resources I could access to, but not following a prescriptive mode of who she was expected to be.

She was really a very proactive student at school and took the initiative to use all kinds of resources and possible opportunities. In our texting messages, we were used to using phrases like "you authored your own life script", "happiness is an option", "proactivity and creativity", "ownership of my own education", "this is my life" and "take responsibility for achieving your own goals", etc. Consciousness of identity construction and negotiation, she has been empowered to reinvent and better herself in many areas. Agency has been a key to her achievements, which is a living proof of effectiveness of agency-based learning and education.

The following paragraphs were selected from her personal statements written for college applications:

…… As an artist and a budding scholar who is passionate about engaging in interdisciplinary study, I am eager for the opportunities to take ownership of my own learning and have space to enact my agency to create a concentration that is personally and socially meaningful. I seek the freedom to explore different ideas and pursue innovative ways of combining and expanding them.

…… I want to apply for your university because it gives me the chance to be engaged in integrative scholarship, and the agency to mix up my unique palette of studies that can paint the education that I want.

As a high school student, she was very determined and comfortable to use the academic vocabulary to depict an ideal of her college education. She used this kind of awareness in all of her writings in anthropology course assignments, art history commentaries and analysist of literary figures and poems. As long as a child could benefit from her own success because of her achievements of agency, he or she will see the opportunities and constraints to manifest this kind of agency for others too.

There was a memorable incident in her eighth grade, when she became an activist leader at her middle school to report to the school head a male artist teacher's condescending pedagogical practices in art class. I was not sure how to advise her as her parent, especially from a Chinese culture who adopted the Middle Way. On one hand, I supported her and affirmed her courage to let out student voice; on the other hand, I was in a dilemma that her radical act might cause unpleasant consequences to a teacher's life.

She wrote a letter representing the entire class's voice and collected many student signatures. Here are the two important paragraphs accusing the art teacher of his feedback to students' artwork.

"Among us all, we feel Mr. XXX lacks the very understanding of how to teach art. Almost everything we do is restricted and questioned. Art class is a place for us to express ourselves, enjoy art, and share our creations. Under the ruling of Mr. XXX, we feel none of the openness that ought to be in an art class. We feel our art works

being judged, and our creativities banished. Who is he to say our art is not good enough? Art is the physical representation of our hearts and souls; we understand there are some regulations of inappropriate messages that are not allowed in school, but other than that, we should be left free. The colors we want, the design we choose, the style we desire… we understand art is a tough subject to teach, and we feel very lucky to have the art program at school when we see many other schools closing theirs down, but we also hope our art classes can be the best for us.

A teacher who doesn't listen to his students is not a teacher at all. The process of effective learning is supposed to be the teacher and students working together and sharing ideas. Here in our art class we feel our voices being silenced. Mr. XXX is against all comments and suggestions that are directed at his ways of teaching. Rather than reflecting upon his own actions, he finds fault in ours. When we as a whole entire class tries to express our side of the problems, he becomes defense and order us to stop. (Catalina's letter at her 8th grade, 2014/10)

I was very surprised of her observation of the teacher's performance and behavior. She was leading a fight for students' voice for how art was taught and responded. She desired freedom and teacher-student collaboration, which she was satisfied at home. As an adult, educated in China and respecting and trusting teacher's authority, I had been hesitant to support her radical activism by voicing out students' honest concerns as this might hurt the teacher's job opportunity, his family and his future. My husband was also not comfortable that she would give the letter out. Another concern from me was she also used her power of specialized knowledge over others. Outside school, she was following professional artists who all allowed her to have lots of freedom and respect her individual choices in many aspects of art creation. She was advanced in appreciating art, responding to art and creating art. To some degree, was she exercising her power of expertise in the school again the teacher? I was very indecisive in supporting her. I didn't know whether there were alternative ways to solve the problem. In the end, after the letter was delivered to the principal, the good thing happened. The art teacher changed his behavior in the following week and opened another conversation, finally chose to listen to students and seek compromise. This was her victory of her first

activist experience. I admired her courage to look for ways to change. I think the seed planted

in her mind from young to be an agent of change helped her to be a leader empowering her

own life and others'. There were several other incidents occurring later that she was resisting

imposed unfairness and challenging status quo of public-school teaching, and protecting her

own rights. She had developed more capacity to enact agency and I witnessed how the

discourse I socialized her into regarding education, teaching, reflection, criticality and social

justice issues had changed a young woman at home. Through mothering and home education,

I realized that agency could be the catalyst for the growth of an independent student and the

engine to drive learners to go all out for their desired self-fulfillment. This quality has

distinguished her from many peers and students raised in a system that emphasize being

obedient.

8.5.2 Self-Experiment: The Power of Arts-based Education

Emerson says "all life is an experiment. The more experiments you make, the better".

In order to understand the beginning level Chinese learners' experience, I did several self-

experiments. From running to become a marathoner, an ice-skater to a photographer, a

calligrapher, and a painter, I treat every new skill as a second language. I thought like a

beginner and experienced a novice student's anxiety, fears, self-doubts, and problem-solving,

looking for resources. I also insisted on agency-based learning, which meant I designed my

own learning and how to practice. Most of the time, I taught myself, reading books, watching

videos, talking to more capable others, and used my daughter as a resourceful person to give

me scaffolding support. I also took workshops a couple of time with professional artists, my

daughter's teacher.

I read Lave and Wenger (1991) who argued that learning to be something—a tailor,

midwife, or teacher—involves more than technical knowledge or skill. It entails becoming a

member of the community by knowing its social relations and the overlapping knowledge, theories, and beliefs that direct professional actions. It also entails knowing how to use these resources to change practices. I also was aware that this kind of agency was attributable to individuals' capacity to "imagine themselves in worlds that may yet be scarcely realized, and to the modest ability of humans to manage their own behavior" (Holland et al. ,1998, p. 281).

I try to apply the social learning theory and community of practice, including building up new identities, to my learning process and consciously observe how I made progress and got better at each skill. I was not afraid to learn new things and did not mind to fail as I viewed it as an opportunity to ask for my daughter's assistance. One of the reasons why I was engaged with learning new skills was to deeply connect with a then teenager daughter. I desired to spend quality time together with her and seek more common language and common experience with her. I She was very strong at painting and ice-skating. She became my teacher and company, or the immediate learning community member. Especially for appreciating her arts and other artist's work, and understanding the difficult process of making from idea generation to completion and the characteristics of a creative mind, I invested most of my time and energy on painting. I took learning to paint as an example to show how I made sense what I learned from theories and discourses from doctoral program in the real-world learning experience.

As Greene (2014) points out, exposure to the arts affects people's values, making them more tolerant and empathetic. The awareness of different people, places, and ideas through the arts helps people appreciate and accept the differences found in the broader world. Arts experiences boost critical thinking, teaching people to take the time to be more careful and thorough in how they observe the world. Noticing details in paintings helps train learners to attend to details in other things. Arts can do numerous great things in

people's mind and heart, which is why I value arts-based education at home, in my teaching, supervision and in my way of living.

Art has the potential to allow people to express in a unique and creative way. Starting from fifth grade to college, my daughter has presented creative projects as responses to assignments for various subjects like English, science, social studies, literature, economics, brain science, and others. Some teachers who knew her talent just created the option of creative artistic responses for her so as to encourage her to show her imagination in public. From mobile hanging art, to 3D art, from self-made drawing video to model stage creation, she never failed to amaze teachers and peers. She has endless ideas to convey abstract notions, depict a situation and communicate a thought with a designer's thinking. I was always the first viewer, critic and the witness of the process from the mapping stage to the completing stage. As I supported her art creation at home and accompanied her growth as an artist, a strong thinker and a capable doer, I also brought out my own artist self, cultivate my own creativity and seek expression of imagination to realize the great many good benefits by myself.

At the beginning, I learned from YouTube and watched artists working with various kinds of medium, from watercolor, acrylic paint, to pen & ink, to pastel, I was so absorbed into the self-paced learning. At the first stage, I was very happy creating and could sit at the table patiently making art till early mornings. I did a lot of research about the greatest artists, art educators, and borrowed books from libraries, watched master classes, took notes to build up the basic theoretical discourse and foundational knowledge. I learned like a beginner but with a lot of courage. I also asked for my daughter's feedback. I made a great number of post-cards size drawings and paintings and bigger sizes works. I invented a new self and additional identity in me. Later on, I attended workshops and joined painting group and socialized

myself into a group of accomplished artists. I was living the sociocultural theory of learning in my art class.

The physical, personal and social benefits of arts motivated me to go in for many arts-related activities. A very important part of my life besides teaching and academic work was related to providing conditions for my daughter to practice all kinds of arts and exposing her to all kinds of arts and events, from visual arts to music art, martial arts to ballroom dance and other forms of art. I put emphasis on museum learning and art appreciation to make her see what arts can do in other creators' hands and minds. My beliefs in the educational function of art and the value of aesthetic education justify my advocate of arts-based education for my child, myself and other children and prospective teachers. Creating environment for both of us, we had already viewed arts as essential parts of our lives and the aesthetic education on daily bases made us more attentive than before. I felt like I developed a new vocabulary and took up an artist's mind and eye gradually.

Being a young artist's parent, I was socialized into artists' worlds, too. I went to many shows near and far and attended artist forum and talks by people making art. Many art teachers had become my close friends and I had frequent conversations with artists very easily as I understood their lives better than any other kinds of people. By practicing arts by myself, from painting, drawing, making children's book, preparing an art show (see the following figure) to practice gardening, I was expressing my creative selves and using art to make unnoticeable visible. Arts are always about individual ways of looking and thinking. They are making something that may not exist before and solve problems in a creative way. My experience made me more and more open and tolerant, when I regard life as an art, parenting

as an art. I start to see aesthetic beauty in everything.

Figure 10: Two acrylic paintings on show and One of four pieces sold at a show

I was experiencing the ten lessons the arts teach generated by Eisner (2002) through my own experience. What arts can teach people are 1) the ability to make good judgments about qualitative relationships; 2) the awareness of approaching problems with more than one solution; 3) multiple perspectives to see and interpret the world; 4) the ability and a willingness to surrender to the unanticipated possibilities of the work as it unfolds; 5) the cognition of the limits of language; 6) the realization of small differences can have large effects; 7) to think through and within a material/means; 8)the capability to say what cannot be said; 9) to discover the range and variety of what we are capable of feeling; 10) important position of arts in education.

Learning to create and enjoy the production process can be very rewarding and help with visual literacy and multiliteracies. If I can nurture that in myself, I believe if conditions allow, arts can be integrated in the language education and teacher education of my students and student teachers, too. After practicing arts by myself, I improve my capabilities of writing about art and how to appreciate art. The following piece was part of a revised artist statement I wrote for an oil painter for her show, whose major theme was about still life. I had never imagined I could write like an art critic. I created a lot of meaning in making still-life

paintings. Frankly, I was writing about my own understanding of the ordinary objects. Arts

activities positively impact my ability to think and reflect critically and made me a deep

thinker that could deeply connect with objects in life.

<div align="center">Be Still an Instant</div>

The magic of still life paintings is that they can show us a new way of looking at the inanimate ordinary objects around us. Once they are placed into a deliberate arrangement and then captured in paint, the objects take on a whole new meaning and acquire a life beyond the ordinary. Their existence becomes recorded permanently in time. To appreciate still life asks us take pleasure in the stillness in front of us as well as the beauty and value of the material world human beings have created throughout time.

The history of still life is a humble story, where everyday objects were considered mundane and commonplace, compared to artwork that depicted landscape and portraiture. Yet still life rose in hierarchy to play the key role in some of art's most important moments.

As a seeker of stillness, I find myself drawn to still life as a subject of painting. I always locate peace and order in the containment of simple objects in everyday life. I strive to capture them as they appear, utilizing natural light as much as possible. The objects chosen for my still life composition usually have personal significance for me. I enjoy painting things that take me back in time, especially my youth growing up in the XXX. I've included several family treasures found in the cellar archives of my childhood home. You are sincerely invited to examine the close-up details of them with your own investigative eye and an inquisitive mind! (Artist Statement, 2017/10)

Observing teacher artists, I also realized that people who understand arts are usually

taking on very humanized approached to teaching students. Except one teacher used step-by-

step teaching plan (from a trial lesson, my daughter quitted right away due to the teacher-

controlled style), most of the teachers liked to teach by collaborative talking and working at

their sides. They created a very nurturing and comfortable space and group learning

experience and gave each participant individualized attention. At art classes, I watched the

student-centered teaching in the actual sense. Students made their respective choices in

medium, content, themes, did their work under little guidance. The beginning talk, wrap up

critique and safe space meant everything.

Here is my testimony for one of the great artist teachers. My writing showed how what I valued in a teacher, what I was sensitive to and what I saw and verbalize to praise a humanized education. I actually saw a model of teaching for language learning, an engaging and nurturing education towards creativity, with lifelong influence. It did not restrict the purpose to skill, techniques and other utilitarian and functional objective. I wish language teachers can do what the artist teacher can do, to make sure students can change for the better for themselves.

> My daughter has been following J as an art student for over five years. J is such a wonderfully supportive and experienced educator. We are deeply grateful for the unparalleled individualized art education/aesthetic education ONLY J can give. Julie has a unique power to change a young artist's life immensely.
> Working with her, my daughter has developed greatly in using various mediums, from printmaking to charcoal drawing, from watercolor to acrylic, from sculpture to mixed media. With her thoughtful design and masterful guidance, my daughter and her group-mates have experimented on all kinds of art materials to their heart's content. J has opened the doors to many art worlds for her students. It is she who makes students seek the meaning of art making and being a creative human being.
> J's student-centered teaching always creates space for meaningful conversations and reflective critiques so that students can achieve a deeper level of learning and understanding through active thinking and seeing. Her openness and flexibility empower her students to let out whatever is on their mind. I always see her give her students just the right touch of direction, insight and necessary training. My daughter has been enjoying so much freedom and encouragement under J and accomplished many award-winning pieces.
> J's studio is a comfortable and relaxing learning environment, with the background music to add a humanistic touch. She is a role model, a highly productive and creative artist who can amaze her students every week with her new masterpieces. To witness the birth of her work is very inspiring. She will be a great mentor to help you unleash your creativity and nurture your artistic self.

Learning to create art, to appreciate art, to see the good art education, for me are great experiments. They helped me understand the best learning occur when the learner made meaningful connections with what s/he was learning and used it to build up a new identity to accomplish new things to extend relations with world. Most importantly, the learning process is a about identity change towards an expert from new comer and take up a new language and

discourse about what you are learning. Also, a heightened level of a self-knowledge is the important learning outcomes.

8.5.3 Feeling the Power of Language: Passion to be a Writer

My concentration in doctoral program talked a lot about theories of language and social dimensions of language use, and discuss how language could be used to achieve what kind of social functions, all of which made me attend to the use of language very carefully. I remembered that when I used "language acquisition", "teacher training" in our talk with my advisor, she would point out the use of words could manifest which discourse community we are from. If I was from social-oriented view of language, I would use "language development", or "teacher preparation or development". As acquisition metaphor and training metaphor implied the mindset of input and output, which treated learners more like containers or objects of behaviorist training.

We are what we say and what we do. The way we speak and are spoken to help shape us into what kinds of people we position ourselves and we want to become. Through words and other actions, we construct ourselves in a world which is building us. That world addresses us to produce the different mindsets and identities we carry forward in life: men are spoken to differently than are women, people of color addressed differently than whites, elite students very likely differently than those from low income families. Discourse has power to reshape us. We can redefine ourselves and remake society, if we choose, through alternative rhetoric and devices. When I understand possible interpretations behind the language use and what it can do, I began to create and observe the others' use of language, especially how you say something achieve more than the message you want to convey.

I also tried to do a lot of literary writing, critical essays, blogging, micro-blogging, documenting daily life and diaries. I watched my own use of language and felt the power of

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different ways of speaking exercised different impacts. I wrote more often than before in both literary and non-fictional forms. I enjoy being a bicultural person who could create thoughts different from writers in mainland China and Chinese people living outside as I convey ideas influenced by the libera culture and readings in the US.

A language teacher can be a more effective teacher if he or she uses language(s) a lot and have intimate relations with language as a creative tool of mind. They can attend to more nuances and subtleties of language in use and appreciate the beauty of language and the hidden meaning-making practice behind the word choices, styles, and genre features.

Poetry as an Artistic Creation. Emily Dickinson, whose house I drive by very often, and whose gravestone I walk past once in a while, is the poet who sparked my interest in poetry. Through reading Emily's (I am on a first name basis with her because we've been neighbors for so long) poems, I am able to gain some of her poetic sensibilities and observe the world with the same sharp-sightedness as she did. Writing poetry gives me a softer and more philosophical view on life. It opens up my eyes to minuscule moments such as a leaf fluttering to the ground, or a robin perching upon a branch.

Leonardo da Vinci says, "The art of painting reflects silent poetry. Painting is a form of poetry to be seen, rather than felt, and poetry is painting to be felt, rather than be seen." His words indicated the commitment between visual arts and literature, including poetry. As I develop painting skills, I also intentionally wake up my poetic talent.

Art mirrors of a wide spectrum of emotions. I use poetry as an important expressive form of emotions. It also helps me verbalize my inner voice. There are so many fleeting ideas in minds every day, and a poem is the perfect place to let them run wild. There's no right and wrong in the world of poetry, and I seek a lot of joy and freedom in this form of artistic

creation. I create beauty in language and words, attending to the rhymes, sound effect, imagery, symbolic meanings and try to weave words artfully together.

Simple poems can have very sophisticated vocabulary and long poems can use simple language. I love making poems and develop materials for learners. The readability of poems can promote language learning. In poetry making, I can share the joy of dearth of fixed forms, and liberating power. I can just let the words come to me and then I put them down.

I self-published two poetry book of hundreds of Chinese poems and use poet's eyes and heart to feel the realities deep within human beings. Since practicing poetry, I feel like I open up more possibilities to connect with the world and people. I help people recognize more beyond the surface look. This kind of agency comes from the sensitivity to language art and poetry.

Here is an interest encounter with a modest rock balancing artist Robert when I hiked on a mountain. He was looking for some stones to make a wedding gift. I started a conversation with him about his previous nature art creation. I used very poetic language to describe his art and the beauty of the making process.
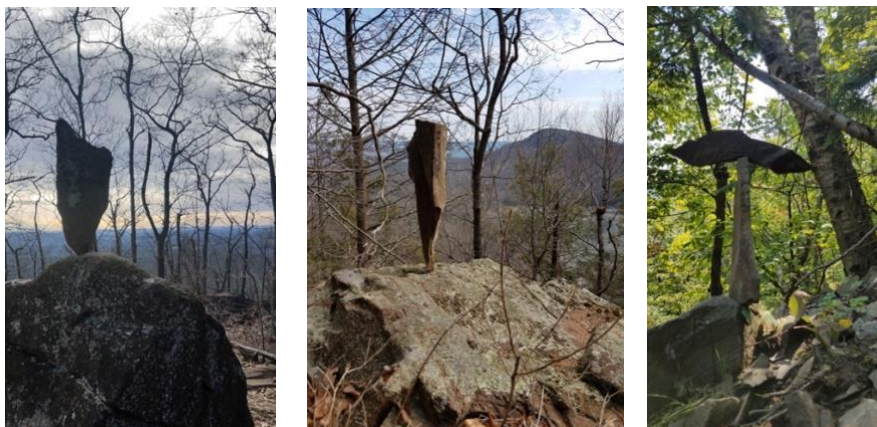
Figure 11: (from left to right) Resurrected in April; Stoppable High-heel; Floating Moustache

Later, we had more exchanges. I sent her poems and also shared with him my perspectives to look at his work and the meaning of his creation. Here are two micro-poems inspired by the other two images:

Stoppable High-heel: It is possible/to have a stoppable/high-heel/It is simple/to just stand still/with more deep breaths/Life is good/when I can feel/when I am filled/with/light/and/sun-shine/

Floating Moustache: You say/It is a mushroom/I disagree with you/Why not a Halloween pirate hat/You say/It looks like a huge axe/I say/Can I you a secret/That is my moustache/Floating in the air

Ying: I named this image "Resurrected in April". If I used the voice of the rock, I wanted to say: I had never imagined that I could see the broad view standing at the peak. I had thought I would lie down on the ground forever, with just one posture I have been used to in the entire life. Thanks to Robert, who rewrote my life. He is the one who had changed my biographical memory. His belief in me enabled me to have fresh eyes and new perspectives of the world. My life starts over in April on the day I revived. I am grateful for the moment I was discovered. I love the world more than ever.

Robert: I loved our conversation! Could you tell?!! You provided such an interesting and unique perspective to my hobby. Initially it began as a personal response to anxiety and loneliness. Seeking balance in all things has become a mantra. The physical process requires my breathing to slow, despite usually after heavy hiking gasps. I get excited about attempting what seems to be improbable.
As we spoke, I remembered past pieces that have taken on personalities. Besides changing their biography in their current form, the story that they can now tell is a gift to our imaginations.

I had many similar encounters with perfect strangers. The poetic language and imaginative possibilities added new meaning to people's life. I was living the power of language and helped people open up to new possibilities. If I could help ordinary people to seek more meaning to what they are doing, I believe I could work with my students or student teachers in similar way, to build up connection and repurpose language learning itself.

8.5.4 Doing Translation and Interpretation: More than Relaying Messages

I can imagine how narrow my life in the US doctoral program would be if I was only confined to the university campus and academia world. Translation and interpretation work exposed me to the deeper level of the US social and political culture and brought me to many new territories that not many people would ever enter and experience. The first-hand contact with people from many walks of life and with socio-economic status was very meaningful for my understanding of humanity, language use and their social functions.

Becoming a social-oriented translator and interpreter helped me to become a better language user in both Chinese and English. With an awakened mind on the issue of agency, I practice the agency perspective to look at self and others, agent and non-agent, and their interactions and mutual influences in various stages of translation/interpretation process. I don't go to any task as a passive actor but get ready to perform the role of translatorial agent and look for the opportunities to exercise my agency in mediation and achieving goals and produce the final translation product. I believe the increasing capacity and awareness nurtured through doctoral program regarding language, culture and society really made me more competent, confident in any kind of communicative situations.

For over five years, I worked for Translation Center as a side job and dealt with all kinds of interpretation tasks and translation projects. I helped clients from various kinds of fields from school districts, university administrative departments, to academia, business, hospitals, and law suits, etc. Through translating/interpreting practice, I consciously attended to the language use in written texts and oral communication, applying my scholarly sensitivity to how and what people spoke in their respective social role identities. I also exercised my role of agent of change and explored the opportunities to act an active role in

translating/interpreting process, extending from textual level interpretation to the sociological perspective and social contextualization.

Working as interpreter for social workers, disabled kids and families, IEP (Individualized Education Program) meetings, eye surgeon, and private school parent donation meeting, and so on, had been wonderful linguistic and cultural activities for me to get to know humanity in many forms. I became more curious and open to know more about the complicated human worlds through these social events, which broadened my thinking, understanding and tolerance of diversity of human needs and problem solutions in real life. Additionally, working with schools, families and social workers enabled me to see the beauty of love and compassion towards ESL kids and families, the empathy towards people with disability, and the resilience of people who went through hardship as minority, immigrants, international students and others. I get to know deeply how vulnerable people can be cared and how they can do for themselves to look for help and advocate for their rights to improve life qualities. Furthermore, I got to be exposed to some inner workings of some institutes, and learn to see the cultural practices beyond the surface.

My socio-oriented approaches to language and language education actually facilitated my understanding of the cultural turn and social turn in translation studies, which recognized that the social implications constituting the translation process need to be taken into consideration. The social intrinsically encompasses the cultural, textual and what is beyond. There has been a fast-growing interest in exploring the role of agents of translation in relation to their agency (Inghilleri, 2005). The interplay of agency as well as social and power relations between agents has drawn more and more attention in translation studies. Translators and interpreters are more visible as social actors. (ibid.). This shift in focus highlights the

importance of and the key role played by agents of translation in either shaping ideologies or introducing new perspectives through translation (Khalifa, 2014).

With the educated attention on my own role as one of the agents, also social actors, I was heavily involved in the dynamics of translation production and interpretation task and the power interplay arising at every stage throughout the translation/interpretation process. I view myself as an important contributor to the common goal of each meeting I were present. I also practice reflection upon my work or my performance to analyze critically my role as a social and cultural agent actively participating in the production and reproduction of textual and discursive practices (Inghilleri, 2005). This promote my understanding of how a certain translation is produced, and how the way I enact my agency can affect the final translation product or the outcomes of the interpretation tasks.

I can use my interpretation events for the IEP meeting or the ELL student goal-setting meetings for examples. What helps me to be able to willingly act out my agency in the role of interpreter for the parent(s) can be attributed to my background as a language educator, a supervisor of pre-service ESL teachers and my previous role as a mother of an ELL student after arriving at the US. My knowledge of the topics about instructional contexts, teaching strategies, intervention measures, language assessment, WIDA standards, ELD standards, state curriculum framework, common core standards, and other relevant content gave me appropriate language to communicate between school personnel and parents. All I had learned from my doctoral program regarding equity and equality in education, minority rights, social justice education, made me appreciate every participant's effort and love deeply. The agency-as-capacity manifested when I assisted each speaker at the meeting and I play the role of more than relaying messages. I clarified questions, asked for further explanations, provided suggestions, elicited parents' concerns and their home education issues and advocated for

parents' will to implement changes, and also helped the teacher give a more complete picture

of student for parents. My social status of a PhD student from a university and my

individualistic and dispositional characteristics and understanding of the goals of the social

events make sure I creatively complete a task either in writer form or oral production. The

more I practiced translator's agency consciously, the more active I become.

