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# Teaching and Learning Chinese Characters in the Chinese as a Foreign Language Classroom

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TEACHING AND LEARNING CHINESE CHARACTERS IN THE CHINESE AS

A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

by

Wanru Xue

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

TEACHING AND LEARNING CHINESE CHARACTERS IN THE CHINESE AS

A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

by

Wanru Xue: Master of Second Language Teaching

Utah State University, 2021

Major Professor: Dr. Ko-Yin Sung
Department: World Languages & Cultures

This portfolio covers the author's perspectives in the field of Chinese as a

foreign language when she was in the Master of Second Language Teaching program

at Utah State University. The portfolio has three main sections. The first section

includes the author's teaching philosophy statement, rooted in her second language

learning and teaching experience, and a reflection on classroom teaching

observations. The second section contains two research perspectives on teaching and

learning Chinese as a second language. The final section consists of an annotated

bibliography on the topic of collaborative writing in a second-language context.

(68 pages)

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CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AT: Activity Theory

CALL: Computer Assisted Language Learning

CFL: Chinese as a Foreign Language

CW: Collaborative Writing

DLI: Dual Language Immersion

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

IELI: Intensive English Language Institutes

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

MSLT: Master of Second Language Teaching

PACE model: Presentation, Attention, Co-construction, Extension

SLA: Second Language Teaching

TPS: Teaching Philosophy Statement

USU: Utah State University

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

INTRODUCTION TO THE PORTFOLIO

The solid understanding I gained about second language acquisition during my two years in the MSLT program covers both theoretical and practical knowledge. In addition, I will apply the concepts I learned from the Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) class I taught while in the MSLT program to my future language class(es).

This portfolio contains four significant parts: teaching perspectives, research perspectives, annotated bibliography, and future perspectives. In terms of teaching perspectives, I include my professional environment, teaching philosophy statement, and professional development through teaching observations. The teaching philosophy statement addresses four main themes: pedagogical beliefs, intercultural competence, the PACE model, and the chunking method. I plan to use this statement and related acknowledge as my guide for teaching Chinese as a foreign language. I describe my professional development through teaching observations by reflecting on observations of Chinese and Spanish classes at USU and analyzing those classes according to the four themes of my teaching philosophy statement.

The research perspectives include my ideas and beliefs about effective teaching in the Chinese as a foreign language classroom. The first paper addresses a teaching reflection of how to use chunking method in CFL classroom. The second paper contains data I collected and analyzed during this program. The annotated bibliography discusses the use of technology in the CFL classroom. The last part, Looking Forward, describes my plans for professional development after graduating from this program.

TEACHING PERSPECTIVES

Professional Environment

Until I became a Chinese tutor in my senior year in college, I had no idea what to do after finishing my bachelor's degree. As I began tutoring students in Chinese, I found they had the same feelings and struggled with the same kinds of frustrations as I did when learning English, such as pronunciation and grammar. For example, a student in her first year of Chinese was trying to pronounce "xu" in pinyin. After I helped her adjust her mouth shape and the tongue place, she finally pronounced a correct "xu".  In my first year in the Master of Second Language Teaching program (MSLT) at Utah State University (USU), I was a Chinese graduate instructor and a teaching assistant, which helped me gain classroom experience. For instance, some students are beginners, they did not learn any Chinese characters before; some students are more advanced, with stronger speaking skills than writing proficiency. The two most difficult aspects of learning Chinese are pronunciation and character writing (Zhan & Cheng, 2014; Nel & Krog, 2021). Therefore, in this portfolio, I have included research on teaching and learning Chinese characters efficiently.

I enjoy teaching college students or adults, who I have found to be dedicated to learning a foreign language, as well as to be able to self-monitor their consciousness. Therefore, this Portfolio is focused on teaching Chinese in universities in the United States.

Teaching Philosophy Statement

**Introduction**

My teaching philosophy is strongly influenced by one of my English teachers in China and my instructors in the MSLT program. While a student in that program, I had an opportunity to teach Chinese classes for two semesters, during which time I came to realize that there is a huge difference between teaching and learning. My statement of teaching philosophy combines elements related to second language teaching knowledge that I acquired as a graduate student, and my teaching experience as an instructor in the MSLT program at USU. In this statement, I will describe my pedagogical beliefs, focusing in particular on intercultural competence, the PACE model, and the chunking method.

**Pedagogical Beliefs**

I started learning English in the 3rd grade at the age of nine. Before that, I only knew a little about English, such as the alphabet and some very simple words. At that time, my English teacher used traditional second language teaching methods, playing recordings from the textbook and guiding conversations in small groups. When I was in middle school, I knew it was not enough for me to learn by only listening to recordings, so I joined an English club where the teacher was a native English speaker. He spoke with an American English speaker's accent, and he used interactive teaching methods, incorporating such novelties as cosplay or fun games to help us understand a word or meaning of a paragraph. This teaching style suited me very well. He combined his unique sense of humor with grammar instruction, which enabled us to absorb grammar in an effective way. Because of those methods, my English skills soared to the top of the class. It also helped that my parents always encouraged me, which gave me a lot of confidence.

However, when I was in high school, we had three years of classes exclusively focused on grammar and Audiolingual Methodology (ALM). After high school, I decided to go to a university in the U.S. to practice English. I enrolled in the Intensive English Language Institute (IELI) of Utah State University. However, the first time I did a presentation I read each word in the PowerPoint, as I was unable to speak spontaneously. Luckily, the teacher encouraged me to not feel too upset about my performance, but to speak slowly and confidently. She assured me that no one would judge me.

Two years later, I was a graduate instructor teaching beginning Chinese. As a student, I thought it was challenging to teach a 50 minutes class. However, after I was a graduate instructor and it was my first year to be a language teacher, I designed my own teaching plan, and communicated with my students to solve any language learning problems. In that short time, I had discovered that there is a huge difference between teaching and learning. My goals for teaching students are to help them use Chinese for multiple purposes -- not just to have simple conversations in Chinese, but to also reading articles and book chapters, and to write essays that describe their knowledge and feelings. Therefore, I perceive being a language teacher as one who 1) encourages students, even when they have an easy question, 2) helps students form a broader understanding and appreciation of cultural activities, 3) displays a sense of humor when teaching grammar or sentence structure, 4) employs the PACE model when appropriate, which is "presentation, attention, co-construction and extension", and 5) uses the chunking method to teach Chinese characters.

Most importantly, I see the role of a teacher as someone who motivates students and tries to bring out the best in them (Wu, Altstaedter, & Jones, 2010). Encouraging students in different ways to learn Chinese is something I often do when

teaching, as it reduces a student's affective filter. The affective filter hypothesis explains that when learners are anxious or nervous in a language learning context, their affective filters are high, and therefore inhibit their processing of information (Finocchiaro, Dulay, & Burt, 1977). Whether it is a specific moment like when students ask or answer a question in class, or an abstract concept in Chinese that they need to understand, I always encourage them and try to foster their passion for language learning. I also encourage my students to study material before class so that they can check which key points they do not understand. This is a very effective habit for students and can significantly improve their performance during class. Moreover, this helps reduce their affective filter because they will feel more confident, try harder, and thus perform better (Lopez Cupita, 2016).

