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TEACHING CHINESE AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: EXPLORING TEACHING
METHODS, IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT, AND LEARNER-CENTERED
EDUCATION

by

Zhen Li

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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2021

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ABSTRACT

Teaching Chinese as a Second Language: Exploring Teaching Methods, Identity
Development, and Learner-Centered Education

by

Zhen Li: Master of Second Language Teaching
Utah State University, 2021

Major Professor: Dr. Joshua J. Thoms

Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies

This portfolio includes a collection of essays reflecting the writer's beliefs about teaching and explorations of topics related to second language teaching, especially in the context of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. The first part of the portfolio consists of the writer's teaching philosophy statement, professional environment, and reflections on her observations of other teachers' classes. The second part consists of two papers focused on the interconnections between language and culture. The first explores refusal strategies in Chinese while the second addresses identity negotiation in Chinese Heritage Learners' study abroad experiences. The third part is an annotated bibliography on collaborative writing.

(86 pages)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ASL = Arabic as a Second Language
AT = Activity Theory
CA = Cultural Awareness
CFL = Chinese as a Foreign Language
CLT = Communicative Language Teaching
CW = Collaborative Writing
DCT = Discourse Completion Test
DLI = Dual Language Immersion
EFL = English as a Foreign Language
ELL = English Language Learner
ERIC = Education Resources Information Center
ESL = English as a Second Language
HLL = Heritage Language Learner
ICA = Intercultural Awareness
IRB = Institutional Review Board
L1 = First Language / Native Language
L2 = Second Language
LREs = Language-Related Episodes
MMORPG = Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game
MSLT = Master of Second Language Learning
NSC = Native Speaker of Chinese
NSE = Native Speaker of English
REFP = Reclassified English Fluent Proficient
SA = Study Abroad
SCT = Sociocultural Theory
TA = Target Language
TC = Target Culture
USU = Utah State University
ZPD = Zone of Proximal Development

INTRODUCTION

This portfolio is a collection of my reflections and research papers related to language teaching and learning. It documents my journey of being in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program, gaining knowledge, awareness, and competence in teaching, while developing my professional identity as a second language (L2) teacher. Specifically, the portfolio includes my teaching philosophy and professional environment, reflections about observations of my own and others' teaching, and essays on a few issues related to language teaching. The topics I researched include collaborative writing (CW), heritage language learners' (HLLs') identity negotiation during study abroad (SA), and the Chinese refusal speech act.

The teaching philosophy statement reflects my understanding of my role as a teacher. I believe that learning is a life-long process and involves both social learning and personal reflections of the experiences. Learning a language involves more than just speaking the language fluently; it also requires an understanding of one's own culture as well as the target culture (TC). Learning can take place in many forms and multiliteracies open the door to more creative and interactive ways of learning. Consistent with my current teaching philosophy, I aspire to be a teacher who is dedicated to students' and her own growth, finds opportunities to help students reflect on their culture, cultural identities, and the TC, explores creative ways to teach the language, facilitates group activities, and creates space for individual reflections. My ultimate goal is for my students to develop autonomy and interest in learning Chinese and become more self-aware in this process. It is exciting to me that I can be a part of students' journeys of discovering the Chinese language, culture, and their identities. As I am constantly

learning from new experiences, my understanding will likely change over time. In Chinese, there is the old saying “生命不息，追求不止” (One’s pursuit never ends so far as life goes on); I would like to use it as an inspiration for both myself and my students.

TEACHING PERSPECTIVES

PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

As a native Chinese speaker, I would love to teach Chinese in the future. The ability to speak and teach the most spoken language in the world provides me opportunities to explore the world and help others develop an understanding of my native language and culture.

As for the population I plan to work with, my employment status in the future will likely affect this decision. As a licensed psychologist who currently works full-time, teaching Chinese is not my only career plan. After I graduate from the MSLT program, I envision myself providing one-on-one tutoring at home aside from my part-time or full-time job. I have always loved working with people individually and forming connections with them. Since language teaching is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor, a more personalized teaching format caters to students' individual needs in language development. In addition, working one-on-one and from home provides me a lot of flexibility in fulfilling my other personal as well as professional interests and responsibilities. If I were to provide one-on-one tutoring, I will be teaching learners of all ages. I have also toyed with the idea of opening a summer camp for young children with my local Chinese teacher friends. Either option allows me to fulfill the dream of teaching Chinese while also maintaining my professional identity as a psychologist.

Another possibility regarding my future language-teaching career is to teach young adults full-time in a foreign country outside the United States, whether it is through a university, community college, or private institution. Young adulthood is characterized by a lot of exciting changes and is a critical time for an individual's

development. For example, through my experiences of learning Japanese as a young adult, my understanding of different cultures deepened, and my identity further developed. In the past, I have worked with college students as a student leader, a teacher, and a psychotherapist. Through my personal growth that took place in college and the growth I have seen in others, I came to the conclusion that working with young adults in the future will likely be very rewarding to me. This portfolio includes principles of teaching that I learned through my personal experiences and education in the MSLT program and explores teaching practices (e.g., CW) in an L2 context, especially in teaching Chinese as an L2.

PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING STATEMENT

Reflecting on my own learning experiences, I realize that the teachers who influenced me the most taught me more than just content information. Rather, interactions with them helped me to develop my own understanding and identity, influenced me to form effective study habits, and encouraged me to embark on a journey of life-long learning. In this paper, I first discuss examples of how these teachers influenced me and my teaching philosophy and then share teaching principles that I learned through studying my L2 and taking classes in the MSLT program. In essence, the components that I describe below make up the pillars of my current teaching philosophy.

Experiential Learning and Learners' Self-Reflections

My teacher and previous supervisor who is a clinical psychologist worked with me in my early years of providing psychotherapy as a practicum student at a university counseling center. Speaking English as an L2 and being inexperienced, I struggled significantly with feeling confident about my ability to help others. Instead of telling me what to do, he encouraged me to look inward to understand my own experiences and helped me to develop an understanding of and appreciation for myself. Through this process, I learned self-acceptance, which is one of the core beliefs that guide my current clinical work. In this example, my teacher helped me to find my own answers instead of handing me solutions. This experience taught me the importance of encouraging learners' self-reflection and respecting their own development.

Kolb (1984, 2015) states that "Knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 49). Consistent with this notion, while a teacher has a responsibility to teach students certain factual knowledge and provide directions/feedback, a learner can

benefit from critically reflecting on their learning experiences and their thoughts, feelings, behaviors during the learning process, and searching for their own answers through experiential learning. A teacher can create a reflective space in the L2 classroom by asking thoughtful questions and providing students feedback, but this process can also happen outside of the L2 classroom.

Education is individualistic rather than a one-size-fits-all solution, and self-reflection personalizes learning for students. For example, learners need to determine for themselves which study strategies work best for them. In the context of SA, they need to navigate their foreigner identity and reconceptualize who they are. Given that there often exists a connection between learning a foreign language and the development of a unique identity associated with being multilingual (Henry, 2017), students' self-reflection in their learning processes can also contribute meaningfully to their identity development. These are difficult and critical issues, and the answers cannot be found without self-reflection of personal experiences.

Social Learning

My second example is from my experience working with my primary advisor of my doctoral research. After I submitted a draft of a literature review or a research paper, she would read my writings out loud with me and revise it while verbalizing her thinking process. Little did I know that this seemingly unnecessary process would transform my writing ability over time. The skill to polish a draft continues to benefit me in completing many writing tasks even after my graduation from the program.

The above example illustrates the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the principle of scaffolding. According to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural

theory (SCT), teachers' guidance transforms learners' knowledge and contributes to their development. Through this type of scaffolding, learners develop the ability to perform the same tasks eventually without the teacher's help. For some second language acquisition researchers, learning is "first social, then individual; first intermental, then intramental" (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2019, p. 319). Through intermental activities, such as interactions with a variety of mediators (humans, technologies), individuals' understanding is transformed. In the process of collaborating with others, learners co-construct knowledge instead of passively receiving information. They internalize psychological tools (e.g., problem-solving strategies) from engaging in social activities, and these tools are incorporated into their own cognitive resources. As such, intermental activities become intramental activities, and social experiences shape psychological development (Daniels, 2011). Therefore, as a teacher, I strive to generate a learning environment in which learners engage in learning through interactions with each other and with the teacher. To achieve this goal, I seek to plan and carry out meaningful task-based activities in my classroom that facilitate the internalization of psychological tools, such as role-playing and storytelling.

Life-long Learning and Motivation

My last example is about my Japanese teacher. Other than being skillful at teaching, he always remembered each student's name and patiently answered my email about selecting a Japanese name. He also speaks to his children at home in Japanese as a non-native speaker, which inspired me to apply language skills to my daily life outside the classroom. Through my interactions with him, I start to see language learning as an

ongoing process and a life-long journey. His example facilitates my reflection on the role motivation plays in education in general and specifically in language education.

Through personal experiences and observations of others, I learned that many people do not maintain their language skills and gradually their ability to use their L2 deteriorates. As far as I am concerned, developing motivation for life-long learning provides an effective way to prevent this phenomenon from happening. As Dörnyei (2019) points out, the L2 learning experience is an important part of the L2 Motivational Self System. It refers to “a range of situated, ‘executive’ motives related to the immediate learning environment,” which include “the impact of the L2 teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, and the experience of success” (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 88). As a language teacher, I believe that I can engage L2 learners on many levels and thus improve their motivation. For example, this could be achieved by establishing rapport with students, implementing learning tasks that facilitate the development of their interest in learning, and facilitating their involvement and sense of belonging in a community. In this community, students can connect with others and practice using the target language (TL). Among various aspects of an L2 learning experience, the most important one to me is the teacher’s interactions with students. Students can learn the most when they believe in themselves and feel valued, and as a teacher, it is my responsibility to create such conditions of learning. These conditions could be developed by the teacher’s displays of genuine care toward students as individuals, their learning, and their growth. The teacher can also lead by example by engaging in life-long learning himself/herself.

Communication Across Cultures

My own experiences learning English and Japanese and studying in the MSLT program helped me form additional principles of my teaching philosophy. Consistent with principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), my main goal for my students is to use the L2 to communicate and as a tool to understand culture, people, and the world. As language is a means of communication, I believe that helping L2 learners to communicate is of the utmost importance. Similarly, understanding cultural contexts and developing relationships with native speakers are also important aspects of learning. Language and culture are interconnected and learning about culture can make learning the L2 more purposeful, authentic, and real (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003). Developing an understanding of culture requires more than just acquiring cultural knowledge; cultural awareness (CA) is also an indispensable part of it. Belli (2018) states,

CA leads us to the recognition and understanding of the differences and similarities between our own culture and the other cultures that we observe and contributes to bridging the gap between these differences and building the atmosphere of tolerance and confidence among societies (p. 105).

Indeed, CA contributes to one's ability to accept and appreciate different cultures. Baker (2012) coined the term intercultural awareness (ICA) to reflect the need to "go beyond single cultural frames of reference in intercultural communication" (p. 67). According to his framework, learners need to recognize the "dynamic, diverse, and emergent" (p. 67) nature of culture. They need to possess cultural knowledge but also have awareness about the limits of such knowledge. For example, for global languages, such as English, which are not used primarily in only one nation/culture, learners need to understand the influence of culture on behaviors and communications from the specific

intercultural encounters, and the negotiated communications that happen between interlocutors (Baker, 2012).

