TRACING CHINESE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' LANGUAGE AND LITERACY
SOCIALIZATION TRAJECTORIES WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE FIRST-YEAR WRITING
CONTEXT IN A U.S. UNIVERSITY

By

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ABSTRACT

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While language socialization research has yielded rich insights in understanding international students' language learning and socialization experiences in the instructed academic settings (Duff, 2010, 2019; Duff, Zappa-Hollman, & Surtees, 2019), fewer studies have examined the learning and socialization occurred outside the classrooms (Reinhardt, 2019). As Reinhardt and Thorne (2017) pointed out, focusing on the language socialization in the instructed L2 settings might be limited in (1) describing and capturing second language learners' language and literacy practices outside the classrooms, and (2) tracing their complex identity construction and performance across formal and informal, online and offline environments. Therefore, there is a strong need to investigate how their out-of-school language and literacy practices inform/mediate their language learning and socialization in the academic discourses (Kobayashi, Zappa-Hollman, & Duff, 2017).

This dissertation set up to portray a comprehensive picture of four Chinese international students' socialization experiences in the U.S. higher education context. Guided by second language socialization framework (Duff, 2010), this ethnographic study traced four Chinese undergraduate students' multilingual and multimodal literacy practices within and outside the First-Year Writing (FYW) class in a U.S. university over an academic year. Data including individual interviews, class observations, social media posts, and written assignments were collected and analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The findings showed that central to their socialization experiences is my participants' exertion of individual agency to achieve their goals, the construction and negotiation of different identities, and their participation in different communities across various spaces. The study demonstrated that the instructors, their parents, the writing center consultants, the American students, and others they encountered in the informal spaces were all important socialization agents. The interactions with these agents greatly affected how my focal participants positioned themselves and how they negotiated the imposed identities. Their identities then guided their decision-making and socialized participants into different practices, values, and communities. For example, my participants constructed identities as a video editor, an emergent business professional, an intelligent and knowledgeable student, and a bodybuilder in different spaces. More importantly, these identities empowered them to challenge the imposed identity of being the deficient English language learners in academic settings. Therefore, the findings presented that participants were not "passive" novices; instead, they agentively and strategically leveraged linguistic and semiotic resources developed in literacy spaces to navigate academic challenges in the FYW classes and steered their language socialization to positive directions.

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I'm deeply indebted to my participants, Michael, Xing, Henry, and Yang, who are willing to share their stories and lives with me, which made this dissertation possible. I am grateful to their commitment to the project and their trust in me with their stories. I hope this study generates insights that help others better understand international students' learning experiences.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

CBW   College Bridge Writing

CEFR   Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

CIC   Creative Inclusive Campus Grant

CoP   Communities of Practice

ELC   English Language Center

ELU   East Land University

ESL   English as Second Language

FYW   First-year Writing

INoPs   Individual Network of Practices

ISSO   International Students and Scholars Office

IRB   Institutional Review Board

LS   Language Socialization

L2   Second Language

NLG   The New London Group

PI   Principal investigator

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines international students' language and literacy socialization experiences in a U.S. university. In this ethnographic case study, I trace four male Chinese undergraduate students' language and literacy practices within and outside their First-year Writing classes. I also explore their identity construction and performance in their respective socialization trajectories during the first year of their undergraduate study at East Land University, a large public university in the Midwest of the US. In this chapter, I present a general overview of my research topic and the need, and the significance of the study. I also introduce key terms used in this study.

1.1. Situating the Study

In recent years, U.S. higher education institutions have witnessed an influx of Chinese international students, who now constitute the largest population of international students (31%) (Heng, 2018), and contribute more than 10 billion to U.S. colleges and universities and their locales annually (Institute of International Education, 2014; Tsuruoka, 2016;). This phenomenon is a result of a complex combination of factors (Abelmann & Kang, 2014; Heng, 2018; Louie & Qin, 2018; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002) that include: (1) an expanding new rich middle class in China due to China's steadily booming economy; (2) China's one-child policy that encourages parents to invest in their singletons, especially in education, to boost their competitiveness in the globalized job market; (3) increasingly competitive college entrance examinations in China; and (4) U.S. higher education institutions' reduced state and local funding, which pushed universities to locate funds in the global market.

Despite the huge economic value that Chinese international students bring to the US, their experiences in U.S. colleges are reported to be far from satisfying. Many institutions, for

example, have been reported as being inadequately equipped in accommodating Chinese

international students' diversified needs and integrating them into the university community

linguistically, culturally and academically (Fraiberg, Wang, & You, 2017; Heng, 2018; Urban &

Palmer, 2014). At individual level, studies show that Chinese international students experience

language barriers, cultural adjustment, social integration issues with domestic students, and a

lack of preparation to meet Western educational expectations (Heng, 2018; Jones, 2017;

Marginson, 2013). Kwon, Hernandez, and Moga (2019) also describe a trend of racial

segregation at U.S. universities between domestic and Chinese students, with the latter group

self-segregating in and through academic and social activities.

Admittedly, over the past few years, the institutional support for international students

has certainly grown: there are increasing numbers of English Language Centers, international

orientation seminars, service programs that help students familiarize themselves with university

culture and expectations in order to ensure their smooth transition into their new social and

academic lives (Bista, 2019). Nevertheless, scholars have also raised concerns towards such

efforts by pointing out that the underlying assumption is that international students are often seen

as "newcomers" who have "a set of identifiable and correctable problems" (Lee & Rice, 2007, p.

338) that include inadequate English proficiency and unfamiliarity with the academic practices in

English-speaking countries. As such, these students are often framed as needing to be fixed with

the help of "experts" (i.e., the domestic students, instructors, and supervisors) (Ou & Gu, 2018).

Being treated differently and unequally, these newcomers are often positioned and even position

themselves as the "Other" (Bista, 2019; Marginson, 2013; Straker, 2016). As Duff (2015)

astutely pointed out, "transnationals are often perceived as one massive, undifferentiated

category (or problem) - English language learners - obscuring tremendous differences in their

backgrounds, resources, goals, abilities, and trajectories" (p. 66). Because it is recognized that such "tremendous differences" impact students' participation in different kinds of activities (Straker, 2016) and shape their identity construction in the host communities as well as their socialization trajectories into the host communities (Duff, 2015), more studies have problematized and examined the aforementioned deficit perspective which posits Chinese international students as "newcomers" with limited linguistic and cultural repertoires in the host communities. Instead, these studies (e.g., Bista, 2019; Kiernan, Meier, & Wang, 2016; Seltzer, 2019) promote an asset-based perspective, that is, one that constructs these students as multilingual writers and speakers who bring their own rich cultural, ethnic, linguistic histories and experiences to the existing community (Gargano, 2009).

In addition to their knowledge and expertise on their own languages and cultures, international students are often seen as being transnational youth, whose learning experiences should be understood within the frame of globalization and translocal flow of cultures, knowledge, technologies. Their transnational experiences are exemplified by their active participation in the digital world to engage with the globally informed youth cultures and interest-based online communities (Thorne, Sauro, & Smith, 2015) and their extensive social network building efforts to maintain ties with their home countries and the host countries (Darvin & Norton, 2014; Fraiberg, Wang, & You, 2017; Lam, 2009). As a result, their participation in the digital world provides opportunities for them to develop a multilingual and multimodal repertoire which affords them different modes of communication to make meanings in the host community (Thorne et al., 2015). In addition, It also allows them to develop multiple identities or subscribe to memberships in different communities that guide their decision-making (Lam, 2009; Reinhardt & Thorne, 2017; Yi, 2009). Furthermore, their language and literacy practices

traverse online and offline, instructed and informal spaces and also affect the learning in

academic settings (Lee & Bucholtz, 2015; Wang, 2017). Therefore, in the present study, I take

into consideration how their identity construction, their out-of-school literacy and language

practices, and the learning of academic literacy practices were interconnected and influenced

each other, contributing to the unique language and literacy socialization trajectories of each of

my participant.

1.2. Justification for the Study

Given their demographic importance, there has been an increase in academic interest and

inquiry on Chinese undergraduate student populations in the US over the past decade. For

example, the scholarship on higher education and international students (e.g., Forbush &

Foucault-Welles, 2016; Heng, 2018; Su & Harrison, 2016; Yan, 2017; Valdez, 2015; Zhang,

2016) has intensely investigated various arenas of Chinese international students' experiences in

the US (e.g., their motivations, challenges and difficulties encountered, use of strategies to

promote academic performance, their social media use, and their acculturation patterns, etc.). In

addition to the investigation of the intragroup dynamics, their relationships with other groups,

such as Asian Americans, and the domestic American students, have also been of great interest

to scholars interested in cross-cultural communication and human relations (e.g., Kwon,

Hernandez, & Moga, 2019; Louie & Qin, 2018; Zhu & Bresnahan, 2018). Of these studies,

Chinese international students' social and academic integration into the U.S. academic

discourses remains the focus of the research inquiry. This inquiry has been extensively

investigated in different lines of scholarship in applied linguistics, often centered on topics

related to Chinese international students' learning and socialization of second language and

literacy practices in the U.S. academic discourses (e.g., Anderson, 2017; De Costa, Tigchelaar, &

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Cui, 2016; Fraiberg et al., 2017; Lam, 2009; Rabbi & Canagarajah, 2017; Wang, 2017; Wargo & De Costa, 2017). In particular, second language (L2) socialization research, grounded in a sociocultural understanding of language learning, which views language learning as a situated, fluid, and dynamic social practice in specific social contexts, has shed light upon understanding Chinese international students' socialization into U.S. academic discourses (Anderson, 2017; Duff, 2010; Kafle & Canagarajah, 2015; Kobayashi et al., 2017).

However, within the U.S. higher education context, recent language socialization research has looked at mostly Chinese graduate students' experiences (e.g., Anderson, 2017; Okuda & Anderson, 2018; Rabbi & Canagarajah, 2017), in particular their language and literacy socialization into specific academic discourses (e.g., oral or written academic discourses in their master or doctoral programs within their specific disciplines). As important as these studies are, more studies are warranted to inform Chinese undergraduate students' socialization trajectories. As Stevens (2012) pointed out, "the linguistic bar has been set far higher" (p. 2) for international undergraduate students in the sense that they are expected to have a wider range of vocabulary, requisite cultural knowledge, as well as communicative competence to participate in various courses, interactive classrooms, and student communities. In addition, compared to the graduate students, there are a larger number of international undergraduate students (431,930) than graduate students (377,943) in the US, according to the statistics released by educationdata.org in 2019. Particularly noteworthy is research on how Chinese undergraduate students (1) navigate more challenging social and academic demands, and (2) are socialized into new forms of linguistic and literacy practices in the academic discourses.

Furthermore, while most socialization studies focus on language development in the instructed contexts (mainly, the classroom), as discussed earlier, the transnational youth today

often engage in extensive language learning and use practices in spaces outside the classroom, such as the peer communities, interest-based Internet sites, social networking sites, etc. (Gee, 2005; Lee & Bucholtz, 2015). In particular, the advancement of new media and technologies has afforded new modes of communication which can diversify and enrich students' language and literacy practices (Lam, 2008, 2009). However, questions such as how international students interact with the affordances of new media and technologies in relation to their socialization into the academic discourses, have been under-explored (Kobayashi et al., 2017; Reinhardt & Thorne, 2017).

Informed by these insights, my ethnographic qualitative study traces four Chinese undergraduate students' language socialization experiences at East Land University (ELU). I recruited focal participants from First-year Writing (FYW) courses where students develop literacy skills of rhetoric, critical thinking, reading, and composition (Eckstein & Ferris, 2018). The FYW, composed of various writing assignments (narrative and argumentative essays, research paper, remix projects, etc.), is considered a literacy space where the norms and values of academic literacy practices are made explicit (Godfrey, 2015). By engaging in these practices, students learn and are socialized into U.S. academic literacy discourses (Fraiberg et al., 2017; Kim, Hammill, & Matsuda, 2017). Outside the FYW classroom, during their first year, international students also experience new cultures, languages, friends, while also constructing and maintaining social relations with different communities to negotiate their identities and seek belongingness (Lam, 2008, 2009; Wang, 2017). All these new encounters create opportunities for them to develop strategies and literacies to make sense of the world around them and navigate different demands.

Drawing insights from the L2 socialization theoretical framework, I recognize Chinese undergraduate students as active agents who make strategic moves that facilitate/impede their socialization process (Duff, 2010; Duff & Doherty, 2015). The study also views socialization as a multi-directional process in which Chinese undergraduate students' own knowledge and expertise helps them (re)negotiate and transform their normative practices over time (Duff, 2010; Duff & Anderson, 2015; Duff & Doherty, 2015; Garrett, 2017). To summarize, I employ a multiple ethnographic case study method to examine four Chinese undergraduate students' language and literacy socialization experiences in a U.S. university. In particular, I focus on how their language and literacy development was shaped by (1) their identity construction and negotiation within and outside the FYW context; (2) their enactment of agency in mobilizing various resources to facilitate their learning; (3) their out-of-school language and literacy practices across different spaces and how these practices interact with their literacy practices in the academic discourses.

1.3. Definition of Terms

1.3.1. Literacy, Literacy Practices, and Multiliteracies

Literacy has become a critical term in language education research and has constituted a significant part of language pedagogy in recent years (Kern, 2000; 2015; Warner & Michelson, 2018). A contemporary understanding of literacy has extended beyond reading and writing skills, and from a sociocultural perspective it has been conceptualized as ways of knowing and being in the world (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, 2015; Gee, 2002). To be more specific, informed by sociocultural theory in the 1980s (Heath, 1983; Street, 1984), literacy is understood as not residing in the individuals' mind, but in people's everyday literacy practices shaped by the local contexts. In other words, literacy practices occur in the interactions "between language users,

texts, and contexts of use" (Warner & Michelson, 2018, p. 5). While recognizing its situated nature, Brandt and Clinton (2002) also reminded us of the interconnectedness between the local contexts and the global forces in shaping our everyday literacy practices. As Kern (2015) rightfully pointed out, literacy requires language knowledge, including the morphological, semantic, and syntactic rules used to write it, so that one can interpret written signs or produce well-formed sentences. In addition, literacy also requires understanding of the discourse worlds mediated by both linguistic and non-linguistic (e.g., tables, graphs, diagrams, maps, photographs) conventions, and familiarity with various genres and styles, so that one can engage in social practices and understand social and cultural meanings embedded. In short, literacy is understood as a social practice (Street, 1984, 2013).

Literacy events and literacy practices are widely used notions in understanding literacy as a social phenomenon. Literacy events are understood at a local and situated level. It serves as concrete evidence of literacy practices. As Barton and Hamilton (2000) describe, "events are observable episodes which arise from practices and are shaped by them. The notion of events stresses the situated nature of literacy in that it always exists in a social context" (p. 8). Literacy practices, on the other hand, are not always observable, as it involves values, feelings, beliefs, including how participants think about literacy, make sense of literacy, talk about literacy, and so on (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 6). As suggested by Rabbi and Canagarajah (2017), literacy practices comprise a significant part of one's socialization process in that students acquire the relevant knowledge and skills in order to enact identities and discourses that are desired in their host communities.

Building on the literacy scholarly work in the 1980s, a group of education and literacy scholars, i.e., the New London Group (NLG), issued a manifesto in 1996, titled, *A Pedagogy of*

Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures. The use of multiliteracies was in response to the "realities of increasing local diversity and global connectedness" (NLG, 1996, p. 64), which resulted in varied communication patterns applied to everyday interactions at school, family, and workplace, etc. The *multi* in Multiliteracies was understood from two perspectives: the multilingual and the multimodal (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Multilingualism recognizes not only the use of multiple languages and multiple Englishes in everyday experience of meaning making in the contemporary globalized society, but also the discourse differences within a language across various social contexts (e.g., professional, online, interest group, affinity group) (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Gee, 1996). The multimodal dimension speaks to the changing communication modes and patterns due to the widespread use of digital technologies and new media. In this new era, "understanding and using new media and technologies competently is another conception of "new literacies", which include digital literacy, internet literacy, multimodal literacy" (Lankshear, Knobel, & Curran, 2013, p. 1). As a result, meaning does not solely derive from texts. Rather, learners make meaning through combining and applying both linguistic and other semiotic resources (e.g., visual, gesture, sound, etc.) following "the sets of conventions connected with semiotic activity [...] in a given social space" (NLG, 1996, p. 74).

Informed by the concept of multiliteracies (NLG, 1996), in this study, I adopt the view that language and literacy learning are socially and culturally situated, shaped by contexts, and mediated by the use of technologies and digital tools (Gee, 1996). This understanding of literacy practices not only recognizes Chinese international students' cultural and linguistic diversity, but also invokes a gaze to students' literacy practices in different spaces and communities (e.g., classrooms, social media sites, virtual communities, etc.).

1.4. Organization of the Dissertation Chapters

Thus far, I have introduced the research topic and have explained how this study contributes to the current research on understanding Chinese international students' socialization experiences in the US.

In Chapter 2, I present the theoretical framework of second language socialization that I used for this study and elaborate on three key constructs that are widely adopted in language socialization research to understand individual learners' language socialization trajectories: agency, identity, and community. Next, I review the literature on language socialization research within the post-secondary contexts. These studies are divided into two categories: (1) studies that examine language learners' socialization experiences in academic discourse communities; and (2) studies that look at language learners' socialization experiences in informal or online settings. In addition, it's necessary to point it out that given the changes in academics due to Covid 19, many universities in the US have moved their face-to-face courses online, which leads to a growth of online academic discourses communities.

In Chapter 3, I explain the methodology used in this study. I begin the chapter with an introduction of the research context (e.g., the First-year Writing program) and the four participants –Michael, Xing, Henry, and Yang – by providing their respective demographic information. I also describe the data collection process, and how I have situated myself as a researcher. In addition, I discuss how my relationships with the participants and my own experience as a transnational student have informed the interpretation of my data.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I present the findings, that is, the language and literacy socialization trajectories of my four focal participants (Michael and Xing in Chapter 4, Henry and Yang in Chapter 5). Michael and Xing's cases are discussed in Chapter 4 because I identify that both

their fathers were considered the newly rich, whose sociocultural status in the Chinese society has affected two participants' decision-making in their literacy practices and their identity development. Henry and Yang's cases are discussed in Chapter 5 because both of them were largely influenced by a particular online community due to their interests: Henry's interest in videography and Yang's interest in muscle building. The data, including the interview excerpts, class observation notes, their writing assignments, screenshots of social network posts, etc, presented in these two chapters, show how four participants constructed and negotiated their identities, enacted personal agency to leverage resources to facilitate their learning in the academic discourse community, and socialized into different values, practices, and communities.

In Chapter 6, I summarize the major findings from the four participants. In addition, while the previous two chapters map out each participant's unique socialization trajectory, this chapter focuses on the significant factors that shaped their socialization experiences and discusses each of them in great depth. Lastly, I conclude the dissertation by discussing the pedagogical implications.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, I describe the theoretical framework – language socialization – and three constructs (agency, identity, and community) that are crucial in understanding international students' language socialization trajectories. In addition, I take into consideration students' out-of-school language and literacy practices in shaping their socialization experiences. In particular, I understand that international students, in the globalized and digitalized era, engage in extended social networking and online activities across their home and host countries and across various languages and cultures. I also provide a review of the research that have investigated this student population's language learning and literacy practices across different spaces. Through these steps, I contextualize the study within a larger body of research in the fields of applied linguistics.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Language socialization (LS) is a theoretical and methodological framework that documents a process by which novices or newcomers are socialized into language, culture, and literacy practices within a larger sociocultural context through the mediation of language (Duff, 2019; Garrett, 2017; Schieffelin, 2018). *Language* in LS is understood as a "powerful semiotic tool for evoking social and moral sentiments, collective and personal identities tied to place and situation, and bodies of knowledge and beliefs" (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008, p. 8). Language learners' development of language and literacy practices specific to a community also entails learning the certain ways of thinking, talking, feeling and acting that are expected in that community (Garrett, 2017). Therefore, novices or newcomers develop the linguistic knowledge as well as the sociocultural knowledge (e.g., beliefs, values, ideologies) in the process of socialization (Duff, 2010), which in turn, helps them to use language meaningfully, appropriately

and effectively in specific communities (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984; Schieffelin, 2018). Second language socialization differs from first language socialization in that second language learners draw on their linguistic and sociocultural repertoires they developed in their own communities as they negotiate their socialization process in the target communities (Duff & Talmy, 2011; Rabbi & Canagarajah, 2017). In addition, as Diao and Maa (2019) rightfully pointed out, "unlike L1 socialization, in which children's membership in a given community is usually assumed, for L2 learners, their legitimacy in the language and their status in the community are often subject to negotiation." (p. 131), which means identity construction and negotiation constitutes a significant part of international students' language socialization experiences (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007).

As a theoretical framework, Lee and Bucholtz (2015, pp. 321-323) summarized seven principles central to the theorization of language socialization. As Principles # 3and #5 in Lee and Bucholtz (2015) are interlinked in that they all point to the role of individuals' agency in their socialization experiences, I combine them in my modified Principle #3 below. In addition, a more thorough discussion of the agency is provided in section 2.1.1.

(1) LS understands learning occurs through social interaction with others. More specifically, through social interaction, learners are scaffolded by the more expert individual/s to perform practices that are desired to specific discourse communities.

(2) LS considers language and culture as interconnected. Researchers observed that the ways in which novices are taught to speak, think, act are culturally specific (e.g., Heath, 1983). Given that cultural and linguistic practices vary across different discourse communities, novices' socialization in different discourse communities (either home or other communities) shapes their experiences and academic outcomes in schools.

(3) LS research recognizes "the cultural norms and practices of a community as dynamic and fluid", as the novices make agentive decisions to resist, reproduce, or transform the practices through interaction with the experts. Therefore, LS researchers call for a dynamic model of language socialization, that is, to understand the socialization process as an interactive, multi-directional process (Bayley & Schecter, 2003).

(4) LS recognizes that the rules of language forms and use in specific discourse communities are not value neutral. Instead, they are shaped by language ideologies that reproduce social inequality.

(5) Identity is "a key outcome of socialization processes". LS understands identity as indexed and achieved through the use of languages and other semiotics. A more thorough discussion on identity can be found in section 2.1.2.

(6) LS understands the relationship between the experts and the novices as fluid and relational. See more in-depth discussion in section 2.1.1.

In the sections that follow, I discuss three constructs that are crucial in understanding language learners' language socialization experiences: *Agency*, *identity*, and *community*.

2.1.1. Agency

As mentioned earlier, the role of agency remains central to understanding language learners' resisting or reproducing cultural and social practices desired in the situated discourses (Lee & Bucholtz, 2015). Recognizing that the socialization process is interactional and co-constructed by members in the discourses, researchers (e.g., Duff, 2010; Duff & Doherty, 2015; Schieffelin, 2018) argue that while the members (the "experts") socialize the "novices" into the practices of norms, including how to think, feel, and act that are informed by the certain values, beliefs, and ideologies (Ou & Gu, 2018), language learners (the "novices") are not passive

recipients in the socialization process; instead, they strategically mobilize linguistic, social and semiotic resources available to them and draw from their rich linguistic and cultural repertoires developed in their original communities as they comply with or resist the norms of practices in discourses in which they are embedded.

The compliance and resistance of language learners to the norms of practice also lead to the transformation of norms and (re) socialization of experts in the target discourse communities, thus contributing to the dynamic, fluid, and multi-directional nature of language socialization (Duff, 2010; Duff & Doherty, 2015; Duff & Talmy, 2011). Particularly in the digital technology era, as observed by Ochs and Schieffelin (2012), the new members with digital literacies might be able to socialize the experts or peers into unfamiliar and changing practices. As a result, many language socialization scholars challenge the static binary of the expert and novice in their research by showcasing that the expert and novice roles are particularly fluid and highly situation-specific (Anderson, 2017; Ou & Gu, 2018; Surtees, 2019).

The fluid and dynamic relationship between the experts and the novices have been examined extensively in empirical studies (Anderson, 2016, 2017; Ou & Gu, 2018; Rabbi & Canagarajah, 2017). Ou and Gu in their 2018 study examined Chinese students' language socialization in intercultural communication at a transnational university in China. The Chinese students, who were positioned as novices in the English-speaking community, were in need of acquiring the linguistic and sociocultural knowledge from their native-English-speaking peers. These students were also in the process of constructing their multilingual identities which empowered them to mobilize multi-linguistic and cultural resources to socialize their international peers into practicing Chinese language and cultural knowledge. This reciprocal process was also found in Rabbi and Canagarajah (2017), who examined a Turkish Ph.D.

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student's academic literacy socialization in relation to the neoliberal norms of academic discourse (e.g., the discourses of academic publishing and funding imperatives). The study showed that the international student was able to renegotiate neoliberal expectations and steer his socialization towards a more ethical and positive outcome. As a result, Rabbi and Canagarajah proposed that we take into consideration students' own histories of mobility across social and cultural contexts in shaping their academic socialization process. Anderson (2017) took a further step into the inquiry of students' self-directed socialization process. Drawing on the notion of *internal-socialization*, Anderson investigated seven Chinese doctoral students' strategic use of internal and external sources and resources to mediate their socialization into the preferred academic discourses. The students' self-reflective and self-monitoring practices in relation to their identity construction of a Ph.D. student highlighted the active role of agency during the socialization process. In light of this finding, Anderson called for more research that takes into consideration how students "mediate events and possibilities internally" and how this internal socialization affects their external actions.

Students' self-directed socialization was also discussed in relation to students' active participation in the online world (Duff & Doherty, 2015). The socialization experiences of the youths in contemporary society were largely mediated by their interactions with the virtual worlds and the online gaming communities (Lam, 2004, 2008; Lee & Bucholtz, 2015; Reinhardt, 2019; Thorne, Black, & Sykes, 2009) that include fanfiction sites (Black, 2005), multilingual chat rooms (Lam, 2004), and social networking sites (Chen, 2013). While there is substantial evidence that digital technologies generate extensive learning opportunities and resources that facilitate students' language learning and socialization (see Reinhardt, 2019 for a review of studies), other studies (e.g., Lam, 2004) remind us that the affordances of technology empower

and enable students to enact oppositional practices that challenge dominant assumptions and lead to transform the established norms in the target discourse communities. Further complicating the understanding of students' self-directed language and literacy learning in the virtual spaces is that such learning is often entangled with the construction and performance of their desired identities (Chen, 2013; Thorne et al., 2015; Yi, 2009). Therefore, Duff and Doherty (2015) called for more future studies to explore "the intersections and potential of new media and social networking, agency, and self-directed socialization into languages, identities, and cultures" (p. 59). In the next section, I discuss language learners' identity construction in second language socialization.

2.1.2. Identity

While various theorizations of *identity* have been developed over the past decades, in the field of applied linguistics, scholars have been drawing from two main theoretical perspectives to understand *identity*, namely a sociocultural perspective and a poststructuralist perspective (Morita, 2012; Norton & Toohey, 2011). A sociocultural perspective draws on Vygotskian sociocultural theory about learning, which considers "language as a mediational means" and learning occurs when language learners appropriate language to participate in situated "socioculturally meaningful activities" (Zuengler & Miller, 2006, p. 39). This view was widely adopted by LS scholars to examine the way children or the novices are socialized into the practices of a given community through interaction with community members (Morita, 2012; Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Central to this socialization process is the learning of the sociocultural knowledge embedded in language use in communicative contexts (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Therefore, language learning is understood as novices participating in the practices of a target community and gaining membership in the community (Lave & Wenger, 1991;

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Morita, 2004). In this process, individuals enact, modify, negotiate, or alter one's identities as they understand who they are in relation to the particular community of practice (Morita, 2012). As Lee and Bucholtz (2015) pointed out, identities are not "a priori categories", but "a key outcome of socializing processes" (p. 323). That is, identity is not seen as an individual's attribute, but rather, it is socially produced and in a continuous process of becoming and changing through social interaction with others (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Morita, 2012).

