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Let's Take an Adventure: Exploring Beginner Writing in Chinese by Non-Heritage Learner

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University of Massachusetts Amherst

Let's Take an Adventure:
Exploring Beginner Writing in Chinese by Non-Heritage Learner

A Dissertation Presented

by

PING GENG

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DEDICATION

To my beloved father and mother who taught me the importance of education and

had unwevering belief in me.

To my beloved husband who is my everlasting enthusiastic cheer leader and

supporter.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ways, especially on the reading and editing of my work. Without their love, patience and

consistent support, it would have been tremendously difficult to accomplish what I have

achieved so far.

ABSTRACT

LET'S TAKE AN ADVENTURE:

EXPLORING BEGINNER WRITING IN CHINESE BY NON-HERITAGE LEARNER

MAY 2017

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Due to the globalization and economic growth, both the U.S. and Chinese governments increased their investment in Chinese language education across the US, especially in K-12 schools (Shi, 2010). This rapid development demands tremendous support, especially from the research on Chinese language learning and teaching. Unfortunately the research in this area is very limited, particularly on writing in Chinese. For those whose first language is alphabetical, writing in Chinese is tremendously difficult. A survey of research in the field shows that the assumption of teaching/learning Chinese is strictly based on this liner sequence: vocabulary--> reading--> writing. Learners of Chinese usually do not compose writing until intermediate high level, before which learners usually learn to decode and write Chinese characters (Ke, 1998; Shen, 2005). Therefore the research on composing in Chinese is scarce and none at the beginning level. Gee believes that writing as a form of acquisition of literacy can be practiced in a very early stage (Gee, 2012). What is it going to be like if I introduce writing into beginning level curriculum? In order to explore this question and help fill the gap of research on writing, this ethnographic case study attempts to use sociocultural

theories (Cope & Kalantsz, 2000, 2009; Gee 2012; Kern, 2009; Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey 2004) and second language teaching and genre-based pedagogies to explore writing (composing) in Chinese as form of co-construction of text by beginning level students and teacher in an urban high school. Since no research on writing at this level was found, this study is exploratory. The goal is to investigate: 1) how do student's identities revealed in the writing process affect her investment in writing and in the learning of the target language? 2) how do beginning level student and teacher co-construct texts with different genres using Chinese as foreign language?   3) what are the intertextualities and genre moves student uses to construct her writing (Bakhtin, 1982)? The findings from this study will offer insights of creating more opportunities for learners to learn Chinese language, especially on composing in early learning stage. It is my hope that this study will contribute to the field of Chinese language learning in K-12 level.

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INTRODUCTION

The Context of Chinese Language Education in US K-12 Schools

As globalization progressed, China's economy took wing. In the last three decades, China's the GDP grew by an average of 10%.* During the last 30 years, China successfully completed her transition from planned economy to a market economic system, becoming the world's fastest-growing major economy, which ranked the second largest in the world. Since China was a global hub for manufacturing, China became the largest trading nation in the world and has played a vital role in international trade. While China was the world's fastest growing consumer market and second largest importer of goods, China's capital rich firms also made investments in both developing and developed countries.** The United States was usually the first choice for such investments, mostly on manufacture companies or real estate. One of China's strategies of invigorating the country was to invest in science through education, which helped make the nation more competitive in the global arena. To master the advance science and technology, English language education paved the way by which students and scientists learning from other nations. The massive scale English language education in China started in the late 1970s.

By the same token, both Chinese and US government realized language education was pivotal in more and more business deals and cultural exchanges between the largest economy and the second largest economy in the world. Both governments were willing

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* World Bank data, summer 2016, http://data.worldbank.org/.
** Wikipidia, summer 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China#China_in_the_global_economy

to increase investment in language education, springboarding learning Chinese as second or third language in the United States. As a result, "Chinese language education is undergoing unprecedented development in K-12 schools across the United States" (Shi, 2010).

Even though Spanish was the most popular second language choice in US, Chinese had steadily increased its presence not only in colleges, but also in K-12 schools throughout US. According to Robelen (2011) and a report from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, while there were 6.42 million students learning Spanish, an estimated 60,000 K-12 students were studying Chinese in US schools as of 2007-08 school year, up 195 percent from 2004-05 school year. It was even more significant to compare these statistics with the data of overall enrollment in foreign language courses and programs, which had increased from 18 percent of K-12 public school students in the 2004-05 school year to 18.5 percent, or 8.9 million in 2007-08 (Robelen, 2011).

Carol Chmelynski, the Assistant Managing Editor of School Board News, published an article titled "Teaching Chinese as Tomorrow's Language" (2006). In this article, Chmelynski, gave an overall picture of the current state and the challenges of Chinese language learning in US. She was very optimistic about the future of Chinese language: "relatively few public school students are currently learning the Chinese language, but expert predict the number of K-12 schools offering such instruction will soon soar" (2006, p.59). She also cited Thomas Matt, the Director of World Languages Initiatives at the College Board, "the signs are there for tremendous increase…. It's the wave of the future" (p.59)

Why is Chinese language important for the children in U.S.A.? Patrick Pearson said it clearly in his article "U.S. Kids Should Learn Chinese" in Bloomberg Business Website, April 22, 2015:

> China will inevitably be a major economic, political, and cultural force in our children's future. We should prepare our students to engage, collaborate, and compete with their Chinese peers. Any diplomat or international business professional will attest to the tremendous advantage that speaking and respecting a counterpart's language brings to any negotiation or partnership. Increasingly, that colleague across the table will be a native Chinese speaker. By teaching Mandarin in U.S. public schools, we are making a wise investment in one of the many vital skills our children will need to compete for high-skill jobs and thrive in the interconnected 21st-century economy.

For the above reasons, the support of Chinese language instruction in K-12 schools came from all levels: the top level of government, mostly the National Security Agency, to the grassroots level, mainly the many school districts throughout US. The National Security Agency has provided $114 million in 2007 and $26.6 million in 2008 to fund the Federal Startalk Program, launched by President George W. Bush in 2006, and the program is getting stronger currently.* These summer programs provided instruction for K-16 teachers and students in "critical need" languages, including Chinese, identified by the US government (Robelen, 2010). As early as 2005, Senator (D-CT) Joseph Lieberman and Lamer Alexander (R-TN) introduced a bill calling for the nation to spend $1.3 billion over the course of five years on Chinese language programs in schools and on cultural exchanges to improve ties between the United States and China. When Lieberman announced the U.S.-China Cultural Engagement Act to the press event, he pointed out that, if this Act was passed, it would provide our children with

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*https://web.archive.org/web/20080929044930/http://exchanges.state.gov/NSLI/

the opportunity to understand the Chinese language and culture and would help ensure that they have a better chance of succeeding in the global economy (Chmelynski, 2006).

Aside from the U.S. government's support, Chinese government also helped in many different ways. During the last few years, the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban), an affiliate of China's Ministry of Education, provided millions of dollars to help launch several programs in U.S. public schools, including a program in North Carolina to offer Mandarin Chinese classes in 45 schools in 15 school districts. North Carolina state board of education alone expected to receive more than $5 million in direct aid and "in kind" services. As the school districts were affected by the economic down turns, funding from China appeared to be getting a welcome reception in local schools and communities (Robelen, 2010).

Meanwhile, in February 2010, the Asia Society, a New York-based nonprofit organization and Hanban launched what's being called the Confucius Classrooms Network (Kongzi xuetang) at K-12 level. Twenty individual schools and districts were selected in February, 2011 to join the network; 40 more would be announced subsequently, toward the ultimate goal of 100. The Confucius Classrooms initiative promised to give schools a small grant, typically $10,000 per year for three years — for learning materials, professional development, and related purposes. Hanban also promised to provide Chinese guest teachers, whose travel expenses and salary would be subsidized up to $30,000 per year to the new as well as the existing Chinese language programs in the U.S. This guest teacher program was formally started in 2007. Member schools and districts could also get access to free instructional resources from Hanban and assistance in finding a partner school in China. In addition, Hanban would help pay

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for school staff members to visit China to attend a conference and to visit their partner school if they have one (Robelen, 2010).

Simultaneously Hanban sent out representatives to different parts of US, as well as many other countries, to provide help in instructions and teaching materials. I went to one such session in Boston in November, 2014. Each attendee was given several sets of textbooks and other teaching materials. At the session, many teachers showed the audience their teaching techniques in different levels, followed by an extensive session to introduce various sets of textbooks. Participants from public schools were also encouraged to apply online for the donation of teaching materials worth more than $5000. I applied on behalf of my school and we received the donation early the following year. The donated materials turned out to be very helpful in teaching.

As early as 2003, with the financial help from Hanban, the College Board announced the development of a new Advanced Placement course in Chinese language and culture. It was very significant that Chinese got officially recognized as a foreign language and it would have the same status as any other foreign languages in high schools and colleges so that students who were studying Chinese would have the same opportunities in college admission, and the credits of the course work would be recognized.

Purpose of the Study

The rapid development in learning Chinese language in K-12 US schools encountered many challenges. One invisible challenge was the lack of research in the K-12 Chinese language classrooms, especially the research on writing/composing at the beginning level. Grabe pointed out: "One of the most consistent implications of two

decades of reading and writing relations is that they should be taught together and that the combination of both literacy skills enhances learning in all areas" (Grabe, 2001, p. 25).

Reading and writing in the Chinese language teaching and research appeared to be out of balance: research on reading was readily available, but research on writing/composing was very limited. Last year I surveyed the research work on Chinese language teaching as FL in all the related journals in China and in US. I found about two dozen research works from China and many from U.S. But most of them focused on writing characters, reading and computer- assisted learning. Almost all of the research studied college level students. While research on reading was basically about word recognition, and about study on how to write characters or simple sentences (Shen, 2005; Shen, & Ke, 2007; Shen, 2010; Xu & Padilla, 2013; Xu, Chang, Zhang, Perfetti, 2013), there was no research on literacy from a holistic scale or critical scope. Nor did I find research using sociocultural lens to see how students fare in learning Chinese different from European Languages. Some research studies I found in the US mostly focused on Heritage Speakers of Chinese (e.g. Curdt-Christiansen, 2006; Zhang, 2009) and recently there had been little research on writing by non-Chinese heritage speakers at the college level, focusing on comparison of hand writing vs computer writing (Kang, 2011).

In order to bridge the gap of research on writing/composing in Chinese as part of the literacy process, I conducted an exploratory ethnographic case study on student writing/composing using the target language by level 2 students in high school Chinese language classroom. Through the lens of sociocultural theories on literacy, identity, investment and intertextuality (Gee, 2012; Bonny Norton, 2000, 2003; Bakhtin, 1981), the study closely examined student texts of different genres, and literacy events around

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constructing texts and the reflections on the writing process. One of the goals was to explore how students as "apprentice" writers internalize and appropriate the knowledge of genre-based Chinese language in completing the writing task (Gee, 2012; Bakhtin, 1981). The process of internalization and appropriation involves active participation. It requires learners to take active roles in constructing new meaning of their own from something that belongs to others (Bakhtin, 1981). "The semantic structure of an internally persuasive discourse is not finite, it is open; in each of the new contexts that dialogize it, this discourse is able to reveal ever new ways to mean" (Bakhtin, 1981: 346). The nature of semantic structure was forever open to interpretation and reconstruction so that learners often experience struggles and growth in the process. Therefore, the other goal was to look at the social cultural identity and investment during this active internalizing and appropriating process. The design of this study was based on my experience of writing intervention in the curriculum for five years with genre-based approach. I believe learners of Chinese language can start writing practice early on in their journey of learning and have fun and success in experience the construction of meaningful texts. In so doing they apprentice themselves into the target speech community (Gee, 2012).

According to Gee, the traditional view of literacy regarded literacy as the ability of being able to read and write, and it was the mental or cognitive capacity inside someone's head. But the sociocultural view of literacy was to engage the world with words and with other people, in order to take action, make dialogue, produce knowledge and change ourselves and the world (2012). Literacy was to apprentice into the speech community and cultural practice. In my experience of teaching, writing gave learners a

sense of connection to the discourse community and a sense of accomplishment in learning the target language. Writing was a way of enriching language learning in classroom by building on the learners' lived experiences (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) and of providing a space for cultural exploration and language participation experience.

Research Questions

After 5 years of writing intervention in the curriculum, I felt that research was necessary to see how students fared in the literacy process. I was hoping the findings would serve as a conversation starter in the field and raise interest in research on composing in Chinese in general, and beginner writing in particular. Our experience would shed some light on the text production process. The goals of this study were three folds: 1) to investigate what kinds of identities affect their investment in their construction of the texts and in the writing process; 2) to explore what strategies the students used to internalize and appropriate their language into the construction of their texts with beginning level of Chinese to describe the world; 3) to examine the intertextuality and genre moves students made with scaffolding in the construction of the texts (Hyland, 2004, 2007). The guiding research questions are:

1. How do student's identities revealed in the writing process affect her investment in the production of texts and in the learning of the target language?

2. How do beginning level student and teacher co-construct texts with different genres in Chinese?

3. What are the intertextualities student use to construct her writing?

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Critical examinations and reflections of the many moments occurring in the classrooms were vital to students becoming multilingual through a meaning-making process and the formation of their identities. Therefore, examining critical moments could better inform the curriculum and instruction. Equally important, meaning-making process could inform how identities were forming when interacting with activities and their effect on developing basic literacy. These examinations and reflections from both learners and teacher could also inform a better understanding of the need for certain opportunities to allow for student creativities and ownership in activities that shape their learning experiences.

Significance of the Study

This ethnographic case study contributes to develop a much needed research on the teaching and learning of Chinese language writing/composing at the beginning level. The development of basic literacy in the Chinese language classroom using sociocultural perspectives to examine language learners learning Chinese in an urban multicultural setting was an uncharted territory. I conducted an exploratory ethnographic case study on a student of mine with her writings to see what she experienced in this particular social context.

In general the Chinese language is perceived as a very difficult language because of the logographic nature of the characters. Therefore, in most language programs that majority of learners whose first language literacies are alphabetical often never learned beyond novice level, due to the difficulties in writing the characters (Xu & Jen 2005). In other programs, some learners advanced to the intermediate level and were restricted in

character learning and simple sentences (Ke, 1998; Shen, 2005). However, very few advanced to the level of composing a meaningful writing in the target language.

Despite the fact that a few teachers of Chinese language at college level had done some studies recently on the learners' compositions, the common assumption was still that it was impossible for beginning learners to compose writing in Chinese. In Chinese language classrooms of secondary schools, composing any meaningful writing in Chinese with small lexical inventory or short learning experience was beyond the wildest imagination. This study was an inquiry into the untested water of writing by the beginners and I hope other Chinese language educators can do a follow up practice or studies, so that we will have more knowledge on writing that helps learners in undergoing a better learning experience of the target language.

Another importance of the study was that it could serve as an example that teachers and learners could use writing as a tool to apprentice learners into reading the world and describing the world----writing-to-learn practices (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2011) while we are learning the basics (Gee, 2012). Needless to say, writing at this stage was still relatively simple, but could be more complex as the learning advances, and became learning-to-write practices (Lefkowitz, 2009, cited in Rechelt, Lefkowitz, Rinnert & Schultz, 2012).

Writing as a social practice required selecting topics, sorting out ideas/thoughts, collocating words and phrases, assembling the sentences and organizing the entire writing for particular purposes and audiences. Similar to the elementary school students learning their first language, L2 learners needed to engage the acquisition of the above writing practice from early on. Hyland believed that genre-based writing approach would be

crucially helpful in this endeavor, because "writing is a practice based on expectations: the reader's chance of interpreting the writer's purpose are increased if the writer takes trouble to anticipate what the reader might be expecting based on previous texts they have read of the same kind" (Hyland, 2007, p. 149). Therefore, members of a community usually have little difficulty in recognizing the similarities in the texts of certain genre they used frequently and were able to draw on their repeated experiences with such texts to read, understand, and perhaps write them relatively easily (Hyland, 2007).

Xu and Padilla and other researchers argued that in learning Chinese, many learners were left stuck at the vocabulary stage and were not led to advance to the writing level, just because they were told that they did not have enough vocabulary, and therefore they could not write (Xu & Padilla, 2013; Xu, Chang, Zhang, Perfetti, 2013). Traditional view of literacy was that the ability of reading and writing was skill sets, mental capacity, isolated from the world (Gee, 2012). We often called it rote learning, away from social context (Kramsch, 1989, 1993; Perez, 1998; Kern, 2000). Sociocultural approaches viewed writing as ways of reading the world and describing the relationship and experiences with the world (Freire & Macedo 1987).

Literacy was multiple: home literacy, community literacy, public-sphere literacy and many more. Gee (2012) called these literacies as Discourses with a big "D". These literacies or Discourses required the teacher "to apprentice students in a master-apprentice relationship in a Discourse wherein the teacher scaffolds the students' growing ability to say, do, value, believe, and so forth, within that Discourse, through demonstrating her mastery and supporting theirs even when it barely exists (i.e., you

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make it look like they can do what they really can't do)" (Gee, 2012, p. 175). This apprenticeship would lead to acquisition of the target language.

As previously stated, there was limited research that addresses writing development in Chinese language teaching, therefore I could only learn from research at the college level. In Kang's dissertation (2011), she noticed that the college intermediate level learners relied heavily on computer-based references and dictionaries in both paper-based and computer-based writing. If learners could utilize these resources to express themselves, they would have the opportunity to play with many characters they knew and learned more through using them. In the traditional sense that we needed to learn enough characters in order to be able to write, but now we were trying to use writing to learn more characters through authentic use. Consequently we took the learning of the target language to a new level. Thanks to the technology, the world was getting smaller and the communication was mostly done over the cyber space by writing. Therefore writing to express was increasingly more important for language learners to be able to 'read' and 'write' the world since their early learning stage (Freire & Macedo, 1987).

My ethnographic case study would provide contribution in the field of research by demonstrating that students in an urban high school were apprenticed into writing in different genres using Chinese as Foreign Language (FL) with scaffoldings from teacher, peers and other resources, including technology. Since the body of research on writing, that is all at the college level, all focused on simply how to memorize the writing of Chinese characters and decode the characters for the novice level students (Xu, Chang, Zhang, Perfetti, 2013, Xu & Padilla, 2013; Yin, 2007), I believed this study would invite more teachers to challenge the assumption of linear order of learning Chinese (see Figure

1), and to create more opportunities for learners to apprentice into different genres in order to communicate with the discourse community, as well as enjoy the sense of accomplishment and success early on in their learning path. It would also call for more research on ways the writings will help to enhance the memorization of Chinese characters by using them in the genuine manner of describing and expressing themselves in authentic situations, therefore ultimately helping with their reading of the language. Tan, Spinks, Eden, Perfetti and Siok (2005) suggested that reading in Chinese depends on writing, due to the linguistic differences between Chinese and alphabetic languages, and due to the different processing mechanisms of Chinese and English words. Under these assumptions, through genre-based writing, we are trying to achieve four linguistic and cultural purposes among others at the same time: 1) in writing, students learn the characters with meanings making in social contexts and be able to appropriate the words in the authentic social interactions; 2) in writing, students learn characters with socially embedded meaning can help reading; 3) writing is a language as well as cultural practice into the target speech community with cultural expectations; 4) writing practices make students better writers. Many studies on learning English as L2 had already proven that the memorization of vocabularies through real use/context was far superior to the memorization of isolated words or rote learning without social context (e.g. Kramsch, 1989, 1993; Perez, 1998; Kern, 2000), and genre-based writing provides opportunities for students to apprentice into the discourse community (Gee, 2012) and exploit the expressive potential of the language community's discourse structures (Hyland, 2007).

I explored how the student with particular cultural backgrounds constructed her texts in Chinese in this particular context, and what kind of investment she would be

willing to contribute in the writing process through draft writing, editing and revising, as well as what kind of scaffolding she was seeking to complete her writing task. Literacy is considered as a social act, a social construction (Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Giroux 1987; Gee, 1992), a situated social practice (Kramsch, 1993; Norton Peirce; 1989; Pennycook, 1990), more than the act of reading and writing.

Literacy seeks to understand the sociocultural context in which students discover and interpret who they are in relation to others and the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987). These contextual discoveries and interpretations will lead to identity construction and positioning issues (Gee, 2012). Writing was the opportunity for learners to describe their experiences with certain identities and positions on many issues, such as how they made sense of themselves in the process of learning the second or the third language, and therefore get associated with the target language community and their cultural models, such as values, beliefs and attitudes while they situate themselves in the school community and their home communities, as well as what their attitudes were toward their future, etc. The findings would also provide language educators a fresh look into the successes and struggles the learners experience as apprentices in the target language discourse community. Language educators might use these insights to help their learners achieve a better success or help ease some of the tensions in the learning practice. I hope that all these pedagogical perspectives would have some potential impact on the Foreign Language teaching practice.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

<u>Introduction</u>

For the purpose of investigating how novice Chinese language learners in an

urban high school ventured into writing to construct and describe their world and how

their identities in the learning process in particular context affect their investment in the

learning, this study was anchored on several theoretical frameworks: sociocultural

theories on literacy, second language teaching and learning within social contexts (e.g.

Cope & Kalantsz, 2000, 2009; Gee, 1992, 2012; Kern, 2009; Toohey, 2000; Pavlenko,

2004; Pennycook, 2001; Street, 1995); sociocultural theories on identity and investment

in learning (Gee, 1992, 2012; Norton, 2000, 2012), intertextuality (Bakhtin, 1981;

Bazerman, 2004) and genre-based approach on writing (Hyland, 2004,2007; Gentil, 2011;

Yigitoglu & Reichelt, 2014; Swales, 1990, 2004). These theoretical perspectives

provided me lens to examine, analyze and interpret data so that I could better explain how

students could learn to compose in Chinese as language learning experiences are

negotiated in the context of our classroom.

In this chapter, I would first discuss the different perspectives of literacy, yet

particularly highlight the sociocultural perspective of literacy (Barton, 1994; Cope &

Kalantsz, 2000, 2008, 2009; Gee, 1992, 2012; Street, 1995) which guided my teaching

practice over the years and served as the overall theoretical base for my current research.

Then I would review the current research literature in the field of Chinese as a foreign

language (CFL), and summarize the focus of contention in the teaching of writing (Kang,

2011). Next I would discuss the genre-based approach of writing which guided our

writing practice in our learning journey. Further I would review the literature of

intertextuality, which structurally and functionally facilitate the construction of texts by

our students and the focal student. Last I would also review the literature of second

language teaching and learning, with a focus on identity and investment (Gee, 1992;

Norton, 2000, 2012).

Literacy Becomes Multiple Literacies

The term literacy is very common to most people, but if we try to define literacy,

it becomes complex and dynamic, and it is continuing to be interpreted and defined in

multiple ways. How people view literacy is influenced by perspectives from their

institutional agendas, academic research, cultural values, and personal experiences.

Literacy can be viewed as cognitive---- autonomous set of skills (e.g. Goodman, 1975,

1983; Goody, 1977; Johns, 1997; Olson, 1977, 1994; Ong, 1982; Thorndike 1917), as a

learning process (e.g. Kolb,1984; Rogoff and Lave, 1984; Rogoff, 2003;), as

transformative tools (e.g. Freire, 1995; Gadotti, 1994; Giroux, 1987; Kern, 2000), or as a

social practice, embedded in historical, sociocultural and political contexts (e.g. Gee,

1992, 2012; Heath, 1983; Kern, 2003; Kramsch, 1989; Kramsch & Nolden, 1994; Street

1995). It is often a practice that one particular perspective of literacy is sometimes

practiced on the expense of other possibilities. It is important to recognize that all or

some of these perspectives are possibly at work simultaneously in particular contexts and

particular time frames. I believe the sociocultural perspectives of literacy as situated

social practice can be used to address the interdependence of all these perspectives.

Literacy as Cognitive Skills

Literacy is commonly regarded as a set of tangible skills, such as reading and writing skills. It is a "learner-centric view", often concerned with learners' individual mental capacity--cognitive development and processing (Johns, 1997). Some researchers studied the cognitive abilities that affect reading and writing, and usually these abilities were taken out of social contexts (Goodman, 1975, 1983; Thorndike 1917). Reading and writing are viewed as a thinking processes which require readers to elaborate on mental representations and problem solving. The process of meaning construction happens in ones mind. In the early debate of how to best acquire literacy, some researchers claimed phonetic approach works well, while others advocated reading for meaning. Later some researchers turned their attention to the cognitive sciences on human memory to examine how human brain processes reading patterns. Based on this knowledge, learners can be trained to read faster (Abadzi, 2003b, 2004). Subsequently, writing was regarded "superior" to phonetic approach, becoming the tool to improve faculties of reasoning (Scribner and Cole, 1978; Olson, 1977). Some even claimed that the alphabetic system was technologically superior to other script forms, since it was phonetic, rather than reliance on pictures to denote meaning (Olson, 1994). These cognitive assumptions had been linked to broader societal development, and literacy was the instrument to achieve economic growth and the progression from oral to literate modes (Goody, 1977; Ong, 1982; Olson, 1977, 1994).

In the traditional view of literacy, there had been a "great divide" between oral cultures and literate cultures. Ong argued (1982) that work on oral and literate cultures had changed our thinking about human identity. Oral culture produces powerful

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performance, but writing was more powerful ---- without writing, human consciousness could not achieve its best potential. "There is hardly an oral culture or a predominantly oral culture left in the world today that is not somehow aware of the vast complex of powers forever inaccessible without literacy" (Ong, 1982, P. 15). For individuals, literacy was the engine that led to higher orders of intelligence. Therefore, this transition from orality to literacy was believed to have great impact on human consciousness, since the signs of words gave a linear shape to thought and provided a critical framework to think analytically. Psycholinguistic theories were guiding research within this domain, and they are still prevalent today.

Gee cited Scribner and Cole's later study (1981), arguing against this cognitive ability theory and he pointed out, "literacy in and of itself led to no grandiose cognitive abilities …" (2012, p. 55), but rather it fostered behaviors and attitude toward good citizenship and moral behaviors perceived largely by the elites of the society. Their research indicated that the important matter was not literacy as decontextualized cognitive ability, but literacy as ways for people to be apprenticed into the social practices of the social groups. On the same vain, Gee cited Gramsci's work (1971), pointing out that the most striking continuity in the history of literacy was the fact that literacy had been used "to solidify the social hierarchy, empower the elites, and ensure that people lower on the hierarchy accept the values, norms, and beliefs of the elites, even when it is not in their self-interest or group interest to do so" (Gee, 2012). This debate still very much presents itself in many literacy research work today.

Literacy as a Learning Process

Literacy can be viewed as an active and broad-based learning process. Building on the scholarship of Dewey and Piaget, constructivist educators believe individual learners, especially children, make sense of their learning experiences. Some educators also believe that personal experience is a central resource for learning for adult education. Kolb (1984) argued that concrete experience should be the start for any learning with critical reflection. More recently, social psychologists and anthropologists have started using the concepts of collaborative learning and communities of practice to build the focus towards more social practices based on newer understandings of literacy (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff and Lave, 1984). Rogers (2003) identified two types of learning: task-conscious learning and learning-conscious learning. While the former was typically evaluated by test-based task completion, the latter was assessed from the perspective of the learner. The task-conscious learning or literacy was the more traditional learning method for both children and adults.

Literacy as Transformative Tools

During the 1970s, Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, developed the theory of 'conscientization', through which Freire pointed out that social awareness and critical inquiry are key factors in social change. Paulo Freire's notions of active learning emphasized the importance of bringing the learner's socio-cultural realities into the learning process itself and then using the learning process to challenge these social realities. The center piece of his pedagogy was his notion of 'critical literacy', often referred to as "emancipatory". For Freire, literacy is achieved partly through engaging

with books and other written texts, but, more profoundly, through 'reading' the world, such as interpreting, reflecting on, interrogating, theorizing, investigating, exploring, probing and questioning; and through 'writing' the social world by acting on and dialogically transforming it (Freire, 1995). Freire believed that literacy could empower people if they became critical about their social world:

> Reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continually reading the world … we can go further and say that reading the word is not preceded merely by reading the world, but by certain form of writing it or rewriting it, … of transforming it by means of conscious, practical work. For me, this dynamic movement is central to the literacy process.

> Freire and Macedo, 1987:35

Freire was well aware that literacy is not political neutral, but it is "a form of cultural politics", and it is always associated with political perspectives and interpretations (Feirie & Macedo, 1987, p.16). In this sense, a written text is a loaded weapon, as we have no way out, but to have an opinion, an ideology, a world view, and ultimately act upon it. Literacy can be used to critically reflect on how language shapes our representations of our experiences and the existing social order (Kern, 2000). With the critical reflection, literacy serves to imagine and act on transforming the world (Giroux, 1987).

Freire's pedagogical ideas are widely spread and have been used as tools to support learners who have been oppressed, excluded or disadvantaged, due to gender, ethnicity or socio-economic status. Freire argues that we create meaning through dialogic negotiations between language and lived experiences. The language or the words that give meaning to people's lives are shaped, created and conditioned by the

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world they are in. Dialogue engages the interactions between oral and literate forms of interpreting, understanding and transforming the world. Learning involves an active engagement with the world, with words, and with other people, it is not just about information. Learning requires learners take active role in appropriating knowledge and constructing new meaning from it (Bakhtin, 1981). Learning is a social activity, a social act, a social practice, which takes place through communication or interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978). It is not a matter of ordering the learning activities, such as, speaking first, then developing reading skills and then learning to write. Rather, speaking, reading and writing are interconnected parts of an active learning process and of social transformation (Gadotti, 1994). Learning and literacy occur in social interactions and are co-constructed by students, family, communities, peers and their teachers. The more a learner is exposed to social interaction, the better he/she is being mediated and mediating learning and literacy. This important concept was the basis for my literacy practice in my classroom with my students, and it guided our daily engagement with language and our social world. This means that while we are doing a lot of speaking and listening, we need to integrate more on reading and writing which engage the learners to describe their lives and the world they are in.

<div style="text-align:center">Literacy as Situated Social Practice</div>

Acknowledging the limitations of a skills-based approach to literacy, and going beyond the traditional view of literacy as "great divide of cultures", scholars in the 1980s and 1990s tried to focus on new ways in conceptualizing literacy (Gee, 2012). Through ethnographic research into literacy practices in particular settings, scholars developed a new approach to literacy, which is practiced varied by social and cultural contexts

(Barton, 1994). This perspective of literacy with a large body of work is known as 'New Literacy Studies' (Gee, 1990, 2012; Street, 1995) which defines literacy as historically, socially, and politically constructed practice. This sociocultural perspective is gaining more and more momentum in conceptualizing literacy and literacy practices (e.g. Barton and Hamilton, 1998; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Gee, 2012; Heath, 1993; Street, 1995, 2013).

Brian Street is one of the most important scholars of this sociocultural perspective. His major contribution to the conceptualization of literacy is the distinction between literacy events and literacy practices. Heath argues that the concept of literacy events are situations in which people engage with reading or writing that are "integral to the nature of the participants' interactions and their interpretative processes" (Cited in Street, 1995, p. 2). While literacy events refers to particular activities in which literacy plays a role, literacy practices are the larger systems, or general cultural ways of utilizing literacy that guide literacy events within a community. Literacy practices are the patterns of literacy events in a society; different domains may have different literacy practices, as literacy has different functions within a society, across domains. Street defines literacy practices as a broader cultural conception of particular ways of thinking about and doing reading and writing in cultural contexts (1998).

Street views literacy as a social practice that is embedded in power relations. He developed his theory in opposition to leading literacy scholars at the time, including Jack Goody and Walter J. Ong, who and other scholars, represented an "autonomous view of literacy", in which literacy is as a set of autonomous skills that can be learnt independently of the social contexts. Street advocates an alternative view, an

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"ideological model", which acknowledges literacy's context-dependent and power-laden nature. While emphasizing "the ideological character of the processes of acquisition and of the meanings and uses of different literacies" (Street, 1993, p. 7), he also argues that cognitive capabilities of reading and writing as well as technical skills may be good, but they are "encapsulated within cultural wholes and within structures of power" (p. 9).

Another major contributor to the theories of literacy as social practice is James Gee (1990, 1991, & 2012). He points out that literacy is traditionally viewed as mental phenomenon, the ability to read and write, and "this situates literacy in the individual person rather than in society" (2012, p. 26). In turn this view "obscures the multiple ways in which literacy relates to the workings of power in society" (p. 26). He argues that the new sociocultural approach of literacy "studies different uses of language, spoken and written, in their sociocultural contexts" (p.72). The fact that people become literate is very difficult to separate the influence as literacy of "reading and writing" from that of formal schooling, because the two mostly go together. Schooling contributes much more than just the ability to read and write. Gee cites Wertsch's point on this: "A student is involved in learning a set of complex role relationships, general cognitive techniques, ways of approaching problems, different genres of talk and interaction, and society as a whole …" (Cited by Gee, 2012, p. 73). The key point is that being literate, one is able to function well in society.

Central to Gee's literacy theories is the focus of language-in-society, especially language-in-schools. When dealing with language, meaning of words becomes essential. "Meaning is not a thing that sits fixed in the mind" (Gee, 2012, p. 21). Dictionaries might give definitions for particular words or phrases, but the actual meaning is primarily

the result of social interactions, negotiations, contestations and agreements among people, and it depends on the time and other aspects of the contexts. At times we may have to guess the meaning from the situations. We cannot just simply look the words up in dictionaries and apply them anywhere we want. Meaning-making is an active process (Gee, 2012).

We all speak multiple languages (voices) with multiple identities in different contexts. The appropriate language does not only need to have the right grammatical form, it needs to fit the "right" situation with the "right" values, beliefs and attitudes. Gee refers this language in its social context as "big 'D' Discourse". This "Discourse" covers many different social languages, which connect with many different kinds of literacies in complex ways (Gee, 2012). He argues "Discourse (with a capital 'D') are ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing, that are accepted as instantiations of particular identities by specific groups …" (Gee, 2012, p. 3). We are all members of many Discourses and each Discourse represents one of our multiple identities at different times and occasions. These values or identities projected in different social contexts are often not consistent or compatible, and they do not need to be.

> Any time we act or speak, we must accomplish two things: (1) We must make clear *who* we are, and (2) we must make clear *what* we are doing (Wieder and Pratt, 1990a, b, cited by Gee, 2012). We are each of us not single *who*, but different *whos* in different contexts. In addition, one and the same act can count as different things in different contexts, where context is something people actively construe, negotiate over, and change their minds about (Duranti 1997; Duranti and Goodwin 1992, cited by Gee, 2012).
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> (Gee, 2012, p. 148, emphasis are original)

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Gee also makes difference with acquisition from learning. He defines acquisition, on one hand, as "a process of acquiring something (usually subconsciously) by exposure to models, a process of trial and error, and practice within social groups, without formal teaching" and learning, on the other hand, as "a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching (though not necessarily from someone officially designated a teacher) or through certain life experiences that trigger conscious reflection" (ibid., p. 167). Acquisition must, or at least partially precede learning, and in other words, apprenticeship must precede overt teaching. Teaching to gain acquisition is "to apprentice students in a master-apprentice relationship in a Discourse" (Gee, 2012, p.175). The teacher not only needs to create an authentic social environment for students to experience the Discourse, she/he needs to scaffold the students' growing ability to say, do, value and believe within the discourse through demonstrating her/his mastery and supporting theirs for growth. That means teachers need to believe in and stretch students' ability: make it look like they can do what they really cannot do without help. Gradually they will be lead to acquisition. Teaching to gain learning is to break down the materials into small units with analysis and explanations, which will give students "meta-knowledge", looking at the materials with theoretical or critical lens. Good teachers should be able to integrate and balance both.

Literacy as Multimodal Learning Practice

It is worth noticing that research on multimodality in language learning has flourished in recent years. Gunther Kress and other scholars have done extensive work on multimodality. They use the term "multimodality" to describe the approach that employs various modes of representation in communication to promote literacy. This

approach encourages a different path to achieve literacy from the traditional authoritarian pedagogy with textbook playing the main role, to pedagogy of multimodalities (Kress, 2000). This multimodality approach is for learners to foster the ability to identify the social and cultural features of texts and create multimedia texts using various modes of representation, such as visual, audio, gestural, spatial and linguistic means (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000; NLG, 1996).

As technology gaining prominent place in literacy, scholars who view literacy as social practice propose the concept of multimodal to accommodate the increasingly recognized multiliteracies (Allen & Paesani, 2010; Cope and Kalantzis, 2000, 2009; Kress, 2000; Kumagai, Lopez-Sanchez and Wu, 2016, Gee, 2012). The term "multiliteracies" was introduced by the literacy scholars from New London Group to address the textual multiplicity characterized by increasingly diversified cultural and linguistic environments and the changing communication channels of media and technologies (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008). It is "a much broader view of literacy than portrayed by traditional language-based approach" (NLG, 1996, p. 60) and "a way to focus on the realities of increasing local diversity and global connectedness" (p.61). This new kind of learning will prepare learners to negotiate discourse differences, given the plurality of representational forms and the variety of text forms that circulate and interrelate in contemporary communication.

Literacy in Chinese as Foreign Language

According to Xu and Padilla (2013), the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) of State Department in the U.S. has classified foreign languages taught in the United States into three categories based on linguistic distance and the length of time it takes English-

speaking students to achieve general professional proficiency in speaking and reading. Mandarin Chinese is among the few languages that are assigned to Category III, while Category I is easy to learn, category III is very difficult for native English speakers to learn. The FSI estimates that generally it will take approximately 2,200 class hours, at least half of that time spent in immersion study, for learners to reach the level of proficiency which is needed to use a Category III language in a professional setting.

Though Chinese is considered one of the most difficult languages to learn by the English speakers whose writing system roughly represents its sound system, while the Chinese sound system and writing system seem to be independent of each other, the interest of learning Modern Standard Chinese has dramatically increased at both college levels and secondary-school levels of education in the U.S. The Modern Language Association (MLA) did a comprehensive survey study on the Chinese language enrollments in U.S. institutions of higher education, which indicated a dramatic increase by 51% from 2002 to 2006 (Furman, Goldberg, Lusin, 2007). Chinese became the seventh most commonly studied language in American colleges and universities during this period, (Furman et al., 2007).

The flourish of interest is motivated by three major factors. First, as I mentioned before, China's rapid economic growth promotes a great deal of international businesses, which are spread all over the world, including U.S. The appeal of the Chinese market and job opportunities attract the world attention and have encouraged the interest of learning Chinese as tool of international communication. Second, as China's economy gets bigger, the international influence expanded too. Some students in secondary and elementary schools are very curious about the dramatically different language and culture,

and strive to take the challenge. Third, the U.S. government has developed the National Security Language Initiative to broaden foreign language education for the Less Commonly Taught Languages in the U.S., especially Chinese, Arabic and some African languages. This National Security Language Initiative allocates tremendous resources to fund the different language learning activities nationwide.

Chinese Language

According to Wikipedia, Chinese language can be traced back to a hypothetical Sino-Tibetan proto-language, as part of the Sino-Tibetan language family together with Burmese, Tibetan and many other languages spoken in the Himalayas and the Southeast Asian Massif. The first written records were dated back over 3,000 years ago during Shang Dynasty. As the language evolved over long period of time, the various local varieties became mutually unintelligible. In order for communication for all citizens, central governments have repeatedly sought to promulgate a unified standard.

Chinese (汉语 hànyǔ or 中文 zhōngwén) or Mandarin is the standard official language spoken by more than 1.3 billion people (around 18.5% of the world's population,)* in China. This Standard Chinese (Putonghua) is a standardized form of spoken Chinese based on the Beijing dialect of Mandarin. It is also one of four official languages of Singapore. In Taiwan Province and Hong Kong, it is called 'Guoyu' while in Singapore, it is often called 'Huayu'. It is one of the six official languages of the United Nations, in addition to Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The written

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* Data from Worldometers website, December 2016, retrived from
http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/china-population/)

form of the Standard Chinese (汉语 hànyǔ or 中文 zhōngwén), based on the logograms known as Chinese characters (汉字 hànzì), is shared by all, though some ethnic minorities may have their own local spoken dialects. Standard Chinese and the other local dialects are all tonal and analytic. Chinese once had tremendous influence on some neighboring countries with their languages and characters, such as Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese.

The relationship between the Chinese spoken and written language is rather complex, because its sound systems are quite independent from the writing systems. The spoken language including varieties of dialects evolved at different rates in different geographic localities, while written Chinese has changed much less. The earliest written records have been discovered dated back to the 14th to 11th centuries BCE in Shang Dynasty on oracle bones using the oracle bone scripts (Wikipedia, 2016).

The Chinese orthography centers on Chinese characters (汉字 Hànzì), each of which consists of a number of strokes interwoven in a square-like form, traditionally arranged in vertical columns, read from top to bottom down a column, and right to left across columns, whereas nowadays arranged in horizontal lines as English does. Each Chinese character represents a monosyllabic Chinese word or morpheme. The Chinese characters were classified into six categories by Xu Shen, the famed Han dynasty scholar in 100 CE. The six categories are pictographs, simple ideographs, compound ideographs, phonetic loans, phonetic compounds and derivative characters. More than 90% of Chinese characters are called phonetic compounds, each of which is composed of a phonetic element and a meaning element, often called phonetic and semantic "radical" (部首), for example, 沖 chōng (pour), combining a phonetic component 中 zhōng

(middle) with a semantic radical 氵 (water). Only 4% were categorized as pictographs, including many of the simplest characters, such as 人 rén (human), 日 rì (sun), 山 shān (mountain; hill). The 18th-century Kangxi Dictionary recognized 214 radicals (Xu & Padilla, 2013; Wikipedia, 2016).

The traditional Chinese characters, dating back to the late Han Dynasty and some of them are quite complicated and have more strokes, were used until 1954, when the government of Mainland China underwent various degrees of simplification to about 31.9% of the total Characters that are commonly used**. The simplification was for the purpose of promoting mass literacy in China at the time. The traditional Chinese characters are still used in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau and some of the Chinese speaking communities outside mainland China. For that reason, some teachers teach both the traditional and simplified characters, and others teach only simplified, which is what I am doing with my students, because I believe that the simplified characters are easier for my students.

Research in Teaching Chinese

Learning Chinese orthography is often regarded as the greatest challenge for learners and teachers of Chinese as a foreign language. Packard argues (1990) that mastery of Chinese characters is difficult because of the large number of non-phonetic, visually complex symbols that constitute the orthography of the language. Wu (1992)

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** According to http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4d3f04b40100ffxk.html   A scholar Dingji Wang did a calculation of the percentage of the simplified characters from the traditional ones, based on the "The List of Most Commonly Used Chinese Characters" 《现代汉语常用字表》 published by the Language Committee and Education Bureau on January 26, 1988. There are total 3500 most commonly used characters and 1116 were simplified, so it was 31.9%.

points out that novice learners of Chinese claim that Chinese characters are like "random symbols" that are beyond mastery and retention due to their large quantity and lack of regularity (cited in Xu &Padilla, 2013).

In addition to the complexity of the writing system, the challenge also resides in the fact that the characters and the pronunciations are not transparent compared with other writing systems. "While the relationship between spelling and pronunciation is transparent in alphabetic languages, the Chinese script has little or no systematic grapheme-phoneme correspondence" (Xu, Chang, Zhang & Perfetti, 2013, p. 424). We can assume that student who is learning to listen and speak the more familiar languages, such as from English to Spanish or other western languages, will achieve a parallel competence in reading, but the parallel development with Chinese is not possible (Wrenn, 1968).

From the survey of research works on Chinese learning and teaching, the general consensus of achieving Mandarin literacy is that learning the Chinese characters is the most difficult task for learners. Therefore, for many researchers and teachers, teaching Chinese characters becomes the core task of Chinese writing instruction. In the early Chinese writing acquisition research in the US, in which researchers even debated whether or not teachers should teach Chinese characters to beginning level learners at all (Chin,1973, cited in Kang 2011). In fact, such debate is still prevailing because of the unique writing system of Chinese (e.g. Ye, 2011). It was not until the 1990s that researchers started to study the methods of teaching characters to learners, focusing on character recognition and the effectiveness of teaching various character learning strategies (e.g. Boltz, 1994; Ke, 1998; Shen, 2005, Wu, 1992). Currently, most

researchers on writing do not deviate very much from the character learning and writing (Xu, Chang, Zhang & Perfetti, 2013, Xu & Padilla, 2013; Ye, 2011; Yin, 2007). So far, there are very few studies that investigate how leaners learning Chinese as situated literacy, but rather regards learning Chinese characters or reading, coding or encoding in the isolated manner.

Xu and Padilla (2013) did a study on using meaningful interpretation and chunking to enhance the memory of Chinese characters. They pointed out that Chinese characters are not random symbols without patterns and regularities. "An exploration of Chinese characters reveals that traceable patterns exist that students can use to facilitate learning characters, reading, and writing" (p. 403). They believe that strokes are the basic building materials for radicals, which make the Chinese characters. In addition, the way strokes combine and vary across the many Chinese radicals and characters makes them particularly challenging to write and remember, especially for novice learners. So if they could find ways for students to better understand and chuck the strokes and radicals, the learners would have better chance of memorizing the characters. Xu & Padilla studied the Chinese language learners in two high schools with their theory of meaningful interpretation and the chunking (MIC) mnemonic technique, and the linguistic features of Chinese characters to examine the retention rate of Chinese characters. The findings suggest that MIC enhances learners' immediate learning and retention of Chinese characters. The method of teacher cueing and familiar independent work were more effective for learning and retaining Chinese characters than the teacher instructed method and unfamiliar independent work.

The study found that one methodology of using MIC enhances the immediate learning and retention of Chinese characters, but it did not explore how long this memory of the characters would last or whether the learners were actually able to use or appropriate the characters learned in the real world situations, since this learning took place in isolations. For the best scenarios that the learners retained all the characters they learned in this isolated space, there would still be gap for the learners to bridge between the characters and meanings in the interactions situated in social realities. Sociocultural perspective of literacy emphasizes that literacy is a social act, a social construction (Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Giroux 1987; Gee, 1992), a situated social practice (Kramsch, 1993; Norton Peirce; 1989; Pennycook, 1990), more than the act of reading and writing. What we need is to situate the learning in social contexts which would permeate the characters with real life meanings. The purpose is for learners to be able to appropriate the learned in the real life situations by their intended communication goals.