In practice, teachers can facilitate students' development of ICA through a variety of ways. First, teachers can guide students to critically explore local and national cultures, recognize the diversity within each group, and the connection between local and global communities. Second, teachers can present local/national and foreign cultures in study materials and a variety of medias (e.g., films, television, magazines, emails, instant messaging) for students to examine, which will likely enrich their understanding of culture. Third, students can learn from "cultural informant (p. 69)"- teachers who have traveled overseas. Last, students can benefit from opportunities for face-to-face intercultural communications with non-local teachers and students (Baker, 2012). As noted above, ICA requires a deeper understanding of culture than simply cultural knowledge, and critical thinking is needed in this process. As a teacher, I can create these opportunities for students to acquire cultural knowledge and reflect on culture's influence. This could be achieved by using authentic texts, leading open discussions about cultural similarities/differences, and encouraging students to participate in cultural events.

Multiliteracies

Globalization and digitalization have changed our means of communication and teaching. The concept of multiliteracies as developed by New English Group (1996) emphasizes the inclusion of linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial meaning, and multimodal interactions in literacy pedagogy. The use of multiliteracies extends

classroom boundaries into digital space, supports diversity and connections across generations by including literatures from multiple languages and modes, facilitates learning through interactions via digital means, and incorporates play into learning (Lotherington, 2011). As Lotherington (2010) notes, while traditional literacies are “static, linear, paper-based” and “two-dimensional” (as cited in Lotherington, 2011, p. 227), digital literacies create a third dimension and allow for exciting and different ways of learning. For example, students can collaborate via wikis and practice the L2 through playing virtual games (e.g., massively multiplayer online role-playing games [MMORPGs]) online. Digital literacies also add a fourth dimension through their interactive nature. Well-structured study materials and activities are crucial in teaching and learning languages. The multiliteracies approach allows teachers to engage students in creative and fun ways, as well as preparing students to communicate in an ever-changing digital world. In my classroom, I plan to use a variety of media and interactive platforms to engage students and facilitate their communication with each other. I believe that this approach also increases students’ interest and motivation in learning their L2.

To conclude, I see language learning as similar to the creation of a painting. Just as one cannot paint without brushes or paints, teachers need to have a good foundation of knowledge and relevant tools (e.g., multiliteracies, language and cultural knowledge to meet students’ basic expectations) and fulfill their role as teachers. However, only providing the right equipment and instructions to students is not sufficient for them to create art themselves. As stated above, a student’s ability to reach their full potential lies far beyond merely learning skills to complete their tasks at hand. I appreciate teachers who helped me learn to be my own teacher and I would like to give my students the same

gift. I believe in helping L2 learners form their own learning habits and learning styles, development their commitment to life-long learning, and engage them in the learning process. There are, of course, certain skills L2 learners need to gain to perform (i.e., apply what they learned), but it is equally important that they make learning their own and find their own inspiration and motivation to continue developing their skills over the course of their lives.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TEACHING OBSERVATIONS

Observing others' classes is an important way to learn from others and reflect on and improve my own teaching. I learned tremendously from my previous teachers and peers that I observed. In the MSLT program, I have observed university beginner-level Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish classes and one 7th grade Chinese Dual Language Immersion (DLI) class. These observations helped me reflect on how my teaching philosophy would look in action, and the important elements I want to include in my future classroom.

Group Activities as a Way to Practice L2

During my observation of several classes, the teachers organized meaningful group activities for students to develop their L2. Students were given a scenario and asked to practice having a conversation with another student or a few other students. This kind of exercise allowed students to scaffold each other and learn from each other. I noticed that in a lot of these activities, students seemed relaxed to speak the language with their peers, as opposed to feeling embarrassed or shy. It seems that engaging in guided practices and role-plays using the L2 helped students gain confidence in speaking.

In some classes, the teacher asked students to practice speaking the language in small groups, and then ask for examples from each group. This approach gave students the opportunity to use their L2 with a few peers in a less anxiety-provoking environment and still learn from other groups.

However, practicing the L2 in groups could also go wrong quickly. For example, in a large Chinese DLI class I observed, the students were too distracted and disruptive to follow the teacher's instructions when asked to engage in a group task. While some students followed the instructions and patiently waited for others to come to their group, others just chatted in their first language (L1) or refused to move. This observation made me realize that some students need to be held accountable in these activities, and that working in groups is not necessarily more effective than working alone. While practicing the TL with classmates can be beneficial, group activities can become chaotic without sufficient supervision and accountability. This experience challenged me to take into account students' age and personality when designing classroom activities. Despite the benefits of having group activities, these activities can be time-consuming. In some classes that I observed, the teacher kept class as one group while creating opportunities for students to interact during a guided practice of the language. This seemed very efficient. As far as I am concerned, a combination of different activities can be refreshing and benefit learners with different learning styles.

Motivation and Interest

Students' motivation and interest in learning an L2 can largely affect their learning. How does a teacher increase students' motivation and interest in learning? In a Spanish class I observed, the teacher achieved this by bringing his playful personality

into his class. He organized a game that required students to team up with another classmate and take turns translating English sentences into Spanish. In each round, the team was given an opportunity to toss a paper ball to a trash can if they translated the sentence correctly and the total scores of each team were calculated in the end. During the demonstration, the teacher himself failed to throw the paper ball into the trash can, and he made fun of his failed attempt. Everyone seemed very relaxed and enjoying the process of learning. This fun activity and the teacher's use of humor allowed students to enjoy the class and thus became more engaged in their learning.

Another simple, yet important, way to keep students motivated is the connection between the teacher and the student. I have observed many teachers' examples in addressing students by their names, giving them encouragement and compliments, and showing their care for each individual. In contrast, I have had teachers who appeared to care more about students' work/grades than the individual students. As a result, students spoke about their learning experience negatively, even though they have learned a lot in the class. Being motivated by fear, they are likely to not associate learning the subject with positive emotions in the long run. Because of this, positive teacher-student interactions are so important. When students have positive experiences with learning, I believe that these positive experiences serve to motivate students, even after they have moved on from a particular L2 class.

Cultural Knowledge and Cultural Awareness

Language and culture are interconnected and learning about culture can make learning the L2 more purposeful, authentic, and real (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003). Savvidou and Economidou-Koetsidis (2019) distinguished the "hidden layers" (e.g.,

values, politeness, beliefs, attitudes) from the “visible layers” (e.g., food, festivals, habits) (p. 53) of culture. The surface level of culture often displays differences. In contrast, addressing the “hidden layers” allows us to see the similarities within differences and understand culture deeper by developing CA. CA plays an important role and contributes to one’s ability to accept and appreciate different cultures. Although it is different from knowledge about culture, it can be facilitated in reflecting on cultural knowledge and intercultural exchanges.

In the Japanese class I observed, the teacher seamlessly incorporated teaching Japanese culture into classroom activities. For example, she asked students to use a specific grammatical structure in Japanese to discuss their prior experiences with a list of activities. The activities included Japanese cultural products, such as Kabuki (traditional Japanese drama) and onsen (hot springs). The inclusion of these culture-specific activities allows students to learn about Japanese culture in the process of learning Japanese grammar... In my own experience learning English, cultural knowledge and awareness were not emphasized, contributing to my difficulty adjusting to the United States upon arrival. Without sufficient cultural knowledge and CA, it is very difficult to form connections with those from the TC and feel included in that community. Therefore, I am committed to teach culture and help students accept and appreciate different cultures in my teaching. While this can be a challenge for beginning language classes, I believe that it is possible if one incorporates cultural facts into activities, uses authentic study material, and nurtures students’ CA by creating opportunities for students to reflect on culture(s).

Conclusion

Through these observations, I learned a lot from other teachers' teaching styles and class activities. I also realized that there is more than one way of being an effective L2 teacher. While I can incorporate a variety of activities from other teachers, I need to make them my own according to who I am as a teacher and what I believe about teaching. For example, in my co-teaching experience of CHIN 1020, I learned to explain Chinese characters based on the radicals from my co-teacher. When I explained words, I also try to go beyond that and provide some kind of mnemonics or witty examples to help students memorize. In this class, the two of us both value group activities but structured them in different ways. For example, my co-teacher had more small-group activities and I chose to conduct the same exercises in big groups with a few students participating and the rest learning by observing.

The best part of observing others' classes, to me, is to reflect on my teaching and my professional identity. It is the key to continuing development of my teaching competence.

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

LANGUAGE PAPER

The Art of Chinese Refusals: Research Review and Cross-Cultural Comparison

Orientation and Reflection

This paper was originally written for LING 6820 L2 Pragmatics taught by Dr. Karin deJonge-Kannan. For this project, we were asked to research a speech act in our TL and I selected the speech act of making refusals in Chinese. I have noticed that people from different cultures approach social situations differently, yet teaching social norms are often not an emphasis in the L2 classroom. Consistent with my belief that communication is the primary purpose of teaching languages, and learners need to communicate in culturally appropriate ways, teaching pragmatics is a key to their success in social interactions using their L2. Influenced by traditional cultural values, the Chinese tend to be very careful about making refusals because they are face threatening. Other factors, such as the political environment and power differences inherited in the Chinese society, also contribute to this careful interpersonal approach. In this paper, I compared the realization of the refusal speech act in Chinese and non-Chinese contexts to deepen my understanding of this speech act and explore ways to best teach it in a Chinese L2 classroom.

From researching this topic, I came to understand that avoiding conflicts in social interactions, even when considered culturally appropriate, could cause frustration in others (Pan, 2012). When the interlocutors are not on the same page about the communication, it is often ineffective. In Pan's study, participants avoided direct refusals at all costs, yet this indirectness was seen as being uncooperative. In the case of ostensible refusals, interlocutors can only engage in the "dance" between them if they both understand the real intent behind their words. These situations are complex and

require a substantial amount of cultural knowledge and awareness to successfully navigate. From reading existing studies, I learned the importance of teaching L2 learners how to perform speech acts in culturally appropriate ways and developing the flexibility in choosing their approach according to the context. In general, the Chinese tend to use indirect refusals more often and support their refusals with extrinsic reasons, such as pre-existing commitments with family. In making refusals, the Chinese tend to go at great length to protect their interlocuter's face. Having a conceptual understanding of basic principles in Chinese refusals and common refusal strategies is very crucial in Chinese L2 education. Without this understanding, learners may end up using grammatically correct sentences to offend the locals.

To me, this paper highlighted the differences between individualism and collectivism worldviews. Teaching speech acts is not only about the *how* but also the *why*. In order for students to develop ICA they need to compare and contrast beliefs and practices from different cultures. As a teacher, I would like to include activities that facilitate the development of their awareness as well as those that focus on practice. I also believe that the use of multimodal input can provide great materials for discussions in teaching speech acts. While reading relevant literature, I encountered a study that discussed refusal strategies used in a Chinese dating reality show. Although this article was not included in this paper, it provides me ideas about how to use authentic video clips to achieve the purpose of contrasting the realization of speech acts in different cultures.