A poststructuralist perspective views identity as "how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future" (Norton, 2000, p. 5). Identity is therefore considered socially constructed, multiple, dynamic, and subject to change (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Norton, 2000). Language and identity are mutually constitutive: individuals construct and express identities through language; their use of language also indexes their identities (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001). In understanding how identities are shaped and negotiated through discursive practices, many scholars drew on Davies and Harre's (1990) concept of "positioning". According to Davies and Harre (1990), individuals construct and negotiate their identities in relation to how they are positioned by others or by social structures and how they position themselves. This positioning occurring at the local interactional level was argued to manifest the social structures at the macro-level (De Fina, 2014). Therefore, scholars adopting a poststructuralist view also highlight the power relations and ideologies, which mediate the access to resources, in shaping learners' identities (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Darvin & Norton, 2015; Norton & Toohey, 2011). When examining L2 learners' identity construction in relation to the power relations in the social world, many scholars (Kubota & Lin, 2006; Menard-Warwick, 2009; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004) paid attention to identity categories

such as gender, race, ethnicity, social class, and argued that power operates within such socially and historically constructed categories, which mediates language learners' access to resources and impacts their investment in learning the target languages (Norton & Toohey, 2011). While studies reported that learners agentively employ strategies to negotiate the unequal power relations embedded in these categories (Norton, 2000), Blackledge and Pavlenko (2001) also reminded us that the negotiation has its limitations in that learners might not be able to resist certain positioning in powerful power relations. In addition, recognizing that the situated social contexts shape learners' identities, the learners' imagination of the future identities and communities is also seen as influencing their identity construction and investment in language learning (Norton, 2000, 2013; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). Importantly, language learners' desire to realize their imagined identities and participate in the imagined communities affects language learners "learning trajectories, agency, motivation, investment, and resistance" in language learning (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007, p. 669). In this study, I adopt a poststructuralist understanding of identity, as it pays sufficient attention to the role power plays in shaping language learners' investment in learning the language, and it recognizes language learning is also driven by language learners' desire of participating in an imagined community.

More recently, a body of research has examined the identity construction and negotiation of international students (Choi, 2019; Darvin & Norton, 2014; De Costa, 2016; De Costa et al., 2016; Lee, Hunter, & Franken, 2017). For example, studies have investigated how international students negotiate the imposed identities such as 'deficient English language learners', 'nonnative speakers', 'immigrants' in the university settings and reconstructed their identities as successful and capable students and legitimate speakers of English (e.g., Choi, 2019; Lee et al., 2017; Morita, 2004). In the process of negotiating the imposed identities, learners employ

various strategies to increase their learning opportunities and reposition themselves in the target

communities (e.g., interacting with the instructor individually in Morita, 2004; critically

reflecting on the self- and other-imposed positions in Choi, 2019).

In addition, the transnational identities of international students in the contemporary

globalized and digitalized era have also been of great interest to scholars (e.g., De Fina &

Perrino, 2013). Given the increasingly complex language learning contexts shaped by

globalization and digitalization, scholars recognize that individuals develop new identities that

are not necessarily bound to their ethnicity, nationality, or culture (Higgins, 2011). To be more

specific, globalization leads to the increased mobility of people, "globally shared forms of

popular culture and the development of new literacy practices afforded by the Internet". As a

result, individuals engage in a multilayered social life that is featured by "the flows of people,

ideas, culture and technology" (Higgins, 2011, p. 19). As Alim, Ibrahim, and Pennycook (2009)

rightfully pointed out, transnationals meshed and mixed their languages and literacies informed

by globally informed cultures creatively in their work and performance. Therefore, to understand

the complexity of language learners' learning and socialization experiences in contemporary

society, Kasun and Saavedra (2014) argued for a re-framing of language learners as transnational

learners who (1) participate in various online and offline communities, and (2) perform multiple

identities through the use of languages and other semiotic resources (Darvin & Norton, 2014;

Duff, 2015; Higgins, 2011). Next, I discuss the construct of *community*.

2.1.3. Community

The concept of *community* is pivotal in language socialization research. In understanding

language learners' socialization into the target language communities, many LS scholars have

adopted Lave and Wenger's (1991) concepts of *communities of practice* (CoP) and *legitimate*

peripheral participation to examine how language learners gain language competence and membership in the target language communities (Black & Steinkuehler, 2009; Morita, 2004, 2009; Toohey, 2000). The concept of *legitimate peripheral participation* describes a learning process through which the novices progress from the peripheral position to a fuller membership in the given community through the participation in the social practices of the community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). CoP is a situated learning theory which examines community members' collective learning based on three shared characteristics: (1) shared interest; (2) mutual engagement in activities and discussions; and (3) development of a repertoire of resources (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998, p. 71). Central to the CoP theory is the idea of membership. Learners' understanding of being a member of the community shapes their identity, as members share common goals and use shared language and cultural practices to negotiate meaning (Wenger, 1998). In addition, from a language socialization perspective, the novices, if accepted as a legitimate member in the host community, can access more opportunities and resources to learn and use the language to engage in daily practices (Anderson, 2017). Toohey (2000) also reminded us that the power relations and ideologies circulating within the target language community might constrain novices from gaining full participation, as language learners might be excluded or marginalized in the community.

Building on the theoretical framework of CoP, many LS scholars set out to investigate students' socialization experiences with academic discourses and literacies (Duff, 2010; Kobayashi et al., 2017), contributing to a line of scholarship in language socialization research, *the academic discourse socialization*. Academic discourse socialization research mainly focuses on how university students learn to participate in academic discourse communities in a way that is institutionally and socio-culturally valued (Kobayashi et al., 2017). Duff (2010) defines

academic discourse communities as "forms of oral and written language and communication – genre, registers, graphics, linguistic structures, interactional patterns – that are privileged, expected, cultivated, conventionalized, or ritualized" in different academic contexts (p. 175). In the next section, I discuss the related research on international students' academic discourse socialization.

Learning spaces. While CoP has yielded rich insights in language socialization studies (e.g., Anderson, 2017; Morita, 2004), some scholars also questioned its ability to account for students' socialization in digitally mediated learning contexts (e.g., Gee, 2005; Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015). For example, Gee (2005) argued that the concept of community denotes "belongingness" and "close-knit personal ties among people" (p. 214), which do not necessarily explain all kinds of human activities across different spaces, such as classrooms, workplaces, and social media sites. According to Gee (2005), one shortcoming of CoP is that it tries to "label a group of people" (p. 215) in order to draw and delineate the boundary between people in the group and those who are out of the group. Thus, CoP might fall short of characterizing the emergent spaces that are "geographically distributed, technologically mediated, and fluidly populated" (Gee & Hayes, 2012, p. 106). Therefore, spaces characterized by blurred boundaries and fluid engagement, such as fan-based, interest-driven Internet sites (Gee, 2005), afford opportunities and resources that, according to Zappa-Hollman and Duff (2015), do not necessarily derive from the affordances of CoP-like memberships. As a result, Gee (2005) proposed the notion of *affinity spaces* as an alternative to CoP.

According to Gee (2004), an affinity space is "a place or set of places where people affiliate with others based primarily on shared activities, interests, and goals, not shared race, class culture, ethnicity, or gender" (p. 67). Gee (2005) summarized some of the key features that

define an affinity space1) People relate to each other based on common interests and goals; 2) Novices and experts share common spaces; 3) The ways and degrees of participation vary greatly among members; 4) Members are free to draw on knowledge from other spaces and create new signs; 5) Members often engage in self-directed learning and are encouraged to distribute and share their knowledge to other members; and 6) The leadership keeps shifting and is fluid. Gee's notion of affinity spaces has been widely adopted to describe learners' participation in fan-based or interest-based online spaces (e.g., Aljanahi, 2019; Black, 2007; Curwood, 2013; Curwood, Magnifico, & Lammers, 2013), as it captures young people's on-the-move literacy practices in the digital world and the complex nature of their interwoven and interconnected offline and online social networks (Wang, 2017).

Lee and Bucholtz (2015) identified both affinity spaces and academic communities as "culturally meaningful learning spaces" (p. 319). The boundaries of learning spaces are not necessarily clear-cut, as students nowadays participate in multiple communities and engage in new linguistic and cultural practices that emerged from different communities (Duff, 2010; Lee & Bucholtz, 2015). This is particularly evident in transnational students' lived experiences. Therefore, Duff (2010) highlighted that transnational students' different interactions with these learning spaces might lead to a greater variation in students' socialization experiences. To capture the complexities of transnational students' socialization trajectories, Lee and Bucholtz (2015) suggested that scholars take into consideration their interactions with multiple learning spaces and examine the agency of students as they strategically exploit the affordances to develop linguistic and literacy repertoires in these spaces.

Informed by these insights, I recognize that international students' participation in different learning spaces shapes their literacy and language development in the academic

discourses in the US. In response to Reinhardt and Thorne's (2017) call for future language

socialization research to look beyond the classroom settings and shed more light on how learners

make meaning and construct their identities across different spaces and communities, I trace four

Chinese undergraduate students' linguistic and literacy practices across different learning spaces

in this study. In addition, this study explores how participants' learning activities in multiple

learning spaces – whether in the face-to-face communities or mediated by digital technologies –

interact with each other, contributing to their unique language socialization trajectories in the

US. Having discussed the theoretical framework of Language Socialization and its core

constructs, *agency*, *identity*, and *community*, I turn next to studies that adopt LS as the theoretical

framework on international students in the English-medium post-secondary contexts, mainly in

North American contexts.

2.2. Language Socialization Research in North American Post-secondary Contexts

Employing LS as a theoretical framework, scholars have investigated language learners'

socialization experiences in different communities (e.g., Pesco & Crago, 2008 in Canadian

indigenous communities; Cook & Burdelski, 2017 in Japanese communities), different ages of

language users (e.g., Heath, 2017 among adolescents; Kobayashi et al., 2017 among university

students), and different contexts where language socialization occurs (e.g., Fogle & King, 2017

in family language socialization; Kinginger, 2017 in a study-abroad context; Reinhardt &

Thorne, 2017 in an online community). Given the focus of this study, I review language

socialization research that examines the socialization experiences of international students who

learn and use English as an additional language in the English-medium higher education contexts

mainly in the US and Canada (Duff, 2010; Duff, Zappa-Hollman, & Surtees, 2019). In their

socialization paths, like Duff, Zappa-Hollman and Surtees (2019) describe, they "must negotiate

the linguistic, literacy, and multimodal practices associated with (English) academic discourse as well as informal uses of English for everyday social interaction." (p. 309). Through the daily encounters with the English language and English-dominated discourse communities, students interact with different socialization agents, such as instructors, domestic students, and "various other forms of distributed support from within and outside the institution" (Duff et al., 2019, p. 309). Therefore, students not only learn and use English, but also develop and forge relationships with others, construct and negotiate their identities in relation to how they are positioned by others, and navigate the norms as well as the academic and social expectations in the desired discourse communities (Duff, 2010; Duff et al., 2019).

2.2.1. Language Socialization into English Academic Communities

In the context of North American universities, extensive work has been done in tracing international students' second language socialization into academic discourse communities (e.g., Cheng, 2013; Morita, 2004, 2009; Okuda & Anderson, 2018; Rabbi & Canagarajah, 2017; Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015). A large proportion of the studies in this line of research have looked at students' socialization into the written academic discourses (e.g., Anderson, 2016; Cheng, 2013). More recently, students' socialization into oral academic discourses and multimodal practices (e.g., in-class group discussions, oral academic presentations) have also been of interest to many LS scholars (Duff & Kobayashi, 2010; Ho, 2011; Morita, 2004, 2009).

For example, Morita (2004) traced a group of international Japanese graduate students' participation in open-ended class discussions across different courses in a Canadian university over an academic year. Grounded in the notion of CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991), this study examined how these Japanese students employed their agency to negotiate the tensions between their imposed identities and their self-positionalities, resulting in varying levels of participation

in the classroom communities. For example, some participants remained relatively silent in the class discussions because of their perceived non-native status or assumed lower English proficiency. In the meantime, in order not to be seen as low achievers or not competent, they also employed various strategies to increase their participation in the discussions (e.g., speaking early in a discussion, introducing fresh perspectives, or seeking support and advice from instructors outside the classroom) so that they could attain fuller membership in the classroom communities. Nevertheless, Morita also illustrated the limitations of agency through a case participant, Rie, who failed to re-position herself as a full member in the course community, despite actively resisting an imposed identity as a non-native speaker of English with a language barrier. Rie talked to her instructor about her difficulty to participate in the class and requested the instructor to make changes. Her instructor regarded Rie's language issue as her own problem and did not accommodate Rie's needs. This case revealed that the negotiation of identities is a site of struggle that reflects the unequal power relations between the newcomers and the experts.

This unequal power relation between the newcomers and the experts was also delineated in Cheng's (2013) study in which native speakers of English exerted a more powerful and fuller membership role in the group writing projects whereas the non-native Korean graduate student Lee was at the peripheral and marginalized position. Nevertheless, in the second semester, Lee was able to resist the negative position imposed by her native speaker peers and construct an identity as a contributor to the writing process, by employing various strategies, such as investing more time in the group writing projects, learning more about disciplinary knowledge, and actively interacting with her group members. More interestingly, Lee demonstrated different levels of participation concerning language proficiency and academic literacy. In terms of language proficiency, Lee did not act strongly to resist her position as the non-native speaker of

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English. Instead, she accepted grammatical corrections from her native-speaker peers. On the other hand, in terms of academic literacy, she refused to take the peripheral position; instead, she agentively made contributions to the co-writing project, which later led to the development of her academic literacy. Cheng (2013) pointed out that while central to Lee's academic discourse socialization experiences is the negotiation of power relations between the native speaker peers and her non-native speaker status in different aspects, Lee's trajectory of legitimizing the peripheral participation revealed that the power relations are not fixed and are subject to change, especially in a specific disciplinary discourse where native speakers are also considered novices.

In addition, students' interactions with other aspects of sociocultural contexts have also been examined. These contexts include the interactive semi-formal literacy spaces such as the writing center (e.g., Okuda & Anderson, 2018) and students' individual network of practices (e.g., Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015). For example, Okuda and Anderson (2018) looked at the role the writing center played in the academic discourse socialization experiences of three Chinese graduate students at a Canadian University. According to the authors, the writing center sought to provide peer scaffolding to learners in a student-led collaborative environment, with an emphasis on the writing process. Often, the service of proofreading is not provided given that the goal is to cultivate good writers who can write, revise, and proofread on their own. The findings showed that while the three students (Blenda, Sissy, and Lily) actively sought opportunities to be socialized into the target academic discourses, one of the attempts being to seek proofreading help at the writing center, all three of them were rejected by the writing center tutors because of the non-proofreading philosophy implemented by the center. Blenda, despite the rejection, continued to negotiate her needs and expectations with the writing center tutor, however. She also visited the writing center regularly, resulting in her building a good relationship with the

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tutor. The tutor then served as a positive socializing agent, who helped Blenda greatly in her writing and socialized Blenda into the desired writing practices by providing detailed feedback and editing suggestions. Okuda and Anderson further emphasized that as primary socializing agents, the tutors' practices might also inadvertently socialize students into deficit identity categories (in Lily's case as an individual with a lack of academic ability) or into legitimate members in academic communities (in Blenda's case as an individual who encounters an improved writing ability). Given the significant role the writing center plays in international students' academic discourse socialization, the authors argued that the tutors should work constructively with students, listen to their specific needs, and change the deficit model of seeing L2 writers as "deficient".

In addition to writing center tutors, Zappa-Hollman and Duff (2015) showed that peers from the same country of origin can also serve as the socializing agents. Drawing on the notion of *individual network of practices* (InoPs), this study examined the language socialization experiences of a group of Mexican undergraduate students into the academic discourses at a Canadian university. To navigate the expectations of the academic discourse communities, the three participants were acquiring knowledge of English academic literacy and disciplinary-specific literacy through interaction with members of their InoPs. The findings revealed that the participants mainly interacted with their peers in their InoPs and were very resourceful in asking their peers for help, rendering other socializing agents, such as the instructors and tutors into a periphery position in socializing the participants into the academic discourses. Furthermore, while there were non-Mexicans in participants' InoPs, the majority of them were students (either the experienced ones or the newcomers) who shared similar backgrounds and goals and experienced similar challenges. Based on the findings, the authors called for more attention to

peer socialization, especially, those sharing similar backgrounds. As observed by Zappa-Hollman and Duff, "peers can be very powerful agents of (co-) socialization and identity work, as can the learners themselves through their agentive, strategic, goal-directed efforts and resourcefulness" (2015, p. 358).

Collectively, these studies highlight the complex nature of socialization, which involves students negotiating their beliefs, values, and practices and constructing identities to gain membership in academic discourse communities (Okuda & Anderson, 2018).

2.2.2. Language Socialization in Out-of-school Learning Spaces

The prevalent use of technology and new media both in and out of instructional settings leads to the need of re-conceptualizing the concept of "language classroom" (Collins & Muñoz, 2016; Leander & McKim, 2003). The expanded circulation of language, knowledge, and texts in the digital era rendered language learning and socialization far beyond the physical boundaries of a language classroom (Collins & Muñoz, 2016; Reinhardt, 2019). Therefore, another line of LS research on international students has looked at how their language learning and socialization experiences are shaped by their out-of-school language and literacy practices, such as their participation in the online gaming community (e.g., Black, 2007; Chik, 2014), their online social networking practices (e.g., Chen, 2013; Lam, 2004), and their interactions with their lifelong mentors (e.g., Gilliland, 2018). Of them, the majority of research has focused on international students' learning and socialization experiences in online spaces (see Lam, 2008; Reinhardt & Thorne, 2017; Thorne et al., 2009 for a review of studies). As observed by Thorne et al. (2009), students' language and literacy practices outside of instructed educational settings "involves extended periods of language socialization, adaptation, and creative semiotic work that illustrate vibrant communicative practices" (p. 815). As a result, more work has been done regarding how

language learners use second languages in different modalities to interact and make meanings on online spaces such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, blogs, wikis, online gaming, and fan fiction sites (e.g., Black & Steinkuehler, 2009; Curwood, 2013; Curwood et al., 2013; Lam, 2004, 2009; Thorne et al., 2015, Yi, 2009). Now I turn to some of the key LS studies that examine language learners' language and literacy socialization experiences in the online spaces.

Located at a U.S. university, Chen (2013) traced two Chinese international graduate students' identities as multilingual writers on Facebook and their language socialization experiences through Facebook. Chen adopted both qualitative and quantitative analysis to present two participants' different types of activities (e.g., status updates; posts; sharing videos and creating images) on Facebook for over two years. The author identified Facebook as a hybrid third space in which two participants Cindy and Jane strategically employed linguistic, cultural, and semiotic resources to construct and perform various and sometimes conflicting identities. Through participating in different language and literacy practices, they demonstrated different socialization trajectories: For Cindy, Facebook to her is a site of reflection. She mainly used Mandarin to share her experiences with other Chinese-speaking students and reflect on her struggle during the MA program. The language use and the writing revealed how she perceived herself, a Chinese and a struggling student. Jane, on the other hand, actively connected to the local community through commenting on the local issues; on the other, she also performed her identity as a Chinese citizen as well as a cosmopolitan global citizen by sharing news and participating in discussions about China and the world. The findings revealed that two participants agentively employed different languages and semiotics available to them to enact different identities. The author argued that participating in multimodal and multilingual

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practices is the norm in the online world and students also appropriate language and other semiotic resources to explore their identities.

Relatedly, Lam (2004) looked at how two international students' participation in a Chinese/English bilingual chat room mediated their language learning and socialization. Yu Qing and Tsu Ying were two young Chinese immigrants who had difficulty interacting with their English-speaking peers at school. Nevertheless, on the Internet, they were able to use English to connect with other Chinese young people who are in different parts of the world. By participating in the bilingual chat room, these two teenage girls were socialized to the identity of bilingual speakers of English and Cantonese. The author observed that two participants often mixed English and Cantonese in their speech in the chat room. Such hybrid language practices were seen to help them develop confidence in speaking English. This sense of confidence then got transferred to the local classroom and helped them use English more confidently. Furthermore, two girls were able to re-position themselves and make sense of their immigrant English learner status by not having to fit into the fixed categories of being English-speaking Americans or Cantonese-speaking Chinese. Through these two cases, Lam also identified an "interpenetration of the global and local in the process of socialization: people are influenced by the global, but this is interpreted locally" (p. 59). As a result, Lam proposed to examine the intersecting relationship between "the global practices of English in the online world and the local practices of English".

In addition to social networking sites, scholars also paid attention to online gaming. Looking at language learners' language learning in out-of-class contexts, Chik (2014) followed a group of Chinese learners of English and Japanese at a university in Hong Kong who engaged in digital games in English or Japanese collaboratively. Drawing on the notion of autonomy

(Benson & Chik, 2011), the study explored the role of autonomy, community, and identity in shaping their language learning trajectories. The findings showed that L2 gamers engaged in literacy practices such as translation and giving each other instructions about the language, which facilitated their learning of the target language. The author argued that while out-of-school activities such as digital games are often unrecognized in schools, students develop game-related literacies that can be harnessed to facilitate their learning in the formal instructed settings.

To summarize, these above-mentioned studies examined language learners' participation in online gaming contexts and social networking sites. Language socialization research has shown that games and networking contexts are multimodal texts, through interacting with them, learners engage in "transcultural interaction and socio-collaborative learning" (Reinhardt & Thorne, 2017, p. 6). Furthermore, as Thorne et al. (2009) pointed out, students are likely to construct a different identity when participating in online spaces where their identities are not restricted to "students" (as in Chen, 2013 and Lam, 2004). Participation in these spaces allows students to construct their identities as players, writers, and/or knowledge contributors, instead of language learners in instructed L2 settings. In addition, these online communities such as social networking contexts and online gaming contexts are parallel but also interacting with the classroom communities (Reinhardt & Thorne, 2017) (as in Chik, 2014 and Lam, 2004).

As the picture with socialization in the digital contexts gets more complex, especially when it intertwines with the off-line face-to-face socialization practices, scholars (e.g., Lam, 2009; Reinhardt & Thorne, 2017) call for collaboration with other disciplines by borrowing and combining theoretical and methodological frameworks from other disciplines. For example, the concept of multiliteracies, developed in response to capture the dynamic multilingual and multimodal literacy practices the youths and adults nowadays engage with (NLG, 1996), has

been widely adopted for research on language socialization in digital contexts (Reinhardt &

Thorne, 2017). Lam (2009) highlighted the value of combining multiliteracies with language

socialization research: multiliteracies, despite being informative from a pedagogical perspective,

fall shorts in theorizing the development of new linguistic and literacy practices in globalized

and digitalized contexts; whereas second language research, with its strength in theorizing

language learning and development that derives from sociolinguistics, could also benefit from

multiliteracies studies' recent academic inquiry in transnational and translingual literacy

practices across various learning spaces (both online and offline). Learners' participation in

digitally mediated literacy practices might render the traditional socialization research

methodology limited and questionable in explaining the complex nature of language learners'

socialization process.

For example, Lam (2009) explored a Chinese adolescent immigrant's affiliation with

various linguistic and cultural spaces. This 17-year-old girl of Chinese origin from a working-

class family had just migrated recently to the US at the time of the study. In this study, Lam

examined this adolescent immigrant's use of instant messaging to manage her social relations

within and across different spaces. The participant deliberately chose among different linguistic

practices in English and Chinese to compose her messages so as to develop and maintain

different networks across countries. For example, she code-switched between Cantonese and

Mandarin to communicate with her peers at the local Chinese immigrant community, and in the

interim, she mixed Mandarin and the dialect of Chinese used by local Shanghainese to

communicate with her friends in her hometown Shanghai. She also used a different variety of

English available to her to maintain a social network with Asian Americans. The findings

revealed that her participation within and across different spaces afforded her opportunities and

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resources for the development of her multiliteracies repertoire, which allowed her to navigate across multiple communities.

Similarly, and also examining multiliterate adolescents within the framework of language socialization, Yi (2009) invoked a gaze towards the out-of-school digital literacy practices of two Korean adolescents Mike and Joan in the States. Identified as transnational adolescents, these two participants actively participated in the online writing communities, including visiting various websites across borders, creating and constructing a transcultural online community, and communicating with people across the US and Korea. Their transnational online literacy practices helped them maintain their ties to their own language and culture and preserve their social networks with other transnational youths. Yi reminded us that transnational students are not simply English language learners or immigrant students. Instead, they are strategic and agentive users of multiple languages and literacies to make sense of themselves and their worlds. They mixed and meshed different linguistic and semiotic resources to construct their identities and make meanings. Yi argued for the need to re-conceptualize transnationals' language socialization experiences, as such transnational students do not simply assimilate into the target society by embracing its cultural and linguistic practices. Rather, their transnational identities mediate and complicate their socialization experiences. As Yi pointed out, they "operate within more than one linguistic and cultural code", and more importantly, when they were understood as multiliterate transnationals, they are "at an advantage" (p. 124).

Lastly, in addition to the research on students' out-of-school digital practices, LS research has also examined how students' socialization experiences can be shaped by their interactions with the crucial literacy sponsors in their life. For example, Gilliland (2018) traced a Mexican student Ivan's transition experiences through high school and college. Drawing on the idea of

literacy sponsorship (Brandt, 1998, 2001), which is identified as any agents, "who enable, support, teach, and model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold, literacy…" (Brandt, 2001, p. 19), Gilliland analyzed the literacy success of Ivan, who was a former gang member, supported by his different literacy sponsors, including Ivan's English teachers in middle and high schools, his out-of-school mentor, Rick, a police gang officer, and his writing assignments. The findings showed that Rick turned out to be the most powerful literacy sponsor who not only turned Ivan's life around by helping him leave the gang and get back to school, but also actively facilitated Ivan's literacy learning at school by tutoring him on his schoolwork. While not recognized as having a direct impact on Ivan's academic literacy development, Rick was identified as Ivan's lifetime mentor who socialized Rick into "socially preferred activities" that afforded space and opportunity for Ivan's academic literacy development. As a result, Gilliland argued that researchers should take into consideration mentors and literacy sponsors from the periphery communities and examine how some of the crucial literacy sponsors impact students' language socialization into the target communities.

The above-mentioned studies have examined how students negotiate identities, agency, languages, cultures, and networks in out-of-school learning spaces. The use of digital tools and new media, on the one hand, enables them to constantly traverse linguistic, cultural, semiotic and geological boundaries so as to establish and maintain their connections with their countries of origin and settlement (Darvin & Norton, 2014); on the other hand, these affordances give them access to different modes of communication and forms of participation (Gee, 2002; Thorne et al., 2015). Students also draw on the affordances to construct and perform hybrid and multiple identities (Chen, 2013; Chik, 2014). In addition to the online world, students' interaction with

their literacy sponsors or their mentors in the out-of-school context also contributes to their literacy development and might inform their in-class learning, as shown in Gilliland (2018).

To summarize, the scholarship of language socialization research has yielded rich insights in understanding international students' language learning trajectories, by examining their everyday language and literacy practices in relation to their negotiation of the dominant values and practices in academic discourses (Cheng, 2013; Mortia, 2004; Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015), or in informal out-of-school spaces (Chen, 2013; Chik, 2014; Lam, 2004, 2009; Yi, 2009). Of them, some LS studies also showed the cross-fertilization of socializing practices across the online and the instructed learning contexts (e.g., Chik, 2014, Lam, 2004). This intersecting relationship between students' online literacy practices and their academic literacy practices also points to the possibility of developing a pedagogy that channels students' out-of-school literacies to the classroom to support their literacy learning in the instructed settings (Wang, 2019).

2.3. The Current Study

Building on the developments in language socialization research thus far, this study looks at the language and literacy development of Chinese international undergraduate students in a U.S. university. The learning trajectories of these students are characterized by their language and literacy practices across different communities and spaces (offline/online, instructed/informal) (Darvin & Norton, 2014; Reinhardt, 2019; Reinhardt & Thorne, 2017). Therefore, I recognize students' participation in the multiple communities and spaces and their learning and use of new cultural and linguistic practices across these spaces could lead to new language socialization spaces and variations of socialization trajectories (Duff, 2015; Lee & Bultchotz, 2015). To be more specific, as Reinhardt and Thorne (2017) pointed out, when

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drawing the picture for future language socialization research, focusing on instructed L2 settings might be limited in (1) describing and capturing second language learners' language and literacy practices outside the classrooms; (2) tracing learners' complex identity construction and performance across formal and informal, online and offline environments. In addition, I recognize that students might (1) interact with different socialization agents (Gilliland, 2018), such as instructors, international students, domestic students, and "various other forms of distributed support from within and outside the institution" (Duff et al., 2019, p. 309), and (2) develop compliance or resistance towards the established norms, thus resulting in different socialization trajectories. Therefore, to understand the complexities surrounding international students' language socialization trajectories, it's important to trace their language and literacy practices within classrooms and in informal and online spaces outside classrooms.