Unfortunately, the literacy process for some Chinese language educators and researchers are still limited on the isolated character learning, or advocate isolating the learning even more, separating the writing of characters from speaking. Yin (2007) did an empirical study on his own teaching experience of teaching Chinese characters. Based on his observation that some teachers teach speaking and writing (characters) simultaneously, while others teach speaking first and then writing (characters). In either way, they teach speaking and writing (characters) in one course of study. Thus, he advocated an independent course in which instructor teaches character writing only, from the history of coining characters to the categories of formation of characters. The character writing is approached by structures and meanings, but not the pronunciations which will be taught

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in a separated course. Yin pointed out that college students are adult students who learn better in an analytical way, and they have very little time for each course they take. If students start from the structures of the characters, rather than having to worry about speaking, they would learn how to write characters a lot quicker. He proposes 229 characters students learn first, because these are the basic radicals or base words.

There is no doubt that Yin's study emphasized the importance of Chinese character learning, but he went to the extreme, totally ignoring what language is about. For most leaners of Chinese, they are not aiming to become linguists specializing on character studies, but rather learners learning Chinese for communication purposes, for which learners need to learn how to listen, speak, read and write simultaneously. Again learning characters without social meaning in contexts is a literacy process in a vacuum and has no connection with the social world (Kramsch, 1989, 1993; Perez, 1998; Kern, 2000).

Apparently until now researchers are still debating about when to start learning Chinese characters. Reviewing Ye's dissertation, we will have some understanding of the contentious nature of the debate. In Ye's study for her dissertation (2011), she claimed that "due to the challenging nature of Chinese characters for non-native Chinese language learners, especially learners whose L1 corresponds with an alphabetic orthographic form, when and how to introduce Chinese characters to CFL learners have become essential issues within Chinese as foreign language (CFL) educational research" (p. 3). She cautioned that "the writing system that distinguishes Chinese from other western alphabetical languages emphasizes that the success of the CFL instruction depends to a large extent on the effectiveness of Chinese character teaching" (p. 3).

As for the timing issue, she analyzed two most common timing choices. One choice is to delay the learning of Chinese characters by substituting the use of Pinyin instead (e.g. Everson, 1988, 1994; McGinnis, 1999; Packard, 1990; Unger et al., 1993; Walker, 1984, 1989, cited in Ye, 2011). Pinyin is a Romanized phonetic transcription of Chinese, which is designed to scaffold the learning of characters by the Chinese children when they start to learn the characters in the first grade. The other choice contends that Chinese characters should be introduced and taught from the beginning of CFL learning (Liu, 1983, cited in Ye, 2011). Ye believed that educators who take the first choice of timing seem influenced by speech primacy theory, which states that students must have developed substantial oral and aural skills prior to the start to literacy instruction (Dew, 2005; Jorden & Walton, 1989; Swihart, 2004; Unger et al. 1993; Zhang, 2005, cited in Ye, 2011). This position reflects the ways that the English Speaking or other western language speaking children learn their L1.

Ye observed that the relatively recent scholars of the alternative choice of timing argue that characters should be taught concurrently with the regular CFL curriculum, which means teaching speaking, listening, reading and writing simultaneously. Because the lack of research, she cited the findings of a Japanese study that if learners were not taught characters from the beginning of a JFL course, learners might show resistance towards character learning when they moved to higher-level courses. Ye's own findings from her quantitative study of survey showed that most post-secondary CFL programs in the U.S. introduce characters from the very beginning of instruction, and majority of teachers and students preferred to introduce characters from the beginning. From the

surveys of students' ideas on the issue of the timing, there were seven main reasons for

this position, grouped in a descending order, based on a frequency count: (p. 68):

1) It is important to get students used to characters as early as possible.

2) Characters are an essential aspect of the Chinese language.

3) Learning characters from the beginning makes it less difficult in the long-run.

4) It is important to connect characters with sound and meaning early.

5) Learning characters helps learn other skills.

6) If characters are delayed, students are likely to rely on Pinyin.

7) Chinese characters convey culture.

Though in general, the students who are in favor of delaying the introduction of

Chinese characters are in the small minority, they have their own reasons for their

positions, which are presented according to a descending order of frequency count:

1) It is easier for students to learn reading and writing after a solid background

for speaking and listening have been established.

2) To teach all aspects of speaking, listening, reading, and writing constitutes a

heavy cognitive load for students and makes it difficult to maintain students'

interest in learning Chinese.

3) Speaking and listening are more important than reading and writing. Few

students pointed out the importance of typing characters using Pinyin in a

computer.

Based on her research, she also found that "Pinyin acts as a double-edged sword

at the beginning of learning" (p. 126). On the one hand, Pinyin could serve as important

scaffolding to assist beginning CFL learners in pronunciation and the acquisition of early

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levels of speaking and listening proficiency in Chinese; on the other hand, when later

Pinyin is replaced by characters as the main written script, learners have already

established a connection between meaning and Pinyin (only). When the connection

becomes too strong, learners may find it very difficult to transition to using characters in

their learning.

I am not surprised to see this finding, because I had similar experiences in my

own classroom. After two years of teaching Pinyin at the beginning of the year for level

1, I changed to teach character first. When we established what Chinese language is, then

students learned Pinyin to be used as tools to learn more characters in class or on their

own. Otherwise, students would be more than willingly to take Pinyin as Chinese, since

they were familiar with the alphabets and it was easy for some of them. I tried to avoid

misleading them at the beginning of their learning Chinese. Obviously in learning

Chinese, character learning is a big task that no teachers and learners can go around, and

this is why a great deal of research focus on how to improve the way students learn

characters. However, I believe the better way of learning characters can be practiced in

writing/composing, some scholars call it writing-to-learn (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2011),

in which learners learn characters in genre-based writings (e.g. Gentil, 2011; Yigitoglu &

Reichelt, 2014) that describe the social relations and frame the positions they are in. This

was one of the major reasons that I took my students to do the genre-based writing in the

past five years, and it was what the current study is all about. With my position on this

learning issue, I was drawn to a study "Reading, Writing, and Animation in Character

Learning in Chinese as a Foreign Language" (Xu, Chang, Zhang & Perfetti, 2013),

because this seemed to be one of the few research works that connects character learning

with writing and reading. But unfortunately the writing and reading here is coding and decoding, and yet, has some connections with students' life experiences by the three modes of communication, interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes. While the curriculum looked encouraging, the analysis of the experiment was on isolated word memory and word retention rate.

Xu, Chang, Zhang & Perfetti's (2013) study was a quantitative experiment, conducted at a first Chinese language course at college level. The participants were divided into three groups and were taught for 20 weeks in a curriculum with the three modes of communication, interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes. Their theoretical basis was that "writing helps reading development in Chinese in both first and second language settings by enabling higher-quality orthographic representation of the characters" (p. 423). Their study investigated the comparative effectiveness of reading, animation, and writing (characters) in developing foreign language learners' orthographic knowledge of Chinese. The three experimental groups took the task of reading, animation, and writing respectively. Then they compared the results of the rate of character memorization and retention. Their findings suggested that three learning conditions facilitated learners' character learning in different ways: Writing and animation both led to better form recognition, while reading produced superior meaning and sound recalls. Further, the effect of animation in meaning recall was also better than character writing. In developing the skill of reproducing characters from memory, writing was superior.

It is encouraging that some researchers argue that visual-orthographic knowledge may be more crucial in learning Chinese characters than in learning an alphabetic

language (e.g., Huang & Hanley, 1994; Leck, Weekes, & Chen, 1995, cited in Xu et al., 2013), and others make the connection with writing and reading. Tan, Spinks, Eden, Perfetti and Siok (2005) suggest that reading in Chinese depends on writing, due to the linguistic differences between Chinese and alphabetic languages, the different processing mechanisms of Chinese and English words. This notion of reading and writing relationship is in line with my assumption that writing builds the blocks for reading, though their writing is character writing while my writing is composing.

Tan, Spinks, Eden, Perfetti and Siok (2005) did a quantitative experiment on native Chinese children's reading and writing relationship, in Beijing, China. One group of children were 7-8 years of age, while the other group were 9-10 years of age. All children were native speakers of standard Mandarin which was the language of instruction in school. The researchers were trying to prove that the role of logograph writing in reading development is mediated by two possibly interacting mechanisms. While the first is orthographic awareness, which facilitates the development of coherent, effective links among visual symbols, phonology, and semantics, the second involves the establishment of motor programs that lead to the formation of long-term motor memories of Chinese characters. Judging by these two factors, the researchers tried to "determine the important diagnostic indicator and predictor of Chinese reading ability" (P. 7). The first finding is that writing performance is strongly associated with Chinese reading in beginning as well as intermediate readers. The second finding is that the contribution of writing to Chinese reading is mediated by at least the above two factors operating in parallel. One, orthographic awareness, is engaged by the analysis of internal structures of

printed characters, while the second factor, motor programming, serves the formation of long-term motor memory of Chinese characters.

Another research on reading was done by Liang, (2005), using psycho-linguistic approach. The researcher used Labov's reading theory of narration and flowchart to schematize the contents of a text and emphasize the new syntactic structures and vocabularies it contains. In addition, strategies are described for fostering students' classroom participation through the use of dictations and quizzes. The Thematic Approach of reading is based on the psychology concept "schema" (Bartlett 1932; Rumelhart, 1975, 1977; Thorndyke 1977; McCarthy 1991, cited in Liang, 2005), which concerns two independent, yet related approaches of reading the text. One is micro-bottom-up approach, and the other is macro-top-down approach. The micro is from words, phrases, sentences, to the text. The macro is "reader-driven" reading—reader decodes the text using his or her existed knowledge and the information in the text. However, both of these approaches are linear approach. The "interactive reading model" is more realistic, because the brain uses both constantly in reading (Rumelhart 1977; Stanovich 1980; Rumelhart & McClelland 1986). This is also called "cyclic approach".

Liang cited Yorio (1971)'s work to provide the reading possibilities: one needs four kinds of knowledge and skill in order to read: 1) knowledge of language; 2) ability to predict or guess in order to make right choices; 3) ability to remember the previous cues; 4) ability to make the necessary association between the different cues selected. Labov and Waletzky (1967, cited in Liang, 2005) pointed out that there are six steps in narration: Abstract, orientation, complicating event/episode, resolution, coda, evaluation /validation.

From the short history of Chinese language education, research on the pedagogical theory and operational practice is very limited. Most of the research centers on the psychological approach using quantitative methodology to investigate Chinese language learning (e.g. Boltz, 1994; Ke, 1998; Packard, 1990; Shen, 2005; Tan, et al., 2005; Xu & Padilla, 2013; Wu, 1992). Since the 1990s, due to the complex nature of Chinese writing system, most research has focused on character recognition and the effectiveness of teaching various character learning strategies (Boltz, 1994; Ke, 1998; Packard, 1990; Shen, 2005; Xu & Jen, 2005; Xu & Padilla, 2013; Yin, 2011). In these studies, quantitative experiments are conducted on Chinese learners to identify what character learning strategies they use and how they use them. These researcher claims that learners who utilize character learning strategies perform better in character recognition tests, and their results provide pedagogical tools to Chinese teachers to teach Chinese learners. Other research has focused on how to improve reading (Liang, 2005; Tan, et al., 2005). These researches are in the category of psycho-linguistic methodology, using micro-bottom-up and macro-top-down approaches. Very few are from the sociocultural perspectives.

Research on writing/composing is basically ignored, because most beginning-level learners often do not advance beyond the introductory level of Chinese (Xu & Jen 2005). Therefore, the wider range of issues associated with writing composition has not been addressed for the Chinese language learners (Kang, 2011). Kang's (2011) dissertation is one of the few recent studies on Chinese writing/composing by Chinese language learners.

In Kang's study (2011), she identified at least four areas that needed to be addressed in the current research on Chinese learners' writing. First, comparing with other areas such as listening, speaking, character learning and grammar, there is little research on Chinese writing/composing. Second, there is no longitudinal study that investigates how Chinese learners acquire Chinese writing system and develop their Chinese writing skills. Third, the research methods reported in the literature have focused on a quantitative approach, without heed to qualitative research. Fourth, the limited research on writing Chinese has not fully investigated the effect of using computer technology on learners' Chinese writing.

In her research, Kang combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies comparing "Computer-based Writing and Paper-based Writing" at college level. The focus of the comparisons is on the mechanics of writing errors: character errors, stroke-sequence errors, lack of clarity, poor organizations as well as speed of writing and length of writing. The conclusion is that each writing mode has its own strengths and weaknesses: while the beginning-level participants connected their characters with Pinyin Romanization system better using the computer-based writing, the intermediate-level participants wrote faster and longer essays with computer-based writing. And yet, paper-based writing helped intermediate-level participants produce well-organized and well-written writings.

Kang's study provides one of few attempts to investigate writing in Chinese language by beginning and intermediate level college students, thus advancing research in the area of teaching and learning of Chinese. Though Kang's study provides research on writing development at beginning and intermediate levels in Chinese language

classroom and it is a valuable step to the right direction, it only focuses on how to retain the charaters of the writing and fails to examine the content of writing, nor takes into consideration the participants' cultural background, attitude, experience and multiple identities (Norton, 2012). As we all know, the participants do not live in vacuum, thus the social context and their identities must have impact on their writing, especially the content of their writing ((Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, Lantolf, 2005, 2011). Kang's study also recognizes that there is very limited research on writing in Chinese programs on all levels. As one of the most difficult parts of learning Chinese, composing has received little attention from researchers. Indeed, there is a great need to do more investigation on different aspects of writing development in Chinese language classrooms.

For learning Chinese as a Foreign Language, learners whose first language is English consider learning Chinese writing as the most challenging part of learning Chinese (Kang, 2011), therefore, students without sufficient knowledge of Chinese characters often encounter considerable difficulty in reading (Shen, 2005). So when and how to learn characters becomes contentious issue in learning Chinese. In fact, in many high schools today, including other schools in my school district, pinyin is still the only or partially written form for the beginner students. Character learning is gradually introduced starting at level II or level III. From majority of the research we can summarize that the general underlining assumption of learning practice is a linear progress, with beginners learning lexical items, then proceeding to reading, and writing as the ultimate goal in high level of learning, as the flow-chat indicates:

```
┌─────────────────────────┐
│   Writing / Composing    │
└─────────────────────────┘
            ↑
┌─────────────────────────┐
│         Reading          │
└─────────────────────────┘
            ↑
┌─────────────────────────┐
│        Lexicons          │
└─────────────────────────┘
```
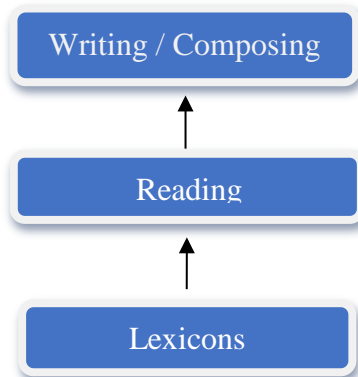
Figure 1: Flow-chart of Traditional Chinese Language Learning Sequence

This learning sequence assumes that learners need to have enough lexical inventories first, and then they are able to read. If they can read well, they may be able to learn how to compose texts. Since the characters are very difficult to master, especially when learning the characters in an isolated manner, most learners stay at the character learning stage for a long time, usually dropping out before they advance to the reading and writing levels (Xu & Padilla, 2013).   Based on this assumption and the desire of pushing more learners to proceed to the reading and writing level, researchers felt they needed to tackle the stumbling block of Chinese character learning: stroke orders, radicals and other elements in the structures of pictographs, ideographs, logical aggregates, phonetic complexes, transference and borrowing. This is why many researchers focused their energy to find more efficient ways to improve learners' Chinese character learning (Ke, 1998; Shen, 2000, 2007; Scrimgeour, 2012) and very few went beyond that stage.

As a researcher, taking Gee's literacy standing and Hyland's theory on genre-based writing, I attempt to challenge the traditional Chinese language learning sequence and rethink the impossible----writing (composing) for the beginning level students. In

my teaching experience in the past 5 years, I have been introducing level I and level II students to various writing practices. The intention is to give learners opportunity to have fun experimenting with the language, using the characters learned to express themselves from the simple to the more complex as the learning progresses. "Meaning is not a thing that sits fixed in the mind" (Gee, 2012, p. 21), and students need to learn from the social interactions. By composing texts, learners develop a deeper knowledge of writing, and they are experimenting using the characters to express meaningful real life situations and their many potential selves. This application enhances mastering of those characters learned, and learning new ones along the way with the need of expressing oneself in a more complex manner.

I would also advocate that learning characters, writing and reading by writing-to-learn approach (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2011) at early learning stage, but not necessarily exclusively focus on grammatical accuracy as the writing-to-learn scholars' would propose. Instead, my writing-to-learn is to have students learn the characters in the social contexts, which would provide them with meaning making based on particular sets of social dynamics. I believe learning characters with meaning making is a situated literacy, a social practice, which is best embodied in writing/composing practice to describe the world around the learners, connecting with their lives. This situated learning within the social contexts is far better than the memorization of isolated words or rote repetition of the character learning without social context, which many studies on learning English as L2 already had proven the positive results (e.g. Kramsch, 1989, 1993; Perez, 1998; Kern, 2000).

Learning requires learners take active role in appropriating knowledge and

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constructing new meaning from it (Bakhtin, 1981). Learning is a social activity, a social

act, a social practice, which takes place through communication or interaction with others

(Vygotsky, 1978). It is not a matter of ordering the learning activities, such as, speaking

first, then developing reading skills and then learning to write. Rather, speaking, reading

and writing are interconnected parts of an active learning process and of social

transformation (Gadotti, 1994). Our language learning is situated in our particular

contexts with certain dynamics and certain sets of tensions. Instead of the linear

sequence as it indicated in Figure 1, I would argue that the Chinese language learning

stages can be conceived in different relationships to each other: an integration in a

learning upward spiral:
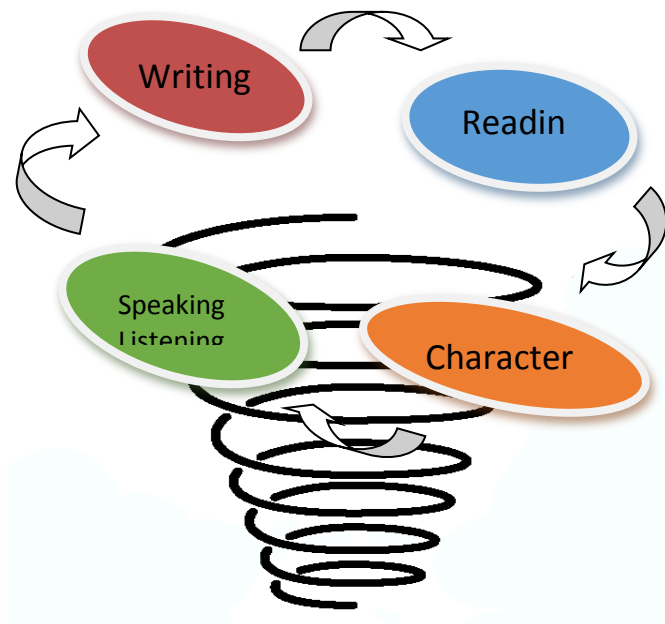
Figure 2: Learning Chinese in an Upward Spiral

The spiral of learning starts from the very beginning, using what students know to create

texts, which will lead to expansion of their vocabulary that in turn will help with reading.

Only language with multiple dimensions gained from social practice can better be applied

appropriately in discussing conflicting views, values, and identities in specific social

contexts (Gee, 2012). Creative writing is the ultimate goal, but it does not have to wait

until the end of a long journey.

Theories on Identity and Investment

Social Identity

In 1970s and 1980s, the traditional psychological perspectives view identity as an

objective reality that is part of one's cognitive make-up. This perspective regards identity

as being derived from one's knowledge about one's own or another's membership in

various categories. Therefore, most of the research on L2 learners conceptualized their

identities as having fixed personalities, learning styles, and motivations. Other

researchers view identity as a dynamic social phenomenon that people invoke and deploy

during every day interactions (Antaki, Condor, & Levine, 1996). Identity as a social

process embedded in the use of discourses in conversation, so that interactants are able to

use symbolic representations to position their various identities based upon the structural

orientation and social activities embedded in the talk. Therefore, identity is constructed,

built or negotiated in the process of conversations or written communications.

In conversational identity, Antaki et al. (1996) believe that an important way to

understand the display and negotiation of identity within conversation is that identities

are flexible and fluid. Apart from being a set of meanings about oneself (content),

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identity is also defined as a process which incorporates identifying oneself and being recognized by others. Willett (1995) argues that "people not only construct shared understandings in the process of interaction, they also evaluate and contest those understandings as they struggle to further their individual agendas" (p. 475). As people act and react to one another, they also construct relations, ideologies and identities. These constructions both constrain subsequent negotiations and sustain relationships of power, solidarity, and social order. Identity is, therefore, seen here as embedded in social relations and as dynamic, contextual and relational (Antaki et al., 1996). Bakhtin (1981) suggested that we engage in internal dialogues that are the result of the many voices we have already encountered in the past. These internal dialogues are often sites of struggle and through these dialogues we are able to construct and reconstruct ourselves. Thus, identity construction is a process during which our internal struggles are revealed through negotiation. Mishler (1999) suggested that identity is the "dynamic organization of sub-identities that might conflict or align with each other" (p. 8).

In the camp of identity construction through literacy, researchers view that literacy practices are means through which identities are constructed. Ferdman (1990) suggested that literacy and culture have a reciprocal relationship at the level of the individual. A person's identification with a particular ethnic or cultural group is connected to his perception of literacy. Ferdman (1990) also argued that while cultural identity mediates the learning and the use of literacy, literacy will subsequently alter an individual's view of himself/herself. In other words, literacy helps improve an individual's self-image by transforming the individual.

More recent works on learners' identities argue that identities are fluid, context-dependent, and context producing, under particular historical, cultural and social circumstances (Norton, 2011). Norton's notion of identity refers to "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (2000, p. 5). In the process of identity construction, language plays a central role in negotiating a sense of self within and across different sites at different points in time. It is also language that helps a person to gain access to the target language communities and the resources in the communities. Language, therefore, is not neutral, but sites of struggles with social meanings.

Gee (2000) pointed out that in today's fast growing interconnected global world, more and more researchers from variety of disciplines use identity as an important analytic tool to understand education and society. It is more contextually specific and more dynamic than the traditional race, class and gender is. He developed four lenses to view identity: 1) Nature-identity (N-identities): one is recognized, by oneself or others, as kind of person based on his/her nature, such as genes, biological disorders, defects, for example, ADHD, twins. The source of power is nature. The "N-identities must always gain their force as identities through the work of institutions, discourse and dialogue, or affinity groups, that is, the very forces that constitute our other perspectives on identity" (P. 6); 2) Institution Identity (I-identities): identities that cannot be accomplished by oneself, but given or imposed by institutions, for example, a professor, a principal; 3) Discourse Identity (D-identities): identities evoked by individual traits, which are generated or accomplished through discourse or dialogue by other people in social

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interactions, such as being charismatic. The source of power is not nature or institution, but individuals. "The process through which this power works is recognition" (P. 9). Thus, D-identity is an ascription or an achievement; 4) Affinity identity (A-identities): identities that have allegiance to, access to, and participate in specific practices that give each of its members the requisite experience. The key is participation or sharing in an affinity group, for example, Star Trek fans.

Gee cautioned us that "it is crucial to realize that these four perspectives are not separate from each other (emphasis is original)" (P. 4). But rather they are inter-related in important and complex ways in theory and practice. "Rather than discrete categories, they are ways to focus our attention on different aspects of how identities are formed and sustained" (P. 4).   At times they can be mixed and woven together, and yet they can stand out predominately within a given context. These four perspectives of identity will be used as tools or lenses in the analysis and interpretation of identity in my study in general. As for the D-identity, I will also take Norton's (1997, 2000, 2008, 2011) and Bourdieu's (1991) theories and concepts into the analysis and discuss how they form the D-identities based on the data.

Norton's Investment

In the field of second language learning, Norton introduced the concept of investment, which alerted us to focus our attention to the relationship between learners' socially and historically constructed identities and the target language, especially "their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it" (1995, p. 17). Norton (1995, 2000) referenced Bourdieu (1977) notion of cultural capital as knowledge and modes of thought that characterizes different classes and groups in relation to specific sets of social forms.

Some forms of cultural capital have higher exchange value than others in a given social context. If second language learners have the desire to gain access to the cultural capital, they need to invest in the L2 learning, in order to get return which will increase the value of their cultural and even economic capital. This notion of investment is a big step away from the concept of learner motivation, drawn primarily from the field of social psychology. Norton cited Gardner and Lambert's (1972) and Gardner's (1985) work to unpack their conceptions of motivation as having two categories: instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. While instrumental motivation refers to the desire that language learners have to gain utilitarian advantage, such as getting employment, the integrative motivation is for the language learners to successfully integrate into the target language community.

Norton points out that such concepts of motivation, which are dominant in the field of SLA, do not capture the complex relationships between relations of power, identity and language learning. She cautions that her construct of investment is different from instrumental motivation. The instrumental motivation "presupposes a unitary, fixed, and ahistorical language learner who desires access to material resources that are the privilege of the target language speakers" (Norton, 1995, p.17). In this presupposition, motivation is property of the language learner, a fixed personality trait, one either has it or does not have it, which would have direct impact on language learning. This view places the responsibility of learning solely on the shoulder of language learners, ignoring other potential obstacles imbedded in the social context that could affect the desire of learning.

Norton's notion of investment attempts to capture and explain the complex relationship between learners and the ever changing social world. It recognizes the language learners as having complex social identities and multiple desires. Second language speakers use the target language to exchange information, and most importantly to "organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world" (ibd. p. 18). Her conclusion is that "an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own social identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space" (p. 18).

This notion of investment, I believe, recognizes that language learners' investment is related to learners' social and cultural identity which is fluid and constantly changing with particular social contexts. This awareness will place the responsibility of learning on both learners and teachers in the formal learning environment of classroom setting, where teachers and students co-construct the learning experience. Teachers need to examine how the learners negotiate their social and cultural identities and what could be their potential "incentives" for their investment, and how these identities and investment change over time. Being informed of these clues, teachers can better cope with the pedagogical practices that provide encouraging contexts for the learners to invest. In increasingly diverse language classrooms, poststructuralist theories provide the conceptual tools which help us better understand and address the complexities of learning and teaching in contexts of linguistic diversity (Norton, 2012).

Imagined Community and Imagined Identity

Norton's (2001) concept of imagined communities refers to groups of people who are not immediately tangible and accessible to us, but we connect with them through the

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power of our imagination. Often, in our daily lives we interact with many communities

whose existence can be felt concretely and directly. These include our neighborhood

communities, our workplaces, our educational institutions, and our religious groups.

However, these are not the only communities we are associated with. Especially in the

era of advanced information technology, we use cyber space to connect with the world,

part of which we might never have the opportunity to physically reach. But this distance

or space does not prevent a student in China or a country in Africa to compare himself or

herself to Michael Jordan in order to form a particular identity.   As Etienne Wenger

(1998) suggests, direct involvement with community practices and investment in tangible

and concrete relationships — what he calls engagement --- is not the only way in which

we belong to a community. For Wenger, imagination --- "a process of expanding oneself

by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves"

(p. 176) --- is another important kind of community.

Imagined communities are extended both spatially and temporally. Benedict

Anderson (1991) first coined the term imagined communities. He argues that what we

think of as nations are imagined communities, "because the members of even the smallest

nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them,

yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (p. 6). Thus, in imagining

ourselves living with our fellow citizens sharing common languages, ideologies and

practices across space and time, we can feel a sense of community with people we have

not yet met, but perhaps hope to meet one day.   Wenger pointed out,

> We not only produce our identities through the practices we engage
> in, but we also define ourselves through the practices we do not engage in.
> Our identities are constituted not only by what we are but also by what we
> are not. To the extent that we can come in contact with other ways of being,

what we are not can even become a large part of how we define ourselves.

(Wenger, 1998: 164)

This concept of imagined communities will be used to see what kinds of community students will imagine and how students connect with the imagined communities, or even shift from one community to the other or get in between.   In situating and shifting themselves in these communities, I will examine what and how the student learning occurs and in what capacity, what and how much the student investment is, as well as what kinds of identities are formed.

Writing in Foreign and Second Language

While research on second language (L2) writing in English increased tremendously in the last decades, research on writing in foreign language (FL) is far behind, even though there has been a growth in this area recently. Researchers find that one of the key factors that affects L2 learning and FL learning is how much authentic exposer to the Target language (TL) environment. They argue that whereas the L2 students often have the advantage of unlimited access to authentic TL use because they are immersed in the language environment, thus they are getting the spoken and writing input constantly, the FL students often have limited contact with the TL environment, except the artificial language contexts in the classroom, and yet these classroom contexts may or may not have writing (Rechelt, Lefkowitz, Rinnert & Schultz, 2012). This difference makes it more difficult to learn FL, especially the writing/composition in FL.

According to Rechelt et al (2012), there are also other environmental factors that affect FL writing at college level: class size and contact hours. While ESL classes

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typically have 12 to 17 students in one class, FL classes, particularly Spanish, tend to have higher numbers, 30 to 35, based on their interview data. Further FL classes are usually allocated less time than ESL classes. With fewer students and more time, instructors are able to have their students be more creative, peer editing, incorporate contrastive or intercultural rhetoric in their writing classes.

Besides limited contact with TL, FL students also face other challenges in learning to write. First of all, FL students may not want to invest their effort in the learning of writing because they do not see the immediate benefits of being able to write in the TL. Further FL students may hold stubbornly to writing formats they learned from their L1 reading and composition class, and refuse or have difficulty to try the new essay format with different discourse patterns. They may have the impression that writing well in TL is to simply learn the appropriate vocabulary or grammar and use them in the L1 writing format (Rechelt, Lefkowitz, Rinnert & Schultz, 2012).

Foreign language educators also have challenges when facing with teaching FL writing. In recent years, L2 and FL language pedagogy has shifted to the emphasis of communicative approach from the traditional grammar-translation and audio-lingual approach. Though communicative approach includes all four mode of language learning: listening, speaking, reading and writing, yet in practice, the emphasis is often placed on oral proficiency at the expense of writing (Allen & Paesani, 2010, Hedgcock & Lefkowitz 2011, Rechelt & Bryant 2001). "Thus, speaking and listening skills are privileged, and writing is frequently used primarily to support the development of oral proficiency" (Tomstad & Thorson, 1996, P3). The direct consequence of this communicative approach is the unbalanced teaching practice: very little

writing/composition occurs in foreign language classrooms, except the most advanced classes.

This unbalanced classroom practice provides very little space for research on FL writing. In addition, the many variety of FL make the language specific research on writing even scarcer. Without the updated theories and guidance of the research on FL writing, language educators are often at loss as how to teach writing. Research (Lafkowitz, 2009) shows that some FL instructors use the form-focused, product-oriented approaches, which include selecting artificial topics, assigning writing task often before any specific instructions and expecting grammar accuracy. Instead of tailoring their writing approaches to assist students to become proficient writers, instructors consistently emphasize grammatical correctness rather than meaningful communicative content. Additional challenges for language educators teaching FL writing include time constraint, inadequate knowledge (O'Doonnell, 2007) and the assumption of automatic transfer of writing skills from L1 to FL (Rechelt, Lefkowitz, Rinnert & Schultz, 2012). All the challenges that students and teachers have make it very difficult for FL learners to learn to compose in a language they are not completely comfortable with yet.

Genre-based Writing

Nevertheless, recently some research on genre-based pedagogy has shed positive light on L2 and FL writing. In the field of L2 and FL writing for the last decade or so, genre-based pedagogies are increasingly gaining momentum. Genre-based pedagogies are based on the "changing views of discourse and of learning to write which incorporate better understandings of how language is structured to achieve social purposes in particular context of use" (Hyland, 2007, p 148). Instead of drawing on the composition

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theory, cognitive psychology or traditional grammar, genre-based pedagogy offers a linguistically informed and research grounded writing theory and writing practice, which will make explicit what is to be learnt, provide a coherent framework for students to study both language and context, ensure space for students to express themselves and supply students with resources and scaffolding to accomplish their writing task, and ultimately become experienced writers (Hyland, 2007).

Hyland defines genre as "abstract, socially recognized ways of using language" (2007, p. 149), and Swales calls genre "a distinctive category of discourse of any type, spoken or written" (1990, p. 33). For the members in a discourse community, genres establish certain levels of norms of interaction which are easily recognized and expected from other members in the same community. "… reader's chances of interpreting the writer's purpose are increased if the writer takes the trouble to anticipate what the reader might be expecting based on previous texts they have read of the same kind (Hyland, 2007, p. 149).

For Bakhtin, genres are utterances that are "filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances" (1986, p. 91). We all possess a schema of prior knowledge which we have learnt from others and at times we bring this knowledge to the situations of reading and writing, so that we can understand the texts and express ourselves effectively and efficiently. We learn genres and discourses "through a process of assimilation—more or less creative--- of others' words (and not the words of the language)" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.89). Being creative is to be able to appropriate the learnt language to achieve our particular purpose in particular context. This notion underscores the current concept of literacy which emphasizes that writing and reading varies with context and cannot be

simply a set of abstract cognitive or technical skills (Street, 1995). Language learners do

not learn just vocabulary, syntax or semantics, but rather they are to enter a discourse

community, they need to learn to assimilate creatively complex patterns of language use

based on particular context. "There are a wide variety of practices relevant to and

appropriate for particular times, places participants, and purposes, and these practices are

not something that we simply pick up and put down, but integral to our individual

identity, social relationships, and group memberships" (Hyland, 2007, p. 150).

Genre pedagogy stresses that genres are specific to particular cultures, and our

students may not share the same culture with us. Genre-based writing theories inform us

that we need to go beyond syntax structures, lexical items or grammar, and have our

students compose in ways that language is used in specific contexts (Cope & Kalantzis,

1993; Hyland, 2007). As writing instructors we need to present explicit and systematic

explanations on how writing works to convey our ideas, what the linguistic choices are,

and have our students to take advantage of the expressive potential of the cultural

discourse structure to create texts in ways that students can give their ideas authority and

express themselves with their agency (Christie & Martin, 1997; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993;

Hyland, 2007). Hyland argues that,

> …genre-based writing instruction offers students an explicit understanding of
> how target texts are structured and why they are written in the way they are.
> This explicitness gives teachers and learners something to shoot for making
> writing outcomes clear rather than relying on hit or miss inductive methods
> whereby learners are expected to acquire the genres they need from repeated
> writing experiences or teacher's notes in the margin of their essays.
>
> (Hyland, 2003a, cited in 2007, p. 151)

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Genre-based writing theories encourage language educators to utilize these principles in teaching writing: collaboration, or peer interaction, and scaffolding, or teacher-supported learning. These principles are based on two notions in learning: shared consciousness and borrowed consciousness. While shared consciousness refers to the concept that learners working together learn more effectively than individual work separately, borrowed consciousness means that learners working with knowledgeable others develop greater understanding of tasks and ideas (Hyland, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's notion of scaffolding is to have learners interact with peers and more knowledgeable teachers in order to move from their existing levels to a higher level. Research in this area has proved this to be happening with the learners (Donato, 2000; Ohta, 2000). The key to scaffolding writing is the degree of teacher intervention and the selection of tasks in ways teachers provide support from closely controlled activities to more autonomous communication, gradually reducing the support as learners gaining their confidence at a higher level.

According to Hyland, scaffolding takes many forms, but the most important ones are "modeling and discussion of the texts, explicit instruction, and teacher input" (2007, p. 158). He takes the concept of "writing frames" from Wray & Lewis (1997) to show one of the many possibilities. The "writing frames" are skeletal outlines or modeled texts to serve as genre templates which promote and scaffold students' writing, enabling them to start, connect, appropriate and produce their own texts while focus on what they want to express. He continues to argue that,

> Frames provide a structure for writing and can therefore take many different
> forms, depending on the genre, the purpose of the writing, and the proficiency
> of the students, even being devised for individual learners. They are introduced
> after teacher modeling and explicit discussion of the forms needed for a particular

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kind of text and can be used to scaffold planning or drafting. Basically, they provide something of the promoting missing between a writer and blank sheet of paper, assisting writers to envisage what is needed to express their purposes effectively and to anticipate the possible reactions of an intended readership. Students will need to use them less and less as their confidence in writing and their competence in writing target genres grows.

(Hyland 2007, p. 158 & 159)

While the majority of the research on genre-based writing is from studies on English as second language (ESL) (Cheng, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2008a, 2011; Christie & Martin, 1997; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Dixon, 1987; Hyland, 2003a, 2004, 2007; Swales, 1990, 2004; Swales & Luebs, 2002, Tardy 2009, 2011), researchers have begun to explore the teaching of writing on less-commonly taught languages, especially the genre-based writing on non-English FL (Gentil, 2011; Yigitoglu & Reichelt, 2014). Byrnes, Maxim, and Norris (2010) argue that the research of L2 writing is overwhelmingly oriented towards ESL writing, but not on FL writing. Such research reflects learners and learning situations that are very different from the learning contexts for FL writing. Foreign language learners often may not have a clear sense of immediate or future need of FL writing, and instructors may just use FL writing to support the target language acquisition or to foster positive attitude writing (Reichelt, 2009).

However, Yigitoglu & Reichelt (2014) explored the possible need of the FL writing in a context of a US university. They did a survey in Turkish-language class, which indicated 3 major purposes for students to learn writing in Turkish: 1) writing specific genres such as academic papers or job application letters in Turkish for work and study in Turkey; 2) writing in order to be able to communicate for interpersonal/cultural contact with native Turkish speakers through email or other electronic means; and 3) writing not for its own sake, but to reinforce vocabulary, grammar, and phrases in the

target language. Apparently the purposes for learning writing are either instrumental, such as studying or working in the target language context, or interpersonal, communicating with the target language speakers. There is also an immediate need for writing as vehicle to learn and strengthen their capacity to use the target language appropriately and effectively.

In their study, Yigitoglu & Reichelt (2014) also reflect the special challenges their students face in writing in Turkish, and provide recommendations for writing instructors who intend to use genre-based writing instructions. They find that the specific challenges in writing in Turkish are mostly case marking, case ending, word order, and rhetorical differences, for example, inductive vs deductive way of developing the texts, which is often culturally oriented beyond language itself. They recommend genre-based writing instructors to do the following: 1) providing students with ways to make contacts with other users of the target language or with authentic goals that may motivate students to learn writing in target contexts; 2) encouraging interest in written exchanges via email or other electronic means; 3) implementing contrastive rhetoric consciousness-raising activities in the teaching of writing; 4) carefully considering what students may bring from their L1 genre related knowledge to their L2 writing experience, at times, simultaneous genre acquisition is also possible or needed.

In the FL writing conversation, there are also other discussions on methods for teaching writing. Based on the research (Lefkowitz, 2009, cited in Rechelt, Lefkowitz, Rinnert & Schultz, 2012), one popular practice that most FL instructors use is the form-focused, product-oriented approaches. In this practice, instructors select artificial topics and often assign them before any instructions are given. The writing assignments

consistently focus on grammatical accuracy, instead of focusing on meaningful communicative content. These researchers argue that these writing approaches are consistent with the writing-to-learn practices (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2011).

Writing-to-learn approaches in FL classroom employ writing as tools for the TL learning. Through writing, learners practice lexical usages and grammatical constructions, aiming at developing learners' TL literacy. Writing tasks are often regarded as subordinate to the overall goal of improving TL proficiency, instead of using writing as vehicles to develop experienced and efficient writers (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2011). In contrast with writing-to-learn, some writing instructors like the approach of learning-to-write.

According to Lefkowitz (2009, cited in Rechelt, et al, 2012), ESL writing instructors tend to use learning-to-write approach in teaching ESL compositions. This approach emphasizes content over linguistic forms, engaging learners in collaborative interactions. The focus is "on the entire writing process rather than concentrating exclusively on the final product" (Rechelt, et al. 2012, p. 28). Similar to genre-based writing approach, learning-to-write practices attempt to select authentic topics connected with learners' real life world, hold brainstorming, conferencing and free writing sessions, and organize summarizing, paraphrasing, sentence combining and synthesizing. The goals are to have learners write in different genres for different audiences and purposes. Ultimately learning-to-write approach will help learners to become competent writers in English as L2.

While each approach demonstrates its merits in the teaching practices, I would argue that FL instructors should integrate both writing-to-learn and learning-to-write

approaches into one systematic practice, in order to achieve FL proficiency and competent writers simultaneously. On the one hand, FL learners take writing to learn and reinforce the basics of TL, including the lexical choices, syntactical functions and grammatical mechanics, to improve TL proficiency, which all constitute the necessity of quality writings. These linguistic knowledge can be used in FL writing as practical tool to identify the patterns of vocabulary, grammar, and cohesion structure at different stages in the texts of particular genre of writing. On the other hand, FL instructors should consciously provide step by step scaffolding to have leaners learning-to-write, and become skilled writers. To this end, FL writing instructors need to keep in mind the concept of intertextuality, employing genre-based approaches, including selecting topics to fit students' need, providing writing templets, modeling, identifying and analyzing the series of moves of particular genre, guiding students to appropriate their ideas into the texts (Hyland, 2007).

This writing journey is similar to the process of assembling machines, in which students are the apprentices and instructors are machinists. Their overall goals are to make different kinds of machines. The machinists need to show the apprentices how to recognize big and small parts, nuts and bolts, and various tools to put them together. Then the machinists will show and tell on the different kinds of machines and how to read their blue prints. Next they need to work on assembling the machines. Of course, assembling machines needs to start from the relatively small and easy ones, and gradually working on the bigger and more sophisticated ones. Here the sample machines are the sample texts or templates that we can show the students; the parts of various kinds, the nuts, bolts and tools are the linguistics, such as the lexicons, the syntax and the

grammatical rules that we use to construct texts; the blue prints are the meta-language of how to build the texts. In this assembling process, students might need to recognize the functions of the lexicon and syntax and use the grammar tools, take many trials to fit their ideas to the machine being assembled. Without the whole machine as a bigger picture, it is very hard to see what the functions each smaller parts play, and at the same time, without the small parts working together correctly, it is very hard to build complete machines. This is why I argue that the writing-to-learn and learning-to-write should work hand in hand simultaneously and systematically, with focus varying perhaps slightly at different stage of learning. The difference between the writing and the assembling metaphor is that the machine assembling is more visible, that is, it is easy to see if they are fit or not. Yet the completed texts may not visibly show the flaws. I believe if our FL instructors set a consistent goal and start to let students create texts from early on, instead of dwelling on only the grammar or only character writing stage for Chinese, our learners will be practiced into the target discourse much quicker than we can imagine.

In light of their research, I would expect that in each FL learning context learners will have specific needs and language specific challenges for FL writing. Despite the fact that most of the research work are done in the context of college level writing, the theoretical perspectives and the findings will facilitate my instruction of writing to address the challenges we have in creating texts. As an instructor I try to connect my students with the target language community in order to establish ties for communicative interactions. I hope this study will contribute a drop in the pool of investigating genre from various perspectives, including the role of genre acquisition, genre transfer among

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languages acquired, and genre theory in developing academic literacy in K-12 schools (Swales, 2011).

Intertextuality

According to Bazerman (2004), the term "intertextuality" was coined by Julia Kristeva in a work "Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art", published in English translation in 1980. Drawing on the work of both Bakhtin and Volosinov, Kristeva argues that any text is a mosaic of quotations. She questions the notion of originality in any text, but common cultural experience in the sharing of text. Orientation to common utterances creates the ongoing culture and evokes common objects of desire. "Intertextuality, for Kristeva, is a mechanism whereby we write ourselves into the social text, and thereby the social text write us" (Bazerman, 2004, p. 54).

The origin of the concept of intertextuality is from Bakhtin and Volosinov, according to Bazerman. In his "Dialogic Imagination" (Bahktin, 1981), Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin talks about dialogic and dialogism which often refer to that any utterances or literary work do not appear in isolation, but have dialogic features, carrying on a continual dialogue with other works of literature and other authors. The dialogic work not only answers, corrects, silences, or extends a previous work, but also informs and is continually informed by the previous works. Bazerman (2004, P.54) echoes Volosinov's argument on this dialogic nature of language: "Language exists only in individual utterances which are located in particular moments and relations; one cannot properly understand language apart from its instances of use, embedded within many

surrounding utterances." In other words, the nature of language is situated utterance in social interactions and social relations.

In Bakhtin's perspective (1981), dialogue is not just a mode of interaction, but rather a way of communal existence in which people establish multi-dimension relationships of mutual interdependence. The dialogues carry communication through which people build up relationships and negotiate their identities. He argues that a person engaging in dialogues invests his or her entire self in discourse and that this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life. Bakhtin has a moral stance of "valuing appreciation of the existence of others", and "a morally accountable, autonomous self that must take responsibility for individual actions" (Bazerman, 2004, p. 56).

Bakhtin also suggests that one of the most interesting aspects of language is the dialogicality of each spoken utterance or written message. Reading a text is an exchange of ideas between the reader and the writer, a two-way cultural communication, a dialogue. This perspective challenges the traditional views on reading that reading simply as decoding what the author has constructed, but rather readers use their prior knowledge to evaluate and re-evaluate the characters of each other's voice. Bazerman argues that such complex attitudes towards other people's utterances or texts "can serve to exclude or demote appreciation of the other". He continues that this is often a way to distance those who are different from us, "as we might parody a foreign accent or non-dominant dialect or we might mockingly repeat words we dismiss as absurd." (Bazerman, 2004, p. 57). In the relationships of mutual interdependence, while readers gain their enhanced agency by perceiving how texts create social reality of references and situate in relation to the

resources of prior and ambient texts, writers achieve their enhanced agency by increased ability to place their texts in relation to other texts, draw on others' resources, represent others' texts from writers' perspectives, and assemble new social representations of textual texts within which writers act through their words. "How we use other texts frames social organization, relation, and action within the world of textual exchange" (ibd. P. 58).