Abstract

Teaching an L2 involves teaching pragmatic knowledge that is specific to its culture context. Without pragmatic competence, an L2 learner is at best a “fluent fool” (Bennett, 1997) who “speaks a foreign language well but does not understand the social and philosophical content of that language” (p. 16). Making refusals is a face-threatening act and therefore a delicate art. L2 learners will need to understand the Chinese culture as well as master language skills in order to successfully perform this art. This paper first discusses the influence of culture on making refusals and then examines studies that investigate refusal strategies used in Chinese and non-Chinese-speaking contexts. It aims to explore patterns in Chinese refusals and provide implications for teaching.

Keywords: Chinese refusals, cross-cultural comparison, L2, pragmatics

Zhongyong, which is commonly translated as *Doctrine of the Mean*, is a traditional Chinese philosophy from Confucianism (Yau, 1988). Under the influence of *zhongyong*, the Chinese believe in self-regulating passions and impulses, so that they can achieve internal harmony. The socially oriented Chinese tend to be conforming in their responses and prefer to be implicit in interpersonal communications to maintain harmonious relationships with people. This emphasizes the significance of *face* in the Chinese society. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), “[Face is] the public image that every member wants to claim for himself” (p. 311). For the Chinese, face concerns “a person’s dignity and prestige” (Wei, 2013, p. 64). As Li (2014) posits, the Chinese tend to be reluctant to turn people down and sensitive to preserve the other person’s face (*liumianzi*) if they have to decline an offer. In doing so, they also leave a way out for themselves (*liuhoulu*) (Zhang, 2012). In the hierarchical Chinese society, this reflects Chinese people’s modesty about themselves and generosity toward others, especially those in a higher social status (Wei, 2013). This is also a reflection of the collectivistic nature of Chinese society. Compared to individualistic cultures, such as the United States, collectivistic cultures tend to emphasize welfare of the group instead of the individual (Liao & Bresnahan, 1996). In Chinese culture, one’s relationship with others sometimes take precedence over one’s own needs and desires.

Politeness is an important aspect of social interactions in Chinese culture. This means being aware of others and their needs and not taking social relationships for granted. *Renqingzhai* (relationship debt) reflects this concept. If one is often on the receiving end in a relationship, this individual will end up owing *renqingzhai* and cause the relationship to be unbalanced. In discussing requests and refusals in Chinese, it is

important to keep this concept in mind. Navigating requests and refusals is a balancing act. As described above, making refusals presents a dilemma to the Chinese. Specifically, accepting invitations may end up in *renqingzhai* that need to be repaid and refusing an invitation may not be socially acceptable. It is a delicate art for native (L1) speakers and L2 learners alike.

Studies on Chinese refusal strategies typically focus on the refusal strategies used, as well as factors such as social status and social distance and their effect on participants' use of refusal strategies. A few studies have compared the realization of refusal speech acts in Chinese and American cultures. This paper will take a close look at those studies, summarize their findings, and provide pedagogical implications.

General Findings

Indirect vs. Direct Strategies

Multiple studies indicate that the Chinese tend to be indirect in their approach to refusals (Guo, 2012; Hong, 2011; Lin, 2014). Guo (2012) used a modified version of a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) to collect responses from Chinese undergraduate students and teachers and American English-speaking undergraduate students and teachers. The DCT presents eight situations with different social distance and social power relationships between interlocuters and elicits participants' response. The author found that both Chinese and American participants prefer using indirect refusal strategies over direct strategies. American participants, however, used more direct strategies than Chinese participants on average. Lin (2014) investigated differences between Chinese and English refusals by collecting data from three groups: native speakers of Chinese (NSCs) in Taiwan, Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Taiwan, and

native speakers of English (NSEs) in the United States. The NSE and EFL groups read and completed a DCT in English and the NSCs filled it out in Chinese. All groups were found to favor indirect refusals and no significant differences in preferred refusal types were found between the three groups. Participants were found to favor the strategy of negative willingness/ability (e.g., “I cannot make it”) more than providing a direct refusal (i.e., saying no). Hong’s study (2011) compared NSEs’ and NSCs’ refusal strategies in rejecting a professor’s invitation to a New Year’s Day party. Similar to Guo, Hong’s study demonstrates that NSEs used more direct refusals than NSCs.

The results from these studies show a clear trend that NSCs favor indirect refusal strategies. In contrast, while a majority of NSEs also tend to use indirect strategies, some of them chose direct strategies in making refusals in the studies reviewed. Overall, more NSEs use direct strategies than NSCs. Although the difference between the two groups’ use of refusal strategies was not statistically significant in one study listed, the above pattern was observed throughout various studies.

Formula for Refusals

In Liao and Bresnahan’s (1996) study, a formula Chinese people used to refuse an invitation is to address the interlocutor by title, use a politeness marker of apology, and then offer reasons. In contrast, American English speakers tend to express positive opinions (e.g., “I would love to”), reasons for refusal, and politeness markers of an apology. Liao and Bresnahan point out that the Chinese do not typically say “I’d love to” or use other expressions to convey positive opinions about an invitation, because in their collective mind, they may be pressured to comply if they were to express positive opinions.

Hong (2011) claims that both NSCs and NSEs commonly use apology and explanation in refusals but differ in their use of other strategies. While NSCs use explanations as the head act in their indirect refusals, most NSEs choose to use explanations as supportive moves to their direct refusals. The following examples illustrate this difference:

NSC: What an unfortunate coincidence (expressing regret)! I planned to spend New Year's Eve with my aunt (explanation 1). We don't see each other very often, and the New Year is the best opportunity for us to spend time together (explanation 2). Thanks for your invitation (thanking), Professor Li (addressing with title). I wish you (polite 'you') a happy New Year (greeting)! (p. 126)

NSE: Thanks for your invitation (thanking), but I am going to a football game (explanation), so I can't come (direct refusal). (p. 127)

Lin (2014) argues that NSCs tend to state their reasons before expressing negative unwillingness/ability (e.g., "I have something important to do. Thus, I have no time to go there.") (p. 648) In contrast, NSEs often express a statement of regret before offering reasons (e.g., "Sorry, I have a lot to cover today!") (p. 648). Chinese EFL learners in the study showed a similar pattern as NSEs but overly used "adjunct + but + head act."

These studies fail to come to an agreement about a formula for Chinese refusals; however, they provide important information about the basic structure of a Chinese refusal. As shown in the examples, Chinese refusals may include expressing negative willingness but do not typically involve saying no directly. While other factors discussed in the sections below can affect the specific structure being used, in general, learners need to learn to offer reasons and use politeness markers of apology in making refusals.

Most Commonly Used Strategies

Provide Reasons

Both Chinese L1 speakers and American English L1 speakers tend to use reasons as part of their refusal speech (Cai, 2011; Liao & Bresnahan, 1996; Lin, 2014). As Liao and Bresnahan state, native Chinese speakers opt to express the existence of “a compelling extrinsic force” (p. 725) to support their refusal. By doing so, they suggest that they are helpless and the refusal is not their choice. Cai (2011) and Hong’s (2011) studies support this finding. After analyzing NSCs’ and NSEs’ responses in various scenarios and investigating patterns and factors affecting their refusal strategies, Cai reports that Chinese students tend to provide reasons about their parents, family, or work to justify their inability to accept the invitation/request. These reasons are external to them and suggest that it is not their desire to not come. It is culturally inappropriate to express unwillingness to go or even provide personal reasons (e.g., “I am busy.”). Hong’s study shows that NSCs used family reunions and meeting friends as reasons to refuse an invitation, which serves to minimize the imposition on the interlocuter. It is concluded that NSCs are more sensitive to preserve the professor’s face by providing more “genuine reasons” (p. 132) that are specific and detailed and use more refusal strategies in their indirect refusals than NSEs. In Lin’s (2014) study, the most commonly used refusal strategies were also excuse/reason/explanation. Both NSEs and NSCs used unspecific reasons in this study, while Chinese EFL learners used a balanced amount of unspecific and specific reasons. Reasons about family matters and one’s own health issues were commonly used by native Chinese speakers and Chinese EFL students, but not native English speakers.

Use Principles as Reasons

After analyzing NSCs' and NSEs' responses, Cai (2011) came to the conclusion that NSEs tend to use principles as a reason for direct refusal, while Chinese do not tend to use this strategy. For example, NSEs may explain to others that their principle is that they never lend others their car, therefore others cannot borrow it. In Chinese culture, this type of refusal is not very common. Similar to Cai, Guo (2012) found that the Chinese do not tend to state their principles as a refusal strategy.

Other Strategies

Lin (2014) states that NSCs use the softening device of *keneng* (may) in their refusals. For instance, one NSC said “I may not be able to go” (p. 646). For NSCs, other commonly used strategies include addressing with title, expressing thanks, apologizing, stating alternatives, indirect complaint, exclamation, and expressing regret (Guo, 2012; Hong, 2011).

In conclusion, providing specific and detailed reasons is an important part of making a refusal in Chinese. These reasons are often about family, work, friends, and one's health issues, and caused by “a compelling extrinsic force” (Liao & Bresnahan, p. 725). Expressing one's unwillingness to go or using personal reasons (e.g., “I plan to watch a movie tonight.”) are not considered culturally appropriate.

Factors that Affect Refusal Types and Strategies

Social Status and Social Distance

NSCs are sensitive to social status and tend to use more indirect strategies and/or mitigating devices with those in higher social status (Cai, 2011; Guo, 2012). In these social interactions, the Chinese tend to soften the tone of their speech by using more

mitigating devices and various refusal strategies. In doing so, they avoid threatening the face of the listener. In contrast, they opt to not provide explicit reasons for their refusal to those from a lower social status (Guo, 2012).

Higher social distance is associated with fewer refusal strategies or more impoliteness (Cai, 2011). As found in Liao and Bresnahan's (1996) study, for NSCs, refusing their family's requests is the most difficult, while for Americans, family and friends' requests are both difficult to reject. Teachers, on the other hand, are easy to reject by both groups. In Lin's (2014) study, NSCs provided specific reasons of their refusal to their boss while NSEs and Chinese EFL learners groups provided specific reasons to friends. This reflects cultural differences in perceived social statuses of and social distances between specific groups. While Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) learners from various countries of origin show competence in adapting refusal strategies to match the interlocuter's social statuses and social distance, they perform the refusal act most successfully with peers, compared to interactions with those who have lower or higher social status (Liu & Chang, 2018). This finding suggests that it is important to teach learners to perform appropriate refusal acts in various contexts, with interlocuters from various social statuses and social distance.

As illustrated above, social status and social distance largely affect the realization of the refusal speech act. Specifically, Chinese people tend to be more careful and use more refusal strategies or mitigating devices when declining an offer from those with a higher social status. Regarding social distance, the Chinese find it more difficult to reject invitations or offers from those in a closer social distance, such as family. Therefore, learners need to be sensitive to social status and social distance when making refusals.