**Intercultural Competence**

From my personal experience, culture exists at all times as students keep learning. Many students want to learn a particular language because of the culture. For example, many learners of Japanese are interested in Japanese Popular Culture (JPC), which includes anime, cuisine, and pop-stars. Their "passion for JPC can become intertwined with Japanese language, and many high school and university participants gave JPC as the reason for taking up Japanese classes initially, and as one of the main reasons for their intention to continue" (Northwood, 2018, p. 201). Similarly, with my Chinese classes, I use various aspects of Chinese culture to attract students' interests and spark their passion to learn Chinese. This makes them feel eager to learn more Chinese language skills so that they can explore more of Chinese culture.

In my class, at the beginning of the semester, I tell students how to greet their teacher in a respectful way. There is an old proverb in *The Analects of Confucius*:

Once a teacher, always a father figure [一日为师，终身为父]. In general, the mutual communication and work interactions in China are deeply influenced by Confucianism (Zhou, Lapointe, & Zhou, 2018). When students come to class, they address me by using my last name plus laoshi (teacher), that is, Xue laoshi. It is a general Chinese convention that people of a senior position and age address their juniors by their full name including their surname or their given name (Wu, 2006). Another example from my class is when we learn the word for "to eat" (吃 chī). I introduce the eight styles of Chinese cuisine, and often host a hotpot party on the weekend. This event is a huge success because hotpot is unique to Chinese culture, and most of my students do not have anything similar in their home country.

**PACE Model**

If students explore Chinese culture, they will more easily acquire the fundamental skills of the language, which are listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The PACE model (Adair-Hauck, & Donato, 2002; Cho, 2018; Li, 2015; Li & Paul, 2019; Shrum & Glisan, 2016) is a good choice when teaching Chinese grammar. The PACE model has four components: presentation, attention, co-construction, and extension. With PACE, leaners participate in problem-solving and thinking skills, and it encourages performance before competence. The model states that questions must be suitably tuned to a level at which performance requires assistance. When using the PACE model, I use implicit ways to inspire students' comprehension, such as pictures to help tell a story. At first, they have no idea what the story is about when they see the picture for the first time. Then, I read the story to them. In this way, students are fully engaged in the activity so that when they figure it out for themselves, what they learn sticks with them longer. Teaching grammar in the

context of a story draws students' attention to small morphemes and other nuances that they might otherwise not notice.

**Chunking Method**

### Definition of Chunks in Chinese Characters

In 2009, the State Language Commission published *GB13000.1* Character and Radical Standards (*GB13000.1 字符集汉字部首归部规范*), which is a standard of Chinese radical integration, and it defines chunking in the Chinese language as: "a character unit composed of strokes that has the function of combining Chinese characters" (GB13000.1 Character and Radical Standards, 2009, p. 2). Most chunks have two or more strokes, such as "汉(hàn)" (Chinese) has two chunks "氵" and "又", and each of these chunks have two or three strokes ("氵" has three strokes and "又" has two strokes). Sometimes it consists of one stroke, for example, "亿" (million) has two chunks "亻" and "乙" as well, but the second chunk "乙" has only one stroke. There are 3,500 most commonly used characters, and 514 chunks are used among them. (The Standards of Normal Character Chunks and Chunk Name, 2009).

#### Chunking method in Chinese character teaching.

In my second year as an MSLT student, I was a Chinese TA in a level one Chinese class. Under Dr. Sung's direction, I designed two types of chunking method activities and used them to teach Chinese characters every Friday. The first one is a comparison of similar chunks, and the second separates each character into chunks. In each lesson, students used a chunking worksheet to practice and memorize Chinese characters. The worksheets contained three activities, two of which featured the second type of chunking. At the end of the semester, I spoke with students who attended every Friday's class, and all of them gave positive feedback about using the chunking method. For example, students said that it reduced their memory load, and

some indicated that they intended to continue using the chunking method in the future.

**Conclusion**

In this statement of my teaching philosophy, I introduced my experiences learning a foreign language and teaching my mother tongue. I described how I gradually turned from a student into a teacher and outlined key components of my teaching style. First of all, intercultural competence is an essential ability when students try to learn a foreign language. It helps students learn tolerance and understand a different culture. Secondly, the PACE model helps me teach grammar by fostering an active classroom environment. Lastly, I use the chunking method to teach Chinese characters, because this method involves cultural understanding and character acquisition. In general, pedagogical beliefs and intercultural competence are key components of my teaching philosophy, and the PACE model and chunking methods are techniques that I use often. In my classes, whether in the MSLT program or in future classes, these two teaching techniques will be essential. It is important to bear in mind that this teaching philosophy statement reflects my current understanding, and that I consider it incumbent upon me to stay up-to-date as second language teaching evolves and to adjust my teaching philosophy accordingly.

Professional Development through Teaching Observations

**Introduction**

During the MSLT program, I conducted classroom teaching observations of Chinese and Spanish courses. I observed six classes in total, including novice-level (CHIN1010 and SPAN1010) and intermediate level (CHIN2010) classes. All of the instructors displayed a passion for the language they taught, and they inspired me and broadened my knowledge of how to incorporate my teaching philosophy when teaching my own language classes.

**Intercultural Competence**

Language and culture are inseparable. In one of Chinese classes I observed, the topic for that day was "to go shopping", and the lesson objectives were to learn vocabulary words related to shopping and recognize numbers in Mandarin. At the beginning of class, the instructor used images to introduce the culture of giving gifts in China. For example, sharp objects or the number four, which has the same pronunciation as the word for "dead" in Mandarin, should not be given as gifts. Using pictures to explain such abstract concepts made the concepts more concrete and easier for students to understand. After introducing the topic and goals, the instructor taught specific sentence structures the students would need.

When teaching the term "honorable surname", the instructor explained that it is a polite form of asking for one's last name and that it is used to ask interlocutors whose social statuses are equal or higher than the speaker (e.g., teachers, elders, customers, business partners, etc.). Then the students participated in an activity in which they practiced choosing the correct informal form (你叫什麼[么] ? 你姓什麼[么]? [What is your name?]) or formal form (您貴[贵]姓 ? [May I know your last name?]) to ask for people's names depending on their age, social status, and type of relationship they have

with the interlocutors. At the end of the class, the instructor introduced a few polite language terms for communication. The first one was 請問 [请问] [May I ask]. The instructor stated that 請問 [请问] is often used at the beginning of a sentence as a polite way to introduce a question. The second one was 哪裡[里] [where? where?], which is used to respond to a compliment. The instructor explained that it literally meant, "where can the compliment possibly apply in my case?". She further explained how Chinese people usually use this term to reject a compliment to show their humbleness and how accepting the compliment by saying, "thank you", might appear arrogant to Chinese people.

The third term introduced was "對[对]不起"[sorry]. The instructor pointed out that the terms are unlike those used in English, which could be used to express sympathy. She stated that "對[对]不起" literally meant being incapable of facing someone and is only used to express apologies. After the instructor explained all three polite terms, the students were asked to work in pairs and create short conversations to practice using the terms accurately.

**PACE model**

PACE is a story-based/guided participatory approach to language instruction. It represents four stages in the teaching process which are presentation, attention, co-construction, and extension.

In the presentation stage, the teacher showed the grammar explanation first by using cohesive discourse such as stories, poems, recordings, songs, etc. Literal comprehension and meaning are emphasized in this stage. The instructor chose a dialogue from the textbook and edited it for teaching Chinese grammar because the students are familiar with the characters and the background of the story. The teaching objective was to help students learn and distinguish two confusing Chinese characters about tense expression "又" and "再", where the former, "又", means that something has already

happened, and it happened again, while the latter, "再", means that something will happen. In the presentation stage, the teacher first presented the story with the picture slides. To check their comprehension of the story, she asked students five questions (Did Wu apply for Chinese visa successfully? (Y/N); What did Wu forget to bring? Lin will come back again tomorrow. (T/F); How many forms has Wu filled out? (1/2/3?); If Wu applies for a Chinese visa successfully next time, how many times has he been to Chinese Embassy? (1/2/3?)). Then, the instructor retold the story and the students were able to comprehend it better because of the questions.