Echoing the concept of intertextuality, Bakhtin (1981) proposes two types of discourse in learning: authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse. Authoritative discourse "demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us, quite independent of any power it might have to persuade us internally; we encounter it with its authority already fused into it" (Bahktin, 1981, p. 342). Internally persuasive discourse as Bahktin says it: "the internally persuasive word is half-ours and half-someone else's", it allows dialogic interaction and individuals' conscious reflection of their "own intention" and "accent" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 345). This concept of authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse provides me with analytical tools to examine our writing practice, how much teacher's authoritative discourse is acknowledged and made into learners' own, how learners' internally persuasive discourse is formed, and how much learners' "own intention" or "accent" is fused into the texts they created, to reflex their own agency in the writing process.

The mechanisms of the formation of consciousness rise out of the mechanisms of textual relations (Volosinov, cited in Bazerman, 2004). Volosinov argues that our particular experiences of language utterances enrich our individual consciousness, therefore our consciousnes is deeply dialogical, intertextual, just as our utterances are. In

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the same vain, Vygotsky (1987) argues that our consciousness is formed by the influence of the language spoken around us, which is full of cultural and historical information. A child's development goes through two steps: first it is on the social level, and then it goes to individual level. An interpersonal process gradually becomes intrapersonal knowledge, forming one's self. Our thoughts and actions are deeply intertextual, even though at times they may seem to be very private and personal, or they may not seem to have overt reference to other utterances or texts.

Bazerman points out that only recently Genette, one of the literary critics, has started to analyze how intertextuality works in specific texts (2004). Genette has provided several possible relations among texts: transtextuality----intertextuality (explicit quotation or allusion), paratextuality (the relation to directly surrounding texts, such as prefaces, interviews, publicity, reviews); metatextuality (a commentary relation); hypertextuality (the play of one text off of familiarity with another); and architextuality (the generic expectations in relation to other similar texts) (1992, 1997a, 1997b, cited in Bazerman, 2004). These concepts have expanded our view of how texts can be formulated and provide useful tools for "reorienting teaching of writing and literacy studies away from the isolated, individual writer toward the writer placed within a complex social, textual field" (ibd. P. 58).

In his work "Intertextualities" in 2004, Bazerman proposes three dimensions of intertextuality that lie behind the new text, and that the writers can draw on to define the current task of writing on hand. The first dimension is the sequence of texts that have led up to and formed the current rhetorical situation. What course syllabi and assignment

sheets, assigned course readings, books cited in class lectures, and prior paper have led up to the paper that is to be handed in tomorrow?

The second is the genre of any text or text to be written which grows out of a history of prior texts that set exemplars and expectations. Showing students models of prior texts that accomplish the tasks they are facing and helping them see how they can build on and modify that history of genre models can help provide guidelines as well as space for originality relevant to the specifics of the current task.

The third is the entire range of documents that can be brought to bear or used as a resource for a current document. The more broadly and precisely students and other writers envision the intertextual world they can draw on, the more powerful a set of flexible options they will have on hand. By bringing in new intertextual resources and contexts that they can show to be relevant, they can even redefine the fundamental rhetorical situation in major ways. A seemingly narrow issue of political expediency, for example, can be transformed into an issue of political principle and moral integrity. Or a historical narrative can be transformed into a test of social theory. Or a muddle of conflicting interests can be sharpened into a small list of legally permissible choices.

Supportively agreeing with the above three dimensions, I am adding the fourth dimension here. For second language learners, the intertextual texts in target language bring the subconscious thought into forefront, in order to evaluate, elaborate, redefine and clarify ideas. Intertextual texts enable second language learners to materialize the thoughts formulated in first language into acceptable second language and be able to appropriate the language in creating new texts.

Though Bazerman's work is about first language writing and on the college level, I believe these concepts and ways of scaffolding writers and writing can also be applied in second language writing and at high school level, since all language use is situated utterances and embeds in social interaction and social relations. Bazerman echoes Volosinov's argument that, "as linguistic creatures, human are inevitably caught up in the social drama of unfolding webs of utterances, to which we add only our next turn" (Bazerman 2004, p. 61). How we draw on the history of utterances and place that next turn is worth our serious attention. Our complex world is saturated with all kinds of texts, we need to take our students to a level of richer and more participatory understanding of intertextuality, and ultimately students are able to create their authorities, identities, agencies and powerful texts, either in first language or second language, to describ themselves and the world they are in.

Fairclough (2003) also supports the idea of intertextuality. He discusses two characteristics of dialogue that are closely related to Bakhtin's concept of dialogism that could affect identity construction: intertextuality and assumption. In Fairclough's words, intertextuality means that a contribution in discourse brings other voices into a text and therefore relates to other people's texts, discourses, whereas assumption reduces the difference by assuming common ground and leaving out such explicit relations to other people's discourses. Fairclough's (2003) intertextuality refers to the juxtaposition of other texts into a text, i.e., the bringing in or introducing of other texts, other voices. Intertextuality is "the shaping of texts' meanings by other texts". It can refer to an author's borrowing and transformation of a prior text to a reader's referencing of one text in reading another.

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The concept of intertextuality can be used to analyze the learners' references to other texts or forms of texts, for example, our pen-pal letter writing and our fairy tale story writing. Through analysis we can trace the lexical use, syntax, organization, story line and even the very story from other similar texts, which help with students' own writing. This borrowing often is used to construct ones identity or to position oneself in certain contexts and enhance her/his agency in the texts.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter of literature review examines the history of literacy development and current dominant discourses that are implicated in research and pedagogical practices in the field of L2 and FL education. Gee emphasizes that literacy is about language-in-society, especially language-in-schools. When dealing with language, meaning of words becomes essential. "Meaning is not a thing that sits fixed in the mind" and meaning-making is an active process (Gee, 2012, p. 21). Learning requires learners to take active role in appropriating knowledge and constructing new meaning from it (Bakhtin, 1981). Learning is a social activity, a social act, a social practice, which takes place through communication or interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978). Teaching to gain acquisition is "to apprentice students in a master-apprentice relationship in a Discourse" (Gee, 2012, p.175). The teacher not only needs to create an authentic social environment for students to experience the Discourse, she/he needs to scaffold the students' growing ability to say, do, value and believe within the discourse through demonstrating her/his mastery and supporting theirs for growth. That means teachers need to believe in and stretch students' ability: make it look like they can do what they really cannot do with adequate

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scaffolding. Gradually they will be led to acquisition. Teaching to gain learning is to break down the materials into small units with analysis and explanations, which will give students "meta-knowledge", looking at the materials with theoretical or critical lens. Good teachers should be able to integrate and balance both.

However, the investigations of the current state of Chinese as Foreign Language (CFL) education or FL in general hardly reflect the trend of newer conceptualizations of literacy that are based on social and cultural perspectives, especially for writing or composing. And yet, I believe the sociocultural contextual oriented literacy will provide fresh frame and space to re-conceptualize the practice of FL and CFL literacy. With the new concept of literacy as social practice, we can start to recognize the practical value in our FL classrooms, where we are not only working with the lexicons, syntax, grammar and text structures, we are also working through the texts with interpreting, analyzing, reflecting, and appropriating language as well as culture and society (e.g. Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Kramsch, 1993; Gee, 2012).

Only language with multiple dimensions gained from social practice can better be applied appropriately in discussing conflicting views, values, and identities in specific social contexts (Gee, 2012). It is not a matter of ordering the learning activities, such as, speaking first, then developing reading skills and then learning to write. Rather, speaking, reading and writing are interconnected parts of an active learning process and of social transformation (Gadotti, 1994). With this notion in mind, I have made three aforementioned arguments: 1) Chinese language learning does not have to be in a linear order, learners can experience speaking, listening, reading and writing simultaneously, in a spiral upward fashion; 2) Character learning can be embedded in writing/ composing

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practice in early learning stages, where learners experience the active meaning making process, so that they are be able to appropriate the meaning into their reading and writing as apprentices; 3) writing-to-learn for beginners does not have to exclusively focus on the grammatical structures, but rather it is an opportunity for learners to expand their knowledge on the TL, negotiate their own identities in the social context, and learn to be experienced writers. These arguments are the underpinnings of my assumption for my practice of teaching in my classroom, and our writing practices, thus, they are also my assumptions for this study.

In order to understand our writing process, I reviewed the literature of genre-based writing and intertextuality, as well as social identity theories. Bakhtin's concept of dialogism/ dialogicality suggests that language as a living tool that is simultaneously structured and emergent, by which we bring our cultural worlds into existence, maintain them, and shape them for our own purposes. In using language to participate in our activities, we reflect our understanding of them situated in their larger cultural contexts. We also create spaces and identities for ourselves as individual actors within them (1982).

I take the genre-based writing as a platform, a frame embedded in the sociocultural perspectives of literacy. On this platform, the learners as actresses/actors pick up the different tools of language mechanics, taking the intertextuality as cues to dramatize their characters of identities. The real world actresses/ actors do not know their lines and the social, cultural relations before they accept the job, and they need some rehearsal to get into the characters. The directors will provide scaffolding in the process of acting. This is the analogy of our writing process, and TL as mediating means to make the presentation possible for the drama.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

After reviewing the literature related to this study, I will focus discussion on the theoretical perspectives that frame this study: sociocultural theories on language and literacy, and genre-based theories on L2 writing. Then I will discuss the sociocultural theories of identity construction, investment (Norton, 2000), intertextuality, and how these theories help analyze the data for this study. Subsequently I will describe the methodology used for this research. Then I will provide the setting for this study, including the research site, the curriculum, and the participants. Further, I will describe the design of the research and the data collection and analysis. Last, I will discuss the limitations of this research.

This research work will take the form of an ethnographic case study. As an ethnographic case study, I will "thickly describes" (Geertz, 1973) a particular participant based on my field work. Ethnography grounded in the sociocultural setting presents the results of a holistic research methodology in which multiple ways of data are gathered to form a complex representation describing the patterns of the participant's interactions in social and cultural practices. In my ethnographic case study, I situated the learners in our social context and tried to understand the learners and myself in the co- construction of the particular reality in the literacy practice. Though I am a participant researcher, I am aware that I need to distance myself when I examine the learner's identities and learning as well as my own literacy practice. While I am intending to code and describe the salient patterns of the learner's success or failure in a holistic impartial way, I

acknowledged that all knowledge is partial, and I have my own particular bias towards

certain interpretations. However, I hope that the findings from this study have practical

as well as theoretical implications to the field of FL learning and teaching, especially on

writing.

Theoretical Framework

Influenced by the sociocultural theories from the New Literacy Studies (e.g.

Barton, Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Gee, 2012, Street, 1995) and the New London Group, I

believe that language and literacy are social and political practices which are subject to

larger historical, social and political contexts. Teaching and learning of language and

literacy are not simply linguistic processes, but social processes, through which students

learn not only how to read and write, but learn also the "values, roles, categories, and

statuses" that go hand in hand with the content of reading and writing (Broome and

Willett, 1991, p. 214).

I am aware that literacy is considered a social act, a social construction (Cook-

Gumperz, 1986; Giroux 1987; Gee, 1992), a situated social practice (Kramsch, 1993;

Norton Peirce; 1989; Kern 2000). I believe that learning requires learners take active role

in appropriating knowledge and constructing new meaning from it (Bakhtin, 1981).

Learning is a social activity, a social act, a social practice, which takes place through

communication or interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978). As a teacher, I not only

need to create an authentic social environment for students to experience the Discourse,

but I also want to scaffold the students' growing ability to say, do, value and believe

within the discourse through demonstrating her/his mastery and supporting theirs for

growth. That means I need to believe in and stretch students' ability: make it look like

they can do what they really cannot do without help. Gradually students will be led to acquisition of the TL. I teach by breaking down the materials into small units with analysis and explanations, which will give students "meta-knowledge" by looking at the materials with theoretical or critical lens. I am trying to integrate teaching and learning and at the same strike a balance between both.

I situate my students and Chinese language learning in the particular social contexts. I am drawing on the sociocultural theories on identity to understand and articulate my focal student's identities and her investment in the literacy practice. Literacy seeks to understand the sociocultural context in which students discover and interpret who they are in relation to others and the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987). These contextual discoveries and interpretations will lead to identity construction and positioning issues (Gee, 2012). Writing was the opportunity for the participant to describe her experiences with certain identities and positions on many issues, such as how she made sense of self in the process of learning the target language, and therefore get associated with the target language community and their cultural models, namely values, beliefs and attitudes while she situated herself in the school community and her home communities, as well as what her attitudes were toward her future imaginary community (Norton, 2001).

Though research in learning Chinese is limited, the research and theories on learning L2 and FL is rather extensive. I take the genre-based writing theories (Hyland, 2007; Yigitoglu & Reichelt, 2014) to support our writing practices. Genre writing sets students in certain types of writing which require certain language or ways to articulate the related expectations, purposes. This literacy process entails not only the awareness of

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the relationships between textual conventions and their contexts of use, but also the ability to critically analyze underling sociocultural values, assumptions, and ideologies implicated in creating texts (Kern, 2000). I hope that this writing process provides a tool for self-reflection, and a distance from her own taken-for-granted notions; and thus, helps to develop critical consciousness about her own as well as other cultures and societies.

I am also drawing on the theories of intertextuality to provide understanding of the nature of reading and writing, as social dialogue. This dialogue is not just a mode of interaction, but rather a way of communal existence in which people establish multi-dimension relationships of mutual interdependence. The dialogues carry communication through which people build up relationships and negotiate their identities. A person engaging in dialogues invests his or her entire self in discourse and that this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life (Bakhtin, 1981). Reading a text is an exchange of ideas between the reader and the writer, a two-way cultural communication, a dialogue. Writing is actively engaged in the exchange of ideas as well. This perspective challenges the traditional views on reading simply as decoding what the author has constructed, but rather readers use their prior knowledge to evaluate and re-evaluate the characters of each other's voice.

Research Setting

The Research Site

The research site is a vocational & technical high school, located in a small city in New England Region. The school's faculty and staff are committed to the belief that every student can learn and successfully participate in a rigorous academic and technical

education in a supportive, respectful, and safe environment. Although faculty and students have made a lot of progress from the past, the school is currently designed as a Level 3 school by the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, with Level 1 being the best, and the Level 4 under performance.

The school sits in a state of art, brand new building which houses about 1,600 students and 180 faculties. The student body is comprised of roughly 55.8 % Hispanic—Puerto Rican background, 20.4 % are black of Jamaican or Dominic Republican background, 9.4 % White and 1.7 % Asian students, with the rest of unclassified, multiracial and American Indian (data is from the school's enrollment registration, in the school year of 2015-2016). The composition of the student body in this school reflects the demographic of the school district. The overwhelming majority of the students has free or reduced lunch from school.

For the last several years, this school ranks number one in the school district that the number of middle school students want to apply for, though academically it is not regarded as number one by the popular opinion in the city. The students in this school volunteer to apply to this school, and there are many students who cannot get in, because their total scores from middle schools do not measure up to the standard for admission to this school. For a typical day, half of the students are in various shops and the other half are in different academic classes. They rotate their schedules by A and B week (Please see Table 1, p. 85). For example, if 10th grade and 12th grade are in shop, 9th and 11th are in academic classes. The following week, they would switch. Though it is a vocational school, it still prepares students for two tracks by their own choices: one is to pursue college education after graduation and the other is to get jobs with their trade.

This is an exciting school with buzzing activities going on at the same time. When it is shop time, some students are working in the various shops while others go outside of school to their work sites. For instance, Carpentry students leave school to work at the house building sites, Early Childhood students go to day care centers and Allied Health students go to hospitals or nursing homes for their practical training. There are also "co-op" students who get paid to work in different companies as interns at their shop time. They are achieving three objectives simultaneously: shop credits, real world experience and financial compensation. Many are hired by the company where they are working at after their graduation. Over the last few years the number of students who went to college after graduation has increased dramatically. The possibility of being able to make choices during the 4 years in high school is the primary reason that parents and students like this school, because most middle school age students and their parents are not sure what they want to do in the future at the time they are applying for high schools.

Despite a vocational school, all students are subject to state standardized testing on math, English language art and science in order to graduate. To this end, since shops normally take half of their school time, 9th and 10th grade students have to be given more time for English, math and science in order to prepare them for the state standardized test. For this reason the 9th and 10th grade students are not allotted time to learn foreign language until 11th grade. Total foreign language education lasts two years.

The History of Foreign Language Teaching in the School District

The research setting is an urban school district, where there are about 56 elementary, middle and high schools. Among these schools, there are three regular high schools and one vocational & technical high school, with two of which are designated by

the State as Level 4 schools (meaning under-performing). Spanish and Chinese are the most offered languages in the school district, only two high schools offer other languages, such as French, German and Latin. There were over 100 foreign language teachers in the school district 17 years ago, teaching Spanish, French, Chinese, Russian, German, Italian and Latin. But now the number of teachers has been reduced to only about 25, with majority teaching Spanish and Chinese and only one & half position teaching French & German and one half position teaching Latin. The school district regards Chinese language as an important addition. The number of teachers who teach Chinese has been increased from one twenty five years ago to six now, with two in each of the two high schools and one in the other two high schools.

Foreign Language Curriculum

This research site is a vocational and technical school, with A and B week rotation regiment. As required differently from other regular schools, many subject areas, including regular academic classes and the academic components from shops need to be covered, therefore a typical school day is divided into eight periods and each class period lasts 43 minute long. Students are in foreign language class one period every day for half of the school year, that is 90 periods total, about a 50 hour experience in the target language in one year. The participants for this study are in the second year of target language learning, that is Level II.

Foreign language is not mandatory in this school, it is only offered to those who indicate their desire to go to college after high school. The 11th grade students start as Level I, the beginning level and go on to Level II by their senior year.   Besides Chinese, Spanish is also offered as foreign language in this school. Before they come to foreign

language classes, some students are able to speak Spanish fluently, and others can only speak some. There are also a few students who can speak Vietnamese. They all have different levels of exposure to Chinese culture without formal schooling for Chinese language. By the end of 10th grade, they make a choice to be either in Chinese or Spanish class when they enter 11th grade.

The curriculum design for us is provided by the school district, but each school can be flexible in using the curriculum since each school has different scheduling. In order to adapt, I made modifications to the curriculum for our school, because of the difference in the number of hours allotted to foreign language from other high schools in the school district. For Chinese level 1 and level 2, the curriculum does not have writing (composing) task except writing words and some simple sentences. For beginner Chinese, though the district curriculum emphasizes all four modes of learning: listening, speaking, reading and writing, teachers can rarely go beyond listening, speaking and some character & simple sentence writing within the limited time frame and resources. However, in today's world, a lot of communication happens online which requires us to be able to express ourselves in writing using the electronic media. In addition, the Common Core Curriculum adopts the four modes of learning from Foreign Language, and emphasizes writing more.

Since 2011 as a way of adding the experience of composing, and a way of adding more channels and gravities to more efficiently learn Chinese, I have designed interventions by adding writing component into both level 1 and level 2. Level 1 students write from simple introductions of family members, to more complex description of oneself or a friend. Level 2 students write short letters and fairy tale stories. Will these

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interventions help increase the quality and quantity of vocabulary learning from the authentic use and pave some foundation for writing to express in early stage of learning Chinese? This study attempts to answer these questions.

Research Context: Chinese Level 2 Class

Our classroom is located on the second floor of a two story building, but it looks like three stories from outside, and the extra space above the second floor with glass windows on all sides gets the natural light into the whole building at day time. The building is designed to look like and function as a shopping mall, with a huge spacious hall way surrounded by shops like retail store fronts with restaurant, hair salon, daycare center, bank, retail store, car body shop, just to name a few, staffed by students and teachers, and all are open to serve the public. Students not only get to learn the trades in their classrooms, but also in the real business world with the real public consumers. Obviously the school is trying to have students ready to work in real jobs when they graduate from this school if they choose to do so.

Our classroom is a standard academic classroom in this school. It is equipped with brand new white desks, blue chairs, a book shelf on the side, bulletin board in the back and front, white board in the front, a smart board in the front middle, and a desk top computer to work with the smart board. The desks are very sturdy and yet light, separated from the chairs, thus easy to be moved around to form circles for small group required for our class work. Smart board and computer are much easier to use and replace all the relatively old electronic equipment, such as TV, VCR, LD player, stereo and so on. With the new technology, we make language learning more interactive and more visual than before.

Class Period	A Week	B Week
1	Chinese 2	Chinese 1
2	Chinese 2	Chinese 1
3	Chinese 2	Chinese 1
4	Preparation	Preparation
5	Chinese 2	Chinese 1
6	Chinese 2	Chinese 1
7	Duty	Duty
8	Chinese 2	Chinese 1

Table 1: My Daily Class Schedule for Chinese 2 and Chinese 1

As the schedule indicates, I had six classes for Chinese 2 everyday on A Week, ninety eight students in total. The class where I collected data was the last period during a day, and there were 26 students in this class. Two thirds of the students in the last period class were from the Allied Health Shop and the rest were from the Culinary Shop. Since my classes were scheduled on students' shop week, rather than academic week, the first period and the last period of the day had more students than other periods. This was by design because the shop teachers liked their students to take the academic class first thing in the morning so that they did not need to leave their shops later in the middle of working, or finish the day's work and clean everything up before they left for class, so that they could go home directly after class.

Because of the A, B week rotations, we had ninety periods of Chinese class a year per student and each class lasted 43 minutes. That meant we had roughly a total of 50

hours of learning time a year for Chinese 2 classes. The core curriculum was based on

the content of school district curriculum and I organized the themes from many sources

combinded including several textbooks and online sources, rather than just from any one

textbook. Since our school schedule was very different from that of any other high

schools in the school district, we had a lot more freedom with the curriculum. Drawing

on Gee's (2012) literacy theories, I focused on the target community discourse level of

literacy, and designed my curriculum for Chinese II with 4 objectives: 1) to expand on

the knowledge students learned in the first year around the themes of "I" and "my world";

2) to connect what was learned before so that students could recycle the lexicons and

syntax in a spiral way; 3) to surround the contents to students' everyday lives so that they

could use their social contexts to anchor their learning (Gee, 2012); 4) to build the

connection with the larger target language community by media of technology and

imagination (Norton, 2000).

Despite the fact that the ACTFL advocated the four modes of learning for FL--

listening, speaking, reading and writing--our school district emphasized communicative

competence for the lower level, which was more of listening, speaking and some reading.

Since I wanted to integrate all four modes of learning, I started adding writing even in the

first few weeks of learning, from simple descriptions to more sophisticated writing as we

went along. For the first year, in addition to listening and speaking, the writing students

did was basically writing-to-learn (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2011). In addition to the

language mechanics, such as the semantics and syntax, students were also guided to

explore the lexicons in the proper contexts with the proper syntax target for social and

cultural understanding, hence enabling students to read better.

In the latter part of the second year, I added genre-based writing (Bakhtin, 1986; Hyland, 2007; Yigitoglu & Reichelt, 2014) to the curriculum. With the writing practice in the first year, most students did not show much of resistance to the genre-based writing in the second year. I was aware that some students did not like writing because they felt they had to put a lot of effort in the excercise, but I was surprised that these students did not resist much. As early as March 2011, after we did the first genre-based writing, I found out that some of the students figured they could use the Google Translate to help with their writing. Those texts they presented to me written by using Google Translate were totally unintelligible, because the sentence formation from English to Chinese was not the same, especially when the main sentence containing a subordinate clause. After this discovery, I would give a warning to not use Google Translate for their writing assignments before we did any writing for later years. However, despite my warning, I always had a few students either use Google Translate for all of their texts or partially for their writing assignments every year. Even so, I still enjoyed the fact that the majority of my students were working seriously, sometimes painstakingly to construct their texts over the years and the texts for my data collection.

Just like working on any assignment, some students preferred to invest more in their work (Norton, 2000) and others chose to put less effort in their tasks. While some students wrote word by word, sentence by sentence, and paragraph by paragraph, building quality and longer texts, other students worked less enthusiastically, constructing texts with less creative ideas or more mistakes. A few students even wrote only a dozen sentences or less for their writing assignments. The most invested students were also the ones who were willing to get help from peers and teacher, to take time conferencing with

teacher, and to do careful editing. Their reflections were also better written and more thoughtful.

With the genre-based writing approach (Bakhtin, 1986, Hyland, 2007; Yigitoglu & Reichelt, 2014), I also wanted to make good use of the concept of intertextuality (Bahktin, 1981, 1986; Bazerman, 2004; Fairclough, 2003; Vygotsky, 1987). I attempted to create an environment with TL community discourse norms and conventions by setting up genre-based templates, modeling the texts for my students as apprentices so that they will be practiced into experienced writers in the TL (Bazerman, 2004; Gee, 2012; Vygotsky, 1987).

Pedagogical Design and Research Design

Based on the sociocultural theories of literacy (e.g. Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Gee, 2012; Kern, 2009) and genre-based pedagogies (e.g. Hyland, 2004, 2007; Yigitoglu & Reichelt, 2014), I introduced the writing gradually into the curriculum in addition to the regular curriculum. For this study, based on our academic calendar, I designed two writing projects with different genres for Chinese 2 students. These writing assignments were 1) a pen-pal letter; and 2) a fairy tale story. Each writing would include these procedures: 1) pre-reading of a text with a particular genre to model the writing assignment. This first step was to be explicit as what was to be learned, as well as providing a coherent framework focusing on both language and contexts to facilitate the writing experience (Hyland, 2004); 2) studying typical lexical items, syntax and literary devices in the text for this particular genre. This process provided access to the patterns and possibilities of variation to scaffold students' learning and creativities (Hyland, 2004); 3) requiring students to do drafting, editing, revising, expanding and the final writing, and

4) writing the reflection. Prior research indicated that students were able to reach much

higher levels of performance by working together and with an expert than they might

have achieved working on their own (Ohta, 2000). Scaffolding, therefore, was very

crucial at the drafting, editing, revising and expanding stages.   Figure 3 illustrates the

pedagogical design of the intervention:
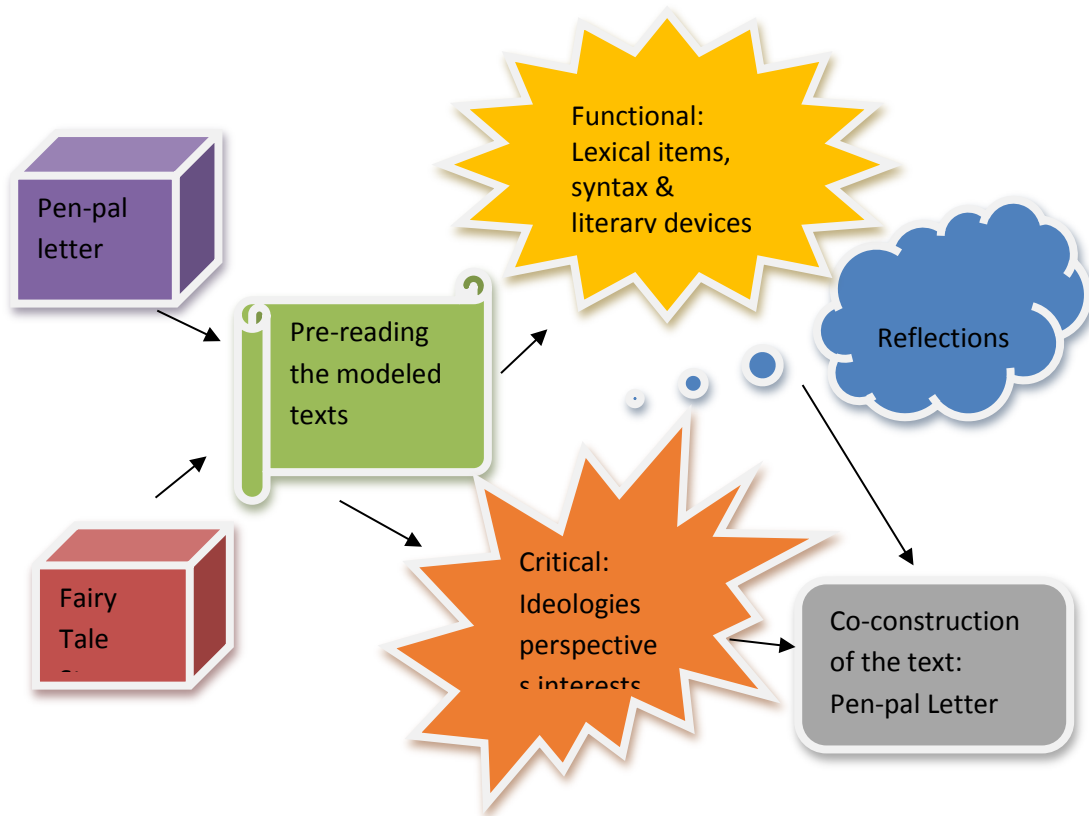
Figure 3: Pedagogical Design of the Study

The ethnographic fieldwork for this study was mostly conducted during the two

writing projects, each lasting about two weeks. Since we have A and B week rotation,

four weeks spread out into two month long, mostly in February and April of 2016.

During these two months, I guided the students to create texts one step at a time,

observing everyone in the writing process, video-taping the class, and providing scaffolding for each student in the class. While some classes were relatively small, others were very large and therefore very demanding. Therefore, I could only take brief notes in the class time and soon after filled in the gaps. Though the writing projects would last two months, endeavors to build students' capabilities of the TL thus far sustained a year and half. The well-defined knowledge before and during this study allowed me to see and understand what was happening when they were writing and what was revealed in the texts they created because I was part of their learning process and teacher/student collectively co-constructed the learning experience in this particular context from the very beginning.

In order to answer all my research questions, I designed an ethnographic case study, so that as a participant observer I could do in depth analysis to examine the different layers of my quest encapsulated in the research questions. A case study is the collection and presentation of the detailed information about a particular person or a small group (Stake, in Denzin & Lincoln ed. 2005). Case study as a form of qualitative descriptive research, explores intensely an individual or small participant group and draws conclusions about that particular person's case or a group's case in specific context. This type of comprehensive understanding is achieved through a process known as "in depth" and "thick description" (Zhu & David, 2008). I will use this "thick description" to present my data, my interpretation and findings.

Participants in The Study

Though I designed this study as a case study, all my level 2 students (about one hundred in total), occupying six periods of class in a given day (please refer to Table 1, p.

85), participated in this process, since I inserted writing into our curriculum. The criteria for the selection of this focal student are that 1) he/she is enthusiastic about writing and willing to collaborate with peers and teacher in the learning experience; 2) he/she is willing to participate in the study as focal participant, which includes discussions about writing, taking extra time for the interviews, willing to be video-taped during class, and giving consent to be included in dissertation or publication.

Jasmine was selected among several students who fit this criteria, because she was the only one who was willing to participate in all the interviews. She is an African-American whose grand-parents were from Jamaica. She is the oldest of the three children with one younger brother and one younger sister in the family. Her grandmother lives with her family, but from time to time her grandmother goes back to visit Jamaica. She constantly tells her life and cultural stories to her grandchildren, and Jasmine brings her cultural knowledge into the writing process, which provides learning experience for me throughout (Interview, Feb. 2016).

I was a participant researcher in this study. I came from China as a graduate student 27 years ago. While working for my graduate degrees, I was an elementary school teacher and coordinator for the after-school Chinese program nearby the university for several years. I later became a teaching assistant and an instructor afterwards, teaching Chinese to college students for several years. I taught in the current high school for almost two decades. All the teaching experience spanned over such an age range that I have built expectations for continuities of the learning experience. Therefore from teaching experience, I designed my curriculum map with learner's age

and learning level developmental progression in mind. I expect what I ask students to do here would prepare them for college level learning.

At the time of this study I was one of the three teachers teaching foreign languages in this school. I taught Chinese while my colleagues taught Spanish. It is important to note that our school has only ½ academic schedule as other regular high schools. My colleagues and I have to work together modifying the school district mandated curriculum at different levels to fit our students' academic schedule.

During this study, I taught both Level I and Level II Chinese. For Chinese I, we used the textbook "Ni Hao" as a base, and added other topics to the curriculum, including many more daily expressions and conversations, as well as many topics the students ask to include. In addition to oral communicative content, students would also required to write short texts which would describe family, classrooms, human body, friends, and the food they like. At Level II, I expanded on everything students had learned before to write longer texts. This is to say, my involvement had been part of this social and learning context and helped to shape the construction of texts and interactions during the class time, especially the writing moments.

Access to the Research Site

The writing projects were our regular assignments and all students had to participate in order to get their credits. I only collected the data from the eighth period, the last period of a school day. With my verbal invitation and description, all of the eighth period students were very curious about my study and verbally agreed to participate. However, I did not get all consent letters back, because some students kept forgetting to ask their parents to sign the consent letters, and others lost it. Right before I

started to collect data, I received 16 signed letters back, and Jasmine's consent letter was among the received. Each consent letter required two signatures, one from students themselves and one from their parents. I had also obtained the consent letter from the principal of the school for this study.

Both consent letters to the students and the principal provided a brief description of my study with an explanation of the potential contribution to my teaching practice and the FL education field, and the research methods I would use (including audio/video recording, observations, interviews, copies of student created texts and students' reflections on their writings, etc.). I verbally invited everyone in my classes to participate in this study. The consent letter to the students outlined what I would write, whom I might share the information with, an explanation of anonymity and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The letter made it clear that students' participation in the study was completely voluntary and that their course grades would not be in anyway affected regardless of whether they participated in the study or not, or withdrew anytime along the way. (See Appendix A, "Informed Consent").

Researcher's Role

As a participant observer and a teacher at the same time, I faced the typical challenges to juggle between the two roles in the classroom to document the interactions. At the time, I was the more knowledgeable expert to give guidance or suggestions to the students, other times I needed to document what I saw related to the writing task. I tried to write down quickly what I saw or heard, and asked some follow-up questions about what they meant by their statements or actions.

Being a participant researcher, I had some advantages. One advantage was that I had the knowledge of the constant context which enabled me to better understand students' social and academic behaviors. Another advantage was that I did not feel obtrusive in this classroom, and it was easier for me to ask follow-up questions. Further, I was familiar with the outside classroom contexts in the school and the community that provided wider perspective for me to better understand and interpret the data I collected for the study.

I also had disadvantages being a participant observer. One typical disadvantage was that I had to manage multitasking. For instance, the eighth period was a large class with 26 students. In the process of student writing, I had to respond to many students who needed help from me at the same time when I observed and documented what I saw and what I asked with follow up questions. This situation forced me to make up a good amount of my observation notes after class. This was the major reason I chose the eighth period as my research site, because it was the last period of class in the day, and I had more time to document and organize my data. Though students and I had trusted relationship, it did not stop some students from talking loudly at times and disturbing the class at others. Once in a while someone had to be sent to the dean's office. In order to focus more on documenting what was going on with the writing task, I used a lot of humor to defuse such situations so that I could minimize the attention paid for the disturbances. The other disadvantage was that the video-taping was difficult while I was juggling with many tasks in class. Although overtime students would not pay too much attention to the video-taping, I did not have the time to either monitor or adjust the

camera often. Therefore the quality of the video-taping was not ideal, with much of overlapping talking and it was difficult to transcribe.

Data Sources and Data Collection Methods

Starting from the year of 2011 to the present, I gave writing assignments as regular class work for credits. For this study, time required for the two writing projects was two weeks each, thus each project spread out a total of ten days, although we spent more than a year to build the foundation. As Table 1 (p.83) indicates each day I had six classes with forty three minutes in each class period, and all classes repeated more or less the same class content for the same day. As each class progressed during a day, the content was adjusted to adapt students' situations for the classes followed. Table 2 in next page shows the schedule of the writing process for the two weeks.

I collected the data as student engaged in the writing process. In the first two days of the first week, students did brainstorming of the target genre-based texts, searched online the lexical items from the sample text and then teacher and students studied the sample texts together. On the third day, we discussed the overall organization of the sample text and made connection what students could write for their own pen-pal letters. Then I gave them the instructions and the expectations for composing texts, as well as the end-product. In the remaining two class periods/two days of the first week, I planned for students to work on composing their own text drafts with the sample text being a model or a templet. As soon as students started composing, I planned for students to have individual conferences with me to look at their drafts. Ideally I planned for students to form groups and help by reading each other's draft and by editing for each other.

Week 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Chinese II were scheduled in A Week 43 minutes for one class period	-Brain storming -Webbed the lexical items -Study the lexicons -Practice using the lexicons	-Students reading of the sample text -Whole class reading of the text -Identify the genre devices, language, organizations	-Instructions for composing texts -Make connections with the sample text -Expectations for the end-text -Starting the production of text	-Construction of the text -Individual conferences for scaffolding	-Construction of the text -Individual conferences for scaffolding
Week 2	**Monday**	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**
There were two A Weeks in a month	-Construction of the text -Individual conferences for scaffolding	-Editing of the text -Individual conferences for scaffolding	-Editing of the text -Individual conferences for scaffolding	-Final version of text -Individual conferences for scaffolding	-Reflections in English

Table 2: Schedule of Writing in Two Weeks

However, my Level II students were still beginners, and their reading level of the TL was still not enough to be able to handle such tasks. In the conference, I read the draft with each student, and asked questions while we were reading it. I would point out the places where the student needed to make changes, clarify what she/he was trying to express and help with better choices, and so forth. For example, if a student asked how he could write "I love to read books", I would suggest him to write "I like to read books", because we learned that in our regular class before, or one character was missing from the phrase. I would also help organize their writing and make better paragraphs. For example, some students wrote the entire letter in one big paragraph, so we went through the draft and clumped the same themes into several paragraphs. On the Wednesday and

Thursday of the second week students would write their final drafts of their texts. And the last day of the second week was the time that students worked on their reflections of the two week's writing journey. (See Table 3 on p. 95)

On the Thursday of second week I would collect all the first drafts and the final version of their texts, and the last day of the ten days, I would collect the reflections. Just like any assignment, the majority of the students would work diligently to complete the assignments, while others completed it half way through, or minimally, even though they knew the work would be graded.

Data Sources	Data Collection Method	Time Duration	Language Used	Data Analysis Tool
Texts: Pen-pal Letter Fairy Tale Story	Student created for assignments	One text each two weeks period for the two projects	Chinese	Grounded coding DA
Drafts: Pen-pal Letter Fairy Tale Story	Student created for the texts	One draft per week for the two projects	Chinese	Grounded coding DA
Reflection of the writing Process	Student written	One day for each of the two projects	English	Grounded coding DA
Open-ended Interviews	Transcripts	Multiple times	English Chinese	Grounded coding DA
Observation	Fieldnotes	Throughout the research	English Chinese	Grounded coding DA
Video-Recording	Transcripts for the selected parts	Four weeks	English Chinese	Grounded coding DA

Table 3: Data Sources and Data Collection Method

I collected data from six sources: 1) student writings (texts); 2) student drafts for the texts; 3) reflections of the writing process; 4) open-ended, semi-structured interviews; my observation fieldnotes and 6) video recording of the interactions. The drafts and texts were in Chinese and the reflection in English. I used grounded theory methods to code the data collected from Jasmine, and employed Discourse Analysis to analyze the collected data. Table 3 above provides the whole picture of the data sources and the analysis.

Student Texts, Drafts and Reflections

The major sources of data were two texts and two drafts of a pen-pal letter and a fairy-tale story. I hoped to examine genre knowledge, e.g. the genre devices, organizations and the language use, including patterns of lexical choices, syntax structures and semantic clusters. I would also draw on the sociocultural perspectives to see how intertextuality (Bazman, 2004; Bahktin, 1987), investment and sociocultural identities interwoven in the social act of writing.

Another data source was the journals Jasmine wrote after each project. Students as well as Jasmine did this in English to better reflect their investment in the writing, including what they had learned and what effort they put in to create the texts, the resources they used, their struggles or frustration, as well as how they felt about their writing etc. They could also reflect on how they made their personal choices of what to bring to the writing.

While I was collecting data, I did preliminary analysis at the time to do some meaning making to make sense of what was going on and checking or clarifying with students when I was not sure about the data. I would triangulate the data to identify or

confirm the discursive analysis of the content of the written texts. For example, in the draft of the pen-pal letter, Jasmine claimed her identity as an honor student, I would look into her interview data to do some meaning making of how she constructed and maintained this identity. I would also examine my observation and video-recording data to find out how Jasmine invested as an honor student throughout the writing experience. However, most of the analysis was done afterwards due to the time constraint. Since I was a participant researcher, time was an issue for detailed analysis on the spot with so many students in class who needed various kinds of scaffolding. The demand for time in class was high for me as I had to change back and forth my two roles of teacher and researcher. For the preliminary analysis of the patterns and themes emerged from the data, I used margin notes for open coding and webs for relational coding, which provided me some clues of the directions I could go, and I found the opportunities to check and clarify with the author in the interviews or simply asked questions as the writing process progressed. When I investigated the sociocultural background information of the content of the texts, I could have better sense-making of the texts. For example, in the draft of the fairy tale story Jasmine composed, I found the word "voodoo" when Jasmine asked me how to write that in Chinese. I read the word "voodoo" several times and had no idea what it was. If I did not understand what it was, I could not give her the Chinese word for it. So I had to ask her what she wanted to say with that word. She told me that voodoo is black magic. Then she explained to me how black magic was supposed to work, and the core of all black magic was within the spiritual world or the world of the dead. I could not believe how much cultural wealth I was given in a few minutes! Being aware of what it meant, I found the equivalent of Chinese word for it, so that she could

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express herself in the manner she wanted. More discussions on this learning experience will be followed later in this paper.

Open-ended Interviews

I conducted four interviews for the study. One was in the middle of each two weeks and one at the end of each two weeks. They were informal semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions meant to solicit students' family and cultural background, their attitude toward Chinese learning in general and writing in specific, success and struggles they experienced and so on (See Appendix J). I had five students initially selected for the first interview. But as time went by only one remained, because the other four students had their time constraint to stay after school for interviews. It was very difficult to set up an interview, because three of the five students took school bus to go home after school. If they needed to stay after school, they would miss the school bus. Besides the school bus issue, some of them had sports or other extra curriculum activities, or they had to go to their paid jobs after school. The only one who could make the time to stay after school for further interviews was Jasmine, since she lived close enough to school so that she could walk home.

I used the form of informal interview, because I was worried that my students would feel nervous if I asked all formal questions. Though I prepared guiding questions, the format of the interview was open-ended. The interview questions were used as a guide rather than as a script to be rigidly followed (See Appendix J, "Guiding Interview Questions"). I usually let the conversation to flow naturally.

During the interviews, I followed Polkinghorne's suggestion that researchers need to establish a trusting, open relationship with the participant and focus on the meaning of

the participant's life experiences rather than on the accuracy of his or her recall (2005). Most of the interview questions were open-ended in order to get the stories the students wanted to tell, about their personal lives or their communities, including school community, home community and imagined communities (Norton, 2001, Anderson, 1991, Wenger 1998). Other questions were used to solicit either on their writings, journals or learning behaviors. The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed.

Observations

While I was working with the students in each class every day, I would observe how students interacted with each other when they were either composing their drafts or editing their texts. In shift from working with one student to the next, I would take some moments to quickly jot down some of my observations in English and Chinese. While English was for the descriptions of the situations, Chinese was for the TL related to their writing. Since most of the time I worked with individual students at one time or another, I could only catch some of the actions close to me, and let other happenings go. By the end of each class, I would have some time to fill in the gaps of what I could write down quickly as the things happening. After school each day, I would use the quiet time to look through what I had written down and circle the relevant points of interest with some comments. I would mark the parts that I was not sure exactly what was going on for the events or episodes in my notes, and checked with the students the following day for the involvement of the episode or events.

I believe "ethnographic fieldnotes" and reconstructive memos are the fundamental data-gathering method in ethnography (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995). Therefore, I took my fieldnotes very seriously. As I was writing the fieldnotes, I was self-conscious that I

needed to record the interactions as they were, trying not to give any evaluative

judgement. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that it was inevitable that at times I could only

see partially what was happening in the busy classroom and framed the social realities in

the way of my interpretation (Emerson et al., 1995).

Video Recordings

During the writing session, I video recorded the classroom interactions in the last

period of the day. I pre-selected five students as the potential focal students and they

were sitting in different parts of the classroom, so that I positioned the camera facing the

whole class, trying to capture everything that was going on, for not knowing who was

going to be the focal student. At the beginning of video-recording, some students sitting

in the front were very curious, coming over to look through what was recorded, and a few

kept moving it around to see everywhere in the classroom. I asked a few volunteers to

take care of the camera, and later on they forgot it was there. Since early on I did not

have any direction as what would be the focus, I tried to capture a wide range of

interactions so that I would have larger variety of selections of data. But the quality of

the video recording turned out to be not ideal because some students talked very loud in

class and it was difficult to hear what other students were saying.

These recordings helped me to capture some of the language used in interactions.

As a participant researcher and teacher, I had to move around helping as many students as

possible in class time, and it was impossible to stay in one spot observing and writing

down prolonged conversations. These recordings provided me with the class atmosphere

and momentum, as well as some of the important non-linguistic features of language use

such as tone of voice and length of pause. While the nature of the atmosphere and

momentum helped me decide how to readjust the class writing practice such as giving whole class more instructions on specific part of composing or individual scaffolding, the interactions and non-linguistic behaviors would help me with my study.

I took time viewing the recordings within the week I had time right after school and wrote a descriptive memo for silent conversations or writing related events. The recoding let me see my focal student interacted with peers and teacher in the writing process. These transcripts matching with my observation notes provided me with better understanding of class interactions situated in this particular context. This contextual information was very crucial in my interpretation of the texts students were composing.

Data Analysis

According to Zhu & David, we should not make broad generalization of the findings, but to work with "rich and in depth data" for the "thick" descriptions to capture the patterns in the particular contexts, and generate analysis, interpretations and findings from these patterns. (Geertz, 1973; Zhu & David, 2008). I drew from the sociocultural theories of literacy (Gee, 2012), second language genre-based pedagogies (Hyland, 2004, 2007, Yigitoglu & Reichelt, 2014), identity & investment (Gee, 2012; Norton, 2000, 2001) to analyze and interpret the collected data, referencing Chinese language teaching and learning (Kang, 2011; Shen, 2005; Xu, et al, 2013; Xu & Padilla, 2013).