Through translation/interpretation work, I improve my first and second language at the

same time and get to know the actual use of language by social actors. Undoubtedly,

translators and interpreters are cultural agents. They have the responsibility and potential to

transfer culture and bring about changes. Professional trajectories and social positioning are

crucial to both the process and products of translation/interpretation activity. The subjectivity

and intersubjectivity of translators/interpreters in the translating/interpretation process can

exert significant impacts.

In the following, I quote part of an email of appreciation from a human resource

manager working with an old Mandarin-speaking couple who were planning their retirement.

> I've been blessed to work with many interpreters (like you, without whom I'd be completely unable to assist our customers) – but have never worked with another individual as kind, patient, intelligent and collaborative as you (thus also super effective). You bring important knowledge, kind patience, light and smiles to a meeting – I'm indebted and inspired, thank you.

> I was sincere when I said that you can even make an old curmudgeon like me smile – and that is a miracle! Thank you – I suddenly can't wait to need your assistance again! (Email to me and translation center, June, 2014)

What she meant by "bring important knowledge", "collaborative" and "super

effective" actually implied my active questioning on the behalf of the interpretees, my use of

knowledge and willingness to co-construct the goal-oriented conversation in the whole

process. My in-depth understanding of both cultures and their respective concerns facilitated

the problem-solving procedures. My agentic use of strategies to help with the couple to generate more questions and get the most of the information session contribute to the positive outcome of the meeting. Also, I assist the client to reach her goal using culturally responsive ways. For many occasions, I witness how agency can be achieved and how agency-as-achievement can result in progress, transformation and effective mediation between people with two languages.

8.6 Frustrations: Failure, Conflicts, Competing Values

The first few courses at my doctoral program regarding social theory and critical consciousness, critical race theory, critical literacy, and multilingualism were challenging for me as I could not see the pragmatic use in Chinese context and I could predict that I might not have a community who shared the same discourses in the future if I got back. These were conflicting with my expectations about what I was going to learn. The program was not really about linguistics, language study, acquisition theory, sociolinguistics but all about ideological level and macro-level social theories. I had anticipated to learn some linguistic courses that enabled me to design and do "scientific" research "scientists". I went to a course by a linguist about first and second language acquisition. There was quite a strong graduate program in my university and I had thought it might be what I really wanted. In this course, I designed and conducted experimental studies, collecting data and doing some analyses, then I designed research studies to investigate Chinese-as-a-first-language children's linguistic development and asked my Chinese friends to help collected and documented responses from Chinese children. It was a success and my professor saw potential in me and strongly recommended me to go to the PhD program at Essex University in the UK, where I could join the team to do research about native Chinese children's language development. I went through all the

procedures and in the spring of 2011, I got the offer. I also got the UK visa successfully but unfortunately my daughter's UK visa had some problems. I would not be able to go to the UK without bringing my daughter with me. I was forced to quit the idea to join the UK program but returned to the US. Then I convinced myself to put my heart into understanding the required courses and developed my interest and curiosity to get to know sociology, anthropology, and other social sciences. I took time to learn about the new courses nurturing a social scientist mind and gradually, I experienced a paradigmatic shift. Through self-socialization and academic socialization into social theory-informed research, I found myself take up the

The more I was in the social camp, the distant I was from the cognitive or psychology camp. I took a stance of viewing language as a social practice rather than only linguistic code. I took into consideration of social functions of language. But with this new ideology to giving a teaching demo, I was not well-received by everyone. This was what happened in my application for an assistantship opportunity for a Chinese language program with a women's college nearby in the end of my first semester in 2010. I failed to meet the interviewers' expectations although I did a wonderful job in preparation, delivery of the lesson, and highly engaged the students. I displayed all the good qualities and competencies a language teacher should have. I was also a risk-taker and showed my creativity and the pursuit of aesthetic value in a language class. There was every reason to see that I performed well in high spirits as a professional instructor knowing clearly about the whole teaching process. With nearly twelve years extensive teaching experience, I felt like I was a complete failure.

I was told later by a teacher who was present at the demo lesson in a private phone conversation. She said that I was overqualified for the position of being a drilling assistant.

She expressed her love of my teaching and believed that I would bring new blood into the program. Here were the comments in her words:

> You are an amazing person. Your class is also awesome! You are very mature and have high quality and personal charisma. Compared with you, the other two candidates would take time to reach your level. The visual presentation of your lesson was so impressive. The love towards Chinese culture you inspired in students in just one lesson was even greater than what I could do in one semester. You are really a teacher of many thoughts. I never thought language class could be done in this way. You did a beautiful job to keep the students interested throughout the entire class. I enjoyed the rich cultural content that you offered to the class. I believe that the students love it too. I have learnt a lot from you."

She also comforted me by saying that "people thought differently and appraised differently. Don't think low of your own abilities if not hired. I like new things and innovation. But not many people love it." She gave me quite a number of positive compliments. She was a middle-aged veteran language teacher.

When I reflected upon my lessons, I know that I deliberately covered much cultural knowledge and shifted the emphasis from drilling to storytelling. I have expanded view of language as a social practice and as 'open, dynamic, energetic, constantly evolving and personal' (Shohamy, 2007:5). It encompassed the rich complexities of communication. Language is not a thing to be studied but a way of seeing, understanding and communicating about the world and each language user uses his or her language(s) differently to do this. This understanding of language sees a language not simply as a body of knowledge to be learnt but as a social practice in which to participate (Kramsch, 1994). Language is something that people do in their daily lives and something they use to express, create and interpret meanings and to establish and maintain social and interpersonal relationships.

My conceptualizations of language learning and teaching had already shifted from learning language as static subject knowledge to learning through language to achieve personal and social purposes. I created a space for students making their personal meaning

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using Chinese. However, the interviewer told me directly that they wanted someone who managed repetitive practice of new vocabulary, new grammar and the discrete language components. She also pointed out that I was overly teaching culture and language classes only expected language practice. If students wanted to know more about the culture and other specialized China related knowledge, they could always register specific cultural courses to learn. In language class, the teachers' job was to drill, to help students master the new vocabulary and patterns.

I knew I was distant from the mainstream Chinese-language circle and was marginalized in a way. My advisor said I was in a different discourse community. I also represented a kind of destructive power when I represented some new force. The reason I failed was not that I was not good enough but I was holding conflicting and contradicting views of language and pedagogies. This made me a little bit worried that new knowledge did not bring me good benefits but pushed me away from the dominant system.

Later on, when a full-time teacher left the program, they wanted me to give a demo again. This time I tried to satisfy their requirements and designed many skills training plus many real and hands-on materials. This carefully designed lesson still failed to help me get the position. When I reflected and also observed who they hired later, I realized that Taiwanese were favored, younger graduate students were selected. And I knew both of them and observed their teaching. I could tell that I already developed a different mindset which made me dare to teach alternative ways and this was a little bit disruptive and threatening. Although I was not hired, I was more confident of the power I held from the new conceptualizations of teaching and learning. I treated students differently, not like one dimensional language learner but a complex social being. Unpleasant results made me feel

depressed for some time but they became a kind of positive energy to push me to learn more new theories to have more "threatening" power.

When I made sense of what I had learned from social aspects of learning and teaching and critical theories, I started to practice them in daily life. Firstly, I started in my critique of my husband's neoliberal thinking. He came from a world-class transnational enterprise. Then, I used them in my writing to challenge his worldview. I also had arguments with people on social media, who held the traditional values and practices. It was so hard to talk with people who cannot see what you can see when you reach a higher level of consciousness. I felt lonelier than before. I used the quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson: "To be great is to be misunderstood." to sustain me.

8.7 Transnational Living: First-hand Cosmopolitan Experience about Globalization

When I brought my daughter with me to come to the US to pursue the doctoral degree, my husband went to Japan, where he stayed till 2017. Every winter and summer break, I went to Tokyo and China to spend. Tokyo and Osaka are great cities open to integrate Easter and Western art and initiate new ideas for the rest of the world. The big cities in China like Beijing, Shanghai, Wuhan, also developed rapidly and the process of modernization, westernization and urbanization was faster than ever. Later on, when I visited Cairo, Egypt, where my husband's new location was, I saw more Americanization and European cultural impact upon the Muslim country. Whenever I went to Asia, I experience and behaved like Asian. When I came back to the US, I took my American self to live and think. Gradually, I developed hybrid identities to fit the superdiversity of the new global era. Travelling enabled me to see cultural differences and varied ways of living, thinking and doing things. There was no higher culture or lower culture at all. Every culture has its own value and contributes to the

human being advancement. To embrace diversity is easier for me than others who don't travel and know little about nomad style of life.

The gains from the cross-cultural encounters with different cultures were the recognition of how the home culture, Chinese culture, has shaped me and my choices to act and a 'double consciousness' (Golbert, 2001) which contributed to heightened transnational conception of culture, values and self. As a privileged world traveler, I have been developing the cosmopolitan competence and international awareness over the years. Broadened view of China and extended intercultural experiences of other cultures enable constant negotiation, reproduction and expansion of social, cultural and professional identities in an attempt to seek new meanings and enact more meanings. As a result, educational, social and cultural experiences exercise impact on the capacity to function effectively in both my professional and personal lives over time.

8.8 Collecting Inspiring Stories of Agentic Human Beings

Through reading other people's lives and talking to new/old friends, I always collected and wrote about other individuals' life stories. Their actions and choices making were identified by me and analyzed through my understanding of agency, identity, and discourse power. This has been a habit to use agency perspective to make sense others' career paths and life experiences. During my stay in the US, I watched many independent movies about extraordinary women, artists and family stories. Their use of resources and possibilities to create their lives have been very inspiring and thought-provoking. The other people's experiences are mirrors or shadows for me. After gaining a better understanding of others' life trajectories, I have more repertoire choices for myself in personal and professional life. Their

past lives merge into my past lives and provide me a renewed importance on the role of agency in human development.

8.9 Summarizing the Experience in the US Doctoral Program

It is a personal and an intellectual journey that comprises several periods of language-education-related personal histories. I have existed as an ever-changing empirical experience, a kaleidoscope of events, institutions, lives, meanings, roles and identities and power play. Every big social and cultural transformation and major paradigm turn has reconfigured it. Theoretical perspectives that have deeply shaped my thinking and researcher practice have also met constant challenges. This can be seen from the following selected peer-review paper presentations I made during the past years. It is noticeable that the research focus of initial stage of learning to research, I could only see the linguistic aspects acquisition and show more interest in concrete practices. But gradually, I had broadened my perspectives and developed interest in looking at the learners and their identify work, power relations, learning opportunities in social interactions, researching the social cultural issues. I wanted to challenge the major attention on how to teach and problematize the unknowingly not humanizing practices. Each time I understood it was so hard to group my presentation into any panels, and the audience might not really understand the theoretical language I was using and why I did this kind of research, however, I tried to bring up my voice and wish to uncover the curtain to the other side of the world for some. Gradually, I wish more and more people would extend their thinking and welcome new practices and humanize the language learning in more profound ways.

Table 2: The Selected Peer-review Conference Paper Presentation Titles

Research Focus /Methodology	Research Topic (year)

Social cultural aspects of teaching and learning: Identity Agency Power Belief Doing ethnographic study; Making Critical Discourse Analysis To Problematize, Complicate, or Challenge	Social dimension: Under-explored territory in L2 Chinese teaching and learning and future directions (2018)
	Politicization and polarization of L2 Education: A case of L2 Mandarin in US News Media (2017)
	Researching L2 Chinese teacher belief: A review of current studies on native-speaking Chinese teachers' beliefs (2016)
	Beyond Error Treatment: Complicating Interaction with L2 Chinese Writers' texts for Social Meaning (2016)
	Difference and Diversity: Understanding Social Cultural Aspects of L2 Chinese Learners (2015)
	Focus on Learner Agency in a College-Level L2 Chinese classroom (2014)
	Individuality in L2 identity construction: a comparative study (2014)
	Problematizing non-meaning-oriented written responses to L2 students' texts (2014)
	Power Sharing In A Foreign Language Classroom: An Application of Critical Discourse Analysis to A Student-centered L2 Chinese Classroom (2013)
	Social Aspects of L2 Learning through the PRISM of Classroom Culture (2013)
	L1 English as a powerful tool in L2 Chinese classroom: a sociocultural analysis (2012)
Linguistic Aspects Technology use in input and enhancement	What corpora can tell us? Raising Chinese teachers' awareness of use of corpora (2011)
	The Essentials of CFL Vocabulary Instruction
	Facilitating CFL vocabulary Instruction: the cloze procedure
	Mnemonic Techniques and Technology: Optimizing the Learning of Chinese Characters (2008)
	SCOAL in Chinese Learning: Keeping Students Really Simply Syndicated by Podcasting in CMS

My initiatives and efforts to engage with various kinds of theories and ethnographic accounts (see Appendix I)of my researches along the doctoral journey, intentional identities building and even parenting experience raising a bilingual and bicultural at home have all inspired critical reflections and many internal dialogues. I am strongly aware of the limits to movement and contingency. In order to understand the macro-level structural impact is to appreciate that, at certain large historical junctures and political context, elements of these processes present themselves as powerful institutional structures with lasting significance, and often internalized. My intellectual inquiry is often triggered by surrounding discourses showing appreciation for macro socio-historic contexts. My educated attention in the doctoral program has shifted to the holistic complex social beings but not one-dimensional language learner or language teacher in language education. I take up the social theory to help me to understand human beings's interplay among self, others and socio-cultural environment. The respect to the struggles and negotiation and efforts to achieve social and personal purposes is endless.

CHAPTER 9

AGENCY IN THE LONGITUDINAL VIEW:

MANIFESTATIONS OF VARIOUS FORMS

Agency can refer to the ways in which individual strives to make active choices in a way that s/he feel will make a decisive difference for self and others. During my time in Indonesia, I was a visiting teacher and also a cultural tourist, taking advantage of the opportunity to explore the natural beauty and local customs. The students I taught were mainly Indonesian-Chinese heritage students. Teaching heritage students for me at that stage did not feel challenged and I viewed them as Chinese students but limited Chinese proficiency. I took purposeful action to invest time and energy on writing to publish and made teaching secondary to my responsibilities. I worked for my own professional rights and goals, coordinated relationships, planned and enacted professional actions to accumulate new teaching and academic experience for my future promotion. In a newly built Chinese program, which initially imitated and learned from the Chinese program within China serving international students, from textbooks to curriculum design, there were not many localization and innovation yet. My role in that program was a native-speaker Chinese to teach language skills courses and culture survey course using materials from China. I felt not excited and motivated to do much besides the usual teaching activities. With experiences from English language teaching, I was skillful to organize tasks to enliven classes and engage them. I was doing what my English-speaking teachers did to me, training. Not many deep level connections and aspirations to know more about students and build cultural relevant responsive class.

During the first-time US college working experience while running out-reach programs for grade-schools, the personal and professional agency were enacted in the role of being a language professor representing China selected and sent by a Chinese partner university, I fulfilled various kinds of teaching tasks for all kinds of learners. I gave substantial support to China-related events, actively defined my own professional goals, engaged with limited number of local contacts. I performed like a person from exotic land and feed people's curiosity about China and its present condition. I developed my intercultural competence through social and personal events, connecting with other families. I was living in a quite white suburban neighborhood and adapted to quiet life and closeness to Nature, or solitary time to explore and learn new things. Especially from YouTube which was new to me at the year of 2007. I could watch some wonderful stories, films, talks sanctioned in mainland China. At the same time, I got to know what US culture and society look like through lived experience not through Hollywood movies or other media. I benefited from seeing more, watching more and thinking differently. I tried many creative teaching projects that I had never done before, collaborate with passionate language educators.

When I went back to Chinese university, I was in charge of Chinese-language program and was the leading instructor for international students. I applied my new learning and skills learned from the US to China and managed hiring, training and maintaining of part-time teachers. I also designed workshops to improve teacher quality. I oriented teachers to implement student-centered curriculum, attended to international students' cultural backgrounds and respected their personal knowledge brought to China. However, for each international students, passing language exams has always been a primary goal in order to maintain the status in China and teaching was forced to focus on helping students preparing

for HSK tests and explaining linguistic concepts and readings that were not appropriate in my today's eyes. After I finished one academic year of teaching and administration work, I left China to come to New England region to pursue a US doctoral degree. I am hungry for doing more and aiming for higher purpose. I aspired to extend my territory and enter academia seriously, as a fulltime student.

I continued to evolve as a more mature teacher, teacher educator, and mentor, becoming more knowledgeable and experienced. I had equipped myself with broadened theoretical thinking, deepened understanding of learning as a social practice and awakened awareness of social aspects of language and language use. During winter and summer holiday seasons, I moved to China, Japan and Egypt to get together with family, living the nomad style of modern life. I was thinking with the cultures I had been to and tried to make sense of the superdiversity and mobility of the modern people's new possibilities.

Over the past years, as a transnational teacher, I had the fortune and privilege to experience varied roles and situated identities, moved across different educational contexts and has become a more proactive teacher, setting higher purpose of language education and exercising my capabilities to create liberatory pedagogical spaces for learners, student teachers and teacher friends. The development of consciousness of personal agency and others' agency enabled me to be open to opportunities and possibilities to exercise impacts and create changes. It is undoubted that it was impossible to get a flawless and totalized view of educational practice. Even though I paid efforts to increase individual commitment to agentic professionalism, I would always be constrained by "local contextual conditions, including the material circumstances, physical artefacts, power relations, work cultures, dominant discourses, and subject positions available." (Etelapelto et al., 2013).

For me, learning was not only a cognitive operation but also a biographic embodied experience. It was not separated from cultural, social, technological, emotional and effective forces, flows and fluxes. I also had not stopped pushing my learning boundaries. My beliefs and philosophical understanding of language, L2 learning and teaching were reconstructed over time, established in changing practical encounters, and informed by shifting academic discourses. They had impacted greatly the emergent forms and chances of enactments of agency.

Across different sociocultural surroundings and institutional contexts, I continuously build both linguistic capacity and theoretical positions, develop professional knowledge, and hold ideological beliefs, which afford and constrain agency in the interplay between internal and contextual factors. Agency is developing over time and it is an ongoing work facilitated by the power of my ever-increasing capacity, renewed beliefs and all kinds of outcomes achieved through agentive actions. The various surroundings and discourses and individual transformations altogether contribute to the ever-changing, fluid agency.

In this chapter, I will mainly discuss the various forms of agency manifested and identified in the process of self-examination using some critical incidents as evidence to facilitate understanding of specific enabling and constraining factors of agency and agency achievements in the long view. First, I will use myself to describe the characteristics of an agent of change.

9.1 Self-knowledge: Becoming an Agent of Change

To be an agent is to intentionally make things happen by one's actions (Bandura, 2001). Being a change agent is a mindset, a way of thinking about the teaching profession

(Hattie, 2012). Looking back upon my evolvement and transformations, I gradually learn to stay open to changes and challenges, and act accordingly, while being self-conscious of the multiplicity of realities and complexity of change processes in different institutional contexts. I become a career-long learner of more sophisticated pedagogies and technologies (Fullan,1993). I have developed abilities to 'a form and reform productive collaborations with colleagues, parents, community agencies, businesses and others' (Fullan,1993).

I see myself as a change agent, as activator and evaluator, eagerly to make a difference in students' learning and myself as a learner. I construct and actively negotiate the developing identity positions at teaching and my lifelong learning. I enact agency in many aspects of life when situational contexts allow. I own my professional actions and decisions to do things.

Generally, there are the following characteristics identified in my evolving self.

First, I position myself as a lifelong learner who systematically reflect on my ways of getting things done and in search of theories, information and ideas. I have a strong will to learn and use that agency for new levels of insights. I use inquiry-oriented ways to make improvements and adapt my work at may levels. In different period of time, the level of reflections varies as the capacity to see things is constrained by my beliefs and education. Obviously, doctoral studies and learning communities at graduate school have largely enlightened me and made me see many things in language education and teacher development from alternative mindset.

Secondly, I don't narrow myself into one paradigmatic thinking but try to be exposed to new theoretical landscape and to master all levels of understanding of content, pedagogies and praxis. I initiatively shape my beliefs constantly. I know and apply theories of language and a range of learning strategies to foster student learning and achievement. Even the

changes I brought to real practice was resisted by the mainstream circle, I place trust in the changes.

Thirdly, I have the enterprising spirit who responsibly takes risks, makes decisions, and advocate changes at individual and collective level. I take creative and meaningful initiatives and daring to take responsibility.

Fourthly, I seek collaboration with others. Collaborative effort will generally benefit each other and build up strong community and has a positive effect on teachers' learning and students' learning outcomes. I always view myself as a member of the learning community and would be ready to learn from others and create opportunities for others to share their expertise and learned knowledge.

Fifthly, I have grit and resilience to deal with hardship, conflicts, power and unfairness in the process of change. Transformation takes many factors and I am aspiring for the positive outcomes and this kind of faith motivates me to not to give up worthwhile efforts.

9.2 Epistemological Agency and Learner Agency

I borrowed the term 'epistemological agency' from Smith (2017), who conceptualize worker-learners' active learning endeavors - the socio-personal construction of learning in, through and for work, that is, work-learning. Workers are engaged in learning through the very practices that constitute work. Smith (2006) also defined epistemological agency as a conception of learning that captures the new workers taking charge of the conduct and accomplishments of their actions at work, that is, their self-management of learning. As a language teacher who live a contemporary nomad style of life, teaching and learning in different cultures, I have been always exposed to new knowledge and display epistemic

virtues - open-mindedness, willingness to participate, initiative to embrace new communities and their ways of being and doing, sensitivity to evidence, and the like.

Teaching all kinds of new students, new courses, in new universities, developing programs at new schools with new learning culture and new group of colleagues and friends, I empower myself by improving my capabilities to research and get access to as much local knowledge as I can, to complete tasks confidently and utilizing opportunities to make friends and practicing other strategies to acquire more privileged identity by learning. I am aware of demands and requirements, opportunities and limitations, rejections and invitations, enablement and containments altogether are what van Lier (2000) explicate about affordance, the relationship between properties of the environment and the active learner. My agency interacts with the environment with conscious intention. For example, running outreach after school enrichment program at K-12 schools in Rhode Island was totally new for me. I went to online teaching videos to learn new skills, craft-making games, class management strategies, observed other exemplary elementary school teachers, and went to library to get inspiration to develop my own teaching materials and curriculum content. For each school site, I came up with different materials according to different groups of students, space for afterschool program and collaborative teachers at different schools. I learned to use technology to create, to design paper-cutting and practice brush ink painting and work on collaborative projects with other artists.

Agency is considered to be a tripartite construct (Bandura, 2001), consisting of an individual's recognition of a significant challenge, the development of a strategy to address that challenge, and the implementation of that strategy. The development of agency occurs over time, as the capacity to deal with a challenge takes all kinds of societal forces and inner development. This development in a long run is the result of an accumulation of perceived

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positive outcomes. The more frequently a positive achievement results from an action, the more agency a teacher can feel and experience and the more likely she is to exercise it out. My overall experience teaching grade-schools were new challenges first to a college-level teacher. I viewed it as a performance like any other actress. Dressing up for each class, I was full of enthusiasm to introduce China and its cultural products to school age children. This might not be related to college professor in China but in the US, I got this chance to extend my skills. Teaching grade-schools was not easy at all. But the strategies I developed to meet the challenge was teaching myself the art-based pedagogies, collaborative projects with local teachers, adopting the exemplary elementary teachers' practices and so on. The more confident and successful I became, the more agency I developed and I was becoming more agentive in trying out all kinds of creative ways to engage students to learn new cultures.

I benefited from my understanding and awareness of autonomy, agency, identity of participation and non-participation, ecology of any particular type of community, and situated learning in what Lave and Wenger calls a "community of practice"(CoP) (Wenger, 1998). I expanded life opportunities and re-crafted my subjectivity as a work of art in acquiring the specific skills.

Understanding my own experience as an active learner and exercising my epistemological agency, I enjoy the authorship of my own teaching life and self-development as a versatile teacher who can work with all-age learners. And this made me realize how to create affordances for my students if they want to succeed in learning new languages and cultures and develop new means of articulation using languages as tools.

9.3 Reflective Agency

Michael Bratman (2007) posits that the agent is the source of, determines, directs, governs the action and is not merely the locus of a series of happenings, of causal pushes and pulls in some cases. Individuals actively bring about their own actions and do not act out of various desires and effects passively. Reflection or deliberation lead to agential activities. An agent is playing an active role in reflective or deliberative acts. Full-fledged agency comes from reflection and self-examination in a proactive manner. For a teacher who aims to achieve desirable goals in educational contexts, understanding one's identities, beliefs and values, using critical reflection frequently can help realize systematic examination and interpretation of teaching self through introspective accounts of personal and professional life. The chief goal is self-realization, with attendant possibilities for self-reconstruction and self-renewal.