In the attention stage, the instructor assisted the learners in focusing their attention on the particular language form of "又" and "再". She handed out the script of the story and a chart with two columns (one for the "又 and the other column with "再" listed) and instructed them to work in pairs to draw a straight and wavy line under the short sentence with "又" and "再", respectively, then asked students to copy the sentences that contain each character in either column. As they worked in pairs, the instructor began to prompt them to look for any patterns between the two columns of the sentences that contain each character, and invited them to discuss what they noticed about the two different forms.

In the co-construction stage, the instructor designed two activities to guide them to co-construct the language form of "又" and "再" and discover the patterns by themselves. The first activity of "C" stage is to discuss in pairs about the differences between the two different example sentences with "又" and "再". This helps students try to find the differences and reminds them of the patterns of the sentences of the dialogue script with straight and wavy lines. They were able to find out the pattern by themselves. Moreover, the second activity reinforces their findings by raising the sign with the correct character ("又" or "再") to fill the blanks of the example sentences in the whole class. There might

have been some students who hadn't found the pattern, but they would have been able learn by noticing others' signs, which would have pushed them to think about the pattern.

In the extension stage, the teacher helped the learners use the patterns they just figured out to make two sentences with "又" and "再" according to the pictures on the slides. The language form was applied in the task immediately. It could be seen clearly if they understood the differences between "又" and "再" through the specific extension activity. Lastly, the teacher instructed them to role play and read the story again. The language forms of "又" and "再" were emphasized in the story and students could see how it applies in the textbook.

The PACE model gave the teacher and the students a chance to be engaged in authentic and even interesting material. By using the pictures and gestures, the teacher guided and scaffolded students to eventually comprehend the story and then drew students' attention to the language forms in focus. Students were active learners who worked on understanding the grammatical structures. The PACE approach also facilitated the development of learners' metalinguistic awareness. However, a story-based approach does have some challenges. Firstly, it may not work for every grammar point. Secondly, it is time-consuming to design the various stages and implement all of them in class. Thirdly, it is not easy to find authentic material with a suitable degree of difficulty for language learners.

**Pedagogy Beliefs**

I found two differences between Spanish and Chinese classes. The first difference was the target language used. In the Spanish class, the instructor used Spanish to explain or correct students most of the time, but the Chinese instructor used Chinese in the classroom significantly less. The second difference was the teaching style. In the Spanish class, I found that the role of the instructor was to guide students to do the tasks and help them

with correcting their mistakes or questions they had. In most cases, learners would learn words that they had not known previously and, by asking questions, would acquire new knowledge. In the Chinese class, the instructor listed new vocabulary words and grammar rules on the board and led students through more regimented tasks.

One reason for this difference in teaching styles may be because of the language system itself and pedagogy difference. Spanish is derived from a dialect of spoken Latin, and some English words share that origin, retaining similar intonation, alphabet, and vocabulary. Even if a native English speaker learns Spanish or vice versa, they are likely to be able to pronounce the terms correctly more easily. However, Chinese comes from the Sino-Tibetan language family, with four tones and unique characters. Non-native Chinese speakers cannot learn such characters working solely from an alphabet. Therefore, my observation experiences in Chinese classes were quite different from those in Spanish classes.

**Chunking Method**

When I observed a first-semester Chinese class, the instructor first introduced two characters 貴[贵] ("guì" expensive) and 漢 [汉] ("hàn" Chinese). She used chunking method to teach 貴[贵] and 漢 [汉], she pointed out that the radical of 貴[贵] , 貝[贝] ("bèi" shell), means money and explained that in ancient times, Chinese used shells as money or used shell-shaped money. The teacher's explanation of the radicals and related history was very effective in engaging the students, thus helping them remember the characters easily. When teaching the character 漢 [汉], the teacher gave examples of how 漢 [汉] is used with other characters (e.g., 漢 [汉] 人 "hàn rén" Chinese people、漢[汉]字 "hàn zì" Chinese character、漢語 [汉语] "hàn yǔ" Mandarin/Cantonese). This instructor's

approach to helping students make connections is a good illustration of chunking, which I describe in my teaching philosophy as an effective method.

**Other observation**

Another first-semester class I observed was taught in Spanish. At the beginning of the class, the instructor gave students 15 minutes to review previous material. He used different ways to help students do a self-check. The instructor divided the class into two groups, and everyone in each group drew something which was learned in a previous class while the other people guessed what it was. The students who guessed fastest and made the fewest mistakes would get a facsimile of a Spanish-speaking country's currency. The instructor walked around and corrected their pronunciation while the students worked in small groups.

After finishing the review, the instructor gave students seven minutes to find a Spanish recipe online which had at least ten ingredients. Then, students were divided into new groups of two. One of them drew his/her ingredients and the other guessed what the food was without allowing their partner to see their notes, which took 15-minutes. The instructor made corrections immediately when students made grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation mistakes. Students could also correct their own mistakes as they learned.

In the last part of the class, the instructor used interaction instruction. For example, students changed partners, repeated what they did, and tried to find other students who drew the same ingredient as them, taking about 10-minutes. This gave students an opportunity to practice using the target language in different situations.

There were two similarities between the Chinese and Spanish classes. The first one was the use of the target language. Both instructors used a slow pace, understandable vocabulary, simple sentences to explain new concepts, along with clear pronunciation that students could understand. Even though I cannot speak Spanish, I could understand what

the word meant after the instructor explained. I believe that most students would be able to acquire and retain new vocabulary in the same way I did. Another similarity was the use of intervention and interaction. In both classes, instructors used oral corrective feedback to correct mistakes immediately, which helped emphasize communication. Also, students responded to their teacher's feedback by correcting their errors right away, to which the instructor replied with encouragement, such as 'good' or 'right'.

Both instructors provided oral corrective feedback when students made vocabulary or grammar mistakes. Lyster, Saito, and Sato (2012) discuss the types of oral CF found in second language classrooms. From my observations and according to the aforementioned reading, I found that the most common type of oral CF that instructors use is explicit correction, which is a reformulation of a student utterance plus a clear indication of an error.

The opportunity to carry out these observations helped me fine-tune my teaching philosophy and deepen my understanding of the importance of culture and pedagogy. Language cannot exist without culture, and integrating cultural aspects as observed in the Chinese class can attract and retain learners. In my opinion, regarding pedagogy, these observations changed my mind from exclusively student-centered teaching methods to a combination of student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogy. Teachers can have more control of the lesson and lead students through the learning process, and students can exchange their thoughts and ideas meaningfully in the L2 classroom.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY PAPER


Using the Chunking Method to Learn Chinese Characters in a College-level Foreign
Language Classroom

ORIENTATION & REFLECTION

This teaching reflection describes the Chinese character acquisition method applied in a CFL classroom. The word "chunk" is defined as "several pieces of information in a meaningful unit" (Sung & Tsai, 2019, p. 139). The chunking method is to break down Chinese characters into chunks to reduce the complexity of character forms and present smaller units for encoding (Sung, Tsai & Huang, 2019; Sung & Tsai, 2019). The chunking method is also called "bujian jiaoxuefa". During my time in a Chinese elementary school, I was taught a similar method in Chinese class. From my personal experience, using the chunking method, which shows the whole character minus a small chunk that students need to fill in, is effective and helps students remember the characters. When teaching Chinese at USU, I expected my students to benefit from using the chunking method to learn Chinese characters. With the help of Dr. Sung, I started to design chunking activities for beginners, and Dr. Sung gave me the chance to teach chunking in her class on Fridays for one semester. After carrying out language activities and teaching students via the chunking method, it appeared to me that CFL students learned and reviewed characters more efficiently. Implementing the chunking method has helped me understand the logic of character instruction. I gained valuable experience designing the chunking instructional activities to assist students in learning CFL.