Pedagogically speaking, while language learners are often positioned as deficient in English proficiency in school, their literacies developed outside the classrooms are rarely recognized and harnessed to facilitate their language learning in class (Reinhardt, 2019). Therefore, by looking closely at Chinese international students' literacy practices in the First-year Writing courses, this study seeks to (1) challenge the deficit perspective which posits them as "deficient language learners" with limited communicative competence, and (2) shed light on how First-year writing instructors can incorporate learners' multilingual and multicultural repertoires into class pedagogy, and thus create a space for students to integrate their literacy experiences into the learning of academic literacy practices.

In addition, I recognize that language and literacy learning in academic discourses is also shaped by students' identity construction and negotiation in the interactions with others in different communities and spaces (De Costa, 2016; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007).

Therefore, this study aims to examine how international students construct their identities and negotiate the imposed identities through interactions with others, and how the construction and negotiation of their identities affect their enactment of agency in learning or resisting the norms of the practices in the targeted communities.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The previous chapters introduced the background of the study and reviewed the

theoretical development of the language socialization framework and empirical studies that have

employed such a framework. In this chapter, I introduce the methodological framework that I

adopted in this study. I also describe the research site, the First-year writing program and the four

student participants: Michael, Xing, Henry, and Yang. I then describe the multiple data sources

and my coding procedure. Next, I situate my researcher self, and discuss how my relationships

with the participants have informed my interpretation of the data. In the following two chapters, I

present the findings of my focal participants: Michael, Xing, Henry, and Yang and map out the

complex trajectories of their socialization in and out of the First-year Writing classroom.

3.1. Ethnographic Multiple Case Study

This study aims to capture the complexity of Chinese undergraduate students' language

and literacy socialization trajectories at East Land University (ELU). Particularly, I am interested

in examining how they construct and negotiate identities, and how they engage with various

language and literacy practices in different communities and spaces –affecting their socialization

into academic discourses. I adopt a multiple ethnographic case study approach for this study.

Garrett (2017) summarized the key methodological features that are integral to language

socialization research:

- longitudinal study design;

- naturalistic data, ethnographic in nature; and

- analysis of factors at micro and macro levels.

As observed by Garrett and other linguistic anthropologists such as Schieffelin (1990), an

ethnographic perspective is essential for language socialization research in that researchers need

to document and trace participants' different kinds of interactions and practices in different social settings over a course of time to map an individual's developmental trajectory.

Relatedly, a case study design, grounded in social constructivism, according to Merriam (1988), is "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 21). A multiple-case study design, as suggested by Anderson (2017), investigates individual participants as separate cases, the linkages of which then contribute to the understanding of the issue in question (see also Duff, 2008). To date, many scholars (e.g., Anderson, 2017; Morita, 2004; Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015) have employed a multiple case study design to investigate international students' L2 socialization This design is helpful in that it recognizes participants as individuals who have their own experiences and perspectives; conversely, it also sees the similarities across individual cases (Anderson, 2017).

This study evolved from the findings of a grant-supported research project in which I participated (for details, see the section on researcher positionality). The project was a large-scale interdisciplinary research project which explored international undergraduate students' navigation of resources provided by different units on campus, including the FYW program, neighborhood writing center services, the English Language Center (ELC), and International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO). The involvement in this project put me in touch with faculty members who work in the FYW program, helped me understand the structure and curriculum of FYW courses, and eventually enabled me to identify FYW courses as one of my focal research sites.

3.2. Research Sites

For the dissertation study, I recruited four Chinese undergraduate students from a First-Year Writing program. The FYW is a three-credit class administered by the Department of

English Writing and American Cultures at ELU. It currently has about 900 English language users/learners, with the majority being Chinese. The mission of FYW is to "help learners acquire the moves, strategies, and dispositions that will allow them to continue to develop as writers and producers of knowledge beyond first-year writing" (FYW program website, ELU). Immersing them into literacy practices desired in the academic and social discourses of the university, the FYW program hopes to facilitate students' transition into college learning and life. FYW comprises two different types of courses: CBW 101, College Bridge Writing Program, and FYW 101, Writing as Inquiry. CBW 101 is mandatory for students who do not meet the requirements of English standardized tests (17 for ACT English and 509 for SAT reading and writing) or those who failed an English placement test of FYW 101. FYW 101, Writing as Inquiry, is a compulsory academic writing class for all university students. One thing worth mentioning is that student demographics change dramatically from CBW 101 to FYW 101. Different from FYW 101 where most students are domestic students, the majority (sometimes all) of the students in CBW 101 are international students who fail to meet the threshold of English language requirements. Among them, the majority is Chinese, as they constitute the largest international population at ELU.

Instructors of FYW 101 have a shared curriculum, which consists of five projects: a learning narrative project, a cultural artifact project, a disciplinary literacies project, and a remix project, and the final reflection project (FYW program website) (please see appendix A for a more detailed description of each project). For CBW 101, given students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, instructors can decide and develop writing projects that they think can best cater to the international students' needs in their classes. Some instructors try to incorporate multilingual and multicultural components into the curriculum. For example, in one of the CBW

101 classes I observed and collected data from, the instructor created a separate section, "what if English "ain't my first language" in the syllabus (see Figure 3.1), in which the instructor (Janice, pseudonym) stresses the value of students' own languages and cultures, and invites students to bring the artifacts from their own communities, cultures, and countries to class and to their writing.

What if English "ain't" my first language?
Throughout the semester, I will invite you to bring in stories, examples, and "artifacts" from your own communities, cultures, and countries. In this course, speaking other languages or having lived in other parts of the country and the world is seen as enriching your contributions.

Figure 3.1. A screenshot of CBW 101 course syllabus

In addition, Janice implemented five writing projects that are relevant to international students' experience:

1. A personal story of "crossing cultures" (students are given opportunity to write about their experience of cultural dissonance)

2. AN analysis of some aspects of ELU Culture

3. A translation/reflection project (students are given opportunity to translate one of the poems in their own cultures into English)

4. A multimodal writing project

5. A reflective project.

Therefore, international students in CBW 101 were provided ample opportunities to reflect on their own language and culture practices and exploit their multilingual and multicultural repertoires in the writing. Their literacy practices in CBW 101 and FYW 101 are ostensibly supportive of their socialization into the U.S. university academic discourses.

In addition to the First-year Writing classroom, I also followed my participants' language and literacy developments in other learning spaces, including the online spaces they frequently

visited, such as the social networking sites, interest-driven Internet sites (e.g., WeChat, Instagram, YouTube, etc.) and the offline spaces such as peer-led communities and neighborhood center academic supporting groups. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Chinese international students actively engage in multilingual literacy practices across transnational networking sites and constructing multiple identities in different communities and spaces (Lam, 2009; Wang, 2017). These multilingual and multimodal literacy practices, which interact with class communities and broader academic discourses (Reinhardt & Thorne, 2017), are therefore worth tracing and investigating in order to better understand students' language and literacy development. Based on my observations and my interviews with the focal participants, their participation in these spaces created rich opportunities for them to learn and use English and develop linguistic and literacy repertoires that are supportive of their academic literacy development in academic discourses. Therefore, I have identified learning spaces outside of the classroom (both online and offline) as important research sites, too.

3.3. Participants

For this study, I interviewed and observed four Chinese undergraduate international students at ELU - Michael, Henry, Yang, Xing. I first met them in Janice's CBW 101 class when they were all in their first year of college life. All of them are male, in their early 20s, and come from different parts of China. They are also all first-generation college students in their families. Another commonality among these four participants is that their parents ran family-owned small to medium-size businesses in their hometowns. Table 1 summarizes their demographic information. Based on their TOEFL test scores, their English proficiency is at the B2 level. Now I turn to my four focal participants.

Table 1

Participants' demographic information

Name	Hometown	Major	High school	TOEFL score[1]	ELC experience	Arrival in the U.S.
Michael	Beijing	Computer engineering	Private International high school	96	None	August 2018
Yang	Henan Province	Business	International-designation classes in a regular high school	88	None	August 2018
Henry	Zhejiang Province	Finance & Media and Information	Regular High School	76	1-year Intensive English	August 2017
Xing	Hebei province	Accounting	Private International high school	75	1-year intensive English	August 2017

ELC = English Language Center

3.3.1. Michael

He was born in a mid-sized city in Shanxi province, China. He is the only child in his family. His father left the hometown city for Beijing to start his real estate business even before Michael was born. When Michael was at the age of five, his mother and he moved to Beijing to live with his father and stayed there ever since. According to him, he was raised by his mother and barely had much quality time with his father over the past ten years. He went to regular public primary and middle schools. Upon graduation, he was offered two options in terms of his high school education: (1) he could enroll in a regular high school, take the university entrance examination, and study at a university in China (Gaokao); or (2) he could choose to study in an international high school to pursue a path of studying abroad for his undergraduate education. He

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[1] The ELU admission TOEFL score is above 79. Provisional admission TOEFL score is 60 to 78. According to Tannenbaum and Wylie (2008), TOEFL iBT test score of 72 to 94 are mapped to the B2 level of CEFR.

decided to go to the international high school, because he did not want to attend the exam oriented Gaokao. In addition, he wanted to pursue the high-quality undergraduate education in the US. However, his learning experiences at the international private high school were not as expected. He described these experiences with mixed feelings. On the one hand, he felt blessed that he had a relatively relaxing time in the international high school, compared to his friends who went to the regular high school and had years of cramming in the hope of a good Gaokao score. On the other hand, he felt lonely and marginalized at that school. "Students do not care about their academic study there". Described by Michael, he couldn't make any friends there, because the students there were devoted to showing off their luxurious lifestyle. Michael frowned upon such a lifestyle and tried to stay away from these classmates.

In terms of his English learning experience, while he went to an English-medium international high school, he never invested proper time and effort in learning English. When the second year of high school started, he came to realize that he needed to study hard to earn a better future for himself. He then started to take private English lessons outside the school and prepare for the TOEFL test. He described the last year of preparing for TOEFL as like restarting to learn English from scratch. "I didn't even know *be*-verb at that time". He learned from a private English tutor for a year and took the TOEFL exam six times. The first time he only got 26 out of 140. The last time, he got 96. This good score also helped him secure a position at East Land University. He enrolled in the computer engineering major at ELU.

3.3.2. Yang

Yang was born and raised in Zhengzhou, the capital city of Henan province, which is located in the midland of China. In the same year Yang was born, his father started the family business which is now growing into a medium-size company in Zhengzhou. In his family, Yang

has a younger brother. Yang's schooling experience was full of ups and downs, described by Yang in the interview. When he was in middle school, he was bullied by some of the members in a local gang. Instead of asking for help from the teachers and his parents, he decided to join the gang to avoid bullying. He described the period when he was with other gang members doing anything except studying as "the darkest time" in his life. "At that time, I didn't think about tomorrow at all. I had no plans, no future, no motivation. Day and night, we hung out, played computer games, smoked, drank, and fooled around with girls." As he admitted, he was perceived as a "bad student" by his teachers, classmates, and his parents as well. His relationship with his parents was very tense, involving constantly arguing, yelling, blaming, and feeling disappointed. As he tried to summarize the relations between him and his parents in the interview, "I just couldn't feel that they loved me. I just felt I was such a big disappointment to them."

Things changed when his mother went to attend a seminar about the parent-child relationship and came back with a new perspective of perceiving and treating Yang. Instead of blaming Yang and feeling disappointed towards Yang for not being a good son, his mother came to accept Yang for who he was, by reassuring him repeatedly that she would love him unconditionally and support him to do whatever he wanted to do. Her change of attitude was also reflected in how she acted and reacted to Yang's seemingly deviant behaviors. Yang told me three times in the interview, his mother's recognition and acceptance empowered him to make changes as well. "I feel I can do anything if my family supports me and loves me." He then broke with the gang, started to go to school every day, and studied very hard. Knowing that he may not stand a good chance of attending a good university in China, he decided to study abroad for his undergraduate education and then invested enormous time and effort in studying for

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TOEFL during his high school. After taking the TOEFL three times, he finally got a good enough score and applied for universities in the States. He is currently a sophomore student at ELU.

3.3.3. Henry

Henry was born in a coastal city in Zhejiang province in southeast China. He is the only child in the family. His parents started a family business of manufacturing shoes in his hometown city. As the company grew, they also expanded their business into the local private tutoring industry. Henry described that his parents are like the model couple who supported and cared for each other. Growing up in such a family, Henry was well cared for. More importantly, his parents respected him and invited him to family conversations about the business, and about his education. As Henry stated in the interview, "I always have a say in family affairs, you know, my family is very democratic. They respect me and trust me to make correct decisions." Originally, studying abroad for undergraduate education was not Henry's plan. Henry went to a regular high school and wanted to attend a good university in China. However, his failure in Gaokao made it impossible for him to attend a good university in China. He then decided to take a gap year to study for TOEFL and apply for universities in the States. After a year of intensive English training, he gained a TOEFL test score of 78, which allowed him to apply for schools with the condition of taking a one-year language program.

He joined ELU in 2017 and then took one-year of intensive English courses at the English Language Center. He is now studying Finance in the business school at ELU. In addition, when Henry was in high school, he developed a strong interest in photography. After he came to the States, because of his interest, he decided to do another major in media and information. In addition to learning about photography and videography in the disciplinary

courses, Henry also applied what he learned to his work at a Chinese student-led student organization. He worked in the department of publicity as the associate chair, taking charge of poster design and video shooting and editing.

3.3.4. Xing

Xing was born to a business family as well. He was born and raised in a second-tier city in Hebei province, close to Beijing. He is also the only child in the family. His father currently runs a small-size business in his hometown city. Xing's family went through a period of economic hardship when he was at primary school. He shared a story with me when describing the difficulty, "after school we usually took the bus to go home. When I was with my friends, I would take off one stop ahead of my home so that no one would know where I live." His family's condition greatly improved as his father's business thrived and expanded. Nevertheless, the experience of economic constraints at an early age had a great impact on his decision-making. He described that his life goal was to live a life of abundance with a well-paid white-collar job. He went to a regular high school in his hometown and hoped to attend a good university in China. Unfortunately, he didn't do well in Gaokao and decided to do his undergraduate studies overseas. He spent the summer after Gaokao studying for TOEFL and got an offer from ELU with the condition of taking English language courses. He then enrolled in English Language Center courses in 2017 and stayed there for a year before enrolling in regular university courses. He is currently an accountant major in the business school at ELU.

3.4. Data Collection

I collected data from my four participants over two academic semesters: from September to December 2018 (Fall semester), and from January to May 2019 (Spring semester). The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of East Land University provided a Certificate of Approval for

this research in September 2018. After getting the IRB approval, I reached out to Janice, the CBW 101 instructor, and got her approval for class visits and participant recruitment. I then sat in on her classes on a regular basis (twice a week) and managed to recruit four international students at the end of the Fall semester. Over the semester, I conducted at least two individual interviews with each participant and also did an interview with Janice at the end of the Fall semester (please see appendices C and D for the semi-structured interview questions I used to interview the focal participants and the instructor). These four participants were selected based on their rich out-of-school activities and their active agency in different learning spaces to achieve goals. When transitioning from CBW 101 to FYW 101, my four participants ended up enrolling in four different FYW 101 classes. I reached out to each of their instructors and asked for permission to sit in on their classes for at least one session over the semester. I was able to successfully visit three of my participants' FYW 101 classes and did three one-hour interviews with their respective instructors. Interviews with the First-year Writing program instructors helped me better understand (1) the opportunities offered for students to connect their informal learning in other spaces to the writing assignments and academic tasks in the classroom; and (2) what kinds of literacy practices were valued in the classroom.

I used Mandarin to conduct interviews with the four participants and used English in the interviews with the First-year Writing program instructors. I conducted six individual interviews with each of my participants in total across the academic year. Later, I was able to do a follow-up interview with each of the focal participants during their third semester at ELU. In this interview, I invited them to share their learning experiences in their respective disciplines and how the First-year Writing courses helped their transition into the disciplines. All the interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed and translated by me. Interviews with their FYW instructors

(one per instructor) and with the FYW program associate director were conducted in English. These interviews were also transcribed by me. In addition to the interview data, I observed and documented the participants' multilingual and multimodal language and literacy practices in virtual spaces and in the classroom. With permission from the instructors, I also audio-recorded the classes I observed. In addition, I made field notes and collected them as part of my data. The artifacts constitute another part of the data source: artifacts related to students' literacy practices in the classes were collected, including their peer review comments, multiple writing drafts for each project, instructors' feedback on their writing samples, their writing assignments for other courses, their email communication with instructors and academic advisers. Other complementary data sources include students' reading materials, course syllabus, assignment instructions, course PPTs, etc.

Outside the CBW and FYW classes, I also collected digital data students produced online, including their social media posts across different social media (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, WeChat, YouTube etc.) and their participation in interest-based online communities, such as gaming communities. In addition, because many of them saw me, the researcher, as a friend, a mentor, and an "expert" in the community, they often reached out to me to share their stories, feelings, and asked for advice through WeChat. For example, Michael would chat with me on WeChat briefly almost once every month to ask my thoughts on the latest news in China and the US, my advice on academic affairs, such as course selection, job opportunities on campus. Xing also approached me for advice about the use of the writing center and ask for my feedback on his application to the business college on WeChat three times over the course of the year. I kept all our chat histories and after gaining their approval, I also included the chat histories with them in my data.

Another data source is the notes, memos and journals of my own reflection on the interaction with participants and the instructors. Later, I also used them as a source of data to contextualize and triangulate the information from other data sources (Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015), and also to examine my own positionality as a researcher and the impact of our researcher-participant relationship on the study. All the data sources are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Data Sources

Source	Type of data
Focal participants	Background questionnaire Individual interviews (six each) Classroom observation for CBW 101 and FYW 101 Email communication to instructors, professors, and other faculties or staff Social media data (posts, blogs, journals, message/email exchanges)
Researcher	Field notes in CBW and FYW classes and other learning spaces Memos Research journals
Course-related materials	D2L posts Peer review comments Multiple writing drafts Multimodal writing assignments Instructors' written feedback
First-year Writing program instructors	Individual interviews (one each) Course syllabi Reading materials Assignment instructions Course PPTs CVs (if available) Teaching philosophies (if available)
Publicly available	First-year Writing program websites Official (institutional) documents Instructors/participants' personal websites

3.5. Data Analysis

Given that this study deals with a large amount of digital and multimodal data, the use of digital qualitative analysis tool helps significantly in organizing, coding, and visualizing different types of data, especially the multimodal data (Paulus, Lester, Dempster, 2013). In this study, I used a qualitative data analysis software, MAXQDA, to facilitate my data analysis. MAXQDA provides a variety of coding functions for researchers to do open and/or focused coding. In addition, it offers data visualization functions, which allow researchers to visualize relationships among the data.

As mentioned, this study captures participants' language and literacy practices within and across different learning spaces and then reveals how these language and literacy practices mediate their socialization experiences at ELU. However, one of the challenges in this study is, as noted by Lee and Bucholtz (2015), to "define and delimit what constitutes a learning space for analytic purposes" (p. 325). To address this challenge, first, I identified two main academic discourse communities: the English academic writing discourse in general and their respective disciplinary discourse. By participating in the First-year Writing classes (i.e., CBW 101 and FYW 101), the participants were learning about norms and practices of English academic writing and some of the specific disciplinary practices. They were socialized into the academic discourses through a series of class activities and assignments. Furthermore, I identified other core learning spaces, including the social media spaces such as YouTube, WeChat, Instagram that participants often visited and learning about new linguistic and cultural practices – based on the narrative data (i.e., the interviews and interactions with others within and outside the classroom). Focusing on these core learning spaces, I then mapped out their language and

literacy practices that are crucial to their identity construction and performance in ways that shaped their unique socialization trajectories.

For data analysis, I first conducted within-case analysis separately and then compared and contrasted data recursively across the four cases (Stake, 2013). In the study, the interview data and the social media/digital data constitute my primary data. To analyze these two types of data, I conducted a thematic analysis and followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step guide: 1) become familiar with the data; 2) generate initial codes; 3) search for themes; 4) review themes; 5) define themes; and 6) write-up. I did two rounds of thematic analysis for each participant, one round for their language and literacy practices within the two FYW classes, and one for their language and literacy practices outside the classrooms. These practices differ case by case. During the first round, I mainly focused on the interview data about the two First-year Writing courses, and participants' written assignments, as they provided spaces for participants to narrate their stories about socialization experiences and to write different identities through English. In particular, I paid attention to how they perceived themselves and how they were perceived by their classmates and instructors. In addition, I also coded the data where they talked about navigating different resources (e.g., Writing Center, conferences with the instructor, Online writing help) to help them with their academic demands. During the second round, I mainly drew on participants' interviews and their work and performance on the out-of-school spaces, including their social media posts, their digital product (e.g., vlogs), and their chat histories with me on WeChat. I was interested in knowing their engaged activities and practices in these spaces. I also paid attention to their identity construction and performance in these spaces. Next, I examined the connections and interactions between their out-of-school practices and their experiences at ELU. Lastly, I draw a map of each participant's academic socialization trajectory

and identified significant factors that shaped their socialization experiences. I also paid particular attention to the values, ideologies, and norms of practice that affected their identity construction and agency exertion in their socialization processes.

To verify and validate my interpretation of data, I triangulated participants' narrative data with data obtained from other data sources (e.g., their instructors' interview data, their online discussion/posts in the community or their social media posts).

3.6. Researcher Positionality

My interest in researching Chinese undergraduate students' experience is mainly due to the following reasons: (1) as a Chinese international student myself, I went through a similar transition and socialization process upon arrival to the U.S. The shared language and cultural experiences helped bring me and my participants closer; (2) Chinese undergraduate students constitute the largest international student population at ELU and also in the US. The issues related to their academic and social integration into U.S. society deserves closer investigation; (3) My participation in the two aforementioned funded research projects, led by Dr. De Costa, allowed me to examine this population through a researcher's perspective.

In the Creating Inclusive Campus (CIC) Grant project (Fall 2017), I was hired as a project manager on the CIC project to facilitate and oversee field researchers' work and coordinate communication between field researchers and principal investigators (PIs). Working with faculty members across different units on campus, especially professors who research and teach international students in the context of FYW, helped me understand the FYW program better in terms of the course structure, class demographics, curriculum, writing projects, as well as the challenges and struggles international students often encounter.

Working with field researchers who had first-hand experience with international students in CBW 101 and 101 classes has provided me with rich insights into international students' use of social media to build their social networks, their use of resources on campus, of strategies to navigate academic demands. While I did not participate in data collection and analysis in the project, I was involved in every stage of the research and attended every project meeting where problems and questions arising from data collection and analysis were discussed and worked on collaboratively. In addition, field researchers also shared with me the ethical concerns they encountered during data collection, such as how to properly protect participants' confidentiality when collecting their social media data, and how to record participants' class interaction without interfering with the in-class interaction dynamics. The discussion of these ethical issues helped me reflect on my own data collection process, including how to approach and interact with participants in a way that they feel comfortable. As a project manager, I have had access to all the research materials the PIs developed collaboratively, such as students' background questionnaires, a bank of interview questions, class observation guidelines, which in turn informed the development of my own research materials. All these insights and experiences have shed great light on the development of my own research questions and research agenda.

During my data collection, I was introduced to the students as "a fellow teacher and researcher" at ELU and as someone whom students should feel free to approach and consult with. During the initial contact with potential participants, I tried to establish a relationship based on mutual trust and respect. I broadly described my research interests and explained what was expected of them in terms of their involvement. Their research participant rights were also discussed. I assured them that apart from collecting data from them, I would also be happy to help them and share information and resources with them to enhance their academic and social

life. I only approached them after they got used to my regular visits to their classes, and after they had some basic idea of who I am and what I was doing. All of them subsequently added me to their social media accounts and shared with me access to their social media life. Janice sometimes included me in some of her class activities and saw me as an additional source to give feedback on her students' work. Through participating in these class activities with students, I built a reciprocal relationship with them.

While coming from the same linguistic and cultural background (i.e., mainland China), I'm aware that my student participants and I also differ greatly in school culture, family education, economic status, etc. Therefore, on the one hand, I can be identified and identify myself as an insider who speaks the same language and experienced similar culture practices. This insider position has helped me gain access to the data and develop a good working relationship with my participants. In addition, my own language socialization experience at ELU has enabled me to better understand my student participants' lived experiences. On the other hand, the generational distance and the socio-economic distance between us sometimes might position me as an outsider who runs the risk of developing stereotypes and prejudice towards them (Berger, 2015). In this regard, informed by Berger's (2015) experience, I remind myself that I should be cautious not to project my experience onto theirs.

3.7. Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I described the research design, and key parts of the methodology in detail. I introduced my four focal participants and described the data I collected from different data sources. I also described the research sites, and the methods and tools I used to analyze the data. I concluded the chapter with a detailed account of my researcher positionality. Next, I present the findings of my focal participants in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4: LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION TRAJECTORIES OF MICHAEL AND XING

The previous chapters introduced the background of the study, the theoretical framework of language socialization, and reviewed empirical studies that employ such a framework. The research methodology, comprising participants, data collection, and analysis procedure, were subsequently presented. In the following two chapters, I present the findings of my focal participants: Michael and Xing (Chapter 4), Henry and Yang (Chapter 5), and map out the complex trajectories of their socialization in the U.S. university.

4.1 Michael: Still on the Margin of the Community

In my first interview with Michael, he told me the story behind self-selecting his English name, "Michael,"

Excerpt 1:

When I was in middle school, I watched an American t.v. series, *Prison Break*. It is the very first American t.v. drama I watched. I liked one of the characters in the series, Michael Scofield, who was a structural engineer, and he used his knowledge to break his brother out of prison successfully. I thought he is very cool. So, I used Michael as my English name. (Michael, Interview 1)

Michael's admiration for the t.v. character, Michael Scofield, led him to choose Michael as his English name. Michael explained to me in the interview that he wanted to be like Michael Scofield, who was knowledgeable of his field and could apply the knowledge to solve real-life problems. The name Michael then has a symbolic meaning, which indexes an identity of a professional with a high level of expertise and the ability to apply personal expertise to problem-

solve. To some extent, Michael therefore actually exerted an imagined identity (Kanno &

Norton, 2003; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007) through naming himself, Michael.

Such an imagined identity was also created in his WeChat Friend Circle page, where the

users could choose a cover photo and a motto that portrayed themselves and displayed it to their

WeChat friends. As can be seen in the screenshot (Figure 4.1), Michael chose a scene from

another very famous American t.v. series, *Game of Thrones*, as his cover photo. In this scene,

one of the characters, Lord Petyr Baelish, narrated his famous line originally from Sir Francis

Bacon, "knowledge is power." Michael explained that he chose this scene because of this line.

His firm belief in knowledge, nicely aligned with the motto he chose, "知行合一." "知行合一,"

(popularly translated as 'the unity of knowledge and action') which is a famous Chinese

philosophical principle that was first used by the famous Ming dynasty Chinese philosopher,

Yangming Wang (王阳明). When asked about his understanding of this motto, Michael

explained on WeChat that it means "knowledge + execution/action". He added, "you have to

have both in order to be successful. This is also my life goal."

Excerpt 2:

Figure 4.1. Michael's WeChat Friend Circle page

As can be seen in his English name selection and the WeChat Friend Circle page, Michael demonstrated a strong commitment to knowledge and enacted an imagined identity of a professional who was capable of applying knowledge to practice. Another thing that is worth noting is his deployment of multimodal resources to mobilize his imagined identity: he used both English and Chinese (e.g., English name – the line from *Game of Thrones* – and the aforementioned motto in Chinese), which bore rich cultural meanings, with the former drawn from the U.S. popular culture and the other from traditional Chinese philosophy. The hybrid use of different linguistic and cultural practices also indexed Michael's identity as a transnational youth, who grew up under the influence of multiple cultures due to globalization and digitalization (Lam, 2009; Yi, 2009).