For the management of data, I used grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Charmaz 2009; Savin-Baden & Major 2013) to identify themes, patterns and concepts of TL communication stages, cultural meanings and learning experiences throughout my data, mainly involving student's texts, draft, reflections, observations and video recordings. According to Glaser & Strauss (1967), a grounded theory is connected to the

real world and gives explanation for patterns of behavior that are relevant and important for the people involved. Through discovery of significant categories and many relationships it becomes dense and saturated and hence theoretically complete. In order to carefully analyze the data, I went through them line by line, using open coding to identify key words, phrases, events and other 'meaningful chunks' from the data, labeling the codes on the margins of draft, texts and transcripts. Then I examined the codes with relational coding to look for themes or patterns, using colored stickers to categorize them. Next I used selective coding by writing memos for the categories of codes to conceptualize the themes and patterns. The objective of coding is to extract meaningful evidence to support certain theories or to generate theories from the data. The grounded theory coding offered me the first steps towards making cohesive sense from the data.

After I sorted out the data with themes and patterns with grounded theory coding, I used Discourse Analysis (DA) to conduct analysis, engage interpretation and come to conclusioin of the findings. DA is a way to examine discourses---the construction of knowledge and identity through closely analyzing texts or discourses. DA analyzes language-in-use to demonstrate how discourse can systematically construct various versions of the social worlds, and position participants in dynamic power relations. DA analyzes specific instances of language-in-use to highlight the ways in which discourse shapes and is shaped by the macro society with the macro discourse.

In order to understand the DA, we need to understand discourse first. According to Gee, "by 'discourse' I mean stretches of language which 'hang together' so as to make sense to some community of people, such as a contribution to a conversation or a story" (2012, p. 112, stress was original). Such "stretches" can be one word or many sentences

"hang together" with interactional sequence to make sense. What makes sense in some communities may not make sense in others because sense-making by language is embedded in society and social institutions. Very often this sense-making in social occasions demonstrates how social identity works in relation to status and solidarity. Discourses are inherently ideological, and related to the distribution of social power and to hierarchical structure in society.

When approaching discourse—language-in-use, Gee proposes that we can think of it from five inter-related linguistic systems (2012). First is "prosody", which covers the way in which the words or sentences of a text are said: their pitch, loudness, stress, and the length assigned to various syllables, as well as the way in which the speaker hesitates and pauses. Second is "cohesion" which consists all the multifarious linguistic ways in which sentences are connected or linked together; third is the overall discourse organization of a text, which constitutes the ways in which sentences are organized into higher-order units, e.g. scenes and episodes make up a story or the arguments, and sub-arguments make up an overall argument for a particular position. Fourth is the contextualization signals speakers and writers use to cue listeners and readers into what they take the context to be. Communication is useless unless they share a common view within certain contexts. But these contexts are not fixed, they are actively construed, negotiated and changed over time (Duranti 1997; Duranti and Goodwin 1992; Gumperz 1982a; cited in Gee 2012). Fifth is the thematic organization of the text, which covers the ways themes (images, contrasts, focal points of interest) are signaled and developed. These five linguistic systems are interrelated, and when they work well together, they

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constitute the sense of a text. This classification of the five systems will provide me with perspectives in using the DA.

In addition to the five linguistic systems of language-in-use, Gee also provides five theoretical tools for DA. These tools are the situated meaning tool, the social language tool, the intertextuality tool, the figured world's tool, and the big D Discourse tool (Gee, 2011, p.150). These tools can be used in the DA to unite and determine relationship among actual texts, discursive practices and larger social context (Fairclough, 2003). They also can be used to analyze the discourse involving power & ideologies that connect to the past and the current context, and can be interpreted differently because of different backgrounds, knowledge, and power relations. These tools are overlapping and complementing to each other in conducting analysis of data.

In summary, I used grounded coding, DA, and Gee's five analytical tools in conducting my data analysis. Coding was a questioning activity and I employed open coding, relational coding and selective coding to manage the data for analysis. I tried not to make broad generalization of the findings, but to work with "rich and in depth data" and provide the "thick" descriptions to capture the patterns in this particular contexts (Geertz, 1973; Zhu & David, 2008).

Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted in a classroom where I had access to the focal student population. As the classroom and language teacher, I was bound to have certain expectations and values regarding students' and teachers' behavior and performance. Since I had been teaching Chinese at different levels for a long time, I presumed that I knew the students and this context, and I had knowledge and understanding about what

was happening in the classroom. As the teacher and researcher, I understood that I had my own particular sets of bias and cultural background which would affect my ways of identifying issues for coding and analyzing the data and interpreting the meanings. I also understood that we had been co-constructing our own learning experiences in the current historical moment.

Since I acknowledged that all knowledge is partial, I was to only provide insights that were situated in this particular setting with the particular participant through my own lens. It did not mean to be a broad generalization about other classrooms or contexts. However, I hope that the findings from this study have practical as well as theoretical implications to the field of FL learning and teaching, especially on the beginner writing in Chinese.

It is regrettable that the time allowed for foreign language learning in this particular setting was limited to two years only so that the follow-up study into advanced stage of the learners was impossible here and now. Therefore, further study is needed for the learners to continue on the language learning journey in order to advance to higher levels from early learning with the help of particularly designed writing practice.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

As I stated earlier that the traditional view of Chinese language learning is still prevalent (See Figure 1): the learning order has to be one liner direction: a lot of remembering characters before reading, and then at last writing. This traditional view perpetuates the fear that Chinese is very difficult or impossible to learn, because learners "only see the trees, but not the forest" (只见树，不见林), as the well-known Chinese saying goes, meaning that students only learn the individual vocabularies, but never have the opportunities to use them in authentic situations to create writings that can express their ideas or feelings about the world around them. As a result, many learners never get the opportunity to try writing before they drop out of character learning stage (Xu & Jen, 2005), since learning isolated words or characters are very difficult (Kramsch, 1993).

However, literacy is considered by some researchers as a social act, a social construction (Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Giroux 1987; Gee, 1992), a situated social practice (Kramsch, 1993; Norton Peirce; 1989; Pennycook, 1990), more than the act of reading and writing. Gee (2012) points out that when students learn a second language or a discourse, they need to be in a master-apprentice relationship from early on. The "teacher scaffolds the students' growing abilities to say, do, value, believe and so forth … through demonstrating her mastery and supporting theirs even when it barely exists" (p. 175). In another words, teacher should make the things look like students can do, when they cannot do by themselves. In this "can-do" practice, with teacher's support, students become apprentice of the target language literacy practice.

With this theoretical guidance, I did some intervention for our curriculum, inserting writing from time to time into the oral-communication-driven curriculum. As a result, students had the opportunities to produce some writings/texts in their early stage of learning Chinese language. Though students could see their success in writings, these compositions were still far from perfect. In fact, these texts were still in simple writing stage. But I was confident that if they could continue learning Chinese in more advanced level or in college, they would certainly feel more able and comfortable creating texts than those who had never tried before.

In this chapter, before I present the data and the detailed analysis, I will summarize the research findings. Then I will describe our classroom literacy practice and students' writing experiences to provide a literacy context for the study. Next I will showcase the data and analysis of how students used their agency to embody their identities and investment in the writing process, by using the lens of identity & investment theories (Gee, 1993, 2012; Norton, 2000, 2001). Further, I will describe the data and the analysis of how students and teacher co-constructed the texts/writings in our particular context. Last I will draw from the sociocultural theories of literacy, and Bakhtin's (1981) and Fairclough's (1992) theory of intertextuality to analyze how students were able to use the intertextual cues in producing their texts. The data from focal student's drafts, texts, interviews, reflections, my field observation notes, and video recording were used to do some analysis and to triangulate the analysis and interpretations.

Next I examined the genres of texts to analyze the series of moves or communicative stages (Hyland, 2007), patterns of lexical choices, syntax structures and

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semantic clusters, as well as the content to see how much their prior knowledge of linguistics played out to support their expressions of ideas, referencing Chinese language teaching and learning (Kang, 2011; Xu, et al, 2013; Shen, 2005). Following that I drew from the sociocultural theories of literacy (Gee, 2012), and second language genre-based pedagogies (Hyland, 2004, 2007, Yigitoglu & Reichelt, 2014) to examine the student's writing practice with genres and newly learned cultural models and how they played out in creating texts in each genre.

Research Findings

After different steps of coding and identifying themes and patterns, I conducted analysis of the data with the theories articulated in the literature review earlier, in order to answer my research questions. These theories included sociocultural perspectives of literacy, Identity and investment, foreign language writing, genre-based writing and intertextuality. Later in this chapter, the data and analysis of data will demonstrate the findings to answer my research questions.

1. How do student's identities revealed in the writing process affect her investment in the production of texts and in the learning of the target language?

Norton's notion of investment attempts to recognize the language learners as having complex social identities and multiple desires. Second language speakers use the target language to exchange information, and most importantly to be "organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world" (Norton, 1995, p. 18). Through the data of the texts, interviews and class interactions for developing the texts, Jasmine demonstrated that she constructed multiple identities and

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was willing to invest to sustain those identities. Her multiple identities included an honor student, a capable CNA, an African-Jamaican, a capable language learner and an occasional teacher, and they were all inter-related. Jasmine felt that being an African-Jamaican girl, she needed to have good education in order to have a reliable career in the future, reaching her life goal of being financially independent in the society. A good education meant that she ought to do everything well in school, and the benchmark of doing well in school was to be an honor student, for which she had to work hard and invest in all academic subjects and her shop, including learning well in the target language Chinese she chose to learn.

As an honor student, Jasmine had the confidence of having intellectual power to conquer the difficult Chinese language and knowing Chinese would enhance her identity as someone who was very serious about education, who had the power to tackle the difficult subject matter, and who was different from many of her peers. Once Jasmine started learning Chinese, she was willing to invest great effort to learn it well, because she wanted to get good grade. Good grade was her standard or measurement of good academic performance. It was also a measurement of sustaining an honor student in this school. Since Jasmine invested a great deal in learning of the target language and got rewarded with good grade, her peers regarded her as the resource person and a group leader. This in turn pushed her to feel obliged to invest even more to keep the status in class. The interactions in the writing process fully demonstrated the dynamics of the identity construction.

According to Norton, "an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own social identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time

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and space" (1995, p. 18). Jasmine had future goal of working for those people who spoke only Chinese, but her immediate goals of getting good grade and constructing her identity as a capable language learner, therefore regarded to be the group leader and the resource person in class were the major incentives for her investment, substantiated by her taking the painstaking steps to work tirelessly on the production of the texts. In order to produce the desired texts, Jasmine actively built her knowledge of composing in Chinese from variety of resources, including her prior knowledge, her teacher, her peers, her notes, dictionaries and internet. In the composing process, Jasmine learned many lexical expressions and syntactic structures in the messy process she would not have the opportunity to learn otherwise.

2. How do beginning level student and teacher co-construct texts with different genres in Chinese?

Literacy is considered as a social act, a social construction (Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Giroux 1987; Gee, 1992), a situated social practice (Kramsch, 1993; Norton Peirce; 1989; Pennycook, 1990), more than the act of reading and writing. Learning is a social activity, a social act, a social practice, which takes place through communication or interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978). The data and the analysis of the data showcased the interactions among students and teacher, from which Jasmine and other students built their knowledge about Chinese language and knowledge of genre writing. The following is the findings from the interactive process of co-construction of texts by the beginning level student:

1). Genre-based writing is fundamental in beginner writing in FL

2). Scaffolding is necessary throughout the writing process.

3). Step-by-step scaffoldings needed for the content and organization of the genre.

4). Student was able to provide peer scaffolding in some cases.

5). Student built their knowledge of composing from the class interactions.

6). Student was able to appropriate knowledge into the texts from variety of resources.

6). To stretch knowledge in writing, teacher took appropriate opportunities to make connection from the prior learning to tackle the current Challenges in writing.

7). In the process of exploring the proper lexical, semantic and syntactic application, teacher provided explicit teaching to raise their metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness.

8). For beginner text production, the proper use of syntactic structure was more difficult than the lexical and the semantic expressions.

9). Writing the outline in English enable Jasmine to be too ambitious in composing the story at her learning stage.

10). Once lined in English, it was difficult for her to switch her first language grammatical codes into Chinese.

11). Beginner student was able to produce genre writings with guidance and scaffolding, and the quality of her texts was beyond my expectations.

12). The co-construction of the texts was a messy and frustrating process, but it was also a mutual learning, hence a rewarding process.

3. What are the intertextualities student use to construct her writing?

Learning requires learners to take active role in appropriating knowledge and constructing new meaning from it (Bakhtin, 1981). The data and the analysis of the data

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demonstrated that it was tremendously helpful to provide samples of genre writings, because they served as exemplars for student to study and follow. Genre writing set up the parameters of purpose of the text, the language used in the genre and the organizations specific to the genre. The intertextual cues would stimulate student's imagination and allow student to imitate, or partially borrow to appropriate into her own texts, bring into writing her own cultural ideologies and constructing her own identities. Brainstorming was another venue for student to connect with her past knowledge and experience as intertextuality. Class interactions, such as teacher scaffolding and peer scaffolding, made it possible for the beginner student to compose her genre writing in Chinese. Other important resources were the class notes, dictionaries and online information. In addition, teacher's explanation of how to draw from the resources for intertextuality proved to be very crucial in helping student to create her own texts.

Chinese Level I and Level II Class

The data were collected from Chinese II class, but I needed to lay the ground work for Chinese I to better understand Chinese II. As I mentioned before, since this is a vocational school, world language learning starts at 11th grade because students need to devote time at 9th and 10th grade for MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) scheduled to take place at latter part of 10th grade. Students may have learned some Chinese words or phrases and gained some cultural understanding before coming into our class, but in general students start their systematic world language education from 11th grade as Chinese I.

At Chinese I level, students begin with the basic daily used Chinese language. The first things are greetings and some basic facts about China. Then students go on to

learn the basics on Chinese numbers, family, pets, school, nationality, body parts, sports

and food, etc. They learn how to say and write those words by analyzing the different

parts that make up each word. They put the words into phrases and then into sentences

around certain themes. From theme to theme students get to recycle the vocabulary and

become more and more familiar with them.

While I was making efforts to reach the goal of oral proficiency with some

cultural understandings as the school district mandated, I also put in composing/creating

texts from time to time. The compositions were from being simple at the beginning to

more complex as time went on. This was my goal of fostering students' metacognitive

and meta-linguistic abilities of the TL early on in their learning journey in order for them

to be able to interpret, interact and function in more complex literary texts later on at

higher levels. My motivation of setting up this pedagogical goal for my students was

based on the sentiment of Allen & Paesani and other scholars regarding the gap between

the curricula at lower levels and higher levels. Allen & Paesani (2010) argued that

communicative language teaching (CLT) is the dominant focus of language teaching at

lower level foreign language courses. This oral proficiency-driven curriculum had

"limited success in developing students' abilities to interpret and create written texts"

(Allen & Paesani, 2010, p. 122). The divisions of pedagogical goals at lower and upper

levels are "typically seen as incompatible" (Allen and Paesani, 2010, p.120).

In order to bridge the gap between lower levels and higher levels pointed out by

Allen & Paesani (2010) and other scholars, from early on to prepare students, I designed

the opportunities for them to experience the lexical, syntactic and grammatical structures

soon after we went through few initial thematic units. I was a firm believer of Gee's

apprentice notion (2012) and I was determined to let my students to do what they thought they could not do by themselves. Of course I was ready to provide all the necessary scaffolding and the intertextual resources. Again from very early on, I had students write short texts about once every three to four weeks, the maximum time allowed within the time limit laid out by our school schedule and by the school district. The short compositions were around the themes we were studying at the time. For instance, if we were studying family, students would be asked to bring the photos of their family members or friends (they could find on their cell phone), and then they could describe their family numbers. Since this was the first short text students created, for the purpose of practice, I would ask them to write similar items several times, such as names, ages, relationships, and occupations, about different family members, so that they had the opportunity to "recycle" the lexical expressions and repeat the sentence patterns several times in one short text. The purpose was to get students familiarize with different ways of expressing similar ideas.

After the initial success of writing, I wanted students to "recycle" the familiar and add new things into the writing practice. As we went on learning more thematic units on nationality and family pets, students did writing again telling about their family, expanding to include friends on relationships, names, ages, nationalities and the pets they had. Though we added many new terms this time, they did not feel overwhelmed because they had written about family, names and ages before. I called this "recycling" as it involves the process of students using the vocabularies again and again in similar fashion and yet different contexts. While students tried to figure out how to use the familiar lexical and semantic items with the new contexts, they also needed to figure out

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how to fit unfamiliar lexicons and semantics to the old and the new contexts. In similar fashion, we created three or four more texts later in the year.

In the second year at level II, while I continued to give students opportunities to build on their writing experience with what they had learned from the first year, I added genre-based writing to the curriculum. Genre pedagogies offered teachers means of explicit and systematic explanations on writing, which were very beneficial for learners as they pulled together language, content, contexts (e.g. Christie & Martin, 1997). As Hyland (2007) put it "genre-based writing instruction offers students an explicit understanding of how target texts are structured and why they are written in the way they are" (p. 151). When we learn a target language, we do not just learn isolated words. We do not assimilate just vocabulary, syntax, or grammar, we need to enter a community of practice and we must be able to assimilate creatively complex patterns of language use. We learn genres and discourses "through a process of assimilation—more or less creative--- of others' words (and not the words of the language)" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.89). Based on the first year's exploration of lexical, semantic, syntactic and grammatical usages, genre-based writing gave students some meta-linguistic and literary experience about the target language. In the first part of the second year, I asked students to write longer texts from time to time just like the first year, and in the later part of the second year I had students do two major writing projects: one a pen-pal letter, and the other a fairy tale story.

Writing Theories and Writing Practice in Chinese II Class

Paul Gee (2012) defines literacy as "mastery of a secondary Discourse" (p. 173), and this literacy is always plural as literacies. He also defines Discourse with capital "D"

which would include "distinctive ways of speaking/listening" and "writing/reading coupled with distinctive ways of acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, dressing, believing … so as to enact specific socially recognizable identities engaged in specific socially recognizable activities" (p.152). While the primary Discourses are the initial Discourses one apprenticed early in life as members of particular families within their sociocultural settings, the secondary Discourses are apprenticed through their socializations in public spheres, such as school or other institutions. The boundaries of these two types of Discourses are constantly negotiated and contested in society and history.

Foreign language learning is apprenticed into a discourse community as one's secondary Discourses ---- literacies, in which writing is an important part. There are two ways of adopting writing practice: acquisition and learning. Gee (2012) cautions that there are also many other ways in between. According to Gee, acquisition is a process of acquiring something in natural settings by trial and error without formal teaching, just like people who come to control their first language. And, "learning is a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching or through certain life-experiences that trigger conscious reflection" (Gee, 2012, p.167). This conscious teaching involves breaking things down by analyzing and explaining them using meta-knowledge. Most of what we gained in life involves a mixture of both acquisition and learning. How we keep a balance between the two ways is very different in different contexts.

Drawing on Gee's view of multiliteracies that language learners apprentice into the discourse community (Gee, 2012), I did an intervention of our curriculum by having

students do some writing/composing in Chinese. On February 24, 2016, after studying

the sample pen-pal letter, I gave students the first writing assignment, writing pen-pal

letters to be mailed to their counter-parts in China at the end of March, 2016. The high

school in China happened to be a vocational school too. On April 27, 2016, the second

assignment was given to students to write a fairy tale story. In the middle of May 2016,

we would take to the local Chinese Heritage Language School for the students there to

read and respond. The texts students created were genre-based writings (Hyland, 2007;

Yigitoglu, N. & Reichelt, M. 2014). These two writing tasks were designed to have

students experience the four stages from literacy pedagogy: experiencing,

conceptualizing, analyzing and applying (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

Through experiencing, students had the opportunity to read a ready-made pen-pal

letter and the modeled fairy tale story, and to develop understanding of what a pen-pal

letter and a fairy tale story were in the natural way of the target language. The

experiencing included both the known and the new. The known referred to their own

experience with letter writing/reading or story writing, their familiar forms of expressions,

and ways of representing the world in students' own understanding in the modal letter

and the story. The new entailed the unfamiliar forms of expressions, unfamiliar contexts,

and new information offered by the modal letter or the fairy tale story. Having students

connect the known with the new, we placed their learning in a "zone of intelligibility and

safety" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 185). This initial move was to expose students into

the modeling from the speech community and experience what they were going to

practice.

The next stage was to have students do some conceptualizing. This was a "knowledge process in which learners become active conceptualizers, making the tacit explicit and generalizing from the particular" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 185). This step was to have students break different parts down and to explain how each part works in relationship with others using some meta-language, and then tried to do some generalization. Students were encouraged to do some naming, such as what letter format they used, what argument should have been, and what narrative was. They were also practicing drawing distinctions of similarities and differences among these different genres. Some of them were able to formulate their own theories of each literary categories from their knowledge of their first and second language. After the naming, we went from general to specific with the task on hand, which was to have students make a list of the things they needed to cover, or to have in the letters or the story they were going to write. For example, the letter would begin to address someone, with greetings fashioned in their own culture, followed by an introduction of various items they want to write about, list questions at the end to connect with the readers, and write the date at the end of a letter, etc. The fairy tale story would have its special genre-based beginning, special kind of narrative and special genre-based ending.

After the macro-level unpacking and generalizing, students came to the analyzing stage that included two levels: analyzing functionally and analyzing critically. First, we analyzed the functionality of lexical expressions, semantic structures and literary devices in the modal letter, and the fairy tale story. We also analyzed how the author used his/her reasoning, inferences, deducting, and establishing the causal as well as functional relationships in the writing. Discussion was also conducted on the strategies and possibly

the resources the author used to write the letter and the story. At the critical level, students analyzed the ideologies, perspectives, interests, and how he/she describes his/her world. They were encouraged to imagine what they would do if they write similar letter or similar story of their own. Did they share the same ideology or totally different one? Did they share the same perspectives or interests? What would their descriptive world look like?

Among the aforementioned four dimensions, the most difficult one was the applying, which involved two different practices: applying appropriately and applying creatively. This process enabled students to be the apprentices of Chinese language Discourse practice. Bakhtin (1981) argued that learning requires learners to take active role in appropriating knowledge and constructing new meaning from it. The concept of "appropriation" assumes that learning and knowing entails taking something from others and make it ones' own. Bakhtin defines the "two basic modes for the appropriation and transmission – simultaneously – of another's words: reciting by heart, and telling in one's own words" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 341). After we studied the model letter and the fairy tale story by experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing, and by the time to applying, most students felt confident or somewhat confident that they knew how to write, or at least they felt they could try to write the letter and the fairy tale story.

The theoretical underpinning for our day-to-day practice of writing learning is Vygotsky's concepts of learning and the notions of scaffolding and of "zone of proximal development" (ZPD). According to Vygotsky (1978), learning is a process of guided participation in community of practices, new members develop their participatory knowledge and competences, and become constructive members of the community.

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Scaffolding refers to the assistance or help that adults or more competent peers provide in making connection between new situations and the learners' prior experiences. The center piece of this assistance is the language used by the more knowledgeable adults or peers in mediating learning and negotiate understanding. This language between the learners and more capable person needs to be appropriate, within the ZPD of the learners. The process of learning or internalization requires active participation in appropriating knowledge and constructing new meaning from it, thus, is both constructive and reciprocal process.

Pen-pal Letter

Multiliteracies have four dimensions---situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice (Cope and Kalantzis, 2009). As the instructor I situated my students in this pen-pal letter writing project with target readers, provided overt instructions on genre-based writing and critically framed what could be culturally appropriate in this cross cultural communication with an ultimate goal of finally transforming my them into more competent communicators both linguistically and culturally.

I believed the best themes for the first genre-based writing were real-life activities in which students could draw on their personal experiences and prior knowledge (Feez, 1998), I therefore set pen-pal letter as the first genre-based writing. Since our first year writings were about students themselves and their immediate environment, pen-pal letter would give students freedom to capitalize all what they had learned and to use that freedom more creatively with this particular genre. In addition, pen-pal letter genre would be more interactive, requiring students to do a lot of self-introduction with letter

writing, which would involve many lexical choices and much syntax they were already

familiar with in their first year's learning. Given their knowledge, I anticipated that

students would not feel too overwhelmed with the writing task. Yet, I did not want to

sound that it was very easy for them to create text at this stage after learning the target

language for only about 80 hours.* In fact, it was still a very difficult task to handle with

the limited vocabulary they had. But I tried very hard to convince them that they could

do it with teacher's help (Gee, 2012). While they could navigate in the familiar, they also

needed to learn many new lexical items, syntactic structures, the format of writing a letter,

and some language of initialization of interaction between pen-pals. Since this was the

first major writing, format and organization became very important too.

As Hyland argued, the target genre-based writing stressed the importance of

purposes for particular times, places, participants (2004). The purpose of this letter was

to connect and establish a real pen-pal relationship between students here and students in

China—to encourage more writing experience, in order to socialize with students from

the target language community and be apprentices of the discourse community (Gee,

2012). The target audiences/readers I had arranged before the writing project started

were my students' counterparts in a high school in northern China. By arrangement they

were going to read and respond to our students' letters. These counterparts in China

would read letters in Chinese and write back in English. This was one way for them to

practice practice English as a foreign language with the authentic users from here in the

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*Comparing with the approximately 2,200 class hours FSI (Foreign Service Institute) estimates,
with at least half of that time spent in immersion study, to reach the level of proficiency needed to
use a Category III language in a professional setting. Chinese language was categorized as
Category III*).

United States. This was in parallel with our students to be able to apprentice into English speaking community. One other reason for this kind of pen-pal letter exchange lied in the fact the English learners in China would have much bigger body of Chinese native vocabulary than our students, so that if they wrote back in Chinese, our students would not be able to read because they were only the beginners.

With the cultural discourse pattern as an overarching picture, I believed it was important to encourage students to use the appropriate linguistic forms such as organization, grammar, syntax; correct Chinese characters, punctuations, well-structured sentences and paragraphs. In order not to make the writing task too overwhelming for my students, I divided this pen-pal letter writing into multiple steps. First we had brainstorming sessions where we discussed all they knew about the genre of a letter: what the beginning of a letter looked like, what the end of a letter would be, and what should be laid out in the middle part of a letter. Students were then given a sample pen-pal letter in Chinese I had designed (Appendix C) to model the pen-pal letter. Students would read the letter and discussed in small groups the content, contexts and the language used in the letter, followed by larger group discussion with the whole class under the teacher's guidance.

Students afterwards were asked to read the details of the modeled pen-pal letter. They underlined those characters that they could recognize and circled those they could not. Based on what students identified, I scribed on board those new words in three categories: one for letter devices, one for connection words and adverbs, and one for the rest. I guided students to take the lexical items on each list to analyze the radicals (left part of a character) and elements (right part of a character), or up and down structures of

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some characters. Xu and Padilla (2013) called these "mini chunks". We took these "mini chunks" to compare with some of the vocabularies students learned before. After they became familiarized with the vocabularies, I selected some of them for students to practice the stroke orders and the mini chunks to form characters in their own texts and sentences for syntactic purposes. This short statement could be on any ideas they chose to write about. If they needed additional vocabularies to complete their sentences, they could ask for help from the teacher or search from an English-Chinese dictionary, or from electronic devices. After collecting these texts, we analyzed some of the sentences together to see what meanings these sentences were tring to express. The purpose of doing this was to guide students to pay close attention to those linguistic choices appropriate in the letter for the intended audiences. This process helped students give their ideas authority (Hyland, 2007). Through the analysis of the syntactic structures they could see different ways of using those words to express many different meanings for their own letter writing. Students would then read the letters together on the smart board with the scaffolding from the teacher.

After reading, our routine was to analyze the form and the content of what was included in the sample letter. Students were guided to label the form of letter: the address terms to start a letter, the self-introduction at the beginning, the content in the middle and the devices at the end of a pen-pal letter. Students analyzed the content of the sample letter, and discussed what else could be included in the letter so that they could expand the scope of content in their own letters.

After the preparation, students started writing their own pen-pal letters in Chinese characters based on the instruction (Appendix D). They wrote a draft and submited for

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one-on-one editing conference with me. Since their knowledge of grammar was still in

their infant stage, they could not do peer editing yet. This editing was intended to be

minimal and not meant to make it perfect, but rather comprehensible and would meet

some basic lexical and semantic requirements for the intended expressions. After editing

they needed to revise or expand their letters to make to the final version of the letter.

Fairy Tale Story

The second major writing project was to write a fairy tale story. This project was

designed based on the idea that fairy tale story was a familiar genre to the students, and it

had relatively wider range of selecting what students wanted to write about. For instance,

they had choices of re-writing the stories they read when they were younger, or the

stories they heard from their parents or grandparents, or simply the stories they read or

heard anywhere across nations or cultures. I was fully aware that they needed more

scaffolding on the lexicons and syntactic structures for this writing because of the wider

range of selections. Although this was already proven true from the previous experience,

I wanted to explore fairy tale writing as another valuable opportunity for students to

gauge all possibilities.

The aforementioned four literacy dimensions---situated practice, overt instruction,

critical framing, and transformed practice were still applied in this writing task (Cope and

Kalantzis, 2009). The beginning routines of writing were still carried out step by step,

just like the above pen-pal letter writing. The only difference was that we had more

variety of modeled fairy tale stories to show to the students, because unlike the pen-pal,

fairy tale genre has unlimited possibilities. While the advantage was that students had

wider range of choices to make selection, the disadvantage was that both students and

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teacher had less control over the linguistic challenge, because the lexical, syntactical and grammatical demand was much more challenging.

After the draft writing and the final texts of each pen-pal letter and the fairy tale story, students were guided to write a reflection on both the letter and story writing process by brainstorming ideas, selecting the selves or identities to present, organizing the texts with possible expansion and the challenges they faced with editing and revising. They were given a list of guiding questions (Appendix D) to think about when they did the reflection, but they were not limited by the list of questions. Instead, they were encouraged to elaborate on what they thought was important to them. The reflection was written in English, so that they could look freely on what they thought about the steps of composing the letter and the story. The purpose was to have them tell what difficulties they encountered, what part of the writing steps they were good at, what part they needed scaffolding, what they learned in the above mentioned process of creating the texts, what intertextual information they used, and what contextual cues were helpful to them.

The writing assignments were for all students on Chinese level II, but my data collection eventually focused on one of the participants, whose writings although were not necessarily the best, she was the most cooperative and willing to participate in the study. I used the name Jasmine to represent this student. The focus of the analysis were multi-folds: on the formation of her identity, her investment in the writing process, intertextuality in the text production which involves literacy apprenticeship, linguistic manipulations, agency representation in the working to accomplish the writing task.

Jasmine's Multiple Identities and Investment

In this section, I draw on Bakhtin's (1982) concept of dialogism/dialogicality and intertextuality to explore and articulate how student and teacher were working together in the literacy development. These concepts can help me identify what resources were drawn on and what connections were made when student and teacher co-constructed the texts and how the identities were constructed through using language in the process of creating texts. I also take sociocultural perspectives on literacy, identity and positioning to examine the literacy practices we were engaged in creating different texts.

Bakhtin's dialogism refers to the potential relationship to be built by the readers or writers through interacting with the text and other readers or authors. Dialogism also refers to mutual communicative connection or relatedness through languages or gestures in the creative process. In so doing people involved in the interactions construct relations with one another, construct identities, and make meanings from related discoursal texts. During the creative processes, a writer or a reader makes meanings, sets up relationships with others, negotiates their identities through the interaction with other readers/authors or texts. Our speech or all our utterances are filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of "our-own-ness", varying degrees of awareness and detachment. These words of others carry with them their own expressions, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, rework, and re-accentuate (Bakhtin, 1986, p.89).

The concept of dialogism is to capture the meaning-making processes by which the historical and the present come together in an utterance, and all utterances are inherently dialogic and relational, dependent and contextual. Dialogism rejects the notion that writing can express a static individual self, but believes that meaning is co-

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constructed by the writer and the reader, mediated by cultural values and beliefs. What a reader or writer gets from the creative processes is closely tied to the things being said before and to be said in the future in response in a sequentially organized manner. Composition is not an individual writer working alone, but always the result of his/her interaction with the world, with its readers and its subjects. The more we interact with others, the wider and more variety our experiences with different social genres of communication will be. The more encounters with different genres we experience successfully, the more enriched is our ability to understand and participate in social life.

The relatively recent sociocultural perspectives on literacy are in line with Bakhtin's (1982) concept of dialogism/dialogicality and intertextuality. Sociocultural perspectives view literacy practice as means to understand the macro sociocultural contexts in which students interpret who they are in relation to others, and how they have learned to process, interpret and encode their world. This interactions with the sociocultural contexts will invite identity construction and bring about positioning possibilities. Apart from being a set of meanings about oneself, identity is also defined as a process which incorporates identifying oneself and being recognized by others. Identity is, therefore, seen here as embedded in social relations and as dynamic, fluid, contextual and relational (Gee, 2000; Norton, 2008, 2011).

Literacy practices can be the arena where learners' identities are constructed and these situational identities can affect our sense of ourselves. Ferdman (1990) suggested that literacy and culture have a reciprocal relationship at the level of the individual and that a person's identification with a particular ethnic or cultural group is connected to his perception of literacy. While cultural identity mediates the learning and use of literacy,

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literacy will subsequently alter an individual's view of herself/himself. Thus, literacy helps improve an individual's self-image by transforming the individual. Usually the more literate an individual is, the better one will portray herself/himself in terms of identity construction.

Identities can be defined by social representations and the dynamics of positioning between self and others. The positioning theory claims that positioning is achieved by the level of language use and meaning construction through discourse (Davies & Harré, 1990). Positions not only 'locate' people within social relations and discursive 'storylines', but also provide people with ways of making sense of the world. Positioning theory conceptualizes the 'other' as an integral part of the positioning process, and constructed positions are always jointly (re)produced and relational, involving both self and other positions (Davies & Harré, 1999). Positioning theory also considers the power dynamics that shape interactions and positioning processes through the concept of moral orders (Davies & Harré, 1990).

After I went through my data of student drafts, texts, interviews, reflections, observations and recordings, I used grounded theory coding to identify the salient themes for analysis. These themes were closely related to the focal student's social identities and positioning which gave the meanings of her social interactions in this particular context and her investment in her literacy activities. In this section, I drew on the sociocultural theories on literacy, identity, positioning, investment, and used Discourse Analysis (DA) as a tool to analyze the identified themes. First I will present the data and analysis of my focal student Jasmine's identities, positioning, and investment in our literacy practice

which includes her interactions with the class and with me in the process of learning to compose in the TL Chinese.

In this section, I would describe the class interactions in our literacy practice of preparing and co-construction of the texts. Though I am aware this is a case study, I cannot isolate the focal participant from the dynamic social interactions in the class context, because writing or any other literacy practice is dialogic in nature, which is historical, political, cultural, relational, and contextual (Bakhtin, 1982). It is impossible to discuss literacy activities without situating the participants and the literacy events in the sociocultural context. For this reason, the discussions would switch back and forth on the focal participant and the wider participants as needed in order to situate the focal participant in the dynamics of the social interaction, so that we can better understand the focal participant's identities, investment and participation in the wider literacy context. This is true throughout this study.

Jasmine as a Dynamic Student with Multiple Identities

Jasmine is an African-American with a Jamaican heritage. She was 18 years old. She had mother, father, grandmother and two siblings from mother's side and three from father's side. Jasmine's mother came to United States when her mother was 14 years old. Jasmine's maternal grandma lived with her family here in US, and she was helping with Jasmine's mother raising the children. Jasmine's mother was a nurse, working very hard and at the same time enjoying her working. Jasmine's younger brother was in second grade. At home, Jasmine helped his younger brother in many ways (interview, March 8, 2016).

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Jasmine was a senior in this vocational technical high school. She was a happy, quiet and shy girl. She had six classes on the academic week, AP math, AP chemistry, AP English, African-American history, economics and music. On the shop week, she had Chinese class and shop, which included the academic classes for shop content, and the practice time for skills based on the trade. The AP class was Advanced Placement class which was designed for the top students in most of the high schools in the U.S. The credits from this class or classes could be counted as college credits in some colleges once they were admitted into colleges. With the AP credits from high school, students in college will need to take fewer classes, thus paying less tuition and be able to graduate earlier.

From the fact that she was taking three AP classes, we could tell that Jasmine was highly motivated and doing very well in this school. She was very proud that she was getting the first honor and maximum honor for the last three years, which was reflected in both her text and her interviews. The literacy practices in this school provided a platform for her to adapt into the sociocultural contexts, learning to interpret who she was in relation to others, and to process, interpret and encode her world. These literacy practices also gave her opportunities to negotiate her different identities through interacting with fellow students, teachers and the school as an institutional environment. The data collected indicated that Jasmine assumed multiple identities: she was an honor student, a Certified Nurse Assistant, a competent second language learner, an African-Jamaican American, and an occasional "teacher". The data showed that jasmine negotiated these social identities from her literacy practices in this context, and most importantly, these

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social identities inspired her to invest more effort for her advance towards being a better learner in the literacy practices, (Norton, 2000) as indicated in Figure 4:
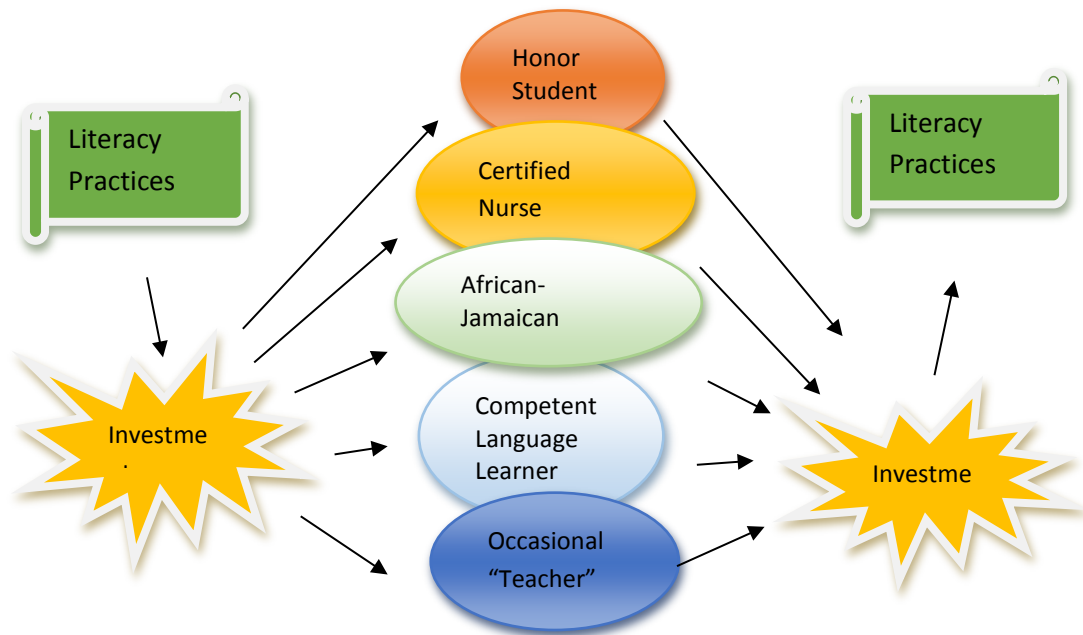
Figure 4: Multiple Identities with Literacy Practices and Investment

Jasmine as an Honor Student

In this school, not many students could get first honor or maximum honor, because one had to be good on all subjects, including shop performance. Jasmine was working diligently to achieve her goal of becoming a maximum honor student. Being an honor student meant that she was smart, and had the prowess to overcome difficulties and be a problem solver, therefore getting good outcomes. Since this identity meant a lot to her, she was willing to invest in the work and negotiation with other students and teachers in this particular context to strive and maintain her status as an honor student. (Norton, 2000).

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Her effort for constructing honor student identity included, but not limited to, working hard in different classes and shop, reading widely, and extra working time at home. She expressed her identity as an honor student in her pen-pal letter, and she also elaborated on her being an honor student in the interview. The following are the excerpts from the text and the interview (March 8, 2016):

Excerpt from her pen-pal letter (Please see the complete text in Appendix D):

Line 18. 我是荣誉学生。 (I am an honor student.)

Excerpt from the interview:

51. Q: Yeah, that's good. So, do you do well in all your classes?

52. J: Yeah, um hum.

53. Q: Are you proud of that?

54. J: Yeah, I work hard. So, it is nice to know that. My grades reflect on that.

55. Q: So you told me that you are an honor student.

56. J: Yea, I am.

57. Q: Do you have to try very hard to be an honor student? Or it just comes natural?

58. J: I have to study, I study a lot. Um hum. If I have a test I have to study a lot for it.

59. Q: You study at home too?

60. J: Um hum, I surely do.

For Jasmine, in line 54, working hard was a virtue, and she was "very proud" of working hard and getting comfort from knowing that. This was not the case with many other students in this school. Taking up the position or identity of honor student had its risk of being called a nerd, which was not a glorious image in this context. Being a sport

star was the popular role who would have many fans and friends. Again in line 58, Jasmine's success was measured by getting good grades. In order to be successful, she was willing to "study a lot" for the tests (line 58). Norton (2000) called this effort investment. By having to "study a lot", Jasmine was investing in her academic subjects in order to negotiate her honor student identity.

Gee (2000) calls this kind of identity as Discourse Identity (D-identities): identities evoked by "the process through which this power works is recognition" (P. 9). Thus, D-identity is an ascription or an achievement. Discourse identity involves in the sequential organization of talk or negotiation. Jasmine's honor student identity was negotiated by working hard and recognized by the teachers and the school.

Jasmine's success was also attributed to by her doing homework after school, it may sound easy for a lot of high school students, but most of the students in this school had part time jobs after school, and Jasmine had one too. In addition to the part time job, Jasmine had to help with her little brother. This meant that she had to wait at the bus stop to receive him from the school bus, otherwise the bus driver would not let him off the bus. It took good time management skills to allocate the time required for working on homework after school. It took a lot of effort or investment to study at home in order to get good grades.

Jasmine's investment in her academics also manifested in the fact that she read a lot of books whenever she had time. She expressed this part of her honor student identity both in her text---- pen-pal letter, and her interview (below). In the text, after she wrote about what kind of music she liked, she went on to say (Please see the complete text in Appendix D):

Line 29. 我也喜欢读书。 (I also like to read books).

Line 30. 我不听音乐的时候，我读很多书。(When I don't listen to music, I read a lot of books.)

In the interview, Jasmine elaborated on this point as well (March 9, 2016):

123. Q: You said you read a lot of books in your letter. Did you?

124. J: Yes, I love reading. If you just give me a book and it's interesting I'll read the book.

125. Q: So besides work and school you read a lot?

126. J: Um hum , that's where all my money goes to.

127. Q: You buy books too?

128. J: Amazon, ha ha…

129. Q: Yeah? So you don't borrow from the library?

130. J: I borrow from the library, but I like to buy and keep them. I have a book-self at home. I just put them on the self after I read it.

131. Q: Our school has a lot of books too.

132. J: Um hum.

133. Q: So you borrow from it too.

134. J: Yeah, I borrow a lot too.

To many people, reading a lot of books or loving books is something we take it for granted. But in this context of an urban school, what I heard most from many other students were that "I am very good with my hands". This meant that they would rather do things than they would read. This was the reason why many students chose to come to

this vocational school. My experience of asking students to read in my class would provide some understanding of the background. On the last school day before the Thanksgivings holiday in 2015, some students did not show up in class, and I asked the ones who were in class to read an article about Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival, a holiday in China, similar to Thanksgivings celebrating harvest in the fall, but with different ways of celebrations activities. The article was in English and the purpose was to have students compare the two holidays after they read it. However, the students asked me to let them read the much shorter text in Chinese. The reason was obvious that they did not want to read the longer article, although I thought it would be easier to read the article in English. In fact, as an adviser of the National Honor Society in this school last few years, I supported the members launching "Reading Contest" twice to encourage all students in this school to read books, given the fact that most students did not like to read very much. This contextual background would shed light on the significance of Jasmine's identity of "loving to read" (line 128) in this context.

In fact, I was surprised when I heard in the interview that Jasmine spent a lot of her money on buying books. This meant that she not only invested her time to read books, she was also willing to invest financially in the literacy practice. This endeavor was even more striking in this particular context. Some students in my class told me from time to time that they had jobs and normally they would pay for their phone, buy their own clothes, their shoes, and some helped parents to pay the house bills. However, for Jasmine, books were "where all my money goes" (line 130), embodying her identity different from many peers around. Davies & Harré's positioning theory takes the 'other' as an integral part of the positioning process, and one's constructed positions are always

jointly (re)produced and relational, involving both self and other positions (1999). By the representation, in the text and the interview, of immersing in the literacy practices of reading a lot of books, Jasmine positioned herself as someone who was willing to invest in her academic achievement and to be highly more knowledgeable than many other students in the school.

Power dynamics shape interactions and positioning processes through the concept of moral orders, and every position has a 'moral quality' associated with a set of rights and duties (Davies & Harré, 1990). To Jasmine, working hard in school and at home, thus getting good grades, and loving reading were all representations of good "moral quality" that contributed to her identity as an honor student. This identity empowered her to believe she had the mental power, confidence and positive attitude to be able to accomplish anything if she chose to do. Her identity as an honor student with confidence or power, was directly responsible for the big investment (Norton, 2000) she put in for creating her own texts in Chinese in our class (Detailed discussion on this will be followed later in this paper). Further, this identity empowered her to build her dream of financial independence and professional career towards a nurse. Ferdman (1990) argued that while cultural identity mediates the learning and use of literacy, at the same time literacy will subsequently alter an individual's view of herself/ himself. Jasmine's investment in building the identity of honor student through literacy practices was her everyday effort, working towards her bigger goal in life. (I will present the details related to another identity later in the section of "Jasmine as an African-Jamaican American"). Her honor student identity and investment also manifested in the two writing projects, which I will touch upon later.