Other Contextual Factors

Li's (2013) study investigates Chinese and American English-speaking students' response to being invited to a meal. Being invited to a meal by the opposite gender sometimes indicates romantic interest, therefore it is different from other invitations. Approximately 95.49% Chinese students refused the invitation, compared to 61.29% American students. This was explained by Chinese students' tendency to avoid leaving *renqingzhai* (relationship debt)—feeling obliged to accept their follow-up request (e.g., meeting up again, developing a romantic relationship) because of being treated to a meal. This explains why a majority of Chinese participants preferred to refuse the invitation directly. In contrast, Americans showed a higher rate of accepting the invitation, even if they were not interested in a romantic relationship. One participant said, “Yes, I’m in grad school, I’m insane to turn down free food” (p. 118). When they did decline, their refusals seemed more direct and straightforward. The author concludes that Chinese speakers, especially female participants, tend to protect the speaker’s positive face by using very indirect reasons to refuse this invitation (e.g., “Unfortunately, today I have plans with my classmate, next time”) (p. 117). Americans tend to consider their negative face as well as the other person’s positive face and give more straightforward reasons (e.g., “I am sorry I do not feel that way about you”) (p.118). Some American participants added conditions to their acceptance, such as “I’m not interested in anything other than a dinner” (p. 117) which shows their individualistic considerations, while the only Chinese participant who added a condition stated “Alright, let’s go Dutch” (p. 117) which came from consideration for others. Another finding is that a higher percentage of Chinese participants (48.65%) apologized for turning down the invitation than American

participants (10.75%). This study illustrates that Chinese politeness may take many forms, and contexts need to be taken into consideration when determining what is appropriate.

Facework in refusals is sometimes not about politeness and more about achieving an interactional goal in the social exchange. In fact, facework in indirect refusals can be seen as being impolite. Pan (2012) interviewed 24 recent Chinese immigrants about their willingness to participate in a government survey. The results show that participants used a clear “yes” to give a positive answer but avoided saying “no” directly. Some participants used “maybe” as a “no”, some gave ambiguous answers, and some listed excuses that they could not go.

Interviewer (I): After you read it (survey brochure), if you were selected to participate in the American Community Survey, would you participate?

Respondent (R): It is difficult to participate because my English is not good.

I: If we provide you with Chinese materials, would you participate?

R: I'm old, and my energy is low. My language is not good, and I can't drive.

I: Then what if we mail the materials to your house?

R: (I) still can't do it, because I have to take care of kids. (p. 66)

In the above example, the respondent did not indicate his unwillingness to participate, but used various excuses to turn down the request. The author concludes that the respondent may be very uncomfortable with direct refusals, especially since government workers have absolute power in traditional Chinese society and refusing someone representing a government agency is a face-threatening act. Some participants used “I don't know” to respond to the question. For example, they said “Because I don't

know what your survey will ask, I'm afraid that I can't answer (the questions)" (p. 68) and "Eh, I don't know if he is really a Census Bureau representative. I don't know" (p. 69). Feeling the pressure to "say the right thing" (p. 70) to the interviewer, most participants used indirect refusals to reduce the perceived threat of refusals, however, this may be seen as "uncooperative" or "impolite" to the hearer, especially one who is from a different cultural background (p. 71). This study has implications for intercultural communications. When we communicate with people from different cultures, we may need to adjust our responses or questions to get the right message across.

Ostensible vs. Genuine Refusals

Ostensible refusals, which are also called ritual refusals, is "a polite act to indicate the speaker's consideration of the hearer" (Chen et al., 1995, p. 152). Often used in everyday situations involving invitations/offers, ostensible refusals function to increase politeness and test the intent of the initiator. Su's (2020) study examines the difference linguistic features of genuine (substantive) and ostensible (ritual) refusals. The main findings include that genuine refusals are often delayed, and elaborated reasons are included to mitigate the impact of this face-threatening act; on the other hand, ostensible refusals are seen as pre-acceptance, and they are not delayed. The following example illustrates the characteristics of an ostensible refusal.

A: Please come for dinner tomorrow.

B: Probably not. It's too much trouble.

A: No trouble at all. Dishes are all ready-made.

B: But you still need to cook them.

A: Even if you don't come, we need to eat. You must come, or I'll feel offended.

B: Ok. Just simple dishes. (p. 3)

As shown above, the hearer and the speaker both understand the insecurity of the refusal. Therefore, it is a polite act, instead of a genuine refusal. Ostensible refusals could be realized through a single-turn, or repeated declination and offer. Su (2020) states that “speakers observe the rule of *keqi* (politeness; courtesy) by acknowledging both the motivation for and the cost of the invitation or offer when relevant, whether they intend to reject or accept it ultimately” (p. 14). It is not surprising that this other-oriented politeness act is found in the collectivistic Chinese culture.

Negative Transfer

Multiple studies have observed the occurrence of negative transfer in CFL learners (Hong, 2011; Liu & Chang, 2018). Liu and Chang (2018) studied the refusal strategies used by Chinese students and CFL learners using a written DCT. They conclude that their results showed L1 transfer—CFL learners from Eastern countries use refusal strategies in their L1 and Western CFL learners also displayed the tendency of negative transfer from their L1. For example, Western CFL learners in the study used personal reasons (e.g., “I am busy”) to refuse a request and this is known as a common refusal strategy used in Western countries. They point out that these CFL learners did not seem to understand the point of *diandaoweizhi* (marginally touching the point) (Liao & Breshnahan, 1996, p. 724) in making refusals, which refers to the phenomenon that a negative expression (e.g., “No I cannot”) is omitted and often implied by utterances that could end the awkward situation quickly and maintain politeness (e.g. “I am sorry. I don’t have a watch”). Coming to the same conclusion that non-native Chinese speakers may have experienced negative transfer from their L1, Hong (2011) posits that pragmatics are

often overlooked and suggests that pragmatics interventions and explicit cultural annotations should be included in L2 classrooms. Zhang (2012) also concludes that a lack of language ability, cultural knowledge, and pragmatic transfer all contribute to learners' difficulty in using appropriate refusal strategies. As noted above, negative transfer from L1 can lead to failures in L2 pragmatics and therefore needs to be addressed in L2 classrooms.

Conclusion and Implications

Eslami (2010) claims that "Although different cultures may share similar refusal strategies, the choice of directness, mitigation and the reasons for refusing may vary across cultures" (p. 221). The review above indicates that Chinese refusals tend to be indirect and supplemented with genuine and detailed reasons concerning external factors (e.g., commitments made with family) instead of personal factors (e.g., "I am busy."). Often, interlocutors do not indicate their unwillingness or inability to accept; their reasons have conveyed this meaning. This is referred to as *diandaoweizhi* (marginally touching the point) (Liao & Breshnahan, 1996, p. 724). Recognizing the differences between ostensible and genuine refusals is also important, as this is a way of showing politeness and violating the unwritten social rules can result in misunderstanding and harm interpersonal relationships.

As Zhang (2012) suggests, L2 learners need to gain awareness of pragmatics and learn to understand their own and the TC. Given the prevalence of negative transfer from L1, learners need CA to act appropriately in their L2. In addition, learners need to understand how factors of age, gender, social distance, and social status affect refusal speech acts, as well as taking specific contexts into consideration while performing the

refusal speech act. In terms of specific activities, Eslami (2010) has suggested two types of activities to teach refusal speech acts: activities that raise pragmatic awareness and activities that provide interactive practice in communication. The key is to help learners understand what is culturally appropriate and recognize the purpose of communication.

CULTURE PAPER

Chinese Heritage Language Learners' Identity Negotiation in Study Abroad: A Research
Proposal

Orientation and Reflection

This paper was originally written for LING 6010 Research in L2 Learning, a class taught by Dr. Abdulkafi Albirini. In his class, I presented a research article that discussed the topic of identity development and it made me interested in exploring learners' identities in an L2 context in more depth. Duff (2010) defined L2 socialization as "the acquisition of linguistic, pragmatic and other cultural knowledge through social experience [which] is often equated with the development of cultural and communicative competence" (p. 427). Through L2 socialization, students not only become more successful L2 learners with improved cultural understanding and language skills, but also gain knowledge about who they are and how they approach various situations in the context of their L2. As stated in my teaching philosophy, I believe that it is important for L2 learners to engage in experiential learning and reflect on their experiences critically. I have personally gained a lot of understanding of myself through studying and living in the United States, and I believe that many others share this experience.

In this paper, I specifically focus on Chinese HLL's identity negotiation process. While looking into this topic, I realize that power and privilege can largely influence an L2 learner's experience during their SA experience. Even in teaching an L2 or training L2 teachers, I found that the topic of social power and oppression is not often discussed. However, the above factors are an indispensable part of intercultural communication between L2 learners and the target community. For example, as discussed in the literature review below, assumptions that people hold about certain aspects of others' identities likely come into play in social exchanges. Therefore, effective communication across cultures requires learning about oneself and one's place in a given society. I personally

believe that teaching language and culture cannot be separated from reflecting on various identities that each individual carries and the impact of those identities on their experiences.

From writing this paper, I become more aware of the challenges presented in HLLs' identity negotiation during their SA journey. While I believe that L2 socialization is crucial to learners' development of a sense of linguistic/cultural knowledge and personal identity, simply putting them in an environment that uses the TL is far from enough. Instead, educators need to carefully examine the SA site, available local support, and prepare L2 learners for the challenges ahead of them.

As an L2 teacher, I think one of my strengths is my own immersive experience being in a different culture and finding myself through my experiences. While many international students see their SA as a temporary journey, mine has been a longer journey during which I have been trying to establish a sense of community and home. From this unique standpoint, I have tackled my identity negotiation as well as the societal challenges I face, such as microaggressions and racism. I do not intend to make my classroom into a storytelling space. However, I would like to help students understand the complexity within themselves and in the society/culture that they will be a part of. I do not want my students to hold an idealistic and stereotypical view of the TC or the local people. Instead, I want to present culture in an authentic way that is rich, complex, subjective, diverse, and multifaceted.

Abstract

As identity is fluid and changes according to contexts, SA experiences often involve negotiating one's identity. HLLs, due to their "bilingual" and "bicultural" (Marijuan & Sanz, 2018, p. 192) nature, have been found to face unique challenges and opportunities during SA programs (Shively, 2016). This study will examine Chinese HLLs' experiences of identity negotiation during their SA experiences in mainland China and factors affecting this process. Using the grounded theory framework, this study will interview 10 Chinese HLLs before, during, and after their SA journey in mainland China. This study will contribute to the field of racial identity development and research, as well as provide insight for educators to help prepare HLLs in their SA experience.

Keywords: Heritage Language Learners, Study Abroad, Identity Negotiation

SA provides L2 learners a unique opportunity to immerse themselves into the host culture and language. This type of immersion experience has been found to be associated with language and cultural learning and overall growth in L2 learners (Kinging, 2011; Marijuan & Sanz, 2018). Bennett (2012) states that SA provides a context for intercultural learning, which was defined as “[a]cquiring increased awareness of subjective cultural context (worldview), including one’s own, and developing greater ability to interact sensitively and competently across cultural contexts as both an immediate and long-term effect of exchange” (Bennett, 2009). He explains that this involves developing “cultural awareness” of one’s own and the TCs, and further developing it into “intercultural sensitivity and competence” (p. 4). For these reasons, many L2 learners participate in SA.