Michael's strong desire for knowledge can also be traced to his interactions with his family members, mainly his father. When talking about his father, Michael described him as someone who was committed to action but lacked knowledge. He used the word "土豪" to describe his father, which is an Internet phrase used to describe the grass-root, newly-rich entrepreneurs whose vulgar taste and extravagant lifestyle are considered distasteful by the elite professionals (Dong & Blommaert, 2016; Young, 2018).

Excerpt 3:

My dad did not receive a good education. He did not go to college. His success in business can be attributed to my uncle's (his father's brother's) help and guidance. My uncle is the only college graduate in my dad's family, and he went to Beijing to start his real estate business from scratch. After my uncle established himself, he helped my dad launch his real estate business in Beijing as well. My dad likes to show off his wealth:

driving luxurious cars and spending extravagantly .... Growing up, he was barely around.

I saw him once or twice every year. I feel he prioritized his business over everything else.

(Michael, Interview 1)

Michael ascribed his father's success in business to the act of boldly taking risks with emergent opportunities. His father's success should also be understood against the backdrop of China's economic transformation in the 1980s and 1990s, when the market economy and open-door policy created enormous opportunities for business of all kinds, resulting in a fast accumulation of wealth and upward social mobility (Young, 2018). Nevertheless, the grass-root, newly rich entrepreneurs are often considered lacking the professional knowledge or the elite education that often goes with wealth. Michael's description of his father signifies an intentional departure from and diametric opposition to such an identity. His interaction with his father prompted him to construct an identity that is contrary to that of his father, one that represented an individual who was not well educated and ostentatious at the expense of family life. Therefore, Michael strove to become a well-educated, intelligent, and knowledgeable person. Such an imagined identity prompted him to go to an international high school and later study abroad. His efforts in realizing this identity were reflected in his strong desire to acquire and accumulate knowledge of all kinds. Such a desire then prompted Michael to engage in various forms of learning in both instructed spaces and informal self-initiated spaces in the US. In addition, his desire for better education and knowledge also largely shaped the way he interacted with others and the types of literacy practices he engaged in, which in turn contributed to a unique literacy and language socialization trajectory at ELU.

4.1.1. Entering the U.S. University Community

After arriving in the US, Michael quickly found local resources that afforded him opportunities to learn new things and gain knowledge. On the first day when he toured the campus, he spotted several places where free copies of *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* were provided at different buildings on campus. He then developed a daily routine of reading *The New York Times* for 30-40 minutes after lunch. He mainly focused on the business column and followed the latest news on current social issues. As he stated in an interview,

> Excerpt 4:
>
> For my extracurricular activities, I read *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* every day ... I mainly read about the current economic, social, and political events happening in the US and other countries in the world. I want to know more about the U.S. society. I also like to visit *Quora* and *Reddit,* mainly to read about the discussions on current political, economic, and social issues. For Chinese news, I visit *Zhihu* [Chinese equivalent of Quora]. (Michael, Interview 2)

In addition to gaining information about the US and the world through reading newspapers, Michael also visited some of the most popular online forums such as *Quora* and *Reddit* in the US, to get "the public's views of social events." Because of his interest in the relationship between China and the US, he would often search for the American public's opinions of the social events happening in China and see how China as a country was perceived in mainstream American discourses. He would also explore how political and social issues in the US were discussed among the Chinese public.

Furthermore, Michael's passion for learning more about the US was not limited to his participation in online forums or reading newspapers. Since his arrival to the US, he had also been actively seeking interactions with the "experts" in the university community, including the university staff, course instructors, and American students.

4.1.2. Actively Seeks Interactions with the "Experts" in the University Community

Michael was very clear about his goal of studying in the US. In our first interview, he told me that he came here to "receive the best college education because the US is known to have the best higher education in the world." He expressed an eagerness to be socialized into the local academic community and participate in academic and cultural activities in the community. One of the self-directed socialization efforts Michael made was to learn about American culture, as he pointed out in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 5:

One of my goals studying here is to learn about and experience American culture... Many Chinese students do not want to step out of their comfort zone to communicate with and make friends with Americans. Some of them might not want to, and some of them might not be able to. I like to challenge myself to step out of my comfort zone and explore new things. (Michael, Interview 1)
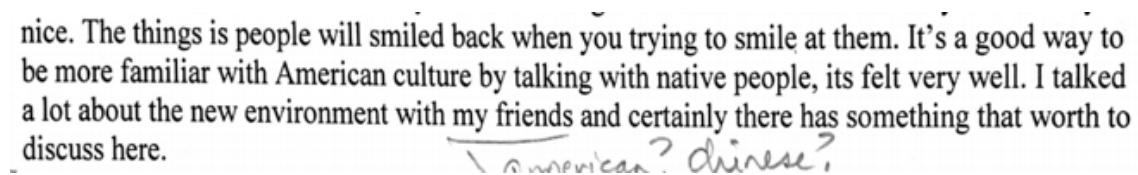
As mentioned in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3), East Land University ranked high among state universities with the largest international Chinese student population. According to the East Land University 2018 Statistical Report, there were more than 3500 Chinese international students at ELU, constituting the largest international student population on

campus. However, studies (e.g., Fraiberg & Cui, 2016) have reported that this student population

in U.S. universities in general did not necessarily contribute to campus diversity. Instead, given

the large population, students ended up developing ethnic enclaves or "a college within a

college," in which Chinese students shared resources and developed strategies to cope with

academic and linguistic demands through various social networks; this practice subsequently

resulted in increased segregation from the majority of the student body (Dervin & Korpela,

2013).

Michael was well aware of the segregation of Chinese international students on campus

and interpreted this ethnic congregation as many Chinese students' unwillingness to "step out of

the comfort zone." As a result, he tried to distinguish himself from his Chinese peers and

challenged himself to make friends with Americans as well as to integrate into the mainstream

domestic student community. This desire was also described by him in a written assignment

where students were required to describe their cultural dissonance in the CBW 101 class,

Michael wrote about his willingness to actively reach out to American students to learn about

and experience American culture (Excerpt 6).

Excerpt 6:

nice. The things is people will smiled back when you trying to smile at them. It's a good way to be more familiar with American culture by talking with native people, its felt very well. I talked a lot about the new environment with my friends and certainly there has something that worth to discuss here.
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　American? Chinese?

Figure 4.2. Michael's first writing assignment in the CBW 101 class

Seating arrangement. Michael's first effort was his choice of seating in the CBW 101

class. Below is the seating chart in the CBW 101 class.

T: Instructor R: Researcher
A: American students   I: Indian student
M: Michael   Y: Yang   H: Henry   X: Xing
C: other Chinese students
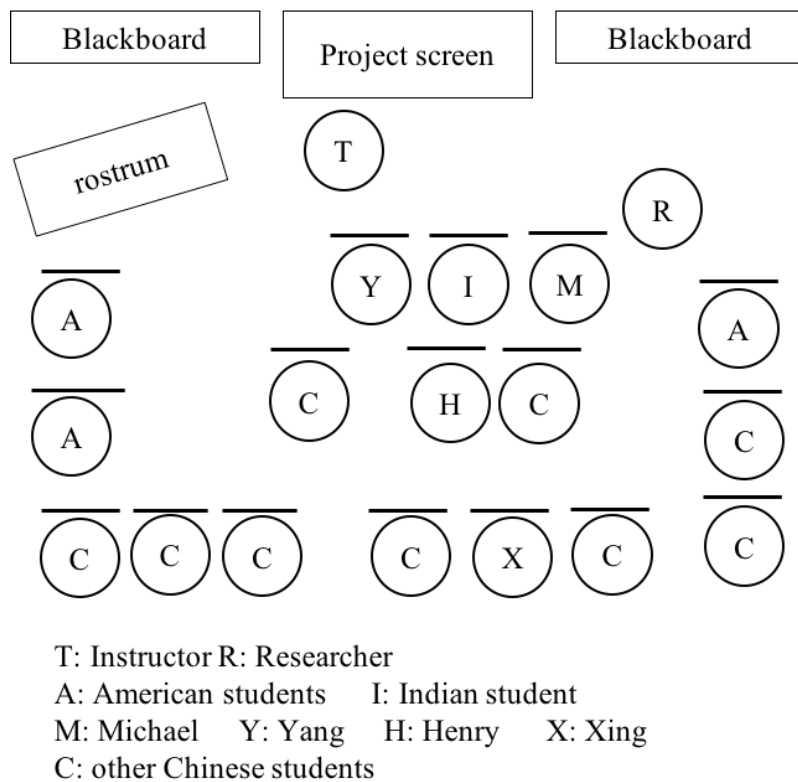
Figure 4.3. CBW 101 class seating chart

As can be seen in this seating chart, the majority of the students were Chinese, and they sat together at the back of the classroom. Michael, on the other hand, sat in the front row close to the professor and another international student, and away from the majority of the Chinese students. Regarding the seating, Michael explained,

Excerpt 7:

I always sit in the front and close to the professor, because you can hear more clearly sitting in the front. Second, you get the chance to talk to the professor from time to time … I don't know why the other Chinese students like to sit at the back and sit together. I like to explore and learn new things. (Michael, Interview 2)

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Through choosing the seat, spatially, he was also performing the identity of a "good international student" who was eager to learn and participate in the instructor-led class community. In comparison, the majority of Chinese students sat at the back close to the back door, keeping distance from the instructor and other non-Chinese students, which signaled a peripheral participation in the class community. Wang (2019) rightfully pointed out that seating arrangements can be seen as an important part of one's literacy practices, as Chinese international students often engage in seat-arranging practices so as to "create backstage channels for gathering resources and conducting discussions" (p. 267). While this practice might help students navigate academic demands, Wang (2019) also observed that it also "constrains the flow of information, turn bodies and ideas inward" (p. 267), contributing to missed opportunities to interact and socialize with others outside the Chinese student community. Therefore, Michael's agentive decision with regard to seating reflects his desire to socialize into the broader university community.

Seeking interactions with the instructor. In the CBW 101 class, I sat next to Michael and had ample opportunities to observe Michael's participation in class. Michael often stayed after class and grabbed the opportunity to talk to the course instructor, Janice, about the issues discussed in class. As mentioned in the methodology section, Janice adopted an asset-based approach (Fraiberg et al., 2017; Kiernan et al., 2016) in teaching, which views students' home cultures and languages as an asset by encouraging students to incorporate their languages and cultures into their learning and writing. As a result, Janice also incorporated discussions about the cultural differences in class. For example, in one of the classes, Janice was discussing plagiarism with the students. As seen in the PPT slides (Figure 4.4) below, Janice made explicit the connections between plagiarism and American academic culture. Furthermore, Janice

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encouraged students to reflect on the idea of "intellectual ownership" from their own cultural perspectives. Inspired by the discussion, Michael decided to stay after class and talk to Janice.

Excerpt 8:
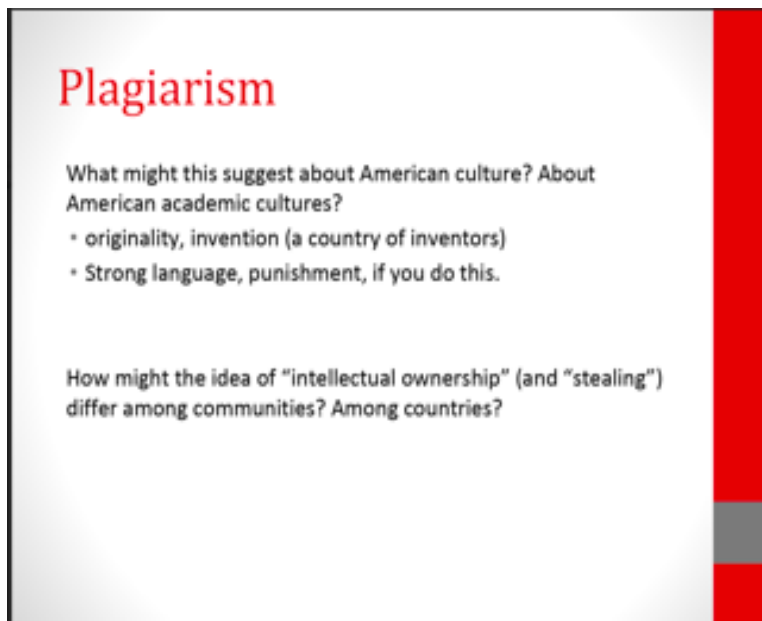
Figure 4.4. CBW 101 class PPT slide

Excerpt 9:

Michael stayed after the class was over and talked to Janice about plagiarism in Chinese culture. He shared what he read about China's copyright laws with Janice. He also told Janice that many Westerners have misunderstandings about copyright laws in China that there was no legal protection of authors' copyrights in China. Janice appreciated that Michael shared this information with her and exchanged her views about plagiarism in American culture. (Michael, Class observation field notes)

As can be seen in the field notes, Michael was quite knowledgeable about China's copyright laws due to his extensive reading outside the classroom. His conversation with Janice, demonstrated that he had the intellectual and linguistic competence to interact with Janice, and his knowledge about China's copyright laws was well appreciated by Janice. The latter, in turn, shared her views on how plagiarism is understood in American culture with Michael. Through this small episode of cross-cultural communication, Michael was perceived as a valuable member of the class community. Nevertheless, the recognition Michael gained through interaction with Janice in his CBW 101 class was absent in the broader peer community.

Reaching out to American peers. After settling in at the student dormitory for three months, Michael reached out to me and asked me about moving to a new dormitory. He was assigned to a Chinese roommate at the beginning, and he wanted to "challenge" himself by living with an American roommate. Before I could share with him what I knew about changing roommates, he had already approached the residential director, met him in person, and gotten hold of the email contact information about the American students who lived in his residential building. After a few days, he contacted me on WeChat again and told me that he had already sent his email self-introduction to those American students. He shared the email with me (see Figure 4.5 below).

Excerpt 10:

Hi, I'm Michael. I'm an international student. Currently enrolled as freshman. It's been one and a half month since I came here at ▮▮▮▮. My major is computer science (one of the major goals in my life for the future is to dedicate in the invention of artificial intelligence) that's the main reason for why I choose computer science. One of my favorite people is Steve jobs who has said that everybody should learn at least one programming language by it tells people how to think. Sometime it can be so hard for some specific project by people need to spend hours to figure out how to deal with a specific problem, and once you get there, you are developing yourselves though, it's a brand-new idea and everything fall apart to where they belong, that's what I felt so far about computer science, challenging but teach people how to think properly.

Figure 4.5. Michael's Email to American students (identifiable information is hidden to protect Michael's privacy)

Figure 4.5. (cont'd)

More details about myself: My height is about ▇▇. weight:
▇▇▇▇. I'm a person who are willing to dedicate current
time for a great future. Including future body healthy
situations and future life. For the part of healthier body, I
will normally go to gym six times a week regularly at 4-6
PM. I normally get sleep no later than 11:00 PM and
wake up earlier than 7:00 AM in the morning. (I can
adjust my time if it conflicts with yours, sorry for I can only
adjust forward, the sleeping time for 11:00PM is the
boundary I can take). I will not find my other half until I
have the ability to take care of my family (Yes sometimes
I'm a type of serious person). So, you don't have to worry
any inconveniences about it. I will spend a lot of time on
my academic success. I consider myself as a quite
person (but things may change after I 'm familiar with
American culture), cultural differences make me not
belong that type of person in which are able to play hard
and study hard (sorry I have a little bit problem with
socialize, I like making friends, but it may only in person,
it is because my culture background). Usually my
entertainment time is read newspaper and read books or
watch TV shows (my name came from the main
character in <prison break>: Michael Scofield). I like
topics related to politics (don't worry I'm always neutral),
news, technology, game (I've been a while haven't play
games but the several of the most favorite games are
<The last of us><UNCHARTED><Detroit: become
human>).

As can be seen in the email, Michael's written identities took on different forms. First, he

identified himself as an international student. Interestingly, he did not specify his country of

origin. Secondly, by sharing his daily routine and pointing out his academic learning priority, he

also enacted an international student identity who was highly self-disciplined and invested in his academic success. In addition, he also talked about famous American entrepreneurs such as Steve Jobs, mainstream American t.v. dramas such as *Prison Break*, and various well-known US-based computer games, which demonstrated his familiarity with American popular culture and thus embodied an identity of a transnational youth. Furthermore, the email (Figure 4.5) suggested that Michael was an international student who was willing to interact with domestic students and be socialized into the American peer community. On the other hand, the email also reveals that Michael was linguistically and rhetorically capable of articulating himself in English. While there were grammatical errors here and there in the email, Michael's writing also reflected his good academic vocabulary size, as well as his ability of using complex English sentence structures well (e.g., the use of relative clauses) and tenses and aspects appropriately (e.g., past tense, present perfect tense). Rhetorically, he used details (e.g., detailed daily routine) and examples (e.g., Steve Jobs) to support his claims.

4.1.3. Being Positioned as the "Other" in Social and Academic Interactions

Michael's request to find an American roommate, however, not well received did not go as expected. He did not receive any responses from his domestic peers. After two weeks, Michael told me on WeChat that he had not received any responses. The following chat history between Michael and me not only revealed Michael's frustration but also signaled a turning point in Michael's socialization trajectory.

Excerpt 11:

- So hard to integrate into the foreign community, Wendy.

- [Do you] have any advice?

- I don't know why in my social science recitation class, the group of American students sitting near me feel so uncomfortable…

- It's this group of American students sitting there.

- They have no interest in me.

- Every time in class [they] feel uncomfortable.

- I found that the way Americans make friends is different from us.

- You know the seeming friend, right?

- It's like that.

- It's been two weeks.

- I don't think I will get any response to my email. (Michael, WeChat communication)

Apparently, Michael not only experienced frustration in finding an American roommate, but also felt marginalized in his social science class, where this group of American students sitting next to him never tried to include him in any type of conversation or showed any interest in getting to know him as a classmate. These two experiences led Michael to characterize the relationship between domestic students and international students negatively. On WeChat, he summarized his frustrating experiences with American students as 物以类聚, 人以群分 (Birds of a feather flock together). While he did not elaborate on this comment, it can be inferred that Michael considered himself excluded from the domestic student community.

Unfortunately, this feeling of being marginalized extended into academic settings. When transitioning to his FYW 101 course (2019 Spring semester) Michael became one of the four international students in the class, with the majority of the student population being domestic

students. Because of the classroom layout (see Figure 4.6), the students were arranged to sit in groups at different tables.

Excerpt 12:

Figure 4.6. FYW 101 classroom layout

Michael sat with four American students at a table. One of the class projects was to do a group multi-media presentation. Michael and his group members decided to do a presentation on privacy and national security. The central argument was whether the government institutions should be authorized to access private personal data under any circumstances. I went to observe their presentation and noticed that Michael did not engage in any conversation with his group members before the presentation. And when doing the presentation, surprisingly, on the title page, Michael's name was not listed as one of the presenters.

Based on my observation notes, two American students started their presentation by talking about the San Bernardino's shooting case and introducing some of the news reports on whether Apple should encrypt their clients' iPhone to help the police identify the shooter. The other two American students then nicely transitioned the discussion to another current

sociopolitical event: an evolving Facebook scandal where Facebook was accused of sharing customers' private data with the Cambridge Analytica company that provided an analysis of Facebook users to the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign. An interactive activity was followed to invite students to check whether their Facebook data has been extracted before. Then, the four American students ended their presentations with a short summary.

Abruptly, Michael started his presentation by talking about the cooperation between the FamilyTree DNA company and the FBI. Michael prepared two slides and wrote down the script for his presentation on his phone. While he brought his phone with him during the presentation and read aloud the script, his script was well written with statistics and scientific evidence cited in the slides to showcase his argument. The presentation ended with three follow-up questions brought up by the group. These questions centered around the U.S. government's rights to access personal information. During the Question-and-Answer section, Michael did not respond to any questions from the class. After class, I asked Michael to share this experience of doing the group project. He noted:

Excerpt 13:

In class, they [the domestic students] always chat among themselves. When doing group work, I felt like an outsider. I don't even know their names by now, they don't know my name either. [sigh]. They have no interest in talking to me, I don't talk to them either. It's really frustrating…We never met or discussed the project outside the class. They finished their parts in class. I did my part on my own and added to their ppt. [sigh]... The majority of them [American undergraduate students] are like high school kids, so immature…

(Michael, Interview 5)

As seen in the interview excerpt above, Michael was positioned as an outsider in his group. Approaching the mid-semester, Michael and his group members were still not acquainted with each other. This is perhaps the reason that Michael's name was not included on the title page of the presentation. One thing that is worth noting is that different from previous experiences in which Michael actively sought to interact with domestic students, in the FYW 101 class, Michael did not take the initiative to talk to the domestic students. Especially despite Michael's strong commitment to academic success, he did not ask to be involved in his group members' in-class discussion of the project. Instead, he did his own research after class and then made two slides. While both the domestic students and Michael did a good job preparing and presenting their cases and arguments in their respective parts, this can still be seen as a failing experience of group work, as Michael and the four American students (two female and two male students) did not draw on each other's expertise and knowledge to enhance as well as expand their understanding towards the topic of discussion.

More importantly, frustrating as this experience might have been for him, Michael's responses towards being alienated and marginalized in this group project were different in that he agentively decided not to (1) talk to the American students, or (2) initiate any meetings or discussions about the project either. Coupled and compounded with previous frustrating experiences, Michael concluded that the majority of American students were like high school kids and thus behaved immaturely. The interaction between Michael and the domestic students also revealed a dynamic and discursive relationship of positioning and being positioned (Davis & Harre, 1990; Norton, 2013): Michael was positioned as the outsider in the group and such a positioning rendered Michael to position his group members as high school kids who were

immature, and as Michael further explained, "they have prejudice towards people who are different from them."

4.1.4. Being Positioned as the "English Language Learner"

In both his CBW 101 and FYW 101 classes, the instructors introduced students to different university resources that they could use to improve their academic writing. Of these resources, the writing center is well known for its mission to help university students with writing assignments in different genres and at different levels, ranging from class writing assignments to resume writing. In addition to the writing center, the English Language Center (ELC) also provided academic writing assistance service (ELC lab) free to international students on campus. In the FYW 101 class, when working on the first writing assignment, Michael was advised by the instructor to go to the Writing Center or the ELC lab to improve his academic writing after submitting the first draft to the instructor. Following the instructor's advice, Michael went to the Writing Center first and then decided to go to the ELC lab, after finding the Writing Center not quite helpful.

Excerpt 14:

I don't like the Writing Center service. I went there twice. Most of them [the consultants] are undergraduates. They are impatient. It feels like they want to finish the session as soon as possible. They started to pack things before the session even ended! I prefer to go to the ELC lab. The instructor is an experienced English teacher. He has rich experience teaching international students. (Michael, Interview 5)

In Excerpt 14, Michael again had an unpleasant experience with the undergraduate consultants at the Writing Center, due to their impatient attitude. After trying their service twice, Michael decided not to go to the writing center anymore and instead chose to go to the ELC lab, because the instructor at the ELC lab had more experience teaching international students.

Excerpt 15:

Wendy: How is the ELC Lab service different from the Writing Center?

Michael: The writing center mainly provides help with the structure. They do not do grammar check for you. The ELC lab does mostly grammar check.

Wendy: So, you need help with the grammar?

Michael: Hmm… actually, I think the structure is more important. Our professor also emphasizes on the structure more than the accurate use of grammar.

Wendy: But you always go to the ELC Lab, not the Writing Center.

Michael: Yeah. Well, grammar is also important. The writing center… They are mostly American undergraduates …

Wendy: Did you tell the instructor in the ELC Lab that you need feedback on the structure?

Michael: Yeah, but he always went back to correct my grammar errors [laugh]. He just, he mainly focused on my grammar errors... (Michael, Interview 6)

Compared to the Writing Center, Michael spoke highly of the ELC lab service and the consultant. He showed great respect to the consultant's authority and experience in teaching English to international students at ELU. Nevertheless, it is also the consultant's long-established

English teacher identity that positioned Michael as the English language learner who needed help primarily with English language, in this case, the grammar. Therefore, even though Michael came to get feedback on the structure and content of his essay, he got mainly grammar corrections from the consultant. Despite this positioning, Michael continued to visit the ELC lab to have his other writing assignments checked by the same ELC lab consultant. He also supplied reasons, "Grammar is also very important."

Michael's choice of writing services demonstrated his enactment of personal agency. On the one hand, because of his negative experience with the American students, he resisted being regarded as the "other" by not interacting with them. On the other hand, such a resistance led to his acceptance of being positioned as an English language learner, which revealed that the identity categories available to Michael during his interactions with the target community were relatively limited.

4.1.5. Socialization: Living on the Margins

In our last interview, one and a half years after Michael first started his journal at ELU in the US, I asked Michael how he felt living and studying at ELU. Michael told me that he came to terms with the outsider identity that had been ascribed to him. "I made peace with it. Living in the margins of the community. After all, it's their country." Michael became "smarter." He "knew" better when interacting with domestic students, as he noted: "I was silly to try so hard to integrate into their world." The words he used, "they, their country, their world" signaled a separation between American domestic students and international students and a marginalized position that international students take. When summarizing his experiences, he stated:

Excerpt 16:

It seems like there are two worlds. In the academic world, I am a student. I go to class, do homework, and study hard to maintain a good GPA. In my extracurricular world, I learn things about the US, China and the rest of the world. I am like a polymath[laugh]…But here no one asks me anything or is interested in what I know… Here I feel like I'm living on the margins of the community. (Michael, Interview 7)

Michael kept his sterling GPA record throughout his first and second years. On the surface, Michael struck every one of his instructors as a model international student who actively participated in class, sought opportunities to talk to the instructors, and did not report any "English language issues". He was considered to be able to socialize into the target community without much trouble. Nevertheless, Michael's construction and negotiation of different identities, including the self-asserted one, "I am like a polymath", which was not recognized and remained invisible in the community, and the imposed one, that is, being the "Other" in the American student community, socialized him into the feeling of not belonging and marginalized.

4.2. Xing: A Cosmopolitan Business Elite in the Start

Similar to Michael, Xing also used his WeChat Friend Circle page as a space where he mobilized his semiotic resources to perform identity work. Figure 4.7 reflects Xing's WeChat Friend Circle profile. As can be seen, the cover photo is a quote in Chinese, translated from a poem *Ars Poetica*, which is written by an outstanding Latin lyric poet *Quintus Horatius Flaccus* under the emperor Augustus. The quote in English reads, "many shall be restored that now are fallen, and many shall fall that now are in honor." In addition, the personal signature under his profile photo reads "SUIT" These two seemingly unrelated texts were ingeniously put together by Xing to index an identity as an emergent business elite.

Excerpt 17:
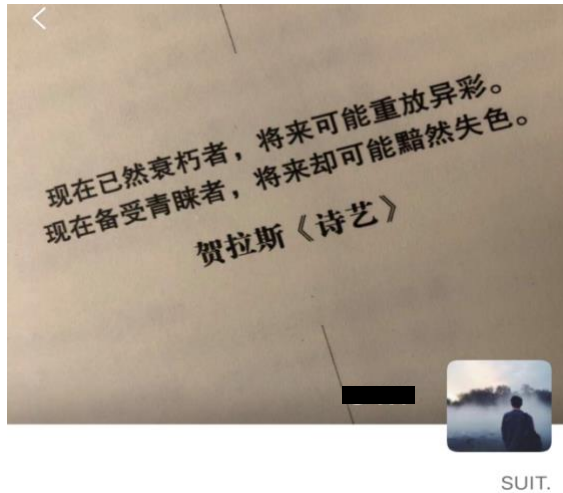
Figure 4.7. Xing's WeChat Friend Circle page

First, the reason for choosing this quote, according to Xing, was not because of the quote

per se. Rather, he used this quote because this is the very first quote written in the preface of a

book, *Security Analysis*. This book was written by Benjamin Graham and David L. Dood, who

are well-known by professionals working in the field of Security Analysis and Investment. This

book has been considered the seminal book in the field of accounting and finance. First

published in 1934, this book went through multiple editions and remained popular, and in 2016 it

was coined "still the best investment guide" by *Fortune.* As Xing simply put it, "everyone in our

field knows it," while acknowledging that "not many people outside the field would know it."