Jasmine as a Capable CNA

In addition to academic classes, every student in this school had a shop to go to on the B Week. Since Jasmine's mother was a nurse, Jasmine wanted to be a nurse. Therefore she picked up the Allied Health Shop when she was just entering this school at 9th grade. She believed that being a nurse would fulfill her dream of being independent after schooling and serving other people. To this end, Jasmine invested a great deal in acquiring the knowledge of human body and how to assist patients. Studying in her shop for four half years (the other four half years for academic classes) would be qualified for a test to be Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) at the end. In order to be certified, in the latter part of junior year, the top ten students would be selected to take the CNA tests which consisted of two parts with one part being theories in written form, and the other the skill sets they had to demonstrste. In their senior year, the rest of the students in the Health Shop were able to take the tests and get certified. This certification almost guaranteed the holders a job in hospitals or nursing homes as a Nurse Assistant. If they wanted to be a Registered Nurse, they needed to go to college for it after high school.

Even though Jasmine did well in all her academic classes, she liked her shop the best. It was not only because her mother was a nurse, but out of her curiosity that it was interesting to learn human body, and genuinely enjoyed learning about body systems, such as respiratory system, the cardio vascular system. In addition to the above reasons, Jasmine had had prior experience of taking care of her grandmother when she was sick. Jasmine was able to take her grandmother's pulse, and helped her to get dressed, etc. She also had similar experience working in a nursing home as part time job after school. She indicated that helping people "make me feel good about myself" (Interview, March 9,

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2016, please see below, line 92). Jasmine expressed her sentiment in both her texts ---

pen-pal letter and her interview. In her pen-pal letter, she wrote (Please refer to the

complete text in the Appendix D):

Line 12. 我的学校是职业学校。 (My school is a vocational school.)

Line 13. 我想当一个合格的护士。(,) 因为我学护士专业。 (I want to be a qualified

　　　　 nurse, because my major is nursing.)

Line 14. 我努力学习护士专业。 (I am studying hard for my major.)

　　　In her interview, Jasmine echoed the same sentiment (Interview March 9, 2016):

35. Q: That's good. How do you do in your shop?

36. J: Um, I do well, I try my best.

37. Q: Yeah. What do you learn in shop?

38. J: I learn about body systems, respiratory system, cardio vascular system.

49. Q: Um hum. So your shop and your class, which one do you like the best? Or what

　　　 class do you like the best?

40. J: I like the shop the best. Because that's where I learn the stuff, actually I want to

　　　 learn, and enjoy learning. I thought the human body is so interesting.

87. Q: Do you think what you learned in your shop will help you in the future to become

　　　 a nurse?

88. J: Yes, because I feel I am already a step ahead, and because I am learning about all

　　　 the body systems. When you go to nursing schools, you have to learn that too, so.

89. Q: You already…

90. J: Yeah, I already know the basics of that, so...

91. Q: Good, alright. So why do you want to be a nurse, beside your Mom is a nurse?

92. J: Yeah, that, my Mom is a nurse, plays a key role. And I remember once my

    grandma was sick, I had to take care of her. She wasn't feeling well. I made sure

    her pulse was OK, she needed to get dressed, I helped her getting dressed. I just

    helped her do everything. This is like, what I want to do. I want to help people,

    make me feel good about myself.

93. Q: So you think you want to help other people just like your grandma?

94. J: Yeah, that's what I do at work, to help people.

95. Q: Did you go to clinical already?

96. J: Yes, I went there already.

97. Q: Do you do the same thing there?

98. J: Yeah, I help them to get dressed… It makes me happy.

Jasmine had a short term as well as a long term goal. The short term goal for

her was to invest her energy learning the knowledge about human body systems in her

shop so she could better help other people at her job. All of this would make her happy

(line 98). Her long time goal was to prepare herself to take the challenge of studying

nursing in college, in order to be a qualified nurse in the future. Both representations

positioned her as a capable CNA with a high moral principle. Mishler (1999) suggested

that identity is the "dynamic organization of sub-identities that might conflict or align

with each other" (p. 8). If Jasmine's identity as an honor student was to convince herself

and people around her that she had the intellectual quality and consistency to be able to

accomplish academic success, her identity as a kind-hearted, knowledgeable CNA was to

show that she was capable of providing quality services to needy people. These sub-

identities were definitely aligned with each other (Mishler, 1999), and the sub-identities

positioned herself on the high moral ground with preparing and fulfilling the set of rights

and duties (Davies & Harré, 1990) which delimited how she defined herself, and how she

invested her energy and effort to fulfil her promises to herself and the people around her

(Norton, 2000). Jasmine's identity of a successful CNA gave her confidence that she was

able to do anything if she put her mind in it. This confidence of hers was evidenced in

her learning Chinese and the process of accomplishing the writing tasks.

Jasmine as an African-Jamaican American

Bakhtin (1981) suggested that we engage in internal dialogues that are the result

of the many voices we have already encountered in the past. These internal dialogues are

often sites of struggle and through these dialogues we are able to construct and

reconstruct ourselves. As I mentioned earlier, Jasmine possess willingness and the

attitude of hard working toward her academic achievement and her potential career; she

therefore constructed her identities as honor student and highly qualified preservice CNA.

These identities actually were in internal dialogues with her another identity of an

African-Jamaican American. As one of the "black people" (from her interview, March 9,

2016) living in the inner city, she experienced the poverty all around her, and knew the

first-hand stories about her extended families and her friends' families. During the past

years in my classes, administrators and many students would tell me respectively that

someone in our class was living in a foster home at the time or moving around from one

foster home to another, especially when behavior problems occurred. And the causes for

these situations were all different and complicated. Students would usually find out such

realistic stories before teachers did, since many of them lived in the same or nearby communities, or they went to elementary or middle school together.

Though the situations were as gloomy as they presented, there were always hopes and dreams and even the real life heroes from the community that inspired young people like Jasmine. Rafael (not real name), a real life hero, was one of the role models who would provide students like Jasmine the inspiration, possibilities and the symbolic identity of being successful. Rafael was my student about eight years ago. At the time he was a junior and then a senior since I had the same students for two consecutive years. His mother was from Puerto Rico and his father was an African American, but they did not get married. Rafael's father left Rafael and his mother soon after Rafael was born, so Rafael was growing up with his mother and his older sister. At his junior year, Rafael was very close to me and one of our school counselors, because his mother had been in jail and he did not have any family members to interact with at the moment.

One day Rafael came to my class and looked very tired. He asked whether he could put his head down. So I asked him what happened. He told me that he was staying in the hallway of an apartment complex for the whole previous night. Without his knowledge, she took her baby and left for Puerto Rico because she could not pay the rent. When Rafael came back late from a friend's house that night, he could not open the apartment door with his key. He sat on the floor of the hallway waiting for his sister to return, but she never did. While he was waiting, he fell asleep. By the time he woke up, it was morning already. He took the bus and came to school, obviously very tired. Fortunately our school provided lunch for any students who came to the cafeteria, so he

was not hungry. Since then he lived with his aunt and sometimes he lived in his friend's house.

Despite the fact that Rafael had gone through a lot of hardship, he kept coming to school and got good grades from different classes. I was very worried that he might drop out of school, or took illegal drugs with bad people, since nobody supervised him out of school. However, he did none of those. He was in electric shop and did very well there. In his senior year, he was one of the few who were chosen to work in Western Electric Company as a co-op student (similar to an intern) which would get him shop credits, real world experience, and get paid. When his eighteenth birthday was approaching, I asked him whether his aunt was going to hold party to celebrate the symbolic birthday entering adulthood. Rafael shook his head, saying there was not going to be any party for him. So I decided to have a surprise party in my classroom. I prepared everything and invited many of his friends who were in the same football team with him. He surely had a big surprise and was very happy that day.

In his senior year, Rafael decided that he wanted to rent an apartment together with his friend James. Their story of teens being independent was published in the local newspaper. Bill Cosby noticed the story and took both of them to the TV program Good Morning America. When he applied for college, he was accepted by a local state university, which provided scholarship for him. However, Bill Cosby decided to take them both and two other African American students to go to a black college in a southern state. Bill Cosby paid all the expenses for them. Rafael had some ups and downs in the college, but he finished it and got his bachelor's degree in sports management. Then he applied for a law school in a different state in the south, and he was accepted. He wanted

to practice laws related to sports or sport injuries after he earned the degree and passed the Bar Examination. Though there were many students who were very successful after high school education from this school, Rafael's acceptance to a law school was still a tremendous achievement. All teachers who knew him in this school were very happy for him.

During his college years and at the time Rafael was admitted into the law school, I invited him several times to give talks to my classes. He talked about his past life experience and his adventurous journey to success. The crucial part of his inspirational speech was the emphasis on his education--- literacy practices which provided the opportunity for him to construct the identity of a good student, good athlete, good college student, and possibly good attorney in the future. Over the years, Rafael's success story had huge impact on many of my students who could relate to Rafael's life experience, since they were all from more or less similar communities and they were in the same age group.

Sharing the same racial identity with Rafael, Jasmine could envision from Rafael's success the possibilities of her own future and her path to the future. She realized the path to the future success was literacy practices that we often call education. Following Rafael's footsteps, Jasmine was willing to work diligently every single day to chase her own dream. However, Jasmine claimed that her first inspiration of getting good education was from her mother. Jasmine referred to literacy practices or education as "school". In her pen-pal letter, in defining her identity as good student, she wrote:

Line 10. 学校对我是很重要的。   (School is very important to me.)

Line 11. 学校对你们重要吗？   (Is school important to you?)

When I asked Jasmine about the above statement in the interview, she provided the elaboration on this point (March 11, 2016):

67. Q: Um hum. So, you said in your letter, school is important to you. Can you tell me why?

68. J: Probably because of my Mom. Because, she raised, like my sibling by herself, she is always independent. She is always basically saying it is good to get your education. It is important. I think it is partly because I am black as well, I can see that a lot of black people struggle.

69. Q: Why black people have to struggle?

70. J: (Pause) I don't know.

71. Q: You don't know? Do you think education is going be good for you in that case?

72. J: Yeah. Working hard, I can depend on myself instead of other people.

73. Q: In what way you can rely on yourself?

74. J: Sure, like go to college, get my education, get my career goals, dreams, and better myself.

75. Q: Do you think school should be important to other people as well?

76. J: Yeah, school is important, because that's how you better yourself as a person. That's how you, like, get out of poverty and stuff.

From line 68, Jasmine's love of school was inspired by her mother, because "she is always basically saying it is good to get your education". By positioning her mother in the moral authority role, Jasmine also positioned herself as a good child who was listening to her mother and did what she wanted her to do. She had the respect for her mother. If she regarded what her mother was teaching her as spiritual inspiration, what

her mother did to raise all the kids independently was definitely the living practice that gave her the life structures and the blueprint of possibilities in her life path. In this life path the identity of being strong and independent was very important to her mother and to her under the circumstances.

Also in line 68, Jasmine claimed her racial identity as part of the reason she had to get good education, because "I can see that a lot of black people struggle". She was determined not to be one of those who had to struggle. She wanted to build a path to her own better future. When I was trying to get out her ideas of why African-American had to struggle, she paused quite a while, and said she did not know. Perhaps Jasmine was not very sure about the deeper cause of the poverty, or perhaps she did not know how to put such a complex issue in a sentence or two, but one notion was profound to her: education was the solution to get out of the dire situation. "School is important" and she wanted to "go to college" and "get my education, get my career goals, dreams, and better myself" (line 76 & 78). Also line 78 showed that Jasmine firmly believed that investing in education was worthwhile, and "that's how you, (like), get out of poverty and stuff" with the capital one gained through the literacy practices, also called education (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991).

According to Ferdman (1990), while cultural identity mediates the learning and use of literacy, literacy will subsequently alter an individual's view of herself/himself. While Jasmine's racial and cultural identity mediated her learning and use of literacy, literacy subsequently altered her view of herself. She made sense of herself and her experiences by comparing with other students around her in this context (Davies & Harré, 1990). In the interview, she acknowledged such comparison (March 11, 2016):

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77. Q: Do you see other students doing the same thing as you do?

78. J: Not really.

79. Q: Not everybody?

80. J: No. Not everybody.

Jasmine was relating about other students not doing the same thing she was embarking on as she believed they did not share the same perspective towards education, nor did they naturally invest as much as she did in the literacy practices. As a result, they might have different outcome of not being able to be independent and pull themselves out of poverty. All identities are situational, contextual and relational (Bakhtin, 1982). Jasmine made sense of herself being goal oriented, hence, a better student.

With the identity of African-Jamaican American, Jasmine was determined to build the capital of knowledge and skills through good education, so that she could invest that capital in the future to rise up from the trap the society made for the African-Americans (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991; Norton, 2000). Under the umbrella of Jasmine's racial identity and her determination, it was very logical for us to see why she was striving and maintaining the identity of honor student and the identity of CNA towards a qualified nurse.

Jasmine as a Competent Second Language Learner

Embracing the identity as an African-Jamaican American, an honor student and a qualified CNA, Jasmine also embedded her everyday investment by learning Chinese as Foreign Language (FL). On the one hand, FL is one of the academic classes, on the other learning Chinese was special to her, because it was "different" (line 100, below). First of

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all, she chose to take Chinese, instead of Spanish at the end of her sophomore year, because as an honor student, she wanted to take the challenge. While many students were intimidated by even the thought of learning Chinese, she was very confident she could learn it well. She took notes carefully, and pronounced each word and sentences accurately. After all she was willing to be an apprentice, practicing into the real world and imagined Chinese language community (Gee 2012; Norton, 2011). She expressed her desire to learn Chinese in her interview:

199. Q: Why do you want to learn Chinese?

100. J: Ah, it's like, just different. You don't see a lot of people learning Chinese. It's

like… You could go to China helping other people. Cause China, like, has a huge

population, right?

101. Q: Right. You don't think you can help people here in United Sates?

102. J: Yeah, there are a lot people, Um hum.

103. Q: What does it mean to you learning Chinese?

104. J: It is important, because there are people out there that speak Chinese, can't like,

you know, speak English, and then I can translate and help.

On the one hand, Jasmine claimed learning Chinese was different from western languages, and there were "not a lot of people learning Chinese" (line 100). Again, all identities are situational, contextual and relational (Bakhtin, 1982). Comparing with other students, she was smart and willing to work hard. In other word, she could take the challenge. She was aware there was a common belief among most of the students in our school that if anyone was able to learn Chinese well, that person must be very smart, because Chinese was difficult to learn. It was true that there were twice as many students

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in Spanish classes than in Chinese, since we had two Spanish teachers. From this backdrop we can better understand Jasmine's discourse of "difference" in this context. This was a representation of her identity as a capable language learner, who is confident enough to challenge the more difficult language.

On the other hand, Jasmine was constructing the moral quality of her identity that she could go to China to help people there, because China "has a huge population" (line 100). She predicted that she was also able to help people here who did not speak English when they needed health care. This help with Chinese language that Jasmine could potentially provide was also the extension of her identity as a qualified CNA and later a qualified Registered Nurse (RN) who provided health care to needy people.

Jasmine as a competent language learner was not only represented by her day-to-day Target Language literacy practices, such as actively speaking the TL and turning in quality work, but also manifested in the writings students crafted. In the first year, along with other students, she created many short texts which required more investment than just speaking in class. Though the texts were short, and later longer, they required careful drafting or crafting at their learning stage, often demanded extra time outside of class time. Jasmine always managed to complete the texts with her best effort. This was consistent with the investment she put in later for the two major writing projects which were part of the subject of this study.

In the pen-pal letter, Jasmine was carefully studying or experiencing the modelled letter. While she and other students read through the modelled letter, they identified the part they were familiar with. This was not an easy task, because many students did not remember all the words or phrases they learned previously. But, Jasmine kept good notes,

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so that for the parts that may look familiar, she could go back to the notes to get confirmation. Every time Jasmine recognized the vocabularies or the phrases as only a few of her fellow students did, other students showed their amazement. After that, we worked on the unfamiliar expressions and forms in the modelled letter. Jasmine took notes carefully and labeled with different marks to remind her of something only she could recognize. Later on when we worked on the draft letter, she could go back to her notes and found many useful hints that could be used in her own pen-pal letter. She could also use her resources to help other students when they needed. Other students regarded her as a resourceful peer and went to her for help when they required scaffolding. If Jasmine did not know how to help, she would then directed them to me. To the students in the class, Jasmine was "smart" and "she knows a lot of stuff". Her identity was a competent language learner, or a "teacher" sometimes, whom other students could get help from. In her interview, she recounted the partial working scene in class (March 11, 2016):

210. Q: So when you feel difficult, what did you do?

211. J: I would raise my hand, and asked you, like how do I do this? I asked my
      neighbors.

212. Q: You asked your neighbors. Did your neighbors ask you?

213. J: Yeah, and I helped them. Some I remembered, or I could find things in my
      notebook.

214. Q: Did you remember any of the questions they asked you?

215. J: Um hum…

216. Q: They asked you a word or asked you for ideas?

217. J: Yeah, the words.

218. Q: So the word they asked was the word we learned or new?

219. J: Sometimes it was the word we learned. Sometimes it was a new word.

220. Q: For a new word, did you know it when they asked you?

221. J: No, I didn't.

222. Q: Did you tell them "I don't know" or did you help them find out?

223. J: I was like ask Ms. Geng

224. Q: Okay, then they went to ask me?

225. J: Um hum.

Checking with my video recording on the class working session, I noticed five small working groups where students huddled together with one or two capable peers as the resource persons. These were naturally formed groups and Jasmine's group was a typical one. I could see that Jasmine's notebook was passed back and forth. She asked her peers questions and they asked her too. Occasionally there burst some laughters comingled with loud talking. Although they may have occasionally talked loudly on something else, majority of students were working on their pen-pal letters. Jasmine apparently served as the resource person in her group, and the peers even asked her how to write the new words, speculating she might know (line 219). When she felt it was beyond her capability to offer help, she then referred her peer to the teacher, me that is, like a triage nurse (line 223). Since I had a big class, and was engaged with different students at different time, it was easier to ask other students around, instead of waiting for his or her turn to talk to me, unless it was necessary. There were twenty six students writing at the same time, scaffolding provided by more capable peers was very valuable

in this situation. Easier questions were addressed among students, only the challenging ones were referred to the teacher (224, 225). This way I could strategically allocate my time to tackle relatively fewer obstacles for the task. I felt fortunate that there were several students like Jasmine in class who could provide such scaffolding among themselves to move the text production forward. Students in her group were happy that Jasmine was the competent learner and a capable peer leading the group helping them along the writing adventure.

Vygotsky (1978) argues that scaffolding is crucial in a child's learning process. Scaffolding is the assistance or help that adults or more competent peers provide in making connection between new situations and the learners' prior experiences. As a competent language learner, Jasmine served her peers providing the help in making connections, such as "remember we learned this word from the Family Lesson? I'll show you," or "I think there is a similar sentence in the sample letter, you can use that one as an example," or "look, I wrote it this way, you can do this too" (Observation, Feb. 26, 2016). This kind of language used in scaffolding was within the Zone of Proximal Development, thus, effectively facilitating other peers' learning and understanding (Vygotsky, 1978). The peer mediations were especially vital when teacher had to scaffold many students in limited time.

More importantly, this active joint participation in meaning-making and appropriating knowledge in composing and constructing new meaning for the text was a constructive and reciprocal process. The meaning of a particular utterance arises from relations between social viewpoints, not from the minds of individuals. These social viewpoints can be integrated into a text, either marked by explicit boundary marks or

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absorbed to varying degrees (Fairclough, 1992b, 1995a). Students could get the view points from each other through the discussion and negotiation, and this was true between students and teacher too. I will provide examples of such in the next section.

Jasmine as an Occasional "Teacher"

Confucius once said "教学相长" (learning while teaching), meaning that in the process of teaching and learning, teacher and student mutually benefit. As the aforementioned analysis shows, Jasmine not only invested in her own work to compose the pen-pal letter in the TL, she was also making effort to scaffold her peers. In the process, Jasmine in turn learned some things she needed from her peers too. This was confirmed by Jasmine in her interview earlier (line 211). Over the years through teaching, I learned a great deal from my students, some were cultural and other generational. Here, to illustrate the point, I will provide two episodes which occurred during Jasmine's journey of learning to write. This kind of learning experience was typical in my teaching career and in the literacy practice. The two episodes also showed that Jasmine was not only the competent language learner, she was also a "teacher" from time to time. Jasmine learned some Chinese language and culture from me, and I learned her culture and some generational practices from her. This is reciprocal learning or co-construction of learning. We constructed the knowledge together and grew together.

Teaching of Exo

The first episode was during Jasmine's drafting of her pen-pal letter. After she started her letter, she introduced herself, her family, her academic class. She then went on to write about her school, her trade concentration, her Chinese class and her future

goal. She piled a lot of the information in just few paragraphs. When she wanted to talk about her hobbies, she expressed that she liked to listen to music. Her favorite music was "Exo" and "Overdose, and Exo was her idol. Jasmine wrote "Exo" and "overdose" in English in the Chinese text, because she did not know how to write them in Chinese. It turned out that I did not know how to write them in Chinese either, because I did not know what they were.

When I read this from her draft in our individual conference for editing, I understood "Overdose" was her favorite song. However, I was completely puzzled and had no idea what "Exo" was. From the way she was saying that she liked to "listen to", I could figure out that it related to music. But I was not sure whether "Exo" was an acronym of a music genre, or a music group, or a particular piece of music or song. In addition, since it was written in English "Exo", I was not sure whether it was American music, Jamaican music or …   After I gave it a serious thought for a while, I gave up and asked Jasmine what it was. She told me that it was Korean music, and she liked it very much. I figured that if "Exo" was Korean music, then "Overdose" was a Korean song. This only helped me to eliminate the possibility that it was American music or Jamaican music, but I was still not clear whether "Exo" was an acronym of a music genre, or a music group, or a particular piece of music or song.

During editing conference, we did not have time to negotiate too much in detail. So later in the interview, I asked her again about "Exo". Below was the recount in the interview similar to the conversation in the conference, but I had more time to do more clarification on the "Exo" (March 11, 2016):

137. Q: You said in the letter you like Exo. What is Exo? I didn't really know.

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138. J: For real? It is kind of embarrassing, but a Korean music.

139. Q: Oh, Korean music? Where did you find out?

140. J: My friend introduced them to me. I like, Woo, I like this song. I just joined on the

   Band-wagon. I love them so much.

141. Q: Do you listen to that a lot?

142. J: Yeah. I do.

143. Q: That's called Exo?

144. J: Exo, um hum.

145. Q: What kind of music?

146. J: It's like pop. Yeah, they call it K-pop.

147. Q: K-pop?

148. J: Uh, K-pop.

149. Q: "K' is Korean?

150. J: Um hum.

151. Q: Oh, Wow. K-pop. You also said somebody was your idol. Who was your idol?

152. J: I think Exo was my idol.

153. Q: Exo is a person or it is a genre of music?

154. J: No, it's a boy group.

155. Q: Oh, it's a boy group. Why is it your idol?

156. J: Cause, um, ha ha… it is embarrassing. Um hum, I don't know. I guess it

   motivates everybody to do better themselves.

157. Q: So, a Motivational factor?

158. J: Um hum.

159. Q: OK. So you also asked your pen-pal to listen to Exo, thinking they might like it?

160. J: Um hum, it is really good.

161. Q: Why do you think they should like it?

162. J: It's like, really, I don't know, it's one of the type of music anybody who can enjoy music and listen to it, will enjoy.

From this excerpt of interview transcript, it showed that at the time of interview, I was still not very sure about "Exo". Not until line 146, Jasmine explained that it was a Korean pop music, called K-pop, which was a music genre. But a music genre could not be an idol, so I needed to ask more questions. Then she said it was "a boy group" in line 154. Now I had some understanding that Exo was a Korean music group, or music band, representing a genre of Korean music, called K-pop. Exo was a music group made of a group of smart looking Korean teenage boys. Only now did I start to understand why she was saying she was quite embarrassed when she was telling me about this group and their music. But I was very surprised that she felt embarrassed talking about boys, since it was not rare in this school to see boys and girls showing affection in public.

Only after the interview did I search online to see what Exo really was, based on Jasmine's introduction. Google search revealed that Exo was a Korean boy music group that performed Korean pop songs in video forms. Indeed, the choreography and the music in the videos were amazingly beautiful. The name of Exo meant to be "The Strongest Music Group". The number of performers were from four to ten in different videos. The content of the songs was mostly about love, and the languages they used in the songs were Korean or English, or mixture of both. Now I understood why it was so attractive to young girls.

In our writing moments and in the interview, Jasmine revealed three types of identities, one was that she was a cool teenager that loved music, that is crazy about the trendy fashion and that is chasing the music or sport stars. She shared common interest with her friends, which contributed to the common bonding. And yet, she was one of the few maximum honor students and she felt that she needed to focus on her study and nursing skills, rather than chasing the stars. That was why she felt embarrassed when talking about the boy music group. The identity of a cool teenager posed a direct conflict with her honor student identity. Bakhtin (1981) argues that we engage in internal dialogues that are the result of the many voices we have already encountered in the past. These internal dialogues are often sites of struggle and through these dialogues we are able to construct and reconstruct ourselves. Mishler (1999) also argues on the same point that identity is the "dynamic organization of sub-identities that might conflict or align with each other" (p. 8). Jasmine's internal dialogues of being an honor student and of being a cool teenager was the sites of struggle, because her honor student identity did not fit with the identity of cool teenagers who did not want to work hard, but instead chasing the stars and doing "cool things", like making tricks on other students or teachers, or skipping classes. These two identities did not align with each other, therefore she felt "embarrassed".

In the process of student and teacher co-constructing knowledge in the text and the interview, Jasmine also exhibited another identity----teacher identity. On the Exo episode, she was the total knowledgeable person, I was a learner, learning what the Exo was all about. Though her teaching was not systematic, and I needed to ask many questions, is it that all students need to ask questions and teachers encouraged students to

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do so? This made me think about our classroom where some students were not good at asking questions, then did we as teachers assume that they understood all we said to them? Could we conduct a reality check and start asking questions to check their understanding?

Gee (2012) suggests that meaning-making is an active process, because "Meaning is not a thing that sits fixed in the mind" (Gee, 2012, p. 21). When dealing with language, meaning of words becomes essential. I did not have time in class to get to the details of the name Exo, though I had gotten enough of the meanings to do some editing on that part. Only after much negotiations in the interview, I could completely understand what Exo was. This means that meaning-making is an active negotiation process, a co-construction of the knowledge in the context. Our writing practice provided the opportunity for student and teacher to negotiate and co-construct knowledge on many fronts.

By questioning as a student did, I learned enough on the spot to continue our editing, and the intercultural communication was successful, because we accomplished the meaning-making and bridged the gap. By the negotiation I tasted current teenager sub-culture. Her "cool teenager" identity was appropriate in the text she created. Zimmerman (1994) identified three types of identity inherent in conversation or text. The first is discourse identity, involving the sequential organization of talk. The second is situated identity brought into effect by participants during a particular situation and is related to the social activities they accomplish. The third is transportable identity that travels with an individual across a variety of interactions. Zimmerman's categorization of identities indicate that identity is not static but dynamic and changeable. Jasmine's teacher identity was situational that I positioned her in and I as a student was brought into

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effect by the learning activity we mutually engaged in. The construction of her identity as teacher and mine as a student was in the discourse of negotiation, involving the sequential organization of talk to construct the meaning of Exo. In this sense our identities were also discourse identity, meaning-making the sequential organization of talk. In different situations, our identities might be the other way round, because identity was not static but dynamic and changeable.

Teaching of Voodoo

The other episode that made Jasmine a teacher was the appearance of the word "voodoo" in her draft of the second writing project of her fairy tale story. From the word "voodoo", I learned a big cultural lesson that opened up another window for me to see the world. Before this episode of learning, I only knew in Chinese culture, some people practice sorts of spirit or magic to either cure people's disease or make someone sick or die. I was very surprised to learn that the black magic was similar to the Chinese magic. The story Jasmine wrote was from Jamaica, which was amazing but very sad. It was a long story from the view point of a novice writer in the TL. I will provide a brief story line here, so that we have some ideas about the context of this teaching and learning episode.

The events in her fairy tale story took place in 1820, on a plantation called "True Friendship". The main character was a woman named Annie, who married John Palmer. Annie Palmer was very beautiful, having a rich voice, black eyes and smooth skin. However, her personality was completely different from her appearance. When Annie lived in Haiti, she started to believe sorcery and spirit. She became the favorite of a priestess who taught Annie all about the spiritual world. She took Annie to forbidden

ceremonies where there were spirits of black magic, and death would be summoned. When the priestess died, Annie immigrated to Jamaica where she married John Palmer. Annie soon became weary of John and poisoned him leading to his death.

Later she married two other men, and both died mysteriously. Annie denied that she killed her husbands, but saying that they died of normal disease. When her third husband died, Annie became more and more intriguing. She tortured her slaves. In one case, Annie beheaded a servant and put his head in a basket. She would take in the foremen and bookkeepers, so she could sleep with them. However Annie liked one of her bookkeepers the most, but this man fell in love with a maid. When Annie discovered this, she became enraged. So she played a spell on the maid. The girl told her uncle about the spell on her and her uncle did voodoo to the girl. However, he wasn't strong enough to lift the curse and the maid died. The uncle became angry, and rallied up a group of slaves. They conspired a plan to kill Annie.

The next night these slaves raided Annie's house. They found Annie in her room and strangled her to death. Till this day, local people in Jamaica say that at night they see and hear Annie Palmer flying on a broomsticks in the night sky.

Since the main character was a witch, Jasmine mentioned the spirit, spell, curse, black magic and voodoo in various places in the story. I had some idea about what the spirit, spell, curse, black magic were, but had no idea what voodoo was. When I read the part with the word voodoo, I did not know what to make of it, though Jasmine asked me how to write it in Chinese. I had to ask Jasmine and she told me voodoo was black magic. I asked her whether she saw this black magic before, and she told me she did not. But she heard her grandma telling about it a lot. Though I asked few more questions about the

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word voodoo, I still did not get the real sense that voodoo was the black magic which needed to be performed on someone. I felt that time was tight, so I did not ask more questions. Under the circumstance of no complete understanding and not knowing what to do about voodoo, I crossed out that part "the uncle performed voodoo" from her draft, therefore she did not include this part in her final draft (Please see the Appendix H). But when I read the final draft, I realized that the semantic sense was not complete without the missing parts that was crossed out by me. I also realized that we failed this time in negotiating the meaning of voodoo, thus that part was not constructed in her original intention of the story.

Through this episode, Jasmine taught me two lessons. One was the cultural lesson in which I learned the rough meaning what voodoo was. After I read the final draft and realized the semantic mismatch, I went online to find out what voodoo really was. Just as Exo was part of the teenager's music world, this voodoo was a part of the cultural world of black people around the natural world. Below I will quote the synopsis of voodoo from the website to provide a sense of its enormity of this cultural world:

> Black magic is an ancient science that uses five elements or the visible or invisible chemistry, physics, biology, electronics and ether (universal spirit) to hurt or heal people. The core of all black magic lies within the spiritual world or the world of the dead.
> Someone who has mastered the art of black magic can perform black magic, these black magicians follow a system for many weeks and months, calling the spirit world, doing rituals, or making animal sacrifices (human sacrifices in some cases) to join hands with the spirit world. Once they have mastered the techniques they take control of the spirits who are at their command 24 hours a day. Then these spirits are used to access any information about anyone and are also used to harm any people, and even kill them. People who are driven by jealousy, anger, hate and other negative traits hire these black magicians to inflict harm on their relatives, friends and co-workers. At present the help of black magicians is being used in the legal systems around the world, help by many lawyers to win cases by their clients. Politicians and business community are also using it around the world to defeat

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their competitions.

(Web address: http://www.vedicwisdom.com/blackmagic/black_magic_faq.php)

Another lesson Jasmine taught me was the real understanding, by experience, of Vygotsky's notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), in which language use in scaffolding is crucial (1987). As I described above that the failure of communication caused the failure of the negotiation of the meaning, therefore failed the construction of that part of the text. This might have two possible explanations. While one possibility was that the voodoo concept was beyond my ZPD in the short time period and the space, another might be that the language we used was not appropriate in that situation, therefore failed to achieve mutual understanding. In this sense, Jasmine did not only open up her cultural world for me, but our experience of working together taught me to be a better teacher. This outcome proved that Confucius' saying "teaching and learning benefit each other" has real meaning for us.

Dialogic Nature: Student and Teacher Co-Building of Knowledge

Bakhtin (1982) used the concept of dialogism to capture the meaning-making processes that everything said is related to something in the world and the meaning constructed is not fixed but rather fluid and changing. This means that a phrase, a sentence, a paragraph, a text, a discourse, or a social action is open to multiple meaning construction, relational to the others, subject to change, context dependent, and dynamic in meaning making. Learning and literacy occur in social interactions and are co-constructed by students, family, communities, peers and their teachers. The more a

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learner is exposed to social interaction, the better she/he is being mediated and mediating learning and literacy.

In Bakhtin's perspective (1981), dialogue is not just a mode of interaction, but rather a way of communal existence in which people establish multi-dimension relationships of mutual interdependence. The dialogues carry communication through which people build up relationships and negotiate their identities. When engaging in dialogues, she/he invests entire self in discourse which enters into the dialogic fabric of human life. Bakhtin's perspective of dialogism suggests that learning is the interaction of multiple related voices coming into play. Learning occurs in the participants' social interaction and negotiation. Learners' active social participation mediates and facilitates learning. Bakhtin's perspective on learning accurately reflects what was happening in our writing journey.

Negotiating the Reading of the Sample Letter and the Story

Before the writing started, we made preparation for the writing, as I mentioned before. When we studied the word list together, Jasmine would take notes on the lists and ask questions. She also wrote notes on her own notebook. When I showed the sample letter or modelled letter to the class, Jasmine was able to read some parts of the sample letter, with all other students reading it too. They would yell up what they thought about the meaning of each sentence. Other peers would say "no, that's wrong, it is school, not student" or "Oh, that's, what's you might call it? Oh, photography" (video-recording, Feb. 23, 2016). One student mistook "school" as "student", because the two words shared the same top radical, looked similar. Jasmine was in echo with some of those reading, and added her understanding of each parts. With a scaffolding role in my mind,

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I was listening, watching, nodding, and shaking my head gently to show agreement or disagreement when nobody was sure on something.

As in any social interaction, the voices of different cultures or sub-cultures came into play. After we read through the sample letter, students started to comment on "idol" which appeared in the sample letter (details refer Appendix C). One student started, "idol, I don't have any idol," while the other said, "Beyonce is my idol, I love her, she is cute!"

Echoing Bakhtin's perspective, Dyson (2000) pointed out that language as a living tool that is simultaneously structured and emergent, by which we bring our cultural worlds into existence, maintain them, and shape them for our own purposes. In using language to participate in our activities, we reflect our understanding of them and their larger cultural contexts. We also create spaces for ourselves as individual actors within them. In learning a language, we appropriate signs that are laden with meaning, "drenched in community experience" (p.129). Though we were reading the sample letter in Chinese, we were situated in our local context of a diverse cultures and sub-cultures. In the frame of reading Chinese text, many students used language to claim their own cultural stances in this particular moment and space, or maintain their cultures and shape them for their own identity presentations in this social setting, because who-is-whose-music-fan can be a topic for debate among these adolescences. Jasmine did not position her own identity in the cultural exchanges because she was not comfortable with the presentation due to the fact that her inner struggles were not revolved yet. She felt comfortable later to put her choice of being Exo fan into her pen-pal letter, because she intended to level solidarity with the Chinese correspondent situated in the similar Asian cultures with the Exo music group.

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A couple of weeks later, when we read the sample fairy tale story, students encountered more difficulties in reading. The story's name was "Chang E" (The Moon Lady), and this was an abridged version of a well-known story in China. When I rewrote the story, I intentionally made many repetitions of the major lexicons of different names and actions. Even so, I knew the students would have lexical limitations since they had not learned many verbs thus far. The advantage was that they were familiar with the genre, and aware of the forms of human characters, plots and actions within the genre. At the brainstorm session they had listed the fairy tales they read before, such as "Snow White", "Sleeping Beauty", "Cinderella", "Beauty and Beast", and "Three Little Pigs", etc. (video recording, April 25 , 2016). I needed to put up the word lists next to the smartboard, and actively help with the reading.

There was a sense of enjoying reading the story, since it had a story line with characters and plots. Everyone in the class had a clear sense what a fairy tale story was, so they could predict what was coming based on what they had already read. I felt their familiarity with this genre made the story reading much easier than otherwise. Though they encountered the obstacles of unfamiliar lexicon, they could manage reading and enjoying the story. As we went along they provided predictions, guesses and clarifications. So it was indeed a joint venture, a process of co-constructing meaning and knowledge but with more scaffolding on the lexicons. Later, after they finished the writing of the fairy tale story, I interviewed Jasmine, and here is what she felt about the reading experience (May 12, 2016):

340. Q: When we read the sample story, how did you feel about it?

341. J: Yeah, it's very hard. Uh, the beginning was Ok.

342: Q: Why?

343. J: 'Cause, I, there were a lot of the words I didn't know.

344. Q: What about after I put the word list on the board?

345. J: Yeah, uh, it's better, but....

346. Q: Were you able to read it through?

347. J: Not really, no, I needed a lot of help.

348. Q: Where did you get help from?

349. J: Um, from other students, from you, everybody together.

350. Q: How was the story?

350. J: Yeah, I did. Um, I enjoyed it, good story, learned some culture there.

The meaning-making process was in negotiation from all the participants, though not all participated. Jasmine was an active participant, who would try very hard (line 349) even if she did not know, looking through her notes on the word list or her own notebook. If the story was hard to Jasmine (line 341), it was difficult for others too. I anticipated that reading such a story on their own was going to be a stretch, and in reality it was stretched out of the "zone of intelligibility and safety" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 185). The remedy was that I needed to scaffold them up to their ZPD. With the resources drawn from the previous knowledge, the word lists, the notebook, and the teacher's scaffolding, Jasmine and her peers co-constructed the reading and the meaning of the story.

Dialogue is not just a mode of interaction, but rather a way of communal existence in which people establish multi-dimension relationships of mutual interdependence. The dialogues carry communication through which people build up

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relationships and negotiate their identities (Bakhtin, 1981). The dialogues among many students and teacher were the mediation or negotiation of this communal existence in literacy practice where we established multi-dimensional relationships of mutual interdependence in meaning-making and building of knowledge. Jasmine was the active participant, and she sought to have dialogues from more sources than other students did in the class, thus, she learned more than many other students in the class, because learning occurs in the participants' active participation in the social interaction and negotiation (Bakhtin, 1981). In this literacy event, Jasmine's identity was positioned as the more capable peer, competent language learner and a resourceful go-to-person.

Negotiating the Organization of the Letter Genre

After students and teacher collectively discussed and co-constructed the meaning out of the sample pen-pal letter in the natural and holistic way in the target language, we started to break things down. Gee argues that "learning is a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching or through certain life-experiences that trigger conscious reflection" (2012, p.167). This conscious teaching involves breaking things down by analyzing and explaining them using meta-knowledge. By breaking the text down into categories of organization, register of language used for the target audiences and purposes, I wanted to engage student to use meta-language to name these letter genre related parts and understand the different types of letter for different readers, for example, formal letter, informal letter or neutral letter. Cope & Kalantzis called this step in literacy as conceptualizing, which was a "knowledge process in which learners become active conceptualizers, making the tacit explicit and generalizing from the particular" (2009, p. 185).

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We started the naming session by first identifying the possible reader and the purpose of the sample pen-pal letter. Only when they understand who the letter was intended for and what the purpose was, they could understand the language better in the letter. This understanding would also set up the structure and the expectation for the letter they are going to write. The discussions for this session were quite heated and the video recorded the following (Feb. 23, 2016):

Teacher: After reading this, this letter (pointing to the board), who do you think it is for? Who is supposed to read this?

Student A: Someone here he doesn't know?

Student B: Yeah, 'cause he has to tell a lot of things about himself.

Student C: That's right!

Jasmine: A pen-pal, because, he says dear pen-pal.

Teacher: Great! Can you explain it, what a pen-pal is?

Student D: Yeah, you want a friend, in another culture.

Student C: Yeah, far away…

Jasmine: Right, make a friend by the pen, write a letter!

Teacher: That's right! (Applauding). You can ask for email address in your letter, then you can write email to each other.

In this discussion, students drew on their prior knowledge and quickly yelled out what they thought was the reader and the purpose. The reader would be someone who lived far away in the Chinese culture and wrote a letter to someone in the U. S., wanting to make a friend. In this interaction as demonstrated above, students and teacher co-constructed these target readers, the objective of pen-pal letter and means to achieve the

identified objective. The dialogic nature of this knowledge building is not just the visible dialogue among students and teacher, but the invisible interaction embedded among the voices coming from the following sources: the language of the sample text, students' understanding or perspectives of the sample text, students' past experiences with the concepts of letters and friend, what each of them could say in the sequence of the conversation which made sense to themselves and the purpose of the discussion, teacher's ideology of literacy, teacher's intention for the discussion, teacher's language used to achieve her expectation of the outcome from the discussion, and last but not least, teacher's past experiences with facilitating such discussion. The resources from many channels were all mingled and then sorted out with the local dynamic logics in the knowledge building. Thus, the dialogues were social, relational, contextual and resourceful. We were in the communal existence where we establish multi-dimension relationships of mutual interdependence in achieving literacy.

Once we established purposes of the sample letter and who the reader would possibly be, we proceeded to identify the organization/format of the sample letter with details including paragraphs, the beginning, the ending and the middle section of the letter genre. After the macro-level unpacking and generalizing, we came to the analyzing, one of the four dimensions. Analyzing can be approached from two levels: analyzing functionally and analyzing critically. We first of all analyzed the functionality of lexical expressions and semantic structures in the sample letter with related items including, for example, the author's biographic information, daily life, school life, interests, hobbies, and then the literary devices, such as, the date of the letter, the address at the beginning, the solute and the signature at the end, the conversational register of the language

including the questions for engagement of information exchanges for the letter genre. We also analyzed how the author used his reasoning, inferences, deducting, and establishing the causal as well as functional relationships in the writing. Discussion was also on the strategies and possibly the resources the author used to write the letter.

Critically analyzing was the next level that we came to. We analyzed the author's ideologies, perspectives, interests from the sample letter, such as, his appreciation of the American music and the American sports stars, the desires to visit many places in the U. S. and curiosity about the U.S. school life. Though the sample letter was in Chinese, we had to use English to discuss multitude themes as demonstrated in the sample letter for the obvious reason that students did not possess enough Chinese language to maneuver the discussion yet. After the analyzing, students were encouraged to imagine what they would do if they were to write a similar letter to a pen-pal. Students discussed what parts of the sample letter related to their lives, whether they shared the same ideology, perspectives and interests, and what the best part of the sample letter was and how they would want to describe their own world to the reader in the pen-pal letter that they were going to write.

Notably, all these interactions of naming and analyzing were part of our students' typical everyday literacy practices where the scaffolding was practiced at different levels with interaction between teacher and students in order to keep all students in the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). Learning was a process of guided participation in our literacy events; students developed their participatory knowledge and competences; and they became constructive members of our knowledge building. Scaffolding is to help one another in making connection between new situations and the

learners' prior experiences. Jasmine was situated in this learning community, amid all

the interactions with the community members. Jasmine's learning and growing in FL

literacy was inseparable from the interactions with the community members. A good

understanding of the interactive process in the preparation for the writings would help

better understand Jasmine's production of her texts.

Negotiating the Organization of the Fairy Tale Story

After we managed to read through the Chinese fairy tale story "Chang E" (The

Moon Lady), we conducted some analysis on the organization and language used in this

genre of the story.

Similar to negotiating the Letter Genre as discussed in the previous segment, we

ran into analyzing, one of the four dimentions by two levels: functionality and critical

reading (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). At the functional level, we analyzed the organization

of the story, and the lexical expressions, semantic structures within the organization. On

the critical level, we analyze the ideologies, perspectives, interests from the sample fairy

tale story "Chang E". Table 4 (p. 171) showed the results of the analysis and comparison

negotiated by all community members in class.

It was interesting to see that the analysis on the organization and the language

used in the fairy tale story was negotiated by wider participation from the students than

the participation for the pen-pal letter, although they may have experienced some

	Function Level	Function Level	Function Level	Critical Level
Genre	Organization/ Genre Devices	Lexical choices	Semantic Representation	Ideologies/ Perspectives
Pen-pal Letter	The opening:	Introductory: -My name is…	Indications: -Want to make	-Study English -Know

	Dear … The closing: -I look forward to hearing from you. -Wish you well or solute -Signature -Date	-I live in … -My family… -I am in … Describing: -School & classes -Leisure activities -Hobbies Ask questions: -What is your…? -Do you like…? -Can you recommend -May I …	friend, connect by writing -Want the reader to know me, -Want to know whether the reader share similar school life -Whether the reader share similar hobbies -Establishing the connection of both cultures	American stories -Like to know your story -Love American music -Love American sports stars -Happy to know that you study Chinese that we have more connection -Hope you write to me
Fairy Tale Story	-Once upon a time… -Many years ago … -Conclusion with messages - Commemorate -Celebrate … -Forever	Introductory: -Main characters, -Narration of story Descriptive: -Power, wicked, magic, medicine, overseas, moon, happy -Many verbs for actions	Descriptive: -Timeline is vague -Feelings, -Fate, -Accidental, -Unrealistic, -Fantasy,	-Conflicts between the two forces: good and evil -Evil, though strong, but is punished -Good, though week, but prevail

Table 4: The Comparison of the Letter Genre and the Fairy Tale Genre

difficulty in reading the story. One reason was that students were somewhat familiar

with the fairy tale genre, since many of them grew up reading many stories of this genre,

as they mentioned in the brainstorming session earlier. Thus, they had some sense of

familiarity. The other reason was that story was more emotionally engaging as it was

interwoven with plots, events, and actions. The dialogic discussion involved voices not

only from the "Chang E", but also from students' past experiences with variety of fairy tale stories and the imagination of their fantasy world. This contribution from different resources is referred to as intertextuality, in which discourse brings other voices /texts into a text and therefore relates to other people's texts, voices, or discourses (Bakhtin, 1982). As many other students in class, Jasmine took an active part in the discussion and brought her voices into the co-construction of the knowledge in the interaction. And later she also brought others' voices as intertextuality into the text of her fairy tale story. I will have more discussion on this later.