The critical pedagogy advocated by Paulo Freire enables me to see teaching and learning space not simply instructional sites but as "cultural arenas where heterogeneous ideological, discursive, and social forms collide in an unremitting struggle for dominance" (McLaren, 1995). Reflection upon or reviewing lived experience using Freirean perspective, I can look for ways to challenge the social and historical forces that undermine my own and my students' behavior and choice-making. Through the process of enacting reflective agency, it helps developing socio-political consciousness and learn to be assertive in acting upon this consciousness, thereby stretching the role beyond the borders of the classroom (Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

Constantly using critical reflection and documenting my own thinking, I have come to view the power of reflective agency to maximize learning opportunities for myself and for others but also view it as a catalyzer for transforming identities, beliefs and values. This kind of achievement are manifested in my own individual reflective writing and collective

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reflective meetings and writings. For instance, I conducted a few autoethnographic projects

and conference presentations to demonstrate my self-observation and self-analysis.

Accumulated from the experience of writing down self-study and talking about my own

observations and research, I form the habit to take a critical look at self and the role of self. I

construct a self-image of who I was, I am and I will be as a persona and as a professional.

Ultimately, I will be able to sketch a self-portrait that renders the connection between the

personal, professional, pedagogical, and the political visible to myself and others.

9.4 Moral Agency

David Hansen (2001) claims that teaching is, and had always been, a moral activity in

his book titled Exploring the Moral Heart of Teaching. He emphasizes the need for teachers to

develop a sense of tradition that animates their consciousness. Hansen sees "the dynamic

human element" as constituting the center of this moral and intellectual activity. He believes

good teaching is one that

> Involves enriching, not impoverishing, students' understandings of self, others, and
> the world. It means expanding, not contracting, students' knowledge, insights, and
> interests. It means deepening, not rendering more shallow, students' ways of thinking
> and feeling. And it entails paying intellectual and moral attention as a teacher.
> (Hansen, 2001)

Kumaravadivelu (2012) points out, a teacher is a moral agent. It is a secret hidden in

plain sight. Almost everything a teacher does, has the potential to carry a moral import

because the educational context is always "an environment of moral interaction and

sometimes moral struggle" (Nash, 2005:4).

Scholars have long recognized that agency has a moral component (Guignon, 2004).

More specifically, research about moral aspect suggests that human agency is measured not

only by the ability to complete an act, but also by the quality and outcome of the acts that one

completes. As a teacher, the quality of morally agentic actions moral is revealed in myriad ways: in the selection of textbooks, developing teaching materials, in the way subject content knowledge is re-constructed and re-presented, in the use of instructional strategies, in the choice of classroom interactional patterns, in the way tasks and activities are organized, in the teacher-student relationship, in responding to conflicts, in making connections with larger societal issues, etc. As Davies (2004) emphasizes that moral reasoning is simply a matter of trying to find out what is best for everyone, achieving the good of everyone alike - the golden mean.

In carrying out myriad roles and responsibilities, teachers are inevitably confronted with competing choices. I had worked with a student teacher, white, man, having overseas ESL teaching experience in East Asia. I supervised his ESL teaching in an inner-city school and witnessed his difficulties to make a choice between taking care of students' real interests and abiding by the official curriculum he was expected to enforce. The classroom I observed several times was often filled with noises, casual activities like doing up hair for each other, forming a group in the center of the classroom, and non-participation by disengaged students. Students seemed quite resentful to do worksheets and finish the assigned take on the required computer program. They came to the classroom to take a laptop and log in a certain prescribed curriculum to practice listening, speaking and reading individually. The teacher was acting as an organizer, distributer and also and language policeman. Generally speaking, he was not teaching much but managing the order of the classroom and took care of logistic issues. There was no authentic learning identified at all. I was quite upset and disappointed about witnessing the young lives were spent on doing nothing much worthwhile. I encouraged him to make a deliberate moral decision to put more trust in his own value judgement and in his conscience rather than in the meaningless check listed learning materials imposed by the

uncaring system. As a supervisor, I shared with him my observation and analysis of his classroom instructional activities and reasons why students were not motivated to do much in school. During the guided reflection, I suggested him doing something more than implementing the required course materials but bringing more relevance and responsive teaching practices in the classroom. The strategies I advised was to leave out one third of time to create his own teaching activities and used his own criteria for building a space for active learning. His passion and willingness to connect with students would make a difference. Through an enthusiastic teacher's organization, there could be more learning opportunities created. He was the one to take professional decision to design space that inspired active learning but not to yield to the prescribed monitored curriculum assigned by the school system. Through him, I also realized my moral agency to help both him and his students.

In attempting to resolve potential conflicts between personal and institutional interests, the educators can do more using their capabilities and strong will to negotiate and the astute observation of own thinking and imposed pedagogy. It is so easy to be blinded about problems created by macro-level structural forces in today's neoliberal era. Developing my own and student teachers' moral agency is about recognizing the socio-political dimensions of language education. How political economics in the global era directly and indirectly influences our professional practices and how teachers can "knowingly or unknowingly play a role in the service of global corporations and imperial powers" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006) require considerations all the time. As long as we teachers systematically analyze, understand, and activate our own intellectual and moral agency, we can take control of our own teaching life and the quality of learning.

9.5 Proactive Agency and Reactive Agency

Agency is more than action, indeed more than intentional action, it is also something that is experienced and the felt experience is significant for the individual (Moate, 2013). However, we could now add that the felt experience is not only significant for the individual within that moment but as an influencing factor for his/her life-course trajectory whether intentional or not. These experiences included proactive and reactive activities oriented towards the world understood as different forms of agency. Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate (2014) claim that the reactive dimension introduces more critical questions and appeared to limit the potential of the self. Differently, the proactive dimension introduces greater potential for both self-development and the contribution self could make to others. In this way, these two dimensions can be seen as complementary contributors to the ongoing discussion.

Reactivity refer to instances in which individuals 'respond to somebody else's agency who has the power to control their lives either directly, indirectly or by controlling circumstances' (Bruner, 1994). Using this definition, some activities were identified as reactive such as meeting expectations of others, complying the rules, depending on others and non-action. Looked back upon the patterns of my own development, I could identify much more cases of reactive agency during the first period before my doctoral studies compared with the life during the doctoral program. I attribute the reasons to the level of teacher cognition and higher order thinking about self, profession, and the external world. And most importantly, I benefited from the freedom of being an independent student not relying on any institutes or restricted by determined social responsibilities from a formal school system. Before coming to doctoral program, I subordinated the individual to the demands of the state and make the individual conform to what the state requires of a citizen or a member of a culture. When authoring my own life in US doctoral life, I pursued my own unique forms of

expression and follow more my educated desired, inner voices and make choices in the interests of self and individual family rather than the native culture and original culture. Living in the US and the discourse about multiculturalism, pluralism, and post-nationalism, nomadism, superdiversity, I get more used to identifying myself as my own race. One human is his/her own race.

In contrast to reactivity, proactivity suggests a knowing and active individual, whose activity is oriented towards one's own goals instead of being driven from the outside (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002). Activities identified as proactive include participating, connecting, initiating new plans, entering a new community and taking a stance, etc. The exercise of different forms largely depends on the affordances and constraints of time and space and external context. During my years in the New England region, the liberal college town, with many voices advocating multiculturalism and diversity, I feel liberated to act like a regular student, without much risk of age discrimination, gender discrimination, sexism, or judgement from outsider. I took many proactive choices to do things favorable for students and learning, researching the overlooked and under-researched. I conducted classroom ethnography, investigated power relations, classroom culture, classroom discourse, and heritage learners and disabled students, gay student, etc. I also advocated the process-oriented writing and non-error-focused feedback, and emphasized individual conferences with students on their meaning-making in L2 Chinese writing. I encouraged L1 use in L2 Chinese learning even though the mainstream Chinese community would avoid the mediation role of L1. I took up more courage by exercising proactive agency to do things that counter the mainstream practices. Although, I felt marginalized each time when I submitted my proposal to the Chinese-related conferences, I did feel the significance to let out my voice as a researcher and teacher using a different perspective. Each time I went to present to the mainstream Chinese

language teachers, I tried to bring new studies to raise awareness. From critical discourse analysis of classroom discourse to longitudinal study of learners, from classroom ethnographies to learner stories, I advocated humanized education and encouraged to eyes to see human beings in language learning. These proactive behaviors come from my desire to bring the students' life worlds and students' voices to the front. As teachers are too concerned with teaching and not knowing who the learners are and doing what while studying a language. Please refer to Appendices to get to learn more about learners.

9.6 Emotional Agency

The emotions ranged from enthusiasm, enjoyment, and satisfaction to disappointment, dissatisfaction, and exhaustion, especially when I experienced a sense of belonging and achievement in my identities. In the changing nature of everyday learning, teaching and supervising, satisfaction and passion emerged when I gained pleasant experiences related to students' authentic learning practices and to the positive changes and impacts of my roles. On the other hand, there was exhaustion, for example, travelling far to school sites in early dark morning and severe weather, depression to see the negative side of K12 education in struggling schools, and other unpleasant outcomes due to lack of personal and social resources needed. In terms of social relationships, satisfaction and pleasure emerged in situations like working very well with supportive colleagues and collaborating well with colleagues and students. Exhaustion and emotional labor related distress appeared when tense relations with people around impeding collaboration in teaching, researching and learning with fear and anxiety.

To be more specific, when changing work and identities shifting go smoothly, I feel a lot of pleasant emotions and motivate me to continue successful performances. If professional

identities were in conflicting with others' interests, unpleasant emotions came out like disappointment, annoyance, exhaustion and sadness, etc. The inability to do things aligning with identities and values make it harder to overcome obstacles. The negative energy can cause non-action and resistance. I once supervised three white female students in their ESL licensure teaching practice. They were local students, white and native English speakers. I was not highly respected at the beginning due to my Asian ethnicity and there were doubts of my capability to supervise. My confidence was challenged at the beginning especially at the group meeting. However, my organizations and observation reports and feedback were very fruitful and helpful, which impacted the interactions among us. I experienced relational ebbs and flows first and then maintained very good rapport. The emotions I brought under control were solidified by my increased professional knowledge and teaching experience, together with insights from the new learning from the doctoral programs.

As for the career decisions, emotions can be seen as an essential part of the agentic processes in career negotiations. When I left the previous college in China that was not able to fulfil my individual ambition and continually provide professional development for higher level, I sought joy and content in new professional space. This means professional agency and emotions can operate via mutual interaction. Unpleasant emotions can impel individual to make choices to make change. Enactment of agency produces positive emotions. It was because the dissatisfaction with examination-oriented Chinese-language teaching culture, which was condescending and demeaning, as actually reinforcing a deliberating culture of passivity, that motivated me to expand my learning for alternative ways of language education and professional power to make decisions.

Negativity from the unpleasant emotions did not result in efforts to change or agentic behavior to improve, specifically the pressure was from macro-level institutional structure. In

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these cases, I became silenced and be quiet and let it be. The feeling of powerlessness could last some time and then attention could be distracted to something I could realize. For example, I was so restricted and felt unhappy about the imposed coursebook, drilling practice, or text-oriented daily teaching jobs. I felt low self-worth and self-esteem and this kind of emotions controlled me and restricted my desire to transform the practice of myself and others.

But negative emotion sometimes could work as a force to stimulate agential active behavior that would leading to more achievements. For example, I was experiencing a sense of inadequacy when I had no time or energy to read or research more about Chinese history, politics and deep level culture phenomena. I also felt not content when compared with professors in Chinese studies, or the applied linguistic field. This kind of recognition of not good enough push me to manage time well and work out plans to teach myself.

The relationship between disappointment or fear of being marginalized and agency could be found among my passion to get involved in Chinese-language related academic conferences. I went through past conferences programs and all kinds of typical presentations they are interested in, I realized that I had been not with the discourse community any more. I am on my own withholding social-theory informed language teaching ideologies and human-centered agency-based teaching. The conflicts between my values and the mainstream discourse in Chinese-language made me see little opportunity to contribute and to change. For me, I have been moving to postmodernist thinking but the field was still predominantly in the old and narrow ways of treating students, teaching, and learning. This kind of marginality made me feel lonely and doubt the meaning of my exploration in the new territory. However, I still got some inspiring feedback as long as I could bring changes in small number of audiences. Sometimes only a small group people's recognition and their satisfaction about the

significance and value of your job could mean a lot and motivate you to be hopeful again. And this kind of shifting energy is actually a force always pushing me to break the current status and seek new balance.

9.7 Creative Agency and Intrapreneurship Competence

Schools and colleges around the world are quickly introducing new teaching/learning models and instructional technologies aimed at developing creativity, creative confidence and innovative behavior in both teachers and students. Recognition of opportunities for improvements, the generation of innovative project ideas, the capabilities to make reasoned decisions, and potential to develop new and better projects are all of critical importance for the success of any organizations and individuals.

Pinchot (1985) shapes the keyword intrapreneurship and he characterizes the intrapreneur as an innovatively behaving individual who acts like an entrepreneur. He states that intrapreneurship (IP) is a process by which a person meets his or her needs for autonomy, inventing, management, and completion of projects in a complex bureaucracy. It is a process by which new ventures, products, and projects are developed and implemented in … organizations. (Perlman et al., 1988). The IP competence and endeavor leads to an incremental innovative outcome and cause a change.

Investigating my teaching and learning behavior and efforts over the years, I found my increasing competence to develop my own teaching materials, design new engaging projects, create new practices and implement innovative thinking. IP dispositions such as innovativeness, proactiveness, and the willingness to take risk are identified. And they are strengthened by inspiring educational contexts and detected opportunities by me. At the same time, I attend to emotional intelligence, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy in both

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myself and others. I give myself and others freedom to implement new plans, providing others with resources for realizing their ideas, honoring their proactive initiatives, or taking on risks that are linked to IP projects.

In the past years, I deliberately research creative thinking, design thinking and promote artistic skills development for myself. Also, I share my learning with others and influence others to pursue unconventional practices and new paradigm thinking. For one semester when I supervised a group of ESL and world language teachers, I brought students to various kinds of coffee houses to experience different culture and atmosphere for group talk, created humanized colorful interesting space for gathering, designed collage projects and other tasks for student teachers to practice perspective taking and learning some new trade, and depended on ourselves to plan and create multimodal teaching materials. I acted as a leader who acknowledged creativity and showed enthusiasm about self-expression and being a maker instead of the consumer.

In a model weekly report (see Appendix), I used my watercolor painting, apps, and other documentation skills to present our weekly group talk and enabled them to see the outcome of eliciting new and non-traditional ways of doing and seeing things. All student teachers started integrating arts, technologies, and designing in their teaching and individual instruction. My own achievements of creative agency also drive me to nurture more conditions for IP disposition and IP competence in my students. Innovative is a mindset I cultivated and this kind of aesthetic power of seeking something new in my teaching life.

9. 8 Grit and Life-course Agency

Life-course agency examines how individuals construct their life within the social conditions they live in. Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe (2003) define it as: ... the ways in which

individuals construct their own life course through the choices and actions they take within the opportunities and constraints of history and social circumstance. It stresses a temporal orientation in referring to the individual's life course.

Agency in different contexts and times requires a focus on the dynamic interplay between (i) past influences and experiences, (ii) engagement with the present, and (iii) orientations towards the future. Agency is seen to be rooted in past achievements, understandings, and patterns of action; it is not something that people possess as an attribute, but something they ''do'' in different contexts (Ecclestone, 2007). For life-course researchers it is commonplace to acknowledge the importance of ''context'' (history, socio-economic conditions, institutional ethos, subject discipline, etc.) (Ecclestone, 2007)

Grit has been viewed as an additional facet of agency (Kwon, 2017). If we place agency within the flow of time, understanding how people see in the future could be a crucial factor that impact people's daily decision making and personal control. As Mische (2009) observed, hopeful, optimistic outlooks certainly motivate individual action. Positive thinking, high self-expectation and planful competence (Clausen, 1991) are future-oriented capacities that have significant longitudinal influence. As the behavioral facet of agency, grit moves from cognition to action, and it is a non-cognitive skill. It refers to "passion and perseverance for a long-term goal" (Duckworth et al. 2007), consisting two components: consistency of interest and perseverance of effort. Grit help individuals focus on something of interest and work with great effort to stick to the end. It is common that people who lack grit give up easily and rarely stick to the end goal. With higher level of grit, the individual can work assiduously and diligently to accomplish the predefined goal no matter the barriers and odds. Gritty people can sustain their determination, interest and effort even confronted with adversities, failures and misfortune.

I, as a person with a strong sense of purpose and persistence, perceive myself as having a high level of grit and more strength to persevere and endure. I always said to myself, "your middle name is resilience" and this kind of self-empowerment comes from seeing other successful people near and far. This subjective beliefs about my control under challenging situations lead me to the realization of long-term goals. I have a strong belief in my agency to achieve my future goals. Grit has acted as a driving force to convert my subjective beliefs and expectations into actual agentic behaviors that, in turn, lead to greater attainments. Grit mediates the engagement with my learning.

I am authoring my own life path and have a future in my mind. My past life experience has exhibited my future-oriented expectation and behavior agency and the role of grit in this agency achievement. I have never given up the goal to become a pioneer in uncharted territory in L2 Chinese education, an innovative educator and independent thinker. In the process of motherhood, and becoming a long-distance runner, and other instances, I have enhanced the qualities of grit and this in turn strengthened my belief in the positive power of grit to my life outcomes. This kind of capacity grows after more experience of success of long-term goal realization.

CHAPTER 10

A FURTHER UNDERSTANDING OFAGENCY AND AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

It has been a continuing struggle for everyone in the world to find some order and significance among the fragmented moments of experience in their life. Everyone questions life and searches for answers in various ways, from collaborative dialogues to contemplation silently and alone, from philosophy to the humanities. Among all the ways, qualitative inquiry can be one of the most productive and fruitful ones due to its reflexive nature. From my own subjective experience, autoethnography is one of the qualitative methodologies that is capable to vivify and unify life experiences with researcher's increased self-awareness and more directly, more comprehensively, to explore the general human situation through personal experiences. To persevere in writing autoethnography is to fight against the human weakness, to win over negativity towards self and develop a complete portrait of self.

In this chapter, I will summarize the investigation of my own lifeworld in the past decade, intellectual trajectory, and professional experience and share my learning, understanding and insights from the deep inquiry into evolvement of awareness, capacity and achievements of agency. For me, I hold a holistic view of language and merges language, research and life together. Personal development facilitates academic literacy development and academic socialization into new concepts and theories help understand life, people and the inner and external world more critically and deeply. It just happens that my profession is a teacher of language, teacher of Chinese originally coming from China. Moreover, I become part of the globalization process, internationalization of Chinese language and live a contemporary nomadic life. Through experiencing, becoming, developing and being socialized into a different kind of language teacher across various sociocultural contexts, I

acquire a better understanding of the influence of the past on present and present towards future self, others and the world, with the help of reflexivity and reflection.

In following parts, I discuss the creative process, the features and aesthetics of this kind of autoethnographic writing, the new discovery along the writing journey, the deepened view of this research approach and how we can use autoethnography for critical thinking, reflective practice and transformational actions. I also discuss the potential to use duo- and team autoethnography for future research for more rigid and complete knowledge-making. By means of autoethnography in many ways, we can facilitate the building of teacher communities and teacher network. In closing talk, I discuss some limitations, explain the reasons for some unsaid and unspoken issues, restate the significance of doing this self-examination project for teachers and the meaning to search for enriched understanding of agency for teachers and ultimately for teachers to help with awareness of students/others' agency.

10.1 The Overall Explorative Inquiry

Post-modernism rejects meta-narratives but encourages a multiplicity of narrative. It shows interest in diversity and complexity instead of looking for unifying single story. Aligning myself with postmodernism and the belief of multiple ways of knowing, I conduct this longitudinal autoethnography which pays very close attention to the evolutionary dimension of one teacher's lived experience (2007-2017) and captures the historical development of consciousness and achievements of agency as well as multiple identities across different situational contexts. Unlike an autobiography, my autoethnography strives to place more emphasis on a deep and critical enquiry pertaining to self within sociological surroundings and look for the forces from the bigger macro- and micro- contexts. It involves

looking both inwards and outwards to discover things about myself as a researcher who was little known or unknown or unexplained until examined and interpreted. Presenting a "patchwork of feelings, experiences, emotions, and behaviors that portray a more complete view of . . . life" (Muncey, 2005) over time has been the major task I am engaged.

Using my own life as raw materials for creation, this work is not just about my self. It also deeply places myself within particular time, historical social space and educational culture. In the entire writing process, I reflexively insert my educational and personal biographical experiences into the ethnographic investigation. The project itself is an interpretive activity, a way of projecting understanding about the interplay of self, others, relationships, resources and situational experiences. I take up the responsibility to make it about other people, too, as this autoethnographic investigation is actually about raising consciousness and awareness, help people see and experience possibilities. By reading an autoethnography, hopefully, the reader can experience something new so as to feel, to learn, to discover, to resonate, and to co-construct in their own professional and personal.

The past years (2007-2017) also represent the period of time when English becomes a global language and lingua franca for the whole interconnected world and the continuous rise of China and the status of Chinese language in the landscape of L2 education. My personal life history has been undoubtedly interwoven with the changing macro historical context. With the advancement of bilingual and bicultural (Chinese L1 English L2) literacy through transnational work and life experience, and together with the increased global impact of China, I also develop my capacities which consist of beliefs, ideologies, values, discourses regarding language, language use, language education, language teachers and learner, and

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other things to adapt myself to the changing realities and try to do something to shape the surroundings and help others changing their thinking too.

By doing and writing autoethnography, I demonstrate an unconventional professional development trajectory of a veteran language teacher of Chinese. It is notable that all of my narratives do not necessarily comply with the traditional teacher development of Chinese teachers. Contrary to the existing prevailing image of problematic Chinese programs, incompetent Chinese teachers, and other negative issues regarding operating and maintaining Chinese programs, or a one-dimension good Chinese teacher, I present a creative, capable and aspiring nonconformist teacher of Chinese who grows to advocate agency-based pedagogic practices, critical awareness, reflective and reflexive practice in learning, teaching, supervising, mentoring and many other aspects of language teaching career and life. In the composition of autoethnographic accounts, I also encountered frustrations, struggles, failures, doubts, and depression, or other forms of adversity. I strive to use my own experience of discovering holistic human beings in both language education and teacher education to outgrowth narrow views of one-dimensional powerless learners or teachers of only limited mechanistic skills. The image I represent myself is a very agentive conscious life-long learner who seeks critical examination and actively makes sense of both preconceived and emergent thoughts and acts across various varied time, social relations and life-worlds.

The critical examination and deep reflection of my own evolvement and transformations are demonstrated in multiple and shifting identities constructed in a long period of time and afforded by different sociocultural contexts. From a teacher of English as a foreign language at college level, to teacher of Chinese as a second language working with international students, and teacher of Chinese within and outside China, I experience changes and learnings enriched by students' cultural experiences. From a teacher researcher, mentor

teacher, teacher educator, to a lifelong teacher-learner, I also enlarge my imagination to challenge the conventional way but practice more humanized way of interactions with people and community members. I continuously and deliberately develop English proficiency as an advanced L2 English learner and deepen knowledge about America, people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds living with different social status, and many sides of their personal world and culture histories. At the same time, I become more knowledgeable about Chinese language and culture when I am living outside mainland China due to the double awareness and improved cosmopolitan competence. I discovered many fields about China I want to know more, its past and present, people and social changes. I position myself both personally and professionally between two or more languages and cultures and do not confine myself to national boundaries. I give myself a substantial investment in both teaching life and personal life. While acknowledging the limitations and constraints of contexts, I witness myself in the constant process of identification and negotiation of meaning. Identification comes from engagement (investing self in diverse social practice, as well as in deeper relations with others), imagination (seeing individual experience as part of a broader context - "images of the world that transcend engagement" (Wenger, 1998) and alignment (connection to others when actual practice is in line with a broader enterprise, involving power). Negotiation of meaning involves ownership of making meaning of experience, power processes, with this knowledge, I want to represent myself and private truth. When the negotiation fails, I experience marginalization and being excluded.

This autoethnography has purposefully challenged the stereotypical images of Chineseness in China-born native speaking teachers and assumptions of their development trajectory. It reconstructs a life-long teacher-learner shaped by and shaping various kinds of socialization process at different stages of professional life, with or without available

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discourses. The personal life and professional life have been mutually constituting each other and inform into each other.

My transformations from a cognitive- and psycholinguistic-oriented teacher to a social-theory-informed teacher and teacher educator who has acquired anthropological and sociological perspectives can manifest the gradual changes of the L2 education landscape and provoke new thinking in Chinese-language education field and Chinese-language teacher development. This study makes visible the complexity of language teachers identity formation, construction, negotiation so as to contribute to the qualitative inquiry of language teacher research and L2 Chinese-language education. Self is recognized as an ongoing dynamic process. I use my case to challenge the static, positivist and cognitive categories that have dominates L2 education field and Chinese education for many years.