Therefore, this quote, in this case, was exported to a new context and assumed a new cultural

meaning, which was mobilized by Xing to index his identity as an insider in the field of

accounting and finance.

In addition, the personal signature "SUIT" also bears multiple layers of meanings. As

Xing explained, the word "SUIT" speaks to his dream, that is, to be able to afford an expensive

suit that matches a high-level white-collar job in the field of accounting and finance. When asked why he used the English word 'SUIT' instead of its Chinese equivalent, Xing responded:

> Excerpt 18:
>
> SUIT sounds fancier. When people say SUIT, you can immediately picture a scene where people wear high-class suits working in the high-rise CBD buildings. There is a famous TV series in the US called *Suits*. It is my favorite show. (Xing, Interview 5)

Xing preferred the English word SUIT here because of its well-recognized cultural connotation of a high-income white-collar job in the CBD, whereas SUIT in Chinese does not entail the same glamorous association due to the lack of a suit culture in China. Therefore, Xing's deliberate choice of semiotics in the WeChat friend circle page indicated his identity performance as an emergent cosmopolitan business elite. In addition, Like Michael, Xing mixed different languages and semiotics to construct identities and make meanings, which also indexed a transnational youth identity (Yi, 2009).

4.2.1. A Departure from his Father's Perceived New Rich Identity

Xing's pursuit of a cosmopolitan business elite identity was largely shaped by his interactions with his family, especially his father. As mentioned in Chapter 3, similar to Michael, Xing was not born into an affluent family. Instead, he was also from a humble upbringing when he was quite young. Because of the economic hardship he experienced as a child, he used to be very self-abased, sensitive, and socially withdrawn, which often led to him being mocked and picked on by and other kids at school. During his years in junior high school, his father quit his job and started a business. It was not until his high school years that his father's business started

to take off. Compared to his father, his uncle already had a very successful business, serving as a managerial board member in a big listed company. Living in the same city close to each other, his father's relationship with his uncle also affected Xing. He shared a small incident, which had a significant impact on him throughout his study abroad years.

Excerpt 19:

When my cousin (his uncle's daughter) was about to go to the US for her undergraduate study, her dad, my uncle, invited the whole family to celebrate this event in a fancy restaurant. I remembered that day, my dad drank a lot, coming back drunk. I don't think he remembered telling me this, but he looked at me and said, "studying overseas, big deal! He is rich enough to send her to the US, big deal! Xing, you have to study hard, to show them that you are every bit as good as they are." I remembered the look in my dad's face that night, he felt sorry for me because he was not rich enough to give me the opportunity to study abroad. (Xing, Interview 1)

As can be seen in the above excerpt, his father's mixed emotions towards his uncle, who was more successful and richer, affected Xing profoundly. As Xing disclosed, during the difficult times when studying abroad, what kept him going was the thought of proving himself to others. Apparently, Xing carried the emotional weight of his father and was expected to compete with his cousin in order to balance out the social and economic gap between his father and his uncle. While his father's business took off and he was subsequently able to afford to give Xing an overseas undergraduate education, this pressure to be better to validate his value remained acutely felt by Xing throughout his undergraduate study. While identifying his father as one of

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the most influential people in his life and showing great gratitude towards his father, Xing made

it clear that he did not want to be like his father. In light of achieving some success in business,

Xing considered his father a "土老板," (a phrase typically used to describe the nouveau rich

who accumulated wealth over one-generation, similar to "土豪"). He described his father as

someone who "does not look smart or like an elite." To depart from such an image, Xing told me

in the interview that he wanted to "live glamorously, wear suits, work white-collar jobs in

skyline buildings." Such a description also revealed that Xing's desire to construct a

cosmopolitan business elite identity had largely been informed by his deliberate effort to distance

himself from his father's perceived "土老板" identity.

4.2.2. Actively Socializing into a Targeted Professional Community

In order to realize this identity, Xing agentively engaged in linguistic and literacy

practices that helped socialize him into his target community. During his first year of

undergraduate study, Xing was very well aware of his goal for the first year, that is, to get

admitted by the business college. In order to increase his likelihood of getting into the business

college, he would need to maintain an average GPA of 3.5 in university-required courses,

including Arts and Humanities courses and First-year Writing courses, and an average GPA of

3.7 and above in college-required courses, including computer science and economics (micro and

macro). GPA requirements in different courses also led him to distribute his time and effort

accordingly in learning different subjects. When asking if he found First-year Writing courses

helpful in facilitating his English academic writing, he commented:

Excerpt 20:

for me, it doesn't matter that much, because the finance or accounting major does not

require lots of academic writing. I would, of course, try to do well in the writing courses

to gain a good score. Other than that, I don't think I will spend extra time and effort in

learning this. But maybe for someone who is going to do social science majors, like,

journalism, they probably will need to spend more time learning this. (Xing, Interview 1)

The above excerpt shows that Xing planned his investment in non-business-related

courses. This strategic control of effort and time was also found in his revising of written drafts

in the CBW and FYW courses: when he got a good enough score for the writing assignments, he

would not spend extra time going through the instructor's feedback in detail or polishing his

writing, neither did he feel the need to go to the writing center to ask for help with the writing

assignments. Nonetheless, he maintained a 4.0 GPA for both CBW 101 and 101 courses and

received many positive comments on his academic writing. Interestingly, such an attitude sharply

contrasted with the enormous efforts and work he put in writing the experiential profile that was

required to apply for the business college. According to the description of the experiential profile

on the college website:

An online Experiential Profile considering the following qualities:

• Motivation & Enthusiasm

• Engagement & Commitment

• Resilience

• Positive Self-Concept

• Written Communication Skills

The college would hold information sessions in which students can get detailed

information about the questions they need to answer to complete the experiential profile and to

meet the scoring and evaluation criteria. In writing this profile, international students need to not

only abide by the English academic writing norms in general but also take into consideration the

specific business academic writing norms, which posed a great challenge for them. As a result,

because of the lack of disciplinary English literacies, international students often were at a

disadvantage in the competitive admission. Knowing that, Xing spent enormous time and

leveraged various resources to help him write a good experiential profile.

Excerpt 21:

Many of the Chinese students paid professionals to help them write. I preferred to write it

myself. No one else knows my story better than me. I first wrote a draft myself, and then

I went to the writing center three times to get feedback. I also asked my friends to read

my drafts and give feedback. I spent so much time thinking about stories I would like to

share and writing up these stories. (Xing, Interview 2)

As can be seen in Excerpt 21, Xing actively exploited different resources both within and

outside campuses to help him improve and polish his experiential profile. As Xing said, he also

approached me as a potential resource to help him with his profile writing. When writing the

draft, he spent lots of time figuring out how the narration of his personal stories could be

translated into discourses valued in the Business discipline, though he had already gained skills

and experiences writing narrative essays in both CBW 101 and 101 classes. Below is a small and

representative part of Xing's answer to a question in the experiential profile:

Excerpt 22:

Question: Please discuss the one activity you have undertaken in your senior year of high school through your time at ELU that best demonstrates why you would be an asset to the Broad College. (250-word limit)

Answer: In my senior year, my school held a Charity sale and I was the sale organizer in our class. At first most people sold their broken teddy bears, postcards, or tennis balls; however, this was not fundraising enough money. Thus, I strategized and challenged by class to sell boxed watermelon. I made this decision because I saw in a magazine, KFC's and McDonald's net-worth and it revealed that most of their revenue was from selling cola and not from burgers and fried chicken, respectively. After packing the watermelon into cubes, we sold each box for ten yuan and our class donated the most money on that day. Since then I have learned, when you can sell something that meets the needs of consumers, you can buy it at a low price and then sell it at a high price.

(Xing, Business College Application File)

As can be seen in the example of his writing above, he used words such as "strategized" "challenged" "meets the needs of customers" "net-worth," etc., which showed that he was consciously making an effort to translate his everyday experience into business-informed literacy practices and positioned himself as an emergent business student who already developed the mindset of a businessman. After gaining admission into the business college, apart from taking the core content courses such as finance, marketing, and business communication, Xing was also actively seeking opportunities to participate in business trainee programs and internship programs at big corporations. After finishing his second year, he successfully applied to a two-

week trainee program in one of the State-owned banks in China. He spent his first week receiving training in one of the branches in Beijing and the second week in the Hong Kong branch. He was very excited about this experience (see the excerpt below):

Excerpt 23:

I get to see how they (bank employees, financial advisers, analysts) work and what their everyday work life looks like. They introduce different banking services and financial products to customers, negotiate terms with partners. When having lunch together, they complained about the stock market and gave me advice on how to make the stock investment. I love this lifestyle. I want to have a job like this. And they wear nice suits every day. (Xing, Interview 3)

This training experience played an important role in socializing Xing into his desired community of practices, that is, the community of accounting and finance. Different from his learning activities in the Business College where Xing was socialized into the disciplinary practices in an academic setting by taking courses, doing assignments, and interacting with peers and instructors, this training experience in a State-owned bank afforded Xing an apprenticeship opportunity to observe and even participate in the practices desired and expected in the target community. As Xing said in the interview, he loved the corporate banking lifestyle. He was quite satisfied with his performance during these two weeks of internship: he not only got used to the working environment quickly, he was also able to help some of the employees with their work and got recognized by them there. The positive experience of fitting in also validated Xing's identity as an insider, contributing to his continuous construction of an emergent business elite

identity. More importantly, he also identified that one of his advantages in comparison with other trainees who came from Chinese universities is that he developed a more complex and nuanced perspective on various issues. As Xing elaborated in the interview, "studying abroad, you learn to look at things differently. As a Chinese, you understand things in certain ways, but as an American, they have a different perspective, so sometimes you learn to accept and negotiate." This experience rendered him a broader understanding of different perspectives and also helped him get more opportunities to deal with issues brought up by foreign customers, which further contributed to his construction of a cosmopolitan business elite identity.

This successful experience motivated him to further pursue opportunities to work in international corporations. From the start of his third year, Xing began to prepare for the annual career fair event hosted by the university in order to gain an opportunity to work in one of the four leading accounting firms as an intern in the US. However, while Xing's overseas study background served as an asset that enabled Xing to secure a traineeship in China, his international student status put him at a disadvantage compared with his American peers in the internship application in the US job market. He shared his experience with me in the interview:

Excerpt 24:

Ever since I started the second year, I had been thinking about this, you know, thinking about how to write a resume, what to include in my resume, what to say to the interviewer when I get the face-to-face interview opportunity... I spent quite some time learning how to write an English resume. I downloaded many sample resumes written by business professionals, and I also asked people who successfully got into these big accounting firms to share their resumes with me. I then drafted my resume based on these

materials and went to the peer career coach center five times to ask different people there

to read my resume. I also sent my resume to my cousin, who worked in Amazon to give

me feedback. I also asked her to pass it to her colleagues who work in other departments

to look at my resume. (Xing, Interview 5)

It is noteworthy to mention that Xing did not engage in resume writing practices in any of

the content courses he took. When writing his resume, he demonstrated a strong agentive force

of committed and invested learning on his own as well as mobilizing all kinds of resources on

campus (i.e., the peer career coach) and leveraging his social networking resources (i.e., his

cousin and his cousin's friends) to help him write the resume. In addition, he was also very

strategic in choosing various resources: instead of randomly downloading sample resumes

online, he chose the resumes of those who worked in the big accounting firms. When it came to

providing feedback, he chose the peer career coach program rather than the writing center

service, as "people there had more experience working in the field of accounting and finance and

therefore can provide more professional feedback on my resume."

Excerpt 25 consists of two small parts of his resume, listing the trainee program

experience and his skills, activities, and interests. As can be seen in this excerpt, these two parts

well demonstrated Xing's mastery of the academic disciplinary discourses as well as his identity

as an insider: the description of the experience was featured by the use of business vocabulary

and highlighted by his listed achievements. The *skills, activities, and interests* part nicely

showcased Xing's disciplinary literacies, as they are mostly known in the business discipline.

Excerpt 25:

WORK & LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

ICBC(ASIA)	Central, Hong Kong
Intern, Private Banking Department	Jul – Aug 2019

- Project Experience:
  - Gold Fund Investment
    - Collaborated with a 6 member Analysts team on a gold fund investment worth $1.5 million
  - Gold Fund Analysts
    - Analyzed 5 different Gold Funds and concluded key factor was Fed rate cuts, made project viable resulted in company proceeding with investment
  - Financial Investment Simulation Exchange Competition
    - Led a team of 4 interns on a simulated investment project worth $1 billion, achieved 15.8% yield increased rate in 3 weeks through asset allocation

SKILLS, ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS

Languages: Fluent in English; Native in Mandarin;
Technical Skills: MySQL; Tableau; Adobe PS; iMovie;
Certifications & Training: ICBC Finance and Integrated Development Program;
Activities: Everything DISC workplace Personality Test; 3rd Annual Deloitte Signature Event;
Interests: Stock market; Portfolio Investment; Fencing; Bruce Harmonica

Figure 4.8. A screenshot of Xing's English Resume

Engaging in an activity like this helped with Xing's socialization into the targeted community of practice enormously. Xing not only developed genre awareness on resume writing, but also developed the metacognitive awareness of writing across disciplines, as can be seen in Excerpt 26: he talked about how the resume for an accountant should be different from that of a marketing person, in terms of the languages and other text features. Majoring in accounting, Xing pointed out that he intentionally wrote his resume in such a way that it reflected some of the linguistic practices adopted by good accountants:

Excerpt 26:

Accountants pay attention to details. They don't talk too much. They don't use fancy languages. They just need to be accurate, free of error, and also concise. So you can see, in my resume, I kept it concise, one page, and I did not use fancy vocabulary, simply listing all the things I did. This is totally different from the marketing people, you know,

their resumes would be very pretty, they have to pay attention to the design, use

complicated languages, and be creative. (Xing, Interview 5)

As can be seen in this excerpt above, Xing was well aware of the features desired of an

accountant and hence subsequently integrated these features into his resume writing. Fortunately,

his effort paid off. He successfully passed the first round of resume screening and was selected to

do the second-round of video-interview, where he was given a few questions and some

preparation time before answering these questions online over Skype. Again, Xing spent an

enormous time preparing answers to different questions. As can be seen in Excerpt 27, he

described in a self-deprecating way how obsessed he was in preparing for his video interview.

By saying, "the moment I see a computer screen, I almost can't help starting to do the self-

introduction," Xing pointed out that he developed a conditioned response to a computer screen

because of countless practices and rehearsals of the self-introduction he did in front of the

computer screen. This also underscored his strong commitment in achieving his professional

goals. With sufficient preparation time and invested effort, Xing again successfully passed the

second round and proceeded to the final round, that is, having a face-to-face interview with the

interviewer. Unfortunately, he failed at the final round. While feeling quite frustrated, he quickly

identified the cause of his failure - his lack of English proficiency.

Excerpt 27:

視频面试到走火入魔
只要看到屏幕
下意识就是一套背好的自我介绍
和阿谀奉承用来讨好面试官的微笑😊
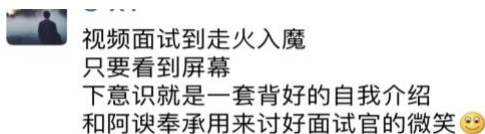
Translation: Gone crazy with my video interview preparation.
The moment I saw a computer screen, I almost can't help starting to do the self-introduction, coupled with a smile to butter up the interviewer [smiley face emoji].

Figure 4.9. Xing's WeChat post about the job interview

4.2.3. Contesting an English Language Learner Identity

Xing was admitted by ELU with a conditional offer: he had to enroll in one-year intensive academic English courses at the English Language Center to meet the language requirement. Although he made huge progress in his academic English competence, as shown in his superb 4.0 GPA record in both academic English courses and FYW courses, he found it difficult to follow content courses in English, especially the core courses in his discipline (accounting), as he was introduced to many new economic and business concepts for the first time. Xing again demonstrated his agency in employing different strategies and leveraging resources within and outside the school to facilitate his learning, as shown in Excerpt 28.

Excerpt 28:

The issue is, when the class is English only, it's just so easy to miss things here and there. Sometimes I couldn't understand the instructor, and it's very difficult to read English textbooks and understand everything. To prepare for the exams, I would resort to online resources, like some Chinese websites, and videos on YouTube, to try to understand difficult concepts and theories. What I would do is to try to understand the whole thing, like, the development of the theory, the related concepts, stuff like that. Interestingly, I

often get a higher score this way than my friends who tried so hard and spent so much

time understanding and memorizing English textbooks. (Xing, Interview 4)

Here his native language (Chinese) served as a good resource to help him understand

difficult concepts and content taught by the instructors. Compared to his Chinese peers who

focused on unpacking English textbooks, he strategically exploited different resources, including

online resources (e.g., YouTube videos) to help enhance his understanding. However, this

practice has its downside, too, in that Xing could not get optimal exposure to English. This

limitation was also recognized by Xing, who felt frustrated about the extent to which he could

improve his English.

Excerpt 29:

I know that I have to get better with my English. I bought a small whiteboard where I

would write down one famous quote every day to motivate myself to learn English. But

it's just that there are so many things that I have to do to keep a good GPA for my

courses, and I have to prepare for the internship interviews... At a certain point, I just felt

exhausted. (Xing, Interview 4)

As shown in Excerpt 29, Xing wrote down different quotes every day to motivate himself

to put more time and effort into learning English. However, with his packed academic schedule

and out-of-school learning activities, he was simply overwhelmed and was thus unable to

squeeze English learning into his daily calendar. Nevertheless, I challenged his perception of

learning English by asking him to rethink what learning English entails.

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Excerpt 30:

Wendy: but what you are doing every day in school can be seen as English learning activities. Like, you attended different classes, read textbooks, and do homework, group work. You also learn English by writing your resume and preparing for the interview.

Xing: well, it's different. I'm worried about my ability to be articulate in English. All the dream jobs I wanted to apply here requires high proficiency in English communication skills. What I mean is, being able to speak, and being able to be articulate are not the same thing. Everyone can speak English, you know, like, I can use words, broken sentences, body language to communicate with others what I want. But being able to be articulate and communicate with your customers professionally and efficiently is a must-have quality in the business world. (Xing, Interview 5)

As shown in Excerpt 30, apparently, Xing was mainly concerned with his lack of English communicative competence (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1995). As he said, being able to communicate with the customers efficiently in a professional manner is the core quality valued by the employers. According to him, because of the lack of ability to be articulate during the interview, he failed the third round of interview. He expressed his frustration in the interview, noting, "I know so much, but I was not able to let other people know I know." As a result, he identified English as the biggest barrier in his overseas study experience.

In addition, the frustration also came from the experience that despite having a good command of disciplinary literacy practices, Xing was valued less as a member of the community because of his lack of English communicative competence. This is particularly salient and became more apparent when he was assigned to do group projects with his American classmates.

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Excerpt 31:

In order to gain recognition, I developed many strategies. Let's say, there are four people

and three of them are Americans. I would first go for the weakest one in the whole group,

you know, the one who does not study much, is not so bright, I suck up to him, always

agree with him. After a while he would be happy to talk to me and have me around.

Then, I would go for the second weakest one. With this student, in addition to always

agreeing with him, I would also try to impress him. I would listen to their discussions

very carefully and try my best to give insightful comments from time to time. Then he

would think, oh, this person is not stupid, he knows things. Once I gain recognition from

two group members, I don't care whether the smartest guy accepts me or not, because I

am already in the group. (Xing, Interview 4)

Excerpt 31 presents a good example of Xing's use of strategies and agency in achieving

membership in a small-sized group community so that he could participate in the learning

activities as a legitimate member. This corroborates Morita (2004) and Choi (2019)'s findings,

which show that learners employ strategies to negotiate the imposed identities to re-position

themselves in the community. Apparently, Xing was positioned as someone less intelligent and

capable because of the ascribed English language learner status. This can be seen in the words

and phrases he used in Excerpt 31. For example, by anticipating the second weakest student's

assessment of him, "oh, this person is not stupid, he knows things," Xing pictured an image of

himself as assumed "stupid" from the native speaker student's perspective. The endearing

strategies he employed, such as "suck[ing] up to him," "agree[ing] with him," and "giv[ing]

insightful comments" so as to be accepted as a legitimate group member further pointed to the

unequal power relationship between international students and the domestic American students. More importantly, such unequal power dynamics was also internalized by Xing, as he took for granted that he needed to gain respect and recognition from the other American students, while "the weakest one who does not study much" was granted legitimacy at the very beginning because of his native speaker status. In the interview, Xing disclosed:

Excerpt 32:

This method worked, but it's also, how to say, it's also quite tiring... But there is no other way. If you want to earn their respect, you need to be able to speak their language well to express yourself and share your views. The English language is also a competence.

(Xing, Interview 4)

Xing used "their language" and felt the need to "speak their language well," in order to gain respect and recognition. I argue that Xing's understanding of "their language" reveals that because "they" set up the rules of the "game", one needs to abide by the rules in order to play the "game". To him, English language communicative competence is one of the main rules non-native English speakers needs to abide by when socializing into the practices of the "game." In this game, both international students and domestic students in the business college were evaluated by English-speaking instructors and peers as well as the U.S. job market. Thus, the English language should not merely be seen as a medium of communication or be understood in a celebratory narrative as multilingual students' linguistic repertoire that can be utilized freely to make meaning. Instead, the English language here is power-laden and bears a privilege that leads to legitimate membership in the university community and more employment opportunities in

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the job market. As Xing said in Excerpt 30, his conversation-level English, and even academic English can fall short in supporting his socialization into the target community, the accounting and finance world.

When asked whether he would like to go back to China after graduation, Xing told me that if he returned home because he could not find a job here in the US, he would feel somehow defeated.

Excerpt 33:

That feeling, I can imagine, it would really suck. You know that you are defeated not because you are less professional or knowledgeable in your expertise, but because your English is not good enough. (Xing, Interview 7)

To some extent, Xing can be seen as a model international student, as evidenced by his superb record of GPA, his ability to strategically exploit linguistic and social network resources to facilitate his academic learning and disciplinary socialization, as well as leverage a strong agentive force to seeking opportunities to develop his disciplinary literacy practices. Nevertheless, a model student like Xing felt caught in a dilemma, as stated in Excerpt 33. On the one hand, he felt convinced that he lost opportunities because of his lack of English proficiency; on the other hand, he acknowledged that English language competence constitutes a significant part of one's skill set, especially for the international students. While Xing stressed over and over again in the interview that he needed to improve his English, his packed daily schedule that defined him as a model student also made it almost impossible for him to invest in improving his English communicative competence. "Improving my English," to Xing, then became something

he always had in his mind, but only existed in the everyday quote he wrote on the whiteboard in his room.

4.3. Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I traced the language and literacy socialization trajectories of my two focal participations: Michael and Xing in the U.S. university, and explored their identity construction and negotiation across different spaces, including the First-year Writing class, the WeChat, and other professional communities. In both cases, their strong desire to realize their imagined identities played a significant role in shaping their language socialization experiences. This finding supports Pavlenko and Norton (2007) and Norton (2013), showing that learners' imagined identities affect their investment, agency, and motivation. In particular, By portraying Michael's self-initiated learning about the American society and culture outside class, active interaction with community members at the beginning, and later his withdrawal from the effort of seeking interactions with American peers, I illustrated how his socialization experience was informed by how he positioned himself and how he was positioned by others in the community. In terms of Xing's case, I demonstrated that in order to realize his dream of becoming a business elite, Xing strategically invested in various academic courses so as to maximize his chance of getting admitted by the desired program and sought internship and traineeship programs in the US and China to gain a fuller participation in the targeted community - the professional community of accounting and finance. Nevertheless, his lack of English communicative competence negatively affected his successful socialization into the target community. In the following chapter, I present the findings of another two participants: Henry and Yang.

CHAPTER 5: LANGUAGE AND LITERACY SOCIALIZATION TRAJECTORIES OF
HENRY AND YANG

5.1. Henry

I first met Henry in the CBW 101 class. As can be seen in the seating chart Figure 4.3 in

Chapter 4, he sat with another Chinese male student in the second row, not too close to the

instructor, and also kept a distance from the majority of the Chinese students at the back. He

often seemed quiet in class, engaging in the class activities while not volunteering any views or

questions. Like Xing, the college bridge writing class was not the first academic English course

he took at ELU. As mentioned in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3), Henry was required to

take one year of intensive academic English courses at the English Language Center at ELU

before enrolling in other content courses. During his first year in the United States, in addition to

taking intensive academic English courses on campus, he spent most of his spare time surfing on

the Internet, mainly YouTube, outside of the school.

5.1.1. Self-initiated Learning in the Online Space - YouTube

As shown in many studies, videos published on YouTube have attracted an increasing

number of audiences with shared interests (Michielse, 2018; Raun, 2012). Recently, vlogs (i.e.,

video blogs) have been of particular interest to young people. Vloggers share their work and life

experiences, as well as their thoughts, views, attitudes, and concerns on those experiences

through the first-person point of view in vlogs (Balleys, Millerand, Thoër, & Duque, 2020). The

practice of vlogging is considered dialogical, relational and participatory (Jenkins, 2009;

Marwick, 2016), and thus is identified as a social practice which creates social relationships and

a sense of belongingness with the audience communities (Balleys et al., 2020). Because of his

keen interest in photography, Henry discovered many photography-related YouTube videos and

followed many vloggers who work in the photography and videography business. These vloggers

share not only their professional work, knowledge, and skills about photo-shooting or video-editing, but also their thoughts and views on daily life and work experiences. Watching those videos significantly changed him, to be more precise, in Henry's own words, "has transformed him" (Interview 2).

Excerpt 1:

YouTube has had a significant influence on me during the first year in the States. When I first came to the States, I was not sure what I was doing here. I had the feeling of being lost. These vloggers and their stories really helped me find myself back. Some of the vloggers shared their positive attitudes towards work and life. For example, in some videos, some of the professionals shared their video-shooting or photo-taking processes, which also revealed how invested and passionate they are about their work. My favorite vlogger is Casey Neistat. His worldviews and lifestyle really had a great impact on me. He said, 'one day has limited hours, one's life has limited days, (I) would try to do more things and good things.' I think so too. He put family first, work second. Me too. I try to run every day, like him. And try to keep a positive attitude, like him. This is also the reason I chose media information as one of the majors. He published more than 400 videos and I watched all of them. (Henry, Interview 2)

Henry felt lost at the beginning, as he did not have a clear goal or purpose of studying in a foreign land. Getting to know some of the vloggers and watching their videos helped him find his "self" again. Vloggers, then, become important socialization agents for young people, as Balleys et al. (2020) stated, because the relational and dialogical nature of the vlogging "creates

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a bond and a sense of closeness with their audience" (p.7). The connection between the vloggers and the audience in Henry's case revealed that the content viewing is not merely an entertainment practice; rather, it is also a social practice (Astigarraga Agirre, Pavon Arrizabalaga, & Zuberogoitia Espilla, 2016; Burgess & Green, 2018) through which identity is explored, shared, and performed. Similarly, Duff and Doherty (2015) discussed self-directed socialization in relation to the emergence of the Web 2.0 culture, which cultivates "new forms of knowledge creation and social participation in communities of practice." (p. 58) They argue that the learners in these new communities are not viewed as merely consumers of knowledge or participants in learning communities, but "as producers, co-creating, revising and critiquing the knowledge and communities they belong to in highly agentive, time-sensitive and public ways" (p. 58). In line with their observation, Henry was not only digesting the content of the videos, but also identifying with identities, values, and acts expressed in these videos, contributing his own exploration of a sense of who he is (see also Arnett, 2013).

In the excerpt below (Excerpt 2), Henry shared a picture of him running on the treadmill and quoted one of the famous sayings by the vlogger Casey Neistat, "Do what you can't". In this case, Casey Neistat acted as an identity model as well as a socialization agent to Henry and socialized Henry into a series of values and practices, such as above mentioned doing more and good things, family-first value, positive attitude towards life, running every day. This is in line with Gilliland's (2018) findings, which showed that mentors and literacy sponsors from the non-academic communities exert great an impact on students' language socialization.