Using the Chunking Method to Learn Chinese Characters in a College-level Foreign Language Classroom

**Introduction**

Mandarin Chinese is the official language of China. It has become one of the most popular languages in recent years, as the Chinese economy has grown to become the second-largest in the world. However, people who speak Indo-European languages, such as English, Spanish, German, and French, find it hard to acquire the Sino-Tibetan languages, including Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese, Korean, and Japanese (Padilla et al., 2013), all of which use Chinese characters to various extents. Unlike alphabetic writing systems, Chinese characters combine phonographic and morphological systems, one of the most challenging writing systems for L2 learners (Shen, 2005). In fact, over 80% of the characters combine a semantic radical with a phonetic radical (Yin & Rohsenow, 1994). For example, the character 座 /zuò/ (seat) consists of the semantic radical 广 /guǎng/ (widely) on the top, and the phonetic radical 坐 /zuò/ (sit) on the bottom. However, the challenges of most native English-speaking learners are the distinction of the meaning of phonetic radicals and semantic radicals (Shen, 2005). To help students from this L1 background, researchers developed the chunking method to teach Chinese characters. Chunking (Chen, Zhang & Isahara, 2006; Pak et al., 2005; Sung, Tsai, & Hung, 2019; Xu & Padilla, 2013) is defined as combining "many pieces of information in a meaningful unit" (Sung & Tsai, 2019, p. 139). In Chinese character instruction, the chunking method is applied to deconstruct a Chinese character into smaller units according to different radicals (Sung, Tsai, & Huang, 2020). A total of 50,000 Chinese characters can be divided into semantic radical, phonetic radical, or even smaller chunks, while at other times, a

whole character can be a chunk (Cao et al., 2013; Sung et al., 2020). Sung, Tsai, and Hung stress that Chinese character acquisition through visual chunking, also called the "chunking method," can produce easier recall and reduce visual memory load. Therefore, this teaching reflection addresses the chunking method in the novice-level and advanced-level learners in CFL classrooms.

**Literature Review**

Current literature has pointed out that radical-based training can promote character acquisition for novice-level learners. For example, Sung, Tsai, and Huang (2020) investigated the use of the chunking method on character recognition in a Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program, which is an academic program in which instructors use English and the target language to teach students (Sung & Tsai, 2019). The authors established a chunking group and a control group in a first-grade class. The chunking group was taught by conducting a chunking activity and reviewing the chunking concept. The control group learned characters through the comprehension of each character and creating meaningful sentences. The experiment lasted one academic semester, and pre-post test data were collected from both groups. The students were assessed according to seven criteria: "character writing, pinyin, stroke and chunk knowledge, structural knowledge, character configuration, radical knowledge, and radical meaning" (Sung, Tsai, & Huang, 2020, pp. 119-120). Sung et al. concluded that the chunking method had a positive effect on character configuration, radical awareness, and chunking knowledge, which is crucial for students' continued learning of Chinese in the future.

Before Sung, Tsai, and Huang (2020) investigated the chunking method applied in a DLI program, Xu, Chang, and Perfetti (2014) researched Chinese character radical learning. They examined novice-level and intermediate-level

learners in higher education using radical-based training, such as matching tasks including meaning and sounds, radical recognition, and semantic awareness. Xu et al. (2014) found that novices exhibited better character memorization and comprehension on radical learning. They explained that novice-level learners' training significantly influenced radical semantic recognition, aiding students to perceive character structure and function. Furthermore, repeating multiple compound characters' radicals facilitates radical knowledge application by intermediate learners (Xu, Chang, & Perfetti, 2014). The difference between radicals and chunks is that chunks are sometimes meaningless and serve no function in a whole character. For example, 剪 (jiǎn, "to cut") consist of 刀 (dāo, "knife") as a radical and 前 (qián, "front") as a phonetic radical. However, "剪" has five chunks: the inverted version of the character 八，一，月, 刂, and 刀. These five chunks represent characters of different meanings, but the meaning becomes "to cut" when assembled into a unit (i.e., a chunk).

In addition to applying this method on a CFL student population, some researchers have also investigated this approach with Chinese as native language learners as their participants. Pak, Cheng, Tso, Shu, Li, and Anderson (2005) investigated the visual chunking skills with primary school students in Hong Kong. The participants were local elementary students. They were all Cantonese native speakers of different ages and grades. The authors conducted a pre-test prior to determining eligibility for enrollment in the experiment. Based on the reading test and their performance at school, students were separated into different levels of Chinese groups (novice, average, and high). The results suggested that using the chunking method was effective for above-average and high-level Chinese students. These findings supported the hypothesis the authors made before doing this experiment. The

researchers suggested that the chunking method reduced learners' memory load when memorizing characters, especially for average and high-level Chinese students. Therefore, it was concluded that chunking skills significantly affected general radical knowledge and improved reading performance.

In mainland China, several Chinese scholars have also investigated the chunking method research on CFL; amongst them were Shen and Tang (2013). They analyzed their teaching experiences and concluded that CFL teachers should have at least five types of awareness and strategies to teach Chinese characters to CFL students: Language input exceeds the output, from divergent language teaching to convergent language teaching, teaching Chinese grapheme as the central part of the teaching plan, using the chunking method as a teaching strategy, and combining the theory of constructing Chinese character construction and popular explanation to teach Chinese characters. Shen and Tang (2013) stated that CFL teachers are required to notice three notes when they teach Chinese characters through the chunking method. There are the chunk positions in a character, compare similar chunks of two or more characters, and avoid negative immigration from their native language to each chunk in a Chinese character. For instance, some CFL students want to write the radical 竹 (zhú, bamboo), but they wrote "kk" because they were not well-versed with the radicals.

Moreover, the chunking method could stimulate our brain and enhance character recognition awareness accordingly. In a study by Cao et al. (2013), the researchers used ERP and fMRI to record brain activity while students were trained on character recognition tasks, including reading, writing, and chunking. The results on visual chunking instruction indicated that when visual learners used the chunking

method to recognize characters, it encouraged their brain and had a positive influence on orthographic unknown character recognition.

Numerous studies have investigated the radical recognition process and the chunking method with younger learners. CFL learning is becoming popular and higher education learners need to be studied as well. Therefore, this teaching reflection showed the effects of visual chunking on college students' ability to recall and recognize Chinese characters.

**Teaching Context**

There were 24 students who were college students in the U.S. learning Chinese as a second language in my class. I designed 10 weeks of character and chunking instruction with all students. With chunking instruction, they learned the 12-character configurations, which are the structure and meaning of each radical. Also, I showed slides that contained a single character, each character's composition, and the importance of the word. After learning the meanings and configurations of the target characters, I guided the students through the following chunking activities:

1) Finding the same part:

This part is a warm-up activity, and it was showed to students to make sure they recalled the learning outcomes of the previous class. Each pair of characters had the same radical. Students needed to find the same radical and fill in the adjacent blank.