Kinging (2011) points out the importance of preparing L2 learners for the SA experience, as some students had “undistinguished achievement” (p. 59)—they did not show significant improvement in their L2 fluency and proficiency in the study—despite being exposed to this ideal learning environment. Whether the preparation focuses on language proficiency or social engagement with the host communities, the purpose is to help learners adapt to their host environment and thus make the most of their journey abroad. SA research has focused on various factors affecting this experience, including cognitive abilities, gender, age, race/ethnicity, personality traits, motivation, and the host environment (Marijuan & Sanz, 2018). Studying these factors not only sheds light on how to maximize this learning experience, but also provides information on how to recruit more minority students in SA programs, who have been shown to be underrepresented in SA programs (Brux & Fry, 2010). Brux and Fry (2010) propose

“diversifying SA” (p. 509) by including ethnic or racial minorities into the SA program. They argue that making SA programs more inclusive not only brings advantage to minority students themselves, but also benefits those around them—their peers, their local and host environment, even the global community. They cite Cressy (2005), who claims that “[t]hrough interactions between and among diverse groups of U.S. Americans, students can help one another progress in their various stages of identity development” (p. 1). This provides a rationale for conducting SA research and including students from diverse background in SA programs.

Research has shown that SA experiences often involve the process of negotiating one’s identity, which happens in contexts of unequal power relations (Kinging, 2013). Identity negotiation involves how an individual chooses to interpret the social, cultural, and linguistic practices of their host communities (Kinging, 2013). In the SA context, it often includes re-examining one’s national, “foreigner,” gender, and racial/ethnic identities (Kinging, 2013). The phenomenon of identity negotiation can be explained by the post-structural theory of identity, which suggests that identity is fluid and can change when an individual is exposed to different contexts (Trentman, 2015). HLLs have been found to face unique challenges and opportunities during SA due to their heritage learner identity (Burgo, 2018; Jing-Schmidt, Chen, & Zhang, 2016; Moreno, 2009; Shively, 2016; Trentman, 2015). Being both “bilingual” and “bicultural” (Marijuan & Sanz, 2018, p. 192), HLLs experience “dual socialization” and share a “complicated identity formation and negotiation” process (Moreno, 2009, p. 27). As Jing-Schmidt, Chen, and Zhang (2016) state, a majority of existing research on linguistic and identity development in SA focuses on Americans as a homogeneous group. Existing literature also indicates a

lack of research on the effect of race or ethnicity on L2 learners' SA journey (Kinging, 2013; Marijuan & Sanz, 2018). Even fewer studies have focused specifically on Chinese HLLs' identity negotiation process during their SA experience.

Because of a lack of research investigating Chinese HLLs' identity negotiation process, it was unclear how these individuals approach the unique challenges and opportunities they encounter during their SA experiences and how these experiences affect their understanding and development of their own identity. Therefore, this study focuses on Chinese HLLs' experiences studying abroad in mainland China, with the purpose of understanding their identity negotiation process.

Literature Review

Identity and SA

Norton (2000) defined identity as "How a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future." (p. 5). Identity is fluid, multiple (Darvin & Norton, 2015), and constantly changing according to different contexts (Trentman, 2015). In this sense, identity is "negotiated" (Duff, 2012), and "[i]t is only through the Other that 'we' can establish our identity, through what we are not" (Meinhof & Galasinski, 2005, p. 8).

Research has shown a relationship between changes in one's sense of identity and the experience of studying abroad. Kinginger (2013) asserts that one's perception of who they are in the environment and their interpretation of various aspects of the host environment can significantly affect how they interact with others and their overall

experience abroad. Prior research that focused on identity and SA showed that some students' national identity was reinforced during SA (Du, 2015; Kinginger, 2013) and some "recoil into a sense of national superiority" (Kinger, p. 342), especially when faced with frustration in intercultural exchanges. In addition to the development of one's "national identity," Du (2015) also shows that students have different reactions to their newly developed "foreigner identity." While some students were flattered, others felt frustrated toward the unwanted attention that accompanies their "foreigner identity." However, the students in Du's study reported being able to defend themselves and deflect the unwanted attention, while taking advantage of the opportunities this identity brought.

In the context of learning a second language, Harder (1980) mentions the concept of a "reduced personality," which refers to an L2 learner's inability to "define his/her place" in social interactions due to their learner identity and language barriers. Indeed, many sojourners expressed the feeling that they could not be who they are in various social contexts while studying abroad (Li et al., 2017). The interactions mentioned by participants in Li et al.'s study ranged from having phone conversations with customer services to understanding jokes and sharing personal experiences in graduate-level classes. The theme of the interviews was a sense of loss and the difficulty of fitting in. Moreno (2009) also echoes the finding of a sense of loss among L2 learners and mentions that they tend to feel like a child because of their lack of language proficiency.

Race and SA

The impact of race on SA experiences manifests in many ways. Kubota (2016) posits that racial prejudice, though "rarely documented" (p. 350), plays a part in SA. For example, a family in Japan that is involved in a homestay program with a Canadian

school is likely to expect to host a White student instead of a Chinese Canadian student. Conversely, a student on SA in Canada may expect to stay with a White native English-speaking family as opposed to a non-white family of immigrants.

As identity is fluid and constantly changing according to social contexts, it is not surprising that social constructs such as gender and race affect the identity negotiation process in SA (Kinging, 2013; Marijuan & Sanz, 2018). Using critical race theory, Goldoni (2017) explores a Black American male student's SA experience in Valencia, Spain. Goldoni discusses how the student's "race, ethnicity, and class" shaped his "language and culture learning" and social experiences, and its effects on his "identity negotiation" (p. 328). During his stay, he was once called a "runaway slave" on a train and stopped twice by police for no reason. He also felt that Spaniards looked down upon him and his cultural background as Dominicans were portrayed in the media as having low SES and speaking "weird Spanish" (p. 333). As a result of his experiences of racism, this student disengaged from the host community and reported less progress in the language than he would like to, and his identity shifted from an "actor" to a "spect-actor" and a "spectator" (p. 335). He wanted to abandon his program due to "racial battle fatigue," which is defined as "the result of constant physiological, psychological, cultural, and emotional coping with racial microaggressions in-less-than-ideal and racially hostile or unsupportive environments" (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007, p. 555). Goldoni concludes that "programs designed to explicitly address racism" may be a better fit for this student (Minikel- Lacocque, 2013, p. 460), as they offer more support from a team who are more involved in addressing issues related to race, ethnicity, and racism. This study delineates a male Black student's experience of racism and discrimination due to his race in a SA

context and suggests that students of color may struggle during SA experiences in host countries that lack cultural diversity or acceptance.

In contrast with the negative experiences reported in Goldoni's (2017) study, Lee and Green's (2016) study shows more positive experiences of four Black American students' SA experience in South Africa, where a majority of the population is Black. Through analyzing qualitative data, they conclude that these students benefited from SA. Specifically, they report having a better understanding of their racial identity, having more clarity regarding their academic interests/goals, and gaining experience in conducting research. This research illustrates that it is a student's perceived minority status in the host country instead of their race alone that determines how others see and interact with them during SA.

Some research has documented how others' perceptions of an individual's in-group/out-group status shape their experiences abroad. For example, in Du's (2015) research, one Korean-heritage participant who had lived in both Korea and the United States had a unique experience during her SA in China. Her journey of negotiating identity differed from many others because of her Asian appearance and personal history of living in different countries. Anya's (2011) study of four African American students who studied abroad in Salvador, Brazil also shed light on the uniqueness of these minority students' experiences studying abroad. This study found that participants reported an enhanced sense of safety and belonging because they could "pass" as locals in Brazil. Both studies suggested that sharing the same race with the host culture affects students' experience abroad as well as their identity negotiation process.

While a group of foreign students may all be perceived as outsiders in the host country, the host community's attitudes toward them could differ depending on their position of power. In Pulsifer, Feagan, and Sliwinski's (2020) study, a group of seven White students and four students of color went on a SA trip to El Salvador. One student shared the experience that their White peers were recognized by the host while they did not, after a service program they provided together. This may be because White foreign students were perceived to be superior than minority foreign students by the host culture. These frequent and subtle discriminatory encounters explained why White SA students often fail to 'see race' (i.e., gain awareness of their Whiteness), but students of color display more awareness of their "racialized identities" (Pulsifer, Feagan, & Sliwinski, 2020, p. 69).

A closer look at existing literature suggests that race is a very relevant factor in SA research and it affects L2 learners' SA experiences in significant ways. How do we see ourselves? How do others see us? Where do we fit in? The answers to these questions inevitably lead to self-reflections on one's identity. The question is, is it safe to explore one's identity in a foreign land? If not, what needs to be done to make it safe, especially for racial minorities who experience prejudice?

Heritage Language Learners' Identity Negotiation During SA

HLLs are defined as "individuals with familial or ancestral ties to a language other than English who exert their agency in determining if they are HLLs of that language" (Hornberger & Wang, 2008, p. 6). Some HLLs interact with immigrant parents who socialize them with "language, values, and customs from their country of origin," while they also interact with the mainstream American environment using English. As a

result, this “dual socialization” led to “complicated identity formation and negotiation for heritage learner students” (Moreno, 2009, p. 27). Similarly, Marijuan and Sanz (2018) also point out the complex role bilingual and bicultural heritage plays in HLLs’ identity negotiation process. Comstock and Kagan (2020) state that:

HLLs may encounter a range of experiences that challenge their assumptions.

Possible scenarios include questioning their own cultural and/or racial identity, cultural identity confusion, facing expectations in the host country for linguistic and cultural skills incommensurate with their actual ability, struggling with uneven proficiency in their HL, and many others (p. 2).

Indeed, HLLs’ heritage identity not only affects their motivations about SA (Burgo, 2018), but also shapes their SA experiences. Although individual differences largely exist among HLLs’ experience studying abroad, research has found some common themes. Petrucci (2007) used “a high stakes venture” to describe the SA decision for HLLs. Likely being treated with ambivalence by both people from the same country in which they grow up and the host culture, their process of identity negotiation has many unique features. For example, the host culture may have a higher expectation of their language skills based on their physical appearance. This was found in Trentman’s (2015) research on Arabic HLLs’ journey negotiating their identity during their SA in Egypt. For example, others from the host culture interacted with them using Arabic despite their L2 learner identity, while other L2 learners were often approached only in English in the study. Moreover, these heritage learners readily established their cultural connection to Egyptians because of shared cultural heritage. In this example, the shared

heritage was found to compensate differences in language and culture between the students and the hosts (Petrucci, 2007).

However, the expectations based on HLLs' cultural heritage may also cause misunderstandings (Riegelhaupt & Carrasco, 2000). In Riegelhaupt and Carrasco's (2000) case study, a Chicana teacher was treated differently from non-Chicano teachers by a Mexican family. The host was perceived as highly critical of the Chicana teacher and this was because they imposed their expectations on her—they associated her language use (e.g., accent, vocabulary) with a lack of education and low social status. This research demonstrates negative effects of differentiated expectations based on HLLs' cultural heritage and language usage. Trentman (2015) comes to a similar conclusion that heritage learners are subject to higher expectations from the host culture (e.g., language, gender practices) which makes them resist their heritage learner identity.