Excerpt 2:
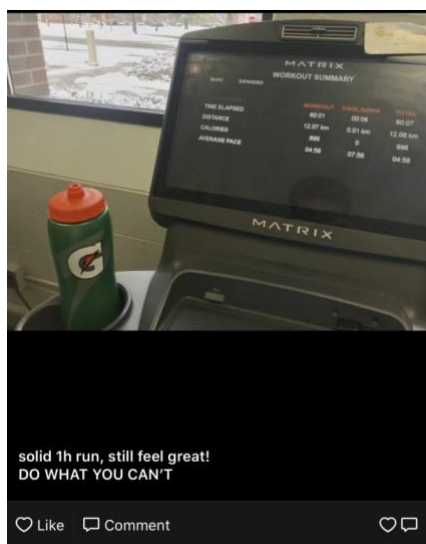
Figure 5.1. Henry's WeChat post

In addition, Henry also identified watching vlogs as an interactive activity, which aligns with what Balley et al. (2020) found in their study, that is, people who described their viewing experience as their fellow YouTubers "speaking to us," rather than "us watching a show." As Henry stated in the interview (see the excerpt below), watching YouTube helped him enormously with his English learning, because "to learn English, you will need to speak to others and interact with people." and watching YouTube is "like we are communicating." This, on the one hand, further evidences that Henry felt connected and close to the vloggers by identifying them as someone present in the same space and time talking to their audience. On the other hand, the dialogical, interactive, and participatory nature of vlogs turned content viewing into a communicative activity for the audience. Therefore, watching videos for Henry went beyond understanding the meaning of the video in another language, but also involved talking to friends in another language. As a result, "learning occurred naturally."

In a similar manner, Henry also learned techniques and skills in photography and videography through watching YouTube.

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Excerpt 3:

YouTube helped me enormously with my English learning. To learn English, you will

need to speak to others and to interact with people. To be honest, (when) making friends

with American students, the relationship always stays at the surface level. We do not

have many opportunities to talk to them. Like, to have a real conversation with them, not

'how are you, what's the homework, etc.' stuff. So, that's why watching YouTube is

great. I watch vlogs every day, and it's like we are communicating. I sometimes would

speak after them and pay attention to the words and expressions they use. This is not to

mechanically memorize vocabulary. Rather, it's to learn through interaction. Because

those words were used in specific scenes, you learn those words to understand what the

vloggers meant. Learning occurred naturally in this situation. It's the same for learning

how to do editing and photographing. You learned the techniques and also the language.

After watching many tutorial videos about photography skills, video making, and editing.

[I] basically self-taught myself all the basics about professional photography, video

making, and editing. (Henry, Interview 2)

As stressed by Livingstone (2013), in a participatory online world, what constitutes an

audience is changing, as everyone feels that they could be both an audience and a content creator

(Balley et al., 2020). Especially in vlogs, many vloggers adopted DIY styles to create their

videos rather than positioning themselves as "professionals with scripts," which delivered the

message of "you can do it too" to their audience, contributing to an enhanced sense of

participation as well as connectedness. Similarly, after watching YouTube for a whole year,

Henry stated in the interview, "I feel like I want to try some of the things these vloggers have

been doing. I feel like I can." As a result, Henry started to create his own content. He created an

Instagram account, a YouTube account, and a user account in a top online Chinese professional

photography community. As shown in the screenshots below (Excerpt 4), Henry presented a

professional identity through publishing professional photos and videos on different online

platforms.

On Instagram, he followed many of the famous international photographers and

videographers and was also followed back by some of them. There are two things worth

mentioning regarding his self-representation on Instagram: first, he showed good tagging literacy

skills when publishing the professional photos on Instagram (see the third screenshot of

Instagram in Excerpt 4). Tagging literacy is part of digital literacy (Dudeney & Hockly, 2016),

and is deployed to craft an identity display (Blackwood, 2019). Henry inserted tags such as

"street photography, urbanphotography, travelphotography, sonya7riii," which can be seen as his

way of crafting an identity as a professional in the community with his familiarity with the

hashtags of photography on Instagram. Secondly, he used English in both the description of the

photos and the hashtags. As stated by Henry, "English is the common language here for

communicating about our work," which indicates that he identified with the international

community of photography professionals. Apart from Instagram, Henry also published his

videography work on YouTube and a Chinese photography online community. In fact, the very

first video he published in the Chinese professional photography online community got pinned to

the top and identified as a hot video in the community, as can be seen in the screenshot below

(one day in Chicago), which shows 43,900 views and 3,823 likes.

Excerpt 4:
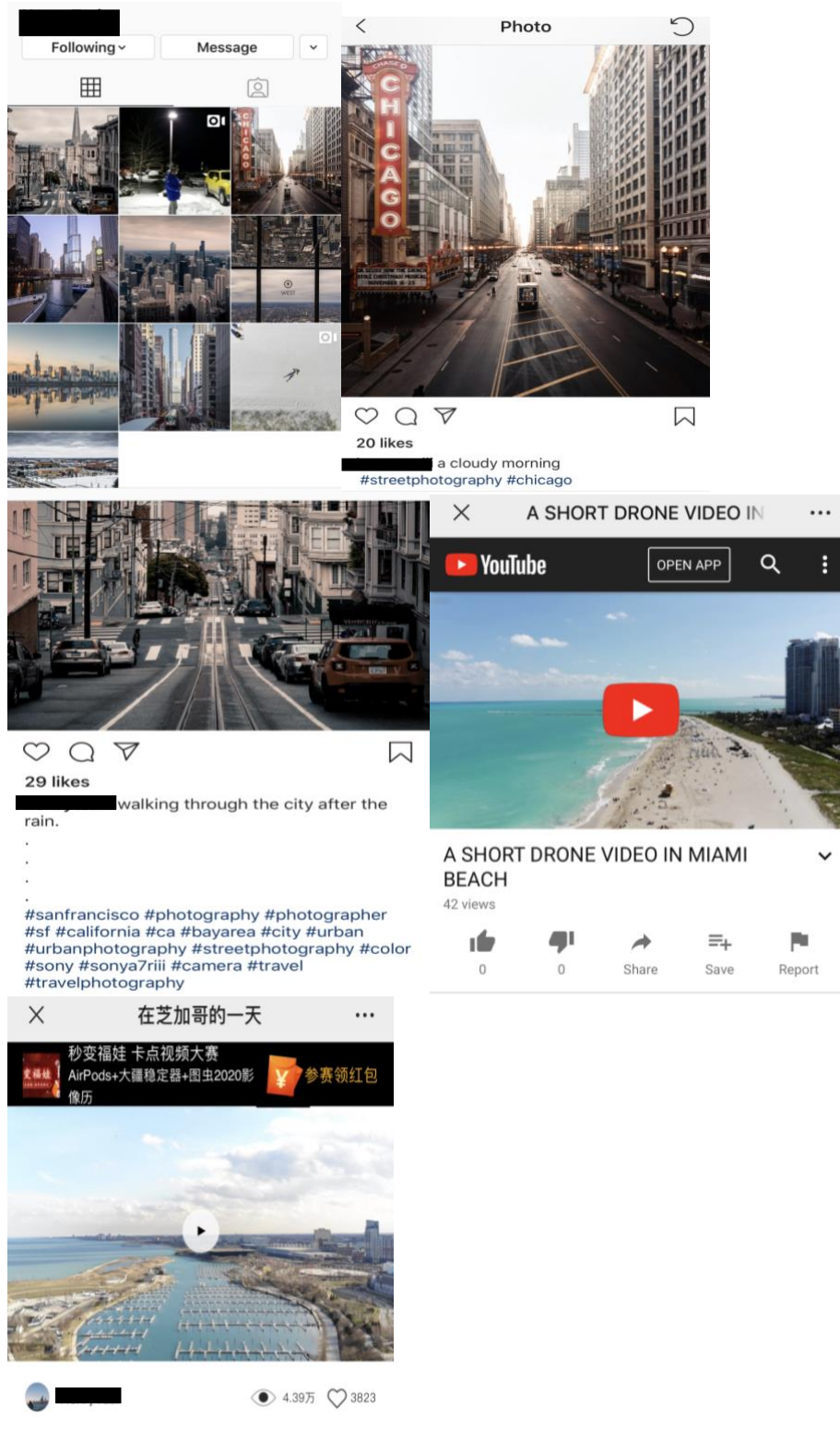
Figure 5.2. Henry's artwork in different social media platforms (identifiable information is hidden to protect Henry's privacy)

Self-identified as a professional. Participating in the online photography and videography community for a year led Henry to perceive himself as 'part of the gang' and a legitimate member in the community. This feeling of being an insider can also be seen by how he carried out a multimodal project in his CBW 101 class. Students in the CBW 101 class were required to turn one of their previous essays into a different modality and present it with the class. Henry's group decided to do a video project on the first narrative writing assignment – Cultural dissonance (see detailed description in Chapter 3). As can be seen in Excerpt 5, he did the project almost all by himself, because "average students may find it very difficult to do a good video project." By differentiating himself from the "average students", Henry can be seen to enact the identity of a professional vlogger who has the techniques and skills needed to create a good video project. Similarly, by stating "you cannot expect them (his group members) to give you any feedback on the video", Henry again claimed an identity as a professional by reiterating that average students who did not receive professional training on video-making or video-editing may not be able to give valuable feedback on the video.

> Excerpt 5:
>
> For example, the multimodal project in our 1004 class, actually, I did it almost all by myself. So, in class, we discussed the multimodal project, and I asked if they had any ideas or thoughts. And then I told them I had an idea, and I can do most of it. Because I think average students may find it very difficult to do a good video project unless they spend time and effort in learning the techniques or skills. After I finished, I showed the video to them. But you cannot expect them to give you any feedback on the video.
>
> (Henry, Interview 2)

5.1.2. Out-of-school Literacy Practices Travel to the Writing Classroom

After one year of watching vlogs and trying to create content on different social media platforms in the online communities, Henry was socialized into literacy practices shared and recognized by the vloggers and professionals in the online communities in which he participated, which contributed to his construction of an identity as a professional in photography and videography field. Such an identity was central to Henry's self-positioning and therefore exerted a significant influence on Henry's other aspects of life, including his academic life at ELU.

In the FYW 101class, one of the narrative writing assignments is to ask students to write about a past learning experience. Henry wrote about how the camera was like an instructor to him and how photography has taught him so much. Below is a small part of his written assignment (Excerpt 6). As can be seen in the highlighted texts, he enacted a composer identity when thinking about how to create a nice picture and how to convey the message to the viewers through a limited viewfinder. As a composer, he was well aware of the means of production as well as the audience in creating good composition work.

Excerpt 6:

It's not just camera to me. I use it to photograph beautiful things, and it motivates me to insist on that. It's also my teacher who can teach me different philosophies. "For me, the camera is a sketch book, an instrument of intuition and spontaneity, the master of the instant which, in visual terms, questions and decides simultaneously."(Henri Cartier-Bresson) Every time I want to capture a moment, I would decide how to composite a nice picture, how to explain to people what I want to express through a limited viewfinder.

Figure 5.3. Henry's second writing assignment in FYW 101 class

This composer identity developed as a result of and through the practice of creating and publishing his photography and videography work. Importantly, this literacy practice was subsequently imported into academic settings and got cross-fertilized, enabling Henry to construct a composer identity in academic writing discourse, as can be seen in the interview excerpt below.

Excerpt 7:

Both of them [taking a photo and writing a paper] are, like, they are composing activities. You have to think about the audience and, it's like thinking about how you can better communicate the message to the audience through the means of communication you choose. (Henry, Interview 3)

Later, in the above-mentioned multimodal assignment project, Henry was able to enact and perform both of his identities: as an expert video-maker, editor, and composer. Henry worked with three other Chinese male students and created a video sharing their cultural dissonance experience in the US (to view Henry's part of the video, go to https://youtu.be/6XmTw4b3aZE). In this video, instead of shooting real people or real scenes on campus via camera, as illustrated in other groups' projects, Henry chose to make a hand-drawn video to tell a small story of his cultural dissonance experience (see Excerpt 8 below).

Excerpt 8:
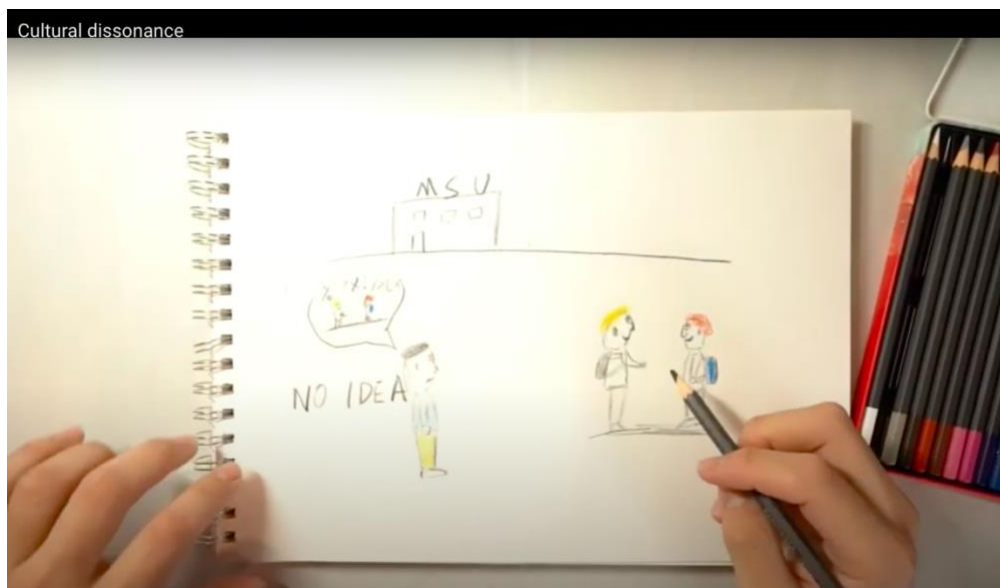
Figure 5.4. A screenshot of Henry's multimodal assignment in the CBW 101 class

Henry got this idea of using hand drawing animation from one of Casey Nestat's vlogs where Casey used pre-made drawings and texts and moved them around on a piece of paper to make it look like a Facebook users' Facebook page (see Figure 5.5, the screenshot of Casey's vlog below). In this hand-drawn video, Henry incorporated background music and each student's narration of their cultural dissonance experiences. In addition, Henry also used some pre-made emojis (e.g., small red hearts and face emojis) to indicate a change of emotions.

Doing this multimodal project, Henry showed that as a composer, he was able to orchestrate all the elements, including the personal narrations, his hand drawing, and the background music coherently and cohesively, which required hours and hours of video editing work. In one of his WeChat posts below (see Excerpt 10), Henry shared on WeChat that he set up a home studio in order to do the multimodal project. He commented, "self-made studio up and running. Is doing an assignment easy [smiley face emoji]." While Henry was seemingly complaining about the excessive effort put in doing the assignment, he was also performing an

identity as a professional in videography, by showing the professional camera and the professional video editing software presented on his computer screen. Such an identity was also reflected in his use of the word "studio", which signified a sense of professionalism in producing artwork. Henry later told me in the interview, "even though it's a lot of work, I enjoyed doing this project a lot. Because it allowed me to show another side of me to people." As Henry said in the interview, the multimodal project provided a space where he can incorporate his out-of-school multimodal literacy practices into his academic literacy practices. He could also perform his identities not just as an international student, but more specifically as an international student who was a talented and creative composer.

Excerpt 9:

a facebook movie by Casey Neistat
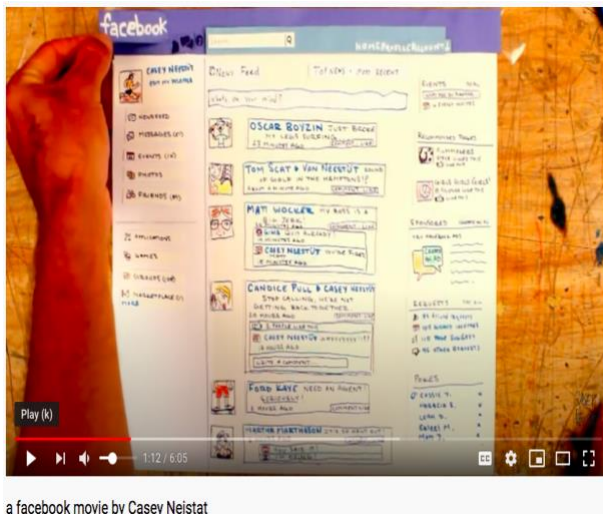
Figure 5.5. The screenshot of one of Casey Neistat's vlogs

Excerpt 10:

自制studio上线，写个作业容易吗我😊

Translation: home-made studio up and running! Is doing an assignment easy [smiley face emoji]

Figure 5.6. Henry's WeChat post about the multimodal writing assignment

5.1.3. Constructing an Identity as an Academic Professional

Henry's video left a deep impression on his instructor of CBW 101 course, Janice, who invited Henry to work as a student researcher in one of the university-funded projects led by Janice and her colleagues. The funded project aimed to examine the teaching of international students in ELU, including presenting the challenges international students face in academic settings and providing possible teaching strategies for instructors who encounter international students in their daily teaching. Henry played two important roles in this project: one was to share his own experiences as an international student studying at ELU; second was to create videos that showcase some teaching cases or moments where international students often find

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difficult to comprehend, though those struggles might not be salient to the instructors. Upon my last interview with Henry, he had already made two videos for the research team and did a presentation using one of the videos at the ELU's annual Undergraduate Research and Arts Forum.

5.1.4. A Unique Socialization Path: Seeking Meaningful Interaction

Towards the end of the second semester of the First-year Writing class, I asked Henry the same question about socialization into the university community. He shared his thoughts:

Excerpt 11:

As I said before, when making friends with Americans, our conversations remain at a very superficial level. I think it's normal though. We do not have many shared experiences growing up, after all. I do not want to put extra effort to fit in, you know, to become Americanized. ... Although people usually say you are in the US, you should try to fit in, to make friends with Americans, to do group assignments with American students. But doing these doesn't really help you with your grades, does it? And you don't really feel comfortable, probably feel embarrassed because you are a burden. But if I feel that I can contribute, I will try to participate in the discussion...What I'm seeking is meaningful interactions with them [Americans]. You know? Like, in Janice's research team, we work on a project together. I'm one of the members, I can contribute to the project, and they value my input. I also got the opportunity to do presentations and to learn about doing research. This kind of interaction is more meaningful and also more helpful to me academically. (Henry, Interview 6)

Apparently, Henry had his own understanding of social and academic integration in the US. On the one hand, he recognized that interacting with Americans and being socialized into the perceived mainstream American peer-led university community was generally viewed as a goal for most international students. On the other hand, he was aware of what mattered to him, that is, to be perceived as a valuable member of a community. Working with American students in group projects, Henry felt he was a burden, and he felt that he needed to be taken care of by his American group members. He gave an example of working with them on a chemistry lab project. When doing this group project, he did not understand many chemistry-related terminologies in English and felt his participation would slow down his group members' completion of the project. He then decided to keep silent and let the American students take control. This experience left him feeling powerless and useless. Later, he switched to a group full of Chinese members and got even better grades in another lab project, as he said, "we did just fine, actually, we did better than working with American students." These experiences led him to reconsider the expectations set for international students regarding the integration into the target community. Henry questioned the 'fit in' ideology taken for granted by many international students: "the purpose is not to 'fit in'. The primary goal is to learn new things, new perspectives, to get inspired, and to be better." Henry's elaboration also pointed to the difference between enculturation and socialization, with the former emphasizing on the 'fit in' whereas the latter focusing on learning through interaction.

As shown in the interview excerpt above, Henry identified that learning occurred in meaningful interactions, for instance, the one he had with Janice and her research team, where he was positioned as a valuable member and was able to make contributions to the research project. In the interim, interactions with the team members also helped socialize him into the practices of

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doing academic presentations and doing research. Another meaningful interaction was with the famous vloggers he followed. By "talking to them" and "watching their vlogs" every day, Henry was socialized into shared values and interest-based communities. He was also encouraged and inspired to create content himself and contributed to the online communities through publishing his work.

Notably, Henry was strategic in his socialization trajectories. His socialization processes in the photographic and videographic online world afforded him access to multilingual resources circulating and invested in these spaces. The literacy practices he engaged in in these spaces later transferred to the academic spaces in ELU. He enacted strong personal agency in making decisions that aligned with his own learning goals, that is, he sought to engage in meaningful interactions with people. He was clear about his learning goal and did not feel pressured to seek superficial acquaintances with his American peers. On the other hand, Henry was extremely fortunate in that he was offered the opportunity to incorporate his literacy practices into the online communities in which he participated, and this in turn, facilitated his academic learning in the classroom. Put simply, Henry was first socialized into a collective community with viewers and vloggers who shared similar interests, unlike Michael, whose online world remains unseen and unrecognized by others. Through watching vlogs, Henry identified with the vloggers and was also socialized into their views and attitudes toward life, family, and work. He then constructed an identity as a professional and published his work on different online platforms. His identity was then transferred to the classroom and was valued by his instructor, Janice. In understanding Henry's socialization trajectory, it is crucial to recognize that he directed his own path of socialization into the online communities and was offered the opportunities to channel his

literacy practices in the online communities to the academic world where he was able to gain

support and help that he needed to grow academically.

5.2. Yang

When Yang first landed in the US, he was more nervous rather than excited about his

new journey to this foreign land. While he passed the ELU TOEFL entry score, he was not

confident about his English communicative competence, which was necessary to help him

navigate the English-speaking world. It was Yang's first-time leaving home and studying abroad.

In his words, he learned English in high school for the sake of passing TOEFL, and now he had

to use English on a daily basis to communicate his thoughts and concerns and to solve problems.

"It is so different. Learning English through the textbook and doing TOEFL exercises is totally

different from living in an English-speaking world." he stated in the interview, elaborating on the

difficulties he encountered in daily communication: the difficulties lay not at the vocabulary or

grammar level, however. Instead, the challenges he encountered centered on the cultural

practices embedded in the English language.

Yang shared with me and also wrote in his CBW 101 writing assignments about two

small instances he encountered after coming to the US. The first instance happened in an Asian

restaurant, where he thought he could use his native language (Chinese) to order food.

Unfortunately, it was a Thai restaurant, and no one could speak any Chinese. As can be seen in

Excerpt 12, with the help of body language and simply pointing to the dishes on the menu, Yang

was able to order some food. Nevertheless, he never learned about or experienced the tipping

culture in the US. Although he knew that the customers were expected to pay tips at the local

restaurants, he was not sure how much he should pay and in what way the tip was paid. He was

too nervous and embarrassed to ask about paying tips, and when he got the receipt back with the

amount of tip included, he misunderstood that he paid the tip already and left the restaurant.

Later, he realized the tip was not included in the payment, and he told me in the interview, "I felt

really embarrassed and ashamed."

Excerpt 12:

> food by pointing the picture of the food and say "this one and this one …" After
> dinner, another difficulty arose. How to pay tips. Of course, I have heard that in
> America you have to tips for a meal, but how? Since in China, we do have the
> custom of paying tips. Instead of getting tips, the waiter will acquire a year-end
> bonus as reward for one year of hard work. After I paid the bill with my credit
> card, the waiter gave me the receipt and I clearly saw the tips labeled on the
>
> receipt. Then I guess I have already tipped and just simply left. If the first day in
> America was a depressing one, the next day was also very embarrassing.

Figure 5.7. Yang's first writing assignment in FYW 101

He described the experience of paying tips as "a depressing one." In Excerpt 13, he

shared the other embarrassing culture-dissonance instance at the grocery store. As can be seen in

his writing in Excerpt 13, while he learned the two words "paper" and "plastic" before, he had no

idea what it meant when he was asked "paper or plastic" by the cashier. Such an encounter then

evoked a series of strong emotions, as described by him in words such as "froze there,"

"confused," "dig a hole, and let myself escape."

Excerpt 13:

The second day, I went to Meijer to buy some daily supplies. After I finished paying, the cashier asked me "paper or plastic?" I froze there. She did not see any reaction from me then asked me again "paper or plastic?" I am really confused at that moment. I know these two words clearly, but I do not know what she trying to ask and what I should respond. At that time I wanted to dig a hole and let myself escape along the hole from the Meijer. In the end, I finally got her idea after she shows me the paper and plastic bag.

Figure 5.8. Yang's first writing assignment in FYW 101

The two above-mentioned instances had a great impact on Yang's learning and use of English. Ever since these instances occurred, he often felt very nervous and scared when talking to American peers and instructions. Primarily, he was terrified that he might make mistakes speaking English and make a fool of himself. As a result, at the beginning of the first semester, Yang often avoided talking to other students and instructors. Even when he could not understand the instructions or the assignments, he would not dare to ask the instructors for help.

Yang's experience and feelings were common among international students. Hu (2008) illustrated that many Chinese English learners experience anxiety and frustration when studying abroad because of a lack of knowledge about western cultures and customs, which inevitably results in some unpleasant cultural dissonances. To address such cultural dissonances, Wang (2012) reported some of the learners engaged in self-directed learning through watching popular English t.v. dramas, such as *Friends, Sex and the City*, *Desperate Housewives*, etc. to understand western cultural values and help them better socialize into the mainstream cultural practices. Yang was one of those learners who was committed to such an endeavor.

5.2.1. Self-directed English learning and English Socialization

Learning English through watching "*Friends*". Being bothered by the anxiety of communicating in English, Yang consulted one of his friends who spent his high school years in the US and is now at a U.S. university.

> Excerpt 14:
>
> He recommended the t.v. series "Friends" to me. He said that I could learn a lot by watching this drama, like, how people make daily conversations and some of the idioms in American culture. Then I started to watch two or three episodes every day. In the beginning, I couldn't understand most of the punchlines. But when I finished three seasons, I found that I could understand most of their jokes and even get Chandler's jokes. This helped me gain confidence in using English to communicate with others. I then decided to challenge myself and try to find opportunities to talk to American students. (Yang, Interview 2)

Yang's self-directed learning as evidenced by watching *Friends* should not be simply understood as learning the English language in general. Rather, it can be seen as his enactment of personal agency to socialize into the American mainstream cultural values and practices through learning pop culture references, including culturally coded jokes, idioms, and daily interactions in this popular American TV sitcom. Notably, *Friends* was considered one of the authentic forms of input of American popular culture for Chinese international students (Wang, 2012). After watching three seasons, Yang noticed that his understanding of their conversations and jokes

significantly improved, which motivated him to pursue real-life communication with American students on campus.

Learning English through communicating with other students in English. Yang's first attempt at communicating with American students in English was in the CBW 101 class, where the instructor invited students to share their cultural practices with people from different cultural backgrounds. Yang chose to pair with one of the American students in the class and had the very first conversation with her about the local food in his hometown. Yang described his experience as "anxious and nervous when talking to her." Later, he noticed that his American classmate was intrigued by the local food he introduced and showed great interest. This positive experience further motivated Yang to seek more opportunities to talk and work with other students in the CBW 101 class. As seen in Figure 4.3 the seating chart, Like Michael, Yang decided to sit in the first row in the class and stayed relatively far away from the majority of the other Chinese students. Sitting next to him was an Indian international student, who sat next to Michael. Later, when doing the multimodal project, he got the opportunity to group with the Indian student and Michael.

Excerpt 15:

One of the biggest gains in the CBW class is doing the multilingual projects in which I got to know H (the Indian student). It really helped me overcome my fear of talking to others in English. In the beginning, I was afraid of talking to foreigners, even though I want to make friends with them. When doing the multimodal writing project, we met regularly and communicated ideas. Gradually, we got to know each other better. Even though I didn't know certain words, or I couldn't express myself clearly, I did not feel

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embarrassed. Instead, I would just check the dictionary and continue the conversation. The more we talked, the easier we understood each other, even though our English was not that good... It feels really good to have a friend you can communicate in English.

<div align="right">(Yang, Interview 1)</div>

"I wish to live like an American." Spending the first semester adjusting to the new environment, Yang reflected in his four-month learning experiences in the first FYW 101 writing assignment, as shown in the excerpt below. In this writing assignment, he started by sharing his frustrating encounters with cultural differences. He then transitioned to talk about the efforts he made to learn about American cultures and customs and take initiatives to reach out to friends and students from different cultural backgrounds.