※ The two characters have a part in common. Write the common part in the blank.

◎ Simplified

1. 姨 / 奶: _____
2. 妈 / 她: _____
3. 爸 / 爷: _____
4. 他 / 们: _____
5. 吗 / 呢: _____

◎ Traditional

1. 姨 / 奶: _____
2. 媽 / 她: _____
3. 爸 / 爺: _____
4. 他 / 們: _____
5. 嗎 / 呢: _____

2) Matching Exercise:

In this part, a total of ten characters (including simplified and traditional versions) were divided into two groups, and each group had two lists. The first list showed the radical, and the second list showed the rest of the characters. Students needed to connect each list in one group and write the whole character in the adjacent blank.

※Matching Game

◎ Simplified

A: 1.未  2.彳  3.亻  4.女  5.父
B: a. 阝  b.夷  c.门  d.又  e.艮

Your answers: _____

◎ Traditional

A: 1.未  2.彳  3.亻  4.女  5.父
B: a.耶  b.夷  c.門  d.又  e.艮

Your answers: _____

C:  6.口  7.亻  8.女
D:  f.乃  g.也  h.尼

Your answers:_____

C:  6.口  7.亻  8.女
D:  f.乃  g.也  h.尼

Your answers:_____

3) Filling in the missing part of a character:

This section contained seven or eight characters with simplified and traditional versions. The characters had a missing radical or one stroke. Students needed to recall and fill in the missing part.

※ The provided characters are missing some parts. Fill in the missing parts, then write the character in the adjacent blank.

| ○ Simplified | ○ Traditional |
|---|---|
| 1. 也(he; him) _____ | 1. 也(he; him) _____ |
| 2. 冉(again) _____ | 2. 冉(again) _____ |
| 3. ヒ(to see; to meet) _____ | 3. ヒ(to see; to meet) _____ |
| 4. 彳 (very) _____ | 4. 彳 (very) _____ |
| 5. 马(an interrogative particle used to formal questions) _____ | 5. 馬(an interrogative particle used to formal questions) _____ |
| 6. 父(grandfather) _____ | 6. 父(grandfather) _____ |
| 7. 女(auntie) _____ | 7. 女(auntie) _____ |

After class, I also had informal conversations with students to discuss their language background, the chunking activity, motivation, and learning habits. Except for class interaction and informal discussions, the final test was the chunking activity similar to the in-class activity conducted.

**Reflection**

From class interaction, informal after-class conversations with students, and their performance of each chunking class and final test during an academic semester, I

found that most students in the class experienced three stages when they used the chunking method to learn and memorize Chinese characters:

1) *Feeling Overwhelmed:* Most students had learned some Chinese in high school, but none learned how to write Chinese characters systematically, such as understanding the radicals. According to after-class conversations with students who took Chinese classes in high school, their high school Chinese teacher focused more on teaching the meaning and pronunciation of characters rather than writing them. This led students to feel overwhelmed when they tried to read or write Chinese. For example, a student was trying to practice "美" [měi, pretty] in the class before she learned it. She tried to count how many strokes were in it.

2) *Strategy Change:* Upon introducing the chunking method, most students adjusted their memory approach from an alphabetic memory strategy to a radical memory strategy. Take, for example, "美." Before they learned the chunking method, some of the students read "美" like a big picture with a lot of lines and triangles, and they were amazed that they could memorize so many strokes. However, I found that most of the students tried to find the different radicals together when focused on each part and radicals. For instance, in the final test, students separated "美" into "羊" [yáng, sheep] and "大" [dà, big] to remember the character. Therefore, students gradually felt less overwhelmed to look at the parts of the characters instead of the whole thing at once. Moreover, because most chunks have their actual meaning, and sometimes it has a new meaning when several chunks are combined to form a new character (Huang & Liao, 2017), this "magic" motivates students to learn Chinese characters. In general, it revealed that students started to memorize chunks rather than strokes.

3) *Chunking Acceptance:* After one semester of instruction, I asked students for teaching feedback. Most of the students expressed positive feelings about using the

chunking method to learn or memorize Chinese characters and said that they would continue using this method as it is easier for them to recall the different parts that make up the whole character. Furthermore, in the three activities that I designed for the chunking method class, students preferred the second activity to recall the characters, which is the "matching game." Some students considered the first activity, "finding the same part," as good for practice, and the last activity, "filling in the missing part of a character," as a challenging level for students that want to achieve a higher level of learning.

**Conclusion**

Most CFL learners regard Chinese as a complex language. The Foreign Service Institute of the U.S. Department of State identifies 66 languages divided into four categories according to the average length of time it takes to learn the language. Chinese Mandarin is in Category IV, deemed "exceptionally difficult for native English speakers." It states that a native English speaker must spend around 88 weeks (2,200 class hours) to learn Mandarin and accomplish proficiency (U.S. Department of State, 2018). Chinese characters are more challenging to learn than oral Chinese for CFL students (Shen & Tang, 2013). As a CFL teacher, according to my students' performance in this class and my reflection, the chunking method could mitigate the difficulty of learning Chinese radicals and characters effectively for novice college CFL students. Based on the structural and fundamental differences between the Chinese and English writing systems, I have introduced the chunking method to learn Chinese characters and designed two types of chunking method activities. Students in my class have adopted a positive attitude when learning and memorizing Chinese characters.

This teaching reflection delineated the chunking method instruction in a college-level foreign language class. According to this method of education, I found that CFL students showed three stages of learning: feeling overwhelmed, strategy change, and chunking acceptance. Generally, students shifted their strategy to memorization of radicals after mastering the chunking method. Moreover, I encourage CFL high school Chinese teachers to balance teaching characters and pronunciation, which can obviate the phenomenon whereby CFL students only understand the meaning of characters but do not know how to write them.

CULTURE PAPER

The Teaching of Global Competence in Chinese as a Foreign Language Classrooms

Orientation & Reflection

This is the first research paper that I wrote in the MSLT program. It was conducted in the LING 6490 taught by Dr. Sung. For this case study, I investigated the teaching of global competence in a Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) classroom. Learning CFL involves not only acquiring linguistic skills, but also having the ability to communicate in culturally appropriate ways in the target language environment. From reading the related literature, I found a lack of research investigating how global competency is cultivated in CFL classrooms in home institution settings. Hence, the classroom observations and teacher interviews in this paper displayed how a CFL instructor perceived the level of importance of the different components of global competence, and how the different components were emphasized in teaching practices. In the paper, I used the three standards of intercultural competence from Li (2016) to demonstrate and analyze the global competence and intercultural competence in the Chinese language classroom. The implications of the research results may inform language educators and language program administrators on specific strategies to integrate the teaching of global competence in CFL in home institution setting. The study's implications informed me, as a graduate instructor and a native Chinese speaker, on how to teach Chinese culture and intercultural skills, and helped me develop a better understanding of my native culture.

Teaching Global Competence in a Chinese Foreign Language Classroom[1]

**Introduction**

With the sky-rocketing economic development of China, the need to learn

Mandarin is increasing every year. As demand for exploring China and Chinese culture

has increased, more and more students have realized the importance of learning Mandarin

and developing global competence. Li (2013) described two aspects of global

competence. The first involves students using systematic learning methods to obtain

global competence, and the second involves the instructor offering students an

opportunity to connect with the target culture and communicate with the native speakers.

Unfortunately, there is an abundance of terminology that has the same meaning as

global competence, such as, "transcultural competence" (Fantini, 2009, p. 457 ) as well as

"the ability to comprehend and analyze the cultural narratives that appear in every kind of

expressive form" (Koda, 2010, p. 1), and "intercultural competence" (Fantini, 2009, p.