Petrucci (2007) mentions that HLLs may face the judgement that they are “less than ideal representatives of a particular country” (p. 287) if they were to perform their own national identity in the host culture. Van Der Meid's (2003) study confirmed this point by describing an Asian American student's experience facing discrimination when applying for English-teaching jobs. In Jing-Schmidt, Chen, and Zhang's (2016) study, two out of four participating Chinese HLLs also reported being treated differently from other foreign students in China who were visibly foreigners, due to their heritage status. Their experiences discouraged their participation in the local community. In this study, one of the Chinese HLLs stated that her heritage identity made her SA experience “one of the most challenging things ever” (p. 805). She shared that at a game show to which they were invited, the camera recorded her white friends, but skipped her and another Chinese

HLL. She shared that the locals were “awfully cold towards the heritage population,” although she sometimes appreciated being able to “blend in” (p. 805). The other Chinese HLL in her group also echoed her frustration. However, over the course of the semester, this student reported having more acceptance toward the differences between the U.S. culture and Chinese culture.

The above studies suggest that HLLs’ heritage identity brings both opportunities and challenges. Although HLLs may be treated as “in-groups” by the host culture and enjoy the advantages associated with this status (Quan, Pozzi, Kehoe, & Menard-Warwick, 2018), they also face discrimination from the locals due to race, social class, or language (Shively, 2016). In addition, their sense of identity may be challenged if the locals do not respect their bilingual or bicultural identities (Shively, 2016).

In addition to discussing the impact of HLLs’ heritage identity on SA, some of the studies also discussed HLLs’ identity negotiation. In Quan, Pozzi, Kehoe, and Menard-Warwick’s (2018) study investigating HLLs’ identity negotiation during SA, HLLs were found to have “increased metalinguistic and sociolinguistic awareness” as well as “reconciled identities” (p. 439). Moreno (2009) identifies various ways HLLs speak about their identities, including a “world identity” or an “all-encompassing identity” (e.g., “citizen of the world”) (p. 116), “heritage identity” (p. 118), American identity, “bridge-between-cultures identity” (p. 120), and “mixed identity” (e.g., Chinese American) (p. 122). While these studies focused on the outcome of HLLs’ identity negotiation during SA, the process itself was largely overlooked.

Given the complicated nature of HLLs’ identity negotiation process during SA and the lack of research in this area, the proposed study focuses on Chinese HLLs’

experiences during their SA programs in mainland China and their identity negotiation process. In particular, it asks the following research questions: First, what are HLLs' experiences negotiating their identity in SA? Second, what experiences help them to deepen their understanding of their identity? Third, what factors (e.g., social context, host culture expectations) affect their identity negotiation process?

Method

Participants

Ten American students who identify as Chinese HLLs will be included in this study. Meeting the explicit criteria for participating in this study, these students will have been born and raised in the United States, will identify as Chinese HLLs, will have signed up for SA in mainland China for a semester or an academic year in a program organized by their universities, and will not have traveled to a foreign country for more than a week. Their heritage status will be defined by "familial or ancestral ties" to the Chinese language as defined by Hornberger and Wang (2008).

Participants will be recruited through formal and personal means. After the study is approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the primary researcher's institution, the primary researcher will contact the Office of Global Engagement at her university, with which she enjoyed previous collaborations. She plans to explain the purpose of the research and ask them to forward recruiting emails to all students who signed up for SA in mainland China in the upcoming semesters. The OGE will then forward the information of the study to these identified students. To recruit enough participants, these recruiting emails will be sent three times, in November, March, and August. These emails will briefly explain the purpose of the study and research

procedures, as well as the criteria for participating in the study. Qualified students who are interested in participating in the study will contact the researcher to schedule interviews. The primary researcher also plans to make announcements in Chinese SA preparation classes in November, March, and August to recruit participants. A majority of participants will be recruited through email invitations sent by the sponsoring university's OGE and classroom announcements, while a few participants may be recruited through their personal connections to another participant or the primary researcher.

Procedures

Participants will be asked to review and sign a consent form prior to participating in the study. Each participant will be interviewed a total of three times: before, during, and after their SA experience. Each individual interview will last for 45 to 60 minutes and will be conducted via virtual conferencing technology. These interviews will be conducted in English, audio recorded, and then transcribed for analysis purposes. As a token of appreciation, each participant will receive a \$15, \$20, and \$25 Amazon gift card at the conclusion of the first, second, and final interview respectively.

The study uses semi-structured interviews to collect data. Participants will be asked about their expectations of the SA experience, perceived identity, changes in perceptions, social experiences, language practices, etc.

Data Analysis

Interview data will be analyzed using grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss (2017, p. 1) define grounded theory as “the discovery of theory from data.” In the field of HLLs' identity negotiation process, there is a lack of research and theory. For this reason,

grounded theory was chosen by the researcher to better understand HLLs' identity negotiation process. It is concerned with generating theory as opposed to verifying existing theory and is divorced from a priori assumptions. Following the principles of grounded theory, data analysis will involve open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Creswell, 2012).

Contributions

This study focuses on HLLs' identity negotiation process during their SA experiences and has the potential to make important contributions. First, it will contribute to the field of racial identity development and research. Although various racial identity development models exist (e.g., People of color identity development, White identity development, Biracial Identity Development; "Summary of Stages of Racial Identity Development," n.d.), these models primarily conceptualize one's identity development process within a given context. SA, on the other hand, provides individuals opportunities to interact with others from different backgrounds and to experience oneself in potentially different positions in their context (e.g., from a member of the minority ethnic group to the majority group). As identity is fluid, these encounters facilitate one's reflection and development of identity. This study will also shed light on how other identity factors, such as gender and age, shape one's experiences abroad. Drawing on feminist and critical race theories, it will employ intersectionality as an analytical tool to study identity and power. Through an intersectional lens, different domains of identity are intertwined, and context influences the saliency of one or few particular domains of identity (Azmitia & Thomas, 2015). This research will contribute to the study of intersectionality by

exploring the interaction between multiple identity factors and the broad sociocultural context.

Second, this study will offer educational implications. SA provides an immersion environment for language and culture learning (Kinging, 2011). As HLLs face unique challenges and opportunities during their SA journey, programs that specifically prepare HLLs can be very helpful. For example, they may benefit from developing more realistic expectations about their experiences abroad. Because of challenges HLLs face in SA, Burgo (2018) recommends faculty-led programs for these learners, as they could provide more guidance to HLLs. Comstock and Kagan (2020) suggest that intercultural competence plays an important role in HLLs' successful SA experience. They propose that HLLs need to achieve IC level 3 standards of intercultural competence, requiring "cultural differentiation, pragmalinguistic knowledge, and instructor feedback on HLLs' self-presentation" (p. 13), prior to departure for the host country. Furthermore, the study provides educators information regarding the characteristics of SA settings that are beneficial to HLLs. These findings could assist students as well as program coordinators in making decision regarding the location and design of SA program.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Collaborative Writing in L2 Contexts

Orientation and Reflection

This annotated bibliography was originally written collaboratively with Wanru Xue as a final project for LING 6500 L2 Acquisition: Theory and Practice, taught by Dr. Joshua Thoms. My interest and motivation in researching this topic came from my own experience struggling in writing in my L2. There seemed to be a disconnection between my thoughts and words, and the writing exercises my English teacher gave us were not effective in improving my writing skills. In the traditional Chinese educational system, receptive skills, such as reading and listening, are emphasized in foreign language education. In contrast, productive skills, which include speaking and writing, are not seen as important. When I came to the United States, I noticed that my English writing was not at the same level as my receptive English skills, and it took me years to develop it both on my own and with others' help. I am motivated to explore approaches that help L2 learners develop their writing skills so that they are well-rounded. The approach of CW is also consistent with my belief about social learning that is described in my teaching philosophy statement. What I appreciate the most about CW is the focus on the writing process instead of the writing outcome. I believe that this focus can help students improve without causing unnecessary stress. While the original assignment only included 10 sources, I added five more to go into more depth on this topic and fulfill the requirement of the portfolio. The added articles helped me delve deeper into topics such as web-based CW and pair formation for CW activities.

From investigating this topic, I learned that CW allows students to learn from each other and results in positive writing outcomes and improved critical thinking skills. While CW has many benefits, the successful implementation of CW requires teachers to

explain the rationale of CW and be thoughtful about how they assign students to groups. They also need to be mindful about fairness and conflicts in teamwork. As stated in the annotated bibliography, affective factors can play a big part in students' perceptions and experience of the activity. Therefore, interactions between students need to be monitored and guided. In addition, I learned about the trend of using web-based CW in L2 classrooms. Technological tools enable us to track students' progress and thus make it convenient for students to connect and collaborate remotely or asynchronously. While collaboratively writing this annotated bibliography, I also had first-hand experience about many challenges researchers present in their studies on CW, such as having reservations about CW, navigating the topic of fairness in a collaborative task, and finding ways to communicate effectively. Open communication about tasks and expectations throughout this collaboration has benefited our process of CW.

In my L2 classroom, group work plays an important role. Through working with each other, students develop a sense of community and learn from each other's strengths. Some students may find working with a partner writing unfamiliar or uncomfortable. Therefore, some preparation is needed to help students feel open to and ready for a CW task. Before assigning a CW task, I plan to explain the task well and help students understand how they can get the most out of it. I would also provide sufficient pre-writing guidance, during-writing support, and post-writing feedback to students. My hope is that by engaging students in CW, they will become less intimidated by writing and better able to express themselves over time.

Introduction & Theoretical Framework

Collaborative Writing is a process-oriented writing approach. As the name suggests, it is a joint writing product created by two or more writers (Storch, 2011) and is interactive in nature. As a tool, it is found to effectively facilitate students' L1 and L2 writing abilities (Coffin, 2020). This annotated bibliography reviews pertinent literature regarding the effects of CW on L2 learning and teaching. The review is carried out/framed via a sociocultural theoretical perspective.

While traditional cognitive approaches emphasize the inborn capacities and changes that take place inside the individual's mind, sociocultural perspectives view this individual dimension of learning as secondary to the social dimension which involves the co-construction of knowledge (Zuengler & Miller, 2006). Learning is "first social, then individual; first intermental, then intramental" (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2019, p. 319). Individuals internalize psychological tools from engaging in social activities, and these tools are incorporated into their own cognitive resources. As such, intermental activities become intramental activities, and social experiences shape psychological development (Daniels, 2011).

According to SCT, learning is a social activity that is mediated through physical and symbolic tools, activities, and human mediators (Kozulin, 2003). Human mediators, including teachers and peers, mediate students' learning through scaffolding and thus help them achieve a higher level of development compared to the level they could achieve without others' help. The space between these two levels is called the ZPD, and it is in this space where learning occurs (Walqui, 2006). In CW, students are provided opportunities to interact with and learn from each other. Students from different

understandings and backgrounds scaffold each other and gain a deeper understanding or a new perspective that would not otherwise be achieved by the individual alone. Therefore, the interactions do not only increase their knowledge quantitatively, but also qualitatively transform their understanding of L2 writing and their overall knowledge of the L2.