To sum up, I use socio-cultural sensibilities and ecological approach of agency to scrutinize long-term view and longitudinal perspective of changes happening to my life worlds and how I transform or maintain my immediate reality. The transformative learning that I experienced and the agentic breakthroughs in my personal and professional development hope to inspire reflective and reflexive practice in educators, especially experienced, veteran language teachers to explore the notion of agency and related concepts like identity, discourse, power and ownership.

10.2 Reflecting Upon My Individual Experience of the Research Methodology

My experience proves that autoethnography is more authentic than traditional research approaches, precisely because of the researcher's use of self, the voice of the insider being truer than that of the outsider (Wall, 2006). Being authentic is an option indeed and it takes courage to confront the potential critique, judgments and challenges.

The use of this research tool has allowed me to explore self and culture in wholeness. I have enjoyed the freedom to be introspective in my reflexivity, and to improve my capacity of reflectivity and reflexivity, to be as mindful, heartful and soulful as I could be to attend to the actual interactions that experienced with people involved in my life.

I purposefully record, examine, and interpret the meaning of my experiences over a long time. The long view makes it possible to understand the process and transformation due to changing identities and positions. Reflecting through doing and writing autoethnography is an ongoing process that is predicated on continually thinking about one's actions and then modifying them accordingly. One never completely arrives at a place of completion with their reflection. By revisiting and rethinking what happened in the past and relations to the present, projections upon future, there is always a new discovery and enlightening moments through mistakes, missteps, misrepresentations, or misjudgment and other kinds of activities. I think this is also the art of possibilities.

Autoethnography is a form of consciousness that is created by the act of writing: when we write, we are thinking in a different way. Van Manen (1990) describes how writing creates this 'reflective cognitive stance':

> Writing fixes thought on paper. It externalizes what is in some sense internal; it distances us from our immediate lived involvements with the things of our world. As we stare at the paper, and stare at what we have written, our objectified thinking stares back at us. Thus, writing creates the reflective cognitive stance that generally characterizes the theoretic attitude in the social sciences. The object of human science research is essentially a linguistic project: to make some aspect of our lived world, of our lived experience, reflectively understandable and intelligible. (pp 125-126)

I cannot agree more that when one formulates one 's personal acts in writing, one is taken up by the machinery of reason, logic, and universality. What was confused and subjective becomes thereby objective in the end.

In undertaking this autoethnographic research, I witness myself to discover something new, a new way of thinking about a subject or lived experience, interpreting a cultural issue, choosing a new way or ways of being. Ellis in (Bochner and Ellis 2002) argues that "the self that is writing the story is changed by the process of writing it" (p 91). It is definitely the true case for me. I am a different person now and will continue to be. Autoethnographic research explicitly acknowledges this kind of shifting sands of being. I know I become a better self who understands better about self-examination and self-analysis and will continue to seek changes for the better using autoethnography as a way of living.

Doing an autoethnography can be compared to going on an academic adventure or running a marathon. It demands a lot of mental, emotional, intellectual and physical preparation in the entire process. No matter what I encounter or feel, pleasant or unpleasant, rewarding or unsatisfied, fulfilling or inadequate, I convince myself to persevere to the end. There are all kinds of distractions, cynicism, (self-) doubts or other forms of forces along the way to urge me to quit. However, it is imperative to place trust and faith in self and the supportive community deliberately fabricated from the start of the exploratory project.

No pain, no gain. It is so true for any autoethnographic journey. Most of the pains are worthwhile and make me learn a lot from them and feel grateful. The whole adventure of self-exploration is truly about learning, unlearning, relearning reflectively and critically. I am always confronted with the moments to unsettle all the bias and preconceived beliefs. With years of expansive learning (Engeström, 2003), rhizomatic learning (critical and creative thinking and meaning searching), and nomadic thinking, there is every reason to believe that longitudinal autoethnography cultivate a better thinker and writer and a more capable doer who do things better, do better things and ultimately see the world differently and see beyond the surface.

10.3 Expressing Self Autoethnographically: The Writing Process

Writing about one's lived experience is a difficult activity. It often involves reflection about traumatic incidents, sadness, loss, identity confusion, illness, and divorce. In many ways, compared with writings about external issues which involve little personal investment in the content, writing self is very challenging. If one has never written about self before, self-writing may feel strange, even threatening. The mirror is not always kind, especially when we sometimes create false impressions of ourselves. Hence writing requires effort, honesty, and perseverance. It also requires meaning and purpose. Writing is a movement towards something worthwhile (Johns, 2006).

There is no standard method of autoethnographic writing. It varies from author to author because, as Ellis and Bochner explain, ethnography is what ethnographers do. It's an activity. Ethnographers inscribe patterns of cultural experience; they give perspective on life. In using oneself as an ethnographic exemplar, the researcher is freed from the traditional conventions of writing. One's unique voicing - complete with colloquialisms, reverberations from multiple relationships, and emotional expressiveness - is honored (Gergen & Gergen, 2002). I interact, take note, photograph, moralize, and write in the whole process. Autoethnographic writing involves personal expression about a particular event or situation. It's not just writing about what an individual think or how an individual feel about anything. It involves careful consideration of one's lived experience, and have the knowledge about how to express myself autoethnographically.

Autoethnography is more subjective than objective and does not fit the conventional (i.e., positivist-oriented) research that requests objectivity, certainty and clear boundary. The author's "I" is frequently seen and stories of social and personal life are unfolded at many layers and levels. When it comes to reporting findings, as Raab (2013) argues,

autoethnographic writing highlights action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and a sense of self-consciousness (Raab, 2013). Even so, however, the impact is as much emotional and affective as cognitive because the author creates a heightened self-consciousness through textual production (Plummer, 2002). It rides on the epistemological belief that the vicarious learning and knowledge creation that come through the literary discourses of an autoethnography are as effective as the cognitive learning that comes with the discourse of more scientific objectivist research (Richardson, 1994).

As an autoethnographer, I seek to understand human beings and their relations with the world and culture through myself. Humans perceive the world using interpretive lens and autoethnography makes possible a similarly creative process of perspective building about one 's past experience. When writing autoethnography, I chose a situation or event on which to focus. All situations occur in a particular space and at a particular time in one's life. This event or situation was investigated in a particular light because of the circumstances that surrounded it. After building perspective and coming to understand the conditions that make some point of view about a particular situation, I become more responsible for my way to respond to contexts. Using autoethnography to explore my trajectories was liberating, especially as I reflected on the multiplicity of my identities as a language teacher. Through this approach, I could give a voice and a perspective to experiences that I would typically keep silent, since autoethnography acknowledges the explicit impressions of emotions. This opportunity is crucial, especially for teachers like me who feel a sense of marginalization with professional background not in Chinese studies, Chinese literature, Chinese linguistics and holding a different philosophy about teaching and learning.

Using my alternative narrative of teacher development, I promote the understanding of complexity and richness of language teachers' lives in the era of globalization and

superdiversity. I attempt to question and problematize official ideology and normalized

formal practice of Chinese language teacher preparation and development. I agree with Reed-

Danahay (1997)'s words: by exploring a particular life, I hope to understand a way of life, a

language teacher's life.

Autoethnography is proved to be a useful tool for teachers who are engaged in

reflexive practices. Furthermore, autoethnography may also bring to the forefront the nuances

of cultural contexts which otherwise may be hidden by traditional social science research

paradigms. This could be beneficial for other teachers (and researchers), because it validates

similar experiences, or creates an awareness of the complex issues confronted by language

teaching professionals worldwide.

As a researcher, I observed some challenges with regards to an autoethnographic

approach. While working from an analytic perspective, I was continuously restrained by the

need to relate what I had experienced with broader theories. In other words, the need to

abstract was, at times, a hindrance to coherently pen down my thoughts. The evocative

approach, on the other hand, allowed me to express myself freely. Nonetheless, I was not

comfortable by simply ending my story without any form of abstraction (as seen in the

previous section). As a researcher, I still had to bring about vital theoretical points which I

wanted readers to notice and make sense of it. Another challenge lies in the selection and

determination of relevant stories. I was cautious in selecting which narrative to examine.

I see much value in doing analytic autoethnography. First, from a growth perspective,

analytic autoethnography supports a dialogic relationship between personal experiences with

broader theoretical constructs. This not only encourages teacher professionalism, but

contributes to the development of the community of practice. Second, this methodology

empowers teachers to be critical and systematic thinkers, and not as one who is insular or

removed from the beliefs and practices of the community because of the emphasis on the experience of the self. Finally, from an ethical perspective, analytic autoethnography may be more successful in ensuring the confidentiality of participants being examined. This, I believe, is crucial though it may render personal stories less colorful.

In terms of the personal struggles of writing up the narratives, I would like to frankly share problems I encountered about reducing accounts and letting go the stories that may not effectively contribute to the major storyline. Removing insignificant parts sometime can be very challenging for me. In my email to my advisor, I shared the following thoughts:

> It is also emotional process - imagine someone has to revise the diary and the emotionally charged writing - and "murder the darling". Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, a man of letters, wrote in a 1916 essay titled On Style: "Whenever you feel an impulse to perpetrate a piece of exceptionally fine writing, obey it — whole-heartedly — and delete it before sending your manuscript to press. Murder your darlings." William Faulkner, an American writer and Nobel Prize laureate, also gave similar advice: 'In writing, you must kill all your darlings.' Have the guts to cut" (Kurt Vonnegut) does require the suppression of a natural affection. In order to create something I love, I have to let go of something that I like. As long as I "kill" my beloved excesses, what is left will be what I am justly proud of - my real darlings.

10.4 Advocating Engagement with Narrative Research

Narrative research has been recognized to be of particular significance in capturing development and changes over time. Rooted in a constructivist paradigm, autoethnography embraces narrative as a meaningful way of deconstructing individual lived experiences authentically (Ellis et al., 2010). As an autoethnographer, one also takes up the role of being an astute observer, consummate writer, and keen scholar. The distinguished feature of this style of writing is that the researcher becomes part of the data, and he or she must be capable of deep self-introspection and vulnerability. Intrapersonal competence, self-reflexivity and rigorous honesty are all required.

Autoethnography potentially wields a textual power that transcends the typical academic dissertation. This power arises in its narrative capacity to be more memorable than

traditional textually sterile scholarly work. This work aims to be both accessible to myself and others even without much knowledge in qualitative studies and teacher education.

One of the most liberating and attractive aspects of autoethnography is its versatility in form. Academic data may be constituted as short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, scripts, co-constructed narratives, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing, multi-voiced accounts, twice-told tales, and social science prose (Ellis, 2004). Such allowances permit writers of autoethnography to employ their own brand of creativity, use the first person, and contribute to scholarship in a rigorous way.

Autoethnography can do what art can do to take you deeper inside yourself and ultimately out again, and that exhibits esthetic merit, reflexivity, emotional and intellectual force, and a clear sense of a cultural, social, individual, or communal reality (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). It is regarded as an action that sets a scene, tells a story, and creates a text which demands attention and participation; makes witnessing and testifying possible; and puts pleasure, difference, and movement into productive conversation (Jones, 2005). Autoethnographers have been in the forefront of challenging the traditional written form of the research report. They have drawn on a variety of creative arts genres, including autobiography, fiction, poetry, and performance arts, to share their findings and to make scholarship more accessible (Lapadat, 2017).

In my writing process, I feel entitled to exercise various kinds of writing to fully express myself and to explore the power of different ways of using language. Sometimes it was charged a lot of emotions, writing was tiresome. I felt reluctant to continue and fearful to relive the past. Sometimes I enjoyed finding new ways of narrative identity building and found the intellectual enlightenment. Tears and laughter took turns; regrets and satisfaction

rotated to appear. My heart and mind experienced severed tests but also being enlarged and broadened.

It is understood that language teaching and learning focus not only on the acquisition of a language, but on the interaction and development of a holistic and intercultural identity (Scarino 2013). Gibb (2013) and Liang (2013), for example, have written language teacher narratives featuring the transformative, or 'identity-changing' effect of language learning in their lives, and as they also observe it changing lives in their classroom learners (Moloney,2016). In my use of narrative enquiry to examine my individual experiences and trajectories within the Chinese education community, I have, as noted, endeavored to avoid essentialization of educational schema (Dervin 2009; 2011). Nevertheless, in individuals' stories, the tension between educational beliefs is noted, for example, between the models of teacher as authoritative source of knowledge (Leng, 2005) and of the teacher as facilitator, helping the student to make their own discoveries in learning. I advocate the use of narrative research to reflect and reform themselves.

10.5 Critical Thinking through Autoethnography

Critical thinking is recognized as one of the most vital skills for both teachers and students. It provides additional opportunities to gain a better understanding of issues and topics that are discussed in many occasions. A person who thinks critically is much better placed to take informed actions; actions that are well grounded in evidence and that are more likely to achieve the results intended. Language education also needs to take up the responsibilities to nurture students' critical thinking but the first thing is teachers should have the capacity and habit of mind to practice critical literacy.

It seems not unusual for teachers to complain about how students behave unprofessionally in an educational context or about how students are intellectually inadequate to investigate or even evaluate varied perspectives or creatively solve problems. Brookfield (2012) explains that educators themselves have not had their critical thinking skills fostered or developed to a great degree while they were in higher education as students in their past. In many cases, teachers themselves are not capable enough to practice and utilize their own critical thinking skills as they profess and expect. It becomes an overused term. Although teachers tend to advocate the exercise of critical thinking in students, in reality, they do not demonstrate critical awareness and need more skills and in-depth understanding of critical thinking and critical reflection.

This is why Brookfield (1995, 2012) encourages to foster and fully develop educators' own critical thinking skills before they actively implement teaching that requires critical thinking skills. Being critical often means to be able to know about and understand oneself (Misawa,2014). The self needs to be acknowledged for both critical thinking and qualitative research reasons. To learn to critically reflective about my own practices enhance my capability to continuously and sufficiently develop critical thinking skills. Writing up my own autoethnographies allows me to become better acquainted with myself and thus better able to elaborate on my own subjectivities as researcher. I am convinced that the educator's critical thinking will set up model for, nurture and facilitate the cultivation of students' .

Palmer (2007) states, "the work required to 'know thyself' is neither selfish nor narcissistic. Whatever self-knowledge we attain as teachers will serve our students and our scholarship well. Good teaching requires self-knowledge" (p. 3). Having self-knowledge helps educators become critically reflective teachers who understand and examine their own practices from both teacher and learner perspectives (Misawa, 2014).

Paulo Freire (1998) offers a frame for the critical self-reflective teacher-researcher, stating,

> I teach because I search, because I question, and because I submit myself to questioning. I research because I notice things, take cognizance of them. And in so doing, I intervene. And intervening, I educate and educate myself. (p. 35).

Autoethnography really provided me ample opportunities to critically examine my own biases and viewpoints. "When we do autoethnography, we look inward into our identities, thoughts, feelings and experiences – and outward into our relationships, communities and cultures" (Adams, Holman, Jones, and Ellis, 2015, p. 46). This process of zooming in and out, between the personal and the cultural, makes autoethnography an ideal tool for reflective professionals, with the caveat that such research ought to demonstrate scholarly understanding of frames from the specific professions (Chang, 2008).

10.6 Expanding Reflection through Autoethnography

There are many approaches introduced to encourage reflective practice but the narrowness lies in treating reflective practice solely as a one-dimensional, intellectual exercise, while overlooking the inner life of teachers where reflection can notably lead to awareness of teaching practices but also self-awareness for a more holistic view of reflection and reflective practice. Taking the TESOL field as an example, Akbari (2007) has also (correctly) cautioned that, when reflection becomes a solely intellectual exercise, reduced to a set of techniques and 'gets done' (Mann & Walsh, 2013), it leads to 'a real loss of reflective spirit' and a 'disregard for teacher personality.'

Farrell (2015) advocates a holistic approach to reflective practice that focuses not only on the intellectual, cognitive and meta-cognitive aspects of our work, but also the spiritual, moral and emotional noncognitive aspects of reflection that acknowledges the inner life of

teachers. My own experience enabled me to understand the power of autoethnography to reach inner world and help with soul searching process. This kind of soul work is critical to transformative learning and it is transformative procedure.

Autoethnography is a place to listen and pay attention to one's own heartbeat of experience (Johns, 2000). We seldom listen to what our heart tells us. It provides such a quiet and sacred place for me to step into the lived experience and relive those significant moments and attend to dialogue with self and particular contexts. By stopping, pausing, being present, listening to my self-narratives, being filled with inner meanings, metaphors and inner soul lessons from both personal and professional life, I seek and gain new enlightenment, new insights, dynamics of wisdom and depth of meanings revealed whole to me. They are truly already contained on the margin, in the shadows, in the distance haze of our own existence. Like Watson (2006) states, it is through the breakdowns of conventional practices, combined with breakthroughs of reflective practice, which can now be integrated with the most up-to-date knowledge and skills, philosophies and theories, that we enter a new world of professional practices that embrace, encompass and more fully actualize the paradigm of hope.

Through this combination of evocative and analytic autoethnography, I have offered models of insight, revealed the hidden subtext of paradox, competing values, dilemmas, inner drama, unaddressed questions, uncertain and unknown. It has been a journey into the spiritual, the aesthetic, the ethical, the arts and a reflective awakening journey, into context, discovery, relationships, non-objectivist, non-formulaic, non-prescriptive emotions and responses with intentional consciousness and reflectivity.

10.7 Autoethnographic Reflection Is Action-oriented

Reflection is always disruptive in that it cuts across the take-for-granted and thus always has the potential to destabilize. Stories trigger the audience's own stories and facilitating the sharing of stories and development of communities of learning. My writing can be a revelation and open a way for others, simple but profound. As such, stories change lives as they have changed my own life. They are a mandate for social action towards a greater humanity. Richardson(2005) once argued very strongly that the self that is writing the story is changed by the process of writing it.

Autoethnographic work has an inclination to focus on traumas and turning points - those personal and social experiences that have led one to be marginalized or to feel powerless. Just as traditional ethnography has tended to study the less powerful and exotic other, autoethnography has looked preferentially at the powerless and exotic aspects of self (Lapadat, 2017). Uncovering personal and social consequences that have been hidden in dominant discourse is a prerequisite for initiating change. Talking about truths is a starting point for action.

Denzin (2003) tells us that, together, our collection of personal stories presents an alternative to the dominant discourse and a way forward. Therefore, in addition to its roots in (auto) biographic and ethnographic inquiry, Denzin (2003, 2014) sees autoethnography as being interpretive and performative, with the purpose of "mov[ing] audiences to action" (Denzin, 2014, p. 20).

Autoethnography is the study of lived experience within a larger cultural context. It is a kind of academic writing and performance that depends upon deep reflection, reflexivity, and narrative construction that pays particular attention to the relationship between the particular and the general - between part and whole (Viramontes, 2012). Reflection is

concerned with harnessing energy for taking action (Johns, 2006). Being open systems, people can exchange or convert this energy with the environment and create positive energy for acting based on a reorganization of self as necessary to resolve crisis and emerge at a higher level of consciousness.

As Johns (2006) points out, reflection is not a neutral thing but a political and cultural movement towards creating a better, more caring and humane world. He describes the three notable features of reflection: 1) A process of enlightenment or understanding as to why things are as they are (self in context); 2) A process of empowerment or take action as necessary based on understanding; 3) A process of emancipation whereby action actually transforms situations for a vision to be realized (in the understanding that visions actually shift in the process of realization.

During my autoethnographic exploration, I feel and obtain great energy that dissolves the past and gives me the gift of a new future. It helps me identify past patterns of thinking and behavior and releases me from the imprisoning habitual mindset by offering a path into newness. Autoethnography has the power to recreate myself and move me to transform to reach a new world. This kind of power is made possible due to particular efforts to add the temporal framing to reflective practice in the writing process.

As Johns (2006) notes, experience is never an isolated event but part of an unfolding temporal narrative that links with past experience whilst anticipating the future. Temporal framing facilitates the continuity of meaning between present and past experience believes is crucial in order to focus on the future in a meaningful way. From previous experience, new learning can be acquired and applied to future experience and subsequently reflected on. This process creates the conditions for reflexivity, looking back and seeing self as a changed person through experience. By looking for answers to questions like "Is there any connection

between this situations and previous ones?" "Could it be done better or alternatively?" "How are the feelings different now?" The sense of continuity and continuous development could be enhanced through regular reflection attending to growth and change.

10.8 Going beyond Autoethnography and Seeking New Possibilities

George Eliot wrote in Daniel Deronda (1865) 'There is a great deal of unmapped country within us which would have to be taken into account in an explanation of our gusts and storms'. Doing autoethnography is mapping, charting the unknown field, expanding knowledge of 'who I am'. According to Johari window, a psychological tool created by psychologists Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham in 1955 helping people better understand their relationship with themselves and others, there are parts of ourselves and relationship with selves and others to be explored and uncovered.

Arena	Blind Spot
I Know You Know	I Don't Know You Know
Facade I Know You Don't Know	Unknown I Don't Know You Don't Know

Figure 12 Johari Window (Keogh, 2018)

Autoethnography has great potential to awaken in us our strongest denials and deepest, darkest, and most fearful parts. But for the parts that only exposed to others, and those unknown, we do need others' eyes and their critical examination or sometimes another mirror held by others for us to see. The individual process underestimates the value of collaborative

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processes. The acts of sharing, dialogues, willingness to use other's critical reflective lens, and mutual efforts in questioning, challenging, unsettling, and interpreting utilizing different theoretical literature all enable new understanding to be established. We learn both from ourselves and others' experiences and could turn learning into action. This knowledge and recognition is very important for language teachers who work on their own in many cases.

I wish I can have a colleague adopting the collaborative philosophy of reflection with me to build up a supportive culture, even it may happen that clashing values cause tensions. Coming to a radically new self-conception is hardly ever a process that occurs simply by reading some theoretical work. An environment of trust and support in which one's own preconceptions and feelings can be openly discussed, in which one can think through one's experiences in terms of a radically new vocabulary which expresses a fundamentally different conceptualization of the world. It is in this kind of supportive environment that one can see the particular and concrete ways that one unwittingly collaborates in producing one's own misery and one can gain emotional strength to accept and act on one's new insights.

Cox et al. (1991) focus on this phenomenon:

'Reflection in isolation is difficult to sustain because of the difficulty in surfacing and transcending what may be our own distorted self-understandings, asking ourselves difficult, often self-exposing questions, facing the difficult answers to such questions, and, perhaps most particularly, keeping our vision directed towards new possibilities for understanding and action.' (p. 385)

Considering the above arguments, I would suggest the dialogic approach to do ethnographic work of self - involving dialogic discourse with both self and others - and choose duo-ethnography, tri-ethnography and collaborative autoethnography. With the increased transparency and trust that develops via the co-constructive dialogues, mutual critique, sharing and listening to each person's individual experiences, creating a supportive

and inclusive institutional climate that fosters a willingness to take personal and creative risks, more knowledge and insights, higher level of consciousness and criticalness, greater empowerment, and more informed actions as well as meaningful changes will come into being.

10.8.1 Duo-ethnography and Dialogic Growth

Duo-ethnography is a research methodology that requires minimum two researchers engaged in a dialogic process. Duo-ethnography hinges on the level of trust between the dialogue partners. Their comfort level and willingness to let go of previously held beliefs in order to make room for the reconceptualization of their beliefs is viewed as its greatest advantage but also the greatest barrier to overcome. Duo-ethnography is underpinned by the hope that we can learn to be with each other, not just in tolerance and understanding but in dialogic growth (Sawyer & Norris, 2015).

Bai, Cohen, and Scott (2013) suggest a 3-fold relationality within which we exist: self to self, self to human other, and self to nature. The three dimensions offered by Bai et al. (2013) account for the domains of identity (self to self), community and dialogue (self to human other), and purpose and deity (self to nature). Knowing oneself and knowing others can be experienced through intentional dialogue. In duo-ethnography, autoethnographer use themselves as the subject but also engage in dialogic imagination and promote heteroglossia - a multi voiced and critical tension (Bakhtin, 1981). During the research process, two autoethnographers turn the inquiry lens on researchers themselves as the site of an archeological examination of the formation of beliefs, values, and ways of knowing (Wilson & Oberg, 2002). They gain new learning and change as the result of the conversation, and value the learning from difference.

Brown (2015) 's ''Still Learning After Three Studies: From Epistemology to Ontology'' traces her journey through three duo ethnographic studies and how she shifted from seeing duo-ethnography as a research tool to an ontological and axiological experience. She extends the possibilities of duo-ethnography as she calls on others at her university to engage in duo-ethnographic studies as a way to begin to live in a more humane way and to imagine the world and relational ways of meaning making in a new and more humane key.

I want to learn from difference and look forward to obtaining more self-knowledge, the blind spots and unknown parts, through relational ways and critical dialogic reflection with others. I also invite you to try to seek a partner to do this meaningful work and feel duo-ethnography as a new way of being and living.

10.8.2 Collaborative Autoethnography (CAE) and Evolving as a Team

The third critical reflective lens Brookfield (1995) proposed to enable educators to be critically reflective considers colleagues' experiences in an educator's practice. Fostering critical conversations about our teaching with trusted colleagues or critical friends can yield useful insights. It helps break down the 'shroud of silence in which our practice is wrapped' (Brookfield, 1995. Colleagues' experiences are often broadly similar even while they differ from ours in detail. A sense of diversity will become apparent that can only be helpful to us in exploring alternatives and opening new ways of seeing and thinking about practice.