457). Intercultural competence is defined as a person's ability "to interact with those from

different backgrounds, regardless of location" (Deardroff, 2011, p. 66). All these

definitions offer valid terms and lenses; however, for the purposes of this paper, I will use

the expression *global competence* to refer to speakers' abilities to interact successfully in

the target language with interlocutors of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Acquiring global competence is of particular importance to language learners.

However, most US language learners have had few experiences that develop their

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[1] Data for this study was collected as part of IRB-approved protocol #10707, with Dr. Koyin Sung as the Principal Investigator, at Utah State University

understanding of global competence issues before going abroad (Holm & Farber, 2002). Therefore, they should learn about intercultural sensitivity and cross-cultural awareness before studying abroad. The case study presented in this paper investigates how one university CFL teacher taught global competence. Specifically, it will use Li's (2013) three dimensions of global competence to demonstrate and explore global competence instruction.

**Literature Review**

To better understand how language teachers use pedagogical tools to improve students' global competence, DeWitt and Chan (2019) tested various formative assessment tools to assess and improve students' intercultural communicative competence among Chinese language learners. The participants were 31 college students. All participants were Malay students with no formal language background in Mandarin. The instructional approach included class learning, role plays, activities, and discussions. Upon completing each class or discussion, students were asked a series of questions to test their retention and cultural competence. The results indicated that students enjoyed the class and achieved a more culturally competent mindset.

Similarly, Kennedy (2020) examined two teenage students who were living in New Zealand and learning Chinese as a foreign language without intercultural acquisition. The author explored the questions students generated about the relationship between intercultural competence and beliefs. The instructor used in-class activities, Chinese culture recall, class observations, and interviews. Kennedy found that the students displayed a high level of cultural and intercultural competence after Chinese cultural acquisition. However, misunderstandings about Chinese culture were still evident

in both students. This highlights the need for intercultural content and learning activities to develop intercultural competence. The author recommended that students develop their intercultural competence by watching Chinese movies, creating a culture group, and interacting with native Chinese speakers to reduce the learners' stereotypes. Kennedy also discussed the crucial importance of being culturally competent and how it can affect learners' relationship with others.

Whether working with elementary school, secondary school, or college students, it is imperative for teachers to explore how curricular competencies impact content planning and how content planning enhances intercultural competency. Gracia, Rodríguez, and Carpio (2020) investigated how primary school teachers' professional profile and competence affected their students' Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) intercultural competence. CLIL is "an approach where students learn a subject and a second language at the same time" (Wiseman, 2018, p. 1). Teachers' profile and competence included social and civic competence, linguistic competence, and cultural awareness and expression. The researchers analyzed 59 primary school foreign language teachers' opinions in Cordoba, Spain with an open-ended survey. The questions included what textbook was used, is a textbook used, what is the gender ratio in the classroom, how many years has the teacher been teaching, how many years have they been a second language teacher, and their age. After the survey was completed, the researchers compared that data with the overall cultural competency of their students. They found that students' CLIL was influenced positively by the teachers' professional profile and competences.

Deardorff (2011) defines global competence and emphasizes the importance of its inclusion in postsecondary education. She describes global competence as "effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations, which again can be further detailed in terms of indicators of appropriate behavior in specific contexts" (p. 66). She also claims that US college students who study overseas are less interculturally competent than university students from other countries. For this reason, Deardorff (2011) recommended "internationalization at home" (Deardorff, 2011, p. 71), which means that students should utilize on-campus and off-campus resources to develop their intercultural competence.

The present study follows Li (2013), who describes global competence as being composed of three dimensions: attitudes, skills, and knowledge. These dimensions are used to analyze global competence in a Chinese language classroom. According to Li, attitude includes having an open mind and nonjudgmental ideas to develop an understanding of cultural diversity. In general, attitude is divided into two parts: students accept and welcome the vagueness of cultural diversity, and have open-minded attitudes towards multicultural differences. For example, they can develop respect for different art forms, cuisine, or religions, and compare the similarities and differences between their culture and a foreign culture.

In the second category, skills, Li describes students who have the ability to solve intercultural issues, as well as get along with people that come from other cultural backgrounds by using leadership, linguistic resources, or other personal characteristics. For instance, students can learn to understand and analyze international issues and lay out

their viewpoints, or they can manage a disagreement while demonstrating respect for different cultural viewpoints.

The third dimension in Li's model is knowledge. Li argues that if students want to explore foreign cultures, they should deeply understand their native culture first (Reimers, 2009). Knowledge has three parts in Li's framework: "knowing one's culture of origin, the capacity of foreign culture, and comprehension of worldwide issues such as religious conflicts or economic and political tendencies" (Li, 2013, p. 6). For example, students can learn to gather practical resources such as official government documents or reliable media, analyze global cultural issues, or be able to grasp another culture's fundamental views, including values and beliefs.

From my literature review I conclude that, although studies have been conducted to determine students' global competencies, few have examined what teachers are doing to enhance global competency in their classrooms. So, this case study is both relevant and unique by interviewing a CFL teacher and analyzing her classroom practices based on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes mentioned above. The results of this study will offer suggestions for instructors regarding what they can do to foster students' development to become globally competent.

**Research Question**

Which of the three dimensions does the teacher use the most to help CFL students gain global competency?

**Method**

A CFL instructor at a university in the United States was interviewed and her class was observed. The author interviewed the participant for approximately one hour

twice, and observed five different classes, each one lasting approximately 50 minutes. The analysis was framed by the three dimensions and measurement items explained in Li (2013).

**Participant**

The participant was a part-time instructor originally from Taiwan. She held a master's degree in second language teaching and has been a CFL instructor at the university for about ten years. The class was an intermediate-level course where students learned pinyin, character construction, grammar, and cultural knowledge. In this particular class, some students had been to mainland China or Taiwan, meaning their experience had allowed them to begin developing their views and understanding of Chinese culture.

**Data Analysis**

The author observed five second-level classes taught by the same instructor as a non-participant in the back of the classroom. Interview comments and class observations were analyzed and matched to the criteria of the three global competence dimensions, referenced in Li's (2013) chart.

**Results**

In the observed classes, the instructor involved each Knowledge and Attitude dimensions four times, and use Skill dimension three times, with two of those three overlapping with Attitude dimension. Regarding the research question, results show that knowledge and attitude were the most frequently used dimensions by the instructor. For example, for the attitude dimension, the instructor indicated that

*My approach is to let students try to understand that each culture is*

*different, that is, let students understand that the things every cultural*

*does is different, sometimes they do certain things in a different way*

*than you do.*

In her class, she asked students: "Do you think a man will pay the bill for a lady when they have their first date?" Some students shook their head. The instructor explained that, in Chinese culture, most of time, the man will pay the bill for a lady if they are on a first date. Moreover, someone will pay everybody's bill when they receive their first salary, have good news, or move to a new place. Also, the instructor stated in the interview that:

*In fact, there are a wide range of different countries in the culture, and*

*then it can be explained that each continent has the culture of their*

*own, and students feel more empathetic. Because you've already had*

*your own culture background, and you could agree that the culture of*

*this country has entirely similarities with our own culture, so that*

*students have a sense of cognition and acceptable easily.*

The instructor also discussed gift giving with her students. She introduced some taboos from Chinese culture, for example, sharp objects, clocks, and anything with the number four (because its pronunciation is the same as for the word meaning "dead" in Mandarin). After that, she talked about similarities with the United States, like a visitor to someone's home should always bring something, although cultural norms dictate what this 'something' can be.