Activity theory (AT) sees individuals as embedded into their sociocultural contexts. As Allen (2010, p. 31) points out, activities are “goal-oriented actions.” According to AT, learners are motivated to learn when their goals support their participation in learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). CW is an activity that happens in a specific sociocultural context and its success is dependent on the alignment between an individual’s goals and the writing task itself.

The positive role CW plays in L2 writing may also be related to the use of output as a psychological tool. As students are generating and discussing ideas with each other, their collaborative dialogue allows them to “process language more deeply” (Swain, 2000, p. 99) and pay more attention to the language they are producing. In other words, the externalization or verbalization of their ideas facilitates the internalization of acquired knowledge during collaborative learning. As students collaborate with each other, their ideas may become clearer to them, which explains the improved quality of writing products in CW as discussed below.

Summary of Relevant Literature

Many studies have investigated the process and application of CW and showed positive results. **Storch (2005)** conducted a study in a large Australian university’s English as a Second Language (ESL) writing class for students with lower-level writing skills. Students were asked to choose if they would like to work individually or with a

partner during the writing task, and 18 out of 23 students chose to work with a classmate. The task involved writing one to two paragraphs after being given a visual prompt. Students who chose to work in pairs were asked to record their communications during the task, which were then transcribed for analysis. Three types of results were analyzed: differences in writing accuracy and complexity between those who wrote in pairs and those who wrote alone; the foci of dialogues during the task; and students' experiences of CW collected by post-task interviews.

Storch (2005) concluded that students who engaged in CW wrote more complex, grammatically accurate, and succinct sentences than individual writers. Pair dialogues reflected a variety of functions, which included task clarification, idea generation, language- and structure- related discussions, prompt interpretation, text reading/rereading, and writing task management. In the study, students who worked in pairs stated that CW allowed them to compare ideas, improve grammatical accuracy and vocabulary use by observing others' language use, and have fun. However, a few students reported having reservations about CW. They shared the belief that writing is an individual activity. Some of them lacked confidence in their writing and felt embarrassed when writing with peers, while others worried about giving negative feedback.

The research interest of comparing CW and traditional writing processes continue over the next decade. **Anggraini, Rozimela, and Anwar (2020)** conducted a mixed methods study comparing the results of CW to the traditional teaching approach. Using cluster random sampling, they selected 26 and 27 students to be in the experimental class and the control class respectively, out of a pool of 80 students in a public senior school in West Sumatra, Indonesia. Each group met for eight writing classes and students'

improvement in writing skills was measured by a post-test. Students in the experimental class were also interviewed regarding their perceptions of CW at the end of the study. Three questions were used in the semi-structured interviews, including students' perceptions of the effectiveness of CW, advantages of using CW, and obstacles they encountered during CW.

The researchers found that students taught through CW performed better than their counterparts on the writing test. The researchers concluded that CW has many benefits, including drawing on each member's strengths during the collaborative task, familiarizing students with peer-based feedback, encouraging them to take into account the audience in writing, and helping them develop their critical thinking ability and motivation. Despite participants' overall positive experiences with CW, some participants voiced concerns, including the lack of participation from inactive members, conflicts/disagreement arising during the task, and the time-consuming nature of CW. Similar to Storch's (2005) study, a few participants expressed a preference to work alone despite the benefits of CW.

Alwaleedi, Gillies, and Obaidul Hamid (2019) examined the process and effects of CW in teaching Arabic as a second language (ASL) in a university setting. Sixty-four male adult ASL students with high-intermediate level Arabic proficiency participated in the study. Using a mixed method approach, the researchers conducted a case study and a quasi-experiment. Two classes served as control group, while two other classes were selected as the experimental group. Each class consisted of 16 students. After being trained in CW, the teacher implemented the 12-week CW interventions with the experimental classes, while the control group engaged in traditional group work. All

students were given the task of writing descriptive, narrative, and argumentative essays through duration of the course. Students' interactions were audio recorded for analysis, and pre- and post-tests were conducted to measure students' improvement in writing.

The results of the study showed that students in the experimental group engaged in more collaborative interactions than those in the control group, during which each small group member worked together as a team and negotiated throughout the tasks. In contrast, students in the control group demonstrated more dominant/passive, cooperative, and expert/notice patterns of interactions. While both groups showed improved writing scores over the course of the semester, the experimental group showed more improvement. While other studies contrasted CW with individual writing, this study used a control group being taught by traditional group work procedures. The researchers did not specify what the differences are between CW and traditional group writing but made clear that teachers need proper training to deliver CW interventions.

Qualitative approaches are also used in exploring the benefits of CW. For example, **Coffin (2020)** focused on CW processes and learners' and teachers' perspectives on using CW in an EFL classroom. The researcher used a mix of live observations, video recorded observations, questionnaires, focus group interviews, and individual interviews at multiple points throughout a 15-week semester. After data collection, the researcher used descriptive statistics, content analysis, and thematic analysis to analyze data.

The researcher found that the lack of opportunities in discussing the collaborative task with others put a constraint on CW. In addition, the small classroom setting was not seen as an ideal environment for collaborative learning, as it was difficult for students to

all actively engage during the task without being distracted by others. It was also found that the experienced teacher was more effective than the less experienced teacher in engaging the whole class during CW. Interviews from both teachers and students suggested that CW has a positive influence on teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. Despite the positive findings, the researcher noted that the fairness of teamwork and assessment in CW and interpersonal conflicts during the collaboration remain issues that need to be addressed.

Technological tools have been used in CW tasks, such as wikis, blog, chats, and web-based word processing (Bikowski & Vithanage, 2016). **Bikowski and Vithanage** looked into in-class web-based CW tasks' influence on learners' improvement of writing, as well as teachers' and students' opinions regarding web-based CW. Fifty-nine non-native English speakers enrolled in an undergraduate English writing class participated in the study. Two sections of the class, totaling 32 students, were assigned to the CW group while 27 students from the other two sections served as a control group and wrote individually. Quantitative data were obtained through pre- and post-tests which collected samples of students' writings before and after they engaged in CW classes. Students' and teachers' perceptions of in-class web-based CW were collected by questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, respectively.

The authors acknowledged that technology brought flexibility in implementing CW. They found that students in the CW group showed more improvement in writing compared to those who wrote individually. The results suggested that students should receive training on collaboration and technology prior to participating in web-based CW. It was also recommended that teachers limit each group to four students, monitor

interpersonal dynamics within each group, and provide a rationale for collaboration during the writing task at the beginning of the course. Considering group dynamics, teachers could either let students choose their own groups or take personality differences into consideration while assigning students into groups.

Interested in exploring the effects of using social tools (i.e., wikis and chats) on CW tasks, **Elola and Oskoz (2010)** conducted a study involving eight Spanish majors in an advanced Spanish writing course at a mid-sized East Coast University. The instructor selected PBwiki as the media for students to create their writing and a way to track changes made by students in each group. Each of the four pairs were asked to choose either text-chats or voice-chats to record pair interactions. Each student wrote two argumentative essays, one collaboratively and one individually. After their initial draft, students were provided feedback and asked to submit a second draft. All students filled out two questionnaires at the beginning and upon the completion of courses indicating their perceptions toward individual/CW as well as their attitudes toward using technological tools (i.e., wikis, voice, written chat tools). Writing products, writing processes (e.g., communication using voice or written chat tools), and questionnaires were analyzed.

The results of this study did not suggest any significant differences between CW and individual writing outcomes (i.e., fluency, accuracy, complexity) in the second draft. When the two drafts were compared, the researchers found that learners' accuracy and fluency increased significantly when writing individually but not collaboratively. This was explained by learners' increased attention to grammatical details and provision of additional supportive information in writing. Although no significant differences were

found between CW and individual writings, participants' responses and interactions suggested that CW allowed them to fine-tune their writing and generate an essay that is more organized and well-structured than what they could write individually. Through analysis of chats and interaction dynamics, participants were found to approach the writing tasks differently working alone and working in pairs. For example, when working alone, students defined thematic sentences in the first draft and revisited the structure after completing a few drafts. In contrast, when working collaboratively, they tended to decide the structure at the onset of the writing task and keep changing thematic sentences until the end. It was found that wikis and chats enabled learners to interact and thus develop the content and structure of their essays in their 'community of practice'. It was also suggested that different technologies provided different benefits. Regardless of the perceived benefits of CW, a majority of students expressed a preference to write individually.

Many other researchers explored the topic of using technological tools for CW tasks. For example, **Woodrich and Fan** (2017) focused on the use of technology in CW tasks. They were primarily concerned with the effects of anonymous CW via Google Docs. The middle school that participated in the study has a large number of students who are either English Language Learners (ELLs) or Reclassified English Fluent Proficient (REFP). Ninety-seven students in eighth grade participated in the study. Among the 97 students, 16 are ELLs and 15 are REFP. Randomly assigned to a group of four, each student engaged in face-to-face, online, and anonymous online trials of CW in three class periods. The sequence of interventions was different for each class period.

Students' attitudes toward CW, their writing products, and contribution during CW tasks were collected.

Results from the study showed that anonymous online writing did not correlate with higher writing scores than face-to-face collaboration. Regarding equalizing participation among students of varying language fluencies, face-to-face still proved to be the best at encouraging equalized participation for students as a whole, while ELLs and REFP participated the most during online anonymous trial among the three trials. The study also showed that a majority of participants reported having positive attitudes toward using online tools for CW tasks, which may have lowered their anxiety in writing. It was concluded that anonymous online writing promotes ELLs' and REFP' participation in CW and lowered students' writing-related anxiety. Although the study supports the use of anonymous participation to encourage those with lower language fluency to participate in discussions, the study failed to prove that this method is associated with increased writing outcome for the individual. Without proving how anonymous participation benefits students personally, this conclusion may be based on culturally based expectations and misleading.

Another area of interest for CW-related studies is the process of CW, specifically, students' interaction patterns during their collaborative task. The process of CW cannot be studied without examining students' goals, attitudes, and other affective factors affecting their engagement and interactions during their collaboration. **Cho (2017)** used AT to analyze the relationship between students' goals and their interaction patterns in voice-based and text-based CW tasks. This study focused on three ESL learners' process of writing summary reports for a debate in a Canadian University's debate club. The

three ESL learners are from different backgrounds; one is from Japan, and the other two are from South Korea. The group was assigned two tasks, involving writing an essay for a debate topic while communicating via text chat and composing a debate summary for a different topic using a voice chat tool. Interactions between students were classified into three categories, which were on-task talk, about-task talk, and off-task talk. The researcher found that synchronous voice chat was preferred by students due to its “instantaneous and interactive nature” and that students “initiated more decision-making episodes” when using voice chat instead of text chat (p. 47). It was also found that means of communication, participants’ understanding and division of tasks, expectations of roles, and learners’ perspectives on peer feedback all mediated peer interactions in this study. The study suggests that students’ understanding of the task itself affects their goals and their actions during the collaborative task. Because of this, a teacher needs to provide clear instructions and help students understand how they might be able to work together. Teachers also need to be aware of these goals and assist students to achieve them. Lastly, this study highlighted the importance of selecting the appropriate tools (e.g., voice chat or text chat) and facilitating students’ communication skills in CW tasks.