Brookfield (1995) also states that feedback and comments about teaching are valuable when educators critically reflect on their own practices because "we can notice aspects of our practice that are normally hidden from us. As they describe their readings of, and responses to, situations that we face, we see our practice in a new light".

Using a window as a metaphor, O' Donohue (1997) tells people how important it is to look into ourselves and gaze from other perspectives and positions.

> 'Many people remain trapped at one window, looking our every day at the same scene in the same way. Real growth is experienced when you draw back from that one window, turn and walk around the inner tower of the soul and see all the different windows that await your gaze. Through these different windows, you can see new vistas of possibility, presence and creativity. Complacency, habit and blindness often prevent you from feeling your life. So much depends on the frame of vision - the window through which we look.' (qtd. In Johns, 2013)

Single-authored autoethnographies suffer scope constraints because of the potential pool of participants and limited research foci. Collaborative autoethnography, in which a team of two or more researchers work together to share personal stories and interpret the pooled autoethnographic data, extends the reach of autoethnography and offers ways to address some of its methodological and ethical issues (Lapadat, 2017). Doing collaborative autoethnography is a powerful method of team building as it enhances trusting relationships among co-researchers, provides for deep listening or witnessing, promotes creativity, and offers collegial feedback and mentorship (Chang et al., 2013).

Collaborative autoethnography is a related multivocal approach to (auto) biologic inquiry (Denzin, 2014) or a branch of autoethnography (Chang, Ngunjiri, & Hernandez, 2013). In particular, collaborative autoethnography supports a shift from individual to collective agency, thereby offering a path toward personally engaging, non-exploitative, accessible research that makes a difference (Lapadat, 2017). The focus of this collaboration is not the self of the narrator per se, but rather, it is "a means to provide knowledge about the ways in which individuals are made social, are discursively constituted in particular fleshy moments" (Davies & Gannon, 2006).

An advantage of collaborative autoethnography is to broaden the gaze from the lonely traumas of the self to locate them within categories of experience shared by many. Shared

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experiences reveal systematic oppression and cultural scripts, which can be better understood through multiple lenses on the individual and shared aspects of those experiences (Geist-Martin et al., 2010; Lapadat et al., 2010). If L2 education people can open themselves up and make efforts to take up the task of a long-term autoethnographic projects about teaching and paradigm shifts, the knowledge making process and results would be very meaningful and beyond imagination. I hope I can help form cohesive team in the future to do this team work.

10.9 Putting an End to the Autoethnographic Journey

The unique purposes of autoethnography articulated by accomplished autoethnographers include: Disrupting norms of research practice and representation; Working from insider knowledge; Maneuvering through pain, confusion, anger and uncertainty and making life better; Breaking silence, (re)claiming voice, and writing to right; and making work accessible (Jones, Adams, Ellis, 2013). I have used them to guide my research practice, composition and writing. The experience has greatly improved my self-knowledge and hope to inform readers some concrete practices about how to interrogate their multiple selves. All in all, this research practice helps me understand my researching, teaching and learning processes and my history and cultural experience terms of finding the answers to the question:

Who am I?

The entire process also helps me transform myself into an educator who respect self and others' needs for agency and consciously exercising agency. By opening up my personal and professional life, and revealing highly personalized accounts that draw upon my own life history, I extend sociological understanding (Sparkes, 2000) of the complexities of one language teacher's personal and professional development of identities and achievements of

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agency. The demonstrated process of critical self-examination and self-analysis hopefully broadens and deepens readers' cognition and operation of their own narrative learning, reflective practices, and also makes visible the becoming of a critical reflective language teacher.

I choose to conduct an autoethnographic investigation not for the sake of research but for doing something meaningful by living a more conscious and reflective life. I aspire to make connections with others, with bigger social historical contexts. Journey into past, present and imagine the future is endless. But on paper, I have to put an end, realizing autoethnographic exploration is for me a practice of the art of imperfection. I always find more to say and want to take back what I have said, depending on the discourses and readings I throw myself into. The whole creation process is shifting and tends to change in different time and space. It helps the writer feel relieved and proud, meanwhile, it may make me feel uncomfortable and find disturbing personal truth. Just like long-distance running, there are some unpleasant miles, some warming up miles and miles that make you feel so joyful and content, or make you struggle to quit or not, and the last mile that you create victory. In this writing journey, I know clearly the unpleasant miles, happy hours and the liberation moment, and the enlightening turns. I have to embrace all the imperfections and disappointments of myself due to many reasons, including personal life encounters.

The work of autoethnography is "always, first and last, storytelling work . . .. Building, remembering, retelling, celebrating our stories is part of our work" (Solnit, 2017). Putting an end to this kind of story-telling opens up possibilities and chances for new kinds and trying to understand new relations I and societal contexts.

10.9.1 Limitations of the Study

I acknowledge some limitations of this study. Firstly, my descriptive narratives are unable to fully account for how identities and personal capacities for agency evolve over time and across various cultural contexts. Related to this, the retrospective self-reported nature of the data also has limitations. In particular, autoethnographic accounts of earlier experiences reconstructed unavoidably would be impacted by both current beliefs and perspectives and the ones I had at the time. In addition, self-examination may have been colored by current researcher biases or blurred by the haze of memory. To help mitigate researcher subjectivity bias, I take steps to reflect on and then "bracket" my personal experiences and beliefs when collecting and recreating qualitative data (Creswell, 2013).

The criteria for judging the worthiness of the autoethnography are open to interpretation. There are no fixed rules to be rigidly applied. Interpretation is deeply subjective and changeable based on different time, space and perceptions. In my narrative, I also have blind spots and certainly overlook something. Undoubtedly, I foreground aspects of experience that seem the most meaningful for me at the particular time and space. But many more aspects of experience lay like ripe fruits for readers to be picked and eaten. The autoethnography opens a space for dialogue between the reader and the narrative, a space open to the reader's perspectives in terms of their own diverse experiences and interpretations.

This entire dissertation was written within time and context, and will be read in time and context. As Frank (2005) observes,

> "the meaning of any present story depends on the stories it will generate. One story calls forth another, both from the storyteller him or herself, and from the listener/recipient of the story. The point of any present story is its potential for revision and redistribution in future stories. This principle of perpetual generation means that narrative analysis can never claim any last word about what a story means or

represents. Instead, narrative analysis, like the story itself, can only look toward an open future."

Just like Le Guin (2004) points out that literature is a communal exercise, we perhaps sometimes unknowingly use others' work and ideas. We stand on others' shoulders to achieve our own purposes. The way I design, reflect, and write has been influenced by other autoethnographers, and many other qualitative researchers. They also include poets, classical authors, playwrights, songwriters, academics, people I love, people I dislike. The way I write is influenced by music, and colors, sounds, films, art, and texture. "I am using these other voices to say me." (Gale and Wyatt, 2010)

Second, incoherence seems inevitable. Life is messy, indeterminate, constantly changing, and indeed never- to- be-coherent. This cause some troubles on the part of the to respond and envision the incoherent narrated life and writings. When autoethnographers disclose intimate details of their personal lives, they have purposes of connecting their private lived experience to the larger psychological, social, cultural, and/or political worlds shaping it and being shaped by it (Ellis, 2004). They are allowed for both personal and cultural critique. But the reader and reviewer may criticize and challenge things that are not viewed as an issue by writer as they may see different purpose or take up the four interrelated orientations: analytic, interpretive, evocative, and critical to different degrees. Guided by different orientations, writer and reader have different expectations about what autoethnography is and should be. For example, the writer could be evaluated as inadequate research due to the identified level of explicit deep analysis and criticality as the critical analysis is viewed as a priority. The criteria of being rigid and academically strong are conflicting. The writer may have her won direction of writing in mind and deviate from reader's assumption.

The writing has lasted over a long time during which my life has confronted with emergent new events and unexpected experiences. At different moments when I pause to reflect on what and why my life has been like what it is. I feel that I sometimes understand life in one way and have a totally new understanding in another way, afforded by new forces to bring about new insights and mitigated by circumstances throughout different domains of life. Therefore, understanding and interpretation of self is temporary and attention to and perception of what is important or not is not static, because life is a forward motion in which you must always take new actions and make new choices, which will have changed sense-making and understanding by the time you reflect on life again. At some time, I don't feel like looking back at my writing and going back to past lives again and again as I know they may not represent my new seeing now. This kind of emotion and reluctance limit my willingness to reach in-depth exploration. Agency ebbs and flow freely. I alter my own path of writing almost entirely by means of personal willpower.

Third, autoethnographic writing is not easy if you do not have practice of literary devices. It is expected for autoethnography to use literary expressions and perform the creative analysis and use a certain style of language. If the writer does not have enough reading and writing experience of literature, this is hard. I tried to maintain a flow of literary language, but many times, I get back to the habitual non-fiction tone of writing which I am used to, rational and abstract. Fortunately, I have poetry, art making and reading poetry helps me to play with language. It takes practice and requires sophisticated writing skills. It is not as easy as it seems at all. The choice of language and command of strategies take time and patience to achieve the right effect. I admit that I do not have extensive experience reading English novels and the genre of non-fiction holds me and make me more comfortable. This is why in this dissertation I could not be inventive in the writing as I had imagined and planned I

could. I admitted this deficiency and attributed to the writing culture of Chinese that I was educated from young. It tends to be abstract, vague, and not specific.

Fourth, I consciously know that I would not write everything as I will. There are unspeakable things and hidden events unspoken, which may deeply impact the direction of the thoughts and behavior during the autoethnographic journey. Some are reasons regarding ethical issues, not to reveal relations with others in public and overshare private life; some are reasons in regard to fear to be sanctioned. There are also worries about being judged for how I lived my life and handle relations in the past. It is always a dilemma to choose what story to tell and what not to. Coming from a culture that values faces and avoid public disclosure about the dark side of things had made me very cautious and conscious to hold stories. Especially when I know the stories of my parents' generation who suffered from speaking up in their time throughout cultural Revolution and other stories in the history of China about spanking lead to disaster. I appreciate my own courage to open up widely about self. But I know that I experienced many inner struggles and fear inside. To speak up and no need to voice out, I was in a dilemma many times. This also slow the writing process. In some way, it is safe to say there is no absolute freedom and liberation autoethnography can empower. There is always a choice to make. It is an open-ended process. Unfinalizability is the word for this kind of self-writing.

My observation of myself as a writer also tells me that when I write at night, I have more confidence in the integrity of my private thinking. When I am conversing with others during the day, reading others and talking about my writing, I feel not that sure whether I am authentic and fully functioning self. So, I can be certain that time of the day impact the quality of writing and the coherence of thoughts.

Lastly, I live in East Coast of the US mostly and institutes at Central Part of China, working with college level adults, especially from public university than private colleges. What I wrote about Chinese language education, teaching and learning are only limited to my life contexts not generalizable to other regions or institutes.

10.9.2 Future Research Directions

Future research about language teacher's lives in the classroom and outside the classroom, their individuality and their first-hand cross-cultural practices can depend on various kinds of research design to explore. In addition to concrete strategies and practices of teaching about Chinese, there are many sociocultural aspects and ecological factors researchers can put an eye on in terms of Chinese-language teacher research. Qualitative and quantitative studies about Identity development can be conducted more broadly among teachers with all kinds of background, including native Chinese speaker and non-native Chinese speakers, both novice and experienced teachers, transnational Chinese teachers and long years immigrant Chinese teachers, teachers working in different countries. There is so much to explore and understand the development of language teachers and how they enact their agency to bring about changes. As for the development of programs to prepare pre-service teachers, there are many creative ways and collaborative approaches to be cultivated. In addition to the traditional teacher education mode, there are alternative ways to promote teachers as whole persons development. More attention can be placed on teachers' personal world which may help understand relationship building and learning in general sense. Evolvement and transformations can happen at both theoretical and practical level.

10.9.3 Closing Remarks and Implications

The concept of man conceptualized as an ever-changing being is put forth by various literary writers, among whom Mia Couto (1994) who writes, "A man's story is always badly told. That's because a person never stops being born. Nobody leads one sole life, we are all multiplied into different and ever-changeable men." In the years of 2007-2017, I lived several lives and experienced changeable identities and agency. I never stop self-rebirth and grow with the changing macro-level global and Chinese contexts and micro-contexts of different institutions.

Agency in me is a complex phenomenon that has evolved over time. In me as an individual teacher dwell multiple selves in a state of continual change and that are managed and impacted by outside forces and internal forces. The agency achievement trajectories have manifested different situational contexts' shaping influence and the individual's increased capacity to shape the possibilities of the personal and professional development. Personal development contributes to the advancement of professional judgements and decision making and professional development also promoted the personal development.

As a teacher of language living a transnational life, my L2 English language proficiency increase. Self-socialization into various kinds of cultures and academic discourses, and understanding and using power from different identities, altogether enable me to attain higher consciousness of agency choices and agency behavior. Understanding, researching, analyzing and actualizing agency facilitate this kind of process. In different period of evolving personal and professional self, the capabilities of marshalling great stores of personal agency to professional socialization have been improved with the agency capacities that constitute shifted beliefs, ideologies, values, etc. My newer self is obviously more agentive than the old ones. This is because in the more empowering environments in the

doctoral programs in the US, I was able to leverage agentive resources in creative and empowering ways to create opportunities for learning and transformation profound enough to change my own life and others' path to development.

Agency ebb and flow freely and may be moderated by other circumstances throughout the different domains of an individual's life, and throughout life journey. There is no need to impose a rigid and defined form of the categorization of agentive personalities. In aspects of life, one can be more agentive than other aspects. There are many forms of manifestations of agency at work. Across over a decade of life, there are times I am more than just passive recipient of others' agency and act in an reactive way but at many times, I take ownership of my own agency choices in various kinds of identity positions.

Agency arises from my knowledge and beliefs of language, teaching, learning and social culture, or the possible control of resources, which means the capacity to reinterpret or mobilize an array of resources. It is also constrained by the social surroundings. The forms of agency can be lack of agency and non-action. Individuals are seen as influenced, but not determined, by society and are able to make choices. Agency is seen as achievements that can potentially develop over time through a continual process of engagement and emergence. The capacity for agency emerges as individuals interact with the social (both cultural and structural forms as well as other members of the community), practical and natural worlds. People's potential for agency changes in both positive and negative ways as they accumulate experience and as their material and social conditions evolve.

Using the power of autoethnography to reveal, record, interpret and position, from an insider's perspective, I have examined closely the subjective and reflexive personal and professional experience and my performance of multiple identities. I have gained a deeper

understanding of my shifting theoretical perspectives, socialization process, professional growth, emotions, voices, and actions towards agency-based education at different periods of time and across varied educational and life contexts. Doing autoethnography help me capture the evolvement of my capacities that have enabled me to achieve more for self and others across temporal dimensions and social situations.

Self is an ongoing dynamic process. The ecological approach to agency helps me to understand how humans are able to be reflexive and creative, acting counter to societal constraints, but also how individuals are enabled and constrained by their social and material environments. Structure and agency are mutually constitutive and shaping, so that there is the possibility of transformation of larger social structures through situated social actions, which often involve discursive practices. Instead of being seen as solitary actors in processes of meaning making, individuals are social actors who actively adjust, change and transform their available resources and various kinds of capital in their interactions.

In writing autoethnography, I move back and forth between personal introspection and critical reflection. It is analytically reflexive; it presents a "visible narrative presence" while "engaging in dialogue with informants beyond the self" in order to improve our "theoretical understandings of broader social phenomenon" (Anderson, 2006, p.375). In addition to writing about the personal and cultural, autoethnography scholarship is suggested to address "existing theory, practice, methodology, and research results" (Hughes, Pennington, and Makris, 2012).

Autoethnography creates a space for a turn, a change, a reconsideration of how we think, how we do research and relationships, and how we live (Tony, 2013). By doing this longitudinal study of a veteran language teacher, my stories become "both a means of

knowing and a way of telling about the social world" (Bochner, 2012). No one is told any story but their own. (Lewis, 2001)

> One of my favorite writers, Anne Lamott (1994), says:

> When you're conscious and writing from a place of insight and simplicity and real caring about the truth, you have the ability to throw the lights on for your reader. He or she will recognize his or her life and truth in what you say, in the pictures you have painted, and this decreases the terrible sense of isolation that we have all had too much of. (p. 225)

I hope readers who read my stories are motivated to "recognize his or her life"; to consider how they might research their own practice; and to initiate further dialogues that resonate with the problems and dilemmas I faced as I negotiated my way teaching across competing discourses and cultures of teaching and learning. I am still, and will always be, "in the process of becoming - as [an] unfinished, uncompleted [being] in and with a likewise unfinished reality" (Freire, 2000).

A language educator's normative and lifelong learning occurs in social contexts through different identities and experiences: as learners in classrooms and language programs, as participants in professional development programs, and later as teachers in varied settings and members of researcher community, etc. The teacher learning has always been socially negotiated and contingent on knowledge of self, students, subject matter, curricula, and setting. Teachers act as users and creators of legitimate forms of knowledge who make decisions about how best to teach their learners within complex socially, culturally, and historically situated contexts.

In my classrooms, I see many students who are confused and have not only a limited worldview, but also no understanding of the significance of their existence. I know that autoethnography has the power to affect the way they think about communication concepts

and themselves. Exploring lived experience opens up new ways of thinking, being, and doing that I believe will better prepare them for their professional and personal lives. After all, I am living proof of it. Because "events in the past are always interpreted from our current position" (Ellis, 1999), I use autoethnography as a way to understand and depict my 10-year experiences. By doing this, my stories become "both a means of knowing and a way of telling about the social world" (Bochner, 2012). This act of "telling" is an important element in my autoethnographic exploration, just as agency-based instructional design has become an important part of teaching for me.

I invite the reader to read my stories to "recognize his or her life" as it relates to mine and compare their experience with mine; to share professional learning as teachers or teacher educators; to consider how they might research their practice; and to initiate further dialogue that resonates with the problems and dilemmas I faced as I negotiated my way teaching across competing discourses and cultures of teaching and learning. I am still, and will always be, "in the process of becoming—as [an] unfinished, uncompleted [being] in and with a likewise unfinished reality" (Freire, 2000). I hope that my story will resonate with language educators who recognize the impact of their own histories on their teaching, who are also "becoming."

With a poststructural understanding of knowledge and reality, self and identity, I take a position that one's actions and ideology are strongly shaped and limited by available discourses. I would like to use my study to advocate L2 teachers to open themselves to new discourses and new ideologies about language, teaching, learning and relationship building. The ultimate goal is to inspire an alternative perspective to think about improving teaching and learning, and give more attention to learners, who are complex social beings and have been identified as the center of language education.

10.9.4 A Final thought

Liddicoat (2007) pointed out a state of profound and rapidly evolving crisis of foreign language programs at college level, which involves declining enrollments, increasing pressures of managerial concepts of economic viability, inadequate resourcing and an overarching devaluing of the place of languages in education. This crisis has been inevitable enforced by the commodification of languages in the university curriculum, which constructs language knowledge as "skills" and positions languages as technical adjuncts to academic disciplines, rather than being disciplines in their own right, as Phipps and Gonzalez (2004) observes. Responding to the pressing crisis and neoliberal attack on education in general, language education has been reconstructed according to the utilitarian criteria of what Gee and Lankshere (1995) term fast capitalism and enhanced the performative outcomes of language learning so as to prepare learner for the real-world competition. However, the skills-oriented, results-directed, and narrowly conceived approaches to languages are disempowering, undermine the educative nature of language learning (Liddicoat, 2007). This is also true to case of L2 Chinese education.

In L2 Chinese world, the contemporary utilitarianism and traditionalist elitism in views of languages and skill-getting oriented pedagogy still prevail college all-level curriculum. Not many programs and teachers are guided to think beyond a static, knowledge-bound perspective of language. This is also a reason for the long-term absence of change in Chinese pedagogical practices and philosophical foundations of the design of language program. It is time for language educators to acknowledge the subjectivity of the individuals (including their own personal world) and positioning the learners as the agents of their language learning life, directing them towards a variety of cultures and many new identities, irrespective of national boundaries. Celebrating personal experiences and cultural history of

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learners and making connections and building relevance with their funds of knowledge and cultural experiences require every member's participation in the learning community. Relinquishing the power over the ownership of Chinese language, rethinking the monolingual mindset and discourse about native-speakerism could be first few feasible ways in L2 field.

Adopting Ros i Sole (2016)'s critique on Modern Foreign Languages pedagogy and English Language Teaching, current L2 Chinese Teaching is also built on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) ideology and has not provided sufficient knowledge on the socio-cultural aspects of language learning and its socialization process, which has limited interest to attend to students' most personal, emotional and creative needs. Mainstream psycholinguistic and cognitive approaches have limited ways to build up a classroom that students can address many interested problems and make sense of their own language learning. It is time to promote a vision of learner as a complex social being and from this revisioning, we can invoke humanistic ideals and the development of the self.

It is not exaggerating to say that a teaching demo recorded at present time would be no different from one dated ten years ago. During my personal talk and interview with teachers from different states and all types of programs from prestigious university to liberal arts college, from public university to business private university, I could tell that the core belief of good teaching and essential practices were the training mode and designed, controlled practices for expected pushed outputs by learners. Structured teaching and controlled learning would not hold students' passion for long time, especially for the new generation who are so used to enjoy the agency and freedom in gamified virtual world.

I am answering a call from Phipps and Gonzales (2004), Rod I Sole (2016), and other easy social-oriented scholars to reconceptualize the role and nature of languages education, direct more attention to a lived and varied experience of the complexities of cultural realties,

and to push language beyond a focus on linguistic code and text to a focus on the learner, the context, and the social nature of human experience.

I also advocate and implement a change in the direction of Chinese-language teaching towards a language pedagogy that focuses on the personal aspects of the learning experience and the possibilities it affords for the transformation of self, building new identifies and achieving agency in teaching and learning a language.

I want to invite language teachers to see language and learning as a social and cultural practice, and to deepen their understanding of learner, their new possibilities in today's new world and respect and care students' agency. If the teachers are able to identify learner agency, either discernible or latent, and create more space and opportunities to allow agency to be exercised, they can say their impact on students is meaningful, constructive, and leading to a better quality of life.

A better understanding of agency can help us find ways of creating learning environments favorable to its emergence and development (van Lier, 2008). Agency as a construct can both afford and constrain language-learning opportunities depending on the sociocultural context and the intentions or goals of learners. It is the outcome of agentive actions in which we are most interested in second language learning (Fogle, 2012). It can also help to identify difficulties and possibilities.

EPILOGUE

You understand how to act from knowledge, but you have not yet seen howto act from not-knowing. ~ Chuang Tsu

On being an honest writer, Virginia Woolf (1947) said, "If you do not tell the truth about yourself, you cannot tell it about other people." I have tried to fearlessly speak my truth and tell my personal life stories using autoethnography throughout the whole project. It is also a self-imposed act of being agentive and exercising many forms of agency. It truly takes a lot of courage to confront many selves in the past. After doing this, I am conscious and confident about telling other people's truth as I can see beyond the surface and always seek the hidden ideology and beliefs held by others just like the way I have explored myself. I truly get the message conveyed in Antoine's The Little Prince: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.

Autoethnography is 'a relational pursuit' (Turner, 2013) through introspective and subjective performances. I invite the readers to look into my self-exploration and experience the possibilities of seeing something different and feeling something deeper. They are invited to see themselves and everyone else as human subjects constructed in a tangle of cultural, social and historical situations and relations in contact zones (Brodkey, 1996).

My autoethnographic journey is a journey to wholeness and well-being. The writing process is also a process of unfolding my development as a human being and connecting me

with the other in all kinds of relations. It is a journey from 'I' to the "we', the consciousness of the collective discovery journey of each person. The journey begins with the awakening to the self, self coming to the mind and advances in relation to a path everyone may follow in order to become a critical reflective thinker.

Tapping into the right side of the brain, I would always like to stir readers' centers for imagination, creativity, perception and engage readers by making intimate connections with Autoethnography who is made to resemble humans. I use this literary device of personification in the way Markus Zusak uses in his novel The Book Thief who gives Death a vivid human voice. Death demonstrates his personal and different experiences by effectively using the narration role.

In the following text, Autoethnography uses her power of words and creative energy of poetry to passionately encourage you as a writer to act and transform through collaboration with her. This might be the longest invitation letter in which Autoethnography patiently explains everything about what an autoethnographer can do to make meaning of personal lived experiences so as to make a positive impact on the world and on the teachers' world.

I hope through the imagined dialogic exchange between readers and Autoethnography, some general idea of what autoethnography does as a research methodology and a product, and some feasible ways to conduct it can get crossed.

Poetry is always a powerful form to enable people to touch the essence of things and experiences. It provides space for exploring the art of possibilities. It is used for its expressive power. In poetry, words matter and the relations between words and the materring matters (Shotter, 2017). I am ending my writing with a poetic conversation.