Regarding the knowledge aspect, the instructor stated in the interview:

*For example, bargaining, greeting, saying hello, also some phrases are*

*ironic or not to be taken literally. Like if they don't want something they*

*wouldn't directly refuse it, this is how most people communicate.*

Another example the instructor used involved the character "热", which indicates

that most Chinese people like hot drinks, such as hot tea or hot water.

The skill dimension was also evident in the class, but less than the knowledge and

attitude dimensions. Although the instructor did not express her pedagogical view of the

skill dimension, the author observed that the instructor taught students how to use the

lunar calendar to check what was suitable or to be avoided on a given day. This matches

with "the ability to identify and collect evidence from a variety of credible international

sources, and media format for global issues" (Li, 2013, p. 6).

**Conclusion**

In general, through interviews and classroom observations, I learned to examine

the extent to which this CFL teacher instructed her students in three different dimensions

of global competence: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These dimensions were derived

from Li's (2013) research on global competence.

After analyzing the instructor interviews and class observations, I found that the

knowledge and attitudes dimensions were addressed more often than the skill dimension.

In future research, I would like to investigate whether directly focusing on those three

dimensions will result in more globally competent students. The students might

experience less anxiety when studying abroad or visiting a foreign country. Students may

be able to more easily integrate into a foreign culture and have a more positive

experience.

This case study involved just one teacher and her one class of students. It should be borne in mind that every classroom is different, and each teacher will have their own unique set of specific pedagogies that work for them. However, I believe it will benefit each teacher to survey their students to assess their level of global competence, similar to how this was accomplished by DeWitt and Chan (2019). I also believe that teachers should base their curriculum on the three dimensions identified by Li (2013). By addressing all three dimensions, the language teacher will foster more well-rounded and culturally fluent students. This study could be expanded by also interviewing students regarding their feelings of culture acquisition. In addition, a future investigation on this topic could also involve more Chinese language teachers, which would make the results be more generalizable.

Last but not least, the author would like to encourage each class give students opportunities to experience Chinese culture, whether that be visual, via a documentary, or physically, by meeting and talking with a native Chinese person. This could vastly improve each student's global competency and allow them to gain a more significant appreciation for cultures that differ from their own.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Collaborative Writing in L2 Contexts

Collaborative Writing in L2 Contexts

**Introduction**

For this annotated bibliography, I worked with Zhen Li when we took LING 6520 together in the spring semester of 2020. When I was learning English, writing an essay in English was also a challenge to me. I had never been assigned a CW (Collaborative Writing) task prior to coming to the United States. My first experiences of CW came from working on group writing projects in my intensive writing class. I realized that CW reduces my anxiety about writing and increases my awareness of the importance of collaboration, as well as allows me to learn from others' perspectives and feedback. Based on my positive personal experiences of CW, I am dedicated to using the pedagogy of CW to help Chinese learners develop their writing skills in my future career.

**Theoretical Framework**

Collaborative Writing (CW) is a process-oriented writing approach. Storch defines CW as "the production of a text by two or more writers" (Storch, 2016, p. 387). Another definition describes CW as "an assignment in which students work together from start to finish, producing a single paper from the group" (Howard, 2001, p.54). 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' first language (L1) and second language (L2) writing abilities (Coffin, 2020). 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 starts from a social

perspective, which is on an intermental plane; and then transitions into the individual/intramental plane (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013). 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 sociocultural theory, learning is a social activity that is mediated through physical and symbolic tools, activities, and human mediators (Kozulin, 2003). Human mediators 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 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and it is in this space where learning occurs (Walqui, 2006). As participants in classroom activities, students scaffold each other and co-construct knowledge. In CW, students are provided opportunities to interact with and learn from each other. When these individuals have different understandings and backgrounds, they can help each other gain a deeper understanding or a new perspective that would not otherwise be achieved by the individual alone. As such, 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) points out, activities lead individuals to have an action to achieve the goal. According to AT, learners are motivated to learn when their goals support their participation in learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Collaborative writing 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, 1995; as cited in 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.

**Summary of Relevant Literature**

Many studies investigated the process and application of CW and showed positive results. Storch's (2005) study took place at a large Australian university's 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 given a visual prompt of two immigrants' change of language proficiency since coming to Australia. Students who chose to work in pairs were asked to record their communications during the task, which were then transcribed for analysis. Results from two pairs were discarded due to a failure to record and one pair's lack of agreement which led to a lack of coherence in the final writing product. 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, generate ideas,

language- and structure- related discussions, interpreting prompts, reading/rereading, and

writing management. It was also reported that most students spoke positively about CW.

Specifically, the students worked in pairs stated that CW allowed them to compare ideas,

improve grammar 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 others, while others worried about having

to give their partner negative feedback.

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. Students reported their positive experiences with CW. 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. Participants also reported some concerns with CW, 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.

Coffin's (2020) study focused on CW processes and learners' and teachers' perspectives on using CW in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The researcher adopted a qualitative approach using 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 collaborative learning. In addition, the small classroom setting was seen as not an ideal environment for collaborative learning, as it was difficult for students to all engage actively during the task without distractions from others. It was also found that the experienced teacher was more effective than the less experienced teacher in engaging the whole class in collaborative learning. 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's study looked into in-class web-based CW tasks' influence on learners' improvement of writing, as well as teachers' and students' opinions regarding using 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 which consisted of 32 students were assigned to the collaborative writing group while 27 students from the other two sections served as a control group in which students 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. To study students' perceptions of engaging in in-class, web-based CW, questionnaires were used. Teachers' perceptions were also collected through semi-structured interviews.

The study found that students in the CW group showed more improvement in writing compared to those who wrote individually. Four themes were found in qualitative interviews, including benefits of in-class web-based CW, observations of students' collaboration process, teacher factors that affect students' learning, and suggestions. It was acknowledged that technology brought flexibility in implementing CW. 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 using collaboration during the writing task at the beginning of the course. Teachers could either let students choose their own groups or take personality differences into consideration while assigning students into groups, in order to maximize the benefits of CW.

Elola and Oskoz's (2010) research explored the effects of using social tools (i.e., wikis and chats) on CW tasks. The study involved eight Spanish majors at a mid-sized East Coast University who were taking an advanced Spanish writing course. The instructor selected PBwiki as the media for students to create their writing and a way to track changes that were made by students in each group. Each of the four pairs also chose either text-chats or voice-chats to record learners' 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/collaborative writing 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 their study did not suggest any significant differences between CW and individual writing outcome (i.e., fluency, accuracy, complexity) in the second draft. When the two drafts were compared, the researcher 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. The study also analyzed 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 tended to define thematic sentences in the first draft and revisit the structure after a few drafts were completed. 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 of their work together. 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 suggested that different technologies provided different benefits. Regardless of the perceived benefits of CW, a majority of students expressed a preference to write individually. Cho's (2017) study used Activity Theory (AT) as its framework and analyzed the relationship between students' goals and their interaction patterns in voice-based and text-based CW tasks. This study focused on three English as a Second Language (ESL) learners' process of writing summary reports for a debate in a Canadian University's debate club. The three ESL learners were selected to be in a focal group out of 12 participants of a large research project. 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. The first one was to write an essay for a debate topic while communicating via text-chat. The second task involved using voice chat to write a debate summary for a different topic. The research areas that the study was most concerned with were interaction patterns among participated ESL learners during

web-based CW tasks using text-chat or voice-chat, the reciprocal influence of individual goals on group dynamics, as well as additional factors influencing group interactions during web-based CW tasks. Interactions between students were classified into three categories, which were on-task talk, about-task talk, and off-task talk. The researcher also found other factors mediating peer interactions in web-based CW, such as means of communication, participants' understanding and division of tasks, expectations of roles, and learners' perspectives on peer feedback. After collecting data, the author found that synchronous voice chat was preferred by students due to its "instantaneous and interactive nature" and that students "initiated more decision-making episodes" (p. 47-49) when using voice chat instead of text chat. The study suggests that students' understanding of the task itself affects their goals and their actions taken 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. At the same time, teachers need to be aware of these goals and assist students to achieve them. This study also 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 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 and advanced-level ESL graduate students participated in the study. The authors raised two research questions, involving the interaction patterns among two groups of students during wiki-based CW tasks, and sociocultural factors that account for these interactions.