Gee points out that "learning is a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching or through certain life-experiences that trigger conscious reflection" (2012, p.167). Bakhtin (1982) believes that learning is seen as the process of multiple voices coming into contact, both within and across speaker-produced utterances. While I provided guidance directing the analysis discussion and provided necessary scaffolding with my ideologies and past experience, students brought their own reflections on their past experiences with fairy tale stories, and the knowledge of the identical conflict patterns into the discussion. Thus, the construction of the knowledge was contributed by all the community members. They drew their resources of knowledge or voices from their own inspirations and past experiences and negotiated their knowledge with others' in the interaction, where all voices came in contact.

Echoing Kristeva (1990), Allen (2000) believes that authors do not create their texts from their own original minds, but rather compile them from pre-existent texts, so that, a text is a 'permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text', and in this text several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another

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(p. 35). The analysis and the comparison on the organization and the languages in the sample story was intended not only to understand the story, but more importantly to prepare students for their own writing of their own stories. If in Kristeva's and Allen's sense, students could not create the texts from their original minds, it was inevitable that they needed to draw from other sources. All the preparation of reading and analyzing of the sample texts was to provide rich resources for students to take to intersect with their own voices as intertextuality neutralized into their own texts. I would argue, based on Kristeva's (1990) and Allen's (2000) perspectives, that the more resources students have access to, the more opportunities they will have to draw from these resources, and appropriate the voices or texts from others into their knowledge building in the literacy process.

Student and Teacher Co-construction of the Texts

Among the four dimensions of literacy proposed by Cope & Kalantzis, (2009) the most difficult one was the applying, which had two different practices: applying appropriately and applying creatively. Bakhtin (1981) argued that learning requires learners take active role in appropriating knowledge and constructing new meaning from it. The concept of "appropriation" assumes that learning and knowing entails taking something from others and make it ones' own. Bakhtin defines the "two basic modes for the appropriation and transmission – simultaneously – of another's words: reciting by heart, and telling in one's own words" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 341). After laying the ground work of permeating the class environment with plenty of resources, I intended to have students appropriate the part they recited by heart, combining with their own voices and tell that in their own words when creating their own texts. They were asked to write two

texts at different times, one was the pen-pal letter, and the other was the fairy tale story. In foreign language learning, writing was one step for students to apprentice into the discourse community (Gee, 2012).

Despite the fact that students and teacher negotiated and built some knowledge theoretically when we studied the sample letter together with all students in class (see Table 4, p. 162), in reality there were still gaps between the theories and the writing practices. When it was time to start writing, many students still ask the same question: How do I start? What do you want me to write about? This was within my anticipation. As we all know, writing is a difficult process for many people in their L1, and it is more difficult in a foreign language, even for the advanced learners. My own writing experience can attest this. We can easily imagine how difficult it is to compose in Chinese while the common conception of Chinese learning is more difficult than alphabetical language learning is. This is the very reason that most of the learners of Chinese have never had writing experience until they are at high inter-mediate level or advanced level. Our exploration in beginner writing in Chinese was indeed an adventure, because Chinese class had done this before. For this study, I would by no means want to claim that my students possessed magic and were able to create miracles by only two simple experiences of composing. The facts were that the writing processes were very messy and we had more struggles than success in the journey. The significance of this study was not only that I wanted to see the successful story, such as how much the students learned from this process, and what part of learning occurred in what situations or contexts, but also that I wanted to showcase students' experience of "try and error" in

the real world at their early learning stage, leading the way for other Chinese language educators to engage their students in composing at early learning stage.

The presentation of data and the analysis of student and teacher co-constructing text below is not to show the great amount of language Jasmine had successfully mastered, nor her current writing experience elevated her to be an experienced writer, but rather it is to showcase our experience of working together, using our different strategies and scaffolding to overcome the obstacles and make our writing possible at the early learning stage deemed as impossible. In fact, since we had only done one writing of each genre, it was very difficult to measure how much students learned and mastered without the opportunity to apply those knowledge in writing practice again. Only in similar genre writing again, we could see how much Jasmine could apply with what she had learned from this writing experience. Unfortunately Jasmine graduated three weeks after we finished the second writing assignment. However, I am confident that this real world experience would provide some knowledge of writing and the language mechanics for future references and resources.

In the following sections, I will present the data of what was happening in the classroom around our writing activities in which Jasmine developed her text production. The analysis of the data will provide some moments when Jasmine and her peers built their linguistic knowledge and created their texts for communication through the classroom interactions, as well as the scaffolding they needed from the teacher for the completion of their texts. The analysis will center on the selecting of the content for the drafts, the composing process, the genre moves of the drafts and the final version of the

texts. The focus of the analysis will be on four levels: the lexico-grammatical level, the communicative function level, the cultural models and the language user identities.

Co-construction of the Pen-pal Letter

As I mentioned earlier, though we worked together on the sample letter and built some theoretical knowledge on how to write a pen-pal letter, Jasmine and other students still had trouble to imagine what exactly they could write for the assignment. Some of them still needed step by step scaffolding. Jasmine's interview would shed light on the state of students' mind regarding the writing task (March 8, 2016):

195. T: After we did all the reading, analyzing, sort of picking up all the things in the
    letter, did you feel confident when you started, you know how to write?

196. J: You mean, was I confident when I started the letter?

197. T: Um huh.

198. J: Not really.

199. T: You still not sure?

200. J: I wasn't comfortable.

Despite the fact that Jasmine did not feel comfortable writing the letter without adequate writing experience in the TL, later Jasmine managed to appropriate some language we had gone through, such as the lexical expressions in describing her own world and the wider world surrounding her. Though these linguistic expressions were the basic of Chinese language, it was still very difficult for the beginner to assemble in a meaningful, culturally appropriate text. The underscore of her learning stage was that she had only encountered texts which had the very basic lexicons and syntax, limited by the

time allowed for learning the target language in this particular setting. Thus, the scaffolding was very important in this context.

Selecting the Content of the Pen-pal Letter

As I was aware that I was trying to make the composing look like what my students could do, but actually they could not do without my help, I had anticipation of resistance from some of the students. As soon as I announced that we would start the writing of the pen-pal letter, one student asked me, "Can we skip the writing part?" Another said, "We have already learned how to write a letter, do we really have to write it?" Still another commented, "I don't know how to write it in Chinese, it's going to take a long time to write this." Another yelled, "Can I just write a couple sentences? I can't write that long!" (Observation notes, Feb. 24, 2016). I told them that writing a letter was our assignment for the two weeks, and they had no other choice, but to get started. I assured them that I was there to help if they encounter difficulties. Then they started to think about what could be included in the letter. After some discussion among students, I over- heard that some of them were still not sure.

Since I had given instructions before we started writing, I did not want to repeat the requirement. Instead of explaining what the students needed to write in their pen-pal letters, I had to ask questions to let them locate what would be the first steps for their writing (Video-Recording Feb. 24, 2016):

Teacher: Are you clear what you are going to write for the letter? (Some said yes, some said no) First think about how you're going to start.

Student A: How? Can you tell me?

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Teacher: If you're writing to someone who doesn't know you, what do you want that

person to know you first?

 Student A: Ah, ok, I need to tell my name first. Do I need to write "你好" (Hello) before

that?

Teacher: It's up to you. Then, what do you write next?

Student B: My age, right?

Student C: Do I need tell about my family?

Teacher: If you like. It's your choice. Is there any introduction of family in the sample

letter?

Student C: Yeah, there is.

Teacher: Did we practice how to describe family members before?

Several students: Yeah, we did. We wrote … (overlapping)

Teacher: If you forget some of the words you used before, you can find them from this

sample letter (pointing to the smartboard) or you can look for them in your

notebooks. I'll walk around [in the classroom], you can ask me too.

From this conversation in class, there were several resources for students to draw

from, such as the sample letter as template, their notebooks and my scaffolding. I also

taught them how to use our English-Chinese dictionaries, but they tended to use their cell

phone for quicker access. However, they could only look for lexical items and some

phrases, but not the whole sentences, especially the complex sentences. Even the lexical

items they found from online needed my approval, because they could be the words that

did not fit for our writing. For example, if I typed in "mother" in English, Google

Translate offered "母亲", instead of "妈妈". While 妈妈 was the one we needed at this

level of writing, 母亲 was too formal for our simple writing. Another example of the

inaccuracy was that if we typed in the English name "Mark", the Google Translate would

provide "标记" (marking, a sign). In each of the several years before this writing project,

I had several students in each class who used Google Translate to do their assignments,

because they did not concentrate on writing earlier in the time given, and at the end of the

two weeks they thought Google Translate would be a quick way to get their grades.

While Jasmine and some students were able to follow the instruction on possible

things they could write about with the instruction sheet, others understood better when I

discussed with them one thing at a time by showing examples. I needed to walk around

the classroom to talk to individual student in case anyone had questions. Meanwhile the

video captured another conversation among some students, discussing how to use the

address term at the beginning, as the letter genre required (Feb. 24, 2016):

Student D: (Sitting next to Jasmine and asking Jasmine) How do you start? Did you use

the name on the sample letter? (Referring to the name signed on the sample

letter)

Jasmine: I'm not sure. I think you…

Student E: (Sitting behind Student D joining in) Nop, you can't use that. It's a made-up

name.

Jasmine: We can use the same one from the sample letter, I believe … (pointing to the

address term on the sample letter)

Student E: Let's ask 耿老师(Geng Laoshi) (Ms. Geng—Chinese cultural way of

addressing teachers in China). Geng Laoshi (Calling me, waving her hand to

get my attention).

Teacher: (Walking toward them from another group of students) Yeah, any questions?

Student E: Can we use the same beginning in the sample letter?

Teacher: Yeah, you can use the same thing. Look, using "亲爱的笔友" (Dear Pen-pal),

here, (pointing to the sample letter) the reader can be anyone, it is open.

Right? We can't use any name here, 'cause we don't know who's going to

read it yet.

Jasmine: (Smile) Yes! See, I told you…

These were the typical conversations when students were not sure what to do for composing the drafts. Jasmine was regarded as the resource person by her peers. From my observations, when Jasmine's peers needed lexical items, they were readily asking Jasmine for help, because Jasmine kept good notes and she followed teacher closely in class. However, from the above conversation, Jasmine's peers did not accept Jasmine's opinion of what to use for the address terms, because the discussion was on how to write the address term that would be culturally appropriate for the proper beginning of a Chinese letter, rather than just a lexical item. Teacher's expertise of cultural understanding was more reliable. In such situations and in the situation of not writing the date at the beginning of a Chinese letter, but rather at the end of a letter, I had the opportunity to explain explicitly the cultural way of writing in this particular genre. This was the process that students and teacher worked together to build their drafts and eventually accomplish the writing task on hand.

After drafting about family, some students were wondering whether they needed to write about their school. I assured my students that school was a big part of their life and the readers in China would be very curious about their life in school in the U. S.,

because the readers were in high school too. By this time Jasmine already wrote several

sentences about her school life, but it was all about vocational school and the trade she

was learning. For example, in line 8, 9 and 10 of her draft (see p. 176), she wrote: 我的

学校是职业学校 (My school is a vocational technical school.), 我想当一个合格的护士

(I want to be a qualified nurse,), 因为我学护士专业 (because I study nursing major).

Then she consulted me on whether she needed to write about her classes in school. I was

very surprised by her question. School to me was the place to learn academic subjects

and academic classes were the most important part of any schools. However, Jasmine

was not sure she needed to include her academic classes in the account of her school life!

My answer to Jasmine's question was affirmative and advised her to write about the

classes and put this part ahead of shops in the final version. She was hesitant to do so and

asked me why. As part of my observation notes that day I wrote (Feb. 25, 2016):

> When we were discussing about what to be included in the school life,
> Jasmine did not willingly to take my advice of writing the academic classes
> ahead of her trade for her shop. She believed that her trade was more important
> than her academic subjects, because she came to this school to learn trade.
> However, I assumed academic subjects were more important and the shop was
> on the side, perhaps it was because I am an academic teacher. Probably we had
> an ideological clash on the priority of schooling, without knowing it at the time
> from my part.

After my persuasion, Jasmine hesitantly promised she would reverse the order in

the final draft. Later in her interview on March 8, 2016, she described how much she

liked her shop and wanted to work hard for her CNA. Even when we talked about

academic subjects, she elaborated how much she liked Chemistry which would help her

with learning nursing skills. Only then did I realize that I was unknowingly imposing my

ideology over hers based on my own assumption and value of schooling. The lesson for me was that I needed to be more sensitive to students' cultural or sub-cultural values and make inquiries before giving particular instruction on those contents relating to personal preferences, or possible cultural practices. Yet, when we encountered Chinese cultural practice on genre-writing, I had to be very explicit in explanation and very persistent in complying with the grammatical rules. My intention was to let students write freely their personal ideologies or cultural values, without compromising the requirements of Chinese language.

For those students who still needed help on what to write next after the theme of school, I advised them to write about personal hobbies, interests and talents, or simply anything they wanted other people to know about them. I was fully aware that this part was more challenging for them and they would need more scaffolding because demand for expressing varieties of personal hobbies, interests and talents was beyond their Chinese language repertoires. The syntax to articulate these varieties would be more complex, requiring more individualized scaffolding.

As the above data and the analysis indicated, students at their early learning stage needed step by step guidance to accomplish the task of genre-writing, even at the level of selecting the content of the text. Jasmine, along with some other students who were willing to invest their effort in the learning, usually paid close attention to what was going on in the class, therefore they normally needed less such scaffolding at this basic level. Like Jasmine, they were likely identified by their peers as "smart" and more knowledgeable peers or resourceful peers. I encouraged them to maintain this status by investing more in Chinese language learning. Jasmine's moves on developing her

content of different themes included in the letter were ahead of most of the other students. This indicated that she had a better mastery of the TL and therefore she was regarded as a more capable learner. In her interview Jasmine confirmed this identity (March 11, 2016):

450. Q: What does it mean to you, learning Chinese?

451. J: Mmm, I feel good about myself, I can actually learn another language, a difficult
        language.

452. Q: What strategies do you use to write the pen-pal letter?

453. J: Mmm, I studied the sample letter in class, took good notes. Yeah, I followed the
        sample letter a lot, and asked a lot of questions too.

454. Q: Do the girls sitting around you do the same thing?

455. J: Mmm, some do, but others don't, so they always ask me for help, I don't mind
        that. And this made me want to learn more, so I can help them.

From Jasmine's class identity as the resourceful person among peers, to her mind set described in the interview, Jasmine embraced the identity as a more capable learner and willing to invest more in learning to maintain that status. However, her confidence and willingness to learn did not mean her writing journey was smooth and effortless. By reading her first draft, I could remember the following like movie trailers: episode of negotiations, learning from each other for the meaning making between Jasmine and the teacher, the moment of searching for appropriate lexical expressions together for some ideas, the instances of discussion on metacognitive level of Chinese cultural perspective embedded in the language, the situational demands for the co-construction of the syntactical structures to convey her textual intension, and the cheers of her success on some creations that went beyond teacher's expectation and the frustrations she

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experienced trying to navigate the journey of composing a warm, engaging, complete and well-written pen-pal letter. I will devote the following segment to demonstrate and discuss some of the real cases to illustrate Jasmine's success and struggle.

Composing the Draft

By examining Jasmine's first draft, we could see the striking contrast between the first half and the second half of her writing. In the first half of the draft text, Jasmine could produce the text more independently, the lexical choices were readily available from her own Chinese repertoire and the syntactical structures were mostly complying with Chinese language linguistic requirements. This meant that the mastery of what Jasmine had learned mostly so far on the target language made the completion of the text production on the first part relatively easier for her. However, when she tried to build the second half of the draft, it was out of her comfort zone. In the interview of March 8, 2016 (p. 170), Jasmine confirmed that the first part was smoother for her than the second half. From the draft in Figure 5 (next page), we could see that there were many short lines under some of the lexical expressions. Those lines in between words and phrases were the places that needed help from other resources or teacher's cooperation for the lexical expressions. The English words on top of the lines were the reminders of the meaning expressions for the spots. Later Jasmine found those lexical items from the sample letter, such as "最喜欢" (favorite) in line 17, "能" (can) and "表演" (perform) in line 19, "应该" (should) in line 21, and placed these lexica on the short lines. And the others on the short lines were the ones from teacher or other sources. With some guidance, Jasmine was able to appropriate these lexica into the appropriate places to

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comply with the grammatical rules of Chinese language. As a result the first half of the draft sailed relatively smoothly.

The second half was evidently beyond Jasmine's comfort zone, therefore relying on her first language more for the syntactical structures, even for the syntactical patterns she was supposed to know. For example, in line 24 of the draft, Jasmine could simply write "我也喜欢读书" (I also like reading or I also like to read). We definitely learned this expression before the writing started. But Jasmine fell into the English language way of thinking and tried to say "I love to read". We could see the word "love" hanging above the line in the draft, waiting for the Chinese version for it. Therefore the conclusion would be that Jasmine looked for the expression of "love" and "to" in forming the syntactical structure by English language habits. Although we learned to use the Chinese syntactical structure for this expression, apparently Jasmine did not fully understand it in metacognitive level of Chinese cultural way, thus did not make the right connection. When the writing task was overwhelming to her, she went back to the way she was more comfortable with. As her teacher, I took the case as an opportunity to teach her at the metacognitive level the cultural way of Chinese discourse practice, comparing the usages of the word "love" and the word "like" in both language.

It seemed to me that once Jasmine lost control of the Chinese language and fell back into English language mode, it was difficult for her to get back. For example, in

① 亲爱的笔友：

　② 你好。③ 我叫 ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓。④ 我的家
住在美国的 ▓▓▓。⑤ 我 貝 妈妈, 哥哥, 弟弟, 和
奶奶。⑥ 一起 我们 买东 和看电影。
I'm a honar student
⑦ 我上十二年级。⑧ 我的学校是职业
学校。⑨ 我想当一个合格的护士。)

⑩ 以为 我学护士专业。⑪ 我也有心理学
课, 数学课, 和英文课。⑫ 学校
important
是很重要的, 给我。是学校
important
重要 给对你们！吗 ？

⑭ 除了学校, 我喜欢听音乐。
⑮ 我经常听给 Exo。⑯ 他们是
favorite
我的偶像。⑰ 我是最喜欢 歌曲 _of_
can
⑱ 他们的是 Oicodoo。⑲ 我希望有一天
perform
我能跟一起他们表演 。
_If_
⑳ 你知道 Exo ? 如果不是 你不知道,
㉑

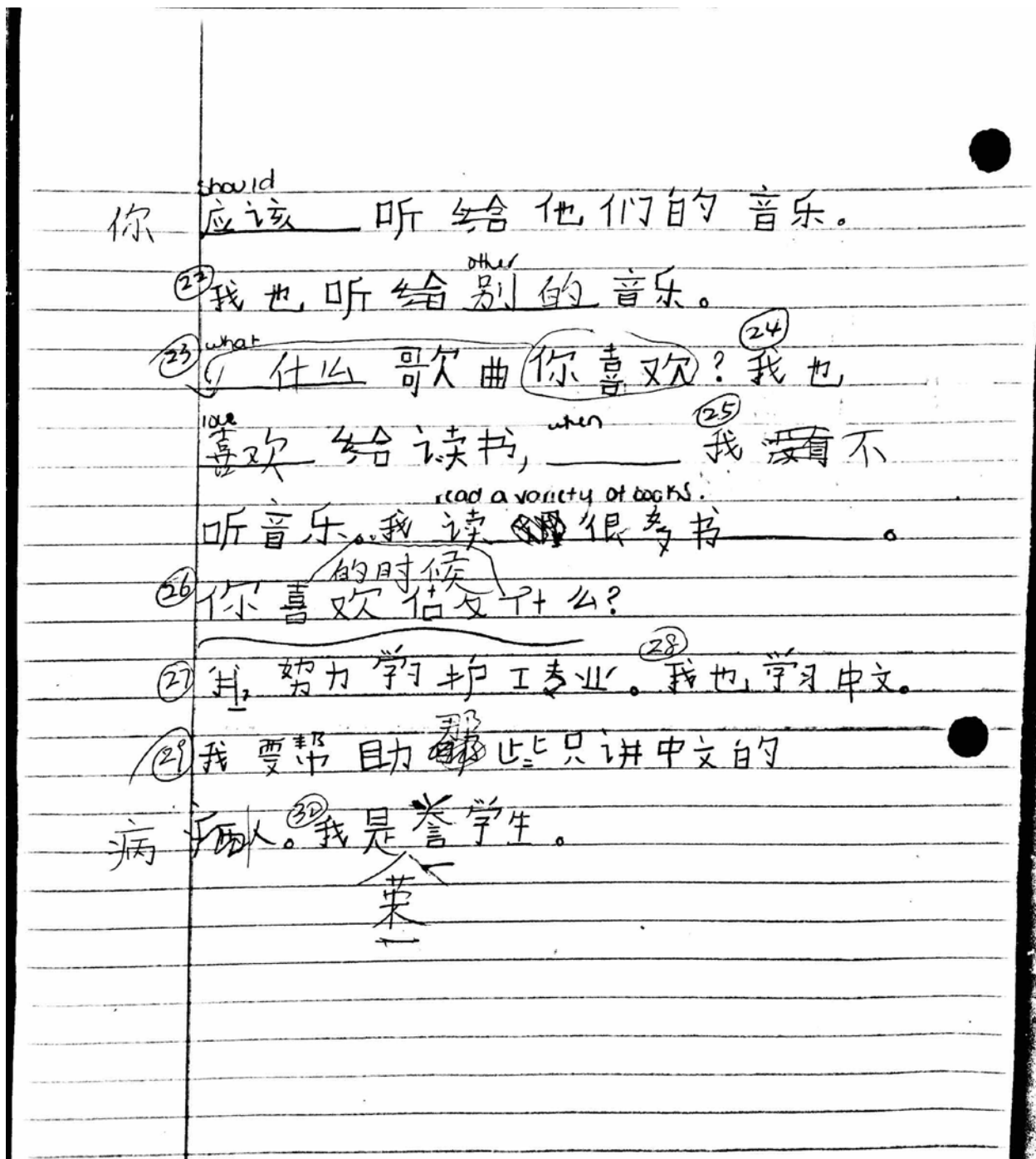**Figure 5: Jasmine's Draft of Pen-pal Letter**

line 23 she wrote _____ 歌曲你喜欢? (<u>What</u> song do you like?) She later found the

word "什么" (what) from her notebook for that empty spot, but the syntactical structure

was totally based on English grammatical rules. In our regular lesson, we had learned "你喜欢什么动物? (What animal do you like?), and Jasmine could have transferred the same syntax of the question to the new situation. However, she did not make the connection, and fell back to the English language mode. Naturally I took the occasion to teach her the meta-linguistic knowledge of how to form the question of soliciting information in Chinese, such as, in the questions in Chinese of "what", "when", "where" "how", etc. the question words would never be used to start such questions as English would. To my comfort, when she created a similar question again in line 26, 你喜欢做什么? (What do you like to do?), she seemed consciously to have applied the knowledge and composed a perfect question! This case in point learning occurred not only at the syntactic level, but also happened at the lexical and textual level in the practice of writing. Since students experienced the combination of acquisition process by "trial and error" in a holistic way and of the explicit "break down" teaching (Gee, 2012) and scaffolding, their knowledge were stretched in their Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1981) in the first-hand experience, learning by doing.

Through the messy and frustrating process of co-construction of draft text, it was obvious that Jasmine gained great deal of knowledge from the actual use of the target languages in describing her own world. She wanted to invest in building the text because she took ownership of the product. This is where she could not only construct her different identities, but also gave voices to her own ideologies in her own social languages. As the examples mentioned earlier in this section indicated, because many things she learned from our regular class were from the texts written about other people, or artificial stories from the textbooks, she had trouble to apply in real life situation ----

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she was unable to make the connection to her own life. Jasmine's case was a perfect illustration of the need to connect students' learning to their life and the community they were in. Perhaps this was why connection was designated as one of the five standards of foreign language teaching and learning set forth by ACTFL (American Council of Teaching Foreign Language).

Genre Moves for Costructing the Pen-pal Text

Genre is defined by Swales (1990) as particular form of discourse with shared "structure, style, content and intended audience," which are used by a specific discourse community to achieve certain communicative purposes through "socio-rhetorical" activities of writing (p. 8). Genre is a product contributed by many elements: audience, purpose, organization, and presentation, with audience as the most important part. According to Bhatia (1993), practicing genre is almost like playing a game with its rules and conventions. In the area of genre analysis, Swales (1990) defines the genre move as a functional unit in a text used for some identifiable purpose, and it is often used to identify the textual regularities in certain genres of writing, as well as to describe the functions each particular portion has to the overall communication task.

According to Connor and Mauranen (1999), the identification of moves in a text involves two aspects: the rhetorical purpose of the text and the division of the text into meaningful units based on linguistic markers, such as marked themes, tense, and modality changes and the introduction of new lexical devices. Other textual markers for move division could include section boundaries, paragraph divisions and subheadings. Upton and Cohen (2008) referred genre move as discourse unit, which is a stretch of discourse of a particular type, serving a particular communicative function. Discourse

unit can be segmented by functional and semantic themes contributing to the overall rhetorical purposes of the text. The analysis of discourse unit can be used as a tool of discourse analysis. It is worth noting that most of the researchers use genre move analysis to analyze the corpus of texts across many texts in the same genre. However, I used the genre move analysis for single text analysis.

In order to do textual analysis of Jasmine's draft for the cases and moments that student and teacher co-construct the text, the discourse unit or the move analysis was employed to examine the text at four different layers, namely, the lexical and grammatical level, the communicative function level, the cultural ways of the genre writing and the language user's identities. For this study, the moves were segmented by their semantic themes in the pen-pal letter, and under each theme there were the steps for the detailed analysis. In Jasmine draft, five moves were identified, namely, *Greeting and self-identification, Introduction of family background, Introduction of school, Leisure activities,* and *Foreign language learning*.

Move 1, **Greeting and self-identification**:

1. 亲爱的笔友： (Dear pen-pal:)

2. 你好。 (Hello.)

3. 我叫 Jasmine. (My name is Jasmine. [Not the real name])

Step 1.1, Addressing the reader (line 1):

Jasmine had ideas of what address term she could use to address the reader she did not know, based on the fact that she paid close attention to the teaching and learning from the sample letter. And later on her ideas were confirmed by students and teacher

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discussion (see in Selecting the Content). The writing practice provided an opportunity for her to clarify the genre device of letter writing, with the proper Chinese language in the cultural way.

Step 1.2, Greeting and self-introduction (line 2 and 3):

Jasmine and other students used this greeting "你好" very often in the everyday social interactions, but they were not sure whether it was culturally appropriate to put it at the beginning of a letter. The explanation to Jasmine and other students were that it was a proper way culturally to initiate a conversation with strangers or someone they were not familiar with, even in a letter. The self-introduction of name served a clear purpose of the pen-pal letter to get acquainted with the reader.

Move 2, Introduction of family background:

4. 我的家住在美国的大地市。(My family lives in Big Land City, the United States.)

5. 我有妈妈, 哥哥, 弟弟, 和奶奶。(I have mother, older brother, younger brother and grandmother.)

6. 一起 我们买东 (西) 和看电影。 (We go shopping and watch movie together.)

Step 2.1, Home location and family members (line 4 and 5):

In our regular lessons, we did not learn many verbs yet. Jasmine was able to appropriate the "住在" (live in) from the sample letter into her own draft. But she moved to write the name of the town, she had to ask how to write the name in Chinese. She first asked one peer sitting behind her, and the student flipped her notebook without finding it.

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So Jasmine had to turn to me for help. Finally her expression of where she lived was completed. She put in her family members as she knew how to express this very well. Functionally in the text, the family background served as part of personal identity, intending to get acquainted with the reader.

Step 2.2, Family activities (line 6):

It was noted that Jasmine had trouble in formulating correct Chinese syntactical structures using adverbs, so she needed scaffolding from teacher for the linguistic accuracy. On line 6, the adverb "一起" (together) was not supposed to be at the beginning or at the end of a sentence in Chinese. Jasmine used the adverb as English would do, putting it at the beginning of the sentence. Since the same adverb appeared in the sample letter, it was well explained where it should be, but she did not make the connection when she was creating the similar syntactic structure. It was an opportunity for me to teach again in the real life situation.

In our regular lessons, we learned the phrase "买东西" (go shopping), but Jasmine missed the second part "西" of the phrase "go shopping". After she was alerted of the incomplete phrase, she added the "西" into "买东西" (go shopping). It was also worth noting that Jasmine was able to appropriate the lexicons and syntax learned from our regular lessons into the draft, but she needed scaffolding to coordinate them accurately by Chinese language rules.

Move 3, Introduction of school:

7. 我上十二年级。(I am in the 12 grade.)

8. 我的学校是职业学校。 (My school is a vocational technical school.)

9. 我想当一个合格的护士。 (I want to be a qualified nurse.) [In the draft, she missed bottom　　　part of the word "want".]

10. 因为我学护士专业。 (Because I study nursing major.)

11. 我也有心理学课, 数学课, 和英文课。(I also have psychology class, math class and English class)

12. 学校是很重要的 (给) 我。(School is very important to me.)

13. (是) 学校重要 (给) 你们 (吗)？ (Is school important to you?)

Step 3.1, Introduction of grade level and school as vocational school (line 7, 8, 9 & 10)**:**

　　　　As part of her personal language user identity in the textual interaction, Jasmine introduced her grade level in school, because senior as student identity in a school meant that she successfully survived the three hard working years and now she was a senior and very close to graduation. This was a milestone for many of our students, because they were the first in their family for many generations to get high school diploma. Apparently Jasmine was such a proud student to see her graduation approaching, although she was not first to get high school diploma in her family.

　　　　Next Jasmine started to communicate about her school as vocational school. She and other students had to negotiate about the expression "vocational school" in Chinese. The video showed the interaction among students and the teacher, working together toward their draft (Feb. 25, 2016):

Student C: (sitting at the back of the room bellowing out) How do you write "vocational

school" in Chinese?

Student D: You dumb …, it's on the board!

Student C: Which one?

Student D: Look! The one near the bottom, a line under it.

Jasmine: (Asking me on this) Do I need to use "technical" here (with vocational)?

Teacher: No, 职业学校 (vocational school) is good enough for our school for now.

Jasmine: Thank you!

This excerpt demonstrated that students discussed and clarified the part they were not sure among peers first. They built knowledge together through interactions around writing task. When they could not come to consensus, they then asked teacher for help. Jasmine wanted to make sure she was accurate with the name of our school that had the word "technical" after "vocational" but before "school" in its full title name in English. I did not incline to allow Jasmine and other students to include the word "technical" in the school title, for the purpose of not using too many new lexicons in general. It did not mean to have a tight control on everything they write, but write in relatively simple way at this stage in order to recycle limited lexicons for mastery, and to also avoid too much frustration for the students.

It is worth noting that the priority of the importance of school was very ideological in Jasmine's communication. She started introducing her shop and her trade (line 8, 9 and 10) before writing about her academic classes. To Jasmine learning the trade was the most important part of her schooling in this school. Bakhtin's (1982) concept of dialogism rejects the notion that writing can express an individual self, but believes what is expressed in discourse is culture, values and/or beliefs held by a

particular culture. The dialogic nature of composition means that an individual writer cannot work alone, but be situated in the interaction with the world, with its readers and its subjects. To Jasmine learning the trade was the most important part of her schooling in this school, which was true to most of the students in this school, hence a local culture phenomenon as Bakhtin referred to above. Comparing with the short description of her many academic classes, her extensive description of the vocational nature of her schooling using her social language served as a statement of her value and beliefe in her culture and her school context. It was also a statement of her discoursal social identity construction. In her interview, she confirmed her idea of preferring her shop to her academic classes (March 8, 2016):

39. T: You have shop and class, which do you like the best? Or what class do you like
    the best?

40 J: I like the shop the best, because that's where I learn the stuff, actually I want to
    learn, and enjoy learning. I thought the human body is so interesting.

41. T: What about the classes?

42. J: Oh, my …, what do you call it? Academic classes?

43. T: Yeah.

44. J: My academic classes? Yeah, I like them. I like chemistry, doing labs,
    experimenting with chemicals and stuff. I like that.

45. T: That's related to medical field, right?

46. J: Um huh.

47. T: Do you want to be a nurse or you want to be a doctor?

48. J: I want to be a nurse.

As the discussion in the section of Selecting the Content indicated, Jasmine reluctantly accepted my suggestion to place academic classes ahead of her statement about her shop in her writing, because that was contrary to her intention. Instead, she wanted to show that her shop was dearly important to her because becoming a nurse was her ultimate career goal. The above interview indicated that Jasmine believed the academic classes would only be in the supporting position, but the skills in trade would get her where she wanted to be. I asked her to change the order based on my own assumption of the importance of academics in schooling, and I certainly did not realize that the potential ideological and cultural conflict occurred at that moment. Jasmine did not insist on the way she intended because she regarded me as the authority of expert knowing Chinese language and culture, thinking it must have been the Chinese value or norm to do that way. This potential ideological conflict became apparent to me later, when I did the interview and I realized that it was my personal bias in believing that academic classes were more important than trade. I certainly wished I did not give that suggestion to change the orders, because the vocational nature of this school was an important point Jasmine wanted to communicate to the reader. It was part of her identity as a potential nurse in this social interaction.

Step 3.2, Academic portion of school (line 11, 12 and 13):

After Jasmine communicated about her Health Shop, she listed her academic classes but did not elaborate on any of her classes. Then she quickly rush to conclude this section that school was important to her (line 12). On the textual organization level, this move was a brilliant way to not only give a conclusion to what had been said earlier, but also get ready to make the transition to the next semantic theme. For the next move,

Jasmine performed even better with a question that she was trying to create in order to engage the counter-part reader of her pen-pal letter to connect the life experience of schooling (line 13). It was very comforting for me to see that Jasmine succeeded in her attempt to engage the reader with the letter genre.

On the communication level, Jasmine constructed her identity as a successful student, for she believed in education. This implied the contrast with many of her peers in her culture who did not regard education as important. Davies & Harré (1990) pointed out that social representations in discourse provide people with a variety of positions but these positions are further elaborated by one's relations with an 'other'. In her interview aforementioned, Jasmine explicitly made comparison with her peers on this topic.

However, linguistically the preposition "to" was misused in both the conclusion sentence and the question by English syntactic rule. In line 12, 学校是很重要的 (给) 我 (school is very important to me) was a Chinese expression based on English syntactic order. The "to" here should have been "对" and "对我" (to me) needed to be placed right after the subject "学校" (school) and before the verb phrase in the sentence. The mismatches were in two levels here: while one was that the "to" in English was not the equivalent of "给" in Chinese, but "对"; another was that it was in the wrong syntactic order.

The same misuse happened again in line 13, when Jasmine tried to ask an engaging question, "学校对你们重要吗？" (Is school important to you?). The "to you" should be "对你们" placed after the subject and before the verb. One more place in the question that was not proper Chinese was the missing of the question word "吗". In

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the draft we could see that Jasmine wrote this question in complete English syntactic

structure, for she did not remember to use the "吗" to form the question. Though we

learned in our regular lessons how to use question word "吗", but we did not practice

enough, thus she did not think of using it.

The above two instances of the improper use of the preposition "对" (to) in

Chinese were the proper moments for me to explicitly teach the correct usage of the

function of the preposition and the syntactic order of structure involved "对". It was also

the moment to re-teach the question word "吗" to form the correct question.

Move 4, Leisure activities (line 14 to 26)

14. 除了学校，我喜欢听音乐。 (Besides school, I like to listen to music.)

15. 我经常听 Exo。 (I often listen to Exo [Korean music group].)

16. 他们是我的偶像。 (They are my idols.)

17. 我最喜欢 [韩国] 歌曲 （of …   ） (I like [Korean] song the most.)

18. 他们是 Overdose。 (They are Overdose [the name of a Korean song].)

19. 我希望有一天我能跟他们一起表演。 (I hope someday I can sing with them.)

20. 你知道 Exo 吗？ (Do you know Exo ?)

21. 如果你不知道, 你应该听他们的音乐。 (If you don't know, you should listen to

their

    music.)

22. 我也听别的音乐。(I also listen to other kind of music.)

23. 你喜欢什么歌曲？ (What kind of song do you like?)

24. 我也喜欢读书（，）。 (I like to read books too.)

25. [when] 我不听音乐的时候我读很多书。(When I don't listen to music I read a lot of books.)

26. 你喜欢做什么？ (What do you like to do?)

Step 4.1, Listening to music as leisure activities (line 14 to 23):

Through the analysis of Jasmine's draft, it became obvious that the lexical problems did not present too many difficulties for legibility, but the syntactic mismatch would prevent readers from semantic comprehension. For example, in line 14, though the "了" was missing from "除了" (except), and "欢" was missing from "喜欢" (like), it was still readable and understandable. In fact, the sentence 除了学校，我喜欢听音乐。 (Besides school, I like to listen to music.) served as a perfect transition to the next semantic theme of liking music from the topic of school. This was a good example demonstrating that Jasmine successfully appropriated the similar phrase from the sample letter into her own draft text. She kept the syntactic structure from the one in sample letter, but adapted to her own semantic sense and made perfect transition from the previous semantic theme to the new theme, hence a successful appropriation.

It was worth noting that though Jasmine appropriated the following two sentences (line 15, 16) in the same fashion as line 14, the mistake of "to" insert after the word "listen" in the appropriation indicated that Jasmine did not just imitate some of the syntactic structure or semantic expression, but rather she went through her own metalinguistic thinking process, making judgement what to take for her reference and what can be modified. Since she was not sure about the word "listen" in Chinese, she

made a mistake by putting "to" after the "listen", which partially fell back to English

lexical expression of "listen to", for in Chinese the word "listen" did not have "to" after it.

Then in line 21, 如果你不知道， 你应该听 (给) 他们的音乐 (If you do not know, you

should listen to their music), the same happened again: the word "to" from English

was added to the verb "listen" in Chinese, and it was not acceptable in Chinese.

Jasmine not only needed help with lexicons or part of the lexical expressions, she

also needed assistance with her negations. In line 21 and line 25, Jasmine used "没有"

instead of "不" for negation, which was not acceptable in the situations. We learned

both ways of negation, but she mixed them up because she was not clear how to negate in

different situations.

As aforementioned, Jasmine had difficulties in forming questions. In line 13 and

20, she had struggles with the yes-no question of how to use "吗", and in line 23, Jasmine

encountered an information soliciting question "你喜欢什么歌曲？" (What song do

you like?), in which she did not make it work. Again she adopted the English way of

asking this question, placing the "what" at the beginning of the question, which was

not acceptable in Chinese. In fact, Jasmine left the place empty for the question word

"what". It was very clear that these were the moments to compare and distinguish at the

metacognitive level for the two types of questions, and explain at the meta-linguistic level

of the different formulation of the two different types of questions. In so doing, we

turned the messy struggle into an opportunity to clearly teach how to precisely use those

words in the sentences with a hope for her mastery of the language. Line 26, 你喜欢做

什么？ (What do you like to do?) proved that Jasmine succeeded in formulating the

question, using the knowledge just learned on the spot! It was also the moment to cheer and praise Jasmine for a job well done! By student and teacher working together, we went through the struggles and successes, a process of knowledge building and confidence building.

Step 4.2, Reading books as leisure activities (line 24 to 26):

We could see from the draft that the connection word "when" hanging over the short line between the two short sentences in line 24 and 25, in which Jasmine was trying to create a complex sentence by English grammatical rules. If we assume that there are differences between English and Chinese grammar, the most striking difference probably lies in the different ways of formulating the complex sentences. From the previous linguistic analysis of the draft, we could see the tendency that Jasmine to some degree lost control of her linguistic knowledge at both metacognitive and meta-linguistic levels in the second half of the draft, because she encountered unfamiliarity at both semantic and syntactic levels. As a result, although the text she formulated was comprehensible, she relied on her first language to formulate many of the syntactic structures. Nevertheless, Jasmine sailed through her writing journey and reached her destiny of completion of her text. Admittedly, the second part of the journey was rough.

On the communicative level, Jasmine blossomed in move 4, where she had freedom to write about anything she chose in a wider space. Regardless of the linguistic flaws, she described very well what she liked to do in her leisure time: listening to music and reading books. While she was constructing a cool teenager's identity for herself, she was leveling the solidarity with the possible reader in China who shared Asian cultures. To this end, though she mentioned that she listened to other music, she chose to discuss

the Korean music group Exo that was very popular among teenagers in Asia and rest of the world. Meanwhile, Jasmine also constructed her identity as an intellectual that fell in love with reading books. Being a music lover and an intellectual achieved a balance for her as a teenager, instead of being perceived as either a crazy teenager involved only with music or simply being a nerd. By the same token, judging from the fact that she asked engaging questions at the end of her discussion on both music and books, she appeared to have acquired the ability to engage the reader in the other culture with more discussion on the two subjects.

Move 5, Foreign language learning and more (line 27 to 30)

27. 我努力学习护士专业。 (I try very hard to study to be a nurse.)

28. 我也学习中文。 (I also study Chinese.)

29. 我要帮助那些只讲中文的病人。(I want to help those patients who can only speak Chinese.)

30. 我是荣誉学生。 (I am an honor student.)

Jasmine meant to end her draft when she finished writing line 26, but she wanted to write more when she realized that she finished earlier than most of her peers. Upon her request of what could be written for extra, I asked her a few questions, stimulating her ideas of what she might be interested in to add to the draft. Upon my suggestion, she thought of adding the line 27 to strengthen the part describing her working for her future dream to become a nurse. She then thought of adding Chinese learning to her academic part of the text and provided an objective for doing so in the following move. Just as she came to a close, she remembered to mention that she was an honor student. She added

that in as a final move in the draft. By the time I had a chance to ask her whether she was going to end the letter with such letter devices as the solute or good wishes, and the signature, she promised she knew how to do those and she was going to add that in the final version of the text.

Final Version of the Text

After she claimed her completion of the draft, Jasmine and I had an individual conference to look at the draft in details. We went through the draft move-by-move, discussing the lexical choices and the syntax for the intended communicative purposes and the overall organization of the text. Reviewing the draft in a holistic way offered additional opportunity to discuss the textual structure at the metacognitive and metalinguistic level, as well as the detailed development of the draft.

As we read and examined the draft together, Jasmine was asked to explain the missing morphemes of some lexical items, such as the "了" from "除了" (besides), and the "欢" from "喜欢" (like). We then used the metalinguistic terms to analyze the two different kinds of questions, comparing the differences of formulating yes-no question and the *wh*-question in Chinese and in English. Next we looked at the prepositions, adverbs and negations. Yet, the more complex Chinese syntactic structures different from English's were the learning points deserved much metacognitive level explanations, since these were the most difficult part of composing for Jasmine. For the organization of the text, Jasmine was guided to identify the themes and divided her draft into different paragraphs by themes. It meant to direct Jasmine's attention to her text from both the

macro and micro level of organization, in order for her to apply this knowledge in her future writings.

After the joint editing and division of the paragraphs, Jasmine started to write the final version of her text. She appropriated the last few added sentences into the relevant themes and finished with the proper ending with letter devices and the date at the end which were all culturally specific to the letter genre in Chinese. She learned these cultural ways of letter ending from the sample letter.

Co-construction of the Fairy Tale Story

About two month later, I took my apprentices on the writing journey again, composing fairy tale stories, another step forward for the student to become members of the TL community (Gee, 2012). The rationales behind choosing fairy tales as the second writing project are multifold: 1) a survey of student opinions showed that they liked to write fairy tale stories as their next writing; 2) since fairy tales are not true story, students have the possibility of making up their own fantasy stories. In fact, several students did that; 3) in this fairy tale story genre, stories can be short and complete, as the genre does not require authors to provide reasonably logical historical information for the development of the stories; 4) story lines can be very simple without too many unknown lexical expressions for elementary level students to write a story; 5) if students write stories from their own culture, the writing would relate more to their own life experience.

First, we studied the sample fairy tale story Chang E, following many of the same procedures as those used in studying the sample pen-pal letters. Then we mapped the possible lexical items for the fairy tale genre, including the ones from the sample story,

such as "once upon a time", "long, long ago" and "many, many years ago", and discussed how they could use those items in composing their stories. Further, we discussed the possibilities of the development of the plots and endings, taking the sample story as example and the possible variations. Students and I also exchanged ideas about the moral messages embedded in the fairy tale genre and how they could present their moral messages in their development of the stories.

Brainstorm and Selection of the Story

Just as the brainstorm technique used in pen-pal letter writing, it was deployed again in our brainstorm session for selection to write the fairy tale stories after we studied the sample fairy tale story Chang E. My instructions on story selection opened up all kinds of possibility for selection: they could write about stories they read befor or heard from family members or friends; or they could find stories from online, or they could simply create their own stories. While one student asked whether she was allowed to rewrite the story of Three Little Pigs and Big Bad Wolf, another inquired whether she could rewrite the story of Cinderella in a simpler version. It turned out later that the Chinese version of The Three Little Pigs was very well written with minimum scaffolding and editing because the main body of the story contained repetitive actions, repeating the lexical expressions and the syntax. Thus, the production of text was better controlled due to the author's knowledge of the target language. This would be my ideal story writing for the beginning level students because they could recycle the same lexical expressions and similar syntax many times so that they not only learned to use some of the Chinese language, but had the opportunity to practice the limited amount of language many times in similar fashions in order to retain the language. In contrast, the composing

of the Cinderella story needed much more scaffolding bwcause this story had many characters, wide range of actions and variety of descriptions, which went beyond the author's control of her knowledge of the target language.

One student asked if she could write a story of her own creation (her story was included in the Discussion Section). This story was one of the several best stories from the Chinese level II classes, based on the quality and the creativity. The other students' choices arranged within the spectrum of the above mentioned. During the selecting process, students were helping each other with ideas and how they could develop the story line. For instance, what plots to include and how long the story would be. When they were not sure, they would get me involved in making the decisions.