Excerpt 16:

and I never worried about "paper and plastic" again. The reason for this is because, in these four mothers, I opened myself to everything happening around me. I tried to accept all the unfamiliar things. I made mistakes and take a lesson from it. All the things above are me trying to imitate or learn how to live like an American. I know that is not enough and my "wings" are not fully covered with "feathers" but I am working on it. I believe one day I will finally fly over the cliff of cultural difference and soar freely in the American sky.

Figure 5.9. Yang's fifth writing assignment in FYW 101

Figure 5.9. (Cont'd)

In conclusion, although I still can not live like a real American right now, I felt more involved and more freely in my life. Now "live like an American" is more like a spirit for me. It is a spirit of overcoming the various barriers and accepting unknown things and a spirit of adapting all kinds of new environments in the future. If I really live like an American in next few years, I believe this spirit will always inspire and remind me that I should always open myself to everything happening around me and do not be afraid to make mistakes. I should learn from them.

In this learning narrative, titled "living like an American," Yang described himself as a bird whose wings were not fully covered with "feathers", described the cultural difference as the "cliff", and explained that his goal was to "soar freely in the American sky." On the one hand, the use of metaphors showed Yang's uptake of the academic writing techniques from the First-year Writing classes. As he wrote in his reflection paper,

Excerpt 17:

I learned how to make my words full of emotion and more appealing to the audience...

By using the method of metaphor, I am able to let the audience more deeply understand

my feelings than simply using that I feel panic or helpless.

(Yang, the fifth writing assignment in FYW 101)

On the other hand, it also revealed Yang's goal towards full integration and participation in U.S. society, or in Yang's words, "to live like an American." Identified by Yang in his writing, the main barrier that prevented him from doing so was the cultural differences. One

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thing worth noting is that Yang did not simply aim to become an American or to gain a legally legitimate identification in the US. Instead, as shown in the final paragraph of his narrative paper, where he talked about "living like an American as a spirit," Yang was trying to construct an identity as someone who could overcome language and cultural barriers and was fully committed to achieving his goals. Yang's sharing in the interview and writing revealed that he was mobilizing an identity of a goal-driven student with strong willpower to pursue and realize his goals.

Over the course of the academic year, I witnessed Yang's continuous academic progress in various aspects of learning, including his English language proficiency and English academic writing, as reflected in his superb academic record in both CBW and FYW courses (4.0) and writing-heavy Integrative Arts and Humanities courses (3.7), and his successful admission to the business school. Such success can be attributed to Yang's exercise of personal agency to wield strong willpower to achieve his academic learning goals. Yang's language learning trajectory was shaped mainly by his enactment of great agentive efforts.

Nevertheless, inspired by Duff and Doherty (2015), I am interested in investigating why and how Yang was capable of (1) harnessing his agency to facilitate his language socialization; and (2) whether agency might be transferable across contexts to support personal growth in different domains of an individual's life.

5.2.2. Transferred Agentive Forces from Bodybuilding

Yang's strong willpower to keep challenging himself to overcome language and cultural barriers in his learning trajectory at the U.S. university can be seen mainly channeled from his bodybuilding training outside the class. Yang started bodybuilding when he was in high school. After several years of daily training, he proceeded to a professional level of building muscles.

Last time we met, he told me that he was preparing for a bodybuilding competition for amateurs, and he had been regulating his diet and gradually increasing his daily training in order to push his muscles beyond their present capacity. After he came to the US, he mainly focused on two things every day: studying and bodybuilding training. As he stated in the interview, "If I missed doing any one of them for just one day, I felt something was seriously off." Interestingly, he also identified a reciprocal relationship between bodybuilding and academic learning: he learned self-discipline and self-regulation from bodybuilding training, which got transferred to support his self-regulated academic learning: First, he developed a habit of planning his academic tasks and completing his daily learning goals in time. Second, his muscle training often required him to repeatedly do the same workout sets, which contributed to his enhanced endurance. Such endurance, according to Yang, helped him easily adjust to hours after hours of concentrated academic learning activities. As he mentioned in the interview, when doing class writing assignments,

> Excerpt 18:
>
> I would just sit in the library for 5 or 6 hours, doing research on the related topics, collecting information, brainstorming ideas, revising drafts again and again. I would not leave the library until I finish the first draft. (Yang, Interview 3)

In addition, when doing strength training workouts, Yang also pointed out the importance of continually learning new sets of workouts to maximize muscle gain, as muscles would quickly get used to one-set of workouts. Painful and challenging as it may be, the strengthened muscle was always a great reward to Yang, which not only validated his hard work but also boosted his

confidence. By doing so, Yang identified a spirit of continually challenging oneself in bodybuilding, which was subsequently mapped onto English academic learning. In Yang's words, "learning is about challenging yourself to be open to new things. I was terrified to talk to foreigners and instructors in English, but I need to do it, to challenge myself."

Constructing an identity as a bodybuilder. As mentioned in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3), Yang used to be one of the local gang members when he was in junior high school. He described that period as the most depressing and darkest moment in his life, "I was like a zombie. [I] did not have any purpose or goal in life." As seen in Excerpt 19 below, he was a great disappointment to his parents and himself as well. Later, because of a parent-children relationship seminar his mom attended, which totally changed her attitude towards Yang, his mother started to accept Yang as who he was and stopped expecting him to be better and become the son she longed for. This change had a significant impact on Yang, which led him to re-define himself and reconstruct his identity.

Studies (e.g., Beyers & Goossens, 2008; Sartor & Youniss, 2002) on adolescent identity formation within the context of parent-children relationships have shown that teenagers aged between 11 to 16 often experience major identity (re)construction as they transition into early adulthood. During this period of time, parental involvement significantly impacts adolescent behavior. As reported in these studies, parents' unconditional love is considered the paramount factor that positively affects adolescents' identity development. Another significant indicator of adolescent identity formation is the independence of these adolescents from their parents (Kroger, 2004; Smollar & Youniss, 1989). As also seen in Excerpt 19, he highlighted that his parents helped him do everything, including getting him into good schools. Having secured his parents' unconditional love towards him, Yang desperately wanted to do something on his own,

which can be seen as a sign to explore a sense of individual self and to validate his identity as a capable young adult. Smollar and Youniss (1989) emphasized individuation as a vital characteristic of adolescent development because it compels children to explore and develop a sense of self that is separate from parental identity. In a similar vein, Beyers and Goossens (2008) pointed out, individuation is characterized by adolescents' ability to make independent decisions and judgments. To achieve individuation, they also argued that parents play an influential role in facilitating adolescent identity achievement by providing emotional support and open communication opportunities. This is well reflected in Yang's transformation from an "about to giving up the school" stance to "I wanted to change myself, to do something on my own, to show them that I can achieve something by myself" stance. This stance transition points to his construction of an independent self.

Excerpt 19:

I used to be the "bad boy" in middle school. I never brought any homework home. I was always smoking, drinking, and fighting. I grew up in an environment full of blame and criticism. My parents always scolded me for all sorts of things I did. Um, I thought they didn't love me. I was about to give up school and work in a local barbershop. Then, my mom went to a parent-children relationship seminar and came back with a new attitude toward me. Um, she told me, she said, she would respect and support my decision if being a barber is what I wanted to do, she would love me no matter what. She did keep her words. I think, I think that's the turning point for me, you know, to know that my parents love me unconditionally. I felt transformed, I wanted to change myself, to do something on my own, to show them that I can achieve something by myself. You know,

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because, because they helped me do everything, they bought me into a good middle

school and a good high school. (Yang, Interview 5)

Yang's transformation started with quitting the high school gang, followed by his quitting

of smoking and starting to workout. His decision to start bodybuilding was due to his

conversation with his father, with Yang disclosing:

Excerpt 20:

my dad said, 'you should be like a man, look at how weak you are. One day you will

have your own family, and you will be responsible for your own family.' That's when I

decided to work out every day. (Yang, Interview 4)

His father then paid for professional workout courses and hired professional coaches to

help train him. After a few months, Yang already started to see noticeable physical changes

happening to his body, as shown in Excerpt 21.

Excerpt 21:

I was the skinniest one in my class. I was laughed at when I told my friends I want to do

bodybuilding. But after three months, none of them would dare to do arm wrestling with

me. [laugh]. After I decided to work out, I never skipped a day. At that time, I also started

to prepare for TOEFL, so my daily routine was like, woke up at 6 am, ran for 5, 6

kilometers, had breakfast, went to school, left school at 8 pm, ate dinner, then prepared

for TOEFL essay writing, practiced speaking English until midnight, worked out until 1

am, and then went to bed. My goal was to obtain the TOEFL score I wanted and proved that I could accomplish something on my own. (Yang, Interview 6)

When talking about bodybuilding, Yang was often energized and passionate. As can be seen in the excerpt above, by doing workouts on a daily basis, Yang transformed himself from the skinniest boy in his class to a stronger individual. Physical changes in his body also brought mental changes. He described his daily bodybuilding routine as painful but at the same time, rewarding and enjoyable. Such intensive training not only led to his physical strength, but also boosted his self-confidence as well as trained him to be self-regulated and persevere when pursuing goals. As Sparkes, Batey, and Brown (2005) pointed out, bodybuilders often adopt strict dietary regimes and workout training regimes which require a high level of self-regulation and self-discipline in order to promote maximal conditions for muscle building. This experience, also commonly shared by other bodybuilders and athletes, brings changes to their bodies and contributes to a positive sense of self, as it promotes self-discipline and self-determination (Bale, 2006; Brown, 1999; Mischke, 2019).

Committed and dedicated as they are in challenging themselves beyond their capabilities, bodybuilders are also reported to feel more capable of taking on other challenges in life, as shown in Probert and Leberman (2009). Similarly, Yang also described after engaging in intensive bodybuilding, that he felt empowered to accomplish challenging goals, and he was able to stay focused to achieve those goals. This goal-driven bodybuilder identity also fueled his English language learning in high school. Seeing the TOEFL test as a challenge not so different from overcoming his physical weakness, he was fully committed and invested in English learning. He implemented an extremely disciplined daily schedule packed with intensive

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bodybuilding and English learning. As a result, not only did his intensive bodybuilding workouts paid off, but Yang also witnessed continuous progress in his three TOEFL exams, improving from a score of 35 at his first try to a score of 89 on his third attempt, which helped him secure a place at ELU.

Above-mentioned studies such as Mischke (2019) and Probert and Leberman (2009) have shown that the body is central to identity construction, as the body is layered with cultural and social meanings. It affects self-conceptions and self-esteem. Yang used to be perceived as a troubled student in school and a disappointing son at home. It was his parents' demonstration of unconditional love that empowered him to explore alternative identity options. Bodybuilding then provided such a space in which Yang employed strong agentive efforts to construct an alternative identity as someone who is goal-driven and highly self-disciplined and regulated to achieve goals. Such an identity shaped his language learning experiences. Also, it shaped his identity as a language learner who perceived language learning as not just a goal but also a challenge that he needs to overcome. After coming to the US, while feeling terrified about talking to foreigners in English and about making mistakes in using English, Yang identified it as a challenge one must overcome in order to achieve a better and improved self. Therefore, socialization into the American society was cast as a must-do path for Yang, as a goal that he sought to achieve through perseverance and determination. Such an attitude was also well reflected in his WeChat posts, most of which were related to bodybuilding. In one of the posts (see Excerpt 22), he tried to cheer himself up by self-validating his recent bodybuilding outcome. He commented on the picture by citing "Everything that kills me makes me feel alive," which is a line of lyrics from the song "Counting Stars", sung and written by OneRepublic, an American pop rock band. As Yang's favorite American band, he was attracted to the common theme across

their various songs, that is, a spirit of not giving up and living one's life to the fullest. This line

from their song precisely portrayed the entanglement of pain and pleasure in bodybuilding

training, which also entails the spirit of keeping challenging oneself and extending one's

limitations. Such an experience, as suggested by Willig (2008), should be understood as a sense

of ownership of personal growth and improvement. Therefore, for Yang, his language learning

and socialization path was also a path of taking control of his own life choices and actively

seeking to explore and construct a self that is always in the process of improvement.

Excerpt 22:

Figure 5.10. Yang's WeChat post

5.3. Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I traced Henry and Yang's language learning and socialization trajectories

in the U.S. university and explored their enactment of agency and identity construction within

and outside the classrooms. Both of them demonstrated strong agency in directing their

socialization trajectories in the U.S. university, which can be seen in (1) Henry's pursuit of

meaningful interactions with the expert members in the online professional community and the university community; (2) Yang's determination of keeping challenging himself to talk to others in English. Their enactment of personal agency was informed by their engagement in activities and practices in other communities. Henry's active participation in the vlogging community on YouTube and Yang's daily bodybuilding activities. Participating in these activities, both participants were socialized into values, ideas, beliefs, and practices shared by the members in the respective communities. These values and beliefs fueled their investment in the English language learning or academic learning. In addition, some of the literacy practices they engaged in outside the class got transferred to the classroom to facilitate their academic development. Furthermore, when engaging in the out-of-class practices, participants also got the opportunity to explore their identities (being a vlogger, a professional videographer and photographer in Henry's case, and being a bodybuilder in Yang's case) other than being the international students or the English language learners in the U.S. university. More importantly, they were able to draw on their identity affordances to support their English academic learning.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In Chapters 4 and 5, I discussed the findings of my four focal participants. In this chapter, I first summarize the major findings, that is, I review each participant's language socialization trajectories over the course of the study. I then focus on the role language played in each participant's socialization trajectory and highlight important factors that facilitated or hindered each participant's language socialization experience. Next, I present implications from this study and discuss future research possibilities based on my research findings.

6.1. Summary of the Findings

This dissertation is set up to portray a comprehensive picture of four Chinese international students' socialization experiences in the U.S. higher education context. Central to their socialization experiences is my participants' exertion of individual agency to achieve their goals, the construction and negotiation of different identities, and their participation in different communities across various spaces.

6.1.1. Michael

In Michael's case, identity construction and negotiation was an integral part of his language socialization trajectory. Across different social contexts, within and outside the CBW 101 classroom and in the social media (e.g., WeChat), Michael actively participated in constructing the identity of a highly motivated, intelligent, and learning-driven international student with a high-level intellectual curiosity towards different aspects of American culture. His craving to learn more about U.S. society can be seen in his daily activities of reading newspapers and watching the news, as well as his active seeking of interactions with native speaker students and instructors within and outside the classroom. In short, he was eager to be socialized into U.S. society and the university as an insider.

Nevertheless, such efforts were not always well received by the members of his university community. While he was positioned as an intelligent and valuable member in the CBW 101 class by the instructor, which aligned with his self-positioning, Michael was positioned as the "Other" and as an English language learner in his interactions with his American peers and the ELC lab consultant. Regarding these two positionings, Michael reacted differently: he resisted being positioned as the "Other" by withdrawing himself from engaging with his domestic peers in both social and academic settings. He stopped trying to initiate conversations with American students, or work with American students in the class project in FYW 101. Michael also avoided going to the Writing Center to ask for help with his writing assignments because the majority of the consultants were American students.

In contrast, he seemed to accept the positioning of an English language learner in the ESL lab, as he acknowledged the authority of the writing consultant, an experienced English teacher. The relationship between the consultant and Michael then became that of an English teacher and an English language learner, which in turn made it easier for Michael to accept this form of positioning. According to Duff (2010; see also Duff and Talmy, 2011), even though professors, lecturers, and instructors are often assumed to be the "experts" in the desired academic discourse communities, they are not necessarily always good socializing agents. In Michael's case, the ELC instructor's expert role in the English-as-Second-Language community led the former to position Michael as an ESL learner, which conflicted with Michael's desire to be socialized into the broader university community as a legitimate university student. Instead, Michael was conferred a deficit identity category as an English language learner whose language problems overshadowed his other literacy practices in the target academic discourses (Bista, 2019; Duff, 2010).

One thing worth noting is that Michael's ideal identity as a knowledgeable transnational student was performed on WeChat and his continuous drive to gain information and knowledge within and outside classes was also shaped by his interactions with his father while growing up. He associated his father with the "vulgar new rich" who did not have appropriate education credentials and the accompanying intellectual sophistication necessary to support his newly found wealth accumulation. This positioning of his father motivated Michael to become a well-educated, intelligent, and knowledgeable person. Such an ideal identity is crucial in understanding (1) his decision to study in the US, as he said in the interview, "the US is known to have the best higher education in the world"; (2) his literacy practices within and outside the class (learning about social, political, and cultural aspects of the US); and (3) his initial efforts in reaching out to American students to be socialized into the local community. Unfortunately, Michael was marginalized and othered in the interactions with American peers. On the one hand, because of his superb GPA record (he scored a 4.0), he was thus seen as an exemplary international student who was welcomed and celebrated in the university's public discourse. On the other hand, being positioned and later having internalized the notion of being the "other" made it difficult for Michael to develop a sense of belonging in this foreign land, which led to him living on the community's margins.

6.1.2. Xing

Xing aspired to be a successful white-collar businessman who dresses in expensive suits and works in high-rise CBD buildings in cosmopolitan cities. Like Michael, this aspiration was informed mainly by his personal history and prior experiences growing up. Xing was raised in an economically modest household and later experienced a significant improvement in the material quality of life because of his father's success. Despite the improved living conditions, Xing was

impacted by memories of being picked up by kids in school and compared with his cousin, who grew up in a wealthy family. As a result, he developed a high sensitivity to how he was positioned and perceived by other people. He was also highly competitive and goal-driven in that he got highly motivated when he competed with others, and his value was validated when he won the competition.

Moreover, similar to Michael's father, Xing's father was also labeled as a member of the 'nouveau rich' entrepreneurial class, who despite their economic capital, lacked the education credentials, taste, social status enjoyed by the professional middle-to-upper-class elites (Dong & Bommeart, 2016; Young, 2018). Even though he had a tremendous respect for his father, Xing longed for an elite socioeconomic status, which was characterized by good educational credentials and a middle-class lifestyle, and further indexed by features such as where one worked and what clothes one wore. It is this imagined identity that deeply influenced Xing's strategic deployment of agency in participating in socializing practices and interacting with socializing agents across different spaces.

In order to enter his dream program - Accounting in the Business College, Xing was highly strategic in distributing his time and effort to the learning of different courses. For example, he invested most of his time taking content courses required by the Business College to ensure he secured a good GPA. By comparison, however, limited effort was put in university-level required courses such as the First-year Writing courses. Such a strategy was also subject to his changing academic performance in these courses. The ultimate goal was to gain a competitive edge in the business college application. This strategic learning was also reflected in his use of the Writing center service. While he never went to the writing center once when taking

the First-year Writing courses, he went to the writing center three times when writing about the personal trait essay for the Business College application.

Xing also embarked on another set of frequent visits to the Writing center when he needed to write a professional English resume in order to apply for an internship. His agentive stances could also be observed in actively applying for traineeship programs during the summer vacation. Two weeks of traineeship in a state-owned bank in China provided him with opportunities to socialize into the desirable community, that is, the community of financial and accounting professionals. Moreover, participating in the practices of the business community, he was also learning how to act, think, and speak the language like a professional in both the Beijing and Hong Kong offices. Because of his good and hard work, Xing gained recognition from members of the community. As he said in the interview, this recognition helped reinforce his career choice, prompting him to declare, "I love this lifestyle. I want to have a job like this."

Nevertheless, the recognition he gained outside the school was not successfully transferred to the Business College community. Nor did it facilitate his entering the professional community in the US. The main reason, according to Xing, was his lack of English proficiency. While he was familiar with and engaged in literacy practices in the professional community in China, the repertoire of practice he developed was not recognized by the English professional community. When applying for an internship opportunity in one of the four leading accounting firms in the US, despite enormous efforts spent developing a professional English resume and preparing for the Skype interview, Xing failed the last round of face-to-face interview. He attributed this failure to his lack of English proficiency to express himself fluently and accurately in the interview.

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To Xing, his agentive force was powerful in that it empowered him to explore every avenue to produce a perfect resume and prepare for the Skype interview. However, it was also limited in the sense that he fell short in the competition with English native speakers to be articulate in the interview, even though he probably had the same if not better mastery of the disciplinary discourses as the English native-speaking students. As he said, "being able to be articulate... is a must-have quality in the business world." In the interview. In Xing's case, such an ability was always missing in his skill kit throughout his years at ELU. Therefore, Xing had to negotiate contested identities in his life: on the one hand, given his self-initiated learning in the discipline outside the class, he identified himself as an apprentice or an emergent accounting professional in the desired community, be it in China or the US; on the other hand, he was always struggling with the English language learner identity category as someone who was quiet in the class and unable to articulate oneself in the job interview. My findings on Xing corroborates with other studies (e.g., Chang & Kanno, 2010) that reported that international graduate students had less access to rhetorical, pragmatic, and other sociolinguistic means to express themselves appropriately and establish positive relationships with others.

6.1.3. Henry

Similar to Michael and Xing, Henry's parents were also new rich entrepreneurs. Unlike them, as Henry grew older, he was seen as a family member who was informed by every business decision his parents made and was later invited to give input on the family business. In addition to the increasing interest in their family-owned business, Henry also developed an interest in photography during high school. Such an interest got further developed when he moved to the United States, where he got free access to online social media platforms such as YouTube and Instagram.

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Henry's active YouTube participation contributed not only to the development of his photography and videography skills but also his English language competence, especially literacy practices in English related to photography and videography. Watching YouTube vlogs became a daily activity for Henry. Interestingly, Henry saw such activity not merely as an activity of watching as an audience; instead, he saw it as an interaction with other vloggers, through which he was socialized into the norms and practices of the vlogging community. After watching YouTube for a year, Henry developed a certain level of knowledge and mastery of discourses in the vlogging community. He then identified himself as an insider in the community of vloggers. He started to create and produce his own vlogs as a professional in different social media spaces, such as Instagram, YouTube, and Chinese photographer online websites. By doing so, Henry developed literacies in photography and videography and learned new literacy practices such as using hashtags and ways of appropriating the English language to describe his artwork. He also developed a sense of authorship when using camera lenses to compose his artwork.

Luckily, Henry's extensive out-of-school literacy practices were transferred to the writing classroom and cross-fertilized his academic literacy development. This cross-fertilization phenomenon also led him to reflect on the interplay between his out-of-school literacy practices and the academic literacy practices required by different writing assignments. Engaging in reflective practices allowed him to construct a writer identity that took into consideration the means of communication and his audience. This writer identity was particularly salient when he was composing a multimodal project. When doing this project, Henry was able to draw on his identity affordances as a writer, a professional video editor, and an international student to compose a well-received multimodal writing piece. He was then invited to work as a research

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assistant for his writing instructor's research project. In this project, his out-of-school literacies were highly valued, as he continued to create videos for the research project. More importantly, his multiple identities (an international student, a professional video editor and creator, and an English writer) constructed across different contexts were also valued and validated. By participating in the research activities such as discussing research ideas and presenting research findings, he was also socialized in the academic community.

6.1.4. Yang

Yang's out-of-school activities also played a crucial role in shaping his English learning and socialization experiences in the US. As can be seen in his writing assignment, he shared the goal of coming to the US, that is, to fully integrate into U.S. society, including learning U.S. culture, understanding the English language well to a native speaker level, and making friends with local people. What was also salient in his writing is that he treated this full integration as a personal goal that he needed to accomplish by challenging himself. In this process, his agency played a significant role. He always drew on the power of self-discipline and self-challenge to force himself to step out of the comfort zone to talk to foreigners, even though he was very nervous and anxious about making mistakes in English. Yang constructed an identity as a hard-working, highly motivated international student like Michael, investing time and effort in every course he took to maximize the learning he gained in class. One thing worth mentioning is that Yang considered the success of the integration as being mostly contingent on his efforts of learning about the language, the culture, and the people. He understood the integration as taking on a linear dimension in which the more he learns about the language and culture, the closer he can achieve fuller integration into the targeted community. Unlike Michael, who was motivated by his imagined identity of being a knowledgeable professional, Yang's motivation derived from

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a source of upward momentum to keep challenging himself and being a better version of oneself. This upward momentum was fueled by his out-of-school activity: bodybuilding.

Yang started bodybuilding when he was in high school. After patching a broken relationship with his parents, he was empowered by his parents' unconditional love and determined to transform himself from being a disappointing gang member to a good student. Such a transformation was first seen in his bodybuilding practices. For three months, he worked out daily, transforming himself from being the skinniest one in his class to the strongest one physically. As a result, he was inspired by this physical change and was committed to making changes academically, especially in English learning. After deciding to study abroad, Yang started to implement a highly strict and intensive English learning routine. The implementation of such a routine was complemented by an equally intensive and strict bodybuilding routine. Bodybuilding exercises brought him physical changes that supported his English learning. This model was again repeated after he moved to the US. Feeling alienated and foreign about the new environment, he at first hid from people and avoided any interaction. Later, he gained confidence after watching the popular t.v. series *Friends* and actively reached out to American peers in the writing class to make conversations. According to Yang, such an agentive power was derived from his bodybuilding experience, declaring that "humans have unlimited potential, and you have to challenge yourself to release such potential, and you feel you can do anything when you reach the goal." As stated in the interview, he constructed an identity as an amateur athlete who set out to challenge one's limit and improve oneself. Such an identity largely informed his practices in academic settings, and also shaped his exertion of a strong agency in English learning and academic study so as to achieve the goal of fully integrating into the US society.

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Both Yang and Xing were overachievers and had a strong personal drive to achieve the level of success they believed they could achieve.

6.2. "Language Learning" in Language Socialization Paradigm

As discussed in the literature review section, many language socialization studies look at how learning the target language also contributed to learning the culture, norms, desired practices in the communication, thereby facilitating their socialization into the target communities (Duff, 2010, 2019; Garrett, 2017; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008; Schieffelin, 2018). Nevertheless, in the present study, one might question the centrality of English language learning to their language socialization processes. A review of Michael and Henry's socialization experiences might lead one to question the extent to which their learning of English played a central role in their socialization experiences. Therefore, it is necessary to (re)engage and expand the discussion of the language socialization paradigm here and centralize the role of "language" in language socialization paradigm in the discussion section of this chapter.

As discussed before, many LS scholars (e.g., Diao & Maa, 2019; Duff, 2010, 2019; Howard, 2014) have examined two essential language-related questions in language socialization research:

1. how are learning and use of the language interconnected with the learning of culture;

2. how does language development differ across different contexts, be it social, political, and cultural contexts?

Language socialization researchers have long focused on the cultural and social aspects of language learning. Ochs and Schieffelin (2012), for example, stressed that language socialization research aims to "capture the social structuring and cultural interpretations of semiotic forms, practices, and ideologies that inform novices' practical engagements with

others" (p.1). Language in this definition is understood as one of the semiotic forms that conveys social and cultural meanings functioning to constitute value-laden practices and ideologies, which affected how novices interact with others. Therefore, research adopting this paradigm has moved beyond the cognitivist perspective of understanding language learning, that is, the acquisition of discrete linguistic items or pragmatic functions. Instead, language socialization research currently aims to engage with the broader dialogue on language learning, that is, understanding how language is learned and deployed to enact, claim, perform identities, emotions, as well as ways to contest or reinforce ideologies within the socio-historical, economic, and political spaces and timescales (Duff & Talmy, 2011).

As a consequence, the notion "language" is re-conceptualized beyond ways of speaking and writing to include ways of being, thinking, and acting in varied culturally mediated contexts (Diao & Maa, 2019). In other words, identity and language are mutually constituted and are shaped and shaping each other (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001). Language learners explore their sense of selves, who they are, by engaging in language-mediated practices, and their identities also affect their language practices. Drawing on this (re)conceptualization, scholars understand second language learning as emerging from language learners' encounters with the real world. (Norton, 2000; 2013). Therefore, researching learners' language development should be not limited to examining their learning and use of language at the micro level (i.e., the interactions in the classroom); rather, it is necessary to understand learners' language encounters at the macro level of globalization and internationalization (De Fina, 2014; Steffensen & Kramsch, 2017).