Through their observations, they 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, which were the collective pattern and the dominant or defensive pattern. These patterns were developed to explain and compare the two groups' dynamic interactions in wiki-based CW. Students also exhibited collective agency and used collaborative agency words such as 'we' and 'our when feeling positive about their teamwork. 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 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. This approach could help prevent group isolation or minority awareness in CW.

Chen and Hapgood's (2019) research looked into the role psychological factors play in CW. The authors 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-method approach and collected data from 40 intermediate-level English learners in two reading and writing classes of the same language level. Participants were at a seven-week-long intensive English-language program in the Midwest of the United State of America. The experimental group was provided training on CW knowledge, while the control group did not receive any

training. Learners were assigned to each pair by the teacher and both groups were given the same writing task to accomplish. The whole program was divided into four stages, with different tasks assigned to each stage. 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. Their research questions included whether and how the knowledge of CW affect interactive patterns and LREs' usage. The results indicated that participants in the experimental group who attended a training on knowledge of CW 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, they mentioned that 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 positives attitudes towards CW. As such, they recommended teachers to help students develop "declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge" (p. ??) about CW prior to engaging in CW tasks. This study also illustrated the important role attitudes and beliefs play in facilitating learning.

Jalili and Shahrokhi (2017) investigated social and affective benefits of using CW tasks among Iranian EFL learners. The researchers raised two research questions about the differences of anxiety level among L2 learners who write individually and collaboratively, and whether there exist positive attitudes toward CW among Iranian

intermediate EFL learners. They hypothesized that there is no significant difference between individual and collaborative writers' writing anxiety levels, and Iranian intermediate EFL learners do not exhibit positive attitudes towards CW. Sixty female intermediate EFL learners with the age ranges from 16 to 28 were included in the study based on the results of Oxford Placement Test (OPT) and formed two groups. The collaborative group consisted of 29 learners, while the individual group had 31 learners. Data were collected at language institute in Iran over two weeks' period. The writing task involved writing 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 this writing task. After completing the task, the writing anxiety level of both groups of students were assessed using the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI), and their perceptions of CW were measured by the Collaborative Writing Questionnaire (CWQ). The conclusion was that CW reduces writing anxiety and increases students' motivation. In their study, participants reported having a positive attitude toward CW. According to the results, the authors suggested that instructors use CW as a pedagogical tool to motivate students and lower their writing anxiety level.

Talib and Cheung (2017) provided an overview of research on the topic of CW in L1 and L2 from 2006 to 2016. They pointed out that the focus of the research in this area has evolved from 'traditional CW' to using technology in CW. They were primarily concerned with findings about the effectiveness and impacts of CW through the last decade. Using the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) as a search agent 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 of them based on their content and method. Their qualitative analysis of the 68 studies focused on the common themes of the studies.

They listed 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, 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 compared to writing individually (Anggraini, Rozimela, &Anwar, 2020; 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). Some studies measured pre-and post-writing scores and concluded that students who engaged in CW showed more improvement in writing compared to those who wrote individually (Bikowski & Vithanage, 2016). Although Elola and Oskoz's (2010) quantitative data did not show any significant differences between CW and individual writing outcomes (i.e., fluency, accuracy, complexity), their qualitative data supported the benefits of CW.

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 lowers students' writing anxiety (Jalili & Shahrokhi, 2017). Students reported that CW allows them the ability to improve grammatical accuracy and vocabulary use by observing others' language use while also having fun (Storch, 2005). In one study, interviews from teachers and students suggested that CW has a positive influence on teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills (Coffin, 2020). Overall, students who participated in CW tasks spoke positively about CW (Jalili & Shahrokhi, 2017; Storch, 2005; Talib & Cheung, 2017).

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; Coffin, 2020). 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). Teachers are encouraged to take into account students' personality factors when assigning groups, limit the number of students in each group, and monitor interpersonal dynamics during collaboration. Some students reported having reservations about CW. Some students prefer to write individually and believe that writing is an individual activity (Elola & Oskoz, 2010; Storch, 2005). This is

partially related to students' lack of confidence in their writing and fear of giving and receiving negative feedback (Storch 2005).

Social technological tools are frequently used nowadays. These tools allow students to communicate outside face-to-face interactions, and teachers to monitor and track students' participation and engagement during CW (Bikowski & Vithanage, 2016; Elola & Oskoz, 2010). The studies listed above reported positive findings about using these social technological tools (Talib & Cheung, 2017). For example, Elola and Oskoz (2010) found that wikis and chat help learners develop the content and structure of their essays and form a 'community of practice'. The use of technology also increases students' sense of ownership of their work, makes collaboration more effective through the online platform, and facilitates critical thinking by selecting which information to attend to. It was pointed out that selecting technological tools (e.g., voice chat or text chat) that is appropriate to students' level and characteristics is very important (Cho, 2017).

Many researchers looked into social and affective factors in CW, including goals, agency, and affect (Cho, 2017). These studies suggest that these internal processes also largely influence students' engagement in CW. For example, Li and Zhu (2017) found that participants are more engaged in CW tasks if their personal goal is in line with the activity itself and they feel positive about their teamwork. Chen and Hapgood (2019) concluded that knowledge about and attitude toward CW affects participants' engagement in CW tasks. Teachers are recommended to become aware of students' goals and help them achieve their goals (Cho, 2017). In order for CW to be beneficial, teachers need to help students understand the rationale and process of CW, as well as conduct training on technology (Bikowski & Vithange, 2016; Chen & Hapgood, 2019). Similarly,

protecting students from feeling lonely, anxious, or criticized can also maximize their learning gains (Li & Zhu, 2017).

LOOKING FORWARD

There is a saying in Chinese, "when you want to look forward, you must have valuable things to look back on." My two years of MSLT program experience brought me a lot of valuable things that I will treasure. The first year, I served as a graduate instructor. It was the first time that I was a teacher, standing in front of 20 students to conduct a 50-minute class. I doubted myself before I entered this program, but just doing it pushed me to overcome my fear and shyness. In addition, I had the great opportunity to conduct CFL research with Dr. Sung's help, which I present as the first research perspective in this portfolio. This excellent experience introduced me to the research field, as I learned how to extract relevant information from academic references, to collect and analyze data, and to determine what kind of questions to ask in an interview.

Therefore, I would like to have two options to look forward to my development. The first option is teaching CFL students, especially those enrolled in college classes. It will help me apply all the second language teaching knowledge I acquired in the MSLT program. The second option is to enroll in a doctoral program in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. I developed a couple of interesting research topics about CFL when I was in the MSLT program and would like to do in-depth research for a doctoral degree.

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