Li and Zhu (2017) also explored the interactional patterns among students during wiki-based CW tasks and sociocultural factors that account for different types of interactions using AT. They presented a case study about the interaction patterns of two groups of ESL students completing two writing tasks using a wiki, which were a research proposal and an annotated bibliography. Twenty-nine intermediate-advanced level ESL graduate students participated in the study. Through their observations, Li and Zhu noticed a relationship between students’ interactions and their goals, agency, and emotions.

For example, participants were more engaged in CW tasks if their personal goals were in line with the activity itself. They found two interactive patterns among participants, which were the collective pattern and the dominant or defensive pattern. When feeling positive about their teamwork, students exhibited collective agency and used collaborative agency words such as ‘we’ and ‘our’. In contrast, negative emotions such as dissatisfaction discouraged individuals’ participation in interactions. Based on these results, Li and Zhu pointed out the importance of group formation in collaborative tasks. They proposed that teachers need to be aware of negative feelings in group work to prevent minoritized students from feeling isolated and use assessment tools to motivate students to be more active and engaged. Specifically, the authors suggested that the instructor should assign certain points for completing each task in CW so that each individual in a group can be held accountable.

Individuals’ beliefs and attitudes also play an important role in their collaboration during CW tasks and their perceptions of this experience. **Chen and Yu (2019)** looked at the role individuals’ attitudes play in social interactions during CW tasks. Over the course of a 16-week English composition class in a university in mainland China, the two selected pairs first attended a training on CW, and then participated in three CW tasks. Their attitudes toward CW were collected in pre- and post-task surveys. Other data collected in the process included reflective journal entries, stimulated recalls, and post-task interviews. Analyzing the interactions of two pairs, they found that students had remarkably different experiences in CW tasks. One pair enjoyed working together and engaged in collaboration, while the other reported having a negative experience due to having arguments. The authors concluded that students’ beliefs about CW, attitudes and perceptions toward peer

assistance, and group interactions and friendships are all factors that influenced their CW experiences. This study chose a very small sample, but its results are consistent with Li and Zhu's (2017) study. It demonstrates that although CW has the potential to be beneficial, teachers need to pay attention to students' affective factors and monitor students' interactions.

Looking into the role psychological factors play in CW, **Chen and Hapgood (2019)** used qualitative analyses to investigate how the knowledge about CW influenced learners' engagement and learning during planning, writing, and revising stages of writing. This study used a mixed-methods approach and collected data from 40 intermediate-level English learners in two reading and writing classes of the same language level in a seven-week-long intensive English-language program in the Midwest of the United States. The experimental group was provided training on CW knowledge, while the control group did not. Learners were assigned to pairs by the teacher and both groups were given the same writing task to accomplish, which is divided into four stages. The researchers collected data from learners' audio recordings, semi-structured interviews, and reflective essays. They used various ways to code data and analyzed language-related episodes (LREs), patterns of dyadic interaction, and differences between students' use of LREs in the two groups. The results indicated that participants in the experimental group showed a higher percentage of collaborative interactions and successfully resolved more LREs. As the researchers noted, knowledge and attitude toward CW affected participants' approach to addressing difficulties, conflicts, and unfairness in the process of CW. For example, one pair in the experimental group were effective in assigning roles to students, which helped students make a decision when a disagreement occurred. They asserted that knowledge

about the CW task may enhance its benefits as it motivates students and helps them develop positive attitudes towards CW. As such, they recommended that teachers help students develop “declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge” (p. 5) about CW prior to engaging in CW tasks.

While many studies above focused the influence that affective factors have on the process of CW, the following study explored CW’s impact on learners’ anxiety. **Jalili and Shahrokhi (2017)** investigated social and affective benefits of using CW tasks among Iranian EFL learners. The authors raised two research questions about the differences in anxiety level among L2 learners who write individually and collaboratively, and whether Iranian intermediate EFL learners have positive attitudes toward CW. Based on the results of an Oxford Placement Test, sixty female intermediate EFL learners from age 16 to 28 were included in the study and formed two groups. The collaborative group consisted of 29 learners, while the individual group had 31 learners. Data were collected in Iran over a two-week period. The writing task involved composing an essay about six pictures. Students in the individual group were given 30 minutes while those in the collaborative group were given 45 minutes to complete the task. After completing the task, the writing anxiety levels of both groups of students were assessed using the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory and students’ perceptions of CW were measured by the Collaborative Writing Questionnaire. The conclusion was that CW reduces writing anxiety and increases students’ motivation. Participants generally reported having a positive attitude toward CW. Based on the results, the authors suggested that instructors use CW to motivate students and lower their writing anxiety level.

Considering the influence that affective factors (e.g., goals, beliefs, attitudes, emotions) have on CW and students' interactions, how should students be assigned into pairs in order to have a positive experience? **Mozaffari (2017)** examined the effectiveness of utilizing different pair-formation methods in CW tasks. She selected 40 female EFL students from two classes in an EFL institute in Iran to participate in this study. These students had the same teacher, and all had intermediate-level English proficiency. The two classes were randomly assigned one of the two pair-formation conditions. Namely, students from one class were asked to self-select their partner, while students from the other class were assigned a partner by the teacher. The teacher also made an effort to not assign friends into a pair. The results suggest that teacher-assigned pairs performed better than student-selected pairs. In addition, they generated more LREs and had less off-task behavior than student-selected pairs. Mozaffari recommended that teachers take into consideration pair composition when assigning pairs.

Fauziah and Latief (2016) investigated another aspect of pair-formation, which is the language proficiency of each individual in the pair. Two classes participated in their study and each class formed 20 pairs. One class only formed homogeneous pairs with students from similar language proficiency levels, while the other class only formed heterogeneous pairs with one student who had a higher level of proficiency and one with lower proficiency. All participants received the same instructions and engaged in the same learning activities. Each pair received training about CW before engaging in CW tasks that asked them to compose three descriptive essays. According to the results, students in the heterogeneous group produced higher quality essays individually than those from the homogeneous group. In addition, the low achievers from the heterogeneous group

produced better quality essays than low achievers from the homogenous group. For high achievers, however, no between-group differences were found. The researchers also found that students in the heterogeneous group reported feeling more positive toward CW than those in the homogeneous group. In conclusion, pairing students with others from a different level of language proficiency was found to be effective in helping them produce better quality work.

An overview of research on the topic of CW in L1 and L2 was provided by **Talib and Cheung (2017)** to reflect on effectiveness and impact(s) of CW studies conducted from 2006 to 2016. Using the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) as a database and taking into account practical considerations, they narrowed down their sources to empirical studies in 15 journals in SSCI journals. They initially used multiple keywords and identified 117 articles. After reviewing these articles, they selected 68 articles based on their content and method and analyzed their common themes.

Talib and Cheung list three findings among studies in this area. First, they acknowledged the frequent use and benefits of technological tools in CW tasks. The use of technology allows students to take ownership of their work, makes collaboration more effective through the online platform, and facilitates critical thinking. Second, they reported positive attitudes toward CW and improved motivation among students who engaged in CW tasks. Many students reported benefiting from others' feedback. Third, they concluded that CW is associated with better writing outcome and increased ability in critical thinking. It was reported that CW facilitates the development of students' language skills and writing performance.

Conclusion

Among the above studies, a majority of studies showed that the use of CW is associated with higher-quality writing products or more improvement in writing compared to writing individually (Anggraini, Rozimela, & Anwar, 2020; Bikowski & Vithanage, 2016; Talib & Cheung, 2017). It was found that using CW resulted in more complex, grammatically accurate, succinct sentences (Storch, 2005), and more organized and well-structured writing (Elola & Oskoz, 2010). The scaffolding and mediation that happen during CW allows participants to learn from each other's strengths, receive and exchange feedback, use critical thinking skills, and increase their motivation (Anggraini, Rozimela, & Anwar, 2020; Talib & Cheung, 2017). CW also has a positive influence on teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills, and lowers students' writing anxiety (Coffin, 2020; Jalili & Shahrokhi, 2017). Overall, students who participated in CW tasks spoke positively about CW (Jalili & Shahrokhi, 2017; Storch, 2005; Talib & Cheung, 2017). Studies involving using social technological tools suggest that these tools provide students an online platform for collaboration, increase their sense of ownership of their work, facilitate critical thinking by selecting which information to attend to, and allow teachers to monitor and track students' participation and engagement during CW (Bikowski & Vithanage, 2016; Elola & Oskoz, 2010).

Although studies reported positive outcomes of CW, its successful implementation is mediated by the communication and interactions among students. That is, conflicts between participants, feeling of loneliness, and lack of participation from passive participants are all possible issues during CW and can negatively affect the success of CW (Anggraini, Rozimela, & Anwar, 2020; Chen & Yu, 2009; Coffin, 2020). Social and affective factors, including goals, agency, and affect, can largely influence students'

engagement in CW (Cho, 2017). In other words, students are more engaged in CW tasks if their personal goal is in line with the activity itself, and they have knowledge about and positive attitude toward CW (Chen & Hapgood, 2019; Li & Zhu, 2017). Additional factors that make the application of CW more difficult include its time-consuming nature, concerns about fairness of teamwork, lack of opportunities to discuss the task with one's writing partner, and the effort of training teachers to be effective in leading CW tasks (Anggraini, Rozimela, & Anwar, 2020; Coffin, 2020). Students' preference to write individually and belief that writing is an individual activity also present a challenge to CW (Elola & Oskoz, 2010; Storch, 2005).

To address these issues, teachers need to help students understand the rationale and process of CW and conduct training on technology (Bikowski & Vithanage, 2016; Chen & Hapgood, 2019). They also need to become aware of students' goals and help them achieve their goals (Cho, 2017), as well as protect students from feeling lonely, anxious, or criticized in CW (Li & Zhu, 2017). Teachers are encouraged to take into account students' personality factors when assigning groups, limit the number of students in each group, choose technological tools that are appropriate to students' language level and characteristics, and monitor interpersonal dynamics during collaboration (Cho, 2017). Teachers may also consider assigning students into pairs instead of letting them self-select and assign students from various proficiency levels in a pair to produce better writing outcomes (Fauziah & Latief, 2016; Mozaffari, 2017).

LOOKING FORWARD

Studying in the MSLT program at USU has expanded my horizon and helped me gain awareness of issues related to language teaching, such as the use of technological tools, the importance of teaching culture and pragmatics, the incorporation of L2 acquisition theories, etc. As a result of this learning, teaching now has become a more complex activity than a mere intuitive act to me. This reminds me of the famous saying derived from Aristotle's work— "The more you know, the more you know you don't know" (Cohen & Reeve, 2020). As stated in my teaching philosophy, I believe that life-long learning is very important to teachers and students alike. The field of second language teaching is ever-changing and therefore I must not stop learning new practices, tools, and ideas about language teaching. I plan to meet my continuing education needs by attending conferences, engaging in discussions with other professionals, and observing my own and others' teaching when possible. Although I have learned a lot about the practice of teaching second languages in general, I still lack specialized and detailed knowledge about teaching Chinese to L2 learners. Having had limited experience teaching Chinese, I look forward to accumulating more teaching experiences and further reflecting and refining my teaching. I believe that through these experiences, my knowledge will become more intuitive to me and what I know will become who I am.

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