For Jasmine, she seemed to have already made up her mind, and her choice was the story of a legend from Jamaica that was passed to her from her grandmother. She was very excited when she received the green light from me to go forward with it. The title was "The White Witch of the Rose Hall." If Jasmine followed my instruction, she would have written a simpler story with simpler plots, within limited lexical choices and having repetitive employment of the syntax, just as the situation in the sample story. But Jasmine was so involved in telling her full story as she knew and wanted, her writing turned out to be involving bigger demand for lexical expressions and more complex grammatical maneuver that was beyond our coverage from our regular lessons thus far. Therefore she relied more on her first language syntax as she did in the second part of the pen-pal letter draft.

Composing the Draft

According to Bakhtin (1982), a contribution in discourse brings other voices/texts into a text and therefore relates to other people's texts, voices, or discourses. Jasmine's production of her story was dialogic with, and contributed by, many resources or voices, such as one from her grandmother, one how she understood it, one from her linguistic tool box, one from the interactions with peers and one from teacher's scaffolding. It was indeed a co-constructed product that gave Jasmine much confidence and satisfaction from learning Chinese successfully. I enjoyed reading the story and appreciated what I learned from the interaction of producing the text.

Based on the experience of writing the pen-pal letter, Jasmine found a new strategy during the time she was writing the second part of the letter. When she encountered the moves of text production that went beyond her metalinguistic awareness, she would resort to relying on her first language for help with the syntax, writing the story line in English as preparation. With the story line set, she started to look for the Chinese lexical expressions to present the story. The lexical expressions of Chinese were relatively easy to find based on the semantics it required, but syntactical structures were not easily transferrable if one did not have enough grammatical knowledge of the target language. For example, English has "which", "who" or "that" to lead a subordinate clause used to modify the previous noun, noun phrase or sentence. In contrast, Chinese does not have this syntactic structure, and needs to express similar semantics in different way. Here is the beginning of Jasmine's draft:

很久 很久以前，有一个种 (植园 missing), 叫 (")真正友谊 ("missing)。

(Long, long ago, there was a plantation whose name is "True Friendship".)

In the English version, there was the word "whose" to lead the clause, which was the modifier of "plantation". In Chinese, we had to separate the main sentence from the clause, into two sentences. Since Jasmine did not learn this kind of complex sentences in our regular lessons yet, she was beyond the familiarity or out of "zone of intelligibility and safety" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 185). Thus, Jasmine needed more scaffolding on syntactical maneuvering, in order to get to her ZPD. Contrary to the writing of the pen-pal letter, such cases were typical in her story writing since different levels of scaffolding became the key in the success of writing the story. Just on her over-relying on grammatical knowledge of her first language in Jasmine's text, here are my takeaways: 1) writing story outline in English enabled Jasmine to be overly ambitious in composing the story at her learning stage; 2) once Jasmine started conceiving the story line in English, it was difficult for her to switch the grammatical codes into Chinese, for she did not have enough Chinese metalinguistic awareness to be in control of the maneuvering; 3) the solution to this problem depends on the collaboration between student and teacher to work out the outline of the major developments or moves for the story in Chinese, even if it is only at the metacognitive level, to prevent trapping in the first language from the very beginning. Comparing with Jasmine's The White Witch of the Rose Hall, the story of the Three Little Pigs was much more manageable, because of the simple plots and language for children, and better fitted for my goal of beginner writing at this early stage.

Although it was difficult to develop the story in the unfamiliar territory to navigate the language, it was still worth celebrating the completed product of the text. Jasmine eagerly embraced investing efforts to complete writing her fairy tale story

because she wanted to tell her story that was full of her cultural symbols, although punctuated at times with some frustration. Early on, I asked Jasmine to write a shorter and easier version of the story to reduce her frustration, but she insisted to write the whole story as she wanted and marched on. Her story turned out to be at least three times as long as the sample story.

<u>Genre Moves for Developing the Story</u>

I will utilize this segment to present the genre move analysis in order to better understand the fairy tale story Jasmine composed. As mentioned earlier, Jasmine mapped out her story in English first, enabling her to be very ambitious to write a full story. Her story had detailed descriptions of many characters, different plots and actions, interwoven with events and cultural symbols. There was no doubt that managing story development in Chinese went beyond Jasmine's Chinese linguistic repertoire. She required much needed scaffolding along the way, mostly on the syntax. Jasmine also needed help with the lexical expressions to sketch out the story with variety of venues under her command; but the help with syntax could only come from me as the teacher.

The genre moves in Jasmine's fairy tale story were identified as five thematic moves: Introduction of the main Character in the story, Descriptions of the main character, Major events in the main character's marriage history, Current event in the story, and The ending of the story.

Move 1, Introduction of the main Character in the story (Paragraph 1 of the text):

1. 很久，很久以前，有一个种（植园 missing），叫（"）真正友谊（"）。

(Long, long ago, there was a plantation whose name is "True Friendship".)

2. 一八二 0 年种植园主 (约翰 帕默) 结婚了（。） (In 1820, the owner of the

plantation, [John Palmer], got married.)

3. (跟他结婚的) 这个女人名叫安妮，她成为我们今天的传说。(John Palmer

married a woman named Annie, who became the legend today.)

Step 1.1, Introduction of the location of the story (line 1):

It seemed that Jasmine might have been a good writer in English since she skillfully narrated her story. The introduction of the main character, Annie, did not start from the very beginning, following the straight time line in the story. Instead, Annie was introduced by the event of marriage at her first husband's plantation, which got reappeared later in the middle of the narrated timeline in the story. It was a very effective introduction to start the story!

While the genre device for the beginning was a proper one, several places in the text are worth mentioning, such as the morpheme "植园" was missing from the Chinese word "种植园" (plantation), though it was on the draft. Another missing part was the quotation mark on the name of the plantation, which she added together with me on her draft. These mishaps probably resulted from the fact that Jasmine was overwhelmed at the time of working on the final text. The story that began with a location provided a solid background for the main character and played an active role to attract readers' attention.

Step 1.2, Introduction of the main character (line 2 and 3):

Jasmine tried to work on the complex sentence with one past participial phrase and one subordinate clause. Chinese syntax and English syntax were not compatible in this situation. When Jasmine asked for help, I took this opportunity to explain the metalinguistic awareness of Chinese syntax: breaking complex sentences into three short sentences by the Chinese grammatical rules. In order to make three separate sentences, there was a need to supply some modifiers to separate the three sentences and make the necessary connection of the semantics. Jasmine and I worked together adding "这个女人" (this woman) at the beginning of the past participial, and adding "她" (she) at the beginning of the clause to make them independent sentences. However, I made the choice not to have her add the preposition phrase "跟他结婚的" (the one who married him) as modifier to modify "this woman", because explaining this preposition phrase as modifier involved too many linguistic terms that might overwhelm her even more at the time when she was just encountering the simple prepositions. I added in the text here for reader to better understand her story line, so that we could see how crafty Jasmine was able to take the plantation as a location and the male owner as husband to introduce the main character Annie.

As for the communicative function, Jasmine effectively presented the setting and demonstrated how the main character was situated in the setting with a few short precise and concise sentences. She painted a picture of a plantation with two characters in it, a setting which culturally grounded the story in the western world, although it was written in Chinese. Jasmine received plenty of praise and encouragement for this crafty beginning.

Move 2, Descriptions of the main character (paragraph 2):

4. 安妮帕默非常美丽。 (Annie Palmer was very beautiful.)

5. 她有丰富的声音，黑色的眼睛。 (She had a rich voice, black eyes.)

6. 她的皮肤是光滑的，她有小鼻子， 小口。(Her skin was smooth. She had small
   nose and mouth.)

7. 然而，她的个性和她的外表是很不同的。(However, her personality was completely
   different from her appearance.)

8. 安妮相信巫术和鬼魂。(Annie believed sorcery and spirit.)

9. 安妮住在海地的时候，开始相信巫术。(Annie came to believe sorcery, when she
   lived in Haiti.)

10. 她成为女祭司的信徒。(She became the favorite of a priestess.)

11. 女祭司教安妮所有关于鬼魂的说法。(This priestess taught Annie all about the
    spiritual world.)

12. 她带安妮去有黑色魔法的仪式，死亡会发生。(She took Annie to the forbidden
    ceremonies where there were spirits of black magic, death would be summoned.)

Step 2.1, Description of the main character's appearance (line 4 to 7):

Linguistically for this step, Jasmine did very well in the draft, except she was inquiring how to use "and" to connect the short sentences. This was the opportunity for me to teach the case in point that Chinese did not use "and" to connect sentences, except connecting two parallel nouns or noun phrases. This phenomenon was explained several times during our regular lessons, but it was still difficult for students to make the

connections between what they learned in other people's text and their own actual writing. This made it even more important to learn to compose, in order to situate the learning in interacting with the world.

From Jasmine's description of the appearance of Annie, it seemed that in Jamaican culture that rich voice, black eyes, small nose and small month were the preferred features of beauty. Therefore, readers could imagine that Annie would be a very attractive woman. The description foreshadowed the contrast between the outside and the inside of Annie. Then Jasmine found the conjunction word "然而" from her phone, and used it to introduce the contrast between the previous description of Annie's appearance and Annie's personality coming next.

Step 2.2, Annie's history of believing sorcery and spirit (line 8 to 12):

Again Jasmine encountered the complex sentence in line 9, in which she needed to write two separate sentences in Chinese, rather than in one complex sentence as in English. Although she worked on similar sentence in Move 1, the conjunction word was "who". When Jasmine came across "when" in line 9, she did not know how to manage it. I took the "who" in line 3, comparing with the "when" in line 9, and explained to her the similarity and difference. In English the two conjunctions were used in similar fashion, but in Chinese the word "who" could be substituted with a pronoun to make an independent sentence, while the "when" phrase needed to be placed at the front part of the sentence to serve as the time for the whole sentence.

On the communicative function, Jasmine informed her intended audience of the inner world of Annie and narrated the history of her perceived magic power from where she started to have contact with the black magic and who Annie's teacher was. The black

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magic reflected one aspect of Jamaican culture, and this narrative of the history foreshadowed the many events happened later.

Move 3, Major events in the main character's marriage history (paragraph 3)

13. 几年以后，女祭司死了。 (Years later, the priestess died.)

14. 安妮搬到牙买加 （，） 她跟约翰帕默结婚。(Annie immigrated to Jamaica where she married John Palmer.)

15. 安妮不久就厌倦了约翰，所以就毒死了他。(Annie soon became weary of John and poisoned him to death.)

16. 之后她先后跟其他两个人结婚。(She ended up marrying two other men.)

17. 但是都神秘地死了。(Both died mysteriously.)

18. 安妮否认她杀害了她的丈夫。(Annie denied that she killed her husbands.)

19. 他们死亡是因为凡人疾病。(And that they died of normal disease.)

20. 她的第三个丈夫死亡之后，安妮更加好奇了。(When her third husband died, Annie became more and more intrigued.)

21. 她开始折磨她的奴隶。(She tortured her slaves.)

22. 有一次安妮斩首一个仆人，把他的头放在篮子里。(In one case, Annie beheaded a servant and put his head in a basket.)

Step 3.1, The death of first husband (line 13 to 15):

Linguistically Jasmine had a few grammatical issues to understand in this step. Jasmine did not have chance to learn how to use the Chinese word "了" to indicate "something is/was done" and we worked together in line 13 to learn the usage. Then in

line 15, 17, 18 and 20, Jasmine had many more chances to practice "了". It would

involve too many linguistic terms to explain the various ways to use the word "了" in

Chinese, except letting her know that it would be used after verbs as a completion of the

action. When she narrated the actions of events by the order, she had to apply "了" in

most of the cases. In fact, in her later narratives, she had to apply it six more times. I

hoped that the frequent application of "了" in many similar situations would give her

first-hand experience of learning in the doing. Ideally she would gain the metalinguistic

awareness of the usage with repeated application.

Another issue dealt with the preposition phrase "跟 (with) sb. do something (with

"together" or without)" in line 14. Jasmine had encountered this kind of phrase in writing

the pen-pal letter, but she was still not sure how to form the phrase and needed help for it.

When explaining, I reminded her of her experience in pen-pal letter writing. She now

realized the similarity, and started forming the phrase by herself after making the

connection.

Gee points out that teaching leads to learning by explaining, analyzing and

breaking down material into its analytical "bits", and such teaching develops learner's

meta-knowledge. But literacy (mastery) is a product of acquisition, not learning.

Acquisition "requires exposure to models in natural, meaningful and functional settings"

(Gee, 2012, p. 174), and good teachers do both teaching and acquisition. In our messy

process of co-construction of texts, as illustrated above and in other parts of linguistic

analysis in this dissertation, I provided the writing practice in an almost-natural,

meaningful and functional setting, and I incorporated teaching as scaffolding in the action

of "trial and error" in order to gain some meta-linguistic knowledge while acquiring

mastery by the real cases in the real communication. I certainly realized that the mastery would not happen overnight by one or two trials, but I was confident that it would grow in an upward spiral by repeated "recycling" of the experience in order to make the connections and the ultimate mastery.

On the communicative function, Jasmine efficiently narrated several events using very limited language. After Jasmine narrated Annie's personal history, she pulled back the scene she painted as an introduction at the beginning and connected with the sad end of John, Annie's first husband. This arrangement of the timeline of events provided reader with space to use their imagination; it also showed Jasmine's sophistication in writing. In the interview (April 28, 2016) Jasmine confirmed her intention of designing the writing using the techniques. She said there were several versions of the legend, and the writing using the techniques. She said there were several versions of the legend, and she tried to make it short, but providing enough background knowledge so that readers could understand the story better.

Step 3.2, Death of second and third husband, and others (line 16 to 22):

Jasmine had chances to practice a few more times of the word "了" in lines 17, 18 and 20, describing many actions taking place in a short narration. Linguistically she knew how to manipulate the language to build up the momentum for the climax of her story by parading several events that led to several more people's death, and ultimately to Annie's own demise.

For the communication intention, her techniques of building the intensity quickly relied on the intertextuality from her first language experience of other similar stories she read in the past. In her interview (April 28, 2016), she recounted the reasons why she

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built the series of actions this way. The original story contained all the details of how Annie married each of her second and third husband and how she killed each of them by different methods, claiming afterwards that they died of natural causes. But Jasmine said she read other stories in which the evil actions happened quickly one after another so that when people read the events and would have expectation something major was going to happen. This was her way to say that she was building up story line for the climax. I concluded that her text definitely achieved that effect.

When arguing about intertextuality, Bazerman (2004) pointed out that in the relationships of mutual interdependence, while readers gain their enhanced agency by perceiving how texts create social reality of references and situate in relation to the resources of prior and ambient texts, writers achieve their enhanced agency by increased ability to place their texts in relation to other texts, draw on others' resources, represent others' texts from writers' perspectives, and assemble new social representations of textual texts within which writers act through their words. As a reader, Jasmine gained her agency by perceiving the social reality of references, placing her text drawing on others' resources and assembling the social representations through her own words and techniques.

Move 4, The current event in the story (paragraph 4):

23. 安妮是有情的女人。(Annie was a woman of passion.)

24. 她总是把监监工或会计带进家里，所以她可以同他们睡觉。(She would always take in overseers and bookkeepers, so she could sleep with them.)

25. 然而安妮更喜欢那个会计。(However Annie took a strong liking for one of her

bookkeepers.)

26. 可是不幸，他爱上了一个仆人。(Unfortunately, he fell in love with a servant.)

27. 安妮发现后，愤怒了。(When Annie discovered this, she became angry.)

28. 她给仆人念了咒语。(She played a spell on the servant.)

29. 女孩告诉了她的叔叔。(The girl told her uncle [who did voodoo].)

30. 可是他不能破解诅咒。(However, he wasn't strong enough to lift the curse.)

31. 这个仆人就死了。 (This servant died.)

32. 叔叔很愤怒，组织奴隶，制定计划，要杀死安妮。(Uncle became angry, rallied up a group of slaves who created a plan to kill Annie.)

33. 下一个晚上奴隶搜查安妮（的）屋子。(The next night these slaves raided Annie's house.)

34. 他们发现了安妮，他们把（她）勒死了。。。(They found Annie in her room and strangled her to death. …)

Step 4.1, The climax of the story (line 23 to 34):

In this section, Jasmine learned to write short sentences to present series of events and actions. When she constructed short sentences as she learned earlier, the lexical expressions became the major concern in narrating the story. When she came across the place in line 34, where she needed to use the unique "把" structure in Chinese, I explained the structure and provided a few examples, but unfortunately she did not have more chances to practice until the next round of writing practice.

In this section, Jasmine built up the climax so intensely that I had trouble dividing the steps by thematic units. It was sad to know so many people were killed by Annie, but she in the end did receive the just punishment, which served well in the genre of fairy tale story.

Move 5, The ending of the story (Paragraph 5):

35. 直到今天，牙买加当地人说 （，）晚上他们会看到，听到安妮附在扫帚上在天空行。

(Till this day, locals in Jamaica say that at night they see and hear Annie Palmer flying on a broomstick in the night sky.)

The last short paragraph of the text provided the traces of the existent old legend in our time, that passed from generation to generation. The legend reminds people that they need to keep it in mind that good prevails and evil gets punished, and it is forever true. This ending was a typical ending of the fairy tale genre, and Jasmine succeeded in making the appropriate ending!

<u>**Final Version of the Story**</u>

There was no doubt that Jasmine's draft of the story looked messier than the draft of the pen-pal letter, and it took her longer time to compose it. However, her time and effort that were put in the writing process indicated that she was willing to invest in building the text one step at a time while learning the language mechanics along the way. She even offered to take home to write the final version of the text. I only found some of the words or partial word and quotation marks missing from the final text when she

submitted it to me. It was a success in many ways. My goals were to take the students

on a journey of writing experience, in which they were the apprentices "in a master-

apprentice relationship in a Discourse wherein the teacher scaffolding the students'

growing ability to say, do, value, believe, and so forth, within that discourse, through

demonstrating her mastery and supporting theirs even when it barely exists (i.e., you

make it look like they can do what they really can't do)" (Gee, 2012, p. 175). Learning

and acquisition are all in the process of interaction with capable peers or experts.

Intertextuality of Creating Texts

According to Bakhtin (1982), the concept of intertextuality refers to that a

contribution in discourse brings other voices/texts into a text and therefore relates to other

people's texts, voices, or discourses. Drawing on the work of Bakhtin, Kristeva argues

that any text is a mosaic of quotations. She questions the notion of originality in any text,

but suggests common cultural experience in the sharing of text. So either a text or a

discourse, always have linkage or connection with other texts or discourses in which the

word "text" is defined broadly as communication, oral or written.

Based on Fairclough (2003), intertextuality refers to the juxtaposition of other

texts into a text, i.e., the bringing in or introducing of other texts, other voices, or other

discourses. Intertextuality is "the shaping of texts' meanings by other texts" (Fairclough,

2003). It refers to an author's borrowing and transformation of a prior text to a reader's

referencing of one text in reading another.

In Jasmine's texts, we could easily find the intertextuality embedded in the lexical,

semantic and syntactical presentation. While Jasmine appropriated partially the

expressions she had learned in our regular lessons into some of the expressions in her text,

she also borrowed other parts to complete those expressions. It was important to borrow and use in an appropriate way. In the following paragraph, Jasmine weaved the borrowed parts or the whole segments into presentation of her own voices in various ways, linked by intertextuality:

19. 除了学校，我喜欢听音乐。 (Besides school, I like to listen to music.)

20. 我经常听 Exo。 (I often listen to Exo.)

21. 他们是我的偶像。 (They are my idols.)

22. 我最喜欢 [韩国] 歌曲 （of … ） (I like [Korean] song the most.)

23. 他们是 Overdose。 (They are Overdose.)

24. 我希望有一天我能跟他们一起表演。 (I hope someday I can sing with them.)

25. 你知道 Exo 吗？ (Do you know Exo?)

26. 如果你不知道，你应该听他们的音乐。 (If you don't know, you should listen to their music.)

Jasmine was quite successful in making the partial borrowing as intertextuality for her text. In line 19, Jasmine borrowed "除了 (besides)" from the sample letter and combined with "学校 (school)" to serve as a transition from the previous semantic content in the previous paragraph, that was similar to the sample letter in syntactic structure, but in different semantic coherence. She then borrowed one syntactic structure to make the other half of the topic sentence appropriated with her own voice (line 19). This move was parallel to the sample letter, but appropriated in a different line of

semantic content or voice, a great move to transition that served to connect the subsequent paragraphs.

Jasmine was successful in the whole segment borrowing as intertextuality for her text. In line 20, Jasmine borrowed the entire syntactic structure and filled it with her choice of music "Exo", a perfect semantic representation following the topic sentence. She asked me how to write Exo in Chinese. I could not tell her at the time because I did not know what Exo was. So she resorted to inserting the English word "Exo" in the text. On the other hand, she considered the insertion of English word in the Chinese text was legitimate because she could find the intertextuality in the sample letter as "Hip-pop" music. Then in line 21, Jasmine transformed another similar structure, appropriated her choice of who her idol was. It was remarkable to me that all these structures Jasmine borrowed were distributed in various places in the sample letter, and she needed highly crafty experience to make the intertextuality work in a perfect sense and logic. Line 24 was another successful intertextuality. Jasmine borrowed the whole structure and filled it with her choice of "them" instead of "you" in the sample letter. This alteration fitted her coherence very well.

However, Jasmine's negotiation with her text was not always successful. In line 22, Jasmine borrowed English syntactic structure to connect two nouns by "of" as "song of Korea." Yet, she did not know the word "Korea", nor did she negotiate that with me or with her dictionary. So she left the "of" hang in the text. I felt that she meant to go back to take care of it later, but she forgot to do so. The negotiation did not take place, so the structure was incomplete.

Jasmine had good sense of the letter genre, and she borrowed one of the genre devices, engagement. In line 25, Jasmine asked a question to engage the reader, so that the reader would feel the need to respond. Jasmine had potentially several places as intertextuality resources for this borrowing. While it was possible that one was from the sample letter, it might also come from her past experience with letter writing. Another possibility was that she had really intended to know if her reader liked Exo or not, as she was so passionate about it. Or the question was simply a way to make a cultural connection with the reader in China that was in the Asian/Chinese culture. In this sense, Jasmine's move was to show solidarity with the reader, judging from my experience working with Jasmine. Notwithstanding, I also want to point out that the meaning would be open to the reader's interpretations.

Based on Bakhtin's perspective, the meaning of any texts depends on many factors such as who wrote it and for what purposes, who read it, under what sociocultural and political background and circumstances, what precedents it and what comes after it, and so on. The meaning is never defined or constrained in a fixed way. Readers can make multiple meanings for themselves out of many available resources within the texts or discourses. Therefore, as any texts, Jasmine's moves in her texts were all open to interpretation by the reader who would bring in her/his perspectives in negotiation with the text.

Jasmine's production of her fairy tale story exhibited different dynamics of dialogicality. As I mentioned before, Jasmine started to outline her story in English, and then worked Chinese into the story line. The success of her first writing project boosted Jasmine's confidence. She felt she was good at writing even though she knew the fairy

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tale might be more difficult to write. So she worked mostly on her own, negotiating with herself on what lexical expressions she knew, what she did not know and how to find them. Most of the time, she would negotiate with her notebook, her smartphone, the sample story and her peers. As for the syntactical level, she left it to the teacher because she knew we would have individual conference for editing. The story was so long that she had to bring home to finish it. Though I asked her to shorten it when she finished the outline, she insisted she wanted to write the longer version of the story. Indeed, she invested tremendously in the production.

As we all know, composing requires a lot more than knowing the lexical expressions. It requires a combination of semantics, syntax, registers, organizations and coherence. Furthermore, Jasmine's story was permeated with abundant cultural colors which were subject to interpretations. As a co-constructor of her text, I was the first one who sought to have a good understanding of her text and her intention of what needed to be in the text. But I found that this posed a big challenge for me for the reason that I was an outsider of her culture. Below is part of Jasmine's text:

9. 安妮相信巫术和鬼魂。 (Annie believed sorcery and spirit.)

10. 安妮住在海地的时候，开始相信巫术。 (When Annie lived in Haiti, she started to believe sorcery.)

11. 她成为女祭司的信徒。 (She became the favorite of a priestess.)

12. 女祭司教安妮所有关于鬼魂的说法。(This priestess taught Annie all about the spiritual world.)

13. 她让安妮不要在有黑色魔法的地方，不然会死亡。 (She took Annie to forbidden ceremonies where there were spirits of black magic, death would be summoned.)

Without the background knowledge, it was difficult to have effective dialogues about the semantics on the cultural representations. Jasmine had weaved in many cultural symbols in her text, such as, "sorcery and spirit" in line 9, "sorcery" in line 10, "priestess" in line 11, another "priestess" in line 12, "forbidden ceremonies and spirits of black magic" in line 13. I had not encountered such cultural symbols in English or in Chinese thus far, nor did I know what those lexical expressions would represent. So I had to consult my English-Chinese Dictionary and discuss with Jasmine to decide how we were to appropriate those expressions in Chinese in the best way we could. From the text above, it showed that we worked out solutions for those expressions in Chinese through negotiations, but I was still not so sure that those solutions were the most appropriate representations of those cultural symbols.

Bakhtin (1982) pointed out that Dialogism/dialogicality also refers to the mutual communicative connection or relatedness through languages or gestures in the creative process through which interactants construct relations with one another, construct identities, and make meanings from related discoursal texts. The dialogues with different voices from Jasmine and me were the interactions of making sense of new knowledge for both of us. The intertextuality was bounced back and forth until we reached an agreement how to negotiate the language interpretation. I needed her cultural understanding and she needed my interpretations in appropriate Chinese, thus we were both learning. Jasmine did not have a full understanding of the cultural symbols, because she heard the story from her Grandmother, nor did I fully know the Chinese language for the cultural presentations without knowing the culture. We both had to make the

meaning out of the "discoursal texts" and create new knowledge in the process of interactions. As a result, we both gained learning on both levels, of culture and language.

Nevertheless, the dialogues or communication did not always go smoothly. As I mentioned before, the "voodoo" episode was my big learning opportunity, but it was also an example of communication breakdown. It showed that it was important to have dialogues, because the more a learner/interactant is exposed to social interaction, the better he/she is being mediated and mediating learning and literacy (Bakhtin, 1982). But how to better facilitate the dialogues or communication became crucial as well. Here I am showing the text for a better understanding of the dynamics of what happened because of the communication breakdown:

26. 然而安妮更喜欢那个会计。 (However Annie took a strong liking for one of her bookkeepers.)

27. 可是不幸，他爱上了一个仆人。 (Unfortunately, he fell in love with a servant.)

28. 安妮发现后，愤怒了。 (When Annie discovered this, she became angry.)

29. 她给仆人念了咒语。 (She played a spell on the servant.)

30. 女孩告诉了她的叔叔。(The girl told her uncle [who did voodoo] {this was missed}.)

31. 可是他不能破解诅咒。 (However, he wasn't strong enough to lift the curse.)

32. 这个仆人就死了。 (This servant died.)

In the dialogues for co-construction of the text, she successfully negotiated the similar cultural symbols of "spell" in line 29, and "curse" in line 31, but she failed to negotiate the "voodoo" in line 30. Thanks to her outline in English on the first draft, I

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could trace back what was missing later when I read the final version of the draft and found out something was missing. It seemed to Jasmine that "Black Magic" was the same as "Voodoo", so she did not negotiate that with me, thinking I would have known it already after she explained the "Black Magic" to me. But to me, I had vague clues of Black Magic, and did not understand what "Voodoo" was. Though I asked Jasmine what Voodoo meant and she explained it to me, I did not get its whole picture until I went on-line later. When I read her first draft in class I only paid attention to the Chinese language, by which the semantic coherence seemed fine without that part. So the meaning of the word "Voodoo" was not successfully negotiated, thus, missing from the final version of the text.

Allen (2000) argued, based on poststructuralist and Bakhtinian theories, that intertextuality suggests that "all texts are potentially plural, reversible, open to the readers' own interpretations, lacking in clear and defined boundaries, and always involved in the expression or repression of the dialogic 'voices' which exist in society" (p.209). These notions were illustrated by the above episode of interactions on literacy. As the first reader of Jasmine's text, I could interpret very little of the cultural symbols of Black Magic, because of lacking cultural knowledge on my part. In fact, I am still not sure about the boundaries or definitions of the word "black" in Black Magic. Does the "black" refer to the people of color, so it is black people's magic, or it refers to the dark side of the magic that associated with destruction and death, so it is dark magic. It looks like I still need to seek more intertextuality or voices to do the meaning making, and the learning process will go on.

Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, through the data presentation and data analysis, I displayed some of the literacy practices of our learners represented by a case study in our social context. Learning is a social activity, a social act, a social practice, which takes place through communication or interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978). Literacy and learning occur in social interactions involving dynamic relationships, fluid identities and multiple dimensional discourses in multiple ways. This process implies the necessity of multiple levels and multiple ways of analysis.

First I painted pictures of our classroom as the overall social context for our literacy practices. Then I outlined our literacy practices, especially our writing practices to provide an understanding of our participants and their interactions in the literacy practices. My focal participant Jasmine was one representative of the learners. Though the data and the analysis presented were focused mostly on her interactions and texts, Jasmine was not isolated from the social context. On the contrary, the data and the analysis indicated that our literacy and learning occurred in the dialogic social interactions, through intertextuality and negotiated by the community members. During the process of our interactions, different voices of identities, ideologies, cultural representations and past experiences came into play, providing more opportunities for the participant to learn, interpret, negotiate and grow with more knowledge. Learning requires learners to take active role in appropriating knowledge and constructing new meaning from it (Bakhtin, 1981).

Drawing on the sociocultural literacy theories (e.g. Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Gee, 2012; Kern, 2000; Street, 1995), I believe that literacy is a situated practice and learning

takes place in social interaction. Furthermore, language learners should be situated in the resourceful learning environment, apprenticing into the discourse community (Gee, 2012). Based on this belief, my students and I embarked on an adventure into the uncharted territory ---- beginner writing/ composing in Chinese as a foreign language. In the field of Chinese language teaching, the assumption of novice learner learning to compose is commonly considered impossible. Overall, research on writing is scarce, because most beginning-level learners often do not advance beyond the introductory level of Chinese (Xu & Jen 2005). The popular concept of Chinese learning is that of a linear system, ie, character learning, reading and writing. However, as Gadotti (1994) argues foreign language learning is not a matter of ordering the learning activities, such as, speaking first, then developing reading skills and then learning to write. Rather, speaking, reading and writing are interconnected parts of an active learning process and of social transformation. I decided to have my students learn everything in a spiral upward way: while learning speaking and listening, we took the approaches of writing-to-learn (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2011) and learning-to-write (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2011; Rechelt, Lefkowitz, Rinnert & Schultz, 2012) at different learning stages to achieve reading, and apprentice our learners to the target language communities (Gee, 2012).

For the writing practice, I adopted the strategies of genre-based writing approaches (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Gentil, 2011; Hyland, 2007; Yigitoglu & Reichelt, 2014). Genres are specific to particular cultures, and our students may not share the same culture with us. Genre-based writing theories encourage us to go beyond syntax structures, lexical items or grammar, and have our students compose in ways that language is used in specific contexts (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Hyland, 2007). Therefore,

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I believed that we need to take genre-based approach "to apprentice students in a master-apprentice relationship in a Discourse", which includes the textual discourse (Gee, 2012, p.175). My previous experiences of teaching writing using this approach enjoyed successful outcome and this study showcased part of the success.

The analysis of the writing process demonstrated that social identities were negotiated and constructed in the interactions of learning to write, and the multiple identities could inspire or hinder their investment in the learning (Norton, 2000). In Jasmine's case, she positioned and was positioned in the interactions with multiple identities which inspired her tremendously in her literacy practices as well as in learning Chinese.

Ferdman (1990) believes that while cultural identity mediates the learning and the use of literacy, literacy will subsequently alter an individual's view of himself/herself. The data and analysis showed that Jasmine's identity as honor student was negotiated with the institution by her investment in literacy, and this identity of honor student gave her confidence and power to take the challenge of learning Chinese. The investment in Chinese as one of her academic subjects was to maintain her honor student status and to facilitate another identity of hers as different from many others in this school, that of intelligence and courage. Jasmine's identity as African-Jamaica American inspired her to invest in her literacy achievement in order to be financially independent in the future. She negotiated the identity of Certified Nurse Assistant in her shop, with which she was willing to invest in learning Chinese so that once she had a professional career as a nurse, she could serve the people with health care needs, including those who might speak Chinese only. Jasmine's identity as a competent language learner and a resourceful

student were negotiated with her peers in the class interaction of literacy practice, where she invested her effort not only to become a competent apprentice herself, but to help others in the class to achieve the same goal. While Jasmine contributed to the dialogues with peers, she also maintained the exchanges of voices with her teacher. In some part of the interactions, the boundaries of student and teacher roles became blurred, or even occasionally reversed in positioning. In Jasmine's identity as a "teacher", she scaffolded the teacher who in turn was able to scaffold her. This demonstrated that the knowledge was co-constructed in the interactions, and the learning was taking place in both directions.

The co-construction of knowledge embodied not only in the production of texts as applying, one of the four dimensions of literacy practices, it also existed in the other three dimensions, experiencing, conceptualizing and analyzing (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). As experiencing, we used the dialogic process to negotiate the reading of the sample texts and allowed multiple meanings for the interpretations. Conceptualizing was to have students breaking things down and co-construct some meta-language to do some naming, such as the organizations of the texts, drawing distinctions of similarities and differences among these different genres. We took the analyzing to analyze at two levels: analyzing functionally and analyzing critically. The functional level included lexical expressions, semantic structures, literary devices and language used in the texts. At the critical level, students analyzed the ideologies, perspectives, interests, and the ways language used to describe the world. The ways students and the teacher co-constructed knowledge of all the above were not only to prepare students to compose their own texts, but also to model the ways how intertextuality worked in the construction of discourse and texts. Students

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witnessed and experienced different voices coming together to co-construct our discourses and texts of our class.

Based on Bakhtin, all languages, all thoughts, all ideas, are dialogic, relational, changing and context-dependent/context-specific (1982) and the interlinkage among all knowledge is called intertextuality. The concept of intertextuality assumes that learning and knowing entail taking something from others and make it ones' own. Bakhtin defines the "two basic modes for the appropriation and transmission – simultaneously – of another's words: reciting by heart, and telling in one's own words" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 341). The analysis of Jasmine's texts underscored the fact that Jasmine drew from many resources or voices as intertextuality to appropriate and construct her texts. Some parts of Jasmine's constructions worked well, and others did not, which required more negotiations or learning for her to be successful.

Learning is a social activity, a social act, a social practice, taking place through communication or interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978). I hope the understanding of the nature of literacy as situated practice through interactions will help language educators to situate student learning in their social contexts and provide plenty of opportunities for students to interact with each other. In the language learning process, learners acquire more than linguistic rules; they also appropriate identities, social relations, and ideologies.

Limitations

The students who were in Chinese II class, including Jasmine the focal participant worked with me for almost two years by the time data were collected. I had close

relationship with most of the students in the class. Therefore, I might have my own bias in the ways I looked at the data and the ways I analyzed the data.

Since I had a big class, I had very limited time spent on each individual in the class time. Though Jasmine was my focal participant, the decision to choose the focal participant was not made until the end of the two writing projects. Jasmine was not chosen based on her performances, but by the availability of her time and willingness to cooperate in the study, and in particular her willingness to participate in the interviews. In such cases, I could not and did not collect data only but focused as well on each move she made during the production of texts.

In the process of analyzing the data, as a participant researcher I tried to set a distance between me as a researcher and me as a teacher. I also made effort to distance students, especially Jasmine from the data. However, the effort may not produce the intended outcome. The data, the analysis and the findings were based on this particular contexts at particular time. I did not mean to make broad generalization for other context or for other literacy practices. The interpretations of the data may be limited by my particular bias or perspectives.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Introduction

In this chapter, I will first briefly discuss the sociocultural perspectives on literacy and the current research on foreign language learning and teaching, contrasted with sociocultural theories on literacy, especially on writing. Then I will discuss the findings of this study, particularly on beginner writing as literacy practices and why I believe these practices are important. I will also discuss the dimensions involved in the writing process, such as identity, investment and the intertextualities. Next I will discuss the implications regarding the possible directions this research suggests in terms of FL writing practices and future research. I hope that these discussions will serve as a small part in the conversation of the foreign language learning and teaching, especially on writing.

Discussion

Sociocultural Perspectives on Literacy and Writing

Literacy is considered as a social act, a social construction (Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Giroux 1987; Gee, 1992), a situated social practice (Kramsch, 1993; Norton Peirce; 1989; Pennycook, 1990), more than the act of reading and writing. Literacy seeks to understand the sociocultural context in which students discover and interpret who they are in relation to others and the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987). As foreign language educators, we need to look beyond the grammatical precisions, though important in foreign language learning, we must take the sociocultural and contextual factors into

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considerations for students' learning, because learning and literacy occurs in social interactions and is co-constructed by students, family, communities, peers and their teachers. The more a learner is exposed to social interactions, the better he/she is being mediated and thus able to be mediating learning and literacy.

Writing is part of literacy and Bakhtin's (1982) concept of dialogism rejects the notion that writing can express an individual self, but believes what is expressed in discourse is culture, values and/or beliefs held by a particular culture. The dialogic nature of composition means that an individual writer cannot work alone, but be situated in the interaction with the world, with its readers and its subjects. The scaffolding for the Zone of Proximal Development of learners' writing requires rich relevant resources for students to draw from and be in dialogues with. Our writing experiences demonstrated that students drew multiple voices from many resources to construct their texts, because we create meaning through dialogic negotiations between language and lived experiences. In the dialogic process, the boundaries between teacher and students often become blurred and at times we need to scaffold each other in order to co-construct the knowledge. Therefore teaching and learning is situational, relational and reciprocal.

The center piece of this study is about beginner writing in Chinese as Foreign language. This study is guided by the sociocultural theories on literacy and embedded in the genre-based writing practice. Taking sociocultural perspectives on literacy development allows me to situate learners in the contextual interactions and provide resources and space for learners to construct their identities in the discourse and invest in the production of texts. In the dialogic process of co-construction of texts, the concept of intertextuality becomes not only the working tools for learners to draw resources from

themselves, social setting, peers, teacher, and their past experiences, but also the analytical tools for me to trace the sources or voices that come in contact in their texts. These perspectives and concepts work together supporting my study:
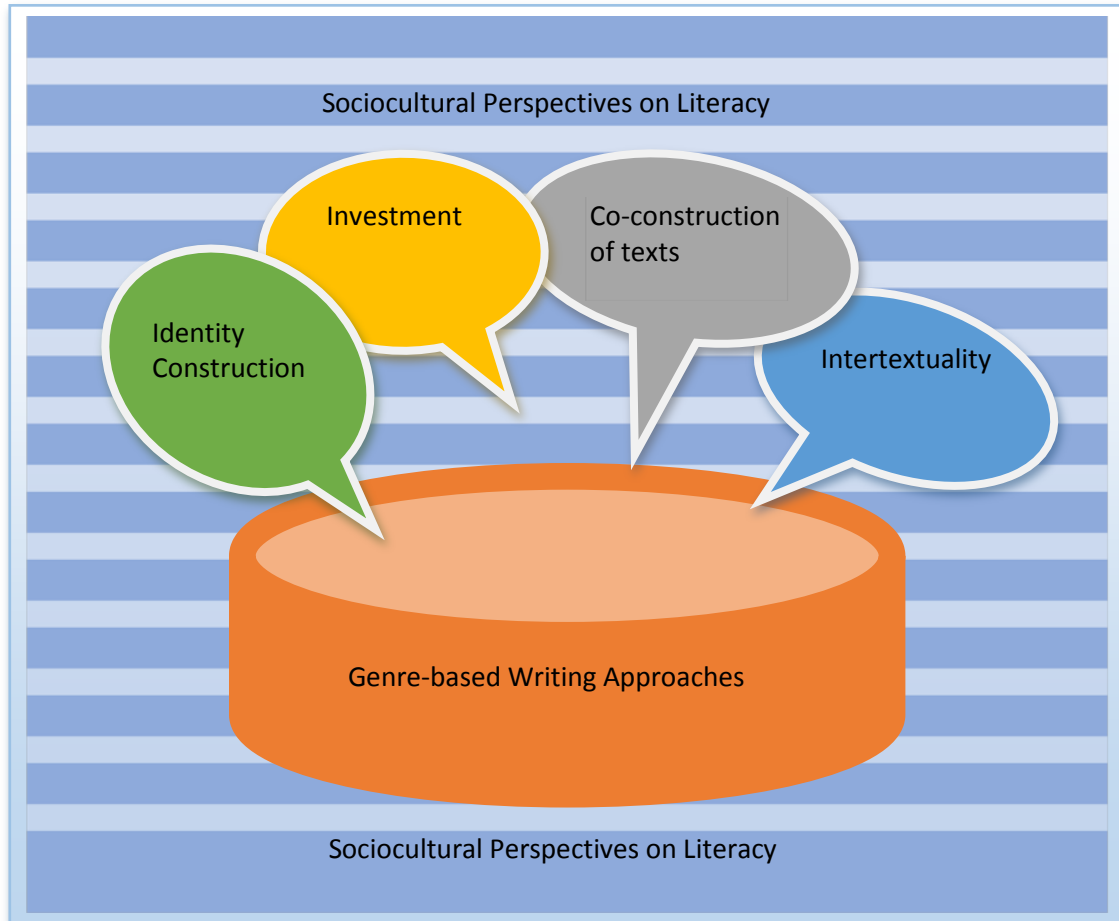
Figure 6: The Theoretical Concepts Framing this Study

Next I will discuss the current research in the field of foreign language learning and teaching, especially writing, and argue why sociocultural perspectives are the better choice in guiding the literacy practice of writing. Based on the findings of this study, I will then argue that the practice of writing in foreign language should be guided by the

sociocultural perspectives and genre-based writing should start early in the learning journey.

Research in second language writing has increased tremendously in the last several decades. While most of the research has focused on writing in English as second language (ESL), the research on foreign language (FL) writing has been growing. Reichelt, Lefkowitz, Rinnert & Schultz (2012) did a survey and found that the current research of writing in FL covers variety of areas, such as, theoretical perspectives, pedagogical issues, procedures related to teaching FL writing, and work on empirical investigations of FL writing. The fundamental differences between ESL writing and FL writing are that ESL writing has an advantage of being surrounded by the TL, while FL learners do not have this luxury. In addition, FL classes are usually bigger in size and fewer contact learning hours. They are often limited mostly to the artificial context of the classroom and are supplemented primarily by homework assignments outside the classroom. As a result, the FL learners often have significantly less exposure to the FL than do ESL students.

Besides the well-defined learning time and context for FL learners, the goals of learning ESL and FL are different, usually with impact on their investments and the learning outcomes. Reichelt et al. (2012) investigated and compared the different goals of ESL and FL learning situations at the college level. Due to the desires of successfully navigating through their college journey to become researchers or future employees, students enrolled in ESL courses are often highly engaged in all aspects of learning, especially in writing, hoping to gain high proficiency in order to express themselves in written English. However, this is not the case for FL students, whose goals vary in a

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wide range. They may learn a FL to satisfy university language requirement or such requirement within their fields of specialization. They may prepare to study or work abroad, or I would argue, may be simply curious about certain language and culture. Though many are learning FL very well, they are still subject to the insufficient time allocation and less favorable learning conditions mentioned earlier.

In addition to learners' factors in learning FL writing, the teaching methodologies of FL writing in most cases are not adequate either. Lefkowitz (2009, cited in Reichelt et al., 2012) interviewed many writing instructors on teaching methodologies, she reported that most of the writing instructors used the form-focused, product-oriented approaches. Instructors using these approaches usually selected artificial topics, assigning them before any writing instruction was given. The writing tasks were designed mostly to elicit grammatical accuracy, instead of focusing on communicative content in order to assist their students to become actual writers. These approaches were referred as writing-to-learn practices (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2011; Lefkowitz & Hedgcock, 2009).

Based on Reichelt et al. (2012), with the writing-to-learn approaches in the FL classroom, writing is viewed primarily as a vehicle for language practice, which are believed to foster the development of proficient communicative abilities with strong grammatical knowledge. In the same vain, some proficiency-oriented FL instructors require their learners to produce original grammatical constructions and lexical items— activities that are intended to generate pushed output. Other instructors may focus on developing communicative language proficiency at the expense of writing development.

Instead of using the writing-to-learn approaches in FL teaching, the ESL instructors employ a learning-to-write approach to composition instruction (Lefkowitz,

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2009, cited in Reichelt et al., 2012). With this approach, the instructors select interesting and authentic topics related to students' real-life interests and needs. Working with variety of activities and stages, such as discussion, vocabulary building, video viewing, and a written assignment at the end, the instructors emphasize content over linguistic precision, engaging students in collaborative interaction and focusing on the entire writing process rather than concentrating exclusively on the final product. The goals of the learning-to-write approaches attempt to help students become skilled writers in their target language.

However, Reichelt et al. (2012) argue that though the learning-to-write approaches seem to be better than writing-to-learn approaches, the FL writing has been slow to embrace such approaches. Lately there appear many institutions who have implemented socioliterate approaches to the teaching of FL reading and writing, this practice is the exception rather than the rule. It is rather surprising to me that the FL teaching of writing just starts to have a hint of the concept of the social dynamics, discourse knowledge, and genre awareness, since sociocultural perspectives in literacy have been in theories and practices for almost three decades since the 'New Literacy Studies' in the 1980s and 1990s (Gee, 1990, 2012; Street, 1995).

Based on my teaching experience and the findings of this study, I would argue that the sociocultural concepts of literacy encompass comprehensive and critical theories on literacy practices and should be applied in all parts of literacy practices, either reading or writing in any languages. As foreign language educators, though we do not have control over the hush conditions of class sizes and time allocation mentioned above, we can have impact on students' expectation and investment in learning the target language

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by situating learners in the social interactions and empower them by recognizing their social identities and scaffolding them in the co-construction of knowledge.