Informed by this understanding, I argue that it is crucial to put "English language learning" in context when trying to understand participants' socialization trajectories. That is, it is not necessarily the learning of specific linguistic components or language skills that shape

participants' experiences; rather, it is learners' use of multilingual and multimodal literacies, aligned with the identities they constructed that shaped their relationships with others that matter (Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). To be more specific, their use of English language or other semiotic forms, be it the conversation, academic, disciplinary language, or pictures, videos, emojis in the interactions with others, has been much informed by how participants positioned themselves and how others positioned them. Their interactions with others then socialized them into different practices, beliefs, and emotions, contributing to their unique socialization trajectories in the US.

Taking Michael's experience as an example, he only recognized his English language learner identity in the interviews where he asked me for advice about how to expand his vocabulary size and improve his reading skills so as to understand better the readings, such as textbooks, newspapers, and novels in English. Nevertheless, this English learner identity was not enacted in the interactions with American peers or his course instructors. Instead, he positioned himself as a legitimate English speaker with no particular language barrier in daily or academic interactions with others within and outside the First-year Writing classes. Such self-positioning was nevertheless not recognized by his domestic student peers and the ELC lab writing consultant. Therefore, his use of English was only legitimate and valued in achieving academic goals, that is, to understand instructors, read textbooks, do homework, and take exams. As he said in the interview, "my university life has shrunk and compressed to achieving a 4.0 GPA."

Michael's case demonstrates that language and identity are mutually constituted: language has the power to index social meanings such as "emotions (how we feel), identities (who we are), and ideologies (what we believe)." (Diao & Maa, 2019, p. 129). Such an intricate

relationship among language, emotions, and identities can also be observed through the other three participants' socialization experiences:

1. the lack of English proficiency becomes a constant struggle, which crippled his ability to fully participate in the target disciplinary community, and therefore, hindered his identity construction as a legitimate member in the desired community as seen in Xing's case;

2. understanding the American culture, which is instantiated through learning English language, became a source of inspiration that led to his enacting of strong agentive power to socialize with others in the desired community, as illustrated in Yang's case;

3. English language functioned as a means of communication and thus afforded access to an online world to which Henry, for example, felt deeply connected. In this online world, Henry developed digital literacies that were later transferred to academic communities to facilitate his academic and professional growth.

6.3. Significant Factors Shaping Their Unique Language Socialization Experiences

6.3.1. Agency, Identity, and Ideologies

As discussed in section 6.1, a finding consistent across four focal participants' language socialization experiences is the enactment of a strong agentive stance, which was manifested in:

1. a series of self-initiated learning outside the classrooms;

2. strong willpower to step out of their comfort zones to socialize with others in Michael and Yang's cases;

3. being determined and strategic in pursuing one' goal and realizing the imagined identities in Xing's and Henry's cases.

In alignment with the previous language socialization research (Anderson ,2017; Duff, 2010; Duff & Doherty, 2015; Morita, 2004, 2009; Ou & Gu, 2018; Rabbi & Canagarajah, 2017), this

study showed that the "novices" are not passive recipients in the socialization process; instead, they bring their own constructed identities, beliefs, values, knowledge, resources, and personal histories when interacting with the "experts" in the discourse communities. In addition, similar to the focal participants in Anderson (2017) and Morita (2004), my focal participants' strong sense of agency played a crucial role in shaping their learning as well as (non) engagement in the norms and practices in their respective communities, be it the First-year Writing class community, the online photography and videography community, the professional business elite community, the broader US society, the university community, or the bodybuilding community.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that my participants' enactment of agency was guided by how their identities were constructed within and outside the classroom. Echoing a poststructuralist understanding of identity (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Davies & Harre, 1990; Norton, 2000, 2013; Norton & Toohey, 2011), we learned that my participants' identities were dynamic, changing, contested, and were shaped by (1) how they positioned themselves and were positioned; and (2) their personal histories, situated contexts, and future visions. Crucially, my focal participants constructed and negotiated different identities across different spaces rather than simply taking on and internalizing the imposed identity of being English language learners. Some constructed their identities in relation to their visions for their future selves, such as Xing's aspiration to become a cosmopolitan white-collar business professional; others were drawn to a community of practice due to their keen interest, such as Henry's interest in the videography and photography. Being a legitimate member of these desired communities motivated them to engage in continuous self-directed learning of the related practices. Nevertheless, identities were also contested and negotiated in the conflicts involving how they perceived themselves and how they

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were perceived by others, as seen in Michael and Xing's cases. Both of them had to contest the deficit discourse of English language learners in their situated contexts.

The contested nature of identity also points to how ideologies – normalized and invisible as they might be – work as a powerful force that limits the extent to which one can exert personal agency to change the problematic positioning of this population in the larger social contexts. For example, in Michael's case, he felt powerless in changing how he can be positioned and perceived by others, despite his attempts to mingle with the local students. The unequal power relations between Michael and the inherently legitimate American students rendered Michael trapped in the identity of being foreign and othered, as he was deprived of full participation in the community despite his sufficient English proficiency. Similarly, in Xing's case, because of his limited English communicative competence, he had to validate himself to his American group members, contributing insightful comments to the discussion to show that he "is not stupid" and "he knows things."

Flores and Rosa (2015) theorized such experience within the framework of racial ideologies. That is, the white middle-class speakers in their study were seen as legitimate speakers of standard language as well as academic language, whereas non-native speakers were cast as the racialized subjects who were seen as foreign, illegitimate, inferior and deficient (Flores & Rosa, 2015; 2019; Rosa, 2016, 2019). Flores and Rosa (2019) further reminded us that the "otherness" was sometimes associated with minority students' ethnicity and race. Thus, the circulation of this racial ideology might lead to the creating of foreign personhood associated with minority ethnicity and race. That is, we expect a person to produce certain language practices based on his/her ethnicity and race (Rosa, 2019). When encountering the racialized ideologies, individual students can do little in transforming the Othering discourses he was

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embedded in, as the case of Michael in the current study. Therefore, I argue it is important to remain vigilant of a celebratory narrative of individual participants' agentive forces, as an overemphasis on learner agency in steering their socialization into positive and promising directions can potentially make invisible the power relations in discourse communities (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Morita, 2004; Norton & Toohey, 2011), which in turn makes it more difficult to enact transformative practices within the target communities. Xing's story, for example, showed that on the one hand an individual can be enabled and empowered by his goals and be so creative and strategic in contesting the stereotypical images that that imposed on him so as to achieve his goals. On the other hand, only celebrating the role his strong willpower plays in his academic achievement and in gaining recognition in the group work could easily result in an oversight of the inequality between him and his American peers.

Moreover, the enormous time and effort Xing invested in preparing for the internship interview, mostly in preparing himself to be fluent and elaborate in English to the interviewer, also drained his willpower, often resulting in an exhausted mind of state. Therefore, Xing's compliance with the dominant white native speaker English discourse norms in the community and the job market works to reproduce the unequal rules and social orders. As a result, the unequal power relations between the majority of white-native speaker s and the minority racialized students remains. The exercise of such power relations is often manifested in limited opportunities to further one's academic and professional growth and development in U.S. higher education and beyond. This line of argument has also been endorsed by Lønsmann (2017), who revealed that the "organizational structures determine the roles, power, and agency of individuals." (p. 341) Therefore, it is necessary for future studies to adopt a more nuanced understanding of international students' agency and critically examine the interplay between

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personal agency and structural force (Duff, 2015, 2019; Duff & Doherty, 2015). Furthermore, more attention should be paid to the act of resistance or non-participation. For example, studies could investigate students' withdrawal and retreat behaviors in class discussions and group activities, especially their interactional dynamics with their American peers in discussions. Such observed behaviors can be examined in combination with participants' individual interviews or stimulated recalls to better understand the reasons of such behaviors. In Michael's case, his retreat from the group presentation project is not because he lacked English proficiency or topic-related knowledge to participate. His non-participation can be understood as an act of resistance of being positioned as an outsider in the group. A closer examination of such acts helps surface the deficient identity categories assigned to international students.

6.3.2. Out-of-school Activities across Different Communities and Spaces

I also illustrated my four participants' activities across different communities and spaces, offline and online, within and outside the classrooms. More importantly, the findings showed that my participants' engagement in the out-of-school activities affected their participation in academic discourse communities. This phenomenon aligns with that reported in many LS studies (e.g., Fraiberg et al. 2017; Lam, 2009; Lee & Bucholtz, 2015; Roozen & Erickson, 2017; Yi, 2009), which acutely pointed out that international students' active participation in more extensive transnational social spaces also constitutes a significant part of their socialization experiences. Therefore, focusing only on their learning in the instructed formal settings might not be sufficient to capture the complex nature of their learning and socialization processes (Duff, 2015, 2019; Lee & Bucholtz, 2015; Reinhardt & Thorne, 2017). As shown in the present study, my four participants drew on various resources in the online spaces as well as professional communities, to navigate the new world in the US.

Learning in the online spaces. The findings show that participants' online activities constitute an important part of their out-of-school learning: Michael was a frequent visitor to various online news websites and forums to get informed about the latest news and the public opinions. Xing was good at searching for online learning resources in Chinese websites to help understand the difficult concepts of economics and finance in his discipline. He also learned how to write professional English resume through studying the good resume examples online. Henry learned English and knowledge of photography and videography on YouTube. For Yang, he watched different American t.v. series online to explore American pop culture and develop his English spoken skills. These online learning activities allowed them to gain knowledge and develop skills in English language, American culture, or specific disciplines, which in turn facilitated their academic learning.

Of these online spaces, some served as merely a learning space where students seek information and expand horizons, as Michael did in the news websites and forums. Nevertheless, it's worth noting that other spaces, such as YouTube, on the one hand, allows users to satisfy their needs of gaining information and knowledge; on the other hand, also afford users opportunities to form affinity spaces that attract people with shared interests, as shown in Henry's case. Henry participated in the affinity space of vlogging on YouTube. Therefore, these online learning spaces, open and fluid in nature, are considered different from the construct of "community" which is often bounded by boundaries, membership, and shared norms and values (e.g., Gee, 2005; Gee & Hayes, 2012). To be more specific, users explore some online spaces as an aggregate of resources and information to fulfill their learning goals without having to subscribe to certain values or norms. Whereas in other online spaces whose affordances create an interactive and participatory culture (e.g., YouTube), users then interact with others and socialize

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others into certain way of doing, speaking, and thinking. It is possible that users might be able to fulfill their socialization needs through participating in these spaces.

      Complicating the "assimilation" goal. A close examination of students' out-of-school learning activities helps question the structuralist understanding of students' academic acculturation, that is, students learn required academic literacies and pursue their respective disciplines. Such a simple and linear understanding of "novice-becomes-expert" might lead to a homogeneous view of students' literacy learning and socialization experiences (Fraiberg et al., 2017; Roozen & Erickson, 2017). In fact, a similar understanding is not uncommon among international students. Based on the findings, they might regard the U.S. university as a homogeneous community with shared American cultures, values, and practices by most of the American students. Therefore, in order for them to achieve insider status and legitimate membership in the host community, they consider it's necessary to be "Americanized". For example, Yang began his border-crossing journey with the goal of assimilation to the new culture, as he explicitly stated in the interview that he hoped to "live like an American" and adapted to American culture. This can be seen in his fear of speaking to American students and making mistakes in spoken English at the early stage, as he was afraid that he was not able to "speak like" an American. Other newcomers such as Michael and Ying might be caught in between, struggling with adapting to the new culture and retaining the home culture. Furthermore, their acculturation experience might differ depending on their encounters with the "experts" in the host community. For example, in Michael's case, when experiencing alienation or marginalization by some American students, he felt othered and rejected by the host community as an ethnic minority.

To help students like Michael and Yang, instructors and administrators in the university could engage international students in a discussion of the "assimilation" goal. That is, the former ought to encourage the latter to question a structuralist understanding of assimilation and help them identify various factors that might come into play in their socialization processes. Such a practice might help them develop a critical mind when examining their encounters with the host community culture and the "experts" in the host community.

Furthermore, I also suggest that it would be helpful to challenge an imagined existence of a university community with shared identities and goals at both the classroom level and institutional level. The key to such practice is to raise students' awareness that the university community is not mainly American students from a homogeneous culture; rather, students need to realize that a university is invented by students and staff from various cultures, languages, and communities (Fraiberg et al., 2017). Moreover, there are contested identities and values practiced by different groups, communities, or organizations within a university institution. In addition, instructors could help direct international students to resources, groups, and organizations that they might feel more related to and identified with. It does not make one less of a legitimate member of the university community if he or she identifies with a small group of people with similar interests and goals, regardless of their language, ethnicity, race, or nationality. For example, Henry was well aware that he did not need to be "one of them" with respect to the American student community; instead, he sought meaningful communication with people who shared similar interests and goals. He was a member of the video-making and poster-design division of the Chinese student and scholar organization and was also one of the members in a research project. Therefore, his participation helped him gain a sense of belongingness in the US, which further fueled his personal growth.

6.3.3. Life History

It is well recognized in language socialization research that it is crucial to understand one's prior experiences, personal histories, as well as earlier socialization experiences, as these experiences would affect students' present and possibly future experiences and trajectories as language learners or users across different communities and timescales (Duff, 2010; Kramsch, 2003; Lønsmann, 2017; Rabbi & Canagarajah, 2017). This can also be seen in the current study.

One of the influential factors that shaped Michael, Xing, and Yang's language socialization experiences is their personal histories before coming to the US. Both Michael and Xing formed their visions for their future in relation to how they positioned their fathers. For example, in Michael's case, his father was a typical "土豪", or the "unsophisticated" new rich, coined by Hird and Louie (2016). According to Young (2018), the term "new rich" is defined as individuals who "recently acquired great wealth, usually in a single generation." (p. 177) due to the 1980s economic reform in China. Similarly, Xing also used the term "土老板" to describe his father. "土" in Chinese means someone who lacks good tastes. According to Dong and Blommaert (2016), middle-class social status is indexed not only by one's social wealth, but also by a middle-class taste, that is, a disposition towards cultural goods and practices. Adopting Bourdieu's (1984) work on taste and habitus, Dong and Blommaert (2016) further pointed out that individual taste is developed in line with one's socialization processes by way of being socialized into specific lifestyles comprised of consistent dispositions and practices that match their social class positions. The new rich, most of who have accumulated their wealth over one generation and are thus not socialized into middle-class dispositions are therefore viewed as lacking the taste to index a middle-class identity; thus, they are often denied access to the common practices and social relations shared by middle-class elite professionals in various

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domains (Dong & Blommaert, 2016; Young, 2018). Therefore, although they have economic

capitals, the new rich do not have access to the cultural and social capitals which often brought

by one's educational credentials and social connections formed during their schooling or

inherited from their middle-class parents' social network. As a result, the new rich are willing to

invest enormously in their children's education by sending their children to private schools and

to study overseas, to socialize them into the middle-class tastes, social networks, and dispositions

(Young, 2018).

On the other hand, growing up in an environment where the new rich do not enjoy much

social respect despite their privileged economic life, Michael and Xing, thus, strove to construct

an identity that departed from their fathers' new rich identities. Both of them came to the US in

the hope of earning the educational credentials that their fathers lacked. Michael was working to

achieve an identity as a knowledgeable and intelligent cosmopolitan who was open-minded and

eager to engage in cultural exchanges in order to expand his horizons and learn new perspectives.

By contrast, Xing worked really hard to realize his dream: to be an elite professional in

expensive suits in the leading accounting firm. Symbols, such as "suits", "white-collar", "CBD"

"high-rise buildings", "accounting firm", were, in particular, signifiers that indexed his intention

of breaking the labeling of "new rich" family and constructing a new legitimate middle-class

identity who has both the educational credentials and the expertise in a specific domain.

While Yang and Henry did not explicitly discuss how their fathers were perceived in society,

there is no denying that their fathers were probably new rich, too. Four of them were first-

generation college students and were first-generation study-abroad students in their families.

Therefore, their learning and socialization experiences should be examined within the social and

historical contexts of China's socio-economic development. Furthermore, their socialization at

the U.S. university also overlapped with their broader socialization into the middle-class dispositions. Inevitably, their decisions and actions were their identity markers.

6.4. Asset-based Pedagogy

Another insight this dissertation study generates is the complex nature of the asset-based pedagogy. When examining international students' learning and socialization experiences, many previous studies (Bista, 2019; Kiernan et al., 2016; Seltzer, 2019) illustrated that international students often draw on their cultural and linguistic repertoires and employed various strategies and network resources to cope with academic demands (Fraiberg et al., 2017; Rabbi & Canagarajah, 2017; Ou & Gu, 2018; Wang, 2017, 2019). As a result, instructors should see the international students' home languages and out-of-school literacies as an asset that can be incorporated into the academic settings to facilitate their learning of academic literacies (Bista, 2019; Fraiberg et al., 2017; Kiernan et al., 2016). Xing's case serves as an excellent example: he actively drew on resources in Chinese to help his academic learning and participate in out-of-school programs and activities related to his disciplinary practices. Despite his mastery of the disciplinary literacies, he was not linguistically capable of demonstrating such mastery, which put him at a disadvantaged position in both academic (i.e., remained silence in class discussion) and work settings (i.e., failed the last round of internship interview). He noted, "Unfair as it seems to be for international students like me, but it is just the reality." He further elaborated such a "reality" in the interview: while international students were encouraged to participate in class despite the "limited spoken English proficiency" with no penalty or consequences attached, this is often not the case at workplace or the job market where one is likely to lose opportunities and suffer consequences when failing to use fluent and accurate English to communicate with clients or interviewers.

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Therefore, when transitioning from an "encouraging and valuing participation" academic environment to a high-stakes job hunting or workplace environment, international students are more likely to be seen again as the deficient non-native English speakers who are at a disadvantage compared to native speakers in competing for the same job or promotion opportunities. This then raises questions to instructors and educators in the higher education context who advocate for and adopt an "asset-based approach" in teaching international students: how sustainable the "asset-based" teaching approach is in facilitating international students' academic disciplinary learning as well as their learning and work after graduation from the college?

I was able to trace Xing's learning experiences over three phrases, from First-year Writing classes to business college to looking for and applying for internships. Both CBW 101 and FYW 101 courses had specific focus on writing across disciplines to help students learn the norms and rules required in their respective disciplines in writing. Nevertheless, what is lacking might be the training and help on students' linguistic competence to orally communicate and disseminate ideas in their respective disciplines. As Chang and Kanno (2010) pointed out, some disciplines (e.g., business) have higher "language dependence" than other disciplines (e.g., engineering), thereby posing more challenges to students of these disciplines in academia. Furthermore, this "language dependence" is likely to be enhanced, when they enter the workplace where their jobs demand a higher English communicative competence. This certainly deserves future investigation, especially longitudinal tracing of participants into their workplace.

6.5. Conclusion and Implications

Drawing on the theoretical framework of language socialization and three important constructs of identity, agency, and community, I traced four Chinese international students'

language and literacy practices within and outside the First-year Writing classrooms in a U.S. university. The aim of the study is not to examine how participants are socialized, or not, into some of the expected roles the "experts" might have in the target community, be it English academically competent university student, or English language learner (Lee & Rice, 2007); rather, it looks at how four focal participants made sense of their encounters with different worldviews and ideologies in various spaces, which led to the learning, engagement in, or resistance of certain practices that shaped their unique learning and socialization trajectories in the US.

The study shows that the instructor, their parents, the writing center consultant, and the American students were all key socialization agents. The interactions with these agents greatly affected how my focal participants positioned themselves and how they negotiated the imposed identities (Duff et al., 2019). Their identities then guided their decision-making and socialized participants into different practices, values, and communities. They participated in language and literacy practices across these spaces and communities. They either engaged in the practices of the community to gain the legitimate membership, or simply collected information and gained knowledge without necessarily subscribing to the memberships or the norms of the practices. Through these situations, they engaged in social interactions by employing different modes of communication. Then, they draw on semiotic resources, values, and knowledge that are useful and meaningful to them to facilitate their personal growth, socially, academically, professional across spaces.

In terms of pedagogical implications, first, it is important for us – as teachers, instructors, or language teacher educators – to acknowledge international students' personal histories, credit their beliefs and dreams, and subsequently open up spaces for them to explore and perform their

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desired identities and share their expertise. Furthermore, it is also beneficial to create discussion spaces in class to engage students in critical examination of some of the problematic associations of "international students" and interrogating the deficit Othering discourses that might operate at the individual level or the institutional level.

Second, we suggest ways to incorporate students' home languages, cultures, and out-of-school literacy into the curriculum. Many of the international students gained digital literacies by participating in the extensive digitally mediated language and literacy practices (De Costa et al., 2016; Fraiberg et al., 2017; Wang, 2017). Instructors could have students participate in academic activities such as the multimodal composition projects, which showed effective in providing students with opportunities to draw on their home literacies and digital literacies (Wang, 2017, 2019).

Some scholars (e.g., Darvin & Norton, 2014; Seltzer, 2019) also propose creating authentic and cultural-situated cases of intercultural communication to develop students' cultural expertise and create opportunities to exchange cultural knowledge, contributing to an enhanced understanding of diversity. Activities such as role-play would be beneficial for students to engage in cross-cultural communication. For example, instructors could design roles that are associated with certain negative identity categories, and encourage students to draw on their metalinguistic awareness to perform their real-life experiences, in Michael's case, a role -play between the American undergraduate consultant and the Chinese international student client might lead to discussions of the deficit perspectives toward international students and thus illuminated the hidden power relations between English language learners and native-speaker students. Only then can we move towards realizing greater equity and educational justice on campuses with large populations of international students.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: THE FYW CURRICULUM

Our FYW curriculum is rhetorical, inductive, and inquiry based. Its goal is to prepare students not only to approach new writing situations with confidence, but also to teach them the uses of rhetorical concepts for making sense of their world—most immediately, in the transition to college life and learning. The curriculum invites students to put their prior knowledge in relation to new understandings of rhetoric, literacy, and culture. It moves students through a sequence of five projects designed to help them discover and articulate their educational goals through a series of structured inquiries into their own learning, cultural values, and academic literacies; understand the uses of writing for learning and symbolic action; and acquire the means to be lifelong makers of knowledge through writing.

The project sequence is scaffolded so that each experience yields conceptual and productive knowledge useful for the next, and so that rhetorical resources accumulate over the course of the semester. The five projects may be framed and inflected differently in accordance with the thematic emphasis of the courses in which they are situated, but the general curriculum includes a Learning Narrative Project, a Cultural Artifact Project, a Disciplinary Literacies Project, a Remix Project, and a Reflective Learning Narrative Project.

The Learning Narrative Project invites students to consider their experiences with learning in and out of school to encourage them to reflect on the relationship between their learning histories and present lives. In this first experience with college writing, students learn that their experiences both in and out of school can be useful as resources for academic inquiry-- even as the narrative itself will eventually become a useful resource for academic inquiry, especially as a resource for the final reflective narrative.

The Cultural Artifact Project invites students to inquire into cultural values in which they are implicated as learners by choosing an everyday object as the focus of guided exploration. This experience gives them further practice in processes of inquiry (formulating questions and forming theories of cultural value). In this project, students explicitly extend their inquiries into the practices and values of learning revealed in he first project into wider cultural contexts. With this project, they begin to see that research is a process of discovery, for which strategies can be practiced and learned.

The Disciplinary Literacies Project enables students to learn about the literacy practices of a discipline or profession of their choice by looking at textual products as cultural artifacts to understand the textual products of disciplines as cultural and rhetorical. It combines the self-discovery piece of the Learning Memoir with the inquiry process of the Cultural Artifact Project. The Disciplinary Literacies project invites students to continue asking the questions implicit in the first project: (What am I doing here, and what resources do I bring to the project of my education? What do I need, and how do I achieve my goals?), and to put these in relation to discoveries about the literacies of disciplinary and professional cultures.

The Remix Project builds on the learning of the first three projects by making rhetorical moves implicit in these projects the explicit focus of attention. It asks students to create a product that helps them be more aware of the — of purpose, audience, medium; mode or genre— they make. It invites students to experience and reflect further on processes of invention and arrangement, and further develops inquiries into relationships between rhetorical purposes, audiences, and resources (material, conceptual, and ethical).

The Reflective Learning Narrative Project takes students' own learning as an object of inquiry. It invites students to reflect on the development and uses of their learning over the

course of the semester: to make claims about what they have learned, to set goals for their ongoing learning, to propose the means for achieving those learning goals, and to use the evidence and examples they have created throughout the semester to support each of these types of claims. This assignment builds directly from all of the activities of the semester by inviting students to cite examples from early and final drafts of their assignments, their proposals, their peer-review sessions, their student/teacher conferences, etc. The Reflective Learning Narrative Project is designed to empower students to investigate and celebrate their successes and to make the most of their mistakes by setting goals that emerge from reflecting on their activities that went less well than they had hoped.

The FYW curriculum at ELU does not presume to predict or replicate every possible writing task that students may encounter in their educational careers. Instead, it aims to develop students' capacity to understand and adapt to new writing situations by giving them the means to ask the kinds of questions good writers ask: What is the purpose of this writing? What is the task? What does it ask of me? What is the larger context? Who is my audience, and what are its needs and expectations? What kind of language is appropriate for the work this writing must do? What do I already know, what do I still need to know, and where can I find useful resources?

The goal of the FYW curriculum is to help students develop transferable knowledge about writing – about concepts, processes, strategies, and practices.

APPENDIX B: BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is adapted from the background questionnaire used in the CIC project

- Name:

- Age:

- Gender:

- Current year at ELU:

- Intended major:

- Country of birth:

- Arrival in the US (month, year):

- Your first language:

- List the languages you can speak:

- List the English-speaking countries you've lived in:

- What language did you speak at secondary school (high school)?

- When did you start learning English?

- Your most recent TOEFL score:

- Are you currently enrolled in an English Language Center course?

- List all the English language courses you are currently taking:

- List all the English language courses you have previously taken:

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FOCAL PARTICIPANTS

In general

1. Where are you from? What types of high school did you go?

2. Why did you decide to study in the US? Why ELU?

3. Do you have a specific plan for yourself? What you would like to accomplish during the four years?

English language learning and use

4. You mentioned that you took ESL. How did this ESL course prepare you for CBW 101 and your other content courses?

5. What additional ESL support would you like to receive at ELU? Please give some examples.

6. If you encounter language-related issues, where will you find help? Who will you ask to help you?

7. What kinds of difficulties you experienced/are experiencing related to English? How did you overcome these difficulties?

8. Do you actively seek opportunities to talk to native speakers? How do you feel talking with native speakers?

9. What resources do you use on campus for language learning? What online/social media resources do you use for language learning?

CBW & FYW classes

10. How is your overall experience with CBW 101 & FYW 101?

11. How do you feel Chinese students use Chinese in the classes?

12. Who/where do you seek help from for your writing assignments?

13. Tell me about the reading and writing assignments in the writing courses. What's challenging about them?

14. What have you learned at ELU that's helpful for your writing?

Outside the writing classes

15. Where do you seek help with your writing outside the classroom?

16. Who do you talk to about academic and school-related work?

17. How do you use social media to facilitate your academic learning in general?

18. Do you feel part of the ELU community?

19. What student groups are you now following/actively participating in?

20. Have you joined any kinds of online communities/groups which share similar interests and goals? What kinds of activities do you participate in these groups? What have you learned from doing these activities?

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FYW INSTRUCTORS

1. What do you think the goal of CBW and FYW is? What students are expected to accomplish in this course?

2. How is CBW 101 different from FYW 101?

3. Based on your experience, what do you think might be the main challenges for international students in CBW 101 and FYW 101?

4. Often, international students bring their own cultural and linguistic resources to the classroom. Have you considered incorporating their cultural and linguistic diversity into the curriculum? How do you see it being incorporated into your class?

5. Could you talk a little bit about the rationale of these five writing projects? How are these writing projects different from the writing students do in the ELC program?

6. How do you see multimodal writing benefit students' academic writing development?

7. Could you tell me your evaluation criteria when grading students' writing? What kind of feedback you give to the students? Content-based? Structure? Or language? Which do you think is the most important? How do you think the role of students' language proficiency here?

8. How do you feel about peer-review process? Do you think it's beneficial for students?

9. What is your take on students' group projects? What kinds of skills and knowledge do you expect them to develop through the collaborative projects?

10. How do you think that CBW 101 & FYW 101 can help students' transition into college life and create a better integrative campus?

11. What would you change/do differently if you have another chance to teach this class again?

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