A Poetic Invitation with a Long Letter

From: Autoethnography
To: My dear writer friend
Subject: You are cordially invited

Your experiences matter
Slow down
To tell
    Your own story
        In your voice
        In your way
    With your heart
    With tears of joy
Together
We reflect and discover
    We make sense
    We perform
And we transform
We present one portrait of life

I have prepared a quiet and creative space for you
Just bring yourself
Come to me
To examine yourself

I know you are curious
to know my address
to locate me in the world
Please be aware
I am outside Google search

I am living at the end of dark winter
Find me at the back entrance to spring
I offer you a warmer cozy temporary home
and we make ourselves ready to new beginnings

My middle name is
Crossing
Which means transgressing
It is inscribed on my tall hat
Just like a huge torch light
Which will bright the pathways to go beyond boundaries

I am always the type of your friend who believes

Understanding is a deeply rewarding thing
I have an ethnographic ear
Listening with all senses, heart and soul

I welcome your story
Any organic story
Rarely told from an insider point of view
And varied kinds of human experiences

Believe it or not,
I am never in a hurry to anything, to set goals,
to mold you, to manipulate and orient you in any direction
I am here to support you
to search
to become
to be the self you truly are
I have my philosophy -
"What is most personal is most general. "

Your self-stories are worthy of attention
And always kept safe here with me
You have more freedom with styles and use of language
Than you have exercised in anywhere else
And freedom to recall, and think, and feel, and be

I am still learning
I am a lifelong learner too
I want to search my own meaning
In helping story-telling warrior like you

When I open my door to welcome you
Give me a high five and make yourself at home
I want you to break the silence slowly
Use your voice that is bold and loud
Uncover the unearthed and untold

I have listened to many other stories before you
I embrace all kinds of emotions
No need to be overly reserved
Use my space wisely to expose your inner landscape
Free your emotions of
Unresolved grief, pain, tension, despair, rage or resistance
Also, positive emotions like joy, satisfaction, aspiration and hope
Let reasons be heard no matter how disturbing it might be

I know you will be tired of narrating
But I will give you tea break to readjust and pause

It is the time to balance your detailed evocations of life
And theory-informed interpretations
Remember to use many conceptual resources
And triangulate all the selected qualitative storied data
To represent what is not previously silenced or overlooked
Change the literary devices if needed to engage others

I know for sure
I will be amazed by your capacity to deconstruct
I cannot praise enough for your courage
to take risks to open yourself up
Your effort to create new knowledge
through your thoughtfully retold past life

I sincerely thank you for opportunities for our mutual growth
And for sharpening my realizations and others'
To so many beautiful things related to truth

It undoubtedly takes lots of emotional and intellectual labor
Together with your creativity and originality
To retell your life stories
As long as you can make the hidden network visible
Either behind the many selves or social and cultural forces
You are bringing new visibilities and awareness

Speak with reflexive considerations of positionality
And tell the authentic moments of your life sincerely
I firmly believe
you are becoming a model for other silenced
and disregarded, and disgraced voices
For those who resonate with you
but struggle to express

You truly make the world change to some degree
With your personalized tales
charged with emotion
and fabricated with critical analysis

No apology for your being non-conventional
No fear of the dominant meta narrative
I empower you with a different frame
To proffer your subjective insights
Alternative points of view is so treasured
Let me invite the audience to celebrate your individuality
To applaud your creativity

If you are new to me

I have one key reminder
Please be cautious of self-harm and unconscious hurt to others
Meet your expressive needs but meanwhile
To protect the confidentiality for others

When interrupting authoritative discourses
Please be resilient and use your grit
It is never an easy fight
I am the secret power to hold you together

Place trust on me
And my versatile talents will help you win
We remake thoughts and actions together
To break the old restraints for emancipation

I rejoice at the privilege of
being a midwife to a new you
I stand by with awe at the emergence of a person with a lighter heart
as I see a birth process
in which I have facilitated and played some part

From here and now,
You are the proud leader
To open up dialogues in your desired direction
To inspire more to tell their cultural accounts
Together, you and new friends destabilize the single telling
And we extended our sociological understanding of lived life
To get close to more truth and realities

You rock
You are a great hero on a new path
You become a better human being
You will be happier on bright spring days
You deserve the joy of giving birth of newness
Can't wait to see you
And welcome your stories
Will you come

Now I encourage you to take the invitation and proves that the most personal

experiences are related with the most general people's experiences.

As long as you pursue the highest order of epistemic learning, you will be delighted to

feel enlightened and experience many aha moments or epiphanies. With the prospective

paradigm changes and transformative learning, the world outside and inside will be refreshed

and enlarged. This kind of happiness and pleasure only belong to a small number of people

like you who are determined to embark on an autoethnographic journey and blaze a trail for

yourself and others in a field that means a lot you.

> When words are born of love, it is better to leave them open, so that each person can
> benefit from them in their own way and at their own spiritual level - this, rather than
> tying the verses down to a meaning that not everyone could relish.
> (St John of the Cross, cited in Matthew, 1995)

<div align="center">

Take pride in

self

Place trust in

ethnography of self

Feel the joy of spring

who sings high praise

of life

through everything

at any place

See you

See me

See us

See them

</div>

APPENDIX A

Email Correspondences During Indonesia (Selected)

2006 年 11 月 15 日 下午 11:41
我的基本情况是：具备娴熟的英语听说读写能力，在与外籍人士和留学生的交流中不存在任何障碍。非常了解对外汉语教学的基本情况，对于教师教学策略、学生的学习策略、组织教学和熟练运用二语教学理论都有较丰富的经验。关注该领域的期刊杂志，勤于研读最新研究文章，自己也在不断尝试写些教学反思和教学研究的小论文，在课堂内外积累了丰富的语料。擅长书法，文字编辑，写作，简笔画等，能熟练运用电脑辅助教学。本人乐观向上，积极进取，富于创意，热爱学习，热爱工作，能吃苦。

2006/11/23
想到能来贵校，与您共事，我感到无比激动和荣幸。我将非常详细地周密地准备好此次万隆之行。一方面，我将向你们学习，了解印尼大学生语言学习现状，从中发现新的启示；另一方面，我将以我个人的教学，教学实验，把中国国内最新的教学思想和教育理念带给你们与你们交流。我将尽我的努力融入到你们的工作环境中，加入到你们的团队中，我盼望着我与你们的合作将大大开阔我的视野，活跃我的思路，并把有益的积极的经验带回中国。我会很乐意做两国文化交流的使者，愿我的到来，给你们的团队注入新的血液。

2006/12/26
我本人有一个想法，希望能与你方合作编辑出版适合当地学生汉语学习的速成类、工具类教材，以汉语、英语、印尼语三种语言来编撰，不知是否可行。如果问题不大的话，我将着手作些材料搜集、整理工作。

我将在结束国内的各项教学任务后，于一月下旬安排到达贵方的行程。非常热切地盼望早日抵达，我已经迫不及待地想投入夏的怀抱中了，美美地享受印尼的阳光和万隆的翠绿，呵呵。

1/28／2007 9:30 pm
你下个星期能抵达印尼万隆还没算迟，我们 12 号开学。
我们已经分配课程，你教的有三门课（总共 8 个学分）：中国文化概论（第六学期-2 学分）、中国概况（第四学期-2 学分）和汉语综合课（第四学期-4 学分）。若你觉得需要带一些与中国相关的资料都可以。尤其是中国概况课，任课老师都可以根据教材而自己发挥教学方法等方面。我们这里有 LCD Projector 可以用。另外两门也有固定教材，等你到来后再谈吧！

2/28/2017 10:45 am

最近住处上网不方便，网络时好时坏，没找到适当的机会联系你们呢，心里老惦记着。

那边过年很热闹吧，劈劈啪啪地响彻节日的夜晚，肯定很值得欢欣。这边华人多的地方也是很认真地过这个重要节日，大街小巷都扎着"恭喜发财"的横幅，就像圣诞节前后，中国的大小店面随处贴上"Merry Christmas"一样。舞龙表演，龙的造型都是经常能映入眼帘的。

我在的城市是万隆，不过经常往返雅加达和这个城市之间。这里气候凉爽宜人，让人非常惬意，风景不错，吃住满意，我的生活、学习、工作、心情都非常好。最近由于在假期，每个周末都能驱车到好玩的地方去享受温泉、海滩，这个周末计划是去 **Bali**。

3/16/2007
在这边的汉语本专科的教学确实给了我不少经验和启发，也让我发现了很多不足和亟待探讨研究的课题。同时，我与这边老师正在合作编写一些对外汉语方面的小册子，辅助学习。所以，这一阶段，上课，学习，看书，编书，与学生交谈等等让我觉得生活比起前一阵子紧张多了呢。不过有时间会游泳，散步，到酒吧听听音乐，运动什么的，能够调节一下生活，比起国内还是压力小多了。所以我是尽情享受，腐败。

4/6/2007 11:30

我来印尼这边已经两个月了，因为上个暑期来过一个月，所以新奇的感觉早就没有。不过一切还是非常美好的，特别是第一个月，每到周末就驱车到海滩、温泉、或者购物中心去游玩，非常享受，平日就自己做饭，打麻将，玩扑克，看影片，没有压力，尽情享受，后来还去了 Bali，潜水，了解独特的巴厘文化，总之过着猪一般的幸福生活。绿树参天，花开四季，大海，海底，巴厘印度教，我理解了更多不曾了解的世界， extend my territory，然后惊奇着很多意想不到的精彩。确实，从长久的生活状态中蓦然走出来，一切都不一样了，心情也比先前开朗很多。

这里的天气十分宜人，我经常往返于雅加达和万隆之间，我生活的地方是万隆，恐怕世界上找不出第二个气候这么适合人居住的地方了。这几个月是雨季，每天都会劈劈啪啪地下雨，然后出太阳，天空蓝得晃眼睛，然后再乌云密布，狂下一阵，接着太阳又会出来，然后晚上月亮也出来，星星也出来。一切都给人酣畅淋漓的感觉，要么雨下得疯狂，每一颗雨的强硬如同远处高速踢飞过来的足球猛地击中眼球的感觉，要么太阳流火。偶尔也有一阵子每天下的温柔的淅淅沥沥的小雨，空气很清新。这里平均气温是23－25，所以每天都有很满足很惬意没什么可以抱怨的感觉。

心境美，看什么都美，也有烦恼的事儿。这里是穆斯林国家，百分之90就是以上都是 Muslim，每天五个时段城市每个地方的清真寺都声嘶力竭地召唤信徒，大喇叭的声音从4点多就开始"吵闹"，然后随着太阳的节奏，每过几个小时就会又开始广播了。还有，我老会被蚊子袭击，然后几天就会有惨不忍睹的情况。还有，现在教学课程还比较多，有中国文化概论，中国概况，有综合汉语 IV，高级汉语 II，每天应付教学恐怕得占去好一会，然后想搞自己的事儿的时候，又被其他事儿分散了注意力。

不过总的来说，还行，学习工作生活都比较如意。现在盼着6月1号回来，办理去美国的手续。这两天是复活节，放假，下周开始两周他们期中考试呢，我有可以放松放松，去雅加达玩上一阵子。这边华人多，所任教的大学也是华人居多的基督教大学，学生和中国学生没有两样，就是语言不通。不过上课全用中文，我是"外教"，嘻嘻

5/20/2007
这边的工作、学习比较繁忙，不过收获很多。虽说不是一类国家，但在这儿还是开阔了视野，更新了一些对事物的看法，在业务上也有一定的提高。这边的校园文化、教学管理、学生学习特点等等都是不同的，从不同中就能学到新的东西。这边大学的图书馆不错，有不少英文文献，为我学习提供了良好的条件。只是觉得时间很紧迫，想干的事太多。我在这边编写了辅助汉语学习的书，这边院系的老师参与印尼语的翻译，文学院、学校出版社都将给予大力支持。虽不能在我走之前付印，但将在下周签订一些必要的合同。

APPENDIX B

Language and Life: Roslyn

1- Q: When did you start your Chinese learning? How were you taught in US Chinese language program?

A: I began my Chinese language studies as a sophomore student in college. I declared my major as "international relations" and decided to focus on China because I was always intrigued by the written script and Chinese culture and art.

It was a traditional language class that met twice a week (plus language lab hours) with a Chinese instructor. We used a text from the PRC that introduced us to Pinyin and simplified characters, and each class period we covered one lesson. The first semester, there were about 20 students enrolled in the class (both Americans and Chinese Americans - mostly Cantonese speakers). The second year (the third and fourth semesters of study) there were 7 students in the class and the third year of study (the 5th and 6th semesters) there were three of us. By that point I could read some basic passages and write simple sentences, however, I had no confidence in my spoken Chinese. When I graduated in 1981, I decided to continue my Chinese studies independently by living, working (as an EFL teacher) and studying in Taiwan. I knew this would be the only way that I could possibly learn how to speak Mandarin.

2. Q: Could you describe your experience in Taiwan and Beijing?

A: In Taiwan, I initially lived with a Chinese family that had a distant connection with one of my father's colleagues at work. The family was headed up by a businessman and his wife, and their two young children (ages 8 and 12). I'd take the bus to school / work where I had individual language lessons and sometimes classes with one other student. This was when I began my study of the traditional script. The teachers were very good and patient and spent a lot of time working with us (international students) on our pronunciation and controlling the tones. After my Chinese class, I'd put on my "teacher's hat" and teach English to adults. I met a lot of wonderful people from the U.S., Canada, Europe, Africa, Hong Kong, and Australia during that year, and eventually we set up informal conversation gatherings at local tea houses where we'd practice English conversation one week, and Chinese conversation sessions the alternating weeks with interested Chinese friends. I eventually moved into an apt. with some of my friends from France, and we took several trips together around Taiwan.

In the spring, I met up with a fellow student who had been accepted into a program to study at Beijing University. She told me how to apply, I took the entrance exam, passed it and was awarded a scholarship to study Chinese in the fall of 1982. At Bei Da, our group was composed of approximately 16 American students who had completed at least 3rd year Chinese in the U.S. We had formal language class every morning (8-11:30 am) and often went on day trips in the afternoons with our teachers. Again, we studied simplified Chinese, and were doing some readings and short stories in class. We had three main teachers who each would focus on a different skill: pronunciation, grammar, and reading. Our teachers and class traveled to many wonderful sites: The Great Wall, Tai Shan, Wuhan, Guilin and others.

We were given a lot of freedom to travel the streets of Beijing, visit all the historic sites and ride our bikes in and out and all around the city; but we had to honor the 10-mile limit. WE were not allowed to travel beyond the ten mile radius from city center unaccompanied by our teachers. Likewise we weren't allowed to form friendships with Chinese students at the university or others whom we met. It was a much more conservative era, but it was a fantastic experience.

3- Raising Melinda make you learn and talk about China and use the language more as you expected? In order to support Melinda to get more exposure to Chinese and culture, what did you do? And why did you do that?

Before getting married and adopting Melinda, I worked as an international student advisor at Boston University's Center for English Language and Orientation Programs while I worked on my masters degree in TESOL. While there I attempted to keep my Chinese conversational language skills alive by creating informal conversation English/Chinese alternating weeks as I did while living in Taiwan with students mostly from mainland China who studied at CELOP or BU.

Just before Wayne and I decided to adopt a Chinese daughter in 1994, I was hired as an ESL teacher at Westerly High School, and at CCRI. My students in Westerly were mostly Chinese students from Cantonese speaking families. My understanding of Chinese cultural traditions was enriched by the discussions I had with them. At that point, I began reviewing Chinese (written and spoken) independently to prepare for my visit to China to meet my daughter. There were 10 families who traveled from the New England region to meet our daughters, and we stayed in touch over the years and celebrated Chinese New Year together and had reunions in the summertime. I continued to speak a little simple Chinese with Melinda every day. A friend of mine, a nurse from Taiwan, welcomed Melinda home and taught Wayne, me and our daughters Chinese language and cultural classes every few weeks when the girls were between 3-5; and Melinda really enjoyed that, and I wanted to keep her awareness of Chinese language and culture alive as best I could. When she was between 5-7 She went to an after school Chinese class with other adopted girls run by a teacher from Beijing. After that period, Melinda got into other hobbies.

In 8th grade, Melinda and I learned about the STARTALK program and made a connection with Island University to bring the program to Sally School and our students to Island University in the summertime for the wonderful program. Her interest was reignited and it was great to share Chinese learning with my daughter and the other students from Sally School and the many other RI middle schools and high schools. Melinda took part in the summer program for many years and traveled to China with STARTALK her junior year. This is what definitely propelled her decision to continue her studies and to take 1st year Chinese as a college freshman. She was blessed with great teachers and opportunities to allow her to embrace her Chinese heritage.

4. Q: At StarTalk program at Island University in June, 2007, did you like that class? Did you enjoy your experience that time? And at the final presentation about the Giving Tree, you performed as a narrator, did you like that experience?

A: It was a great challenge for me to read, write, and speak Chinese again during the summer program. But I had a great teacher, you!!!, who made our classes a lot of fun and the language very real. The language, readings, and communication in class was much more natural than what I had experienced in my previous formal classroom experiences. I pushed myself to perform as one of the narrators in the final presentation because I wanted to be a role model for other American students that they too could accomplish learning the Chinese language if they wanted to. I am proud of myself that I did it.

5- Q: As a librarian and a high school teacher, what you do to bring more Chinese culture into American high school students' intellectual development? What is the meaning in it personally and professionally?

A: We now have a group of 20 international students from China. How blessed we are to have them! My previous international travel and language learning experience comes to play as I get to know them. While I have not kept up with my conversational skills, I love to welcome them to the U.S., chat with them, and make them feel more comfortable both in my Digital Literacy class, as well as in the library. Three of our library volunteers are Chinese this year, and this is a great opportunity to connect with them and give them conversational English practice (chit chat)!

I always make a point of decorating the library during the Chinese New Year (for our whole community) and purchase books and resources to enrich language, history and cultural learning about not only China, but all the nations of this world. Granted I have a special skill in selecting materials and resources about China and the Chinese language. I am very proud that I am a person who has always made an effort to promote better understanding and real-life connections between high school students and teachers who I have worked with and other people and cultures. Having the opportunity to promote the STARTALK program at La Salle was truly a highlight for me. It was fantastic to witness at least 30 students from our school to take on the challenge of attending the classes and program and also travel to China to witness life on the other side of the world firsthand as young people.

6- Q: What changes have you seen in me over the years of socialising into American life? What was I like at the beginning as a "foreign" language teacher compared with your previous language instructors?

A: My time abroad has influenced my personal awareness and philosophy in a profound way. I realized how much time it truly takes to become "fluent" in another language/culture. I'd say it would take at a minimum 5 years of living abroad and actively immersing oneself in a new culture and language to even approach fluency. I never reached that level of proficiency or understanding; but I knew that I knew a lot more than most people. I was troubled at first upon coming back to the U.S. to witness how narrow and unaware the average citizen is to affairs beyond their city and country, but I am reconciled at this point that this is true for the vast majority of people in this world.

You were a very different language teacher than my previous teachers. You were very energetic and enthusiastic and gave us real life communication challenges. You represented a whole new generation of Chinese women and instructors with a 21st century vision. From you I learned how much China had changed since my studies and travel there almost 40 years ago. Wish I could have been a student of yours for much longer!!!! I am very grateful for the cooking and cultural lessons that you have continued to share with me and my family over these past 10 years!!!

7- Q: You once said "only those who have something special in the heart would choose to learn the language". What is your special quality and what has Chinese made you special over the years when you look back? Do you see yourself as a bicultural?

A: I absolutely do not see myself as "bicultural"; I am just someone who knows more than the average Asian Studies college/graduate student. When I said that students who commit themselves to the study of another language, history, and culture as different as Chinese have "something special in their heart" I meant that these people are unusual in the degree of curiosity and respect that they have for peoples and cultures drastically different from their own. Chinese script, music, arts are so very intriguing and those who wish to travel the steps needed to cross the bridge to really communicate and understand Chinese are a committed and special group of people.

APPENDIX C

My Reflective Report at the End of 2-year Stay in the US

在海外生活，要能适应地广人少，生活简单的客观现实，精神上要独立，生活上要自立， 要特别爱护自己的身心健康，保持良好愉快的生活态度，及时调整心理，广交朋友，扩大生活的半径和拓展生活的内容。

Living abroad, one is supposed to embrace the objective fact of vast land, small population, and simple life. One has to be independent spiritually and self-reliant in daily life. It is very important to take care of one's physical and mental health, maintain a positive and happy attitude towards life. It is advisable to adjust oneself to the negative mental state and make new friends from many walks of life. Remember to extend the parameter of life and enrich daily life.

1) 熟练掌握驾驶技术，熟悉公共交通，熟悉地形地貌；
2) 充分利用当地图书馆，利用各类有声资料和书刊杂志丰富生活；充分利用 YMCA 或校内的设施丰富生活；
3) 多参加社区的活动，多参加集体活动, 多走动, 多接触新的朋友和事物；
4) 多做义工，乐于帮助他人，体验给予的快乐；
5) 多和当地的各类人士交谈，获取信息，了解当地风情；
6) 计划好出行计划，丰富假期生活；
7) 加强和各地中文教师的沟通和交流，加强与其他留美学者的交流，加强和当地中国人的 交流 ；

1) Developing good driving skills, good command of public transportation, enough knowledge of typology of the territory；
2）Making full use of local library resources, taking advantage of multimedia materials, magazines to enrich life; utilizing YMCA or the campus facilities;
3)Getting involved in the local community activities, group events, participate in public activities, allow self be exposed to many new things;
4)Doing voluntary jobs for non-profit organizations, giving help to people in need, experience the joy of giving;
5) Talking with people with varied backgrounds, acquiring all kinds of information to get to know local customs;
6) During holidays, planning good trips and exploring more places;
7) Taking initiative to communicate and talk with Chinese teachers in other locations, enhancing friendship with other types of American Chinese or local Chinese community;

总之，要主动与外界联系，寻求朋友的帮助，融入当地文化，快乐地生活，拥有积极乐观的生活态度。

All in all, it is necessary to go out to the external worlds, seek friends' help, living like the locals, create more joyful experiences, and staying optimistic.

在美国的两年教学经验是非常宝贵的体验,将对本人今后的职业发展和回国之后的留学生教学和学科发展起到深远的影响。在这两年中铸就的坚强品质，不断求新的锐意进取的精神，拓宽了的视野和人生观，价值观以及严谨的科学研究态度等等都会帮助我为今后的工作做出更大的成就。

The two-year in the US is a very precious period of time. The experience will exert a profound impact on my work with international students coming to China and the development of TCSL in China. The strong character built up during the two years and the entrepreneurial spirit aspiring higher achievement, together with the extended worldviews, perspectives and values will help me in the future. The conscientious scientist like attitudes towards work also will contribute to my future work.

Work-abroad Chinese Teacher's Qualities

作为在海外教授和推广汉语及中国文化的教师,必须具备:

As a teacher working outside China and taking the responsibility to promote Chinese language and culture of China, s/he is supposed to acquire the following qualities and capabilities:

1) 良好的外语语言素质和沟通能力，深厚的文化底蕴和广博的知识，开阔的视野和灵活的 工作思路；1) High proficiency of English language and effective communicative competence, deep knowledge of culture and many subject areas, broad worldviews and flexible working style and strategies;

2) 兢兢业业的专注态度，和勇于奉献地投入精神，甘于寂寞的思想准备； 2) The attentive attitude and wholeheartedly concentrate on work, courage to sacrifice self-interest and invest energy and time into work and readiness to live with solitude and dedication;

3) 非常强的专业背景，深入了解当地文化和生活，紧跟最新的教学研究成果，推陈出新的创造力；3)Strong background of professional knowledge in certain fields, deep understanding of the local culture and life, the awareness to keep abreast with the latest research results in teaching and pedagogy, and creativity to produce something new;

4) 有市场推广的能力和设计开发项目的潜力; 4) Marketing ability, potential to design and develop new programs;

 5) 较好的教育技术素养, 检索整理信息的实战能力; 5) high level of technology literacy, capability to gather and synthesize information;

6) 有团队精神和合作意识;6) having team spirit and the consciousness to support team members as a collaborator

7) 熟悉美国的工作环境，人际沟通技巧， 适应管理者的风格,方式和方法; 7)Profound knowledge about US workplace culture, good interpersonal skills, ability to adapt to leadership style and their ways of doing things;

简言之，要能了解自己，了解工作对象，了解工作方法，积极上进，永不停止地向往提高。To put it simply, a teacher working overseas is supposed to acquire more knowledge of self, work and strategies, stay positive and endlessly pursue improvement.

My teacher friend's reflection after her US experience
After one year back to China

1- Q: 回中国一年之后最想念美国的什么？
 A：常年清新的空气；美东北秋天的颜色；小镇人们闲适的生活状态；超市、商场无理由退货

1 - Q: What do you miss most one year after returning from the US to China?

 A: Fresh air all-year around; the colorful fall in east coast; the small-town lifestyle with leisure and slow pace; returning purchase to supermarket and department stores without reasons.

2-Q：回国一年后让你觉得花了时间才能适应的 counter－culture shock 是什么呢？你觉得现在看中国和美国的文化差异有哪些主要方面？

A：从宁静的小镇又回到热闹喧嚣的大城市，有心理上的对比，但是也没有什么不适应的，毕竟一切都很熟悉

2-Q: What is the count-culture shock have you experienced after one year back to China? What are the main cultural differences in your opinion?