What I am arguing is not new, but it was the conclusion of our experience in the literacy practices of writing in Chinese, guided by the sociocultural perspectives. Learning is a social activity, a social act, a social practice, which takes place through communication or interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978). The social nature of learning requires that teachers not only need to create an authentic social environment for students to experience the Discourse, but they also needs to scaffold the students' growing ability to say, do, value and believe within the discourse through demonstrating their mastery and supporting theirs for growth (Gee, 2012). This means teachers need to believe in and stretch students' ability: make it look like they can do what they really cannot do without help from the capable peers or teacher. Teaching to gain acquisition is "to apprentice students in a master-apprentice relationship in a Discourse" (Gee, 2012, p.175).

Writing in Chinese as Foreign Language

As I mentioned before, the research in teaching Chinese language as FL mostly focuses on the character learning because the complex visual orthographic writing system which separates from the phonological identifications. Most of the research on writing centers primarily on character writing, rather than composing. The few studies focused on writing are about computer-assisted writing, or composing using computer (Kang, 2011). The common assumption of learning Chinese relates to the learning process set in a linear stage of first learning characters, followed by learning to read which finally leads to learning to write. However, learning characters in an isolated manner makes many

learners never go beyond the character learning stage (Xu & Jen, 2005). As a result, few students advance to the composing stage before they drop out of learning.

The analysis of the data showed that students are capable of composing in Chinese as apprentices with appropriate scaffolding from many different resources. It is true that Jasmine as a representative of majority of the learners did not have a big repertoire of lexical items, nor did she have high level of knowledge of the grammatical rules as a Chinese level II student, but she was able to use the target language to construct her different identities in the literacy practice, and invested great efforts to achieve her goals under those identities. If measured by other non-vocational schools in the school district, Jasmine's learning experience with the target language was about one whole year of Chinese level I, because we only had one half year course by one week on and one week off rotation with the shop in this school.

Nevertheless, Jasmine composed two complete texts with different genres, which had meaningful content with rich intended expressions and are organizationally sound and logically coherent. Through the process she learned many things and gained a lot of experience associated with constructing texts, including but not limited to, the lexical expression, syntactical structures, semantic representations, genre related moves and the sense of appropriating resources as intertextuality into the construction of texts. Undoubtedly, this was a tremendous learning experience in about seven hours for each text, from reading and analyzing the sample texts to creating the first drafts and the final texts. As Reichelt et al. (2012) pointed out that students enrolled in Russian, Chinese, Japanese, or Arabic would require significantly more time to process writing instruction and conduct the writing, due to the dramatic differences between their L1 and the TL.

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It was indeed remarkable that Jasmine and most of her peers were able to create complete texts with scaffolding at their early stage of learning the target language. Why was this possible? I believe that there existed several possible reasons for this: first and foremost, the students were given the opportunities to take the adventures; second, they had already acquired certain amount of knowledge of the target language; third, they were provided with genre-based texts as modeling of the texts to be written; fourth, they had already experienced the genres of the texts in their first language before; fifth, they took advantage of the opportunities to interact with peers and teacher to get scaffolding when needed; sixth, they were provided with the resources and the possibilities of intertextuality; seventh, space was provided to them in the discourse and in the texts to negotiate their identities, under which they were willing to invest their effort to achieve their goals that would shape and maintain their identities, either now or the imagined identities in the future.

Jasmine felt very confident after we completed the text of pen-pal letter, despite feeling intimated during the process of constructing the text. She claimed that she had learned a lot through the writing experience. In reflecting her learning experience through composing the pen-pal letter, Jasmine wrote (Feb. 9, 2016):

> Through this experience, I learned many words and I feel much better in writing Mandarin, though I, still, have a long way to go. Some words I learned through this experience are "besides, love, school, interesting, etc." While writing this letter, I believe that I am better at writing sentences, considering that I ended up writing over 30 sentences multiple times.

I believe this is the best part of practicing writing-to-learn at Jasmine's developmental stage of learning the TL (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2011). Despite Reichelt et al.'s (2012) discredit of writing-to-learn approach and in favor of learning-to-write, I

would argue that both approaches serve the same purpose of learning depending on when they are used in the spectrum of learning stages. Writing-to-learn does not have to emphasize only on the grammatical accuracy. Both approaches do not necessarily conflict with each other in practice, but rather focus differently at various learning stages.

In fact, both approaches can work together most of the time, although the proportion can be adjusted based on the learning stages. In early stage, we should focus a little more on the basic language component and learning the genre related writing knowledge. When students have reached advanced stages, we need to adjust the focus as we go. The language basics and the writing knowledge need to grow together. Efforts to, knowingly or unknowingly, separate these two are not going to be conducive to learning because learning requires learners to take active roles in appropriating knowledge and constructing new meaning from it (Bakhtin, 1981). This appropriating and meaning making need authentic context and real relationships in the interactions in order to make real sense, therefore, learning takes place. Jasmine learned quite much on the language basics through writing experience, as indicated in the reflection that she would not have opportunities to learn in our regular class yet. Meanwhile she experienced the co-construction of the texts that would not only help her with future writing in the FL, but also her first language writing.

Social Identity and Investment

The analysis of class interactions and the process of creating draft and text show that Jasmine constructed multiple identities. Identities conflict through literacy ---literacy makes people rethink about themselves. Bakhtin (1981) argues that we engage in internal dialogues that are the result of many voices we have already encountered in the past.

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These internal dialogues are often sites of struggle and through these dialogues we are able to construct and reconstruct ourselves. While preparing, in actual writing and during the interviews, Jasmine displayed at least five types of identity constructed in the process of literacy practice where she invested efforts to shape, and later to maintain the imagined identities of the future. The recognition or my awareness of the identity negotiations has guided me to understand her better and position the relationships in more positive ways. This in turn helped the investment from both sides in the learning process.

It seemed that the most important identity for Jasmine was her racial identity. Jasmine negotiated her racial identity as an African-Jamaican American with her mother and the society at large. Her mother's image of a strong African-Jamaican American woman with a professional career provided her with a positive role model that inspired her. In Jasmine's interviews, she often talked about how her mother gave her inspirations. Her mother was not only a career woman who provided financial security for the family, she alone took good care of everyone in the household including her grandmother. At her job as a Registered Nurse (RN), she cared many patients every day. She firmly believed that education would give people wings to fly high and be independent. Her mother constantly urged Jasmine to take education seriously and to invest time and energy to achieve her best potentials in school. The modeling of her mother and the inspiration from her mother gave Jasmine the power to be confident and to invest handsomely in all her academic subjects and her shop as well. As a result, she received maximum honor as an honor student. As a teacher working with her closely, I would argue that a positive affirmation of her racial identity strengthened her confidence and reinforced her

investment in the literacy practices. It also helped build a trust worthy working relationship with people around her in the process of literacy.

In Ferdman's (1990) view, literacy helps improve an individual's self-image by transforming the individual. Usually the more literate an individual is, the better he/she will portray himself/herself in terms of identity construction. Jasmine's honor student identity was negotiated with the Discourse of literacy in the institution, and Gee (2000) calls this identity as Discourse Identity (D-identities), which is evoked by individual traits, accomplished through discourse or dialogue by other people in social interactions. The source of power is not nature or institution, but individuals. "The process through which this power works is recognition" (P. 9).

Jasmine's power in the negotiation with the Discourse of literacy is her cultural capital, namely her investment of her time and energy inspired by her mother and her racial identity. Norton (1995, 2000) referenced Bourdieu (1977) notion of cultural capital as knowledge and modes of thought that characterize different classes and groups in relation to specific sets of social forms. Some forms of cultural capital have higher exchange value than others in a given social context. If Jasmine had the desire to gain access to more cultural capital, she needed to invest in all her school work in order to get return which would increase the value of her cultural and eventually economic capital in an imagined future. This notion of investment is a big step away from the traditional concept of learner motivation that is believed to be the property of the language learner; it is a fixed personality trait that one either has or does not have; it has direct impact on language learning. This traditional concept places the responsibility of learning solely on

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the shoulder of language learners while ignoring other potential obstacles imbedded in the social context that could affect the desire of learning.

Norton's notion of investment attempts to capture and explain the complex relationship between learners and the ever changing social world. It recognizes the language learners as having complex social identities and multiple desires. This notion of investment, I would argue, has embodied itself in our social interactions and testifies that language learners' investment is related to learners' social and cultural identity which is fluid and constantly changing within our discourses and the particular contexts. This awareness has placed the responsibility of learning on both the learners and me as a teacher in our interactions. This student-teacher relationship co-constructs the learning experience. I would also argue that teachers need to examine how the learners negotiate their social and cultural identities and what can be their potential "incentives" for their investment, and how these identities and investment change over time. Being informed of these clues, teachers can better cope with the pedagogical practices that provide encouraging contexts for the learners to invest.

By the same token of capital and investment, Jasmine negotiated her identities of Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA). Jasmine had a passion of learning the human body systems and she wanted to be a nurse in the future just like her mother. Her enjoyment and the goal of having a future career gave her incentive to invest in the hard work to obtain CNA as the first step towards her goal to become a Registered Nurse. However, Jasmine's incentives for hard working or investment were not all coming from the desires of getting future returns for herself. She wanted to work hard and get the skill set she

needed so she could serve those people who would need health care. I believed that is the return, a return for her virtue comfort and satisfaction.

Jasmine's identity as a competent language learner had two other dimensions for her investment in the language learning. She wanted to take Chinese instead of Spanish, because "not many people learn Chinese" (interview, March 11, 2016). Having the courage to learn Chinese was seen as being very smart and capable, and learning Chinese well was even more prestigious in this social context. She enjoyed her identity as the resource person and many peers wanted her attention and help. Learning requires learners to take active role in appropriating knowledge and constructing new meaning from it (Bakhtin, 1981). To maintain an identity as an successful learner and a resourceful peer, she was willing to take active role in constructing new knowledge. Again she had an incentive to be able to help those people who were not able to speak English for their health care need. This incentive gave her an extra edge in the pursuit of learning the target language well.

Jasmine's identity as as "teacher" was a typical discourse identity that was not anticipated. It was constructed in the interaction of learning for both of us. As soon as Jasmine negotiated her identity as a "teacher" and turned me into a "student" or leaner, I arrived at my epiphany in my career as a teacher. The lesson was significant in several areas: first, it is more meaningful gaining knowledge in the real life situation. Very often, as teachers we try very hard to engage students in the learning, but if the content does not connect with students' life or needs, it is difficult for them to take active role in acquiring the knowledge. In our writing practices, Jasmine liked the idea of communicating with someone who was in different culture, and was curious about what the other person was

going to say to her. In her fairy tale story telling, Jasmine genuinely wanted to share her grandmother's story. Even if I asked her to write a shorter version, she refused to accept that suggestion and insisted she wanted to write the whole story. It was meaningful for her to work hard to accomplish those writing tasks, and therefore she took an active role in utilizing the resources to appropriate the knowledge into her texts.

Second, it is the social interactions that provide the platforms for knowledge or information naturally comes into contact contributing to the knowledge building or construction. The interactions afford the opportunities for us to be dialogic in negotiating the meaning, soliciting an answer, clarifying doubts, probing into the deeper thinking or meaning and constructing the identities. This interactive negotiation provides a better understanding of issues involved, and makes it conducive to building long term knowledge.

Third, everyone's knowledge is partial, including that of a teacher's. Teachers need to create a learning environment to afford students opportunities to become "teachers". Everyone has his/her own cultural capitals and past experiences, and if we can mobilize the knowledge to collectively construct new knowledge, students would have ownership in this knowledge. I would argue that the ownership in the construction of knowledge would be a good incentive for students to invest their share of effort.

In summary, Jasmine's various identities had helped her in the navigation of learning and inspired her to invest in our literacy of writing. In her reflection, she testified on the investment she put in for the construction of her texts (Feb. 29,2016):

I feel as if I put a lot of effort into this letter. I asked the teacher for help and I even stayed after one day. I stayed after for extra help on insight.

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Genre-based Writing

The data and analysis indicated that genres were the solid anchors for our writing projects. For the members in a discourse community, genres establish certain levels of norms of interaction which are easily recognized and expected from other members in the same community. We all possess a schema of prior knowledge learnt from others and we bring this knowledge to the situations of reading and writing so that we can understand the texts and express ourselves effectively and efficiently. Language learners do not learn just lexical expressions, syntax or semantics, but also they are to enter in a discourse community, learning cultural ways of being and acting in the discourse.

Genre-based writing theories encourage language educators to utilize these principles in teaching writing: collaboration, peer interaction and scaffolding, or teacher-supported learning. Based on the particular genres, our learners have the parameter to understand the purposes and possible readers of the writings. Genres also provide certain sets of organization routines, genre devices, and definite types of languages for students to follow, reducing the difficulties for the beginner writers. By employing genres for teaching writing, I found that genres were effective tools for students to understand what we expected them to do by showing the sample texts.

Through our writing practices, I believe that genre writing works better with going through the four stages from literacy pedagogy proposed by Cope & Kalantzis, (2009): experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing and applying. By experiencing, students get to read a sample text and get a feel of the genre text in the natural way of the target language. Through experiencing reading the sample text, students encounter both the known and the new. The known refers to their own experience with the particular

genre, familiar forms of expressions, and ways of representing the world. The new entails the unfamiliar forms of expressions, unfamiliar contexts, and new information offered by the sample text. Having students connect the known with the new, we place their learning in a "zone of intelligibility and safety" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 185), or Zone of Proximal Development", as Vygotsky (1978) calls it. This initial move is to expose students into the modeling from the speech community and get a taste of what they are going to practice.

The second stage is conceptualizing. This is a "knowledge process in which learners become active conceptualizers, making the tacit explicit and generalizing from the particular" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 185). In this stage, students break things down and explain things using some meta-language, and then try to do some generalization. Next, students are working together to do some naming, such as the format, the argument and the narratives of the text. Guided by teachers, students draw distinctions of similarities and differences among these different genres. In the interactions, some students might be able to formulate their own theories of each literary categories from their knowledge of their first and second language. After the generalizations, students are encouraged to work out the specifics for the writing task ahead.

The third stage is the analyzing, which includes two levels: analyzing functionally and analyzing critically. First, we need to analyze the functionality of lexical expressions, semantic structures and literary devices in the sample text. Second, we need to analyze how the author uses his/her reasoning, inferences, deducting, and establishing the causal as well as functional relationships in the writing. This is the critical level where we are to

analyze the ideologies, perspectives, interests, and how he/she describes his/her world. It is here, as in other critical levels, students can be encouraged to imagine what they can do if they write similar text.

The fourth stage is the applying, which proves to be the most difficult one. Applying encompasses two different practices: applying appropriately and applying creatively. We can use this move to make students apprentices of the target language Discourse practice. Bakhtin (1981) argued that learning requires learners to take active role in appropriating knowledge and constructing new meaning from it. The concept of "appropriation" assumes that learning and knowing entail taking something from others to make it ones' own. Bakhtin defines the "two basic modes for the appropriation and transmission – simultaneously – of another's words: reciting by heart, and telling in one's own words" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 341). This is the move that students can put all the experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing into their own writing practice. While applying appropriately is the use of intertextuality, applying creatively is the new construction of knowledge.

The key to success in genre writing is Vygotsky's notion of scaffolding, having learners interact with more capable peers and teachers in order to move from their existing levels to a higher one. Scaffolding for writing is the degree of teacher intervention and selection of tasks in ways teachers provide support ranging from closely controlled activities to more autonomous communication and gradually reduce the support as learners are gaining their confidence at a higher level.

Co-construction of the Texts and Intertextuality

The data and analysis as espoused in this dissertation illustrate that the student and teacher co-construct texts in actions. From the analysis, I acquired several findings: first, genre-based writing is fundamental in beginner writing in FL. The texts of genres set exemplars or templates from the target language discourse community, which can be used to engage students in studying specific norms and requirements for the genres. They also serve as guidelines for students to understand what my expectations are for their own writings. The genre-based texts can be the resources that students draw on for intertextuality. Bazerman (2004) argues that texts do not appear in isolation, but in relation to other texts. We write in response to prior writing, and as writers we use the resources provided by prior writers. The intertextuality requires learners to apply resources appropriately and creatively.

Second, in the process of selecting content and organizing the thematic moves, some students may need step by step scaffolding as they need to get an orientation in creating their own texts. Although they study and analyze the sample texts, some students may not be able to see the relevance. In fact, the scaffolding at different levels are necessary throughout the writing process. In addition to teacher's scaffolding, peer scaffolding is also an intergral part of co-constructing texts.

Third, students build their knowledge of composing by interacting with teacher and other students. Through interactions, they have the opportunities to negotiate the meanings and appropriate knowledge into the texts using variety of resources.

Fourth, while students are placed in the ZPD to stretch their knowledge in writing, teacher needs to take appropriate opportunities making connection from the prior

knowledge with the current similar situations in order to "recycle" the proper lexical, semantic and syntactic application. These are also the opportunities to provide explicit teaching at the metacognitive and metalinguistic levels.

Fifth, for beginner text production, the proper use of syntactic structure was more difficult than the lexical and the semantic expressions. Students are able to negotiate the lexical and the semantic expressions from various resources, but the only alternative is that of their first language if the management of syntactic structure is out of their target language's linguistic repertoire. Once they fall into their first language metalinguistics, it is difficult for them to come back to the target language they are not too familiar with. Further, if students use their first language to sketch their outline of the story, they become over zealous in creating ambitous story that is difficult to develop by the smaller amount of knowledge of the target language. It also creates obstacles for them to switch grammatical codes back to using the target language, although it is easier for some students to get started with their outlines by using their first language.

Sixth, the beginner student was able to produce genre writings with guidance and scaffolding, and the quality and creativity of her texts was beyond my expectations. Students can take this opportunity of composing to learn many lexical, semantic expressions and syntactic structures in the actions that they would have no chance to experience otherwise in their early learning stage.

Seventh, the co-construction of the texts can be a messy and frustrating process, but it is also a mutual learning process because students and teacher grow together in the unsettling process of co-constructing knowledge. During the production of texts, while Jasmine tried to utilize Chinese as a tool to tell her story with meaningful representations

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of her ethnic culture, I endeavored to make sense of what she was trying to express in her text. We depended on each other's support or scaffolding to build the content of the text in the target language. In collaboration with and negotiation of understanding each other, we achieved mutual learning accomplished through dialogic process that appeared to be somewhat messy from time to time.

Eighth, attempts to impose teacher's preconceived ideology to the process of students' construction may not always be successful while students and teacher co-construct the texts. As the data have shown, the few attempts to help Jasmine with my ideas did not get the anticipated results, even though Jasmine scaffolded me to understand what she needed. It seemed that I failed to understand the Exo music group and the Vvoodoo magic, and Jasmine did not know how to scaffold me to my ZPD. In turn, I could not provide appropriate scaffolding to bridge the coherent meaning in the texts. Coaching rather than imposing may achieve the desired result.

Nineth, teachers are not necessarily always the scaffolders during the co-construction process. When students describe their real life world, the texts can be very colorful for different social events and very rich in cultural ideologies and values in particular contexts. Teachers may or may not share the same social settings or cultural norms. Interactions between the two sides are the best opportunities for teachers to get to know the students, their ethnic culture, generational sub-culture, sports sub-culture, and so on, to better understand students and their lives, building trust worthy relationships. A better understanding will facilitate future construction of knowledge together.

Tenth, the rich and relevant resources for intertextuality should be an integral part of teaching writing. Bazerman (2004) suggests that "the more broadly and precisely

students and other writers envision the intertextual world they can draw on, the more powerful a set of flexible options they will have on hand" (p. 62). By providing new intertextual resources and contexts that are relevant to students' task on hand, they can even redefine the fundamental rhetorical situation in major ways. Resources for intertextuality can also include learners' past experiences with intertextual knowledge or life observations of facts or events. It is important for teachers to probe and utilize the existing voices and build those into new texts.

It is worth noting that I am not in the position to impart an impression with this dissertation that composing texts in Chinese for beginners is an easy task. In fact, it may be challenging if students are to perform composing on their own, especially in efforts to express complex or ideological ideas for the beginner learner without significant amount of scaffolding from the teacher and among peers themselves.

Hard work, negotiations and co-construction are exactly the characteristics throughout our writing practices. Jasmine was not the only student who composed beautiful texts, many other students created satisfactory and beautiful texts as well. Some rewrote the fairy tale stories they knew from their childhood, such as "Cinderella", "Snow White" … Among them I was very proud of the "The Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolfe", which was beautifully written and full of actions. The advantage of this children's story for the beginner writing was that there were many repetitions of the action words so that the author needed much less scaffolding to accomplish it. Yet, the most memorable story was a story written by another girl, who created the story from scratch. She drew on the current discourse of environment consciousness and protection as intertextuality and wrote a moving fairy tale story that was interwoven with relatively

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simple Chinese on her own and much more complex syntax with my scaffolding. I have told this story to many people around me ever since, and I feel I am obliged to tell here, to show how I am proud of their achievement in the creating of texts in Chinese (March 11, 2016):

花 [的] 国 家

很久，很久以前，有一个国家 叫 菲呢尔。 人们很痛苦，因为国王强迫他们 去采钻石。很多人上山 采矿。

一天， 一个女孩 决定向国王 挑战。她用滕条 把自己绑在坑道门口。人们不能赶走她，人们 [也] 不要 挤进门。 国王很生气。 采矿停止了。 他 把 藤条砍断更坚硬。女孩坚持了很，可是 藤条重新长出来，久。 最后藤条把 她 围起来, [她] 成为藤条 和 山的 一 部分。 国王 说："不能 采矿了。"

在 同一 [个] 星期，藤条开花了，而且 飞向 这 [整] 个国家。 人们说 女孩 很高兴，因为 她 救了人们。所以 每年的 四月十六日，人们上山采花， 纪念 这个女孩。

Flower Country

Long, long time ago, there was a country whose name was Fineor. People were very miserable, because the King forced them to go and mine the diamond. Many people went to the mountains to mine.

One day, a girl decided to challenge the King. She used the vines tying herself onto the entrance of the tunnel. People tried, but could not remove her. People did not want to squeeze in through the entrance. The King was very angry that mining stopped. He chopped the vines broken, but they grew again, and they were stronger. The girl held that way for a long time. At the end the vines surrounded her, and she became part of the vine and mountain. The King said: "we cannot mine anymore."

In the same week, the vines bloomed and they flew to the whole country. People said the girl was very happy, because she saved the mountain. Therefore, every 16th in April, people would go up to the mountains to pick flowers, and commemorate the girl.

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First of all the story was written fitting very well to the genre of fairy tale. Functionally, the basics of the target language were beautifully arranged to express what the author wanted to achieve. Critically, her ideologies and perspectives were well interwoven into the text. The author employed the genre writing and using her social language to present her 'figured world' to convey the importance of protecting the natural environment (Gee, 2012). In constructing her identity as an environment conscious individual, her story had situated meaning in the current discourse on environmental protection. Both she and I were very proud that she had accomplished it in Chinese!

The achievement of Jasmine's story and this "Flower Country" story highlighted the reward for my teaching career, which I am very proud of. I am also proud that I was able to empower my students to unleash their imagination in the target language and to boost their ambition to realize their dreams.

Implications and Future Research

The over arching theoretical framing of this study is the sociocultural theories of literacy (eg. Bakhtin, 1982; Barton, 1994; Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Gee, 1992, 2012; Giroux 1987; Kern, 2000; Street, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978). These perspectives not only guided me in designing my pedagogical practice of teaching Chinese language literacy, but also provided me with the theoretical lense and discourse analysis (DA) tools for my research on beginner writing in Chinese (Gee, 2012). DA analyzes specific instances of language-in-use to highlight the ways in which discourse shapes and is shaped by the macro society with the macro discourse.

Within this theoretical camp, I adopted genre-based writing as our plateform for beginner students to compose their texts in Chinese (Cope & Kalantzis, 1995; Hyland,

2007; Swales, 1990, 2004; Yigitoglu & Reichelt, 2014). The genre-based writing theory also served as the analytical means to examine the production moves of the texts created by the focal student. Combining with DA in examing the development of genre moves, I conducted detailed analysis on the student and teacher co-construction of the texts where student negotiated the meaning of the language-in-use and the linguistic knowledge from the application of real life experience to express herself for communication. Cope & Kalantzis (1995) provided me with the four dimensions for literacy practice: experiencing, conceptulizinng, analyzing and applying. These dimensions in the literacy practice were very pratical and very effective.

In addition, the identity theories from many researchers (eg. Antaki, Condor & Levine, 1996; Bakhtin, 1981; Ferdman, 1990; Gee, 2000, 2012; Norton, 1995, 2000; Willett, 1995) helped identifying the social construction of identities in the social interaction that had positive effect on learner's investment in the writing process (Norton, 1995, 2000). Further, the theories on intertextuality (Bazerman, 2004; Bukhtin, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978) provided me with venues to facilitate student's production of texts by supplying rich resources and teaching students how to untilize them, appropriating the intertextuality into their language-in-use to express their relationship to the world.

Equipped with the above sociocultural theories on literacy, genre-based writing, identity construction, investment, intertextuality and discourse analysis, I conducted an ethnographic case study on beginner writing in Chinese by non-heritage learner. Through this exploration of the uncharted territory of beginner writing in Chinese, the contributions of this study to the field of Chinese language teaching are on multi-levels: first, this study showcased the application of the sociocultural theories on literacy in our

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classroom where students negotiated meaning, language use and knowledge building in the social interaction in this particular context. If teachers have their students work as apprentices and create an interactive classroom where students can use their social language and freely construct their realities, students will have the opportunities to learn the language-in-use and achieve the success in language learning.

Second, guided by the sociocultural theories, this study demonstrated how the genre writing was done by the beginning Chinese language learner with the scaffolding from teacher and peers. Regarding composing in Chinese by beginners, genres provide clear directions for students as to what and how to develop their texts based on the the exemplars or templates of particular genres. If we are persistent in the genre writing practice, students will not only learn the language mechanics along the way, but also become experienced writers in the target language.

Third, the discourse analysis of the focal student's social interactions exhibited the various identity constructions in the literacy practice of writing. With teachers providing space and support for the identity negotiation, students are given the opportunity to invest their effort to shape and maintain their identities in the learning process. Students' incentives to invest encouraged them to actively involve in the negotiation and building of their knowledge.

Fourth, this study contributed to the Chinese language teaching field by demonstrating that it is possible to have beginner students compose in Chinese with scaffolding. Our literacy practice of genre writing demonstrated that learning Chinese did not have to follow a linear order and it could be a spiral upward of integrating all modes of language learning even at an early stage of Chinese learning. If Chinese

language educators create the opportunities for their students to try composing early on in their learning stage instead of only character writing, they will have the chances to use the language to describe their world, thus, tasting the early success of learning Chinese so that they will not drop out of learning prematurely.

Fifth, the analysis of the co-construction of texts by student and teacher illustrated the many opportunities during the interactions of producing texts that students learned tremendous amount of lexical, semantic and syntactic knowledge of the Chinese language and they learned those in the language-in-use situation with real life social contexts. Further more, they learned this huge amount in a short time and they would not have opportunity to learn if we did not have the writing opportunity.

Sixth, our writing practice showed that language learning could incorporate the writing-to-learn and learning-to-write simultaneously with scaling focus on the different elements in grammatical code and writing experience at various stages. As language educators in teaching writing, we do not need to separate the two focuses of writing, instead we can make them work together, proportionating the focus accordingly at different stages.

It is my hope the contribution of this ethnographic case study would provide some insignts in the field of Chinese language education by demonstrating that students in an urban high school can be apprenticed into writing in different genres using Chinese as Foreign Language (FL). Since the research on writing in Chinese done by non-heritage speakers is very few, I hope this study can serve as a conversation starter in the area of composing in Chinese, inviting more language educators and researchers to challenge the assumption of linear order of Chinese learning (see Figure 1), and create more

opportunities for learners to apprentice into different genres in order to communicate with the discourse community, as well as to enjoy the sense of accomplishment and success early on in their learning path. The key to the success of writing is that students are given the opportunities to compose their life stories rather than artificial topics, with teachers providing appropriate scaffolding.

Student Writing as Apprentice

Gee (2012) has provided definitions for acquisition and learning within the sociocultural perspectives of literacy. His insights are very significant to our FL literacy practices, especially on our writing practice. He defines acquisition, on the one hand as "a process of acquiring something (usually subconsciously) by exposure to models, a process of trial and error, and practice within social groups, without formal teaching" and learning, on the other hand, as "a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching (though not necessarily from someone officially designated a teacher) or through certain life experiences that trigger conscious reflection" (p. 167). Teaching to gain acquisition is "to apprentice students in a master-apprentice relationship in a Discourse" (Gee, 2012, p.175). The teacher not only needs to create an authentic social environment for students to experience the Discourse, she/he needs to scaffold the students' growing ability to say, do, value and believe within the discourse through demonstrating her/his mastery and supporting theirs for growth. That means teachers need to believe in and stretch students' ability: make it look like they can do what they really cannot do without help. Gradually they will be led to acquisition. Teaching to gain learning is to break down the materials into small units with analysis and explanations. It will give students "meta-knowledge" by looking at the materials with

theoretical or critical lens (Gee, 2012). Good teachers should be able to integrate and balance both.

Gee's concepts of acquisition and learning illuminate our literacy practices, especially on our writing. I took his ideas and tested them in the actual writing practice, and they worked very well for us. Since I did not find any study on beginner writing in Chinese, we were collectively exploring the possibilities of genre-based writing by beginners. This means my students and I set out to take an adventure, trying to do the impossible. In this adventure, I believe that I did stretch our apprentices' ability to do what they believed they could not do. But I planned and prepared the step-by-step scaffolding for the whole class, and individual scaffolding on the case-by-case basis. The purpose was "to apprentice students in a master-apprentice relationship in a Discourse (Gee, 2012, p.175). They complained a lot at the beginning, but later on when they actually worked on the writings after all the steps of preparation, they were led into it naturally without too much resistance. For the second writing, it was even more accepted as the assignment that they could do. Actually they enjoyed writing the fairy tale story because this text had a story line that made students feel related to the fairy tales they read in their own language. In the end, my students enjoyed very much their own stories created in Chinese, the target language.

Again for beginner writers, genre-based approach is not a choice, but a necessity for me. The genres of text not only gave me tools to work with, but also provided guidelines and template for the beginners to follow. Within each genre, while learning how to create text on the micro level as learning-to-write, we also aimed at writing-to-learn (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 2011; Rechelt, Lefkowitz, Rinnert & Schultz, 2012) to

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practice building in those language basics in the texts, in order to express ourselves more effectively. There is no doubt that beginners need to learn the basics of Chinese language, especially Chinese characters. But I believe that character learning can be embedded in the writing practice, because literacy is a situated practice (Gee, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978), and meaning making is in the social interactions (Bakhtin, 1982). In fact, Jasmine was very happy she learned some characters and remembered them by using them many times in her writing. In addition Jasmine was more confident in writing in general.

Intertextuality is not just a tool for researchers to investigate the sources of different voices, it is a practice everyone is engaged in everyday life. Kristeva (1990, cited in Bazerman 2004) believes that authors do not create their texts from their own original minds, but rather compile them from pre-existent texts, so that, a text is a 'permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text', and in this text several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another. "Our reading and writing are in dialogue with each other as we write in direct and indirect response to what we have read before, and we read in relation to the ideas we have articulated in our own writing" (Bazerman, 2004, p. 53). If teachers can take advantage of intertextuality and provide rich resources for students to have dialogue with, students would have better chances to create texts neutralizing many voices, including their own or even making their own voices stronger and more convincing.

Literacy helps improve an individual's self-image by transforming the individual. Identities are constructed in the social interactions of literacy, thus they are fluid, relational, dynamic and context-dependent. The identities constructed can be positive or negative, which can have impact on their investment in learning. It deserves our teachers'

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attention to focus on how to assist students to positively construct their identities in the literacy practices and how to empower them to value and bring their voices into the interactions of literacy practices. Norton (1995) argues that "an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own social identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space" (p. 18). This awareness will place the responsibility of learning on both learners and teachers in the learning environment of classroom setting, where teachers and students co-construct the learning experience. Teachers need to be aware that in the negotiation of social and cultural identities what could be different potential "incentives" for students' investment, and how these identities and investment change over time. Being informed of these clues or values, teachers can better cope with the pedagogical practices that can provide encouraging contexts for the learners to invest their effort.

Future Research

It is regrettable that our language program is only two years long (actually shorter than normal two years) and I cannot do a follow up study for further investigations on my focal student's continuous learning. This study is conducted in our particular contexts with our particular set of students who may be different in many ways from students elsewhere. Further, this study is very narrow in scope, only cover very limited genres of writing. I can see there are many areas open to further investigations on beginner writing in Chinese, or writing in Chinese for all students. I would recommend the following areas for further study and research:

First, I did this study on genre-based writing by our particular set of students in our social contexts. I am wondering that if similar study is done in other setting, what the

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outcome will be. Is it going to be similar or dramatically different? If it is different, what are the differences?

Second, since we only had the time to write two texts with two different genres, further study is needed to investigate writing with other genres. What I have in mind is detective story or a rap song, or even a comic of some kind. It will be interesting to see what students can create. It is also important to investigate genre from various perspectives, including the role of genre acquisition, genre transfer among languages acquired, and genre theory in developing academic literacy in K-12 schools.

Third, we have only two years of learning Chinese language in this school, it is impossible to do a follow up study on my learners over time. I would recommend a longitudinal study to see the changes or growth on the area of writing by starting to practice composing early in students' Chinese learning journey, perhaps in a four year stretch. The longitudinal study can track on the lexical, syntactical, sematic and genre knowledge, including the rhetorical argument on ideologies and perspectives.

Fourth, as the data and analysis of this study have shown that in the process of co-constructing our texts, we have experienced our success and challenges, which are situated in this particular setting with our particular learners. I would be very interested in seeing the dynamics of interactions on literacy in a different setting, what other challenges and success would be in the negotiations of building knowledge collaboratively by teacher and students.

Fifth, this study demonstrates that Jasmine constructed different identities in the interactions that inspired her to invest her time and effort in the academics and the trade,

especially on our writing projects. I would be curious to see what other possible identities can be constructed in different dynamic interactions in different contexts.

Sixth, I would recommend to add reading aloud texts created by each student. The sounding of the characters is to connect the orthography with the phonetic representation. This can be done after they finish their texts. Students can read their own stories to the class after some preparation. The study can track how well students retain both the written and the spoken connections.

Next I will end this conversation with a quote from Jasmin's reflection: "Through this experience, I learned many words and I feel much better in writing mandarin, although I, still, have a long way to go" (Jasmine, Feb. 29, 2016).

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

I volunteer to participate in this qualitative study and understand that:

1. I understand that our curriculum will include several writing projects this year and I will participate just like everyone else in the class.

2. I give permission for Ms. Geng to observe me in class, study and analyze my writings and reflections of the writings, in the forms of draft and final writing.

3. I might be interviewed by Ms. Geng and the interview will be tape recorded to facilitate analysis of the data.

4. I understand that results from this interview will be included in Ms Geng's doctoral dissertation and may also be included in manuscripts submitted to professional journals
   for publication and presentations made at professional conferences.

5. My name will not be used, nor will I be identified personally, in any way of at any time.

6. I am free to withdraw from part or all of this study at any time.

7. There is no prejudice against me either I give Ms. Geng permission to study my writing or not.

8. I have the right to review material prior to the final defense or other publications.

9. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this study.

10. If I have any questions regarding this research, I can contact Ms. Geng at
    gengp@sps.springfield.ma.us or 413-253-4730. I am aware that I can also
    contact Ms. Geng's adviser Prof. Theresa Austin at taustin@educ.umass.edu or
    413-545-0138

_____   _____

  Parent's Signature (under 18)   Participant's Signature

_____   _____

            Date   Date

APPENDIX B

INSTRUCTION FOR WRITING A PEN-PAL LETTER

1. Please write a letter in Chinese character to your imagined Pen-Pal.

2. The letter needs to have a beginning, core content and an ending.

3. The following are some ideas that will get your thinking started for the writing:

    You are asked to use the vocabularies you learned or you can find to create a writing/text in Chinese that will describe yourself, your family, your school, your community, and most important of all, your interests, your environment, what you are good at and your dreams. In one word, what you want other people to know about you.

4. You may get help from your friends, neighbors and your teacher.

5. You are asked to write a draft first. Then you need to do editing and revising or expanding.

6. After the editing and revising, approved by teacher, you can write the final version of it.

7. You are welcome to utilize any resource you can find.

SAMPLE PEN-PAL LETTER FOR MODELING

亲爱的笔友:

　　你好。 我叫林小明。我的家住在北京。我有爸爸，妈妈，和一个弟弟。我喜欢我的家，因为爸爸，妈妈和弟弟都很爱我。我们一起学习， 一起运动，一起去看长城和其他有趣的地方。将来我们想一起去看纽约和波士顿。

　　我上十二年级。我的学校很大， 也很漂亮。 我们有数学课，中文课，科学课和英文课。我最喜欢英文课。 因为我学四年英文了，我可以用英文写信了。我的英文老师给我们讲了很多关于美国的故事。我知道你们的高中里有很多课后活动，我很想参加。我听说你们有中文课。你们喜欢中文课吗？

　　我喜欢美国的 hip-hop 音乐。我经常听 hip-hop 歌曲。我用中文写了几首 hip-hop 歌曲，也经常唱给同学听。我也喜欢打篮球。Kobe Bryant 是我的偶像。 我看了很多他的比赛。他的篮球打得太好了！我希望有一天我也打得那么好。

　　除了听音乐，打球，我也学习摄影。我拍了很多照片了，大部分是风景，其它是人物。中国有很多漂亮的地方，美国也有。将来我想去美国摄影。你可以给我推荐几个地方吗？

　　你叫什么名字？上几年级？我可以看你的学校吗？如果你喜欢，我会跟你见面，给你表演中文 hip-hop 歌曲，也和你一起打篮球。你喜欢做什么？我很想知道。希望你给我写信说很多你的故事。我会耐心等待。

祝好！

你的笔友： 林小明

二零一六年二月二日

PEN-PAL LETTER WRITTEN BY JASMINE

亲爱的笔友：

你好。 我叫 Jasmine. 我的家住在美国的春田市。 我有妈妈，哥哥，弟弟，和奶奶。我们一起买东西和看电影。

我上十二年级。我（是）学生。 我（也）有心理学课，数学课，和英文课。 学校对我是很重要的。学校对你们重要吗？

我的学校是职业学校。我想当一个合格的护士。 因为我学护士专业。 我努力学习护士专业。 我也学习中文。 我要帮助那些只讲中文的病人。我是荣誉学生。

除了学校，我喜欢听音乐。我经常听 Exo。 他们是我的偶像。 我最喜欢 [韩国] 歌曲，他们是 Overdose。 我希望有一天我能跟他们一起表演。 你知道 Exo 吗？ 如果你不知道，你应该听他们的音乐。 我也听别的音乐。 你喜欢什么歌曲？ 我也喜欢读书 (，)。 我不听音乐的时候我读很多书。 你喜欢做什么？

祝好！

你的笔友： Jasmine

二 O 一六年三月八日 (March 8, 2016)

APPENDIX E

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION OF THE PEN-PAL LETTER

The reflection journal is to be written in English and cannot be in Bullet form. It needs to be in paragraphs. You can write anything you feel about the different writing steps. The following would be some ideas that will guide your thinking, but you are not limited by the ideas.

1. What were ideas you learned from the sample Pen-Pal letter?

2. What were things you learned from the sample letter helped you in creating your own letter?

3. How did you put your ideas in order?

4. What were the reasons that you select the things to put in your letter?

5. Did you do any editing or revising, or expanding of your letter? How?

6. Where did you go for help when you need it? Was your teacher helpful?

7. What did you find helpful if you worked with other people in creating your letter?

8. What did you know about writing pen-pal letter before we started this project?

9. What are the things you learned from this project that will help you write better in the future?

10. What challenges did you have when you did the writing?

11. What are your successes in creating the letter?

12. What resources did you find helpful?

13. Do you have any other things you want to tell here?

APPENDIX F

THE MOON LADY CHANG E

<div align="center">

cháng é bèn yuè

常 娥 奔 月

</div>

hěn jiǔ hěn jiǔ yǐ qián yǒu yī gè guó wáng tā de quán lì hěn dà yě hěn xié
很久，很久以前，有一个 国王。 他的 权力 很大，也很邪

è tā yǒu yī gè qī zi tā jiào cháng é
恶。他有一个妻子。 她 叫 常 娥。

zhè gè guówáng tīng shuō yǒu yī zhǒng shén yào néng shǐ rén cháng shēng bù
这个 国 王 听说 有 一 种 神 药，能 使人长 生 不

lǎo tā pài le hěn duō rén qù xúnzhǎo zhèzhǒng shényào yīn wèi tā yào cháng shēng
老。他派了 很多 人 去 寻找 这 种 神药，因 为 他要 长 生

bù lǎo
不老。

zhè gè guówáng pài le hǎo jǐ bǎi rén zuò chuán qù yuǎn hǎi zhǎo shényào
这个 国 王 派了 好几百人，坐船 去 远海 找 神 药。

tā shuō wǒ yào cháng shēng bù lǎo rú guǒ nǐ mén zhǎo bú dào shén yào jiù bú
他说："我要 长 生 不老。如果 你们 找 不 到 神药， 就不

yào huí lái
要 回来！"

pài chū qù de rén zhǎo dào le cháng shēng bù lǎo de shén yào cháng é zhī dào
派 出去的人 找 到 了 长 生 不老的神 药。常 娥 知 道

guó wáng shì yī gè xié è de rén tā bù xiǎng ràng guó wáng cháng shēng bù lǎo tā bǎ
国王 是一个邪恶的人，她不想让 国王 长 生 不 老。 她把

神药偷出来 全喝了下去。

她刚刚 喝下 神 药,就飞 向 了 天 上 的 月 亮。她 现 在

仍 然 住 在 月 亮 上。

人们 很 高 兴 常 娥 救 了 他 们，使他 们 不 再 受 邪 恶

国 王 的 统 治。所以,每 年 的 八 月 十 五 日 人 们 要 庆 祝

中 秋 节,纪 念 常 娥。

APPENDIX G

TRANSLATION OF THE MOON LADY

Many, many years ago, there was a powerful king who was an evil person. This king had a beautiful wife whose name was Chang E （嫦娥）.

The king heard about a magic medicine which would keep him young forever. He wanted it and sent many people to look for the magic medicine that would keep him young forever.

The sent a few hundred people in large boats and told them to sail far out into sea. He said, "Do not come back until you have found the magic medicine that will keep me young forever."

The people found the magic medicine that would keep one young. Chang E knew that the king was an evil person. She did not want him to live forever, so she stole the magic medicine that would keep one young and she swallowed it herself.

As soon as she had taken the medicine, Chang E went up into heaven. She lives on the moon to this very day.

The people were very, very happy that Chang E was able to save them from being ruled by the evil king forever. Therefore, every year on the 15th day of the eighth month, the people remember her with the Moon Festival celebration.

APPENDIX H

INSTRUCTION OF FAIRY TALE STORY

After you read the Story Chang E in Chinese, you will write a similar story in Chinese characters. The fairy tale story can be from any culture, or any story you heard from your parents, friends, read online, or your own creation, but it needs to have positive messages. Please follow the requirement below:

1. The story needs to be a complete story

3. It needs to be at least 3 paragraphs

4. You are welcome to use those languages we learned from our lesson

5. You are encouraged to take the sample story as reference

6. You need to write a draft first and then edit & revise the story

7. You can work with other people or ask for help if you need it

8. I will select the good stories to read to the class before I send them out

9. You will get 1-10 points of extra credit on the average of your grade if

   you write a meaningful story.

APPENDIX I

FAIRY TALE STORY WRITTEN BY JASMINE

白色巫玫瑰

很久 很久以前，有一个种（ 植园 missing），叫 （"）真正友谊（"）。一八二０年种植园主结婚了（。） 这个女人名叫安妮，她成为我们今天的传说。

安妮帕默非常美丽。 她有丰富的声音，黑色的眼睛。她的皮肤是光滑的，她有小鼻子， 小口。然而，她的个性和她的外表是很不同的。安妮相信巫术和鬼魂。安妮住在海地的时候，开始相信巫术。她成为女祭司的信徒。女祭司教安妮所有关于鬼魂的说法。她带安妮去有黑色魔法的地方，死亡会发生。

几年以后，女祭司死了。 安妮搬到牙买加 （，） 她跟约翰帕默结婚。安妮不久就厌倦了约翰，所以就毒死了他。之后她先后跟其他两个人结婚。但是都神秘地死了。安妮否认她杀害了她的丈夫。他们死亡是因为凡人疾病。她的第三个丈夫死亡之后，安妮更加好奇了。她开始折磨她的奴隶。有一次安妮斩首一个仆人，把他的头放在篮子里。

安妮是有情的女人。她总是把監监工或会计带进家里，所以她可以同他们睡觉。然而安妮更喜欢那个会计。可是不幸， 他爱上了一个仆人。安妮发现后，愤怒了。她给仆人念了咒语。女孩告诉了她的叔叔。可是他不能破解诅咒。这个仆人就死了。 叔叔很愤怒，组织奴隶，制定计划，要杀死安妮。下一个晚上奴隶搜查安妮（的）屋子。他们发现了安妮，他们把 （她）勒死了。。。

直到今天，牙买加当地人说（，）晚上他们会看到，听到安妮附在扫帚上在天空行。

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Could you tell me something about your family?

2. Could you tell me something about learning Chinese in our class?

3. What came to your mind when you were given the task of constructing letter in Chinese?

4. Was the sample letter helpful? In what way?

5. Did you follow the letter devices in the sample letter or you used the devices you already knew before? What are they?

6. How did you select your ideas for the letter writing?

7. How did you organize your ideas in the letter?

8. What did you do to revise your letter?

9. Did you do any expansion of your text?

10. What was in your mind when you encountered challenges?

11. What resources did you find helpful to your writing?

12. Did you learn some words by yourself through writing?

13. Are you successful in writing this letter?   What way?

14. What else can you tell me about what happening during the different stages of writing the letter?

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