A: Coming back from the quiet town to noisy metro city, there is a sharp contrast psychologically. However, there is not much that cannot be adapted to. After all, I am so familiar with everything here.

3- Q：你回国后的教学和在美国时的教学有什么不同吗？你觉得你是否回到以前，或和别的老师一样，还是有些新的的表现，有哪些变化呢？

A：教学对象、教学内容、教学目的、教学方法都不一样，回国后的教学和在美国的教学完全不同。国内大学英语有统一的教学大纲、教材、统一的教学计划、统一的考试，不同的是教师个人的专业素养、职业精神，我感觉回到原工作岗位，基本回到自己以前，熟悉教材、准备课件、上课、布置课后任务、教学反思，还是这些工作环节，不过，课堂上的语言能力还是有提高。这么多年，大学英语的教学模式没有什么变化。

3- Q: In terms of teaching, do you realize any difference between your current teaching practice and the US teaching practice? Do you think you return to your old work life, or do as other teachers would do? If there are new performances or different ways of doing, what are they?

A: Difference lies in students, subject content, purpose of teaching and teaching methods. My teaching back in China and in the US context are completely different. Within China, the college English curriculum are designed with common syllabus, textbook, weekly agenda, quizzes and examinations. Different teachers will display respectively their own version of professionalism and professional spirit. I feel like I get back to my old self after resuming the teaching job. I know the essential steps like familiarizing myself with textbook, preparing PowerPoint presentations, giving lectures, assigning homework, and reflecting on work, But I can feel my language proficiency has greatly improved. So many years have passed, I don't think the college English teaching mode has changed much.

4-Q: 你现在回想提起美国的生活对个人的收获是什么？个人在哪方面最有进步呢？如果没有这四年一直在国内的你和现在的你有什么不同吗？哪些方面不一样呢？

A: 国外这四年，有很特殊的一些生活、工作经历，看到了真实的美国，体验了多元文化，传播了中国文化，结识了异国朋友，这些都是收获吧。
开阔了眼界，客观认识美国，这是最有进步的方面吧。
如果一直在国内，肯定有不同，比如，意识不到，自己还是觉得家里好，还是更愿意和家人亲朋好友在一起。

4-Q: What gains and benefits do you think the American life has given you? What are the manifestations of personal development? If you did not have the 4-year experience in the US, do you think you will have any difference from now? What are the differences?

A: During the four years of stay in the US, I had acquired special life experience and work experience. I saw the real American with my own eyes. I experienced a multicultural society and spread Chinese culture, and made some American friends. All of these could be my gains. Having an objective picture of the US is one of the progresses. If I continued to stay in China, I would not realize that home is the best place to be and I prefer to stay together with relatives and friends.

5- Q: 职业发展方面比起其他老师，你意识到自己有什么不同？有哪些方面和她们有差异？你觉得自己因为有了在美国的见识跟没海外经历的老师比较有哪些优势吗？

A: 国内帮助教师职业发展的机会很多，学术会议，培训都很多，图书馆资源也很丰富，并且方便获取，关键在于个人是否去参与，去做，即主观能动性，就资源、条件而言，国内并不缺乏。我自己在孔院的工作并没有给回国后的职业发展带来什么优势，说实话，在孔院期间，我也没有想着利用当时的工作做些科研，相比之下，单纯做访问学者，或者是富布赖特那种交流项目，应该还是会有帮助。在美国的见识，开阔了眼界，丰富了阅历，但是对于达到国内高校的科研要求难有帮助，而一直待在国内的老师，在考评条例的鞭策下，早投入，多投入，相应地早产出了。

5: Q: In terms of professional development, compared with those who have not worked abroad, do you realize you possess something different? In what aspects do you feel you are different? Do you think the American experience has given you advantages that the teachers without overseas experience won't be able to have?

A: Nowadays in China, there are many professional development opportunities, from academic conferences to specific training. The resources in the library are richer now and easier to obtain so it depends on whether individual teacher wants to participate, to do, namely agency. In terms of resources and material conditions, there is no shortage. My work with Confucius Institute did not contribute to my professional development after coming back. To be frank, I did not spend time on doing any research work making use of my work experience. Comparatively speaking, those who come to the US as visiting scholar or from Fulbright programs, they would produce more. In America, I broadened my horizons and opened my eyes. But these might have little help to meet the high standards of China's expectations of college teacher- researchers. Those who have been in China but not gone abroad are pushed by pressure, which make it possible to invest earlier, more and output earlie

APPENDIX E

Individuality in Sociocultural Background of Learners

Demonstrating Difference and Diversity: John and Joyce

This was a part of larger classroom ethnographic study of classroom culture of a L2 Chinese class at a public university in Northeastern America. The class consisted of 22 students and 1 female instructor. It was an immediate high Chinese reading course. Students had four semester Chinese courses before coming to this one. The classroom setting was very conventional with teacher-fronted desk and students' seats in rows and lines. The class met three times a week. The major instructional activities were constituted of teacher's PowerPoint-aided lectured, student presentations, written homework, book report, short Chinese writing assignments. Primary data sources included interviews, tutoring, informal talks, email correspondences, and artifacts.

In this mini- study, I explored the situated, historical and social aspects of L2 identity of two L2 Chinese learners. I also investigated how individual learners enacted their agency within the process of becoming while they interacted with the immediate learning community, their historical backgrounds and future imaginations and the broader social context. I wanted to use this study of Chinese learners' identities to raise awareness of individuality, to promote understanding of the role of individual agency, and to encourage positioning of L2 Chinese learners as whole persons with shifting and social nature. Furthermore, it aimed to education teachers' attention on various needs of L2 learners due to their diverse social backgrounds and respect, address them.

I used three modes of belonging (Wenger, 1998) as the major framework to examine and interpret individual differences. The three modes refer to engagement, imagination and alignment. Engagement looks at how individual learners participate in activities in different ways and how their identities are shaped in relation to the different interpersonal relationships they enter into. Imagination considers identity in realms beyond the limitations of current time and space and locate the engagement in relation to past, future and elsewhere. Alignment examines how individuals align their learning behaviors with the requirements and structures beyond their community of practice, in order to find a particular position for themselves in the broader social setting.

The following tables present the major information collected from interviews, observations, personal communication and artifacts from the class.

John	Joyce
Male (32), white	Female (20), white
Junior, third year in college-level Chinese program	Junior, third year in college-level Chinese program
Double major: Chinese and Japanese	Double major: Chinese and economics
Studied Chinese by himself before starting college	2-year Chinese study in high school

Had 3 year living aboard in military base in Japan, one-week tour in China, took online courses about Asian Studies	Went to China before university with family as a dependent, spent a semester studying in China, was raised in a Japanese-populated community
Strongly goal-oriented; active learner	Autonomous learner and hard-working
High-achieving and aiming to be successful	Striving to do best although not a good test-taker (GPA 3.2)
Lost direction after high school, not a successful graduate	"A pleasant surprise"
Divorced family, having a younger sister, having prior work experience, friends achieving success	Tiger Mom, British Mom, Goofy Dad, Super smart elder engineer brother
Making independent decisions about life choices, majors, staying close to family, home visits monthly	Listen to family's suggestions, seeking some freedom by staying at university
A strong sense of love of self and life, stressing personal development, wanting positive impacts on others	Open, liberal, optimistic, pleasant personality, resilient, not fear stress
Focusing on studying languages, no interest in jobs, depending on savings	Rich life and study experience, working for student club, altogether 7 courses
Doing sports, friends	On fencing team, friends
Work till late night	Like sleeping
Be cooperative, compliant, considerate, expecting teacher to maintain good order of the classroom	Regard the role of teachers as offering clarification

Here is their respective engagement with their immediate learning community.

John	Joyce
Attentive students, dedicated learner	Active learning in and outside classroom
Quiet, not a frequent talker in class, saving chances for others	Silent, shy student in class, preferring to listen, taking notes and observing

Impressing the teacher with the application of prior linguistic knowledge	Not afraid to ask questions if no one else stops the teacher
Going to tutors, office hours, making friends with Chinese-speaking people	Textbooks, internet, vendors, close friends, comfortable with reading
Looking for all kinds of resources	Responsible for independent learning
Speech contests, volunteer presenter	Getting used to be a listener, observer
Self-governed learning, emphasizing the use of language, applying Chinese on many occasions	Strong self-awareness, developing her own earning strategies, learning happens more in individual cognitive process

Imagination (past, future and elsewhere)

John	Joyce
· Envisioning himself to be a more fluent speaker in Chinese · Confident about his linguistic proficiency · Gaining more opportunities for actual benefits · Looking for jobs in China · Using her L2 Chinese ability to position himself in a competitive society · Having clear life objectives	· Not seeing much change of self · Having fun with Chinese language · Acted as a reporter of life stories in China during study abroad time · Longing to deal with foreign affairs related to China for the US government · Hope to live a simple, happy life · Caring about parents' measurement and evaluations

Alignment with social discourses

John	Joyce
· To live a comfortable happy family life and a highly meaningful life · To benefit America and work for the country · To gain recognition and respect in society (self-realization with the help of L2 Chinese identity) · To be tolerant, accept multiculturalism	· To achieve parent expectation · To work for government related to China · To make the use of knowledge about the Chinese language and understanding of its culture and economy and society · To be open minded, to believe there is not right and wrong, culture impacts ways of doing

I conducted this study of two Chinese learners using the lens of Community of Practice (CoP) framework, looking at socioculturally conditioned self, the historical dimension of their language development, linking the past, present and future selves.

L2 learning was uniquely experienced by individual learners who had different historical backgrounds and material resources. As active agents, they continued to establish new relationships with their surroundings and create new layers of social structure, thus shaping and altering the learning context. There were no identical learning paths.

Learners' family culture, historical backgrounds, future expectations, life goals and their value systems all played parts in shaping their L2 identities. Individuals shapes and were shaped by their social experience and roles.

It was necessary to be cognizant of learners as active and purposeful individuals, with different personalities, family and cultural backgrounds, individual learning histories, orientations and values. If possible, conducting longitudinal case study could capture the changing and social nature of the individuality.

APPENDIX F

Stories of Observed Heritage Learners

1. Bing

     Bing is a US-born female student from an interracial marriage. She has a Chinese-speaking mother and a Vietnamese-speaking father. Because Bing's mother expected her to pass down Mandarin to future generations, she wanted her to be a fluent heritage speaker. Along with learning from her mother, Bing had a Cantonese-speaking babysitter when she was young.

     Furthermore, her mother enrolled her in weekend Chinese language classes since she was 8 years of age. Taiwanese ran the community-based program, so she learned traditional Chinese scripts from them. Bing had good oral communication skills but was not good at reading and writing. As a result, she could not complete the written placement test, and for this reason, she was placed in a group with somewhat previous learning experience. Bing's Taiwanese boyfriend took a 'three-hundred' intermediate level course at the same school, and she claimed she could understand her boyfriend's textbook. Nevertheless, simply reading characters was a big obstacle.

Additionally, Bing was a science major with a heavy coursework load and sometimes worked until early in the morning because of it. This made getting to her Chinese lessons very stressful. However, she loved the intimate classroom atmosphere and found it to be enjoyable and relaxing once she got there. Unfortunately, Bing seldom submitted weekly journals, and the teacher did not really push her to hand work in on time. Altogether, Bing missed 5 class meetings out of the 16 I observed. In terms of real learning, she commented that she preferred a higher-level class, but she was not fully ready for the intermediate level in terms of literacy development. Bing could not locate an appropriate class to further her Chinese language studies at her college. She did not expect to learn much cultural knowledge from language classes. She would choose other culture-specific classes if she could spare the time.

     The most important reasons for Bing to study Chinese was that she wanted to survive in a Chinese-speaking community and communicate effectively with her boyfriend, his mother, and other Chinese-speaking members of her community. The ultimate goal was to teach future generations the Chinese language and pass it down as heritage.

2. Peng

     Peng was a Cantonese-speaking boy student. He was born in the United States, and his parents both spoke Cantonese. Cantonese was his first and home language. When he went to grade school, he was placed in ESL and LEP programs. He was a bilingual student in terms of Cantonese and English.

     As a dialect of Chinese, Cantonese shares the same written system as Mandarin. Before coming to the university-level class, Peng never practiced reading and writing Chinese, and he never learned how to speak Mandarin. He was very worried at the beginning of the course that he could not catch up with the rest of his classmates who were all the more advanced learners. Most of the students with similar backgrounds chose to take a different intensive class that mixed non-heritage with the heritage language. For this reason, Peng worked hard and was especially attentive during both lecture and discussion sessions.

Appropriately, Peng's teachers showed great concern for his progress. As a result, he got a lot of help while attending the class and tried hard to remain active and consistently contribute. These combined efforts allowed him to make rapid progress, and in the end, he was quite satisfied with his achievements.

After a period of time, he felt the class was a bit slow for him, especially when he could figure out the similarities between the two dialects, Mandarin and Cantonese by himself. This knowledge about Cantonese helped him a lot to study another dialect of Chinese. His motivation to study the language was to attain a level of communication that would facilitate his ability to interact with his family still living in China.

3. Patrick

Patrick was a United States-born male student from an interracial marriage whose father was an American and mother was Chinese. When she and her family moved from Mainland China to Taiwan, he spent short-term vacations with them. Patrick was able to communicate in Chinese at the conversation level without a problem, which made him sound like a near-native Mandarin speaker.

Furthermore, Patrick's major was in English literature. He was highly motivated to learn the language because, not only was he considering living in Taiwan, he eventually hoped to translate his own literary work into Chinese.

Unfortunately, although he enjoyed the college-level language class, Patrick did not achieve much authentic learning because the class he was placed in was too slow and repetitive for him. In reflection, he realized he helped others to learn Chinese more than he attended to his own language learning needs.

Working with Practicum Students
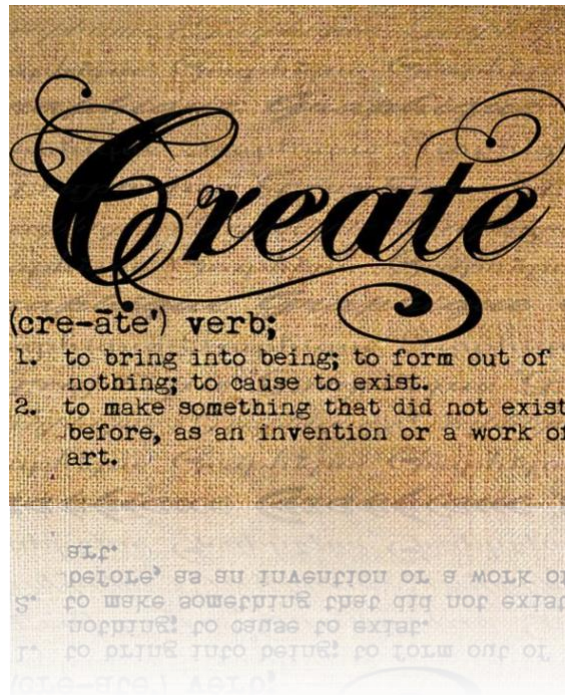
Weekly Group Reflection Report, Sample pages #1

On Professionalism

Our Voices and Perspectives

Group Reflections (Feb. 20 and Feb. 27)
Ying

The following summary is evidence of our creating group knowledge together. Together Everyone Achieves More. This is what team means. We live the team spirit!

Description for Group A

Date: 2-20-2015   **Place**: Cushman Cafe

Participants background
Three of the members, Shanshan, Meng, Bokyung, observed at the local elementary schools from K- 5, focusing on ELL learners. They had not got much real teaching practice. Dan observed and got some teaching practice at a Chinese immersion school, focusing on teaching L2 Chinese language. The discussion will mainly focus on observation so far.

Design of the discussion
Professionalism Through a collaborative Talk about **OBSERVED** teaching practices and behaviors
- **Creating a space to share "what I see and what I expect to see" and also to look beyond the visible educational landscape**
- **Experiencing being a "doer" rather than a teacher and being engaged by a "learning by doing" activity**
- **Raising consciousness of collaborative learning / working with group**

Implementation
1) Group members took turns to tell some practices/stories observed from daily classrooms and school activities. They identified professional and not professional practices through their eyes. They described effective and efficient teachers who give quality education or shared rethinking and learning from the less effective teaching practices.. Participants were active to build upon what has been said and added their perceptions and understanding of the hidden possible reasons.
2) During the break time, the group members produced **a collage art work** using provided materials. After they finished their creation, they shared with the group what their collage work were about. Discuss what they learn from the "creation" process and what this activity can be tailored into speaking, writing, learning
3) Continue the discussion and share their observations and reflections. Clarification and debrief immediately after the whole discussion.

Questions helping reflection upon group discussion

1 - What are the things you take away from the group discussion about being a better teacher/better understanding of being professional or seeking better teaching practice in the future observation?
Purpose: Encouraging post-discussion reflection and rethinking of the gains from group learning experience

2 - Describe your experience making a collage art work with the group and tell us something you learn from the process (about yourself, learner, designer, group member, etc.)

Purpose: Making invisible the individual experience of the process of creating and their personal connections in the arts-based engaging activities.

3- What makes the guided discussion different from peer group meeting?

Purpose: Making the participants think about making changes in weekly peer group meeting and seek innovative ways to improve the effectiveness of group learning and optimize the benefits from meeting time?

Key notes from Group A Discussion
Key themes:
❖ **explicit instruction (especially for the young learner)**
❖ **lifelong learning**
❖ **goal-setting**
❖ **connection with other teachers**
❖ **student knowledge**
❖ **cross-cultural competence**
❖ **knowledge about motivation, engagement**
❖ **sensitivity to student needs, especially ELL students' emotional needs**

Collage Art work by Group A

Time Has Changed Us:
Consciously Becoming Better Teachers

3rd Group Meetings with Ying
Group B 4:30pm -6:15 pm
Group A 6:30pm - 8:30 pm
4/17/2015

(Ying made this watercolor painting "Keeping Track of Time" during the school break)
One of the best ways to stay on track and feel accomplished is to keep record of what we do during a certain period of time.
It's really satisfying to see what we've accomplished so far during the practicum course.

The agenda of the group meeting:

1- Look back to summarize your work during the practicum:
1) Describe the school/classroom context, the students, the supervising teachers, the culture of the school
2) What has changed you and what part of you has changed after practicum? Share some new learning.
3) Talk about the actual practice - the lessons you have planned and taught so far. How effective they were and how well it went and why?

2- Focus on the present
Share your audio/video data to the group and give some critical analysis regarding the planning, delivery, interaction, activity design and implementation assessment. Peers will give comment and suggestions.

3- Wrap up and look forward.
Reflect again upon what makes a good language teacher, a good learner, and a good lesson. Talk about the future directions for the rest of weeks.

Summary

At the last meeting on April 17, 2015, the group had achieved what had been planned to do and shared individual experiences during the past months. After the discussion, we have acquired an improved understanding of who we are, who our students are, who our collaborative colleagues are and what language teaching is and is not. We have demonstrated our awareness and practice to develop learner-centered, learning-oriented classrooms and to internalize a reflective, inquiring stance toward teaching and learning.

Teaching is a helping profession; a process of rapport building; a source of assistance (of discovery); a non-stop reflective practice; a meaning-making activity; a dialogue and negotiation. The complexity of teaching lies in continuous and cumulative cycle of planning, implementation, observation, analysis; dynamic process of give-and-take in search of authentic learning; creating learning opportunities by connecting with past, present and future of individual, community and society; engaging students and making them stay hungry for new learning; constant evaluation, assessment and seeking solutions to improve performance and inspire love for learning; and its unpredictable conditions and emergent problems.

By doing a teacher's job, we position ourselves as curious investigators; active, open-minded learners; autonomous researchers; agents of change; responsible decision-makers; providers of intellectual, emotional and psychological support; knowledgeable professionals equipped with all kinds of educational theories and practical wisdoms; but do not view teaching as just a craft or a listeners/followers of the prescriptive teaching standards

After the practicum, we have acquired new ways of seeing and doing things from in-depth reflection, sensitive observation, working with others, and absorbing from readings. We are working hard toward being professionals who have love of learning, love of learners, and the love of bringing the first two loves together.

As a guide, observer and facilitator for group discussion, I have been impressed by everyone's growth in conception, observation and reflection skills, and actual practice. More

important to me are they teach from their hearts, they have an inquiry mind to improve self and better teaching practice, and they care the well being of the students and the quality of their classroom life.

Here are some key themes emerged from the individual responses:

Challenges/issues/important strategies reflected from own practices
Content-based instruction, teaching content vocabulary
Identifying student needs, and getting to know more aspects of students;
Goal-setting: simple and clear; having one focus a time;
Planning more and make improvising easier;
Achieving both language objective and content objective;
Differentiated instruction with alternative lesson activities;
Setting up rules and making expectation explicit;
Skills to relate to students having diverse experiences/hard time
Time management and having realistic plans;
Reflection-on-practice: noticing difference between planning and implementation

Great learning from others
A learning community can be very supportive and provide a space to get validation, confidence, feedback, new ideas, skills to improve social emotional competence, etc.
Practical technology tools: educational apps, websites;
Ensuring every student can participate in learning activities; instruction can reach every learner;
Awareness to enhance parent-teacher connection and connect with parent more often to show students' work;
Collaboration between ESL and mainstream classroom teacher;
Sensitivity to students' linguistic and cultural background and act as a culturally responsive teacher;
Effective teaching strategies, classroom management tricks;

Creating space that is comfortable, welcoming, inclusive
Preparing and making best use of resources, visual aids, toys, materials
Seeking feedback from cooperating teachers
Trusting and allowing students can do independently;

Proud moments (seen through student achievement)
Seeing students applying the learned knowledge/skills from classroom to real lives;
Seeing students take the information from instruction in another setting(e.g. examination) and show they did pay attention;
Picking books addressing individuals' needs;
Communicating in ELL students' L1;
Setting high expectation making connections to what they have learned and what is learning;
Students understood the teaching points under effective guidance and scaffolding;
Reflecting upon own practice immediately from teaching and adjust the plan for new group when using the plan again

New Enlightenment
Reflecting upon personal learning experience as L2 English learner;

ELL teacher's practice of tolerance when confronted being ignored and understood; handling the difficult situation delicately and professionally;
Actively advocate for ELL students;
Placing Value students' home language and demonstrate true cultural sensitivity
Using multicultural teaching materials to raise student's multicultural awareness
Embracing diversity and publicly acknowledge the students home culture
Careful planning, materials preparation, reading instruction techniques
Putting students at the center
Learning process is endless. Learning about teaching involves many aspects, disciplines and practice.

Here are the guiding questions for reflection upon group talk:

1- Looking back at your teaching experience in the past months, what were the difficulties/troubles/challenges you had been confronted with in planning, delivery, rapport building, experimenting on theories and other issues in real-world educational context? What did you do to solve most of them? What do you wish you could do to solve some of them? *(about your own work)*

2- Are there many good things you see in your group members, colleagues, and observed teachers that can help with your own teaching practice or have contributed to your growth? Share some of the practical wisdom you get from others during the period of time. *(about others' work) *

3- Describe one moment/activity/story you feel very satisfactory with and happy about yourself. *(about self-efficacy) *

4- Summarize your new learning you gained from the work experience - something you won't totally understand until you have some actual experience? What/who has taught you most to enrich your understanding of being a language teacher and supporting the language development? *(about new knowledge from practice) *

APPENDIX H
Working with Task Design

This is the original topic choices provided by teacher Lily's to her Chinese students to prepare class presentations, using the words and expressions related to jobs:

1.   When time goes by, there are a lot of changes in terms of the salary, popularity, social status of many jobs.
2.   Example 1, working in a factory became an excellent job because of the born of the Chinese socialist system since 1949. Now the workers are suffering unemployment because the society has changed.
3.   Example 2, people used to look down upon actors, but more and more young people dream about becoming a movie star.
4.   Example 3, computer science is more and more promising.

-      Research on the change of salary, social status, popularity of a certain job throughout the past 20 years in China or the US, and present what you have found

-      Predict the change of salary, social status, popularity of a certain job in 20 years in the US, and provide reasons.

The following was my response. She adopted my design.

I figure that the students like more exciting and engaging research questions. So I brainstormed many mini-topics for you and suggest you to give them more options and encourage them to extend their thinking to more social issues. The students can generate their own topics too. The ultimate goal is that they bring to the class a great variety of research and presentations on varied topics. The theme of projects is centered on JOBS/CAREERS. You can work individually or form a group of two or three students on one of the following suggested topics. Your own topic is also welcome.

Day I (11/6, W)– Descriptive study
1-   Introduce one particular job of China or US: what it is about; what changes have taken place and why by looking at past history, present condition and future prospects;
2-   Talk about some jobs that have already disappeared or will not exist anymore and why;
3-   Introduce major job trends and potential jobs: what and where the future job will be;
4-   Design a job ad and gave a short speech to the interested applicants: what kind of qualities you are looking for and how to prepare for the job;
5-   Report a survey or interview results: what are the jobs viewed as satisfying jobs/good jobs - indicators and factors
6-   Talk about some little-known jobs and their significance;
7-   Talk about some bias against some job seekers;

Day II (11/8, F)– Comparative study
8-   Compare different types of jobs in terms of salary, qualifications, working conditions, social status, location, and etc.
9-   Compare a traditional job and a modern job
10-   Compare one person's different jobs at different life stages and tell his/her life story;
11-   Compare the jobs of different public figures;
12-   Compare the best jobs/careers in different countries;
13-   Compare women's jobs and men's jobs
14-   Compare your ideal jobs and your parents, grandparents' idea jobs

APPENDIX I

ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY OF LEARNER AGENCY:
Non-heritage (Nick) and Heritage learner (Kay)

Nick takes up multifarious positional identities and multiple types of agency when situated in different contexts and achieves various social goals. He is a lovely example of learner as a complex social being.

Nick's Case

NICK	Positions	Acts
Reflexive Agency	Participant	Being physically present and committing to attendance
	Energizer	Acting as a free person and being a clown
	Master	Engaging himself as a teacher or an expert
Interactive Agency	Assessor	Assigning others positions in the class
	Questioner	Being initiative and inquisitive

Nick was a tall, white male student, with self-identification as gay. He was a great singer and a great performer. He was on the University Theatre Guild and a singing group. He took several courses in linguistics which enabled him to have access to metalinguistic knowledge. This was his third year at Mountainside University. In high school, he took Chinese classes for two years given by non-native Chinese teacher using the exactly same textbook. Nick claimed that he was talented in learning language and during the past summer, he studied a little bit Russian and Japanese by himself.

At the beginning of the semester, he felt a little bit intimidated and almost chose to drop the course as he could not understand the teachers especially in discussion sessions when the teacher Nancy talked mainly in the target language Chinese and used new vocabulary out of his comprehension. It seemed that the heritage students could take in the language and culture easily in his eyes. As time went by, he became more confident and played a very important role in the classroom interaction. As he said, he liked to sit in the front of the classroom if it was a regular classroom with rows of seats and took the best position possible in lectures. In this conference room, his spot was the greatest in terms of the place to read clearly the screen of the laptop. He had high expectations of his performance and liked to achieve as much as he could. He came to the classroom 15 minutes earlier after he just came out of the previous class. He liked to write on the chalkboard in the room to practice writing the new words and dialogues.

It happened that he and the instructor Amy were classmates in the previous semester, which was about opera. He sometimes was absent from that class, which made Amy at first a little bit worried about his attendance. It so happened that I also had attended one linguistic course with him in the previous semester. That was a big class of nearly 40 students. We did not have any chance to get to know and talk to each other in that class. Later, I recalled that he was the

one sitting in the first row each time, raising questions and giving responses very often. When I gave a presentation in linguistic course, some students did greet me in Chinese. It was him. I was quite happy to meet him again in this class. I recognized him when I stepped into the observed Chinese class.

Nick was picked as a focal student as he was the most enthusiastic learner, active talker in the class and playing many roles in the class community. He behaved like a class spokesman and displayed strong leadership skills just as he did in his extracurricular activities. I went to his show named Children of Eden and supported him. He was a leading actor and a leader of the play. I emailed him about my responses and compliments after the show. I was also asked to translate one section of the lyrics of his play into Chinese. I talked with him a lot whenever I was in the classroom ahead of time. We developed very good relations soon. I also offered to help him outside class. He liked writing poems and I helped him to translate them into Chinese. He was highly interested in news about China so I prepared some short news in China as learning materials for on-one-on instruction. During our meeting, he also talked about his gains and feelings about the classes.

Participant Agency: Being Physically Present and Committing to Attendance

In this class community, Nick treasured the opportunities learning together with the small group and made every effort to show up to support the teacher and the class. He took six subjects at one semester plus many social activities. But he was very serious about Chinese learning and had a strong awareness of the consequence of missing some lessons.

> "For me, when I have a class, especially when obviously I take the one I show interest in it, paying to school to go to class, I love to learn anyway. If I can force myself to be there, to be present, if I show up, I invested at it. The only class I don't usually go to if I am tired so late in the afternoon. I will always be there. There's another thing. There are few of us. We have to help to be more comfortable for we know the class move at such a fast pace. If I miss one, I will have to teach myself dialogue homework done."

He invested money, time and energy in learning Chinese and also expressed love and passion to learn this language. Nick also knew that each participant's consistent presence contributed to the positive learning environment. With the investment, interest and the group's benefit in his mind, he showed up for each class and maintained perfect attendance record. He never missed one single class, even though sometimes he was seen really tired from rehearsals and other extracurricular activities when his show or performances were approaching. His commitment to attending class made Amy, the instructor very pleased, who at first was a little worried about his attendance. Nick also was well aware that the class moved at a fast pace and it would be hard to catch up even skipping one lesson. When Nick positioned himself as an interested learner and an active participant who was responsible for self-learning and team-building, he chose to consistently be actively present and stick to the end. His good intention to help a group evolve into a cohesive unit and strong motivation to learn were also enhanced when his existential agency was valued and expected by the instructor and other students.

Energizer Agency: acting as a free person and a class clown

Nick expressed his love towards the humanized space and the stress-free atmosphere. He said,

"I feel like we have not been conditioned. We've been so used to the normal classroom setting teacher fronted, rows, and specific seats, there are seats like I am a student this is where the student sit when we are put into a smaller room that is not like the default setup and we get professional chair, not very professional. We are all in the same level including the teacher."

He enjoyed not being conditioned by a 'default setup' and felt quite free to behave in a comfortable way, meanwhile, not worrying about causing any offenses. He was very dramatic and was very unrestricted to deliberately grab people's attention and express his emotions in public in the class meetings. His talent was recognized by his peers through his voluntary singing and very theatrical physical behavior. In the class, it was frequently observed that he sang out the Chinese words in exaggerating tones or spoke English words in prolonged voice. He made music or rhymes by playing with his mouth, made noises by patting his face, shaking water bottles, at any time he felt like. He acted as an energizer who brought a lot of dynamics and energy to the class community. For example, his performance could be a good transition for the teacher to transfer from word list reading aloud activity to grammar points teaching. One time, when he made some drumming like sounds using his mouth, the teacher laughed and the others appreciated it.

Helen: That's awesome. Pretty few people can do that.
Nick: I thought most people could do that. It turns out that most people can't.

Fortunately, the instructor and his classmates did not view it as annoyed, disruptive or offending. When I asked about his noise-making behavior in my interviews with the other class members, they did not express any uncomfortable feelings. Some students knew him from previous courses and understood his personality well. Some said it was fine for a small class and informal setting, although they might not accept the similar behavior in the big class. His behavior livened up the classroom atmosphere and made it relaxing, casual, and 'entertaining', using the students' words. Just like what he claimed once, he preferred "to be a clown to be silly and fool around". This positionality as a class clown empowered him to act out of free will but also add dynamics and energy to the space.

Here were two more scenes from my field notes. Amy, the instructor, assigned many pair-work tasks to practice the new words. Each student was required to report to the class using their partners' answers to reply the teachers' questions after the practice. Nick and Sally were very quick. When they finished, Sally turned her twist to relax, which was a very exaggerating movement. Nick started to sing a song loudly, although the other pairs were still practicing. Nick continued to make some noises by tapping his cheeks and mouth, like hitting a drum, with good rhyme. He sang repetitively, "Everybody can." The teacher laughed at this rap and said nothing or asked no question. After each pair was done with questions and answers with the teacher, Amy asked students to begin another sets of pair work about the theme of events and time. They were supposed to remember the partners' answers again to get ready to respond to her questions. Nick and Sally were once again quick to finish the entire speaking task like the first time. Two of them were waiting for being called upon. Both of them felt very bored during the waiting time and had nothing to work on. Nick pressed his face against the surface of the table and started to hit his mouth. He made strange noises

again, meanwhile, there was still one pair practicing. The instructor did not respond to his behavior.

McLaren (1986, qtd. In Radigan, 2001) argued that the clown is "the arbiter of passive resistance". His claim was that most students passively accept the packaged information they receive from teachers. Passive resistance comes in the form of leaning back on chairs, tapping pencils, facial expressions of disgust, and daydreaming. Resistance, active and passive, contests the classroom rituals and the instructional process. Nick, at many times, positioned himself to be a clown in this classroom and it was this position allowed himself to be a joke-maker and to have the right to fool around. He did not need to refrain himself from sitting straightly and quietly, passively receiving the instructional practices. He was acting as a free agent. The instructor and other students were very tolerant and regarded him as cute and funny. He was treated just like a family member and given many chances to be whatever he wanted to be. I recalled that in the big class at the linguistic lectures I also attended, he never did the similar things like shaking the bottle to make noises or singing songs freely. This particular culture of the classroom that enabled his choices to be 'weird' and performing as a 'fool' or 'clown', and to wittingly challenge the teacher's practice but in an invisible way. His clown behavior in some degree was a sign of disengagement and the less appropriate level task or in class assessment. This type of deliberate agency helped Nick to avail himself of possible chances to draw the other's attention and put the resources to good uses.

Master Agency: Acting as a Teacher or an Expert

One time, Amy did not show up ten minutes after the class meeting time. The students did not behave impatiently but did their own work like previewing and reviewing practices or had some social talk with desk mates. Seeing there was no teacher within ten minutes, Nick stood up and walked to the seat where the instructor usually sat. He and sat down and started to imitate the teacher and led the whole class to read aloud the vocabulary list, acting just as a teacher. He asked everyone to turn to the page of the unit they were working on. All of the students were quite cooperative, did what he said and repeated after him in chorus. They followed him exactly like following a real teacher. When Nick took up the position of the teacher, the other students affirmed his role and followed his "instruction", which was predictable and reproduced as an internalized practice. Without the presence of a real teacher, Nick and his classmates were performing exactly as a teacher and students.

Nick was familiar with the agenda of the instructor's structured less, which often started from reviewing the lately learned words and expressions. So even the teacher did not show up, he could predict what the instructor would do and mimicry the teacher. He exercised this professional agency of a master to organize the group's own learning under his leadership. He positioned himself as a leader and an imagined teacher, meanwhile, he won the trust that the other class members placed on him through the assistance he gave at other times. His position was not challenged at all but well acknowledged and enhanced, which indicated that he was a more capable student and deserved this social location.

His expertise also came from his knowledge about making vocal sounds, using the right tones, and assisting the other students to get correct sounds and pronunciation. For example, Bing, a girl from an interracial family, had some problems in producing few sounds that were unique in Chinese sound system. The teacher did not have solutions at many times, and found it hard to teach verbally in English how that sound was made. Nick, as a singer who possessed many skills and training techniques, used his vocal knowledge help her to fix the problems. With Nick's step-by-step guidance, Bing finally succeeded in producing the

sounds. Nick was proud to be recognized by his classmates as a "Tone Master" for a tonal language. This position made him take up the expert's role whenever any student got troubles in producing challenging sounds and tones. The instructor allowed the students much space to conduct peer teaching in English. Suppose the teacher controlled the whole class all the time and prohibited the use of L1 English, Nick would not be able to display his professional agency and share his expertise.

Assessor Agency: Assigning Others Positions in the Class

Nick observed every student in the class and identified himself with Tim, Sally in one group, who were white Americans and the heritage learners as another group. He positioned Tim as "a sentence master", while he himself was "the tone master". He said Tim was the one who was so skilled at making long sentences.

> I have a pretty hard time coming up with random things. Tim is really good at making things up. He can just make up one sentence that goes forever. Like I have no idea what to say…I immediately fall back to the dialogue, you know…

He knew that Tim attended two Chinese courses in the same semester, using the same textbook. One was non-intensive; one was the intensive one they took together. He recognized his ability to use the new words to create new sentences as long as they could go. Tim was very pleased to be positioned as a sentence expert and he was the one who was also very active to display what he knew, either in English or in Chinese.

When talking about how the teacher put more emphasis on the speaking practice and conversational skills but not characters and writing, Nick commented:

> It's like skipping the middle step and going to just get it more functional. I feel like if you skip that step, some people, even those they do like skip that step, they are able to skip that step and just talk.., without using that step, it was less supported.

When he mentioned "some people", "those", he meant the heritage learners, who he assumed that they were more proficient in many skills. He observed that especially in discussion sessions, everyone got involved in more oral practices and listening tasks. He positioned himself belonging to a different group from the heritage learners and described him as learners in need of more support.

Nick was very aware of the other students' competences, strengths and weaknesses. He constantly compared himself with students who he identified with the same group and he also compared his capacities with the heritage learners. His personal agency was mediated by the relational positions.

Kay's Case

KAY	Position	Act
Oppositional agency	Victim	Protest: finding fault with the course and class
	Deficient student	Resistance: taking non-participation in class
Proactive Agency	Skillful student	Engagement: actively participated in class activities
	Agentic learner	Autonomy: construct his own learning environment for self-directed learning

Kay's agency is not expressed as manifest as Nick. Nick was markedly identified as an active talker and class energizer who displays visible agency all the time. However, Kay enacted multifaceted forms of agency, either visible or invisible, from protesting against the course design to skipping classes as resistance, and from attending the class as active participant to being an autonomous learner outside class. The following is Kay's case. (see Table 5).

Kay was originally from Hong Kong. He told me:

Cantonese was my first language. However, because I moved to the US before pre-school, my immersion in Chinese was extremely limited. My primary language has been English for as long as I can remember. My Cantonese is at a very low level, but my conversational skills have been improving steadily this year (I've had the good fortune to make many friends who are recent immigrants/international students from Hong Kong).I was learning conversational Cantonese, Mandarin, reading and writing in Mandarin, and pinyin. In short, I was doing too much with too little time.

He didn't position himself as a heritage language learner because of his poor ability in communicating with this language. He also said that he preferred liberal art and social sciences, which might not be valued by traditional Chinese who emphasized more on science, math, engineering, or high techniques. He felt he was more American than being a Chinese. He took mandarin classes for a very short time when he was young but because of mobility of the family, he could not be able to continue persistently to maintain this language. When he went to high school, there was a Chinese program. But he took a Spanish language program and he regretted that he did not take the Chinese one. The learning experience of Spanish as a foreign language helped him understand better about learning an additional language.

Kay was a first-year college student and very engaged with his major political science. He joined the army and on National Guard reserve. Before taking the course, as he said "I have really specific desire in learning this language because I am in the army. I like to use Chinese in my career. Just having an asset in my career. ..I want to be foreign affairs officer. I want to specialize in East Asian and US and China relations. I need to be able to read and write basically." He knew that the army would value his linguistic competence in Chinese and he wanted to develop it during the college years.

Oppositional Agency: Protest and Resistance

From the interview with Kay, I learned that after taking this course, he was quite disappointed. He positioned himself as a victim of the flawed curricular design and found faults with the class and the instructor. He reflected upon his experience by saying "we didn't spend all that time and lecture on it (literacy). The fundamental problem is that I was too ahead in some aspects. I was too behind in some other aspects. Being bored. Struggling really hard…My mandarin got better but not as much as I expected." "The lecture does not help much though. Discussion, not really."

When he identified his deficiency in reading characters and could not follow the class joyfully, he started to skip the class. Kay missed 6 classes of the 16 classes observed. He did not come to lecture session for over one third of the time. When asked the reasons why he missed the class, he explained that

"Not because I have other obligations. Sometimes I don't want to come to classes. I don't learn much in class. I picked up a lot already. I'm pretty behind in the class. It intimidates me into not going class… I did not take her help...I don't want to take time outside of class."

Kay did feel the class was not appropriate for him and he did not fit the class. He felt very uncomfortable that he could not recognize the characters on teacher's slides and he could not understand the teacher right away. The feeling that he was the one left behind frustrated him frequently. The more lessons he missed, the harder he felt to catch up. He told me he really needed a class that helped developing literacy skills in terms of meaningful reading and writing. He chose not to attend lectures class to express his oppositional agency against the design of course defined emphasis.

Proactive Agency: Engagement and Autonomy

However, in the interview with the teaching assistant of discussion session, I was told that Kay was doing great in all speaking practices in class. Whenever he came to the class, he would engage himself with the class activities and act as an active part of the learning community. He had no problem with daily conversations and everyday expressions. He felt quite confident in speaking and listening skills. From the classes I observed, he was also acting as an engaging learner, cooperative and active.

In order to accomplish his personal goal of achieving Chinese literacy, Kay chose to be an agentic learner with a lot of autonomy. He said,

"I am going to study by myself. Try to read and write. Probably I will take another Chinese class." "I am still working my way through the book. I am on lesson seven."

His choice to give up the learning opportunities in classroom contexts did not mean he intended to quit his goal of acquiring the language. In order to accomplish his long-term personal goal of achieving Chinese literacy, he continued to study by himself by using online resources, asking for help from Chinese-speaking friends and practicing reading and writing on his own. He initially constructed his own learning contexts.
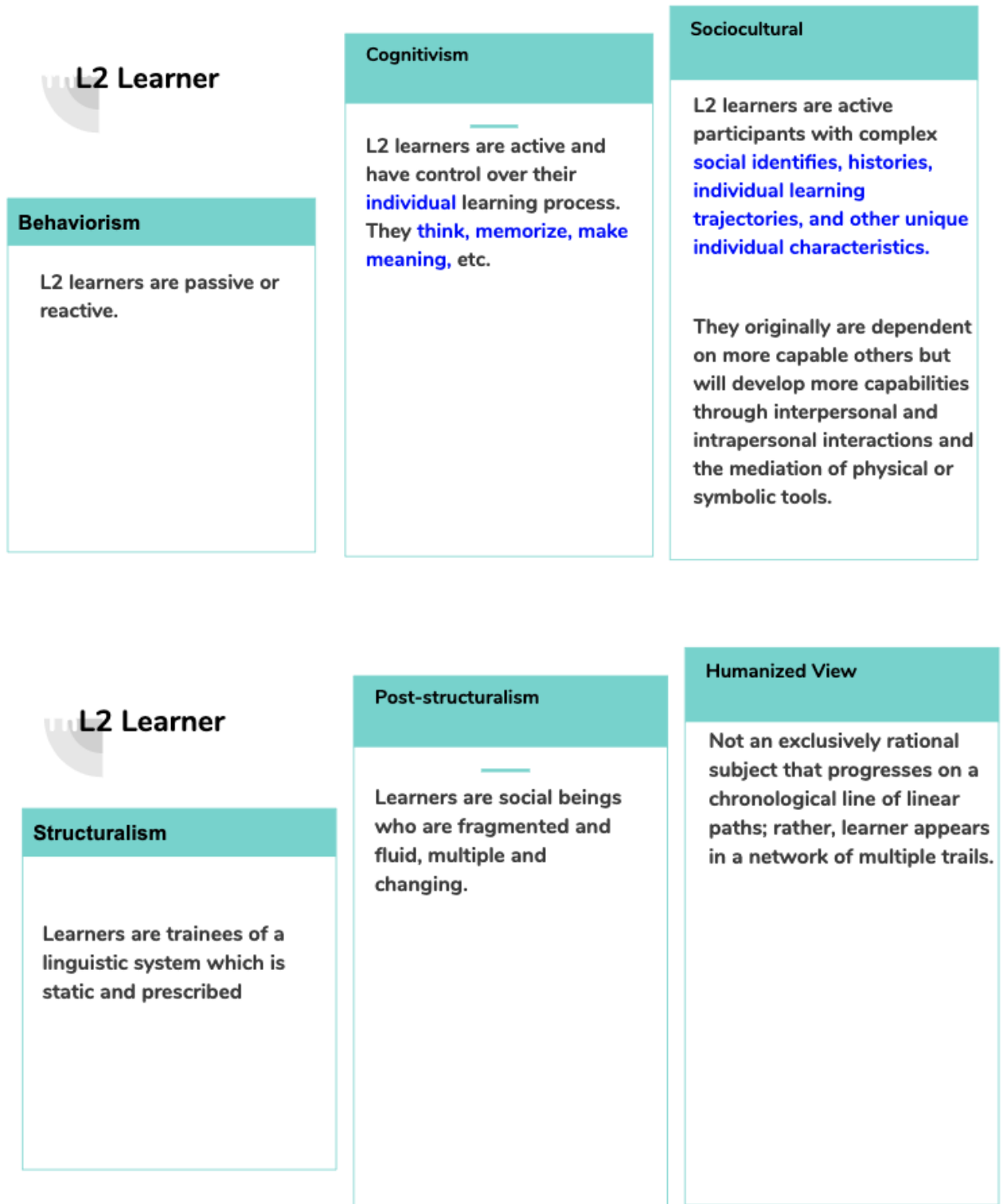
When I wrote an email to follow up and asked more about his plan of Chinese learning, he replied

> I'm not taking Chinese this semester (referring spring, 2012), but I have been attempting to learn more characters (and their pinyin counterparts) in my free time. Since I split most of my time between my actual studies (political science), extra-curriculars, and learning Chinese, I've only been marginally successful -- consistent recall is still difficult. It would probably be more effective to master Mandarin to some degree first, but I have been learning pinyin concurrently so I can type, and in hopes direct association of the two might improve acquisition. I plan to enroll in more Chinese courses in my undergrad career, but at this point I'm unsure exactly when. In any professional setting, I expect to need typing skills and the ability to read characters, so I have been focusing on practicality rather than complete mastery. I hope to eventually be a part of the State Department, and perhaps they will find my language skills useful. (Email, April, 2012)

Kay had chosen not to take other Chinese class in the second year, although he had set up a very clear career goal in mind and wanted to invest time and effort on Chinese. He decided to prepare himself in typing characters and master Mandarin to some degree before he moved on to some courses. He knew that what he needed was the "practicality rather than complete mastery". He had his own strategies to achieve his effectiveness and efficiency of language learning. He turned himself into a self-directed autonomous learner in out-of-class context. Kay knew very well what might be the best and appropriate way for him to learn Chinese language. He was really a self-conscious learner and had his strong belief about how to learn a foreign language.

APPENDIX J

Selected slides: Raising Awareness of Paradigm Shift

L2 Learner

Behaviorism

L2 learners are passive or reactive.

Cognitivism

L2 learners are active and have control over their **individual** learning process. They **think, memorize, make meaning,** etc.

Sociocultural

L2 learners are active participants with complex **social identifies, histories, individual learning trajectories, and other unique individual characteristics.**

They originally are dependent on more capable others but will develop more capabilities through interpersonal and intrapersonal interactions and the mediation of physical or symbolic tools.

L2 Learner

Structuralism

Learners are trainees of a linguistic system which is static and prescribed

Post-structuralism

Learners are social beings who are fragmented and fluid, multiple and changing.

Humanized View

Not an exclusively rational subject that progresses on a chronological line of linear paths; rather, learner appears in a network of multiple trails.

L2 Learning

Cognitivism

L2 Learning is a **mental, cognitive** process.

L2 learning is an **individual** acquisition process.

L2 learning involves **input, interaction, output, noticing, coding, decoding** etc.

Sociocultural

Learning is a social practice.

Learning takes place in **social interactions** and is **co-constructed** with others.

L2 Learning is a **developing process from other-regulated to self-regulated learning.**

Through **dialogic interactions** with others, learners become more independent in self-regulating physical and mental activities using mediational devices.

Behaviorism

L2 learning is reaction to **stimuli and habit formation**.

L2 Learning

Post-structuralism

Their current identities, socialization practices, past cultural identities and imagined selves are all significant and impact their achievements.

L2 Learning is a complex social practice through which messy relationships are defined, negotiated, and resisted.

Humanized

Personal reflection over objective reason, experience over referential learning, and linking mind and body

Structuralism

L2 learning is a linear learning process about a big number of discrete grammatical rules or a corpus of structural patterns.

- An orientation to the job market
- Instrumental
- Goal-oriented
- CLT (Communicative Language Teaching)
- Utilitarian ideology
- Pragmatic

A model to transfer information linking to career opportunities and expansion of global exchange of economic and cultural capital

- Not provided sufficient for the socio-cultural aspects of language learning and its socialization processes

- Limit the ways in which individual could build on their most personal, emotional and creative needs.

Traditional Language Teaching

Critiques about CLT and Mainstream pedagogy

Changing views:

Dropping old national labels

Languages and cultures come in different versions and sizes to fit the bodies of their owners and their circumstances, and they are not only 'acquired' and 'learnt', but also 'lived'.

Language learning allows us to connect with the world in new ways by rebelling against the long-held belief that we are born and die with the same identity.

Learners embark on personal journeys where they draw their own cartographies of the world which use the force of perception, affect and creativity to experience and fashion new road-maps of the world and new interpretations.

(Cristina Ros i Sole, 2016)

Exploring New Directions in L2 Chinese field

Towards humanized language education

- Learner Agency
- Complex Identities
- Subjectivity, intersubjectivity
- Performativity
- Student voice
- Learner biographies/autobiographies
- Power struggle
- Immigrant learners
- Cosmopolitan language users
- Varieties of languages learning
- Personal language learning trajectories
- Affect and creativity

What I Advocate

-- Breaking free from the constraints of the instrumental and functional approach.

If we can shift from pragmatic objectives to an interest in learners' self-cultivation and self-improvement through their experiencing additional language(s), we will treat the learner as a whole person and a holistic conscious human being.

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